

Notes from the Navigator....

A Monthly Newsletter about Serving Customers with Disabilities in the One-Stop System



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What is the Role of the DPN?

- Assist people with disabilities to access the wide variety of programs available to support their successful entry or re-entry into the workforce.
- Ensure the availability of comprehensive resources and disability-related information to One-Stop Center staff and partner agencies.
- Conduct outreach and develop linkages with community providers that offer programs and services that may be of benefit to people with disabilities.
- Provide information about physical and programmatic accessibility issues, including information about technology available to assist jobseekers with disabilities.

Networking for Resources ~By Ivy Chang

As the Disability Program Navigator at HempsteadWorks, I have learned that networking with other providers is essential to learning about key resources in the community that may be of value to job seekers with disabilities. Recently, I conducted a presentation at a Coordinating Committee meeting for the Nassau County Section 8 Self-Sufficiency Program. The Committee is made up of service providers from local government and not-for-profit agencies. This was also an excellent opportunity to network and learn about resources available through their programs.

The meeting began with an announcement made by the Program Coordinator about recent changes in housing regulations. After the update and introductions, I began my presentation with a description of the Disability Navigator. I also talked about the programs and accommodations available at HempsteadWorks, including the Whatever It Takes (WIT) Customized Employment Program for people with disabilities. The audience had a few interesting questions. One person asked

What is the Kinesis Contoured Ergonomic Keyboard?

This uniquely shaped keyboard was designed to reduce the physical demands of keyboarding. The keys are laid out horizontally on a concave surface, as opposed to diagonally on a flat surface, as can be found on a standard keyboard. Another nice feature of the Kinesis keyboard is the ease of adaptive devices, such as foot switch and

whether the transportation fund that is available to jobseekers in the WIT program can extend beyond the job-searching period. I explained the transportation fund is available up to three months after finding a job, so long as there is still money left in a person's Individual Account. Another person asked about the requirements to receive services from HempsteadWorks. I explained that a first step is to provide proof of eligibility to work in the U.S. There was also valuable information shared during discussion about the "Jumpstart" program that may be available to people with low-income who have been working for six months but still need assistance in purchasing a vehicle, ultimately helping them to become more self-sufficient. Overall, the meeting was a success. A lot of information was exchanged, and many new contacts were made. As a result, I have received a number of referrals from other agencies to assist their customers with various needs.

The Disability Program Navigator Initiative is a collaborative effort of HempsteadWorks, VESID & Abilities, Inc.

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programmable keys. If an individual has difficulty using their thumbs, a foot switch can be used in conjunction with the keyboard to eliminate the thumb use.

This keyboard has been found helpful for people with Tendinitis, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and Cumulative Trauma Disorder (CTD).

~By Leslie Monsen

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