eNEWSLETTER // EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

It has never been easier to Invest in Yourself

After a temporary pause, Irving Cares has relaunched employment services and the Invest in Yourself program for the countless Irving residents who have lost their job due to the pandemic.

Unemployment in Texas rose to a historic 12.8 percent in April 2020, according to the Texas Workforce Commission[1], painting a clear picture of the impact of the novel coronavirus. People of color, women and workers in "manual" jobs have been disproportionately affected by recent economic declines—many of whom are Irving residents. Irving Cares has stepped up to meet the local need, reopening our comprehensive Invest in Yourself Program, as well as offering employment services à la carte.

Irving Cares first implemented the Invest in Yourself program in 2017, which was based on the successful national model of the Working Families Success (WFS) network from the Communities Foundation of Texas.

Invest in Yourself bundles in-depth financial education, one-on-one coaching and access to existing Irving Cares services, including employment services, information and referrals and emergency assistance with food, housing, utilities and/or childcare. Ninety five percent of households assisted by Irving Cares are low-income, having a combined income of less than $38,600 per year. The living wage for Dallas County is $48,645 for a family with one adult and one child[2].

Invest in Yourself program in the age of COVID-19 looks different. Participants have the option of attending an in-person workshop beginning October 21. Protocols will be in place to provide a safe experience for staff, volunteers and participants, including temperature checks, mask requirements and social distancing. Irving Cares is also developing an online option for Invest in Yourself workshops, using a combination of YouTube and Zoom technologies. The Invest in Yourself workshop provides an overview of several topics that are essential for personal and professional success, such as self-care, resumes, interviews, budgets and credit scores. Four staff members work together as coaches to provide information and to answer questions. At the end of the presentations, participants are encouraged to select the coach they would like to work with and are asked to sign a contract. The coaches provide support as the participants brainstorm and develop goals to complete their work plan. During this process, the participant identifies key action steps and works with their coach to successfully achieve them.

The next step in the Invest in Yourself program is to work through the participant's work plan. They can choose to email, text or call their coach as needed and have the option to meet face-to face in a safe manner. Coaches may also communicate next steps, share other relevant services available at Irving Cares or research and provide information or referrals about other local opportunities.

Self-determination is critical to the Invest in Yourself program and coaches always support participants' goals and the work plans they develop. Financial coaching and employment

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[1] Texas Workforce Commission (May 22, 2020) https://www.twc.texas.gov/news/texas-unemployment-rate-128-percent#:~:text=Texas%20Unemployment%20Rate%2012.8%20Percent%20%7C%20Texas%20Workforce%20Commission
[2] "Living Wage Calculation for Dallas County, Texas." https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/48113

services are frequently part of the Invest in Yourself program. Financial coaching offers resources to help manage finances, such as budgeting, short-term and long-term savings, ways to increase income and/or decrease expenses, improving credit scores and meeting a variety of financial goals.

Employment Services is another key component of the Invest in Yourself program. Irving Cares also provides these services à la carte for those who are seeing focused assistance with education or reemployment. These resources include, but are not limited to:

- financial assistance for education or training programs through Irving Cares partners, such as North Lake College, to gain relevant job skills
- financial arrangements for up to two weeks of childcare (or until a working parent receives their first paycheck)
- a $50 Walmart voucher to purchase uniforms or clothing for work
- hygiene bags for self-care
- bus passes to attend an interview
- access to the Irving Cares' computer lab for resume building, job search and completing applications
- opportunities for qualified participants to interview with local employment partners

If you or someone you know could benefit from any of these services, please visit our website for more information or contact us directly at (972) 721-9181.

Your donation of any amount is invaluable to help Irving Cares address the COVID-19 unemployment crisis locally. Here are some of the many ways your dollars help make a difference:

- $25 provides 10 bus passes for job seekers or the newly employed
- $50 purchases a Walmart clothing voucher of equal value to help the newly employed purchase professional clothing or uniforms
- $250 pays for childcare until a working parent receives their first paycheck
- $500 provides tuition assistance for job seekers to earn a certification in their field

In 2019, Irving Cares helped 93 participants find employment, creating an estimated economic impact of $2,413,715 in Irving! Your donations really make a difference! Likewise, we welcome volunteers to assist at our workshops and promise you that we are carefully following safety precautions against COVID-19. Complete and email the Volunteer Application form to Joyce, our community engagement coordinator at JoyceE@IrvingCares.org and get involved today!