

Values-Based Employment

Program Model

UnitingCare Australia has been working in partnership with the Australian Government and UnitingCare service providers across Australia to implement a national values-based employment model since 2015.

The model aims to select, train, mentor and support people into employment in community service roles with UnitingCare organisations. The program is specifically targeted at people who have been long-term unemployed, and seeks to provide them with an employment pathway in the growing community services sector

The model is implemented with an emphasis on attracting job seekers with personal values and attributes that align with UnitingCare organisations to enable delivery of quality services. Jobseekers accepted into tranches of the program are equipped with the requisite training and skilling, through on-the-job and formal training (toward completion of full qualifications) to undertake employment in a community services environment.

Core Objectives

The UnitingCare model aims to achieve the following **core objectives**:

- Deliver real employment outcomes for individuals who are unemployed, and particularly for people who face significant challenges in attaining and retaining employment.
- Address social policy challenges and structural employment barriers through implementation of a partnership model involving government, employers, training organisations and the not-for-profit sector.
- Support community service organisations in responding to increasing workforce demands through recruitment of committed, trained and supported employees.

Target Groups

The UnitingCare model targets individuals seeking to return to the workforce after long-term unemployment. It has capacity to develop employment opportunities and pathways for **jobseekers who are**:

- Facing employment barriers and classified under 'Stream C' (long-term unemployed) of the Jobactive jobseeker classification system
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Culturally and linguistically diverse
- Living with a disability
- Living in rural and regional areas.

The model is tailored to delivery in local communities based on the needs of the jobseeker cohort. Design of the model is flexible to ensure fulfillment of the training, support, mentoring and other requirements of participants.

The Program Model

The following model is used to design and implement tranches of the program, using the values-based recruitment approach:



1 Development of an evaluation framework to articulate the objectives of the program and measurement of outcomes, and guide the development of the resources required for its implementation, including screening and selection tools.



2 Development of screening and selection tools, through collaboration between partner organisations to assist both jobactive providers and jobseekers to learn about the community services sector and the scope of career opportunities available, as well as requirements for undertaking employment in the sector with UnitingCare organisations.



3 Information sessions, hosted by UnitingCare organisations and attended by jobseekers referred by jobactive providers or other channels. The sessions should facilitate a deeper understanding of the work of the employer, training and participation requirements and expectations for taking part in the program, and career pathways available to jobseekers.



4 Screening and selection activities, undertaken following the information session. Jobseekers are invited to participate in a range of activities to confirm their suitability for work in the community services sector, based on the personal attributes and values they exhibit. Screening and selection should also enable identification of any additional pre-employment needs of participants, for example, language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) support.



5 A pre-employment program delivered to participants, incorporating a combination of mentor-supported on-the-job training and work experience, as well as accredited training towards the completion of a Certificate III or IV qualification (depending on role requirements). The training program, designed collaboratively by the UnitingCare organisation (employer) and an approved Registered Training Organisation, should ensure that participants receive basic formal training, enabling them to commence employment and count towards vocational certification in the future.



6 Employment opportunities in the UnitingCare organisation are offered to participants who successfully complete the pre-employment program. Following their formal employment, participants continue to receive supervision, support, and, where possible, flexible employment arrangements to accommodate their needs. Each role is funded through existing mechanisms and constitutes a genuine vacancy at the employer organisation.



7 Post-placement support for up to 12 months is provided to participants by their jobactive provider and the employer to ensure a smooth transition into the workforce. This includes ongoing peer support between the participants, individual support provided by the UnitingCare organisation (employer), and ongoing measurement of outcomes, to ensure that support needs are met.



8 Ongoing mentoring, skilling and further training in the workplace is managed by the employer. This includes training of current employees as mentors who were matched with the program participants from the beginning of the program to provide support and guidance, as appropriate and necessary, to the participants as they progress.



9 Evaluation, adaptation and learning occurs throughout implementation of program to support the development and continuous improvement of a model. Evaluation is both formative, informing the design of the model as it rolls-out, and summative, reflecting on the experiences of participants, strengths and areas for improvement in the model design and implementation upon conclusion of the program.

Measurement of Outcomes

Evaluation and outcomes measurement is embedded into the UnitingCare model to ensure effectiveness in its delivery and provide an evidence base to support replication of the model.

The pilot programs undertaken to develop and test the UnitingCare model resulted in the following outcomes:

85%

An overall retention rate of 85% from the point of recruitment to employment after six months.

39

In its three pilots, thirty-nine people completed training and supported workplace experience.

36

Thirty-six people signed contracts with employers as disability support workers, home care workers or aged care personal carers at the completion of training.

12

Twelve additional candidates were offered access to alternative training/work experience programs as pathways to work in the community services sector (the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program and the National Work Experience Program), and an additional four were invited to participate in a direct employment process with UnitingCare organisations (via interview).

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Participants identified numerous other significant benefits from participating in the program, including feeling more capable, having an increased sense of pride in themselves, increased social connection, increased self-worth and confidence, improvements in their overall mental health and happiness.



As employers, UnitingCare organisations have consistently reported high levels of satisfaction with employees engaged via the model, highlighting the quality of their training and their commitment to their roles based on alignment with personal attributes, skills and values.