

Recovery Works

Improving Employment Opportunities for Adult Mental Health Consumers

Sponsored by the Maine Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health

Second Chance

David was connected with the Employment Specialist (ES) by his Case Manager after experiencing a setback in his employment journey. He had recently been terminated from his previous job following a background check that revealed a theft charge. David shared openly that he has a history of substance use and mental health challenges, both of which had significantly impacted his life. He also disclosed that he has a felony on his record.

Despite these barriers, David expressed a strong desire to get back to work, stating that he was “willing to do just about anything as long as it was hands-on.” His motivation to re-enter the workforce was evident from the beginning of his involvement with the ES. He was living in a local sober house, actively engaged in mental health and recovery services, and committed to rebuilding his life.

One of David’s primary concerns was transportation. Having lost his driver’s license due to past legal issues, he was reliant on public transit, which limited his options. Nevertheless, he remained focused and enthusiastic about securing meaningful employment. ES and David immediately began working on rapid job placement. Together, they created a résumé, practiced interview skills, and explored job opportunities that were accessible by bus and aligned with David’s interests.

During the completion of his Career Profile, David shared that he had a passion for building and carpentry. He enjoyed working with his hands, taking pride in long hours of physical labor, and felt most fulfilled when he could see a project through to completion. He described the satisfaction of stepping

back and seeing the results of his hard work, saying he thrived in environments where he could “see the finished project.”

While the ES reached out to several employers in the construction and carpentry fields, David’s lack of a driver’s license remained a significant barrier. Many roles required travel to multiple job sites. David explained that he planned to begin the process of reinstating his license in April, but he didn’t want to wait to begin working, he was eager to move forward now.

Recognizing the importance of being upfront while also highlighting growth, ES worked with David on how to speak with potential employers about his background. Together, they crafted ways to frame his story positively, focusing on the changes he had made, the services he was engaged in, and the motivation driving him forward.

David was proactive throughout the job search process. He attended multiple interviews and stayed engaged every step of the way. While waiting to hear from two construction employers, he received a job offer from a third company, contingent on passing a physical exam and awaiting the return of the construction supervisor from vacation. David successfully met the requirements and began working within a few weeks. Although he has only been on the job a short time, he reports working long hours and loving it!