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ESSENTIAL WORKERS, ESSENTIAL EDUCATION:

The SEIU Labor-Management Training Partnership Model for Home Care Workforce Development

By Terri Harkin | September 2022

Executive Summary

The nation's home care crisis is reaching dire proportions, with massive turnover and workforce shortages driven by persistent low wages, lack of benefits, poor job quality and "dead end" caregiving jobs without opportunities for advancement. The majority women of color workforce have faced generations of racial and gender inequities that devalue caregiving labor. As the U.S. population ages and the demand for home care is increasing exponentially, the lack of available caregivers threatens the health and well-being of millions of older adults and people with disabilities who rely on caregivers for daily personal care and support. The nation must invest in a home care workforce development system that is capable of recruiting, training, and supporting millions of home care workers to provide essential care—and do so in manner that is equity-oriented and responsive to the unique challenges facing home care workers and their communities.

Labor-Management Training Partnerships (LMTPs) are highly effective models for bringing new workers into a field and keeping them employed due to their responsiveness to both workers' and employers' needs,¹ and should be expanded to play a larger role in the nation's home care workforce development system. LMTPs—with their unique focus on codetermination—deliver innovative worker-centered, industry-savvy programming and are uniquely situated to address the task of serving a geographically dispersed, diverse workforce.

To truly tackle the caregiving crisis, decisionmakers must address the inextricable links between structural racial and gender inequities and the poor job quality of home care jobs, a task made difficult by centuries of exclusionary, structural policy choices. In service of guiding efforts to improve recruit and retain much-needed home care workers, this report outlines the best practices and lessons learned from an inventory of SEIU LMTPs serving home care workers in nine states and make the case for the SEIU LMTTP model of home care workforce development.

The findings coalesce around the following three core principles to guide policy and public investment in home care workforce development and training:



Explicitly support workers' right to unionize, set up workplace infrastructure that builds worker power, and set industry-wide standards for home care job quality.



Condition public funding on the creation of high-quality jobs, using job quality and racial equity metrics that incentivize positive outcomes for workers.



Prioritize LMTPs in workforce training and education funding, given those partnerships ensure that workers' voices are represented alongside employer needs.ⁱⁱ

To obtain a copy of the full report, email terri.harkin@hcapinc.org.

¹ Choitz, V., Helmer, M., and Conway, M. (2015). "Improving Jobs to Improve Care: The SEIU Healthcare NW Training Partnership." The Aspen Institute. <http://www.aspenwsi.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/SEIU-CaseStudy.pdf>

² Hanks, A. and Madland, D. (2018). "Better Training and Better Jobs: A New Partnership for Sectoral Training." The Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/better-training-better-jobs/>