

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

VIRTUAL MEETING AT THE HEMPSTEADWORKS CAREER CENTER

September 23, 2020

Attendees:

Elizabeth Ajasin, DOOR
Margaret Brustman, Nassau BOCES
Therese Brzezinski, Long Island Center for Independent Living
Sharon Carty-Johnson, EAC Network
Antoinette Edmonston, Career and Employment Options, Inc.
Edward Kenny, DOOR
Joelle Kronberg, Career and Employment Options, Inc.
Maria Lombardi, DOOR
Kathleen Mafucci, Nassau BOCES
Eric Mallette, Commissioner, DOOR
Melissa Matassa, Department of Labor
Mary McLaughlin, Tompkins Workforce New York
Yvonne Morrissey, DOOR
Gina Reddock, Long Beach Adult Learning Center
Barbara Weissberg, ACCES-VR
Lisa Wright, Long Beach Adult Learning Center

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) COVID-19 Updates

Ms. Lombardi stated that since closing on March 20, 2020, DOOR staff has worked to maintain services to jobseekers during the COVID-19 pandemic, including those being served under the DEI grant. Activities during the shutdown included:

- Serving customers remotely using laptops and cell phones issued to staff

- Maintaining communication with youth via phone, email and Zoom
- Continuing to provide career workshops
- Collaborating with Career and Employment Options (CEO) to coordinate meetings and recruitment events; continue to support youth's career pathways goals; and contact businesses for their employment opportunities

Youth services providers, EAC Network and Nassau BOCES, continue to engage youth with services that keep them motivated and help them maintain their mental health and finances.

IV. DEI Grant Program Updates

Ms. Lombardi provided a summary update of DEI activities. She discussed:

- Reverse career fair – CEO coordinated the event, and reached out to employers such as Northwell Health, Geico, and Trade Source to attend. The event had breakout rooms with a moderator in each room to ensure that youth participants are fine. Ms. Lombardi stated that she received positive feedback from employers, and they would like to participate in future fairs.
- Virtual Networking Event: The event is scheduled for September 29, and Ms. Lombardi will promote the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) website. She and the Disability Employment Coordinators (DRC) from the two other areas worked with Change Impact to develop the site.
- National Disability Awareness Month virtual event: Ms. Lombardi explained that she is seeking youth participants who are essential workers so that they can be featured and celebrated at the event. Youth will share video clips and highlight the work they do during the pandemic

Margaret Brustman commended Ms. Lombardi and the other DRCs for the IRT website, which youth have found helpful for career exploration.

V. Work/Sustainability Plan

Ms. Lombardi explained the State has granted a one-year, no-cost extension to the DEI grant. With notice of the grant extension, the State has additional requirements to be performed under the grant. She invited Mr. Kenny to speak more on the State's requirements. He referenced the work and sustainability plans. He explained that Kerry Wiley, State lead for the DEI project, was scheduled to speak on sustainability but was called away to another meeting.

Mr. Kenny explained that the sustainability plan is a State requirement, and the plan was developed by a subgroup of workgroup using the State's template. Activities for sustainability include:

- Incorporating the delivery of virtual services in light of the pandemic

- Celebrating and publishing youth participants’ successes
- Studying outcomes and lessons learned and use data to monitor and evaluate the project
- Leveraging resources from all partners, WIOA funding, and income from Ticket-to-Work to continue augmenting the DEI project
- Maintaining oversight and integrity of the Pathways to Employment workgroup throughout the extension and after the grant period has ended
- Maintaining a customer-focused approach

VI. Youth Mentorship Request for Proposals (RFP)

Elizabeth Ajasin explained that as a way to support the DEI project, we published a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Youth Mentorships. The RFP was published in May 2020, and the tasks of the mentoring agency would be to:

- promote self-advocacy in youth with disabilities so that they can confidently interact with institutions, such as schools and workplaces, and in their personal relationships
- show support for each youth’s occupational and personal goals
- demonstrate outcomes of all mentees (e.g. self-determination, self-esteem, and social and emotional awareness in their career pathways journey)

Applicants for the RFP must a partnership, registered business, an incorporate for-profit or non-profit organization, or a public agency, and must have at least three years’ experience providing mentorship services. Applicants must demonstrate that they can provide virtual and online services and must include a description of its background and qualifications; a narrative explaining how the applicant plans to accomplish youth mentorships tasks; the resume or summary of qualifications of staff assigned to perform the services; and a proposed budget for the services.

VII. Integrated Resource Team (IRT) – Your Dream, Your Team Website

Ms. Lombardi explained that the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) toolkit is a resource designed to create a network of support groups and organizations that provide workforce development services to youth with disabilities. She collaborated with Disability Resource Coordinators Mary McLaughlin and Alan Sessions, and Danielle DiMare from Change Impact to develop the site. Ms. Lombardi invited Ms. McLaughlin to present on the website. In her presentation, Ms. McLaughlin navigated through the site using the Zoom screen share tool.

VIII. Partners Best Practices Survey

Ms. Lombardi indicated that the State had asked our partners complete a best practices survey. The survey was designed to gather information from our partners on the impact DEI has had on organizational practices in the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities. Ms. Ajasin said that the main aim of the survey was to gain an understanding

of how participation in the DEI grant has led to changes or improvements in practices for different areas such as youth recruitment, business outreach, the use IRTs, and expansion of inclusive work experiences. She gave a moment for four responders to the survey to share of their responses:

EAC Network: Ms. Sharon Carty-Johnson explained that with DEI, EAC has improved its business engagement, and with internships, youth are learning to align themselves with businesses and their jobs of interest. The Virtual Job Shadowing resource has been helpful because it allows them to hear from workers in a specific field or occupation. Youth develop more insight about the type of career they want to pursue. In addition, the reverse career fair gave participants the opportunity to interview with various companies and receive feedback.

Nassau BOCES: Margaret Brustman responded that a large part of DEI has been the development of a partnership with EAC Network and Career and Employment Options, Inc. in helping them implement the grant. Youth participants have benefited from financial literacy programs and the reverse career fair. Kathleen Maffucci added that the grant has helped to ensure additional support to the youth and increase their work experiences in various industries.

ACCES-VR: Barbara Weissberg responded that through the DEI grant, she has developed a strong partnership and collaborative effort with Nassau BOCES and EAC, which will continue well after the end of the grant.

Long Beach Adult Learning Center: Gina Reddock appreciated HempsteadWorks for serving as a great partner. She stated that the DEI project has made staff more aware of the challenges faced by youth with disabilities and is working on ways to support them further.

IX. Virtual Business and Partner Networking Event

Ms. Lombardi indicated that we have been working with our DEI consultant CEO to plan a virtual networking event on September 29, 2020. The goal of the event was to engage businesses in a conversation about creating career pathways for jobseekers with disabilities. Joelle Kronberg said that the event will also be used to promote the IRT website. At the time of the meeting, 30 people had confirmed their attendance.

X. Capital One Virtual Business Breakfast Recap

Ms. Lombardi explained that on June 24, 2020, CEO hosted the virtual Capital One Business Breakfast event that was initially scheduled for March 2020. The event was postponed due to the pandemic. Ms. Kronberg worked with our Out-of-School Youth vendors, EAC Network and Nassau BOCES to plan the event. The goal of the event was

to inform employers, from a human resources perspective, of the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. 69 people attended from various agencies and businesses on Long Island.

XI. Old/New Business

Commissioner Eric Mallette appreciated Workgroup members for their hard work and dedication to serving youth with disabilities under the DEI grant. Ms. Lombardi also thanked Workgroup members and reminded them to share their participants' success stories. Mr. Kenny thanked Ms. McLaughlin for attending the meeting and for providing a brief demonstration of the IRT website.

XII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:31 A.M.