



Calvary Women's Services

A safe, caring place for tonight; support, hope and change for tomorrow.

Step Up DC Job Placement Program

2015 - 2016 Report

Program Summary

Step Up DC is a job placement program for women who are homeless in Washington, DC. The program is available to all current and recently graduated clients of Calvary Women's Services, as well as current and former STRIDE (Search Together to Resume Dignified Employment) employees. Step Up DC focuses on connecting women with jobs as quickly as possible, and is built around a robust network of partners that provide employment opportunities. The program launched in October 2014.

Step Up DC is built on the personal one-on-one support that makes all of Calvary's programs unique and successful. Program activities include:

- Weekly job search sessions, offered every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to noon
- Job Club meetings that offer peer-to-peer support
- Off-site mock interviewing sessions
- Direct assistance in working on computers, including resume building and conducting job searches online
- Trips to local career fairs
- On-site meetings and presentations with local employers
- On-site career fairs offered twice each year

In addition to these program activities, every participant in Step Up DC meets with a full-time Workforce Development Specialist on a weekly basis.

Program Outcomes

Step Up DC continues to demonstrate strong participation and involvement from clients, staff and volunteers. In the 2015-2016 program year, Step Up DC accomplished the following outcomes:

- 34 women participated in the job search and placement process.
- More than 60% of women in Step Up DC secured part-time or full-time employment. Of those women, more than 30% secured a second job or a job upgrade/raise.
- 65% of women who secured employment retained their jobs for more than 90 days.
- Participants submitted 1,941 job applications and completed 67 job interviews.

One important area of success has been the continued increase in the average income of women who secure employment through Step Up DC. It is our goal that women will ultimately earn a living wage that will allow them to live independently, understanding that the employment they secure while enrolled in our programs is often the first step in this process.

In the first year of this program, the average hourly wage for women who had secured employment was \$11 per hour, but in the most recent program year, the average hourly wage was \$13 per hour. This is increasingly close to the current living wage in Washington, DC, which is \$14.54 per hour for a single adult.

Step Up DC also continues to bring potential employers on-site for Career Fairs and informational sessions. We expanded this resource over the past year, inviting job-seeking clients from other service agencies to attend the Career Fairs. In the last year, more than 50 job seekers from other agencies attended Step Up DC Career Fairs. More than 20 employer partners participated in these Career Fairs,

including partners such as CVS Pharmacy, US Airways, Aaron's Furniture, Marriott Marquis Hotel, Walmart, Five Guys, and Hilton Worldwide.

Step Up DC participants have been placed in jobs in the following industries: retail, health care, education, entertainment, tourism, IT consulting and security.

Women participate in a group presentation, job searching session, and Job Club meeting.



Success Story

When she was young, Denise could not have imagined that she would become homeless. She describes her family as a kind of “dream family.” Both of her parents worked hard for what they had, there was always food on the table, and Denise loved to make her parents proud. But everything changed when she was assaulted at the age of seventeen.

Denise struggled to manage her traumatic experience and began self-medicating with alcohol and drugs. As an adult, she found herself in a series of unhealthy and abusive relationships with men. As a result of her struggle with addiction, Denise lost her job, became estranged from her family, and ultimately lost her apartment.

Denise says she came to Calvary Women’s Services with nothing but the clothes on her back and three bags of belongings. She admits that she was scared – scared to ask for help and afraid of the unknown. She describes her fear of “sitting down and looking at myself for who I was and what I was.”

At Calvary, Denise began to make the changes she needed to turn her life around. She began the healing process after a thirty-year struggle with addiction. With the support of Step Up DC, she secured a part-time job.

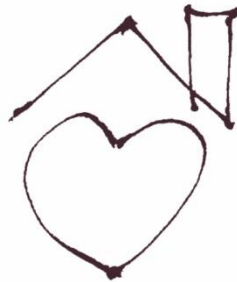
In Denise’s words, Step Up DC “woke up the skills that were dormant in me during my addiction.” She explains that the Workforce Development Specialist was right there beside her while she searched for jobs and began interviewing. “Everyone at Calvary is there to support me, and I couldn’t ask for anything more.”

After spending some time at her part-time job, with the support of Step Up DC, Denise pushed herself to find stable full-time work. She enrolled in classes in medical billing. Denise is now working full-time in her field and, with that income, she was able to move into her own apartment.

Supporters

Calvary Women's Services is grateful for the generous supporters who provide the funding that makes Step Up DC possible. The following partners supported the program this year:

- The City Fund
- Walmart Foundation
- Jovid Foundation
- Wells Fargo



Calvary Women's Services offers housing, health, employment and education programs that empower homeless women in Washington, DC to change their lives. Founded in 1983, our programs carry out our mission to offer *a safe, caring place for tonight; support, hope and change for tomorrow*. These programs include transitional and permanent housing, personalized case management, life skills and education opportunities, job placement services, health and wellness services, therapy and daily addiction recovery meetings. At Calvary, we believe that every woman has the strengths and gifts she needs to be successful. Each woman in our programs identifies and builds on her strengths, meeting her goals for safe housing, good health, and financial independence.

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