

My name is Tommy Warner. Here's a bit of my story about my journey to getting my life back together and who helped me along the way.

About two years ago, I applied for a job at Toyota Tsusho through a program with the KY Career Center for individuals needing another chance at life. Luckily for me, I was one of the two out of eight that was interviewed that day and was selected to start the job. At that time, I had no car and very little money. The KY Career Center WIOA Program helped me with boots and clothing so I could start my job. Once I started at Toyota Tsusho, I was introduced to their Success Coach (Christine James) through the KY Employer Resource Network (ERN) who shared with me about how she was there to help me with barriers to focusing on my job and keeping employment. She was also part of EKCEP's Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment (S.I.T.E.) so she let me know I qualified for additional assistance, if needed. One of my barriers up front was transportation to work. Within my first week or two, a van, donated by Toyota Tsusho, was made available to get me to and from work until I was able to get my own car. That is awesome! I had never heard of an employer that helped people like that.

When COVID hit in March 2020, it was pretty rough getting laid off for several months but Christine helped me with applying for unemployment and maneuvering through the cumbersome process in understanding all that I was qualified for at the time. She also would check on me periodically to keep me updated about when we would return to work and to see if I had any needs. A few months after returning to work, I was quarantined for several weeks due to COVID-19 and fell short on my rent. The S.I.T.E. program paid for three (3) weeks of my rent which was a true blessing. Two months after that I was grateful to be hired full-time at Toyota Tsusho. Finally, I had a full-time job that paid well with great benefits. After I had been with the company about six months, I had saved enough money to buy a used car that I am very thankful for, however, it needed a few things that I couldn't afford at the time after spending my money to purchase the vehicle and insurance. I shared with Christine James and I told her about my problems with the bald tires; I was so thankful that the S.I.T.E. program helped me pay for new tires.

I have tried to make the best of my opportunities that I have been given here. I was the first employee through the transitional program with the KY Career Center that was permanently hired at Toyota Tsusho.

I would just like to take the time to thank Toyota Tsusho for giving me the chance they did and for Christine James for always being there to help me in any way she could or just to talk to along with the KY Career Center for placing me at Toyota Tsusho through the program. From where I started to where I'm at is a miracle and I am truly grateful.

Thanks,

Tommy Warner