



UBE FAQs

1. What is UBE?

- [Universal Basic Employment \(UBE\)](#) is a public policy initiative formed in 2022 with the mission to demonstrate that a federal jobs guarantee can eliminate poverty and its many symptoms.

2. What is the goal of UBE?

- UBE's innovative approach seeks to provide an autonomous wage, along with essential employment benefits, to participants over a set period of time to demonstrate its ability to raise individuals out of poverty. UBE defines an autonomous wage as the income level that bridges workers past the use of most social safety net benefits, provides access to the tools of banking (i.e. credit cards, auto loans, mortgages, wealth-building tools, etc.), and warrants investment from the private sector to improve the quality of place (i.e. grocery stores, internet access, banks, etc.) By offering financial security through meaningful employment, the aim is to empower individuals to chart a course toward economic mobility, help local businesses retain strong and productive employees, and increase community and civic engagement in our neighborhoods.

3. How would UBE work?

- Upon potential adoption following a two-year research and development phase, the Universal Basic Employment (UBE) pilot would provide capital and technical assistance to several small businesses within a designated neighborhood to hire or elevate approximately 100 individuals to a salary of \$50,000 annually over a span of three years. UBE subsidizes participants' salaries, while the employers provide essential benefits such as medical coverage, retirement plans, and paid leave. Throughout the three-year duration of the pilot, evaluators will assess the impact of the wage subsidy on mitigating poverty-related indicators within the neighborhood and enhancing the participants' overall well-being. In addition to the salary and benefits package, the pilot program will allocate \$5,000 in unrestricted funds to each employee, aimed at assisting them in navigating life transitions that may arise from transitioning away from reliance on social safety net benefits. Participants will also have access to supplementary resources, such as occupational skill enhancement programs, life coaches, and education in financial literacy and planning.



4. Who founded UBE?

- UBE was founded by Devin H. Cotten, a community and economic development practitioner who has placed people and their well-being at the center of his work. In addition to Devin, UBE is supported by a 14-member advisory committee of subject matter experts from government, philanthropy, community development, and business. In 2024, UBE joined United Way of Greater Cleveland as a social innovation partner.

5. Why is United Way of Greater Cleveland (UWGC) interested in UBE?

- United Way of Greater Cleveland supports innovative approaches aimed at building income and wealth. As such, UWGC serves as a launching pad for promising ideas from the community. Recognizing that poverty is not merely a collection of individual challenges but stems from systemic barriers, United Way of Greater Cleveland works to tackle the root causes of economic hardship. Through rigorous research, innovative initiatives, and strategic partnerships, UWGC strives to dismantle these barriers to make it easier to build income.

6. What is UWGC's positioning with UBE?

- United Way of Greater Cleveland is participating in a groundbreaking two-year research and development phase of a UBE pilot. This innovative approach seeks to understand how offering better financial security through meaningful employment impacts the trajectory of a person's income and wealth going forward.

7. What support will UWGC provide to UBE?

- UWGC will provide fiscal sponsorship services for UBE during the research and development phase, including office space, administrative support, and assistance with marketing, communications, and fundraising.

8. What fundraising assistance will UWGC provide for UBE?

- During the research and development phase, UWGC and the UBE team will work together to identify and actively reach out to a carefully curated pool of potential donors with priorities that align with the UBE pilot. Given the widespread attention that income support initiatives have garnered nationwide, we are looking forward to learning more about the funding community's interest in investing in pilots like UBE. Interested donors will be guided through an onboarding process to gain a comprehensive understanding of UBE's objectives and the impact their contribution can achieve.

9. How can I learn more about UBE?

- There was a Community Conversation on April 4, 2024, entitled *Imagining a New Path to Prosperity in Cleveland: Universal Basic Employment*. Devin H. Cotten, Founder and CEO of UBE, Emily Campbell, President and CEO of The Center for Community Solutions, and Moderator Abbey Marshall of *Ideastream Public Media* discussed the income gap in Greater



Cleveland and how it can be addressed through a UBE model. The panelists will discuss lessons learned from previous employment subsidy programs and what outcomes can be expected with a UBE program. The recording is available [here](#).

- [Visit the UBE website](#) to learn more.