

Housing First Employment Program

For Housing First Organizations Interested in
Implementing Employment Supports

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Goals

- The relationship between homelessness and employment
- Gaps in Employment Supports
- Housing First Client's reported barriers to employment
- The Housing First Employment model
- Successes and lessons learned from the 2018 pilot project
- Strategies for implementing employment skills training or programming in a Housing First organization

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Common Barriers

- Unable to find work
- Insufficient training or skills
- Unstable or lack of housing
- Physical and mental disabilities
 - Cognitive delays
- Less employment social skills training
- Large gaps in work history (2+ years)
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of employment supplies
- Active addictions
- Fear of Re-traumatization
- Lower literacy levels
- X Public Support X

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Approaches to Employment Supports in Calgary

- Methods of delivery
 - Pre-Employment and Essential skills training
 - Self-directed program
 - Placement based
 - Peer support programs
 - Information only
- Ready, Willing, Able

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Gaps in Calgary Employment Supports for

- Individuals who are interested in employment but are not “ready and able” to work
- Individuals with wavering motivation and ability to reliably participate in programming
- Individuals who are on AISH and would like to work part time
- Individuals who are interested in volunteer employment, or further education
- Individuals who can benefit from programming specific to barriers due to chronic homelessness
- Individuals who would like to work their way up to attending other community employment programming

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Housing First Employment Model

Essential Skills



Employment Readiness



Volunteer Placement /
Competitive Job Application



Ongoing Support / Repeat
of Courses

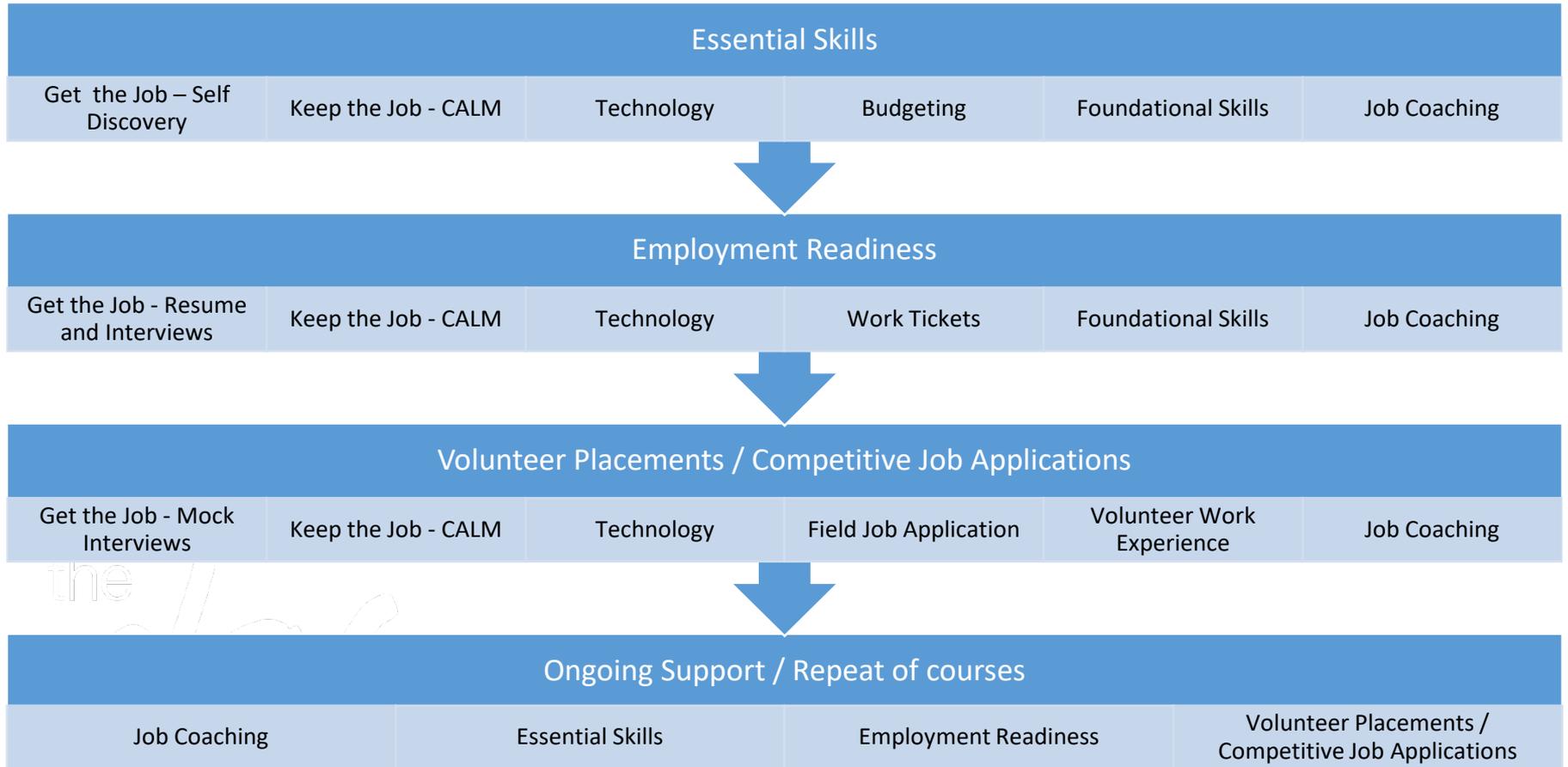
- The Alex Community Health Centre piloted an innovative Pre-pre-Employment Program (PEP) for high acuity, formerly homeless individuals.
- PEP provides participants with supports to prepare them for re-entry into the workforce while managing other issues (physical, mental health, and substance abuse issues).
- Job coaches work closely with participant's supports
- The employment program uses a semi-structured model that combines course work, one-on-one job coaching, and field support. The program comprises of four components delivered over a 12 month period with two points of participant intake.
 - Essential Skills
 - Employment Readiness
 - Volunteer Placements / Competitive Job Application
 - Ongoing support
- Clients are able to be reabsorbed into classes when they are able to rejoin the group.

PEP

- There are five major streams of classes
 - Getting the Job stream
 - Keeping the Job stream
 - Technology
 - Work Experience
 - Certifications
- **Participants choose which classes work with their goals and their schedule.**

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PEP Courses



Job Coaching

- Reinforce class lessons
- Build Learning Portfolio
- Practice specific skills
- Support participants who missed lessons

Tip! If your program has rewards, give this out at Job Coaching to promote regular engagement

- **Most useful thing I learned:**
 - Getting personalized feedback.
 - Help with applying for opportunities.
- **How and why would you recommend this to a friend?:**
 - To be organized and ready for the future

Self Discovery: Getting the Job Stream

- Focuses on confidence in skills and abilities participants already possess
- Learn about available jobs in their area that fit with their skills, interests, personality and experience
- Helps focus the job search and career trajectory

Tip! If using assessment tests, edit the job suggestions to ones that are hiring in your area.

- Most useful thing I learned
 - Confidence & Learning about my self attributes that I didn't know about.

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Keeping the Job Stream

- Focuses on reliability, time management, interpersonal skills, communication, and problem solving skills
- Workers rights and responsibilities
- How to work with people that you do not like
- How to say no to your boss

Tip! Participants learn the most from interacting with each other in this class. Allow for group conversations, and allow for a safe place to for participants to practice work appropriate social skills.

Tip 2! Case managers may request only 1:1 work with a participant due to anxiety. You can gauge and possibly work the participant into these classes – as most jobs require some social component.

- Most useful thing I learned
 - I loved the conversation in this class. Discussions with teacher and classmates. Also, an easier class to attend.
 - Time management.

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Technology

- Works to transform technology from a barrier to a tool
- Lessons focus on practical application of technology skills
- Great opportunity to bring in community members for volunteering
- Skills achievement certificates for participants to put in their portfolio

Tip! Like a language, Computer Literacy requires regular practice. More exposure reinforces the lessons and increases the ability to troubleshoot

Tip 2! Get the participants in the habit of regularly checking their email. Jobs and passwords have been lost due to sporadic email interaction. You can encourage participants to email you with updates.

- Most useful thing I learned:
 - I loved the volunteers that come in. I learned more in three classes than in 6 months of Microsoft.
 - Until this course, I admit that I was practically computer illiterate. Now I am comfortable and confident.
- How and why would you recommend this to a friend?:
 - Let them know that I succeeded on bettering my knowledge on computers and my computer skills.

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Mock Interviews

- Participants fill out mock applications
- Employers from the community come in and discuss their hiring process and interview style
- Employers ask their go to interview questions and provide feedback
- Participants learn to adjust their answers for different employers.

Tip! Participants feel safest with their peers. Mock interviews in a group format creates a safe atmosphere.

- Most useful thing I learned:
 - I was terrified of interviews in the beginning. It has been hugely beneficial to hear interviewers show their vulnerability and admit they've felt fear of interview themselves.
 - What questions I should ask the employer an to be prepared before any interview.

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MOCK



Interview

Customer Experts

Since connecting its first cable customer in 1971, Power Cable has become PEP's leading network and content experience company, delivering the highest quality consumer, business and content product offerings.

Every day, our passionate employees connect our customers to the world and everything in it – it's why we exist at Power Cable. Our people reflect the richness of our communities, and our culture is inclusive of each individual's diverse background and perspective, which makes us a stronger team.

We are hiring for a variety of roles as diverse as our staff.

- Customers Solutions Expert – Phone Sales
- Customers Resolution Expert – Support line
- Customer Results Expert – Stocking and Delivery

Job Information Questions

1. **What is the name of the Company?**
2. **What do you know about the company?**
3. **What Job are you applying for and what are the duties?**

Look at the qualifications for the job you are applying for:

Sales	Support Line	Stocking
Self-Motivation and Positive Attitude	Impeccable interpersonal skills	Task orientated
Resourceful	Strong communication	Able to follow directions
Basic aptitude with computers and interest to learn	Willing to attend product knowledge meetings	Able to lift 30lbs
Experience in Sales.	Experience with support would be an asset	High accuracy when shipping and receiving.

Volunteer Work Experience

- Volunteer on site and in the community
- Participants get to demonstrate and practice their transferable skills
- Participants gain a reference and a recent item on their resumé.
- Group volunteer opportunities often bypass criminal record checks

TIP! Create two tiers of volunteer work experience. One closer to your worksite and one in the community. This allows the facilitator and the participants to build trust before moving into higher consequence environment.

- Most useful thing I learned:
 - By going as a group, I know what to expect. This helps with anxiety.
 - To be a volunteer at a job that I could hold down one day.
 - How to work with others.
- How and why would you recommend this to a friend?:
 - To build real skills.
 - I felt more at ease with my team, they helped me take the step.

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PEP Employment Experience Opportunity
Food Prep – Alex Community Kitchen (Main Alex Office)
Wednesday, July 11th – 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm



Compensation:

On time, Present, Working Throughout	\$15 – Gift Card
Present, Working Throughout (But Late)	\$10 – Gift Card
Present, Leaves early	\$5 – Gift Card
+ Snack	
+ Opportunity for an ongoing volunteer job.	

Workers will be supporting Allison and the Alex Community Kitchen. The goal is prepare food for the upcoming barbecue on July 13th.

Duties **may** include and are **not limited** to:

- Prep Work
 - i.e. washing, cutting, etc.
- Cooking / Preparing Food
 - Menu will be determined day of
- Ongoing Maintenance and Cleaning
 - i.e. Cleaning the fridge or microwave
- Organization as Needed
 - i.e. Ensuring all dishes, pots and pans are in their rightful location
- Educational Entertainment (optional)
 - i.e. 5 minute presentation on food or history

How to Apply:

Fill out application on the back and return to Giselle or Christina. Deadline to Apply is July 11th 2018 @1:00 pm

PEP Employment Opportunity

Food Prep – Alex Community Kitchen (Main Alex Office)

Wednesday, July 11th – 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Name:

What interests you about this position?

Why are you a good candidate for this position?

Do you have any previous experience that is related to this position?

What Duty or Duties are most interested in?

**Would you be interested in an unpaid but ongoing volunteer job with the community kitchen going after this event?
(Not a deal breaker if no).**

Repeat of Courses

- Participants who are not ready to work can continue to take PEP courses.
- Intakes opened up for new participants to join the original cohort

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Attrition

PEP had 17 graduating participants in from its two cohorts.

Original Cohort

- Alex Clients who indicated interest in employment programming and filled in an exploratory survey – 41
- Alex Clients who completed intakes for January start – 24
- Alex Clients who participated in at least one class – 19
- Alex Clients who remain in the program – 11

Holiday Cohort

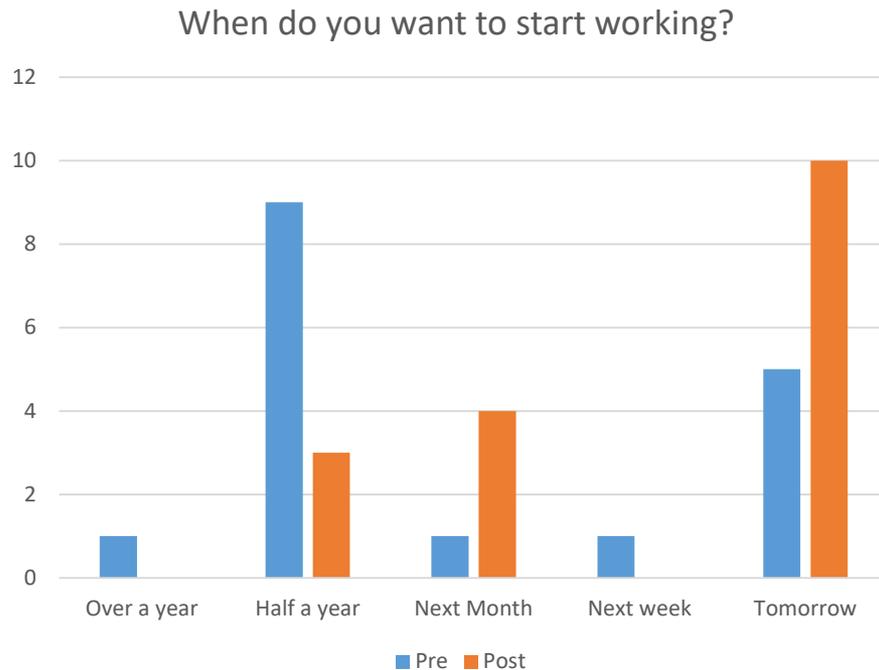
- Alex Clients who indicated interest in employment programming and filled in an exploratory survey – 10
- Previously 'dropped out' Alex Clients who re-entered program - 4
- New Alex Clients who completed intakes for September start – 6
- New Alex Clients and Alex Clients who re-entered who remain in the program – 6

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2018 Pilot Project Findings

	% Completed
	/17
Participant regularly attend training blocks	94%
Participant creates a learning plan	100%
Participant creates an employment plan	94%
Participant acquires workplace certificates	100%
Participant completes training component	94%
Participant enrolls in further education or seeks to enter paid employment or volunteer employment	100%
Participant placed in work experience placement	94%
Participant secures paid employment	35%
Participant secures volunteer employment	35%
Participant secures further education and resources	24%
Participant retains employment after three months	29% / 93%

Timeline to Return to Work



- The shift in the participants' timeline is in line with the duration of the 4-12 month program however it is worth considering the participant's workplace displacement.
- The participants' workplace displacement prior to the program ranged from 3-23 years, with the average being 8 years. A number of participants have had interest in working during this time of unemployment and had a stagnant timeline to enter employment over the duration of these years.
- A possible effect of PEP on participants is a shift of employment goals from long term to short term.

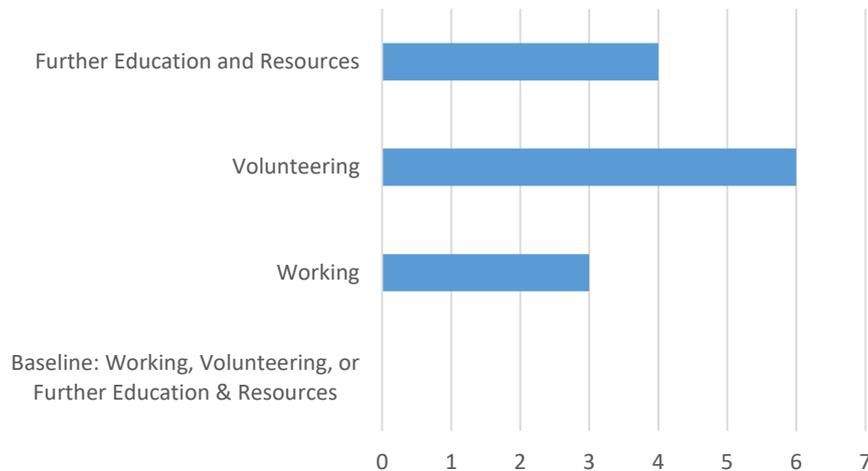
Average Income



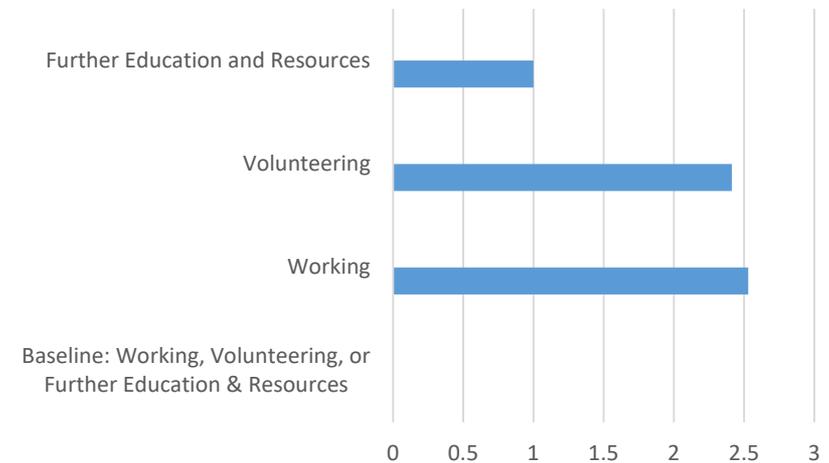
- Prior to the program, the participants' average monthly income was \$1 224, with two clusters within the group.
 - Cluster A were those who are on Alberta Works earning on average \$700 a month,
 - Cluster B were those who are on AISH, CPP, and OAS who averaged \$1590 a month.
- After the program, the average monthly income is \$ 1 497, with
 - Cluster A earning an average of \$971 a month
 - Cluster B earning an average of \$1 865 a month
- Participant income goals varied based on their source of income. Older participants who were receiving AISH, CPP, and or OAS preferred to limit their income to the maximum income exemption, or preferred to go into volunteer work. Younger individuals receiving Alberta Works preferred to pursue training for future careers, or for applying for full time employment.

Volunteering, Paid Employment and Further Resources

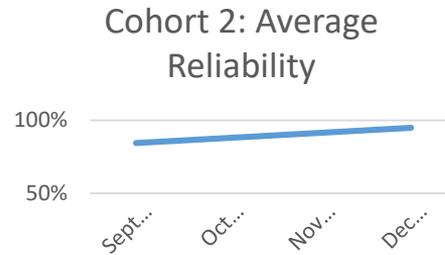
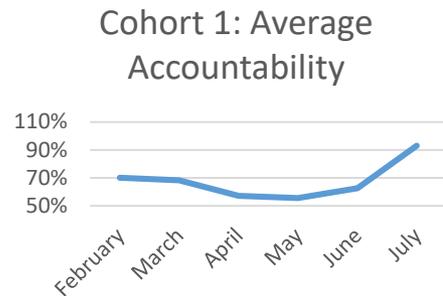
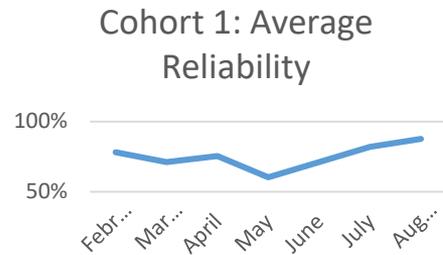
Participants who are Currently Working, Volunteering, or in further Education & Resources (January 22, 2019)



In the Past 24 weeks, average # of weeks Volunteering, Working or Education has occurred



Reliability and Accountability



- When the volunteer mock interviewers were asked what the most important trait in an employee, the overwhelming answer was reliability. PEP staff worked with participants to practice this skill by coaching and assertive engagement.
- Reliability and Accountability feedback was given to participants. Participants worked on signing up for classes that fit their interests and their schedule and creating a habit to be at their assigned classes.
- Trends in participant reliability and accountability increased in both the January and the September Cohorts

Participant Comments

On Outcomes

- *This class impresses me every day. I have done so many things I would never done alone.*
- *I am happy with who I am shaping into and with the results.*

What is Success?

- *Knocking off goals and having fun doing it!*
- *Being myself, knowing my own super powers and excelling in the things I want in life*
- *Working with others that you get to know as friends*
- *Stability*
- *Consistency, Motivation*
- *Looks like we have a purpose and ready to take our skills higher*

Participant Motivation to Participate

- I just finished a mental health program at the hospital. This kept me stable and secure
- I found motivation in the people and the classes. How it all was just so great!
- Certificates, particularly because they were free
- To pursue a career in volunteering or paid employment
- My low education
- Getting out of the house
- Gift Cards
- I learned things that I need to know

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Advice

Working with clients

- Be prepared to work with people where they are at. Progress with participants is not linear. Sometimes employment is not the most pertinent goal for them. When this occurs, stay open and welcoming.
- Keep strong communication with the participant's case management team. Keep them updated with what the participant is working on. Inquire with the participant's case manager if the participant is acting differently or has stopped attending. Create a plan with the case managers to tackle barriers that come up with the participants. Also ensure you are on the same page with the case manager to avoid "triangulation." Triangulation can occur when a participant has more than one system of care. The participant can misinform the different systems of care in order to fulfill a goal.
- If you are unsure if a participant will be work ready, wait for the work experience component. A few of the participants shocked me with their work ethic.
- Give participants calendars each month and notes that indicate what they have signed up for. Some participants had troubles memorizing their schedule.

Consistency

- Even the most well-advertised class will not have full attendance on the first day. Our participants thrived when the class times were consistent. Participants did well when they were able to make coming to the Employment Program at specific times into a habit.

Participant Advice

Future Participants

- This class is Real, Raw, and Incredible. I felt that I could be myself without judgement.
- Be persistent, Stick to it, go to every class.
- To anyone who wants or thinks they want to work. There is support and community.

Future Facilitators and Programmers

- Be honest and straight forward.
- Get participants back on the path
- Be Positive

Potential Funders

- This class has kept my sanity. Improved my confidence to a point that I would not have believed could happen.
- The program has changed my life, body, mind, soul.
- This program helped me overcome my fears of getting back into employment.
- The trust and experience I have is priceless.
- I found the intimate small classroom format better than another pre-employment program I've tried.
- This program is necessary because we are different from society. E.g. Bipolar.
- I found the PEP format less intimidating as a vulnerable woman.
- Great class for people who have been unemployed or never had a job and looking to upgrade skills in the workplace.
- Come on down, you could be the next contestant in PEP. The door is always open. Come visit.
- Your funding goes to good places.

What to Learn More?

- For more information on the particulars of this project, the final report is located on the Homeless Hub
- For more specific questions or if you learn best by conversation, contact the Project Lead Christina Bassett at cbassett@thealex.ca

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