

## New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network Year One Narrative Progress Report

The New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network (NY SCION) pilot project funding was announced in October 2021. The project began on January 1, 2022 and will end on December 31, 2026. At the time of this report writing (February 2023), 25 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) are participating in NY SCION. Each participating LWDB has their own Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC), serving 42 counties across New York State (NYS). It is projected that by the end of year two, four additional DRCs will be hired, bringing total coverage in NYS to 29 DRCs serving 44 counties. The following LWDBs have partnered with NYS DOL to recruit and hire the following DRCs:

LWDB	DRC	LWDB	DRC
<b>Allegany-Cattaraugus Workforce Development Board (Allegany-Cattaraugus)</b>	Marsha Whitsell	<b>Niagara County Workforce (Niagara)</b>	Marilyn Patterson
<b>Broome-Tioga Workforce (Broome)</b>	Randall Cook	<b>North Country Workforce Partnership (North Country)</b>	Jordan LeBlanc
<b>Capital Region Workforce (Capital Region)</b>	John Banas	<b>CNY Works (Onondaga)</b>	Erin McDonald
<b>Chenango/Delaware/Otsego Workforce (CDO)</b>	Kathy DeAngelo	<b>Orange Works (Orange)</b>	Veronica Jones
<b>Chautauqua Works (Chautauqua)</b>	Austin Tipping	<b>Oswego County Workforce (Oswego)</b>	Recently vacated – to be filled in late February 2023 (Tori Wilson)
<b>Columbia Greene Workforce (Columbia-Greene)</b>	Danielle Palleschi	<b>Town of Oyster Bay/Glen Cove Workforce Partnership (Oyster Bay)</b>	Leanne Allocca
<b>Dutchess One Stop (Dutchess)</b>	Jacki McLoughlin	<b>St. Lawrence County One Stop (St. Lawrence)</b>	Recently vacated – to be filled in late February 2023 (Andy Foster)
<b>Finger Lakes Works (Finger Lakes)</b>	David Kelley	<b>Suffolk County Department of Labor, Licensing, and Consumer Affairs (Suffolk)</b>	Kenneth Klassert Timothy Carew
<b>Fulton/Montgomery/Schoharie Workforce (FMS)</b>	John Goldswier	<b>Sullivan County Workforce (Sullivan)</b>	Kathleen Poitras
<b>HempsteadWorks (Hempstead)</b>	Maria Lombardi	<b>Tompkins Workforce New York (Tompkins)</b>	Cassidy Stanley
<b>Herkimer/Madison/Oneida Workforce (HMO)</b>	Kelly Manley	<b>Ulster Works (Ulster)</b>	Michael Thomason
<b>Jefferson-Lewis Workforce (Jefferson)</b>	Recently vacated – to be filled in late February 2023 (Stephanie Harris)	<b>Yonkers Workforce (Yonkers)</b>	David Barclay
<b>Rochester Works (Monroe)</b>	Lindsay Murphy		

The specific goals and tasks of the NY SCION pilot are to

- Improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, ages 18 and older, using existing training and career pathways program, Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs), Ticket to Work (TTW), asset development, and other promising and proven interventions;
- Expand access to available career services provided in the NYS Career Center network to job seekers with disabilities;
- Support and expand partnerships, collaboration, service coordination, and service delivery across multiple education, workforce, disability, and career pathways programs; and
- Support evaluation, sustainability planning, and implementation strategies including partnership development, business and funder outreach, and revenue identification.

This report provides a complete overview of implementation activities and accomplishments across the 25 LWDB sites. The full scope and breadth of achievements to date cannot be captured in this short report. This report summarizes activities completed during the period of performance.

The NY SCION pilot project funding began on January 1, 2022, and will end on December 31, 2026. Since funding was issued, the NYSDOL Special Populations Disability Unit (SPDU) has actively worked with 25 LWDBs to:

- Serve 45,000 people with disabilities in NYS via Career Center services and workforce development systems by December 31, 2026;
- Increase enrollment of customers in Career Center services;
- Increase the assignment of quality tickets under the TTW Program; and
- Increase the number of positive employment outcomes under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA).

## **Scope of Implementation Activities**

All LWDBs have been tasked with the development of local NY SCION Implementation Plans. Initial plans were finalized in April of 2022 and were designed to address the following priorities:

- Business and jobseeker outreach, education, training, and engagement;
- Disability awareness, program, communication, and digital accessibility;
- Job skill development, work experience placement, and retention;
- Benefits advisement, service coordination, and intervention strategies; and
- Program evaluation and sustainability.

Outcomes to date have been included in the tables on the following page. Data reflected represents six months of activities from the pilot project.

NY SCION Outcomes		#
Total number of adults with disabilities (ages 18+) served		4,967
Total number of adults with disabilities receiving core and intensive services		3,922
Total number of adults with disabilities entering Career Pathways training		93
Total number of adults with disabilities completing Career Pathways training		34
Total number receiving an industry-recognized/post-secondary certificate		77
Total number of adults with disabilities entering unsubsidized employment		943
Retention rate (180 days+)		-
Participants who received work experience under the WIOA Participation Period		56
Core Indicators of Performance		
Employment Rate (Q2)		
Denominator	Numerator	Rate
1,925	-	0.00%
Employment Rate (Q4)		
Denominator	Numerator	Rate
1,925	-	0.00%
Median Earnings (Q2)		
0	-	-
Credential		
Denominator	Numerator	Rate
97	62	63.92%

Please note that the data above only includes the 25 areas that were able to participate in NY SCION implementation.

As of December 30, 2022, over **414 people with disabilities have received direct service intervention by DRCs** in their respective Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs).<sup>1</sup>

LWDBs spent the initial months of the project (January 1, 2022, to April 30, 2022) addressing state and local procurement and hiring requirements. Some DRCs were onboarded as late as July 1, 2022 due to these requirements.

## Initial Project Implementation

- LWDBs spent the initial months of the project (January 1, 2022 to April 30, 2022) addressing state and local procurement and hiring requirements.
- Some DRCs were onboarded as late as July 1, 2022.
- Three areas advised that too many local administrative challenges exist to fully and effectively participate in this project.
- Five areas received funding but encountered administrative challenges, and as a result, have not yet hired or procured the services of a DRC.
  - As of January 2023, two of these areas have decided to opt out, as they expect

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<sup>1</sup> Reported data is derived from the bi-weekly OSOS participant and expenditure data.

administrative challenges to continue well into 2023.

- The remaining three areas have advised that they still intend to hire/procure the services of a DRC once administrative delays are resolved.
- Six areas have encountered DRC turnover due to a variety of factors including promotion and transfer.
  - Two areas recently lost their DRCs due to resignation and are in the process of considering whether they will be able to continue with the project given the administrative challenges they will face in replacing them.

## Highlights of Pilot Site Activity

- DRCs engaged with over 400 businesses between county chambers of commerce meetings, job fairs, resource fairs, and other specialized events.
- All DRCs are certified, or in the process of becoming certified, benefits advisors/work incentive counselors to provide said services to Social Security Disability beneficiaries.
- Bi-Monthly Project Council meetings are coordinated by the Hempstead/Long Beach DRC and LWDB. This continues to be an ideal venue for collaboration and information dissemination. Approximately 30 participants attend each meeting.
- DRCs have formed a collaborative DRC Connections Virtual Group. The group is an information-sharing and resource group comprised of DRCs that cover 18 counties.
- DRCs organized a training of their own, contracting with Niagara University's Disability Awareness trainer, David Whalen. Over 60 people attended, representing a wide array of agencies including the NYS Education Department's Adult Career and Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR), QUESTAR, The Justice Center, and NYSDOL. DRCs representing 13 LWDBs also participated.
- LWDBs have implemented staff training on topics including disability etiquette; the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and reasonable accommodations; programmatic and digital accessibility, and strategies to effectively serve individuals with disabilities. LWDBs are also in the process of providing similar training and information sessions for business.
- All LWDBs have been tasked to create a sustainability plan to develop long-term goals and strategies to continue the NY SCION activities and partnerships.

## State-Level Activity

SPDU developed and facilitated a five-week NY SCION DRC Training webinar series in collaboration with staff from the NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs (Justice Center) Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (TRAID) Program and DRCs from **CDO** and **Hempstead**.

The series included five pre-recorded modules that addressed:

1. The role of the DRC;

2. Requirements under WIOA, programmatic and communication accessibility, reasonable accommodation universal design, and disability etiquette;
3. The purpose and use of the Integrated Resource Team (IRT);
4. Customer and business engagement strategies, and outreach examples; and
5. Integrated service delivery and benefits advisement.

Additional trainings were conducted on Reasonable Accommodations and Disability Rights in School and Work in October and November of 2022. Trainings were facilitated by Melinda Dolezal, Director of the Justice Center’s TRAIID Program and staff from AIM Independent Living Center. Director Dolezal also conducted two presentations on the topics of assistive technology and digital accessibility.

SPDU also worked collaboratively with **Hempstead** staff to offer 5.5 hours of specialized training to support DRCs to better serve people with and without disabilities that identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ+). Training identified social and cultural challenges that people who identify as LGBTQ+ face, provided a review of the needs of customers, and reviewed strategies and practices that support the provision of inclusive services.

SPDU and staff from the New York Employment Services System (NYESS) held periodic NY SCION “Office Hours” to provide technical assistance to NY SCION DRCs and to address programmatic questions related to NY SCION, the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS) case management system, and the TTW Program.

SPDU holds one-on-one and group calls with DRCs to offer ongoing support, resources, and guidance. A Questions and Answers (Q&A) document was also developed to address emerging questions as the pilot proceeds. This document is updated periodically and is shared with DRCs. The intent of the Q &A document is to provide a cumulative record of technical assistance provided under NY SCION.

SPDU also worked with DRCs from **Monroe, Onondaga, and CDO** to conduct a presentation promoting National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) and the NY SCION pilot project for NYSDOL employees and LWDB partners.

## **Pilot Site Activity**

### **Partnership Development and Collaboration**

All LWDBs and DRCs have actively engaged in partnership development and/or enhancement with local VR, disability, and human service agencies, as well as businesses. LWDB partnership development has focused on improving awareness of the NY SCION pilot program, Career Center services, development of customer referral agreements between agencies, and promoting TTW.

All DRCs have engaged with partner agencies including the ACCES-VR and the NYS Office of

Children and Family Services (OCFS) Commission for the Blind (NYSCB), as well as their affiliated contract agencies; local Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) programs; local community colleges and universities; Centers for Independent Living (CILs); county departments of social services; local mental health offices; and Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS) programs and other local recovery programs.

DRC Banas and the **Capital Region** have established a new working relationship and referral system with Living Resources, an ACCES-VR vendor that offers employment services and community living programs within Albany and Schenectady counties, as well as the Capital District Educational Opportunity Center, an extension of Hudson Valley Community College, which offers Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) and short-term training programs. Customer referrals continue from ongoing relationships with Schenectady Community Support Center (CDPC), Ellis PROS, Samaritan Hospital PROS, and Rensselaer County Mental Health.

**Jefferson**<sup>2</sup> established a collaborative relationship with staff at Anchor Recovery Center of Northern New York. Anchor Recovery provides services for persons in all stages of recovery, including those seeking treatment, as well as family members impacted by addiction. Another notable partnership includes Fort Drum's CW Resources. CW Resources is a national employer who is contracted to provide employment opportunities to persons with disabilities, veterans, and economically disadvantaged individuals in Fort Drum. The new partnership was established to help TTW customers gain employment.

A notable partnership established by DRC Cook and **Broome** includes a local Digital Divide program, which refurbishes donated laptops to people with disabilities and other underserved groups. DRC Cook has developed a working relationship with NY Connects. Local NY Connects programs provide information and referral on available services and support options for senior citizens, individuals of all ages with disabilities, and caregivers.

DRC Cook also works collaboratively with the Opportunity Impact Training Program (OITP) in Binghamton. OITP services include providing training for individuals in advanced manufacturing employment opportunities. Individuals of various backgrounds (including NY SCION-eligible participants) are screened and participate in four weeks of classroom instruction followed by guaranteed interviews with participating businesses. To date, this program has resulted in at least two long-term employment placements for individuals with disabilities. This program also provides supportive services, some funded by TTW funds, to assist trainees to attend classes and start employment.

DRC Cook also works collaboratively with the Family and Children's Society Vocational Initiatives Program. The program assists individuals with mental health needs to obtain and maintain employment. Collaborative services include benefits advisement and a broad range of job search services facilitated by DRC Cook.

DRC Lombardi and **Hempstead** have formed a new collaboration with People's Alliance Federal

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<sup>2</sup> The DRC at Jefferson left the DRC position in September 2022 for career advancement opportunities.

Credit Union. Hempstead and People’s Alliance are exploring strategies to provide financial literacy training to enrolled participants of NY SCION.

DRC LeBlanc and **North Country** have solidified partnerships with the North Country Center for Independence, ACCES-VR, the North Country Chamber of Commerce, and TDC (formerly the Development Corporation), a regional industrial non-profit.

DRC LeBlanc worked collaboratively with DRCs from **Columbia-Greene** and **HMO** to launch and convene a DRC Connections Virtual group, an information-sharing and resource group comprised of membership that covers 18 counties.

DRC Allocca (**Oyster Bay**), DRC Lombardi (**HemsteadWorks**), and DRCs Klassert and Carew (**Suffolk**) meet periodically and exchange resources to serve customers with disabilities and businesses on Long Island. These DRCs will continue to collaborate on the development of future outreach events.

DRC Kelley and **Finger Lakes** have been working with local representatives from ACCES-VR, NYSCB, and other service providers such as the Youth Advocate Program, Inc., and Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes to formulate future training for job developers and businesses. Training topics under development include Strategies for Working with Youth with Disabilities and Youth with Disabilities and Justice Involvement.

A notable partnership developed by DRC McDonald and **Onondaga** is the InclusiveU/Taishoff Center, a program that connects students with developmental disabilities to an inclusive college experience at Syracuse University.

DRC Jones and **Orange** worked closely with The Mid-Hudson Security School to assist them in becoming an established vendor with Orange. DRC Jones also participates on the Women’s Enrichment Group which is hosted by Orange County District Attorney’s Office. Through this participation, DRC Jones provides information about subjects including work incentives, federal bonding, how to gather evidence of rehabilitation, disability and disclosure, and Career Center services.

DRC Allocca and **Oyster Bay** is currently working with both the Viscardi Center and Abilities Inc. to create a partnership through their Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). DRC Allocca recently toured the Viscardi Center facilities and was invited to meet with the career employment counselors and job developer.

Several DRCs have also engaged with their local Chambers of Commerce.

DRC Clothier-Johnson and **St. Lawrence** developed a working relationship with the local Volunteer Transportation Center (VTC) to introduce their First Mile, Last Mile Program to customers. The program dispatches volunteer drivers to pick up a passenger at their home and drive them to the nearest bus stop.

DRC Clothier-Johnson has met with a representative from SeaComm Federal Credit Union to offer financial literacy training for NY SCION participants. DRC Clothier-Johnson has conducted

project outreach through the St. Lawrence Department of Social Services Temporary Assistance and Medical Services Units, which has resulted in customer referrals.

### **General Outreach: Business and Community Engagement**

All 25 LWDBs have created NY SCION and TTW Program outreach materials including brochures.

DRC Allocca and **Oyster Bay** developed customized fliers titled, Individuals who are Legally Blind. Translated versions of the brochure were also produced for Spanish-speaking customers.

All DRCs are conducting presentations to inform local businesses, as well as human and disability service providers, about NY SCION goals and activities. Presentations typically provide an overview of Career Center services, the role of the DRC, career pathways in in-demand industries (e.g., manufacturing, health care), and local resources. Educational sessions are also being planned on topics including serving youth with disabilities and individuals with disabilities who have been involved with the criminal justice system.

**Chautauqua**<sup>3</sup> participated in a local Chamber of Commerce monthly networking event called Business After Hours. The event included an informational session on Career Center services and the TTW program.

DRCs Klassert and Carew and **Suffolk** have conducted presentations on incentives for businesses to hire people with disabilities. Presentations also included a virtual session called Hire for a Higher Purpose. The session promoted the benefits of hiring people diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The presentation educated business representatives about ASD and observed that autistic adults are less likely than other disability groups to find employment after graduation. The presentation also highlighted best practices that businesses can implement to support autistic workers.

DRC Poitras and **Sullivan** developed and launched a Disability Services page on their website. The page provides local businesses and partner agencies with information about services available at the Sullivan County Career Center.

All LWDBs and DRCs are conducting outreach and education activities for job seekers with disabilities and businesses on disability sensitivity, the ADA, reasonable accommodations, and TTW in an effort to increase enrollment of individuals with disabilities in Career Center services.

DRC Murphy and **Monroe** have finalized a workshop series for businesses which started in January 2023. The series will conclude with a local job fair focused on hiring individuals with disabilities. Monthly workshops will be held covering topics such as disability etiquette, recruiting individuals with disabilities, reasonable accommodations, assistive technology, employment supports, and other related topics. Featured speakers include staff from the

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<sup>3</sup> Chautauqua experienced staff transitions related to the DRC in September of 2022. A new DRC was onboarded in late September.



Northeast ADA Center, Cornell's Institute on Employment and Disability, and ACCES-VR. **Monroe** has also begun offering a workshop held twice a month, called (dis)ABILITY Job Search Group for job seekers with disabilities to strategize their job search and network.

All LWDBs have sponsored, supported, and engaged in local career expos and job fairs comprised of businesses in hospitality, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and finance.

DRC Allocca and **Oyster Bay** hosted a job fair in late October, where 35 businesses from the hospitality, health care, finance, and law enforcement industries attended.

**Oswego** hosted a job fair at the end of September 2022 that showcased 38 local businesses. Oswego also participated in an advanced manufacturing hiring event sponsored by Cayuga Community College. A trade fair and resource fair for veterans with disabilities was also conducted in November 2022.

**Chautauqua** established a collaborative relationship with Prendergast Library. The DRC participated in a library-sponsored outreach event and provided information about TTW. Chautauqua staff also attended local job fairs that represented over 40 local businesses.

DRC Stanley and **Tompkins** co-sponsored an event titled MADE: Manufacturing and Development Expo which was held in October 2022 in conjunction with National Manufacturing Day. MADE is designed to help identify new career pathways in manufacturing and is geared toward high school students with and without disabilities at Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga (TST) BOCES, and Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3). The purpose of the event is to showcase modern manufacturing careers. A total of 127 youth with and without disabilities from eight local schools in Tompkins and Cortland Counties attended the event. A total of 48 businesses were represented at the event.

**Tompkins** was also one of several agencies to sponsor an annual World of Skills job fair. 100 job seekers with and without disabilities attended. The job fair also had over 30 local businesses represented.

**Columbia-Greene** hosted an in-person and virtual event featuring Niagara University's Disability Awareness trainer, David Whalen. This training was designed to sensitize and educate the audience on all aspects of disabilities, including definitions of disabilities, etiquette and interaction skills, stigma and misperceptions, proactive approaches to community inclusion and integration, the ADA, and overcoming barriers through advocacy. More than 65 people attended, representing a wide array of agencies including ACCES-VR, QUESTAR, The Justice Center, and NYS DOL. DRCs representing 13 LWDBs also participated.

**Columbia-Greene** also hosted an Interagency Awareness Day in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension, Greene County Rural Health, and Columbia County Department of Health. The in-person event was designed to increase collaboration and partnership development between 38 human service agencies in Columbia and Greene County. A total of 125 people attended the event.

**FMS** co-sponsored a Community Resources Conference in collaboration with Fulton

Montgomery Community College and the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce. The key themes of the conference included how to identify and overcome barriers. Over 60 businesses, service providers, and community leaders from Fulton, Montgomery, and Capital District counties participated. This event provided local businesses the opportunity to receive information on what services, education, and training resources are available within their local workforce systems.

**FMS** collaborated with **HMO** to co-host a virtual lunch and learn workshop. The workshop featured a presentation titled ADA Policies in the Workplace from local representatives from ACCES-VR and the Regional Workforce Development and Business Relations Coordinator for Utica and the Southern Tier. The audience for this event included over 30 local business leaders, human resource representatives, and recruiters.

DRC Patterson and the **Niagara** Inclusion Committee supported development, registration, and follow-up for workshops (e.g., Microsoft Accessibility Tools) and events promoting accessibility. There were 39 local businesses represented. Other sessions will focus on how a local business can establish, maintain, and build diversity, equity inclusion and accessibility in local workforce.

**Niagara** also offered a virtual workshop titled Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Business: What, How, and Why. The session addressed accommodating diverse populations in employment settings, including customers with disabilities that identify themselves as LGBTQ+. The event was attended by 46 individuals representing 32 local businesses.

**Dutchess** conducted a business roundtable event for 40 businesses on November 2, 2022. Representatives from Nuvance Health, Fidelis Care, Amazon, Express Employment Professionals, Gateway Hudson Valley, and several other organizations attended. The focus of the roundtable was to promote the benefits of hiring people with disabilities. The featured speakers for the event included Wendy Strobel Gower, Director of Disability-Inclusive Workplaces and Employer Initiatives at ILR School at Cornell University, and Cait Rosica of Neurodiversity Hub.

**Dutchess** is also launching a podcast. Six episodes have been recorded. Featured guests include Mercy Turugh and Cecilia Cook from Smart Staffing Group, which works with youth in Dutchess County who have disabilities. Guests have promoted effective practices supporting youth to find appropriate jobs and internships. Future podcasts will feature Dutchess County Executive, Marcus Molinaro, to talk about the county's Think Differently Initiative.

DRC Murphy and **RochesterWorks** host a monthly Disability Resource Hour. These monthly sessions are geared toward local human, community, disability, and education service providers including the Arc of Monroe, Goodwill Vision Enterprises, Empowering People's Independence (EPI), NYSCB, ACCES-VR, and several others. Meetings to date have covered topics including disability disclosure in hiring and related processes, understanding benefits, TTW, and local agency resource presentations.

DRC Barclay and **Yonkers** have been working closely with local school districts and staff to inform teachers and family members about Career Center services. DRC Barclay was invited to

join the Roosevelt High School Job Fair Committee. Roosevelt High School conducted a job fair on November 17, 2022 for high school students with and without disabilities that promoted employment opportunities in the Healthcare and Information Technology industries.

### **LWDB and Interagency Committees and Local Coalition Participation**

DRC Patterson attends the “First Bank on Niagara” committee. This committee was established to minimize barriers to banking access and integrating government and employers to improve banking access and usage.

DRC Patterson and **Niagara** are collaborating with the Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Buffalo and Niagara to conduct the “Bank On” program. The program is designed to ensure that everyone has access to safe and affordable bank or credit union accounts.

DRC Patterson collaborated with a local business’s human resources director, who conducts presentations regarding Disability, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) topics. The director presented at a Morning Start Series workshop on the topic of Hiring without Bias on October 12, 2022. A total of 23 Human Resource Directors, assistants, and generalists attended the event. The Director will also present Driving Change at the next Niagara County LWDB Inclusion Committee workshop. The session will describe the business experience of developing DEIA policies and programs. The session is scheduled for February 15, 2023.

DRC Goldswor is a member of the Glove City Coalition, which is a youth-focused and community-driven collaboration of local service providers and government organizations of Gloversville. The coalition’s mission is to work together to prevent, guide, and support the next generation of youth in the Fulton County region. DRC Goldswor participates on the coalition to educate members about disability employment opportunities, benefits, and work incentives.

DRC Thomason participates in monthly Ulster County Transition Council meetings chaired by the director of employment services at Resource Center for Accessible Living (RCAL). The Ulster Country Transition Council is a group of voluntary members representing Ulster County schools, post-secondary education programs, and adult service agencies. The goal of the meetings are to inform school districts, students, and families of available post-school options and the means to obtain services. This group leverages employment resources as a team to share collective knowledge to support transition of youth.

DRC DeAngelo participates in sub-committees of the Otsego County Human Services Council and the Delaware County Human Services Council. The committees meet quarterly and offer short presentations about local programs, services, or events. Participating agencies include Catskill Center for Independence, ARC, Rehabilitation Support Services, Inc., Springbrook, and the Department of Social Services.

DRC Blessing Whitsell recently joined the local Recovery Options Employment Coalition. The group will focus on best practices for employment retention for individuals with mental health disabilities.

### **Local Workgroups and Steering Committees**

DRC McDonald and **Onondaga** are working with representatives from Onondaga Community College to run the Inclusive Opportunity Workgroup. The Inclusive Opportunity Workgroup was originally established in March 2022 with a goal to engage key partners such as ACCES-VR and Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES in NY SCION activities, and to collaborate on projects to assist individuals with disabilities in all stages of the workforce system. Partners convened in October to discuss formal implementation of IRTs.

DRC Thomason and **Ulster** participate in a local group that is comprised of the Ulster Vocational Steering Committee and Bringing Agencies Together. Bringing Agencies Together is a grassroots forum that meets six times a year to develop collaboration among not-for profits including arts, education, environment, faith-based services, and health and human services. Presentations typically provide an overview of Career Center Services, the role of the DRC, benefits advisement, career pathways and local resources.

DRC McLoughlin and **Dutchess** have formed an advisory group for NY SCION. **Dutchess** is currently in the process of developing a Train-the-Trainer initiative. Activities will be designed to train businesses to mentor new staff. Goals will also include training front line staff to mentor people with disabilities seeking employment and to develop the ability to work with businesses directly.

**Dutchess** is also meeting with community partners including IBM and SUNY New Paltz to examine the creation of a Neurodiversity Hub for the Hudson Valley region to connect neurodiverse individuals to employment.

**HempsteadWorks** collaborates with NYSDOL to host quarterly NY SCION Project Council meetings. The Project Council provides a forum for DRCs and representatives from NYSCB, ACCES-VR, TRAIID, and other agency partners to share information, network, and offer informational sessions on topics including career pathways, assistive technology, digital accessibility, and multiple other topics. An average of 26 representatives participate in the quarterly meetings.

### **Career Pathways**

**North Country** has developed a career orientation program called Authentic STEM (Science, Tech, Engineering and Math). Authentic STEM is an international education and workforce development program connecting local students with students in Germany. Students work as “solver teams” using a STEM-based curriculum and a problem-solving approach to answer challenges faced by local businesses. **North Country** works with the local BOCES and school districts to serve and engage with underrepresented populations in STEM, including people with disabilities, women, and people from racial and ethnic minorities. The goal of the Authentic STEM program is to serve 150 students over the next three years.

**Columbia-Greene** is launching a Workplace Professionalism Micro Credential pilot. This 12-month pilot program will provide an adapted and SUNY-approved micro-credential to two cohorts comprised of students with intellectual disabilities. The micro-credential spans more than ten modules, and a sample of skills that students will learn includes professionalism,

effective communication, teamwork, customer service, and self-advocacy. Leading up to the micro-credential, which is scheduled to begin in January 2023, special education students spent the fall semester exploring a variety of career opportunities on the college campus. Through demonstrations and hands-on experiences, students were exposed to multiple in-demand employment sectors, including health care and construction technology. Students also utilized Virtual Job Shadow and CareerZone. This program was developed by Columbia-Greene Workforce in collaboration with Columbia-Greene Community College's Office of Community Engagement and Professional Development. The micro-credential curriculum was developed by Columbia-Greene Community College's Office of Career Success.

**Niagara** and DRC Patterson are collaborating with the Independent Contractors' Guild. The Guild is offering a new NYS Registered Apprenticeship training facility in Niagara Falls. This facility offers training in welding, general construction, and heavy equipment operation. DRC Patterson established a working relationship with the Director of Students regarding supports for students with disabilities. The Director and DRC Patterson are exploring service delivery strategies to best serve program participants that disclose disability-related needs.

### **Benefits Advisement**

All DRCs have received or are in the process of receiving the Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) credential from Virginia Commonwealth University or the WIP-C™ credential from Cornell University.

### **Customer Successes**

Examples of customer successes resulting from NY SCION follow:

Ongoing collaboration facilitated by DRC Jones and **Orange** with Pathstone, a community resource and senior employment program, resulted in two new Ticket assignments for the Orange EN. The two new ticket holders also secured full-time employment.

DRC Patterson and **Niagara** supported interdepartmental collaboration which resulted in a customer receiving mobility training job search and transportation assistance. The customer recently started part-time employment and is receiving supportive services from the Niagara Youth program.

DRC Clothier-Johnson and **St. Lawrence** collaborated with St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES to assist two customers with disabilities to enroll in GED preparation classes as the first step toward gainful employment. Ongoing collaboration with the local Department of Social Services employment unit has resulted in two people becoming employed.

DRC Banas and the **Capital Region** supported a customer with a disability that began working at St. Peter's Hospital in October. The customer receives collaborative support from DRC Banas; SPARC Rotterdam, an outpatient substance abuse treatment program; and ACCES-VR for American Sign Language interpreter services. The customer is participating in a WIOA-funded training in phlebotomy. DRC Banas is working with the customer and family members to establish an ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) account in order to continue to provide

housing support.

DRC Thomason and **Ulster** facilitated an IRT that resulted in a customer learning to use local paratransit to support their employment goals. The customer has successfully secured and maintained part-time employment at a local Walmart.

DRC Blessing Whitsell and **Cattaraugus-Allegany** supported a customer with a disability to obtain their commercial driver's license and secure employment. As a result of this success, the customer plans to enroll at the local community college.

DRC DeAngelo and **CDO** collaborated with the Otsego County Chamber of Commerce to establish a paid work experience for a customer with a disability. As a result of the customer's success in the paid work experience, the chamber is exploring opportunities to hire the individual.

Through an IRT, DRC Barclay and **Yonkers** supported a customer that was seeking part-time employment. A partnership was established with Inclusive Links, a nonprofit corporation that provides respite care and Medicaid service coordination for individuals with developmental disabilities. The customer needed job readiness training and service coordination. As a result of information and support provided by DRC Barclay and Inclusive Links, the customer is working part time at DeCicco & Sons, a local grocery store.

DRC McDonald and **CNY Works** supported a customer to convene an IRT. The goal of the IRT was to explore available employment placements and to secure needed job coach supports. Outcomes from the IRT included coordinating job coaching support and facilitating part-time employment placement as a housekeeper at a local hotel.

### **Building Career Center Staff Capacity**

All LWDBs have implemented staff training on topics including disability etiquette; the ADA and reasonable accommodations; programmatic and digital accessibility, and strategies to effectively serve individuals with disabilities. LWDBs are also in the process of providing similar training and information sessions for business. Examples of additional capacity building activities follow:

DRC Allocca and **Oyster Bay** coordinated with Director Dolezal from the Justice Center's TRAIID Program to host a webinar for seven employment counselors and two job developers. The session provided an overview of the TRAIID program including the provision of training on assistive technology and providing short term equipment loans at no cost and demonstration of assistive technology to compare different devices.

**North Country** and **HMO** are collaborating to develop a series of Career Center trainings. The series will cover topic including but not limited to disability etiquette, outreach best practices, and strategies to make career exploration and career pathways more accessible to people with disabilities.

### **Ticket to Work (TTW)**

At the direction of the Governor's office, NYSDOL continues its alliance with the NYESS AEN, spearheaded by the NYS Office of Mental Health and NYSDOL. This AEN operates by tapping into the 200+ providers linked within the NYESS network. Nearly all LWDB partners are provider affiliates under the NYESS AEN, generating outcome and milestone payments for their local areas, and for NYS as a whole.

As indicated earlier in this report, NYSDOL and NYESS are collaborating on a bi-weekly basis to help support DRCs. Kerry Wiley (WPS1) and Alan Gallagher (WPS3) from NYSDOL's SPDU recently received security clearance by the Social Security Administration to access the NYESS Ticket to Work Tab, as well as NYESS's Work Incentive Navigator and Reports system to access TTW-related data, including participant milestones, outcomes, and payments to LWDB Provider affiliates under the NYESS AEN. Due to standard SSA processing timelines, which result in a lag, revenue data will be presented in our Year Two Report.

### **Sustainability**

All LWDBs have been tasked to create a sustainability plan to develop long-term goals and strategies to continue the NY SCION activities and partnerships.

SPDU is planning a series of Technical Assistance Forums on the topic of sustainability beginning in January 2023 and continuing through May. SPDU is seeking to build a strong statewide network of DRCs to demonstrate the long-term efficacy of the DRC position. SPDU is currently exploring regional models of sustainability in the context of the Governor's ten [Regional Economic Development Councils](#) and staff are also exploring recently released federal technical assistance opportunities to support the continuation of NY SCION.

NYSDOL Central Office and NYESS staff have both advised DRCs that TTW cannot be the only funding source for sustainability. While NYSDOL does not have a prescriptive approach or strategy for long-term sustainability at this time, Central Office staff have been exploring sustainability in the following ways:

- Participating on various state-level interagency committees and workgroups, such as the Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council and Olmstead Workgroup, which is overseen by the Governor's Chief Disability Officer;
- Co-leading a WIOA Training & Accessibility Assistance Workgroup (TAAG) comprised of staff from the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance, Office for the Aging, NYSCB, ACCES-VR, and the Justice Center;
- Conducting informational NY SCION presentations to advocacy groups and other stakeholders (e.g., The New York Alliance on Inclusion and Innovation and ACCES-VR's State Rehabilitation Council);
- Working with the NYSDOL Grants and Solicitations Unit to identify and apply for public/private and governmental funding for sustainability; and
- Providing updates to NYSDOL Senior Management so that NY SCION activities and the efficacy of the DRC position can be communicated to executive staff.