

Partner Overview

In 2021, the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund (McGowan Fund), a long-time New Moms' funder, invited Bright Path, New Moms' human services consulting team, to provide training and consulting for a new workforce development initiative in Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA). The nine-month, cohort-based pilot program, Readiness in Skilled Employment (RISE), engaged United Neighborhood Centers of NEPA (UNC) and Johnson College in partnership to reduce employment barriers for parents while addressing local workforce skills gaps in healthcare, welding, and plumbing. UNC offered career-readiness services and wraparound supports such as English classes, childcare, and transportation, while Johnson provided technical skills training. Bright Path continued supporting UNC and RISE in 2022 and 2023 as the program expanded to Luzerne County Community College and the region's Head Start provider.



Partnership Objectives and Deliverables

The McGowan Fund engaged Bright Path to train the comprehensive RISE team on the brain and behavioral science of Coaching, primarily supporting UNC's shift from traditional case management to a strengths-based Coaching model that helps participants identify and leverage their Executive Skills to achieve their education and employment goals. Alongside training for UNC leadership, workforce team, and college partners, McGowan Fund requested ongoing implementation support and coaching for the UNC Program Director and Manager, modeling an effective Executive Skills-informed coaching partnership and embedding new coaching practices into the team's operations and program infrastructure, as they navigated challenges including staff turnover, higher ed bureaucracy, and mid-pandemic uncertainty.

Bright Path Services

In 2021, Bright Path partnered with UNC to deliver initial training for senior leadership and nine months of intensive coaching training and implementation support for the workforce development team. The training equipped staff to adopt a strengths-based, participant-centered coaching model and included modules on Coaching fundamentals, Trauma-Informed Care, Harm Reduction, Motivational Interviewing, Executive Skills, and Goal Achievement. Bright Path also consulted with UNC leadership on program design, eligibility, and policies to align with and reinforce the Coaching approach.



Bright Path continued engaging with UNC and the RISE program with coaching training and implementation support over the subsequent two years. In 2022, Bright Path partnered with UNC to review the pilot and further adapt their Coaching practice and train new RISE staff. By 2023, RISE expanded to a second local college and partnered with a regional Head Start provider. Bright Path co-facilitated a two-day training for the expanded RISE team and was later hired by Head Start to deliver a virtual professional development session on Executive Skills in early childhood settings. Staff appreciation for Bright Path training was consistently strong, with positive testimonials in post-training feedback surveys such as, "This is life changing for our staff."

Partner Outcomes

Now in its fifth cohort, RISE is a successful regional workforce program graduating skilled workers in high-demand fields who have partnered with UNC coaches to mitigate barriers to employment retention and economic mobility. The UNC Workforce Development team uses Executive Skills, targeted goal setting, and consistent Coaching behaviors to support participants. They have also embedded Executive Skills and Coaching into their staff onboarding, allowing them to sustain and tailor their coaching model without relying on Bright Path for new staff training.