

President's Message

Innovative Workforce Solutions: Collaboration for Impact

Reflecting on our 20th anniversary with the development and sustainability of Employer Resource Networks® through the 2008 crash and Covid pandemic, there has been no better time for ERNs®. The ever-changing world brings opportunities to achieve solutions we have only dreamed of in strategic employer and community partnerships driven by cutting edge technology. Funding cuts force a re-thinking of how we alleviate poverty, improve lives, grow companies, and strengthen communities.

Our focus is on leveraging resources, sharing best practices, and creating solutions on a large scale for real social impact. This year, we will grow the ERN USA Network with special attention in healthcare, hospitality, and manufacturing industries utilizing structures and customizable integration based on employer needs. Projects center around benchmarking, model integrity; cliff benefit transitions; employer recruitment; funding collaboration; and a community solutions framework incorporating data trends.

We continue to expand our use of technology around process, content, engagement, and data analysis. Integrating AI into onboarding, research, service delivery, and reporting will not replace onsite success coaching, but provide efficiencies for increased face-to-face employee time and success coach wellness. Nothing compares to the human perspective and touch in supporting employees through crisis prevention or intervention, goal setting, resource connection, training, and advancement.

With the completion of the ERN USA 2025 KPI Report, we congratulate and thank each employer member, ERN Admin Organization, and Success Coach for their remarkable dedication and success. Among 26 ERNs, employer ROI averaged 804.1% with 167 employers and a collective workforce of 56,542 employees. ERN® Success Coaches served 5,394 unique employees and their families, delivering 10,489 case need solutions with 15.3% workforce utilization. Extended aspects of return on investment include HR support and burn-out prevention, workforce advancement, and company culture improvement.

Recent studies highlight a workforce crisis across industries with turnover tied to employee struggles and support needs. “Personal and work pressures can reduce productivity, increase absenteeism, and lead to higher turnover, especially when employees feel unsupported,” said James Vander Hulst, CDO, ERN USA. “With childcare costs averaging \$10,500 annually for one child, and the broader financial strain showing up in mental health concerns – it’s no surprise one in four employees consider quitting due to these pressures. Collectively, we can change that.”

ERN USA is at the forefront of collaborative workforce investment with the development of cutting-edge technologies that connect us in our shared vision. We invite employers, organizations, and researchers with regional, state, and national partnerships to collaborate with ERNs® in wide-sweeping change for employees, companies, and communities. We look forward to creating greater impact together in the years ahead.

James Vander Hulst, Chief Disruptive Officer, ERN USA

