



## EXPANDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Expect work-capable adults to work or prepare for work in exchange for receiving benefits.



### **Kenyetta Brame** **Executive Vice President, Cascade Engineering**

“The people who have successfully completed our Welfare to Career program have regained their self-confidence and self-esteem . . . **In many cases they are the first individuals in their families to breakthrough a tradition of generational poverty.**”

Unless you give [individuals] the tools to be successful, they won't be successful.”  
*On the company's "Welfare to Career" program*

## OVERVIEW

Work—especially full-time work—is the surest way to escape poverty. Many welfare programs provide benefits to alleviate immediate need, yet few provide low-income individuals the tools they need to succeed in the workforce, escape poverty, and move up the economic ladder for long-term.

The most common reason people are in poverty is attributed to lack of work. Over 46 million people in the U.S. lived in poverty in 2014, a number that has not budged since the recession ended in 2009. Of all working-age people (18-64) who were in poverty in 2014, almost two in three were not working at all, and nearly one in three were working only part-time.

Our welfare system should encourage work-capable welfare recipients to work or prepare for work in exchange for benefits. It should also hold states accountable for helping welfare recipients find jobs and stay employed.

## WAYS AND MEANS POLICY PROPOSAL

- Strengthen work requirements and end loopholes in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program and require states to engage more people in work or activities leading to work.
- Promote reemployment of Unemployment Insurance recipients to better engage them and connect them with the workforce system.
- Reform existing job training programs—rather than create new programs—and draft proposals better connecting the Child Support Enforcement program to the workforce system.