

Brief Personal Biography

David Tidwell, HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge

Effective January 1, 2025, David became President and CEO of HOPE Ministries, bringing over 30 years of experience in ministry, business, and nonprofit leadership.

A native of Baker, Louisiana, David holds degrees in Computer Programming and Bible/Ministry. Ordained in 1993, he has served in various ministry roles, including leading the largest youth ministry in his denomination and holding both Interim and Senior Pastor positions. His leadership in international and local missions has deepened his passion for HOPE's mission to Prevent Homelessness and Promote Self-Sufficiency and Dignity.

David's entrepreneurial experience includes owning and operating a teacher's supply store and distribution warehouse for 14 years. He also served as Community Resource Consultant for Louisiana with the United Methodist Publishing House. He directed the Christian Outreach Transitional Services (COTES) program, overseeing services for homeless, recovery, and prison reentry populations.

David joined HOPE Ministries in 2017 as a Workforce Training and Development Consultant for The Way to Work (TWTW) program. Under his leadership, the program expanded significantly, launching Reaching Individual Success through Education (RISE) to provide industry-recognized certifications. His business development efforts also strengthened HOPE's social enterprise, creating sustainable income for the organization.

After serving as Chief Operating Officer for four years, David became President and CEO, continuing his commitment to fostering dignity and self-sufficiency.

Outside of work, David enjoys gardening, camping, and cooking. He serves on multiple advisory boards and is actively engaged in his community. He and his wife are proud parents to three children and four grandchildren.

DAVID TIDWELL

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Mission-driven and results-oriented professional with extensive experience in workforce development, program management, and strategic leadership. Skilled in financial management and stakeholder relations. Proven track record of driving organizational growth, implementing innovative solutions, and achieving measurable outcomes.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Planning and Execution
- Business Analysis
- Business Forecasting
- Operations Oversight
- Executive Leadership
- Business Development
- Policy Development
- Nonprofit Management
- Time-management
- Strategic Planning
- Stakeholder Relations
- Change Management

EXPERIENCE

HOPE Ministries / The Way to Work

President and Chief Executive Officer

January 2025 - Present

Chief Operating Officer

July 2021 - December 2024

- Designed and implemented program enhancements to accommodate continued growth, including ongoing evaluation of client outcomes and program design.
- Successfully managed the significant growth of the SNAP E&T program, increasing participants from 67 in FFY '20 to 215 in FFY '23.
- Spearheaded the expansion of services with the launch of a second location in Pointe Coupee for SNAP E&T, resulting from the program's success.
- Oversaw the launch of the PMC Social Enterprise contract, providing services to seven nursing homes over a two-year period while securing a six year contract with BREC for Social Enterprise initiatives, ensuring continued partnership and revenue streams.
- Facilitated the launch of \$TEP UP – Intensive Financial Coaching Initiative and SKILLED BR, fostering collaboration among service providers, employers, and training providers.
- Guided a cross-functional team through periods of significant change while maintaining service quality.

HOPE Ministries / The Way to Work

January 2020 - June 2021

Director of The Way to Work

- Directed and oversaw the expansion of the Team Member Assistance Fund processing to all FMOLHS facilities, resulting in significant cost savings for the organization.
- Secured a grant from the Humana Foundation, overseeing the restructure of client pathways to accommodate program growth.
- Managed the growth and success of the SNAP E&T program, expanding program participation by 24% from FFY '19 to FFY '21.
- Negotiated favorable contracts with vendors for reduced costs and improved service deliverability.
- Implemented key infrastructure improvements, including pantry remodel and test kitchen buildout, and a new client data management system.

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EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

HOPE Ministries / The Way to Work

May 2017 - December 2019

Director of Learning Strategies / Workforce Training and Development

- Oversaw the renovation of The Learning Center facility, enhancing the learning environment for program participants.
- Provided ongoing coaching and support to management teams in their efforts to develop strong workplace cultures centered around learning and development opportunities.
- Launched the SNAP E&T program, managing a \$146,000 budget and serving 88 participants in the first year.
- Led the launch of two new social enterprise ventures, including the Team Member Assistance Fund and Success Network.
- Oversaw the creation and publishing of HOPE's proprietary "Going Beyond" curriculum, which is still utilized to this day, providing valuable resources for workforce training.

Christian Outreach Center of Baton Rouge

December 2016 – May 2017

Program Director

- Cultivated Relationships with ministry partners, prison reentry, halfway homes, and shelters.
- Provided career services to program participants to move them towards self-sufficiency.
- Collaborated closely with executive leadership and outside agencies to develop strategic plans for long-term growth.
- Managed cross-functional teams to deliver exceptional program outcomes within budget and time constraints.
- Maintained program records and client database securely and efficiently.

United Methodist Publishing House

June 2013 – December 2016

Community Resource Consultant

- Served as Regional Team Lead for the United Methodist Publishing House Consultant Team.
- Designed and delivered strategies that addressed customer needs and issues while meeting assigned quota; targets and prioritized accounts and activities.
- Facilitated strategic planning sales calls, demonstrating knowledge of account history, the processes and procedures specific to each client, and the key issues for each account.
- Demonstrated strong presentation skills and the ability to lead and organize during National Sales Events and exhibits.
- Ensured client satisfaction by responding to client requests and concerns with accuracy and timeliness.
- Maintained quality client records and CRM data accuracy.

DAVID TIDWELL

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



OTHER EXPERIENCE

Creative Education Supplies and Distribution

Twelve (12) Years

Owner/Operator

- Owner/operator of a successful, profitable small business.
- Employed full-time staff of five (5) along with ten (10) seasonal employees.
- Developed and implemented strategic business plans to achieve company goals and objectives.
- Oversaw day-to-day operations, including managing staff, scheduling, and ensuring smooth workflow.
- Monitored financial performance, including budgeting, forecasting, and managing cash flow.
- Addressed any issues or conflicts that arose, resolving them in a timely and professional manner.

EDUCATION

Associates of Applied Science: Computer Programming

Spencer College - Baton Rouge, LA

Pastoral Studies Diploma (Ordained)

Ministers Training Institute - Baton Rouge, LA

CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Nonprofit Leadership and Governance – State University of New York
- Franciscan Missionaries of our Lady Health System University – Community Advisory Council (2022 - Present)
- CPastC (Certified Pastoral Counselor) – Ministers Training Institute
- CLRC (Certified Life Recovery Coach) – Light University
- CMHC (Certified Mental Health Coach) – Light University
- Redemptive Entrepreneurship – Praxis Labs
- Certified Agilities Career Pathways Coach and Trainer – DeBruce Foundation
- Consultative Sales & Consultative Selling Certified Trainer – Richardson Consultative Selling
- Board of Christian Education (3 years)
- Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation Community Collaborative Cohort (2022)

*References available upon request

Truth in Testimony Disclosure Form

In accordance with Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5)* of the *Rules of the House of Representatives*, witnesses are asked to disclose the following information. Please complete this form electronically by filling in the provided blanks.

Committee: Agriculture

Subcommittee: _____

Hearing Date: 04/08/2025

Hearing Title :

"The Power of Work: Expanding Opportunity through SNAP"

Witness Name: David Tidwell

Position/Title: President and Chief Executive Officer

Witness Type: ☐ Governmental ☒ Non-governmental

Are you representing yourself or an organization? ☐ Self ☒ Organization

If you are representing an organization, please list what entity or entities you are representing:

HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge

FOR WITNESSES APPEARING IN A NON-GOVERNMENTAL CAPACITY

Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.

Are you a fiduciary—including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent—of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing? If so, please list the name of the organization(s) or entities.

HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge

Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) related to the hearing's subject matter that you or the organization(s) you represent have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

FFY 24-25 SNAP E&T - DCFS \$419,418.00
FFY 23-24 SNAP E&T - DCFS \$317,802.00
FFY 22-23 SNAP E&T - DCFS \$580,663.00

Please list any contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government and related to the hearing's subject that you or the organization(s) you represent have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the amount and country of origin of each contract or payment.

N/A

Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.

- ☒ I have attached a written statement of proposed testimony.
- ☒ I have attached my curriculum vitae or biography.

* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5), of the U.S. House of Representatives provides:

(5)(A) Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof.

(B) In the case of a witness appearing in a non-governmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include— (i) a curriculum vitae; (ii) a disclosure of any Federal grants or contracts, or contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the past 36 months by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (iii) a disclosure of whether the witness is a fiduciary (including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent) of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing.

(C) The disclosure referred to in subdivision (B)(ii) shall include— (i) the amount and source of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (ii) the amount and country of origin of any payment or contract related to the subject matter of the hearing originating with a foreign government.

(D) Such statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the privacy or security of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form 24 hours before the witness appears to the extent practicable, but not later than one day after the witness appears.

Written Testimony of David Tidwell

President and CEO, HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge

Before the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture

Hearing entitled “The Power of Work: Expanding Opportunity through SNAP.”

April 8, 2025

Chairman Glenn “GT” Thompson, Ranking Member Angie Craig, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the critical role that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program’s (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) component plays in breaking the cycle of poverty, fostering self-sufficiency, and strengthening local economies. As the President and CEO of HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge in Louisiana, I have witnessed firsthand how the strategic investment in workforce development through SNAP E&T transforms lives and communities.

The Mission of HOPE Ministries

HOPE Ministries is dedicated to preventing homelessness and promoting self-sufficiency and dignity. Our mission is to equip individuals with the tools necessary to break the cycle of poverty through employment readiness, financial literacy, and success coaching. We provide a holistic approach that integrates career training, personal development, and financial coaching to create sustainable change. Our organization serves as a bridge between individuals facing economic hardship and long-term financial independence, ensuring that participants not only find jobs but also build lasting careers.

The Need for Employment and Training in Louisiana

Louisiana has one of the highest rates of SNAP participation in the nation, with nearly 20% of residents relying on the program for basic nutrition assistance. In East Baton Rouge Parish alone, 84,434 residents—almost 19% of the population—are enrolled in SNAP (U.S. Census, 2022). This high participation underscores the need for robust employment and training services to help individuals transition from reliance on benefits to long-term economic stability. Without access to E&T funding, these individuals would remain trapped in poverty, unable to gain the skills and credentials needed to secure high-wage employment.

SNAP E&T's Impact on Workforce Development and Economic Growth

The SNAP E&T program provides an essential pathway for individuals facing economic hardship to gain marketable skills, credentials, and employment. In Louisiana, the program has had a profound impact:

- **Statewide Investment:** In 2023, 30 partner organizations were reimbursed \$8.1 million in federal funds for providing E&T services. This funding has allowed us to offer job training, career coaching, and wraparound support that align with industry needs.
- **Long-Term Economic Impact:** Investing in employment and training leads to significant economic benefits, including reduced reliance on public assistance, increased tax contributions, and overall economic growth in local communities.

HOPE's SKILLED BR Initiative: A Bridge to Success

Many workforce development providers operate in silos, creating gaps in services and unnecessary barriers for participants. HOPE's SKILLED BR initiative breaks down these barriers by ensuring seamless access to workforce training, career services, and direct employment opportunities. Through an integrated, shared online platform, SKILLED BR connects direct service providers, employers, educational institutions enabling better coordination in serving and referring individuals in need. By leveraging this comprehensive network, barriers to accessing essential services are minimized, ensuring participants receive the support they need to build successful careers.

Employers also benefit from this model, as they gain access to a pipeline of career-ready workers equipped with industry-recognized credentials. By fostering collaboration among service providers, SKILLED BR helps bridge the skills gap and ensures that more individuals can successfully transition from training to sustainable employment.

The Importance of R.I.S.E.: Expanding Access to Education

At HOPE Ministries, we recognize that education is the key to escaping poverty. That is why we developed R.I.S.E. (Reaching Individual Success through Education), an initiative that provides SNAP recipients with access to training and certifications in high-demand career fields. The R.I.S.E. initiative offers both online and in-person training opportunities, ensuring that participants can access flexible, career-focused education.

- **Online Certifications:** R.I.S.E. provides online education in nine career fields, including HVAC, electrical, plumbing, solar energy, and construction. These certifications allow participants to qualify for in-demand jobs that offer family-sustaining wages.
- **In-Person Industry Training:** R.I.S.E. also offers hands-on, instructor-led training in fields such as:
 - **Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Training** – Equipping participants for careers in transportation and logistics.
 - **Medical Training and Certifications** – Offering credentials in medical assisting, phlebotomy, and other healthcare professions.

- **Skilled Trades and Manufacturing** – Providing pathways into construction, welding, and industrial maintenance.

By combining online accessibility with hands-on instruction, R.I.S.E. ensures that participants gain the education, training, and industry certifications needed to secure stable, well-paying employment. Without SNAP E&T funding, these life-changing educational opportunities would be out of reach.

The Role of Financial Coaching in Economic Stability

At HOPE Ministries, we go beyond employment training by providing **financial coaching** to ensure long-term stability for our clients. Through financial literacy and coaching, participants learn how to budget, manage debt, and build savings—critical skills that help prevent future financial crises. By combining financial education with career training, we assist individuals in making sound financial decisions to achieve self-sufficiency. Many participants have successfully transitioned from government assistance to financial independence, demonstrating the effectiveness of this comprehensive approach.

Success Stories: The Real-World Impact of SNAP E&T

Through our work, we have seen incredible success stories that demonstrate the effectiveness of SNAP E&T:

- **A New Path for Tasha:** Struggling to find steady employment, Tasha turned to SNAP E&T for support and a chance to change her future. With access to workforce training and career development, she gained the skills needed to enter the banking industry. Today, she is employed with a major banking institution, earning a stable income and no longer relying on public assistance.
- **Gary's New Beginning:** After incarceration, Gary was determined to build a stable future. Through the RISE Initiative and with tuition assistance from SNAP E&T, he completed his CDL training and received career placement support. Today, he is successfully employed as a professional truck driver, earning a living wage and creating a fresh start for himself.

Why Continued Investment in SNAP E&T Matters

The successes of Louisiana's E&T program illustrate the necessity of continued investment and expansion. The Farm Bill's renewal presents a critical opportunity to:

- **Enhance Funding for Participant Support:** Increased reimbursement for essential services like childcare and transportation will enable more individuals to complete training and secure employment.
- **Strengthen Employer Partnerships:** Greater flexibility in funding can facilitate employer-driven training models that lead to immediate job placements.

- **Expand Access to High-Quality Training Programs:** Investments in industry-recognized credentials and apprenticeship opportunities will bridge skill gaps in key sectors.
- **Support Faith-Based and Community Organizations:** Leveraging these trusted networks can enhance outreach and program effectiveness, ensuring that marginalized populations receive tailored support.

Conclusion

SNAP E&T is not merely an employment program—it is a lifeline that transforms individuals, stabilizes families, and contributes to economic vitality. By strengthening and expanding this program, we can ensure that every SNAP recipient has the opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency.

Respectfully submitted,

David Tidwell
President and CEO
HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge
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