



The Doe Fund



# Work Works America: A Comprehensive Model

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The Doe Fund

# Introductions

## Isabel McDevitt

Executive Vice President, The Doe Fund and  
Work Works America  
Founder, Ready to Work



## Anthony Isaacs

*Ready, Willing & Able* Director, Peter Jay Sharp  
Center for Opportunity



## Bobby King

*Ready, Willing & Able* Trainee



## The Doe Fund

For over 30 years, The Doe Fund has provided paid work opportunities, career training, housing, and supportive services to over 28,000 homeless and formerly incarcerated individuals in New York City.

Our *Ready, Willing & Able* program is proven to reduce recidivism by 62%, improve public safety and quality of life in city neighborhoods, and foster permanent economic independence for people caught in cycles of homelessness, poverty, addiction, and incarceration.

The Doe Fund owns and operates over 800 units of supportive and low income housing, with over 240 more in development.



**Work is the best way. I work as hard as I can, whenever I can, while I can. It's how I am staying afloat.**

—Anthony K.,  
2020 Graduate



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“After the birth of my kids, I can honestly say The Doe Fund is the greatest thing that has happened to me...

I am so grateful that  
**The Doe Fund**  
helped me find the  
real Jesse again.

—Jesse N.,  
2020 Graduate



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# The Work Works Model: A Holistic Solution

- Work Works invests in human capital. The model provides:
  - **Paid work** in social enterprise such as street cleaning, pest control, and culinary arts
  - **Transitional housing**
  - **Supportive services** such as case management, career training, addiction recovery, and adult education



A HOLISTIC MODEL

# Steps of the Work Works Model



## Commit to Change *(Month 1)*

Work Works participants receive paid work (\$15/hr) in the program. Trainees receive 1-on-1 support from case managers to establish long-term education and occupational goals.



## Reenter the Community *(Months 2-4)*

Trainees join the Community Improvement Project, performing paid cleaning services (in *Ready, Willing & Able*, across 115 miles of NYC streets daily). At night, they receive computer and education training to prepare for the modern workplace.



## Build a Career *(Months 5-8)*

Trainees transition out of street cleaning to focus on full-time, paid occupational training. Workforce Development courses offer multiple career tracks, each with their own certifications and professional licenses.



## Secure Independence *(Months 9-12)*

Trainees work with housing placement specialists and career coaches, who assist with creating resumes, searching for jobs, and preparing for interviews. **Each trainee secures full-time employment and permanent housing before graduation.**

# Work Works America: Scaling the Solution

- Founded by The Doe Fund, Work Works has inspired communities to seek work as a solution to address homelessness and recidivism
- Bridge House, Ready to Work and Georgia Works are examples of how the model can be adapted and thrive
- Launched in 2021, Work Works America is umbrella organization for advocacy, policy and outreach strategically scale the model
  - Create and manage **Affiliate Network**
  - Pursue **Replication** in key Cities
  - Develop a **Training Institute**
  - Provide **Custom Technical Assistance** for local stakeholders
- Work Works America can reach 100 more communities by 2026

**READY TO WORK** 

  
**GEORGIA WORKS!**  
*Where Work Works*

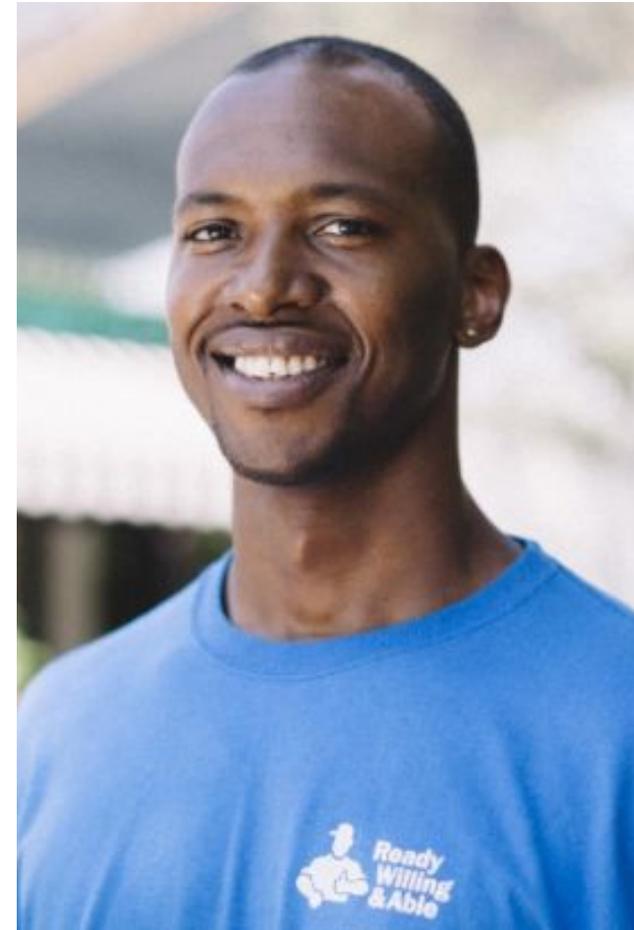
# The Problem

- **Homelessness is at an all-time high:** Over 560,000 Americans experience homelessness on any given night.
- **Lack of housing opportunity:** 75% of people experiencing homelessness are **ineligible** for supportive housing vouchers.
- **Racial injustice:** Black Americans make up 40% of the homeless population and nearly 40% of the prison population.
- **Drug epidemic:** Drug overdose deaths increased by 30% to 93,000 in 2020
- **Economic exclusion:** Lack of opportunity after prison leads to a loss of 1.7-1.9 million workers and \$78-\$87 billion in GDP yearly.



# The Opportunity

- America is recovering and rebuilding post-pandemic.
- Congress is considering major **investments in infrastructure and job creation. We must also invest in human capital.**
- Cities and states are **investing in creative housing solutions.**
- Our country is seeking inclusive solutions to tackle **addiction and inequality**
- **Holistic solutions** are available for multi-faceted challenges



# A Comprehensive Community Solution

- Community stakeholders include:
  - People experiencing homelessness and/or reentering after incarceration
  - City managers, mayors and other elected officials
  - Local employers and business associations
  - Permanent and transitional housing providers
  - Public and private funders



# A Bridge to Careers and Independent

## Work Works Pathway to Employment



### Before Work Works

- Homelessness
- Incarceration
- Unemployment

### One Year of Work Works

- Paid Work in Social Enterprise
- Occupational Training
- Adult Education
- Computer Literacy Classes
- Transitional Housing
- Supportive Services

### After Work Works

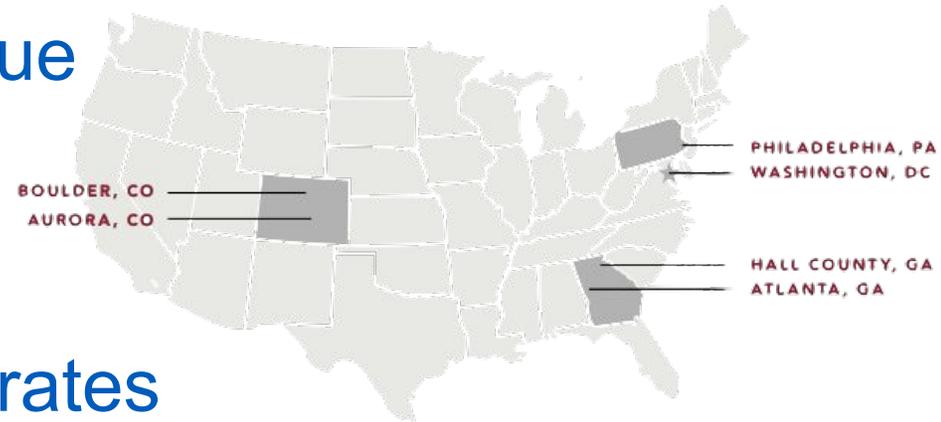
- Entry Level Mainstream Work
- or
- Skilled Trade Apprenticeships

### Beyond

- Career Employment

# Work Works: Outcomes

- Model programs in seven unique communities
- Over 28,000 served in NYC
- In NYC, graduates' recidivism rates are reduced by 62%
- In Colorado, 72% of trainees graduate to mainstream employment and housing
- In Georgia, 70% of trainees graduate; 80% of graduates retain their original jobs and housing



**\$3.60**

**SAVED BY THE  
NYC TAXPAYER**

for every \$1 spent  
on the program



Ready  
Willing  
& Able

The Doe Fund



“ I recently buried my mother and before she died, **I was able to show her that I changed my life.** That's my biggest reason to thank The Doe Fund... I got my life straight and because of that, I could there with her when it counted.

—Marquis F., 2020 Graduate



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# Questions & Next Steps

Isabel McDevitt  
Executive Vice President  
[isabel@doe.org](mailto:isabel@doe.org)  
917 709 9478

