

Charlotte Housing Authority's Job Plus: Proven Job Placement Approach
Jobs Plus Grantee Training Conference
June 2015

In an aggressive effort to increase employment from 21% to 53%* over the next four years in Southside Homes, the Charlotte Housing Authority's (CHA) Jobs Plus Program will incorporate our successful six (6) year working relationship with Grace-Mare Services. Grace-Mar will bring established and *active* relationships with **over 50 local businesses in the Charlotte area.**

Incorporated in 2009, Grace-Mar's mission is to help skilled and unskilled low income individuals in Mecklenburg County to obtain and maintain full-time employment at a living wage. To do this they provide education, counseling, job training and links to professional networks for displaced workers, minorities and low to moderate income persons in the areas of job placement, financial literacy and self-empowerment. For the Jobs Plus Initiative, Grace-Mar will be providing their proven Career Assessment and Job Placement services by hiring a **full-time, site-based Employment Specialist** dedicated to the Jobs Plus Initiative.

Grace-Mar has developed a proven job placement model that streamlines the hiring process for area employers. With the incorporation of the **Kenexa Prove It! Job Assessment** tool and a cloud based Applicant Tracking System in 2012, Grace-Mar now provides employers with candidates that have been pre-screened, tested and interviewed with validated assessments based on the specific needs of the employer (or industry) and the specific open position for which they are looking to hire. Much like the successful approach of staffing agencies across the country, Grace-Mar is now able to place Jobs Plus members in a position of strength in front of employers with open positions, based on their marketable skills, at no cost to the employer. In addition, the assessments can identify job seekers that need additional training or service referrals to area providers, such as the variety of Jobs Plus partners. The Jobs Plus Employment Specialist will reach out to additional area employers letting them know that Grace-Mar has the ability to screen potential applicants and will only send for interviews those that have both the soft skills and the specific hard skills the employer is looking for.

Grace-Mar works with a growing network of employers looking for trained employees, serving as a **no-fee staffing/placement agency** for these employers, including Convergys, Time Warner, Verizon, FedEx, K-Mart and Blue Cross Blue Shield. Grace-Mar uses grant funds and contracts for services with social service providers seeking to find employment for their clients to fund his services. Grace-Mar launched its Intensive Job Placement Program in 2011 and started tracking data in November of 2012. Since that time they have tested and interviewed 1,216 adults and have placed 532 of those hard-to-serve adults in full-time jobs, with an average starting salary of \$10.53 an hour, and Grace-Mar staff continues to work with many of those not yet employed. Others they interviewed were referred to other agencies for more job readiness services while others did not follow through or were not hired for the jobs for which they got the interview.

When not working directly with Southside Homes members and conducting employment assessments, the Employment Specialist will be out looking for other businesses who may have job openings suitable for the members he/she has met with, screened and, knowing their skill level and interests, knows what types of jobs to look for. He/she will look for work-based learning opportunities or on-the-job training slots for Jobs Plus members and seek to find companies where longevity and advancement are possibilities for new hires, coordinating their efforts with **the Charlotte Works (WIOA) OTJ program.**

*202 of the 381 households at Southside Homes will have at least one adult with earned income.