

Sheller Family Foundation

Color Me Back: Same Day Work and Pay Program

Philadelphia, PA

Challenge

To address increased homelessness, panhandling, and economic insecurity in Philadelphia.

Innovation

Considering the trauma behavioral-health challenges for this population, Color Me Back, a same-day work and pay program using public art-making, was uniquely developed to include (1) peer outreach staff working alongside program participants to provide support, connections to services and help with reducing barriers to more permanent employment; and (2) meaningful work opportunities in which people contribute effectively and noticeably to their community, decreasing negative public stigma.

Overview

The Sheller Family Foundation and the Scattergood Foundation worked with Mural Arts Philadelphia to design, implement, and fund, along with the Barra Foundation, a trauma-informed same-day work and pay program to address homelessness and panhandling. Within a month of inception, as many as 100 people were showing up daily for the chance to work. This spurred the City of Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services and the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services to join the partnership with plans to scale to 100 daily work opportunities in multiple sites. The Community Life Improvement Program, a city entity that improves neighborhood quality of life through cleanups, was brought on as a second work opportunity. First Step Staffing, a low-barrier temporary staffing agency, became the pipeline to more sustainable work opportunities.

PARTNERS

Thomas Scattergood Behavioral Health Foundation, Mural Arts Philadelphia, Barra Foundation, City of Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services, Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services, Community Life Improvement Program, and First Step Staffing.

