

**TOWN OF HEMPSTEAD/CITY OF LONG BEACH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
BOARD PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT WORKGROUP MEETING MINUTES**

**VIRTUAL MEETING AT THE HEMPSTEADWORKS CAREER CENTER**

**March 2, 2021**

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Maria Lombardi, Disability Resource Coordinator, opened the meeting at 9:35 A.M. At her request, each of the attendees introduced themselves.

**II. Review of Minutes**

Ms. Lombardi allowed a moment for review of the minutes from the DEI Workgroup meeting dated March 3, 2020. She asked if there were any additions or corrections needed to be made to the minutes, and none were offered.

**III. Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Grant Updates**

Ms. Lombardi explained that since the start of DEI in 2017, the Town of Hempstead Department of Occupational Resources (DOOR) has been providing career pathways services to youth and has worked hard to implement activities that support these services. She shared the following DEI updates:

- DOOR has collaborated with EAC Network, Inc., Nassau BOCES, and Career and Employment Options, Inc. (CEO) to plan virtual Reverse Career Fairs. With a reverse career fair, participants are given the opportunity to showcase their skills and qualifications to employers. So far, fairs were held in September 2020 and January 2021, and another is planned for June 2021.
- DOOR has collaborated with youth contractors to plan a 5-part family engagement series. These activities encourage participants' family members to become more involved with DEI participants' progress.
- DOOR has contracted with Young Adult Institute (YAI) to provide youth mentorship services. These services will help lead youth in the right direction as they progress through their career pathways, and it will help give them hope and stay motivated despite the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Ms. Lombardi has collaborated with the two participating DEI areas to develop the Your Dream Your Team website, which provides resources for individuals with disabilities about everything they need to know about employment. The website helps with employment search and career pathways goals, and it provides best and promising practices geared at community-based organizations, families, and participants.

- As a deliverable under the one-year, no-cost extension, DOOR has sought to procure LGBTQ training, which will increase community and career centers' capacity to serve all individuals. We have received a proposal from Suffolk Independent Living Organization (SILO), and it is being reviewed. If selected, staff, workgroup members and other partners will be invited to attend the training.
- Staff and partners participated in staff training conducted by YAI and John Robinson at Abilities, Inc.

#### **IV. DEI Project Advisory Council**

Ms. Lombardi indicated that with the one-year extension, the State updated DEI grant deliverables and added them to the Work Plan. She invited Kerry Wiley, State Lead for the DEI project, to speak about the deliverables and the DEI Project Advisory Council.

Ms. Wiley commended the HempsteadWorks team, community-based organizations and businesses for their participation in the grant. DOOR will partner with the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) to facilitate the Project Council until the end of the year. The council is comprised of state level partners including ACCES-VR, Commission for the Blind and Our Abilities, Inc. and has guided formation of the Work Plan.

Ms. Wiley explained that last year, each DEI area was tasked with facilitating outreach for youth and partnerships. DOOR was recognized for all the partnerships established with agencies such as CEO, Nassau BOCES, EAC and Northwell Health and its placement of youth in work experiences in priority career pathways including Information Technology, Healthcare, Finance, Manufacturing and Agriculture. Long-term DEI priorities are the continued formation of business sector partnerships, focusing on middle skill jobs, creating career pathways in high-demand industries, and building resources and skills in youth participants.

Ms. Wiley indicated that DOOR was tasked with focusing on LGBTQ and other underserved populations and on individuals who have acquired traumatic brain injuries. She spoke about other focus areas including the promotion of Your Dream Your Team; ensuring long-term sustainability of the project; engaging youth, businesses and families with events; and forging long-term partnerships that support DEI achievements beyond the life of the grant.

Ms. Lombardi said the team at Hempstead and all partners have work diligently with this project and will keep the momentum of the project going. We look forward to the LGBTQ training, career fairs, workgroup meetings and WIOA Section 108 training. Mr. Kenny thanked Ms. Wiley for her guidance throughout the whole project. Ms. Wiley

responded that she would not be as effective in her role as State Lead if not for the Hempstead team and is looking forward to reporting on the work at the national level.

## **V. Young Adult Institute, Inc. Presentation**

Ms. Lombardi invited Talia Colón and Kevin Lopez to speak about YAI and the upcoming youth mentorship program. Ms. Colón explained that YAI is committed to facilitating the employment of individuals with disabilities, with the understanding that they can be just as effective and self-sufficient when given adequate training and support. Youth mentorships will be conducted in two parts. First, youth will be placed in a group of five, and one to two staff persons will run a curriculum. Mentorships will begin with a foundation of work skills development, applying for jobs and interview preparation. Each group topic will be accompanied by discussion, video clips, interactive workshops and encouragement for them to share personal experiences for higher understanding. Second, youth will meet one-on-one with a job coach that will help answer their questions and explore work topics on a more personal level. This will help them develop more courage to explore further in a way they would not have in a group setting.

Mr. Lopez continued that youth mentorships are an integral part of encouraging youth to appreciate their potential. The program will run for 10 weeks on the following topics: Week 1: how to introduce yourself and develop good work habits; Week 2: communication, vocabulary and work tolerance; Week 3: responding to feedback and supervision and how to handle mistakes; Week 4: time management, punctuality, and calling in sick; Week 5: motivation; Week 6: finding jobs; Week 7: applying for jobs; Week 8: interviewing; week 9: job coaching; and week 10: career growth. The group discussion and one-on-one mentoring will each hold for one hour.

Ms. Lombardi thanked Ms. Colón and Mr. Lopez for their contribution and mentioned that she is happy to partner with YAI on this project. Barbara Weissberg asked the age group of youth who will be participating in youth mentorships, and Ms. Lombardi responded that they will be within the same age group of DEI participants, who are out-of-school youth between the ages of 18 and 24.

## **VI. Success Stories**

Ms. Lombardi explained that sharing the success stories of DEI youth has shown the impact services have had on their career pathways journeys. She invited EAC and BOCES to share youth success stories.

Kerrone Scott indicated that the success of youth relies greatly on collaboration between all these agencies. She spoke about a youth named “LH” who came into the program after having lost a job and had no clear direction of next steps. He was interested in working in the automotive field, but he first needed to obtain his driver’s license. He was

able to get into the lubing program at NASSAU BOCES, but when he was placed in employment, he was later laid off. Nevertheless, he was able to complete the lubing program and is now working at Mavis Discount Tire. Margaret Brustman added that LH's story shows how many hands are needed for one participant's life for them to reach success. She is happy to see his evolution since starting at BOCES and believes the mentorship program will be an integral part of helping youth progress.

Myesha Arvon added that at age 16, LH participated in DOOR's In-School Youth program. After high school, he did not go directly into the Out-of-School Youth program, but we continued to work with him until he did. EAC, ACCES-VR and Nassau BOCES have all been instrumental to his progress, and it is amazing to see how much he has grown.

Afterwards, Ms. Scott discussed "ML," another DEI participant. He suffers from bipolar disorder, and he had entered the DEI program during an episode. With staff support and help from ACCES-VR, he was reminded of proper self-care and is now enrolled in an electrician program. Once completed, he will be placed in an electrical employment position. Ms. Brustman added that each youth participant has their own difficulties coming into the program, but working together helps them realize their career goals. This support system contributes greatly to BOCES' high placement rate. Ms. Lombardi thanked Ms. Weissberg for her hard work and dedication to serving youth.

## **VII. Old/New Business**

Ms. Weissberg discussed ACCES-VR's Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) – Potentially Eligible Contract, which will enable youth employment services with the appropriate support to help them set and work towards reaching their employment and social goals. Youth participate in work readiness and job exploration activities, as well as paid and unpaid work experiences.

Yvonne Morrisey asked if any organizations can recommend a job coaching agency. Ms. Brustman responded that BOCES refers youth to ACCES-VR for job coaching. The Corporate Source and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy have also conducted job coaching. Ms. Weissberg said that ACCES-VR has contracts with YAI, CEO and BOCES.

Commissioner Eric Mallette commended attendees for all the work they do for youth participants and that working with them is a rewarding experience.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

Ms. Lombardi thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 10:31 A.M.