

EMPOWERMENT IN ACTION

PENNSYLVANIA WOMEN WORK | MARCH 2025

Thought Leadership Blog



Want to save time, build your career and make your life easier? Soleil Meade, CEO of Soleil Branding Essentials and PA Grow With Google Coach, shares [5 Ways AI Can Be the Ultimate Business Partner for Women Entrepreneurs](#), in this month's thought leadership piece.

Join the club.



Will you be 1 of 8 people to help us reach our goal?

This month, 17 caring people have joined our 100+ [Coffee Club](#) monthly

[Watch PA Women Work on The Kelly Clarkson Show!](#)



On Friday, March 14, Pennsylvania Women Work had the incredible opportunity to appear as guests on The Kelly Clarkson Show!

So many people have asked us: *"How did this happen?!"* So we wanted to tell you a little more about our experience.

Earlier in February, we received an email from a producer at the show. After vigorously searching the Internet, we confirmed this was a real person and a real email address. Within a few days, we had a phone call scheduled with the producer to learn more and tell her about our work.

Following that, we submitted a "Hi Kelly!" video, where Kristin and Abby pitched our organization to be on the show. Fast forward two weeks, and we received a call from their producer that they'd like to have us on...in just one week!

donors for as little as \$5 a month. If just 8 more people sign up before the end of March, a generous donor will chip in \$5,000 to empower more women to succeed in the workplace.

For a small monthly commitment, you will join others to make a big impact.

[GIVE NOW.](#)

Working 9-to-5 Bingo



Join us on May 8 for our third annual Working 9-to-5 Bingo!

Pull your 1970s themed outfits out of the closet and get ready for your chance to win at this lively night of bingo, dancing, fun, and empowering women.

[TICKETS ON SALE NOW!](#)

Advocate!

For more than 30 years, PA Women Work's New Choices program has supported women on their path to personal and professional success. This critical program is funded by a line item in the state budget, and we need your help to make sure we receive full funding to continue our work next year.

You can help by contacting your legislators and urging them to support New Choices. Contact [Lizzi Holmes](#) for a full toolkit to support your outreach.

Upcoming classes

From there, it was a whirlwind. They asked us to bring a participant of our programs, and [Shana Williams](#) (past Empowerment Award winner) was the perfect fit. On Monday, March 10, we all flew out to New York City!

We filmed our segment on Tuesday, March 11, with guest host, Molly Sims. "It was an honor and a dream to be on The Kelly Clarkson Show, sharing a part of my journey on a show that truly highlights women empowerment. I'm also a big fan of Kelly and her voice carried me through some of the difficult times on my journey," Shana said.

From the car picking us up at the hotel, to arriving at 30 Rock, to getting our hair and makeup done, to sitting on the couch next to Molly, it all felt so surreal. All three of us were so happy and honored to be there.

Since the show aired, we have been overwhelmed by the incredible outpouring of love and support from near and far. Our inboxes have been flooded with emails, comments, and messages of encouragement. We are so grateful to everyone in our community—our board, volunteers, donors, and past clients—who reached out to celebrate this moment with us. We have also welcomed new participants into our organization who heard about us through the show.

If you haven't had the chance to watch our segment, [you can see it on YouTube now!](#)

Expanding work to support individuals recovering from substance use disorder



The impact of substance use disorder across our region has increasingly grown over the past few years. To maintain recovery,

individuals often need to create a new life, both personally and professionally.

Through targeted partnerships with rehabilitation facilities in the region, PA Women Work's [ReWork](#) program provides intensive, one-on-one career coaching and job-readiness workshops to individuals recovering from substance use disorder. ReWork focuses on building direct pipelines to employment opportunities and works with partners to provide connections and resources to sustain long-term sobriety.

Thanks to additional funding and new community partnerships, we have expanded our work to reach even more individuals. We are proud to work with the following organizations to deliver this critical programming:



[New Choices \(virtual\)](#)

- April 7 - 11, 9:30 a.m - 12:15 p.m.
- April 21 - 25, 6 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.
- May 5 - 9, 9:30 a.m - 12:15 p.m.

[Empowerment in the Workplace](#)

May 3, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Mt. Lebanon Public Library

[Career Kick-Start](#)

May 28, 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Frank Sarris Public Library
Canonsburg

[Client Support Services](#)

Already a current or former PA Women Work client? You're eligible to [participate in the following opportunities](#) to help continue on your path to success.

[A Closer Look](#)

Employer Spotlight
April 15, 12 -1:30 p.m.

Volunteer Needs



If you are interested in joining our incredible community of [volunteer mentors](#), we are actively seeking those who work in the following fields:

- Entrepreneurship

Pyramid, Renewal, Inc., POWER, Passages to Recovery, Pittsburgh Community Corrections Center, Sojourner House, Foundation of Hope, and Teetotal Initiative.

Hilda Valdespino, ReWork Program Manager, delivers this training and works one-on-one with ReWork participants. "When one of our participants gets a job, I feel like I've crossed the finish line with them! I thoroughly enjoy connecting and building relationships with individuals to help them forge a new path for themselves," Hilda shared.

As this work continues to grow, participants reflect on the impact of the program. Jessica T, a current participant said, "This program helps you get out of your comfort zone to move forward in your life." Another client, Stevie W, said, "ReWork teaches us how to use workforce skills to gain employment and education. You also provide resources that I wouldn't have known about without this program."

To learn more about our work with individuals re-entering the workforce, [visit our website](#).

The expansion of this critical work has been made possible thanks to the following funders: Appalachian Regional Commission | FISA Foundation | PNC Charitable Trusts | Additional support provided by the Richard King Mellon Foundation and Upwork Foundation.

Never losing hope: *Lorah's story*



Lorah Macharia moved to the United States from Kenya in July 2023. "You cannot imagine what it's like to uproot your life, packing everything into two suitcases. I didn't have any family here, everything was different for me," she explained.

With a background in nursing, Lorah hoped to get her nursing accreditation but experienced delay after delay with her paperwork. In the meantime, she was struggling financially in jobs that were not paying enough and had a long commute. A friend told her about PA Women Work's RISE program, and she decided to reach out.

- Data Analyst / business analyst
- Grant Writing
- Software developer
- Project manager
- Digital marketing

If you know anyone within these career fields who you think might be a good mentor, please contact [Lizzi Holmes](#).

Thank you, funders!



Thank you to our funder and partner, **United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania** for supporting our participants through critical transportation support and bus passes. This funding is critical in removing transportation as a barrier for our clients, so they can attend job interviews, meet with mentors and career coaches, and begin a new career.

Thank you, [United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania](#), for your support and generosity.

Kristen, PA Women Work's RISE program manager, supported Lorah with the nursing accreditation process and helped her look for more stable positions in the meantime. "When I got connected with Kristen, I was really struggling. She just kept checking in and encouraging me. She didn't lose hope in me," Lorah remembered.

Lorah finally received her Pennsylvania nursing license in December 2024! Her job search had officially begun. "At this point, I said, it's time for us to step in and support you. I'm going to connect you with a mentor who can help build your connections," Kristen said.

Lorah met Jamie Scarano, Senior Director, Human Resources, UPMC Children's Hospital, and 3 Cups of Coffee Mentor. "My initial impression was just how organized, professional and driven Lorah was. Her biggest challenge was just navigating the application system, so I was happy to help her understand the job search process for UPMC and the healthcare industry and build her connections within the system," Jamie said.

By their second meeting, Lorah already had three job interviews, and in just a few short weeks, she was hired at UPMC Presbyterian Hospital. "I am so excited and looking forward to actually starting my career here. I know I'm going to thrive," she said. "The positive reinforcement I received from Jamie and Kristen, and everyone at PA Women Work, was really huge for me."

Lorah's story, and so many others, are made possible by the following funders.

3 Cups of Coffee: Arconic Foundation, United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, Aerie Real Foundation, Arby's Foundation, Eaton

RISE: Marinus and Minna B. Koster Foundation, FedEx, PNC Foundation, Howard and Nell E. Miller Foundation, Jefferson Regional Foundation, Jack Buncher Foundation

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