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Q & A for Third Avenue PlayWorks

• What is the mission of your organization.

We Are HOPE, Inc. is dedicated to connecting employers and the workforce in achieving mutual employment success.

• What are some of the main programs or services offered by the organization?

At **We Are HOPE | The EmployAbility HUB**, we are here for everyone. We empower individuals to achieve meaningful employment and financial stability while helping businesses build strong, dedicated teams.

We offer personalized career guidance, job search support, durable skills training, computer skills training, and direct connections to local employers. **Looking for that first job, a fresh start, or career advancement, we're here every step of the way. We specialize in working with barriers such as individuals with disabilities, justice involved and those seeking financial stability.**

For employers, we provide recruitment support, hiring events, and workforce retention strategies and resources to strengthen your team and invest in employee success.

By collaborating with businesses, schools, and community partners, we create opportunities that connect job seekers and employers.

• Can you share a meaningful or inspiring story for the past year highlighting your work?

One individual came to us with significant barriers to employment, including a disability and a justice-involved background. They were eager to work but unsure how to navigate the job search process and find an employer who would see their potential rather than their past.

Through personalized career coaching, pre-employment preparation and durable skills training; we helped them build confidence and develop the skills needed to succeed in today's workforce. We worked side by side to identify employment opportunities that aligned with their interests and work restrictions and guided them through the impact of increased income on their public benefits, empowering them to make informed decisions about their financial future.

They have been successfully employed for going on one year now - a milestone that once felt out of reach. Their words say it all: *"I am home."*

This is why we do what we do. We help individuals break down barriers, find fulfilling work, and build a future they are proud of.

• What are some of the challenges your organization faces in carrying out its mission, and how are they addressed?

One of the biggest challenges we face in carrying out our mission is **securing consistent funding to keep our programs and services available to the public and those who need them most.**

After losing our funding as a Wisconsin Job Center, we now depend on donations, grants, and community support to continue providing vital services to job seekers and local businesses. Without stable funding, our ability to expand programs, assist more individuals, and create new opportunities for economic growth is at risk. Community support is essential to ensuring we can continue making a meaningful impact.

We address these challenges by seeking partnerships, applying for grants, and working with local employers, but **individual donations remain crucial**. With every contribution we can ensure that no one is left behind on their path to meaningful employment and financial stability.

● **Looking ahead, what are some of the organization's goals or priorities for the future?**

Our goals and priorities for the future focus on expanding impact, strengthening workforce development, and securing sustainable funding to continue serving job seekers and local businesses.

Key priorities include:

1. **Expanding Employment Services** – Increasing access to career guidance, job search support, durable skills training, and employer connections to help more individuals secure meaningful self-sustaining employment.
2. **Enhancing Employer Partnerships** – Collaborating with local businesses to develop tailored workforce solutions, provide recruitment support, and offer employee training programs that promote job retention and career advancement.
3. **Supporting Underserved Populations** – Strengthening services for individuals with disabilities, justice-involved individuals, and those navigating public benefits, ensuring equitable access to employment opportunities.
4. **Increasing Community Engagement** – Growing partnerships with schools, organizations, and employers to create more career exploration opportunities, mentorship programs, and training initiatives.
5. **Securing Sustainable Funding** – Diversifying funding sources through grants, employer sponsorships, and donations to ensure long-term program stability and growth, allowing us to continue making a lasting impact in the community.

By focusing on these priorities, we aim to build a stronger workforce, support economic growth, and empower individuals to achieve self-sufficiency and success.

● **What is the best way for the community to support these efforts?**

The **best ways for the community to support** these initiatives and help us continue making a meaningful impact include:

1. **Make a Donation** – Financial contributions help us provide these services to those in need. Every dollar supports someone on their path to success.
2. **Advocate & Spread the Word** – Share our mission with friends, family, and colleagues. By raising awareness, you help connect more people to our services and encourage greater community involvement.
3. **Sponsor or Attend Events** – Support fundraising efforts like job fairs, networking events, or community fundraisers to help sustain and expand our programs.

Every act of support—big or small—helps us empower individuals, strengthen businesses, and build a thriving community. **Together, we can create more opportunities for success!**