

Governor's Welfare Employment Committee Honors Employers and Employees with 2018 TANF Employment Awards of Excellence

DOVER (April 26, 2018) – The Governor's Welfare Employment Committee announced the winners of its 2018 TANF Employment Awards of Excellence this week as it recognized 33 employers in Delaware who hire, train and maintain positive working relationships with employees who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits, and 33 TANF clients who have succeeded in the workplace despite the challenges they have faced.

Nominations for the awards were submitted by individuals and organizations from communities across the state, and winners were selected by members of the Governor's Welfare Employment Committee. One award is presented to an employer and an employee from each county, as well as one statewide winner from the employer and employee categories.

"People want jobs," First Lady Tracey Quillen Carney told the 150 people [gathered April 25 for the event](#) at Dover Downs Hotel & Casino. "And the second thing is people want to be good parents." She thanked employers for giving their new employees a chance to succeed.

The number of TANF cases, in which eligible parents receive a time-limited monthly grant, continues to decline in Delaware and across the country. In Fiscal Year 2017, there were 4,884 cases in the state, representing almost 2,000 adults and a little more than 8,000 children. The average grant was \$269 a month. To get a monthly TANF benefit, most clients must work or participate in work-related activities for 20 to 40 hours

per week, depending on the number of parents in the household and the age of their children.

The employee winners of the 2018 TANF Employment Awards of Excellence are:

- Sussex County: Letitia Bessicks
- Kent County: Marita Garcia
- New Castle County: Tanya Bayard
- Statewide: Leona Delli

The employer winners of the 2018 TANF Employment Awards of Excellence are:

- Sussex County: AutoZone
- Kent County: Fairfield Inn
- New Castle County: Goodwill Industries
- Statewide: United Parcel Service (UPS)

The event was hosted by the Governor's Welfare Employment Committee, the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Labor and DART. All nominees were invited to the ceremony.

"The collaboration between state agencies, employers and clients led to the successes we honored, but, more importantly, it helped to foster self-sufficiency for our clients," DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker said. "There can be no greater success than that."

"Creating conditions in which businesses can be successful is Governor John Carney's highest priority," Labor Secretary Cerron Cade said. "He knows if businesses are successful, our families and our communities will be successful, too. Today, we recognized employers who have gone above and beyond what they are supposed to do by hiring, training and maintaining positive relationships with clients who needed that opportunity."

In addition to the First Lady and Secretaries Walker and Cade, attendees also heard personal success stories from Nancy Tellado, a former TANF client who now works as a management analyst for DHSS' Division of Social Services near New Castle, and Lindsey DiCarolis, who works as a senior social worker for the Division of Social Services at the Adams State Service

Center in Georgetown. Hill credited a DHSS



Twin Poets Nnamdi Chukwuocha (left) and Al Miller, Delaware's Poets Laureate, give the keynote presentation at the TANF Awards of Excellence April 25, 2018, at Dover Downs.

staff person at the Porter State Service Center in Wilmington who helped her apply for TANF and other benefits after she was and her children became homeless. Now as a DHSS employee, "I encourage you to never give up." DiCarolus said taking her three sons and leaving an abusive relationship so she could start over was difficult. "There were a lot of rough times, but I told myself I had to do it for them."

The Twin Poets, Nnamdi Chukwuocha and Al Mills who are the poets laureate of Delaware, performed a series of poems, including "America Needs You." "It's very hard for a child to separate my hard time from mom's hard time," Mills said in praising the employers for the support they provide parents. Chukwuocha said their mother worked two jobs when he and his brother were kids, and they would live with other relatives when she didn't have enough money to pay the electric bill. He thanked businesses for hiring TANF clients "because government alone can't do this."

A total of 33 employees were nominated:

- Sussex County (six nominees): Leona Delli, Letitia Bessicks, Theresa Chacon, Shane Sellers, Candace James-Waples and Heather Weist.
- Kent County (eight nominees): Victoria I. Boyd, Latisha Smith, Katie Duncan, Marita Garcia, Deja Givens, Shandora Lyles, Katrina West and Phylicia Young.
- New Castle County (19 nominees): Alicia Wilson, Tony Martinez, Chalese Smith, Darnice Howard, Samantha Plymale,

Naomi Frye, Tanya Bayard, John Smith Ashura, Al-Tyreek Adams-Beach, Rosa Cortez, Leakita Millner, Amber Ross, Roxanne Spencer, Jennifer Treen, Odessa Goins, Adriana Hughes, Tanya Sharper, Erica Rivera and Jaelynn Craighead.

A total of 33 employers were nominated:

- Sussex County (11 nominees): Addus Health Care, Burger King, Mountaire Farms, IHOP, Premier Staffing Solutions, The Curiosity Shop, AutoZone, Royal Farms, Perdue, QSI and Laurel Senior Center.
- Kent County (six nominees): Addus Health Care, Boys and Girls Club, Shore Stop, Americare Home Solutions, Fairfield Inn and Wawa, Inc.,
- New Castle County (16 nominees): AAA Mid-Atlantic, UPS, Performance Staffing Solutions, Securitas Security Services, DePaul Industries, Gabriel Brothers, Inc., Always Best Care, Dust Away Cleaning, Courtyard by Marriott, Goodwill Industries, Little Hearts Childcare, Staffmark Temp to Permanent Staffing, Joe's Crab Shack, Wawa, Inc., Integrity Staffing Solutions and Little Friends Learning Academy.

To hire a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipient or to learn more about the TANF employment initiative, contact the Delaware Department of Labor, at 302-761-8085.

TANF is a time-limited program, and work-mandatory clients can receive TANF benefits for a maximum of 36 total months in their lifetimes. To learn more about Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Delaware, go to the DHSS website.

TO THE MEDIA: Photos of the statewide employee and employer honorees can be downloaded from DHSS' flickr site:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/deldhss/albums/72157692957138532>