



*Obtaining quality, professional work attire is a major obstacle for people entering the workforce...
we remove that obstacle.*

The Clothing Collaborative, a member of the Rhode Island statewide network, helps facilitate this important transition by providing attire for interviews and employment. Through the support of the Rhode Island Department of Human Services and public and private donors, we are able to work closely with communities, businesses, and private and state agencies to be a resource to those who qualify. The program recognizes the achievements of low-income adults who have completed educational, training, and employment goals and need attire for interviewing and work.

Call us for information about hours of operation, becoming a client, making a donation, organizing a clothing drive, referring employees and clients, or becoming a volunteer.

History

The Clothing Collaborative grew out of a Dorcas Place goal to expand its school-to-work transition support services for Dorcas Place students. The overall goal of the Clothing Collaborative Network is to assist low-income, unemployed and underemployed individuals in overcoming barriers to training and employment.

The Clothing Collaborative Network provides work-appropriate clothing at no cost to low-income men and women who are completing job training and education programs, and seeking employment. The program meets the need for practical support, more directly and more effectively, by providing high quality professional attire to the clients of participating Rhode Island agencies who meet the income and job search criteria of the program.

The program enables job seekers to experience the interview process more confidently because they are dressed appropriately and better able to make a good first impression. After employment is secured, clients are able to continue to add to their "work wardrobe." As long as individuals remain employed, they are permitted several return visits to receive additional outfits during their first year of employment.

Modeled after successful programs in Washington, D.C., New York and Boston, the Clothing Collaborative was launched in 1996 and initially received three (3) years of funding from Fleet Bank. Beginning as a small shop staffed by volunteers and located at Travelers Aid, it has grown to become a successful statewide program. A strategic plan was developed with the aid of a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation, and an active statewide Advisory Council was then established.

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) began providing continuation funding for the Clothing Collaborative in 1998. Outgrowing its space at the YWCA, the program then moved to a location on Cedar Street, in the Federal Hill area of Providence in June of 1999. In the fall of 2001, with the acquisition of Dorcas Place's new center at 220 Elmwood Avenue, the Clothing Collaborative relocated to its current home, allowing for greater coordination with other Dorcas Place programs.

Clothing Collaborative
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OUR SUCCESS DEPENDS ON YOUR SUPPORT

Donations

Donations from individuals, as well as business or organizational clothing drives, ensure that we maintain the supply of clothing needed by the men and women referred to our program. Clean out your closets, or hold a clothing drive where you work, and recycle your professional clothes and accessories. Assist someone re-entering the workforce. All donations must be clean and on hangers. **All donations are tax deductible.**

Volunteering

Volunteering even a few hours to help with wardrobe selection, workshops, donation management, showroom coverage, or data entry is an important component to the success of this program. Hours are arranged around *your* availability.

Eligibility for Services

You may qualify for clothing and other support services to assist you in your job search if you are low-income and have recently completed an educational, training, or employment program.

To Become a Referral Agency

Please provide us with the following information:

- ✓ A brochure or letter that describes how your organization/agency helps low-income Rhode Islanders with job training and/or other employment services, and/or your company or organization/agency mission statement on letterhead;
- ✓ The names of two individuals at your organization/agency that have signature authority to refer clients/employees to the Clothing Collaborative;
- ✓ A contact's name, telephone number, and fax number.