



# Focused In Stability

## SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PILOT PROGRAM

People facing homelessness deal with a wide range of challenges. Many are grappling with mental illness or substance addiction. Others are more like Robert.\* When he aged out of the foster care system, Robert was abruptly expected to become independent. That can be a rough transition for a young adult who has none of the support or guidance many of us take for granted. Robert proceeded to make a life choice that resulted in his incarceration. Once he was released from prison, Robert knew he'd need help to build a stable life.

In June 2018, Robert connected with Tarla from ICAN Housing. She helped him create a resume and find a job. In September, he started an industrial job. By October, Tarla had already helped him land a less repetitive, higher paying position in manufacturing. While employers are often reluctant to hire those with criminal records, they can be more receptive to supported employment arrangements. Tarla checks in with Robert regularly and helps him stay reliable, while also serving as a liaison between him and the employer. The employer also receives incentives to hire and retain clients like Robert.

Over the course of a year, Tarla will serve 40 clients of ICAN and the YWCA through the Supported Employment pilot program funded by the Foundation. Once clients are housed, she will help them access training and job search services, find and keep jobs, and become financially stable. She will also compile information from local employment and training programs into an information bank to help both clients and service providers understand what assistance is available to which clients. Tarla's work will complement and build upon existing programs, including Goodwill's Foundation-funded *Dream to Achieve* program. Tarla will continue supporting Robert through April 2019. She fully expects him to have the skill set he'll need to maintain his job and his housing long after.

Her help can make the difference between stability and chaos, which benefits the entire community. As ICAN Executive Director Julie Sparks says, "It's in all of our best interests to make the small investment in Robert, and to give him the foundation that will help him take the ball and run with it."

\*The name has been changed to protect the client's anonymity.