Moving Towards Organizational Best Practice

# Human Resources: Compensation Strategies and Employee Benefits

Time management strategies and operationalizing worker wellness can benefit from the support of human resource officers as well. In addition to establishing equitable pay within and across nonprofits for street intervention workers, human resource managers can establish and clearly articulate incentives available for employees based on their performance evaluations. Not a single outreach worker interviewed described an incentive process for staff who excel or demonstrate excellence in their position. Financial incentives are one possibility and can include; annual salary increases, paid overtime, bonuses, or retainer contracts. Other incentives can be developed with organizational leadership within the boundaries of resources available.

Human resource managers may also consider employee benefits that may help mitigate the traumatic stress of street intervention workers. First, human resource managers are responsible for providing a thorough orientation to basic employee benefits packages and how they can be accessed to enhance employee wellness; medical insurance, short-term disability policies, life insurance, EAP plans, etc. Ongoing training of these employee benefits is recommended to increase the likelihood of utilizing these resources.

It may also benefit human resource managers to consider other forms of employee benefits that could support street intervention workers (and perhaps any other employees that do street-level work). For example, a form of self-care frequently referenced by study participants was physical exercise; a gym membership could be a form of employee benefit that assists with stress management. One street intervention supervisor discussed incorporating a crisis lending program into their organization, where staff can take out interest-free emergency loans. A different supervisor mentioned the value of educational access; a nonprofit could develop a partnership with a GED program or institution of higher learning to facilitate the ongoing education of its workers.

*Like, man, if you're not going to get a raise, at least put this guy- this guy's given so much to the organization, put them to school, get them, let him get his master's, man, pay for it, the whole thing, man, if not 50, whatever, 50%, like whatever, you know, things like that.*

Finally, a human resource manager may be able to identify resources that support the productivity and safety of workers that fall outside of training and professional development. One such resource repeatedly mentioned in interviews was transportation; street intervention workers frequently transport clients in their personal vehicles. Some organizations provide a monthly gas stipend; however, it could be beneficial to explore the purchasing of vehicles with clear emblems/ symbols of the organization for use in street intervention work. Using a nonprofit’s vehicles reduces the wear of personal vehicles and enhances the safety of transporting clients.

# Food for Thought

* + Are street intervention workers fully informed of existing employee benefits? To what extent does our street intervention team take advantage of their employee benefits?
  + What opportunities exist for organizational administration to add employee benefits that attend to the specific needs of street intervention workers (paid time off, overtime, reimbursements for program-related costs, etc.)
    - Can our organization partner with external agencies to provide benefits to our workers? (For example, partnering with a University to facilitate access to higher education)