

PROMISING PRACTICES



Provider-employer partnership helps individuals restart their lives or launch a career

Developing an employment skills training program that guarantees job placement has become increasingly difficult in today's tight economy. In addition, creating a training program geared to the specific needs of an employer can be capital intensive—especially for small businesses with slim profit margins.

One successful solution is to develop a working partnership in which the involved parties have a vested interest in the outcome of the training program and share in the costs of running the operation.

Since 2006, the Kenny family—which operates a five-store chain of ShopRite supermarkets in Delaware—has partnered with [Goodwill of Delaware and Delaware County](#) and ShopRite's parent company, Wakefern Food Corporation, in a cashier training program. The program combines hands-on training with essential soft skills, such as customer service and how to be successful on the job.

In a recent [CARF](#) survey report, Goodwill of Delaware and Delaware County was cited for “demonstrating exemplary conformance to standards ... for creating a retail occupations program that leads to direct placement in the ShopRite grocery stores.”

The survey report continued, “Particularly noteworthy is the grocery store classroom, which is a miniaturized version of a large grocery store.”

For four weeks, a group of eight to twelve cashier trainees meet daily for eight-hour training sessions at Goodwill's headquarters in Wilmington. There, a realistic mini-store with cash registers, product scanners, store inventory, shelving, and cash wrap centers has been created.

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About the ECS Promising Practices newsletter series

An organization receiving exemplary recognition in its CARF survey report stands out because of its professional and strategic response to a service or business need. CARF presents these ECS Promising Practices articles to encourage dialogue among service providers and to offer examples of creative solutions for improving service quality.

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Issues are categorized by topic:
Business Practices, Community Services, and Employment Services.

The participants selected for each training class work collaboratively with an instructor on job-specific skills such as scanning, bagging, and managing cash.

The CARF survey report added, “Almost all graduates of this retail grocery program receive employment at ShopRite as checkers, stockers, and customer service, which can lead to good paying union jobs with benefits.”

Since the inception of the program, nearly 450 students have been placed, and many have advanced to management positions or specialized departments within the store, such as the bakery, deli, pharmacy, and loss prevention.

The training program includes follow-up visits with a retention specialist who helps new employees transition to their new work environment for a full year after placement.

This successful cashier training program enables the Kenny family to staff its ShopRite stores with skilled, motivated employees who have demonstrated success in meeting the employer’s requirements. The training program also enables Goodwill to serve its mission to the community by providing job training and placement opportunities for individuals with barriers to self-sufficiency. Goodwill empowers these individuals to strengthen themselves and their families and succeed in their community. For many participants, the program is an opportunity to restart their lives or launch a new career.

Below: Students in the cashier training program learn customer service and merchandising skills in a mini-store classroom at Goodwill.



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