



EMPLOYMENT FIRST UPDATE FEBRUARY 16, 2018

Hello Employment First Community of Practice!!

February is Black History Month so I wanted to draw attention to its historical context and some interesting and inspiring content highlighting the achievements of African Americans. February is also Low Vision Awareness Month and American Heart Month so I have added some relevant resources supporting increased awareness. So much to pack into the shortest month of the year-I didn't even mention Valentine's Day or my birthday...

"Black History Month" is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of blacks in U.S. history. The event grew out of "Negro History Week," the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history. "<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-month>

Respect Ability has put together a great resource that highlights the accomplishments of African Americans with disabilities in honor of Black History Month. To read more please see: <https://www.respectability.org/2018/02/05/highlighting-african-americans-disabilities-honor-black-history-month/>

February is Low Vision Awareness Month! According to the National Federation of the Blind, about 1.3 million people in the US are legally blind and more than 75,000 more people in the US experience vision loss each year. Technology, tools, and training can help people with vision loss to maximize their remaining vision, maintain their independence, and continue to do the things they love. We shared [examples of ready-to-use tools and technology developed by the NIDILRR grantee community](#) in our blog.

American Heart Month

February is American Heart Month, a national annual campaign that educates about heart disease and how to prevent or manage it. As such, the month is also an opportune time to learn about workplace accommodation ideas for employees who may have heart conditions. As part of its Accommodation and Compliance Series, the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) offers a wealth of information on the topic. Like EARN, JAN is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. Learn more about [accommodations for people with heart conditions](#) or [American Heart Month](#).

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1. FEATURED EVENT

DEI* Career Exploration Day

A Sneak peek at career choices (COMPLIMENTARY lunch)

When

Feb. 22nd, 2018

9am - 1pm

Where

Oakton Community College

1600 E. Golf Road

Tenhoeve Center (Enter Door #37)

Des Plaines, IL 60016

For students with disabilities ages 16—24

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Program is designed to showcase career paths for students with disabilities. Open to students with disabilities;

Transition Counselors; Job Coaches; Academic Advisors; School Social Workers

Visit with employers from multiple industries**

- Manufacturing
- Customer Services
- Foodservice
- Healthcare
- Information Technology

***Find out what skills and experience you need to do these jobs!**

***Prepare for a successful future by meeting with various companies!**

***Learn what you need to do today to get ready for tomorrow!**

Questions? L.M. Pepper Curington, Disability Services Manager 847.437.9995

pcurington@bcsillinois.org

Registration Deadline is Feb. 20th, 2018 at 5pm!

*Disability Employment Initiative **Subject to change without notice. This program is designed for students age 16 to 24 years, transitional teachers and related staff. If you have questions regarding your eligibility, please email pcurington@bcsillinois.org.

2. WEBINARS

- **Webinar: Workplace Technologies and Vision Loss**

The [Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology \(PEAT\)](#), funded by the [Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy \(ODEP\)](#), will host a webinar, [Emerging](#)

[Workplace Technologies and Vision Loss](#), February 15th, 2-3pm ET. Presenters will discuss the development and implications of new technologies, such as access to remote, real time, human, and artificial intelligence assistance; smartphone apps; vision enhancement through electronic optical eyewear; and indoor wayfinding assistance. Registration is free and required.

- **February 20, 2018 2:00 p.m. ET**

[Webinar: Cancer as a Disability: Your Rights in The Workplace](#)

Presented by TransCen, Inc. and the Mid-Atlantic Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Center, this webinar will provide an overview of the laws, among them the ADA, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), as well as various state laws, that provide workplace protections for people coping with a cancer diagnosis and cancer survivors. Topics to be discussed include disclosure, reasonable accommodations and requesting medical leave. [Register for the February 20 webinar.](#)

- **February 22, 2018, 1:00 p.m. ET**

[Webinar: Intro to Accessibility: What Employers Need to Know to Create a Technology-Accessible Workplace](#)

Today, technology is one of the central drivers of productivity, for all workers. But when technology isn't accessible, it can cause employers to miss out on potential talent. In this webinar, EARN and the Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT) will discuss the basics of accessible workplace technology and strategies for integrating accessibility standards and best practices into the workplace, as well as tips for creating accessible documents and websites. [Register for the February 22 webinar.](#)

- **2 PART SERIES: 2/21/18 10:00-11:200 Leading with Strengths: Strength-Based Assessment and Job Seekers with Disabilities**

This is the first webinar in a two-part series hosted by the Diversity Partners Project at the Cornell's Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability. It will focus on the importance of strength-based assessment of job-seekers with disabilities and other barriers to employment, as a critical factor in improving access to WIOA Title I programs and services.

Webinar Login URL: http://register.yangtaninstitute.org/webinar-login.cfm?activity_id=6587

Attendee Phone: 712 432 1001

Attendee Access Code: 457 915 382

- **2/28/18 10:00-11:00 The Match: Skills, Culture, and the Role of Social Capital**

This is the second webinar in a two-part series hosted by the Diversity Partners Project at the Cornell's Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability. In this webinar, we will continue our discussion of the assessment and discovery process, and how that process can lead to a better fit or "match" between a job seeker with a disability and an employment opportunity.

Webinar Login URL: http://register.yangtaninstitute.org/webinar-login.cfm?activity_id=6588

Attendee Phone: 712 432 1001

Attendee Access Code: 457 915 382

- **WIOA State Plan Modifications from a Disability Perspective: Recommendations for Ensuring Inclusion and Equal Opportunity in State Plan Updates WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2018 3:00 - 4:30 pm ET**

Mark your calendars and register today for this important webinar – **Wednesday, February 21, 2018 from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. ET.**

Last month, the Department of Education's (ED) Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) issued a Technical Assistance Circular ([RSA-TAC-18-01](#)) and the Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) issued a Training and Employment Guidance Letter ([TEGL No. 06-17](#)) on the Two-Year Modification Requirements for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plans. After WIOA was passed, it required that each state submit a Unified or Combined State Plan by April 1, 2016. **States now must submit a WIOA Unified or Combined State Plan two-year modification, which is due to DOL and ED by March 15, 2018.**

Join this webinar to hear from DOL's ETA and the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), a representative from the Workforce Innovation and Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC), and people from different systems at the state level who engaged in updating and revising their State Plans. Specifically, you will learn about how they are using this requirement as an opportunity to modify plans and activities to ensure equal opportunity and the inclusion of youth and adults with disabilities in services provided by WIOA partners.

Register for this webinar by clicking or copying and pasting the following link: <https://leadcenter.webex.com/leadcenter/onstage/g.php?MTID=e5928cc085293e893c68d16ec758c1eea>

Please note: All LEAD Center webinars are captioned and presentation materials are sent to participants in advance of the webinar. For any other reasonable accommodation requests, please contact Aramide Awosika at aawosika@ndi-inc.org.

- **"Intro to Accessibility: What Employers Need to Know to Create a Technology-Accessible Workplace." February 22, 2018 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. ET**

Hear from experts including:

Brett Sheats (Moderator), National Project Director, EARN

Corinne Weible, Deputy Project Director, Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT)

Jim Corporal, Account Executive, The Viscardi Center

Learn about accessible workplace technology and how to ensure your organization's technology infrastructure is accessible for everyone, including employees with disabilities. Get tips from experts on creating accessible documents and websites.

[Register](#) today!

This event is approved for 1.0 HR general recertification credit hours through the HR Certification Institute (HRCI) and Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

- **Two Upcoming SAMHSA-sponsored Webinars Cover the ADA and Self-Direction, Respectively**

On February 26 from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law will present *Criminal Justice, the Americans with Disabilities Act and People with Mental Illnesses*. For more information and to register, [click here](#). And on February 27 at 2 p.m. ET, the National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery will present *Self-Direction through Personalized Budgeting*. For more information and to register, [click here](#).

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- **Breaking Down Work Barriers for People with Disabilities: Opportunities for Employers
March 1, from 1:00–2:30 p.m. (ET)**

Live Webinar

[Register for the webinar.](#)

According to a recent article published by the *IZA Journal of Labor Policy*, at least one-third of people with disabilities who are not working say they deal with barriers that could be alleviated through workplace accommodations like assisted transportation or flexible schedules. Findings from the 2017 [National Employment and Disability Survey](#) reveal that many employers strive to recruit, train, and accommodate workers with disabilities, yet findings from qualitative research suggest that employers may not deploy the resources and processes at their disposal consistently, or with equal efficacy, to benefit all employees with disabilities.

On **March 1, from 1:00–2:30 p.m. (ET)**, Mathematica's [Center for Studying Disability Policy](#) (CSDP) will host a webinar to examine these issues. Panelists will discuss: (1) actions employers can take to better accommodate employees with disabilities; (2) feedback from employer interviews about the challenges associated with recruiting and retaining workers with disabilities; and (3) findings from the National Employment and Disability Survey, recently released by the Kessler Foundation.

The expert panel includes:

Moderator:

- [Jody Schimmel-Hyde](#), senior researcher at Mathematica

Presenters:

- [Purvi Sevak](#), senior researcher at Mathematica
- [Alix Gould-Werth](#), researcher at Mathematica
- [Kimberly Phillips](#), project director, University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability

Discussant:

- [Alan McClain](#), Commissioner of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services

[Register for the webinar.](#)

- **March 13, 12 pm - IEP Facilitation: How Facilitated IEP Meetings Can Guide the Process, Arc of Illinois**, with Sherry Colegrove, of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and three IEP facilitators.
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6372359664921580291>.

Parents and school personnel sometimes find themselves facing the challenges of needing to communicate and collaborate with others whose opinions and perspectives differ significantly from theirs, especially during Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. In this webinar, the presenters will provide an overview of the purpose, components, and benefits of IEP facilitation. They will also share a few “real life” facilitation experiences and briefly describe some of the strategies used during IEP meetings to promote successful whole team collaboration and communication. As a result of the webinar, participants will increase their knowledge and understanding of IEP facilitation as a process that supports teams in reaching and maintaining agreements during any IEP meeting.

EFSLMP Recoded webinar links on Large Agency Transformation & funding:

- Did you miss our monthly webinar: **Turning the Queen Mary - Service Transformation in a Large Agency?** If you were unable to join, you can view it [here](#). Meeting materials can be downloaded from the webinar recording.
- Did you miss our monthly webinar: **Funding Strategies for Competitive Integrated Employment?** If you were unable to join, you can view it [here](#). Meeting materials can be downloaded from the webinar recording.

3. LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- **Webcourse: Customized Employment**
The NIDILRR-funded [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Employment of Individuals with Physical Disabilities](#) will host a [Customized Employment Webcourse](#), March 5th - April 2nd. The course is open to service providers who support job seekers and employees with disabilities. Individual modules define customized employment, describe the principles that illustrate organizational commitment to customized employment, describe the role of a personal representative, explain the discovery process and why it is the foundation of job development, discuss ways to learn about businesses' employment needs, and more. Registration is required and there is a fee for the course.

- **Policy, Advocacy and You: Why Personal Stories Matter**
6th Annual Event
February 27, 2018

8:30 A.M. - Noon

location: **Beth Hillel Congregation B'nai Emunah | 3220 Big Tree Lane, Wilmette, IL 60091**

time: 8:30–9 a.m. | Registration and light breakfast • 9 a.m.–Noon | Program

cost: \$40 for Professionals—3 CEUs (LSW, LCSW, LPC, LCPC, QIDP) Free for adults with disabilities, older adults, family members, personal attendants and students.

registration:

Register online by February 19, 2018 at <https://jcfs.formstack.com/forms/policyadvocacyandyou>

Complete and mail registration form on next page.

Payment at door. Cash or Check to CJE SeniorLife.

accommodations:

- A map of the area and parking information will be provided to participants prior to the event.
- CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) services, personal attendant services, large print and Brailled documents will be available at the program. ASL upon request.

To request additional accommodations, inquire about travel planning or ask any other questions about this program, contact us at 773.508.1121 or Linkages@cje.net by February 19.

4. RESOURCES

- **Mobile Accommodations Solution App**

The NIDILRR-funded project [Mobile Accommodations Tool: Development, Implementation, and Evaluation](#) has released the [Mobile Accommodation Solution \(MAS\)](#), an iOS app for iPhone and iPad. The MAS app serves as a first generation mobile case management tool to help employers, service providers, and individuals effectively address accommodation requests in the workplace. The app was designed to streamline the disability accommodation process at various phases of the employment cycle. The app enables employers and service providers to help people with disabilities to better manage the accommodation process. Individuals with disabilities can use the app to develop an accommodation request letter, send the request, and track its progress. The MAS is available free from the App Store. An Android version will be available later this year.

- **How WIOA Supports Employment and Training Programs, and How Social Enterprises Can Benefit**

“The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the largest source of federal funding for workforce development activities in the United States,” writes REDFworkshop. Their learning guide includes information about WIOA’s predecessor, WIA (Workforce Investment Act of 1998), about WIOA and the changes it implemented, how funding flows from the federal to local level, and how social enterprises can benefit from WIOA funding. To learn more and to download the free guide, [click here](#).

- [*A New Look for the Campaign for Disability Employment!*](#)

The Campaign for Disability Employment (CDE) launched a brand-new website earlier this month. With a fresh, easy-to-navigate design, visitors can find in-depth information and coordinating media products for the CDE's three powerful public service announcements (PSAs), including the award-winning "I Can," "Because" and "Who I Am" PSAs, all of which can be used to stimulate discussion about disability in the workplace setting. The site also introduces a new blog, which will feature insightful posts from a wide range of thought leaders on disability and employment issues. [Visit the CDE website.](#)

- [*HIRE Vets Medallion Program*](#)

The U.S. Department of Labor recently announced the launch of the HIRE Vets Medallion Program, an effort that will recognize up to 300 employers for their investments in recruiting, employing and retaining our nation's veterans, including wounded warriors. The awards program, which has different criteria for small, medium and large businesses, is being established under the Honoring Investments in Recruiting and Employing American Military Veterans (HIRE Vets) Act, which was signed into law May 5, 2017. [Learn more about the HIRE Vets Medallion program.](#)

- [*Gains in Federal Employment*](#)

Earlier this month, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued its latest report on disability representation in the federal executive branch, which revealed that at the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, total career employment of people with disabilities increased from 264,844 in FY 2015 to 282,474, representing an increase from 14.41 to 15.12 percent. Furthermore, new hires with disabilities increased from 26,466 in FY 2015 to 28,164, translating to 19.19 percent. Through its management of the Equal Opportunity workgroup and Federal Exchange on Employment and Disability, EARN is pleased to support efforts to increase federal disability inclusion. [Learn more about EARN's federal-sector work.](#)

- [*Workforce Recruitment Program*](#)

In a recent U.S. Department of Labor blog post, Lauren Karas, a business development specialist in the Office of Disability Employment Policy, shared how the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) helped launch her federal career - and that of many young students and recent graduates with disabilities from colleges and universities across the country. She also explained how the program benefits employers, both federal agencies and private-sector, by connecting them with highly qualified students and recent graduates and offering the opportunity to assess the skills and abilities of potential future hires. Read the [blog post](#) or learn more about the WRP for [federal](#) or [private](#) employers.

- [Shared Practices of High Achieving Companies](#)

Recently, the National Organization on Disability (NOD) analyzed the results of its 2017 Disability Employment Tracker to determine what companies with an above average percentage of employees with disabilities have in common. The assessment distilled key policies and practices in five areas: strategy and metrics, climate and culture, recruiter training, people practices, and workplace and technology. The Tracker is a confidential, annual survey of corporate disability inclusion policies and practices, and the 2017 results represent 175 companies that together employ more than 10 million workers. [Read the NOD report.](#)

- [Information Brief: Customized Employment and Guided Group Discovery](#)

Guided Group Discovery (GGD) opens doors to employment for people who experience barriers to employment. LEAD Center recently released comprehensive Guided Group Discovery materials, designed to enable youth and adults with disabilities and others to find a job that is a good fit, and benefits an employer who values and needs the talents they have to offer. This Customized Employment and Guided Group Discovery Information Brief provides a summary of the process and how to access the materials.

- [Employment and Economic Advancement Resource Map](#)

This guide has been prepared in an effort to identify national initiatives that can support individuals as they take steps toward establishing financial stability. Workforce, disability, and community partners can use this guide to assist them in identifying local providers of these services within your community. If you already have a trusted source to identify local providers, this guide will add to what you already know. If you don't have a resource expert in this area, this guide is a place to start.

- [Thinking Accessible](#)

A new video put out by BuzzFeed News educates about how people who are blind or visually impaired, including one of BuzzFeed's News Editors, use and interact with different types of technologies. It also illustrates how technology - if it's accessible - can drastically enhance life and workplace productivity for people with a range of disabilities, just like it does for all people. Fully captioned and audio described, the video itself is also an example of accessible technology in action. [View the video](#) or learn more about [workplace accessible technology](#).

- [New, Free Online Platform Helps Mental Health Advocates Connect with Each Other](#)

"ICI Connect is a simple, free online platform that is designed to help people who are asking questions or thinking critically about the mental health system find and connect with each other in person,"

according to the ICI Connect web page. “After creating basic profiles, members can search by location and/or interest for other members who live nearby in order to connect, share information, spark new friendships or collaborations, provide mutual support or advocacy, organize public learning events or groups, set up crisis networks, or begin to build grassroots community alternatives to the mental health system.” For more information and to connect, [click here](#). For more about the Inner Compass Initiative, click here: www.theinnercompass.org

- **Live & Learn Launches New Peer Respite Program Directory**

Live & Learn Inc. has just launched its newly updated [PeerRespite.net Program Directory](#). The Directory contains a listing of individual peer respites organized by state, with a “profile” of each peer respite. The profiles include a picture, map, information about staff training, guest eligibility, and links. Peer respites—operated and staffed by people with psychiatric histories and/or who have experienced trauma and/or extreme states—are voluntary, short-term residential programs that provide community-based, non-clinical crisis support. They operate 24 hours a day in a homelike environment. For the Directory, [click here](#).

- **“Decisions in Recovery” Website and Handbook Aim to Help People with Opioid Use Issues**

“Are you finding it difficult to stop using?” a SAMHSA website asks. “If you’ve thought about cutting down or stopping, this site can help. If you are using narcotics, prescription pain medications, heroin, or any other opioid drug, this site has information about some of your treatment options and ways to locate a provider who can help. You can also watch videos of people who have been where you are. They found a way to succeed in recovery and reclaim their lives. So can you.” For the website, [click here](#). SAMHSA also offers a free, 68-page handbook called “Decisions in Recovery: Medications for Opioid Use Disorder,” [available here](#).

5. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- **DRRP College and Career Success for Students with Serious Mental Illness or Traumatic Brain Injury**--The purpose of this DRRP is to generate new knowledge about the effectiveness of interventions to improve college education and employment outcomes of people with serious mental illness or traumatic brain injury.
- **VNA Foundation: Supporting Home and Community-based Health Services for Chicago’s Medically Underserved** (*Letter of Interest due 3/15/2018, Application due 4/19/2018 by 5:00 PM*) The VNA Foundation is offering grant funding ranging from \$15,000 to \$80,000 to Chicago Metropolitan Area, Illinois nonprofit organizations to benefit medically underserved populations. Programs must benefit residents of Cook, Lake, McHenry, DuPage, Kane and Will Counties, with a focus on Chicago. The VNA Foundation will consider funding program, operating, and capital grants, which are in support of the following areas: Home health care services, Community and school-based services, Primary care and chronic disease management, and Health promotion.

- **Bank of America; Harry S. Black & Allon Fuller Fund**– (*Application Due June 30, 2018*) The Bank of America Harry S. Black & Allon Fuller Fund is offering grant funding to Chicago, Illinois and New York City nonprofit organizations for high-quality human services and health care programming for underserved groups. Funding may be requested for a broad range of activities related to health care and physical disabilities. The Foundation encourages requests for program, project, and general operating support. The grant-making focus is in: 1.) Health Care - The Fund supports access to health care; health education; and health policy analysis and advocacy. Emphasis will be placed on programs serving low-income communities; and 2.) Physical Disabilities - The Fund supports access programs for physically disabled individuals; disability policy analysis and advocacy; workforce development programs; and programs that improve quality of life for the disabled.
- **DuPage Foundation: Community Needs Grant** – (*Health and Human Services applications due 3/2/18 by 5:00 PM*) The DuPage Foundation is offering grants of up to \$2,500 and grants of up to \$20,000 to DuPage County, Illinois nonprofit organizations for projects in the areas of arts and culture, education, environment, health and human services. First-time applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the Funding Source to determine eligibility before beginning the application process. DuPage Foundation supports programs and projects which impact, improve, enhance and enrich the quality of life for DuPage County residents. The Health and Human Services grant opportunity supports a wide range of programs that improve the quality of life of DuPage County residents in need by: strengthening, assisting and advocating for at-risk and low-income populations and providing basic human needs to children, youth, adults, and senior citizens, and/or promoting physical and mental health. Grants are awarded for a one year period.
- **Follow this link to find available State Grant opportunities**
<https://www.illinois.gov/sites/GATA/Grants/SitePages/CSFA.aspx>

6. FOOD FOR THOUGHT, RELATED TOPICS

- **PCPID Releases Report on Direct Support Workforce**

The [President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities \(PCPID\)](#) has released its 2017 report, *America's Direct Support Workforce Crisis: Effects on People with Intellectual Disabilities, Families, Communities and the U.S. Economy*.

Direct support professionals (DSPs) provide services and supports that empower people with intellectual disabilities to live in the community.

In the report, PCPID notes that DSPs promote participation in the U.S. economy "by helping people with an (intellectual disability) get jobs and by enabling family members to work." The report describes the current state of the DSP workforce as a "crisis," noting that the average DSP wage is \$10.72, most work two or three jobs, and the average annual DSP turnover rate is 45%.

The report also explores:

- How these issues affect individuals, families, and human services systems.
- The factors that contribute to these issues
- Promising practices to strengthen the direct support workforce

PCPID serves in an advisory capacity to the President of the United States and the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) promoting policies and initiatives that support independence and lifelong inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in their respective communities. The committee includes representatives from several federal agencies and 13 citizen members.

Read [the full report \(PDF\)](#) or [a plain-language version \(PDF\)](#).

- **Videos Highlight Healthcare Experiences of People with Disabilities**

What is the healthcare experience like for people with disabilities? And what is Disability Competent Care?

As part of their duals financial alignment initiative demonstration, the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing has produced a series of videos intended to provide insights about how people with disabilities experience the healthcare system. Developed with assistance from local experts in the state's disability communities, the video series also offers ways for providers to be more prepared in their interactions with people with disabilities while promoting compassion and understanding for everyone.

The series topics are: The Healthcare Experience for People with Disabilities, What Is Disability Competent Care, Core Values of Disabilities Competent Care, and Disability Competence in Communication Access, Programmatic Access, and Physical Access.

[View the website with all the videos.](#)

7. PROJECT SEARCH SUCCESS STORY (PARENT'S ALLIANCE EMPLOYMENT PROJECT)

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/seans-project-search-success-story-employment-project>



“Sean McCluskey was a Project SEARCH student who morphed from an overly confident teenager to a mature and independent young adult. The transition happened all within a 9 month period of time while Sean was enrolled in the Central DuPage Hospital Project SEARCH program.

Sean took the Project SEARCH program very seriously. During Sean’s first internship, Sean was a cart runner. Sean prided himself early on his speed, however, he needed to practice cart safety early on. It was great that he was fast, but he also needed to make sure he was being safe. This was especially important when Sean would approach corners in a fast manner. Sean was also frequently found texting on his phone during his first internship, and as a result, he would be coached on why this type of behavior while working was inappropriate & could potentially be harmful to others. Sean took this feedback from staff to heart & quickly changed his behavior. Sean’s ability to run carts in an effective & safe manner towards the end of his first internship allowed him to stand out to his manager, Vickie Yuskis. He was nicknamed “flash” early on by kitchen management due to his speed.

Sean went on two more internships after cart running. Sean worked in the pizza prep department and West Surgery. All of the departments had nothing but positive feedback to say in regards to Sean.

Project SEARCH staff was notified by Vickie Yuskis (Patient Services Care Manager) when a job posting for a transporter meal delivery position was posted. Sean applied right away and was hired on the spot.

Sean has been doing great since he was hired at Central DuPage Hospital. Sean has become an asset to the kitchen team, and he is always willing to work extra shifts and work in positions that are short staffed. Sean has even had the opportunity to train new Project SEARCH interns.

Sean was nominated by his peers to do the Project SEARCH 2017 graduation speech. Sean spoke in front of over 75 people. Sean wrote a poem describing his Project SEARCH journey, which he read to everyone who attended. Sean represented the Central DuPage Hospital Project SEARCH class of 2017 with pride & was a prime example of the positive impact the Project SEARCH program can have on a student who has a disability. For Sean, the experience was life changing. He not only received employment by the hospital, but he also received benefits that will help him lifelong. Sean ended his speech with so much gratitude towards everyone who helped him along the way. He perfectly summed up his Project SEARCH experience: “And sometimes you need a team to follow those dreams, and that’s exactly what project search is. We’re a team. We are an alliance. We are a team that has been shown guidance. As students, we came here looking for job experience, and now were coming out with more than just that. We aren’t slobs now, because we got jobs now.”

8. EMPLOYER CORNER

- **March 1, 2018 Deadline: Disability Employment Tracker**

The deadline to participate in the 2018 Disability Employment Tracker is March 1, 2018. Sponsored by the National Organization on Disability (NOD), this tool provides companies a confidential assessment of their disability inclusion policies and practices, providing tailored reports in four areas. By completing the 2018 survey, companies may be eligible to compete for the 2018 "NOD Leading

Disability Employer Seal" and the 2018 DiversityInc Top 50 Companies for Diversity. [Learn more about the Disability Employment Tracker.](#)

- **February 22, 2018, 1:00 p.m. ET Webinar: Intro to Accessibility: What Employers Need to Know to Create a Technology-Accessible Workplace**

Today, technology is one of the central drivers of productivity, for all workers. But when technology isn't accessible, it can cause employers to miss out on potential talent. In this webinar, EARN and the Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT) will discuss the basics of accessible workplace technology and strategies for integrating accessibility standards and best practices into the workplace, as well as tips for creating accessible documents and websites. [Register for the February 22 webinar.](#)

ASKEARN.ORG SPOTLIGHT



Employer Financial Incentives

A variety of federal and state government financial incentives can help employers capitalize on the skills and talents people with disabilities. This section of the EARN website helps employers understand these different incentives by outlining federal and state tax benefits, including many that support worksite accessibility enhancements and accommodations, as well as several initiatives specific to veterans and return-to-work/stay-at-work programs. [Visit the Employer Financial Incentives webpage.](#)

9. EFSLMP SME INSIGHT, STAFFING TO PROVIDE COMPETITIVE, INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT

EFSLMP SME Insight

Staffing to Provide Competitive
Integrated Employment

Rick McAllister, M.Ed.



Rick has over 30 years of experience in consulting, training and the day-to-day managing of service-based organizations. He is a nationally recognized speaker on employment strategies, leadership, management, and designing creative and effective organizational structures. He has extensive experience providing

technical assistance to private, federal, and state sponsored employment initiatives. Rick has a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in applied behavioral analysis. He is the Managing Partner/EVP of Management Analytics Resource Collaborative, LLC, a consulting group based in New Hampshire.

Rick McAllister was featured as one of the CoP Webinar presenters in January. If you missed the webinar, you may view it [here](#).

To successfully transition from a sheltered employment paradigm to a competitive, integrated employment model that meets our Employment First mission, we need to understand the changing demands and the associated staffing challenges. The new environment is complicated by the reality that our team members are required to live in two worlds; the world of human service and the world of business. We will need team members that are cognizant of the conflicts between the two worlds and thoroughly understand the complexities of each.

Organizational climate, a mission with vision and clarity, values, ethics, reputation and customer responsiveness, consistent and fair policies and procedures all influence recruitment (attracting and hiring the right people) and retention (keeping the right people). Beyond these fundamentals, we need staffing strategies that are tied to specific job competencies. The most

effective recruitment process, which produces the best job match, is the outcome achieved from clarity regarding individual roles within the organization. Additionally, by targeting desirable attributes, business acumen and the experiences required to successfully perform the job, we have a solid foundation from which to build.

Once the recruitment process has been successfully completed, appropriate staff orientation and development is essential to provide for long-term retention. In-house training linked to a competency-based job description, regular supervision and mentoring, a performance management system to track staff growth, performance evaluations and incentives based on skill acquisition and competency based outcomes are critical tools to this end. To be most effective, staff development activities should be clearly in alignment with organizational goals.

An integral component of effective development and retention of a staff is the role of the mid-level manager. Mentoring and coaching of individuals in this challenging position has a trickle-down effect on the support and development they provide to the staff they supervise and to the quality and consistency of the services delivered. Managers are a critical resource in an organization as they not only provide stability and continuity; they are uniquely positioned to affect all phases of service delivery. The effective training and development of middle-level directors and managers is not a one-time training program or effort. To build a high performing and sustainable employment program the combination of best practice approaches and tools must be combined with an ongoing systematic mentoring and coaching process. Having ready resources, including a strong network of colleagues in similar roles, is empowering and builds confidence and engagement.

In summary, best practice steps recommended for a successful transition include: 1) an initial and then ongoing assessment of the needs, current strengths and weaknesses of both the organization and its staff; 2) the establishment of targeted team and management competencies; 3) the provision of targeted training and mentoring for mid-level managers and team members; 4) the creation of team developed standard operating procedures and consistently used tool; and 5) the establishment of a competency based team member development and performance feedback process.