

## Baltimore Resident Services

# Baltimore Job Readiness Program Builds Financial Stability

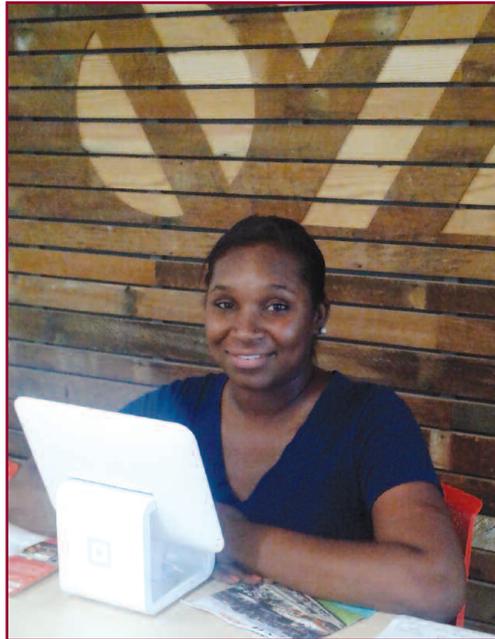
**T**hree years ago, AHC Greater Baltimore initiated a Job Readiness initiative as part of an overall Assets Building Program designed to help residents build long-term stability and financial independence.

The challenges facing our Baltimore residents – more than half are unemployed – are steep. In response, AHC-GB's program takes a holistic approach to providing residents with the assets they need – financial education, benefits screening, access to credit building/repair opportunities, high school graduation (GED), and job readiness – to change their lives.

The Job Readiness component is a comprehensive effort to help residents overcome the barriers they face when finding employment. More than just needing resume and interview skills, residents often face daunting obstacles, including transportation, proper identification, and legal challenges. Thanks to the hiring of a part-time job coach, growing partnerships with local job training programs, and ongoing support, the strategy is working. So far, nearly 40 people have begun steady jobs.

### Overcoming obstacles

When he started AHC-GB's job-readiness program, Darnell (not real name) had lost his warehouse job and had been applying for jobs on his own unsuccessfully. AHC-GB's Job Readiness Coach, Kisha Webster, referred him to Maryland New Directions, which included a training program for the Port of Baltimore.



*After working with AHC-GB's Job Readiness Coach, Jeanelle Miller won a position as a Member Associate at Open Works, where she inputs data, assists with tours, and assists visitors. A single mother of five, Ms. Miller is also attending Coppin State University and majoring in Business Management.*

Darnell was one of only eight individuals selected for the training.

Unfortunately, he soon faced another setback – he was ineligible for employment at the port due to a prior criminal conviction. AHC-GB helped with legal services to successfully appeal on his behalf. During this process, Darnell secured temporary work at the Port for \$10 an hour. Because he could not afford transportation to the jobsite, AHC-GB provided him with a bus pass until he received his first pay check.

After six months, Darnell was offered a full-time position at the Port of Baltimore with a starting

salary of \$14 an hour with an increase after a probationary period. He is now gainfully – and happily – employed. Thanks to the AHC-GB program, Darnell had the tools and the ongoing support to successfully access a job-training program, work out legal issues, afford to get to work and, finally, earn a full-time job with opportunities for advancement.

## AHC Greater Baltimore Residents

**98%**

report very or extremely low income

**50%**

are unemployed

**85%**

are single-female headed households

**50%**

rely on benefits as a sole source of income

**40%**

are un- or under-banked and lack adequate credit history

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