

General Motors Earns Praise for Being A Top Employer for Female Hourly Workers

Working Mother magazine has named General Motors one of the dozen "Best Companies for Hourly Workers" for 2013, its annual recognition of employers that have the best policies and programs for promoting women and a dynamic work life culture.

"General Motors sets a standard of excellence for having not only work life programs and policies that supports this distinction, but for having a company culture that enables it to flourish," said GM Chief Diversity Officer Ken Barrett.

The survey, conducted by the Working Mother Research Institute, reveals that 41 percent of hourly employees at the "Best Companies" participate in family health insurance programs through their employers, and 61 percent participate in employer-sponsored personal health insurance programs.

Women in full-time service jobs are often uninsured, with 35 percent of restaurant workers, 36 percent of cashiers and 26 percent of retail sales assistants lacking insurance versus only 16 percent of all U.S. women, according to an analysis of 2010 Census Bureau data by the National Women's Law Center.

Working Mother's website stated some of the criteria winning companies met, such as being able to allow employees some flexibility in hours worked.

One of the most basic stress points for hourly workers is their weekly, or even daily, schedule. While many salaried working mothers long for flexible weeks or reduced hours, hourly-working moms wish for more predictable schedules that include enough work time to pay for their families' needs.

Paid time off is another area in which the "Best Companies" shine. On average, 99 percent of full-time nonexempt employees with a year of service at the "Best Companies" have access to paid time off, while 10 of them provide paid leave to part-timers. By contrast, nationwide, 23 percent of American adults have lost a job or been threatened with losing a job for taking time away for their own illness or a sick family member, according to the National Partnership.

Health care is also important. The "Best Companies" offer their employees benefits packages that can include not only health insurance but also tuition reimbursement and retirement plans, as well as other service discounts.

All told, 41 percent of hourly employees at the "Best Companies" participate in family health insurance programs (and 61 percent in personal health insurance programs). On average, hourly employees at these companies must work a minimum of 21 hours per week to be eligible.

And, the "Best Companies" aim to create a culture of advancement. Among the 2013 class of winning companies, all offer job skills training for non-exempt em-

ployees, while seven have formal advancement programs meant to identify future leaders among the hourly workforce.

Half have formal compensation programs that reward managers who help hourly employees advance.

Also notable: Among all employees promoted from hourly to salaried positions last year at these companies, 47 percent were women.

"Since 2006, the retail and wholesale sector has cut 1 million full-time jobs and added more than 500,000 part-time jobs" said Carol Evans, president of Working Mother Media. Creating programs to help employees succeed at hourly jobs has become not only good business but also the right thing to do."

Said Jennifer Owens, editorial director of Working Mother Media: "The best companies for 2013 have found solutions to providing opportunities for non-exempt employees to advance into salaried and management roles."

Other top companies named were Best Buy of Richfield, Minn.; Bon Secours Virginia of Richmond, Va.; Capital One Financial of McLean, Va.; Hilton Worldwide of McLean, Va.; Marriott International of Bethesda, Md.; Mercy Health System of Janesville, Wis.; Sodexo of Gaithersburg, Md.; University of New Mexico Hospitals of Albuquerque, N.M.; University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics of Madison, Wis.; Valassis of Livonia, and WellStar Health System of Marietta, Ga.

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CORRECTION

In the April 1 Dragway Retrospect column by Dewey Ketner, it stated the Onondaga Dragway "is located halfway between Jackson and Lansing, off US-127, on Bellevue Road (Leslie exit), four miles east."

The directions should have said to go WEST on Bellevue Road four miles past the Bellevue Road/Leslie exit (Exit 56).

(Readers should note while the dragstrip is slated to re-open sometime this summer it is currently still closed to the public.) We regret any inconvenience the error may have caused.