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Creating Healthcare Jobs Through Collaboration

By Executive Research & Communications Specialist Sarah DiPasquale, GII

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), healthcare is one of the fastest growing industries in the economy. Healthcare jobs are projected to grow by 19 percent between 2014 and 2024. Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin, Inc. (Milwaukee, WI) is helping individuals get on the healthcare fast track through local partnerships.

In collaboration with Ascension healthcare organization (formerly Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare), the Milwaukee Goodwill has trained nearly 1,500 people in health care and customer service industries since July 2011. Of that 1,500, 426 people have found permanent positions at Ascension.

The program, Project Prism, starts by providing paid Ascension training to individuals through Milwaukee Goodwill's TalentBridge program. Training paths include options for medical group operations or patient access/business office to "create great patient advocates," shared to Suzanne Maldonado, managing director of professional services for TalentBridge.

Great patient advocates is especially important to Ascension these days- Prism was designed to provide better customer service for Ascension customers. Individuals in the program do not need to have an extensive work history, but soft skills and a strong sense of empathy, emotional intelligence, critical thinking and organization are preferred, if not required, Maldonado said.

"The biggest change from a hiring perspective is: In health care there was a big focus on people who worked in health care before. By shifting the narrow focus of prior experience to a larger swath of workers who have good soft skills, it has fostered a more "fluid" workforce," Maldonado said.

Ascension employees like Mirabel Berinyuy Kongnyuy found success through Prism. Mirabel is from Cameroon and struggled to find work before coming to the U.S. When she moved to Wisconsin, she was excited to start training, but was worried her Prism classmates would not accept her. To her surprise, she quickly found support from peers.

"When you can train people and make them comfortable in jobs, that's when they succeed," said Cheryl Lightholder, manager of communications for the Milwaukee Goodwill.

As a customer service representative Mirabel started at \$13-\$14 an hour allowing her to support her family in Cameroon.

If you are interested in learning more about Project Prism, you may email Manager of Public Relations and Communications [Cheryl Lightholder](#), Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin.

This article has been edited for length and content. The original article appeared on [The Journal Times](#).