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National report shows supportive employment cultivates employee success and family stability through Employer Resource Networks®

Grand Rapids, Michigan – The newly released 2019 Employer Resource Network®(ERN) Annual Report shows that socially responsible member companies who provide an ERN success coach at the workplace experience an average of 510% return on investment with the goal of stabilizing households and growing businesses for vibrant communities.

“The Southwest Michigan ERN® has been instrumental in our efforts to remove every day barriers that our employees face which keep them from being productive,” said Jan Opalewski, Human Resources Manager for Fabri-Kal, an ERN® member company in Kalamazoo, Michigan. “Having a success coach onsite to address their issues has decreased turnover and improved attendance. This investment in our employees pays off every day.” Based on the success in Michigan, Fabri-Kal is expanding its ERN® involvement with their company network by championing ERN® development in the Pocono Mountains of Monroe County, Pennsylvania.

Employer Resource Networks® provide an avenue to exercise social responsibility that includes a large return on investment. “Companies are realizing more and more that a supported workforce to eliminate barriers, due to challenges at home and at work, is beneficial to the bottom line,” said James. “With the benefits for employees, along with cost savings for companies and the government, it is a win-win situation for all. It provides time savings for you and your management staff to focus on other company issues and growth. We invite new companies to join us in our efforts.”

The annual report includes program data from a sample of 20 ERNs® in Indiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Tennessee and Texas. The average workforce utilization rate was 16% and ROI calculated according to company investment and retention. The study is based on 15,573 Service Needs addressed through 10,222 Employee Requests. ERN USA comprises a total of 28 ERNs from nine states with other ERNs® in development in both new and existing states.

Drawing from over 13 years of development and practice, Employer Resource Networks® evaluate program usage including areas of need, resources utilized and success stories in a customized CMS database, “ERN® Data Solutions”. Onsite success coaches provide a direct conduit to social services

that allow fast relief for many issues that threaten attendance and job performance. The highest needs identified of program participants included those tied to basic needs including financial, housing, government agency navigation, health/insurance, utilities, and auto repair.

“Along with securing personalized resources for needs that can directly jeopardize job retention, other top ten needs that were consistent with the previous year’s data include coaching and counseling referrals,” said CDO, James Vander Hulst. “ERNs® provide a holistic retention approach combining resource connection with coaching, helping employees create and follow-up with a plan to manage those resources. Once immediate needs are addressed, we move forward with long term goals such as home buying or skill building to further stabilize the individual or family. In addition to high arching turnover savings, the end goal is a focused and skilled workforce with a transformed culture of supportive employment. With current pandemic challenges, success coaching is more important than ever and will continue into next year as we navigate recovery.”

Employer Resource Network® companies strive for continuous improvement with committed leaders who are willing to pay the up-front costs to ensure long term success. “It is a shared value system that promotes the belief that, ‘we can always do better,’” said, James. “Organizational leaders who invest in employee supportive practice succeed by building culture from the bottom up. The work of the Success Coach helps eliminate barriers and promote continuous improvement in their personal lives, as well as in the workplace.”

Additionally, the 2019 annual report shows that \$494,297 in emergency loans were distributed to ERN® employees by financial institution partners and \$257,034 in savings generated through a savings component. Employees avoid the high interest rates of predatory lending and are encouraged to put savings into an emergency fund to increase household stability.

The Employer Resource Network® model is an innovative approach to workforce development that was initiated in West Michigan in 2007. State ERNs®, such as Michigan ERN, are affiliates of USA ERN. The ERN USA trademark is a “good housekeeping seal” assuring that members have all completed the five phase “Collaborative Development Process,” follow an employer-led model, share an onsite success coach, utilize ERN® Data Solutions, and participate in ERN USA Peer Learning events.

Member employers, success coaches and administrators participate in peer learning activities such as annual conferences and quarterly calls where they share lessons learned, resources utilized, and new ideas. A customized monthly employee newsletter highlights success stories to inspire member employees and provides an additional platform for best practice sharing amongst success coaches.

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