

CareerSTAT

**FRONTLINE WORKER
CHAMPION**

 **National Fund**
for Workforce Solutions



BOSTON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Boston Children's Hospital (BCH) is one of the largest pediatric medical centers in the country, offering a full range of healthcare services for children and young adults. BCH is one of four organizations whose workforce development journey elevated its recognition level from Emerging Champion in 2016 to Frontline Healthcare Worker Champion in 2023.

Lowering Barriers to Employment

BCH was first drawn to the National Fund's CareerSTAT network to connect with peers and solve shared challenges, especially how to effectively recruit workers in a tight labor market. The organization soon realized it needed programs to address the varied needs of its local workforce.

Impact STAT

BCH has within eight years grown its workforce development staff from a single person to a staff of **11** full-time employees.

Like many urban areas across the country, Boston in recent years has seen an influx of immigrants and refugees from diverse backgrounds. Many of these new residents bring valuable skills and talents that go untapped because of barriers like language or relicensing. At the same time, BCH is a premier disease research organization that houses a range of laboratory animals. But retaining entry-level staff to provide basic animal care is a constant challenge.

One solution to these twin challenges? The animal care technician training program, which BCH created in 2019 in partnership with Jewish Vocational Service (JVS). The unique program pairs animal

care technician training with English language courses. The training opportunity drew more applicants overall, and it specifically increased applications from skilled immigrant and refugee workers who wanted to improve their English proficiency.

"That was a turning point for us as an organization because it opened up the door to provide greater equity and access," says Kristin Driscoll, director of workforce development at BCH. "We're proud of how we leveled the playing field. It also taught us how, if we could do it in one department, we could do it in other areas of the hospital as well."

To further expand community-based worker resources, BCH built and maintains a network of strong, supportive local partnerships. For instance, another JVS collaboration, with the Chamber of Commerce, funds skills and language training programs to help frontline workers move up the BCH career ladder.

One beneficiary is Yamna Hamed, a native of Morocco, who started at BCH in 2013, in the environmental services

"We're proud of how we leveled the playing field. It also taught us how, if we could do it in one department, we could do it in other areas of the hospital as well."

Kristin Driscoll

Director of Workforce Development, BCH

department. Driscoll connected Hamed to a JVS program to enhance her computer and English skills. Hamed then took an after-hours skills-enhancement training program. After completing the training in 2019, she landed a higher paying clinical assistant position at BCH. Because of all the support she received at BCH, Hamed encouraged her husband, also from Morocco, to apply for work at the hospital. He is preparing to enter the animal technician training program.

“We have an obligation to be an asset to the community,” says Lisa Abbott, executive vice president and chief human resources officer at BCH. “We can provide stability for families and vulnerable populations by creating a pathway to good jobs that lead to purposeful careers.”

Boosting Employee Competency and Advancement

BCH also makes intentional, strategic investments to improve retention among its existing team members. It invested in an internal mobility team, which provides career coaching to help BCH employees advance within the hospital.

When Kanisha Coaston first interned at BCH in the summer of 2008, the mobility program didn't exist. After a few years exploring careers in different sectors, in 2021 Coaston was back in the health sector and at BCH. This time, BCH had the infrastructure to support Coaston's career mobility inside the organization. Since rejoining the hospital, Coaston has held three positions, each providing new opportunities to gain experience and learn. She now is the administrative supervisor of the medical surgery intensive care unit, where she leads an 18-member team. “What I really appreciate about BCH



Lisa Abbott

“We can provide stability for families and vulnerable populations by creating a pathway to good jobs that lead to purposeful careers.”

Lisa Abbott

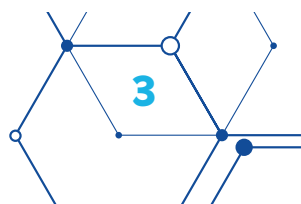
Executive Vice President and
Chief Human Resources Officer, BCH

is that they support movement throughout the organization and that they care about me as an individual and not just about filling a spot,” Coaston says. “They pushed me outside the box of my comfort zone and taught me to trust my abilities.”

Investing in Long-term Success

In addition to the ability to earn extra pay and bonuses, employees want to feel that their employer is investing in them and propelling their careers, Driscoll says. And in reality, she says, everyone wins when worker and organizational needs align.

“The finish line isn't when someone gets hired,” Driscoll says. “It's ensuring our



colleagues feel comfortable and set up for success over the long term.” That begins on day one with an enhanced onboarding program, which helps new hires navigate benefits, training and educational opportunities, the employee assistance program, and more.

“We try to ensure that every team member knows that Boston Children’s supports them in their life outside work as well,” Driscoll says.

“The finish line isn’t when someone gets hired,” Driscoll says. “It’s ensuring our colleagues feel comfortable and set up for success over the long term.”

Kristin Driscoll

Director of Workforce Development, BCH



Kanisha Coaston

Administrative Supervisor,
Medical Surgery Intensive
Care Unit, BCH



Where the world comes for answers

CareerSTAT is a healthcare sector strategy of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions rooted in the power of peer-learning. Through a national network, members share workforce development innovation, best practices, and outcome-based initiatives to support frontline healthcare workers to build skills and careers to achieve family-sustaining wages.

 **CareerSTAT** Frontline Healthcare Worker Champion

