PRC is so proud to be part of the advancement in HIV health outcomes, yet there is so much more work to do!

PRC’s Employment Services GTZ Program was inspired by our community collaborations with San Francisco’s “Getting to Zero” Retention and Re-engagement Committee. San Francisco’s Getting to Zero initiative is a multi-sector, independent consortium operating under the principles of “collective impact”. Modeled after the UNAIDS goals, the vision is to reduce HIV transmission and HIV-related deaths in San Francisco by 90% before 2020.

PRC supports the “collective impact” model. This model fosters large-scale social change through cross-sector coordination, wherein organizations act in concert to a shared goal. By adopting this model through our collaborative efforts, we are able to enhance the spectrum of care for the people we serve, resulting in socioeconomic improvements. Having an HIV diagnosis is no longer a death sentence nor does it have to mean a lifetime of poverty.

PRC’s Employment Services Program Getting to Zero is designed as a service on demand model, to quickly address health, income and housing emergencies. Through our rapid response protocol, we are able to swiftly identify and assess individual service needs. These needs are particularly acute for HIV positive individuals with concurrent conditions such as mental health, substance use, high viral load, homelessness, and Transgender specific barriers. Additionally, many of our GTZ clients face employment discrimination, frequent joblessness, disabilities including the deaf and hard of hearing, sexual orientation and gender identity, people with limited English proficiency, veteran status, and people with dependents, people of color, people with mental or physical disabilities including the deaf and hand of hearing, women, youth, seniors, sex workers, active drug users, and people in recovery.

Individuals served under PRC’s GTZ Rapid Response service protocol receive intensive, high impact services with referrals to medical care, income and housing supports. Individuals are assigned to a GTZ Employment Specialist to determine their specific goals. They are then provided appropriate services such as resume and cover letter development, job search strategy and intensive interview preparation in two weeks or less. Clients who are not ready to enter employment are able to access pre-vocational planning to meet their individualized vocational needs. They can assess clients for their vocational needs, create a plan, set job goal strategies, and practice interview preparation in two weeks or less. Clients who are not ready to access employment will meet with a GTZ Employment Specialist for barrier removal and linkage to care, vocational/career planning. On the Job Training (OJT), volunteering or internship opportunities as appropriate.

PRC’s Employment Services is excited to share with you the accomplishments and opportunities as appropriate.

Managing Director, Employment Services       Supervising Employment Specialist
Joe Ramirez-Forcier                                            Dennis Reilly

PRC Employment Services is excited to share with you the accomplishments and outcomes of our initial “Getting to Zero” efforts.

Joe Ramirez-Forcier
Managing Director, Employment Services

Dennis Reilly
Supervising Employment Specialist

What is PRC’s Employment Services “Getting to Zero” program?

PRC’s GTZ Employment Services Program serves people living with HIV/AIDS who require intensive, culturally appropriate vocational rehabilitation services to ensure that their food, housing and income needs are met while on a vocational pathway.

PRC’s GTZ Employment Services

Rapid Response Protocol:
- Services On Demand: DROP-IN!
- Assessment of acuity and need in the areas of Housing, HIV and Mental Health Stigma, Income Security, and Food Security.
- Every day is a good day to begin services for PRC Employment Services.
- Wait time of LESS THAN 2 WEEKS for intensive non-medical case management services.
- Intensive Employment preparation completed in LESS THAN 2 WEEKS when needed.

PRC’s GTZ Employment Services consist of Client Intake, Assessment and Vocational Counseling, Internship and on the Job Training, Volunteering, Computer and Administrative Skills Training Program, Job Search Assistance.
The HIV Continuum of Care incorporates a framework called the “Cascade of Care”. This measures the five stages of treatment from initial HIV testing to the ultimate goal of viral load suppression.

The 5 stages are:

1) diagnosis
2) referral to care
3) retention in care
4) beginning anti-retroviral treatment
5) viral load suppression

By closely examining the proportion of people living with HIV engaged in each stage of the HIV care continuum, policymakers and service providers are able to pinpoint where gaps may exist in connecting people living with HIV to sustained quality care. They can use this information to implement system improvements and service enhancements that better support individuals as they move from one stage in the continuum to the next.

PRC’s Employment Services Case Management model is a unique approach to address the co-occurring medical and social barriers preventing clients from achieving vocational goals. PRC’s GTZ program employs a rapid response to assess and address client needs including linkage to healthcare, psychosocial support, training, education and employment.

By identifying gaps and implementing improvements, we can increase the proportion of people living with HIV who are prescribed ART, are able to stay engaged in HIV medical care and adhere to their treatment, and ultimately achieve viral load suppression. This will allow them to live healthier, longer lives and reduce the chances that they will transmit HIV to others.

How stigma affects people living with HIV

Stigma and Sickness

“Whenever AIDS has won, stigma, shame, distrust, discrimination and apathy was on its side. Every time AIDS has been defeated, it has been because of truth, openness, dialogue between individuals and communities, family support, human solidarity, and the human perseverance to find new paths and solutions.”

- Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS

Self-stigma / Internalized Stigma

Self-stigma, or internalized stigma, has an equally damaging effect on the mental well-being of people living with HIV or from key affected populations. This fear of discrimination breaks down confidence to seek help and medical care.

Our Client Stories

Adam, 43, Caucasian Male

“PRC HELPED ME GET THE MEDICAL CARE I NEEDED; I WAS SICK AND I DIDN’T HAVE INSURANCE. NOW MY T-CELLS ARE UP AND I’M HOUSED.”

BARRIER: URGENT CARE/INCOME

Adam reported no income or health insurance and was unable to get his HIV medications due to an insurance lapse. He was experiencing extreme fatigue and severe weight loss and needed immediate medical attention.

BARRIER REMOVED:
- PRC’s GTZ Employment Specialists accompanied client to emergency care at San Francisco General Hospital (ZSFGH).
- PRC’s in-house Equal Access to Healthcare (EAHP) Attorney was successful in securing Adam’s SSI benefits, providing a stable income source as well as food security.

Janelle, 29, Latina Trans Female

“EVERYONE AT PRC TREATED ME LIKE A PERSON, AND HAD MY BACK. THEY WENT WITH ME TO MY APPOINTMENTS, CALLED ME TO MAKE SURE THAT I WAS OK. I REALLY NEEDED THAT.”

BARRIER: PRIMARY CARE/COUNSELING/HOUSING

Janelle, a trans-identified female sex worker needed a referral to HIV care and expressed a desire to find stable employment and income. Additionally, she reported domestic violence and needed to secure new housing.

BARRIER REMOVED:
- Working with her PRC GTZ Employment Specialist, Janelle was linked to primary care and case management services at ZSFGH.
- Her PRC GTZ Employment Specialist assisted Janelle with securing permanent housing and part time work as a customer service representative.

Antoine, 51, African American Male

“I THOUGHT I WOULD BE ON THE STREET FOREVER, WITH NO WAY OUT. PRC LINKED ME TO HOUSING AND HEALTHCARE AND I’M GETTING MY LIFE BACK.”

BARRIER: HOUSING AND HEALTHCARE

Newly diagnosed, Antoine was not in HIV care. He was unhoused, sleeping in parks, abandoned buildings, and shelters.

BARRIER REMOVED:
- PRC’s GTZ Employment Specialist assisted Antoine with securing an emergency housing voucher and a long-term housing subsidy through Catholic Charities.
- PRC’s GTZ Employment Specialist accompanied Antoine to care with ZSFGH, where he began antiretroviral therapy and medical care.
- Working with his PRC GTZ Employment Specialist, he is now enrolled in a vocational training program to secure his commercial driving license.

Samuel, 35, African American Male

“MY PRC EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST BELIEVED IN ME. I’M IN SCHOOL NOW, AND I’M DOING THINGS FOR MYSELF THAT I KNOW I WOULDN’T HAVE DONE IF IT HADN’T BEEN FOR PRC.”

BARRIER: ACCESS TO CARE AND SKILL BUILDING

Samuel had both an HIV and PTSD diagnosis. His mental health condition impacted his adherence to HIV medication. His PTSD symptoms made working difficult; having no income, he often missed meals.

BARRIER REMOVED:
- Samuel was referred to a PRC Benefits Attorney who assisted him with his SSI appeal.
- His PRC GTZ Employment Specialist connected him to both HIV and mental health care through SF Community Health Clinics.
- Addressing his social isolation, PRC’s GTZ Employment Specialist assisted him with enrollment in both a barista training program as well as City College where he is completing his Associates Degree.
STAFF:

Joe Ramirez-Forcier | Managing Director of Employment Services
Joe is the Managing Director of Employment Services at the Positive Resource Center which provides HIV+ adults vocational counseling, training and job search assistance. Joe Ramirez-Forcier has been on the part of the SF Getting Zero’s work group for Retention and Reengagement since the beginning and designed PRC’s one of a kind approach in PRC Employment Services for assessing stigma, access to health care and income supports in a “rapid response” protocol. Joe states “I love being taking part in something that has a positive impact in people’s lives.”

Montrell Dorsey | Employment Specialist
Montrell works with the GTZ team as an Employment Specialist. Montrell has a strong background in interpersonal and group counseling, from his many years of experience working in the field of behavior and substance abuse counseling. He supported and empowered clients by providing education and awareness in HIV and STI. Montrell writes, “PRC provides the platform that allows me to be the voice of change, for those who do not have a voice.”

Jose Jauregui | Employment Specialist
Jose brings over 8 years’ experience in Social Services, working with individuals with HIV, substance use disorders and mental health, as well as veterans and monolingual Spanish speakers. Jose reports, “my passion for this work is to assist those in need at all life stages and to advocate for them in reaching their vocational goals.”

Billy Allen | Employment Specialist
Billy Allen has work experience in both for-profit and non-profit organizations. He has worked in HIV prevention, facilitating education programs for youth. Previous to his role with PRC, Billy was an Event Coordinator for Equality California and Under One Roof. Most recently, Billy has been completing coursework towards his BA degree. In Billy’s own words, “I find a lot of joy and fulfillment in seeing clients self-actualize. It is very inspirational. The aspect of working peer to peer, helping clients navigate beyond-transcending their disability is extremely rewarding.”

Hollis Fleischer | Vocational Counselor
Hollis Fleischer is the Vocational Counselor for Employment Services. Hollis holds a Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling from San Francisco State University. As a Vocational Counselor at PRC, she is excited to assist clients in vocational assessments, career counseling and career decision making.

Dennis Reilly | Supervising Employment Specialist
Dennis is the Supervising Employment Specialist with PRC’s GTZ Employment Program and supervises the GTZ team of Employment Specialist and PRC’s Vocational Counselor. Dennis has worked with clients with disabilities across a broad range including HIV, mental health, hearing, vision, cognitive and mobility conditions. Dennis states “I am grateful for all the things clients have taught me, including their resilience and perseverance in overcoming life and vocational obstacles.”

OUR PARTNERS:
Getting to Zero Initiative
SFDPH Clinics with HIV Primary Care
Castro Mission Health Center
Larkin Street Youth Clinic
Maxine Hall Health Center
Tom Waddell Health Center
Southeast Health Center
Silver Avenue Family Health Center
Zuckerberg SF General/Golden Compass/WARD 86
Asian and Pacific Islander Wellness Center
San Francisco AIDS Foundation/Elizabeth Taylor 50+ Network
Shanti Project
AIDS Emergency Fund
PRC Baker Places
The California Department of Vocational Rehabilitation