

## CASE STUDY



### Navigating COVID-19 with Habitat for Humanity New York City: **Moving Forward Together**

Habitat for Humanity New York City (Habitat NYC) was founded in 1984 as an independent affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International. Since then, Habitat NYC has built and preserved homes for over 1,500 families in need throughout the five boroughs of New York City.

Today, Habitat NYC is a leading nonprofit employer in the tri-state area with over 40 employees. The nonprofit partnered with PrestigePEO in 2007 for access to better employee benefits, training and development, payroll processing, compliance, and human resources support.



## THE CHALLENGES

The COVID-19 pandemic is reshaping communities and business markets around the world. With its local roots and global reach, Habitat NYC faces the opposing challenges of increased demand for aid (both locally and internationally) versus ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its employees. And like many other businesses, the nonprofit is also coping with the financial impacts of the pandemic.

Habitat NYC has long trusted PrestigePEO for all HR-related matters, but the events of 2020 tested and demonstrated the true fortitude of our partnership. Read our success story.

## HOW PRESTIGEPEO HELPED HABITAT NYC ADAPT

Nonprofits like Habitat NYC have a lot going on – they seek comprehensive support from a PEO so they can focus on their core mission. COVID-19 introduced further challenges that have required completely novel solutions. Habitat NYC in particular has a unique structure, employing both office-based employees and offsite professionals such as construction workers. This requires special attention on multiple fronts, including compliance and communications.

By partnering with PrestigePEO, nonprofits like Habitat NYC receive the benefit of an entire team of HR experts dedicated to resolving complex HR challenges across the board. Our holistic and personalized approach gives us a unique perspective on any HR situation and enables us to deliver the most effective solutions. As COVID-19 unfolded, PrestigePEO was ready to support Habitat NYC through the turbulence. Here's how we helped:

## Shared Work Program

Our services teams worked with Habitat NYC to explore options as the nonprofit faced shrinking budgets and difficult staffing decisions.

Habitat NYC was among the first of PrestigePEO's clients to utilize the Shared Work Program offered by New York State. The Shared Work Program enables employers to keep trained employees and avoid layoffs by allowing staff members to receive partial Unemployment Insurance benefits while working reduced hours\*. The program became a popular alternative to layoffs during COVID-19.

From strategic advisory to administration, the PrestigePEO team successfully guided Habitat NYC through the entire Shared Work Program application and approval process. We also collaborated with Habitat NYC to communicate program details, reduced hours, and wage changes to all impacted employees.

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**By August 1, 2020, Habitat NYC was able to return all Shared Work Program participants to full-time and full-pay. With PrestigePEO's support, the nonprofit avoided layoffs, mitigated financial hardship as much as possible, and retained its skilled workforce.**

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*\*Via NYS Department of Labor*

## Payroll and Compliance Support

With the Shared Work Program underway, there were plenty of changes to Habitat NYC's payroll. As their hours and wages were impacted, PrestigePEO helped Habitat NYC give the required notices to employees prior to making pay reductions. PrestigePEO continues to monitor all changes impacting Habitat NYC's payroll, and as its trusted PEO, ensure our client and its employees are always protected.



## Returning to Work

Habitat NYC began remote work in mid-March of 2020 and reopened in phases according to the guidelines put forth by the state and city of New York. Habitat NYC moved forth with a reopening plan that did not include a mandatory return to office date; employees were allowed to resume work at their office location on a voluntary basis beginning October 5. With PrestigePEO's guidance, Habitat NYC implemented a staggered and split schedule to maintain social distancing and keep employees safe.

PrestigePEO worked with the Habitat NYC team to develop a comprehensive Return to Work plan that includes new health and safety procedures, guidelines for maintaining a clean workplace, and employee wellness best practices. Here's how we've helped:

### Policy Guidance

Our team of experts stays on top of all legal and compliance issues impacting employers or workplace safety in response to COVID-19. As changes are required, PrestigePEO works with Habitat NYC to update or develop new policies and effectively implement them throughout the organization.

### Return to Work Checklist

Our team of experts curated a complete step-by-step checklist to help the Habitat NYC team ensure the health and safety of its employees in the workplace. The checklist includes social distancing best practices, suggested health procedures, information on employee health screenings, and more.

# BUILDING THE FUTURE

Habitat NYC recognizes that the world is in a much different place than anticipated, but that's not stopping the organization from growing and making a difference. As the nonprofit looks toward the future, it's counting on PrestigePEO to help nurture a workforce that moves the organization forward and toward a new chapter of success.

With PrestigePEO's support, Habitat NYC was able to successfully navigate some of the most pressing challenges brought by COVID-19. Now, the nonprofit is focused on adjusting strategy and operations to account for the evolving needs of its employees, as well as the needs of the communities it so proudly serves.

PrestigePEO is honored to stand by Habitat for Humanity New York City as its trusted PEO partner, always serving to support the organization's mission and growth. Here are other ways we support Habitat NYC:

## Employee Benefits



Partnering with PrestigePEO makes it possible for Habitat NYC to offer its employees premium employee benefits, enabling the nonprofit to compete with private entities for the top talent it needs. Habitat NYC entrusts PrestigePEO to secure the best possible group rates for medical, dental, vision, and other insurance plans. We work with Habitat NYC's team to renew employee benefits plans, handle administration, ensure compliance, and communicate with employees about their benefits options.

## Employee Relations



PrestigePEO's certified HR professionals support Habitat NYC's employee relations efforts by providing guidance on how to manage communications between distinct groups of employees, as well as communications between management and employees. Our experts also provide guidance in employee performance management. Rather than taking adverse action against underperforming employees, PrestigePEO assists Habitat NYC in developing Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) that aim to help employees who are struggling with meeting expectations return to a successful path.

## Training and Development



Habitat NYC is committed to supporting the continued professional development of its employees. The nonprofit leverages several training and development resources from PrestigePEO to educate their employees and grow their organization. From safety and productivity training for employees, to advanced courses to shape leadership, PrestigePEO is committed to helping the Habitat NYC team achieve long-term success.

***PrestigePEO provides exceptional guidance and support to Habitat NYC. We especially value their expertise in New York State labor compliance, excellent employee management services, and competitive pricing on premium employee benefits that fit our budget. Our staff also receives the benefit of real-time HR support, training, and digital tools for payroll, time management, and more that continue to improve.***

**- Alex Havriliak**

CFO & EVP of Administration/Risk  
Habitat for Humanity New York City





PrestigePEO partners with small and mid-size businesses to provide employee benefits, offer strategic HR and compliance support, manage payroll, and much more. Merging the power of industry-leading customer service with innovative technology options, PrestigePEO delivers a full spectrum of HR services and solutions to help SMBs simplify HR.

Learn more about how PrestigePEO can help your business with HR management, employee benefits, payroll, compliance, and more. Visit [www.prestigepeo.com](http://www.prestigepeo.com), or check out the links below for more information about our services and expertise:

### **Media Resources**

Blogs, webinars, and more thought leadership from the PrestigePEO team.

### **HR in 15**

A podcast from PrestigePEO covering all things HR.

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