



A Partner Success Story of the RCORP Rural Center of Excellence on SUD Recovery at the Fletcher Group

EMPLOYMENT IS KEY

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A JOB WELL DONE

"Having a job helps you build a foundation," says Craig Dean, Case Manager at the Recovery Trail halfway house in the rural town of Sevierville, Tennessee. "It not only helps people pay the bills, put food on the table, and take care of child support. It also builds self-worth and a sense of accomplishment." Of course, it's never been easy for people in recovery to find work, particularly if they have a criminal record. That's why Recovery Trail has worked so closely with the Fletcher Group and their local job center to build a model workforce development program that's helped over 100 residents find gainful employment.



A TEAM EFFORT

Recovery Trail had already committed itself to helping residents find employment when Dean and Recovery Trail Executive Director Toby Wagner met Lori Baier, the Fletcher Group's Director of Workforce Initiatives, at a conference hosted by the National Alliance for Recovery Residences. "When Craig and Toby heard about the new pilot program we were launching, they jumped right in," says Baier. "We began meeting once a week, provided employment coaching, and helped them develop closer ties with both local employers and their nearest job center. From there, it just took off."

THE FIRST STEP

Job centers are often close at hand, says Baier, but the trick is learning how to use them. "They have so many great resources, but are often unaware of local recovery houses and programs." Baier recommends using the locator on the American Job Centers website to find the nearest job center. "Then drop by the center to explain your employment goals and invite them to your facility. That will help them better understand the challenges you face and the applicants you'll be sending their way. Of course, you'll also need to prepare your clients so they can take full advantage of the job center's assistance when the time comes."

FACE TO FACE

"We had a relationship with our local job center before, but it wasn't very productive," says Dean. "The Fletcher Group encouraged us to turn it into a real partnership. Eventually they assigned us a staff member who we could call and say, 'We're bringing a client in tomorrow and here's their back-ground.' As a result, their staff has developed a much better understanding of our people, including their limitations such as not being able to work overnight or on Sundays. That tighter relationship has already helped us find jobs for over 100 residents."





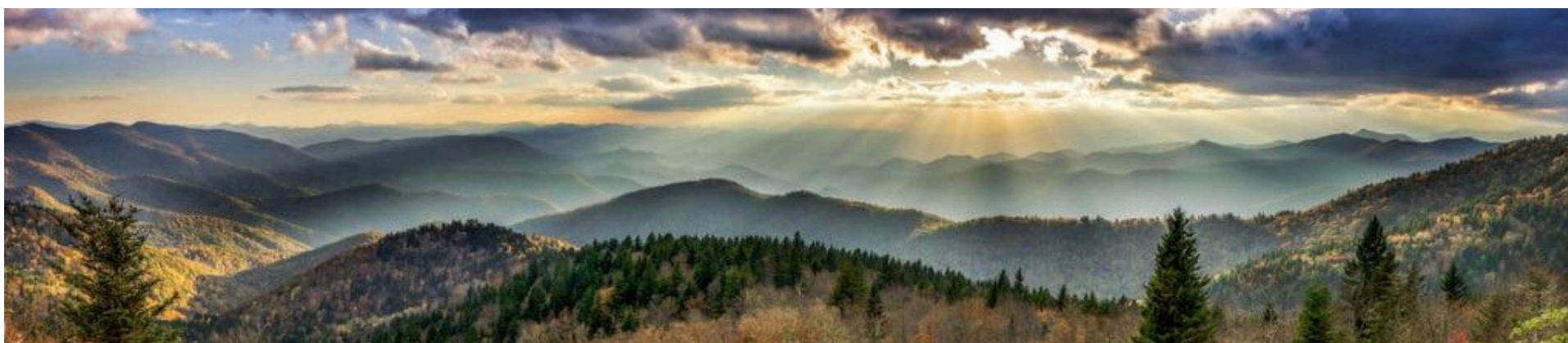
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SO MUCH TO GAIN

"Each new resident at Recovery Trail fills out a detailed client assessment," says Dean. "It identifies any barriers to employment and matches their aptitudes, abilities, and personality with a career they can excel in. The resident then meets personally with a job center representative who helps them build a resume, sign up on LinkedIn and Indeed, and obtain essential documents such as a social security card or birth certificate. The job center will then start looking for jobs that align with the client assessment. The center also works closely with us to create a pipeline of supportive wrap-around services."



MUTUAL BENEFIT

American Job Centers are administered by the state but are federally funded by the Workforce Innovation Act. "The centers have a genuine desire to help precisely the kind of people who live in recovery homes and need their services," says Baier. "And because people in recovery are sober and motivated with lots of great skills to offer, they're great candidates for proving that job centers really work. It's just a natural fit and a win-win situation for everyone involved. All we need to do is get recovery homes and job centers on the same page working seamlessly together."

DOCUMENTATION

"Data collection is a natural part of what we do," says Dean who records outcomes using the Advanced Recovery Management System (ARMS) offered by the Recovery Outcomes Institute. "Every 30 days it gives us an accurate picture of where our residents are physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The benefits of that are enormous."

"Like any other program, data-driven employment coaching requires an accurate evaluation tool like ARMS to show that what we're doing is truly effective," says Baier.

A MODEL FOR OTHERS

"Recovery Trail is a shining star," says the Fletcher Group's Baier. "We ask Toby and Craig to speak at national conferences because they know the engagement and documentation process so well. They've even created a step-by-step guide for working with job centers. And the response I get when I talk with others about this program is just as exciting. Everyone I meet wants to help residents find work and now they have a model that's effective, especially in underserved rural areas."

