

CareerSTAT

FRONTLINE WORKER CHAMPION



LORETTO

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

Located in Central New York, Loretto serves a diverse population that ranges in age, income levels, and care needs. Loretto provides 19 programs and services and employs over 2,400 people — 1,600 of whom are frontline workers — offering community-based care, skilled nursing, memory care, short-term rehabilitation, assisted living, and independent living options.

Addressing a Shared Challenge

Like most healthcare systems nationwide, Loretto has faced workforce shortages due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The communities in and around Syracuse where Loretto's employees live also suffered, and continue to struggle today. Nearly 35% of Loretto's frontline workers live in five of the most impoverished ZIP codes in the county. The many refugees who've settled in Syracuse also face significant barriers to finding jobs.

Amid these challenges, Loretto's leadership team identified a potential opportunity: What if they could solve the workforce shortage, deliver great patient care, and provide pathways out of poverty for members of the community?

Impact STAT

More than **80%** of frontline employees enrolled in Loretto's LPN program are people of color.

Creating a Path Out of Poverty

Loretto started by providing basic assistance to help frontline workers overcome barriers to getting and keeping a job. The organization now offers benefits such as free diapers, public transportation and car-buying assistance, and hardship grants. Loretto also expanded its new-employee orientation and coaching program and follow-up on-site training to make sure frontline employees are set up for on-the-job success.

"We are looking at every angle we can to address the multiple challenges that members of our workforce face outside of work and when they start on the job," says Julie Sheedy, Loretto's chief marketing and engagement officer. "Many face crisis, trauma, and multigenerational poverty in their lives, and we're working to provide what they need to survive and thrive."

Loretto is also helping previously incarcerated individuals resolve legal issues and find jobs through the "Clean Slate" program, supported by volunteer lawyers and advocates from the community.

Climbing the Career Ladder

Loretto addresses retention and recruitment by investing in workforce development programs that give frontline employees opportunities to learn new skills, gain practical experiences, and earn higher pay.

For instance, Loretto is the only regional healthcare system that offers paid training programs for certified nursing aides (CNAs) and certified home health aides (CHHAs). Through this effort, the organization trained more than 540 employees over the past five years. Loretto also launched the first federally registered licensed practical nurse (LPN) program, where graduates can earn twice their prior salary. The latest group of aspiring nurses worked in housekeeping or environmental services jobs before entering the program.

"We are making generational changes in families through this program."

Dr. Johaun Jackson

Director of Nursing Education and Development for Skilled Nursing, Loretto

“We are making generational changes in families through this program,” says Dr. Johaun Jackson, director of nursing education and development for skilled nursing. “Through programs like this, we are fostering a different paradigm of thinking and giving people a light at the end of the tunnel. We designed these programs from the ground up with adult learners in mind.”

Impact **STAT**

Of the **34** LPN program participants to date, **90%** have graduated and **78%** continue to work at Loretto.

Impacting Frontline Workers

That includes people like Morgani Freeman, who began working at Loretto 13 years ago as a housekeeper. She has since graduated from the certified nurse aide training program and then successfully completed the LPN Apprentice Program. in Loretto's LPN program. She credits Jackson with helping her and her fellow trainees balance adult-learning challenges such as work, childcare, and studying.

“I tell people this is a great place to work because you can move up inside the organization,” Freeman says. She is now pursuing her RN degree.

The results of Loretto's investment in staff education and wages support Freeman's statement. CNAs and CHHAs certified through Loretto's programs receive permanent employment and higher salaries. In 2022, 181 participants were trained, certified, and placed in jobs. Another 50 frontline employees received specialized certifications, with enhanced wages and responsibilities. Certified LPNs also receive permanent positions with Loretto and earn double their previous wages. Of the 34 LPN program participants to date, 90% have graduated and 78% continue to work at Loretto.



Dr. Johaun Jackson and
LPN Program Graduates



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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