

‘PowerUp Workforce’ could improve hiring pool

By Carolyn Harmon charmon@dailyadvocate.com

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Tri-County Board of Recovery and Mental Health Services Executive Director Mark McDaniel talks to guests about the “Power Up Workforce Darke County” Pilot Program, at the Darke County Safety Council Steering Committee Meeting September 28, in Greenville.

Carolyn Harmon | The Daily Advocate

GREENVILLE – In response to county businesses having difficulty finding drug-free workers, the [Tri-County Board of Recovery and Mental Health Services](#) (TCBMDS), the Darke County Chamber of Commerce and the [Coalition for a Healthy Darke County](#) are collaborating with [“Working Partners”](#) to address the issue.

“Working Partners” works with businesses of all types, with an emphasis on industries where the substance abuse challenges are the greatest. According to Darke County Chamber of Commerce, Coalition for a Healthy Darke County President Sharon Deschambeau, the Chamber, the Coalition and TCBMDS met with their human resources council about doing a pilot program “PowerUp Workforce Darke County”.

“In order to get to the pilot program we have to complete a survey,” Deschambeau said during the Darke County Safety Council luncheon, in Greenville Thursday, September 28.

A survey was distributed during the luncheon, and can also be completed online (see link below). The data will be used by the TCBMDS, the Chamber and the Coalition, to: direct strategies to support the business community, identify service gaps, strengthen the workforce, reduce employee costs related to substance abuse, and empower employment through prevention and recovery, said TCBMDS Executive Director Mark McDaniel.

“If you are having a hard time finding employment because of failed drug screens, and/or are having issues potentially in your workplace with drugs, there are ways of addressing those things,” McDaniel said. “We want to address hiring practices, by potentially doing something around interceding with individuals you otherwise would have hired, except for that failed drug screen. Maybe we can do things to help them pass the drug screens, get them into treatment and those sorts of things. This is an intervention process. The pilot is also going to bring treatment services with a private employee/employer situation.”

McDaniel said any pilot has to be measured, and the survey process is to establish that measuring stick to decide the need and to put strategies in place. Some important points about the survey are as follows: the survey is anonymous, personal questions are not asked, no attempts are made to collect or connect responses to individual organizations, names of those surveyed will not be shared or collected and at no time will anyone try to sell anything to those participating in the survey, he said.

“We are interested in general information about what is going on in the county, to strategically plan for the next steps,” McDaniel said. “Our hope is to link treatment services, work with the employer/employee process and do whatever we can to support you.”

“By putting processes in place, our hope is to build a pool of workers,” Deschambeau said. “Right now we do not have that in our county. Everybody’s survey counts and we would really like to have a tremendous response from the county. It only takes a few minutes.”

[Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation](#) (BWC) Division of Safety and Hygiene, Safety Council Program Manager Michelle Francisco also addressed the guests. She said in her 20-plus years at the BWC, she has learned the network in Ohio is very unique.

“It is because of the common goal of high quality of life, avoidance of accidents and economic success of employers doing business in Ohio, that brings all of this together,” Francisco said. “Because the drug circumstance has gone beyond the criminal and are impacting our workplaces, it is important for BWC to be involved in a number of different ways, including: connecting partners, resources and people with the drug free initiative in Ohio. Because for many years we have had a very basic component of what we feel is important to a safe workplace is a drug free workplace, we have a drug free work place safety grant.”

According to the BWC’s 2016 Annual Report, it awarded 725 grants totaling, nearly \$15 million, to 689 employers through its Safety Intervention Grant Program, Drug-Free Safety Program and Workplace Wellness Grant Program, to help reduce workplace accidents and injuries. The grant application is available at <https://www.bwc.ohio.gov>

To take the “PowerUp Workforce Darke County” pilot survey, visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DarkeCo>

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