

As a counselor of the Hempstead Works Career Center, the COVID 19 Pandemic has made performing my normal required duties very challenging, as it has for many around the world. Before the Pandemic a typical day included arriving at work prior to the 9 am start time and preparing to assist our customers with their employment needs either by telephone or in-person. Their needs or desires spanned from job search to job readiness assistance, and often to internal or external training, whether it was to restart a career, or to increase their employment opportunities or their income, or to begin a new career path.

Fortunately during COVID 19 their needs and desires have not changed, but some are struggling with how to prepare themselves for employment due to the uncertainty of this pandemic. Therefore, many of the Center's day-to-day processes have been changed to accommodate the needs and desires of our customers, including 'how to virtually assist them in this COVID 19 shutdown and beyond while maintaining our high level of professional service and honoring the confidentiality requirements.

As one of the counselors at the Center, learning how to provide the necessary assistance for our customers has been challenging during this time, but yet very rewarding. This pandemic has forced me to open up to new innovative ways to perform my job. Working with our staff to create a successful online process to offer our customer the same level of services has been awesome to say the least. I never thought working from home was possible, but they have worked long hours to make it possible. Through their research of different social media applications, I am still able to facilitate our Job Readiness Workshops successfully through Zoom, and to offer job search assistance, as well as other essential services our customers might need. And through the collaborative work of the whole staff, Hempstead Works Career Center has proven it can strive in the midst of a crisis to serve those in need or desire employment assistance.

Sincerely,

Etta R. Banks, BBA, MA, MSW

Career Counselor, HempsteadWorks Career Center