

COVID-19 has caused many retail/food/hotel closures, with some not reopening and people laid-off. Some service jobs are available; however, some are reluctant to take those jobs due to the possible infection. Many of the people we work with lack skill and training, so these are the types of jobs they can get.

This community is resilient and finds creative solutions. Our staff found new ways to connect with our case management families. We continued our WIB partnership that connects people virtually to WIB programs through the MO Career Center. The Federal Government assisted with FMLA / SL time for those quarantining. This has helped many low-income employees here and elsewhere continue to be paid. Flexible work schedules and working from home are available for some positions. Creation of a new partnership with Higher Power Garage has helped get some of our case management families' cars repaired, helping them stay employed.

We Believe!

Not long after the 2011 Joplin tornado, Tina found herself homeless, struggling and had lost custody of her son. Eight years later, Tina came to ESC and found ESC's CHANCE Homeless Employment Opportunities in August 2019. She had been staying at a local homeless shelter and completed the CHANCE 80-hour life skills workshop that month. The class helped her with soft skills for finding employment, and with the help of the CHANCE case manager and job squad Tina found a job quickly through a temp agency. Shortly after, she moved on to a permanent job with a different employer. CHANCE support services helped Tina with a bicycle to get to work. She was assessed by The Homeless Coalition's Housing Connect project and was assisted through ESC's rental assistance, funded by the Community Services Block Grant funds, which resulted in her gaining permanent housing. Her son was returned to her custody in May 2020. Tina has moved up in her career and now trains others. She has maintained employment and permanent housing for over a year. Tina has been off SNAP benefits for several months and feels freed!

Tina states, "If it wasn't for the CHANCE program, I would not be where I am today." In addition, of her case manager Tina says, "You were more than my case worker. You believed in me and my success when no one else did. You always encouraged me and lifted me up when I was down. You and the CHANCE program saved my life."

