

## El Barrio Success

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Charlotte, a single mother, needed to find employment and gain independence to support herself and her daughter.

She was referred to El Barrio's Job Readiness and Job Search programs by her case worker at Cuyahoga County's Employment & Family Services Program. Charlotte started the program in May of 2010 and quickly conveyed her interest in joining the specialized Customer Service Training program.

Upon acceptance into the program, Charlotte strengthened her communication skills and went on mock interviews. She praised the program and said, "Customer Service Training was a great class with a very good teacher."

Not long after starting the program, Charlotte applied to Dollar Bank in Cleveland, one of El Barrio's Corporate Partners. "I applied on my own," she said, "but El Barrio gave me a recommendation, and [I believe] that got me the interview and the job."

El Barrio gave Charlotte a referral to Dress for Success prior to her interview. After she started working at Dollar Bank, she realized that she needed more suits. "When I started, I had one suit," Charlotte recalled. "I ran out of suits the first week, and I tried to make outfits with sweaters and other clothes. The Vice President came down and told me to get more suits." She was sent home from work that day.

After learning what happened to Charlotte, another referral to Dress for Success was made even though she already completed El Barrio's program. She was given several more skirt and pant suits as well as work-appropriate shoes and accessories. "If it wasn't for Dress for Success, there is no way I could [afford to] buy suits," Charlotte said. "Without this program, I wouldn't be working right now."

Charlotte is still with Dollar Bank and has been with the company for over six months. She is up for a promotion and will start training to become a supervisor in January 2011. Charlotte acknowledged El Barrio's role in her success story and said, "It was worth it. It was a great experience, and I'm glad I went there."