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# **New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network Year Two Cumulative Narrative**

**January 2023 – December 2023**

**Office of Career Development and Inclusion**

## New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network (NY SCION) Year Two Cumulative Report

The New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network (NY SCION) project funding was announced in October 2021. The project began on January 1, 2022. As of March 2024, 27 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) are participating in NY SCION.

Each participating LWDB has its own Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC), serving forty-eight counties across New York State (NYS). New York City will join NY SCION by Spring of 2024, and it is expected that activities will fully commence by Summer of 2024. The following LWDBs have partnered with NYSDOL to implement NY SCION activities:

LWDB	DRC
Allegany-Cattaraugus Workforce Development Board (Allegany-Cattaraugus)	Marsha Whitsell
Broome-Tioga Workforce (Broome)	Randy Cooke
Capital Region Workforce Board (Capital Region)	John Banas
Chenango/Delaware/Otsego Workforce (CDO)	Angela Kelly
Chautauqua Works (Chautauqua)	Austin Tipping
Columbia Greene Workforce New York (Columbia-Greene)	Danielle Palleschi
Dutchess Career Center (Dutchess)	Jacki McLoughlin
Finger Lakes Works (Finger Lakes)	David Kelley
Fulton/Montgomery/Schoharie Workforce (FMS)	Vacant
HempsteadWorks (Hempstead)	Maria Lombardi
Herkimer/Madison/Oneida Workforce (HMO)	Nicole Sortino
Jefferson-Lewis Workforce (Jefferson)	Stephanie Harris
RochesterWorks (Monroe)	Lindsay Murphy

LWDB	DRC
Niagara County Workforce (Niagara)	Marilyn Patterson
North Country Workforce Partnership (North Country)	Jordan LeBlanc
CNY Works (Onondaga)	Erin McDonald
Orange Works (Orange)	Veronica Jones
Oswego County Workforce (Oswego)	Lisa Cashell
Town of Oyster Bay/Glen Cove Workforce Partnership (Oyster Bay)	Vacant
St. Lawrence County One Stop (St. Lawrence)	Jessica Ashley
Suffolk County Department of Labor, Licensing, and Consumer Affairs (Suffolk)	Kenneth Klassert Timothy Carew
Sullivan County Workforce (Sullivan)	Scott Curry
RocklandWorks	Daniel Moldovan
Tompkins Workforce New York (Tompkins)	Cassidy Stanley
Ulster Works (Ulster)	Michael Thomason
Yonkers Workforce (Yonkers)	David Barclay

# Advancing Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities: NY SCION Overview

## Introduction

The NY SCION pilot initiative is designed with specific goals to address the employment challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. These goals encompass:

1. **Enhancing Employment Outcomes:** Utilizing a variety of existing programs and interventions, such as training and career pathways programs, Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs), Ticket to Work (TTW), and asset development, to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities aged eighteen and older.
2. **Expanding Access to Career Services:** Increasing accessibility to career services offered within the NYS Career Center network for job seekers with disabilities.
3. **Fostering Partnerships and Collaboration:** Supporting and expanding partnerships, collaboration, service coordination, and service delivery across multiple education, workforce, disability, and career pathways programs.
4. **Ensuring Evaluation and Sustainability:** Supporting evaluation, sustainability planning, and implementation strategies, including partnership development, business and funder outreach, and revenue identification.

## Project Overview

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the implementation activities and accomplishments across all 27 Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) sites. While the report summarizes activities completed from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, it acknowledges that the full scope of achievements to date cannot be fully captured within its confines.

Since its commencement on January 1, 2022, 27 Local Workforce Development Boards have been working to achieve the following goals:

- Serving 45,000 people with disabilities in New York State via Career Center services and workforce development systems by December 31, 2026.
- Increasing the enrollment of customers in Career Center services.
- Enhancing the assignment of quality tickets under the Ticket to Work (TTW) Program.
- Augmenting the number of positive employment outcomes under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA).

## Implementation Strategies

### Objectives and Activities

Across the 27 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs), the NY SCION program has aimed to connect customers with disabilities to employment opportunities and support services through effective partnerships, outreach efforts, and training initiatives.

## Key Activities

The 27 LWDAs are actively engaged in a range of strategic activities across all regions to advance their mission. These key activities include:

1. **Outreach Activities:** The program conducts a variety of outreach efforts, such as hosting orientations, presentations, and events tailored to effectively engage the target audience.
2. **Partnership Development:** Recognizing the importance of collaboration, the program diligently fosters partnerships with diverse organizations to enhance the delivery of services and support.
3. **Direct Service Provision:** Individuals with disabilities benefit from direct services provided by the program, including benefits advisement, skills training, and comprehensive career services.
4. **Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Facilitation:** Under NY SCION, Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) actively facilitate Integrated Resource Team (IRT) meetings, which serve as a crucial forum for employment support and coordination among stakeholders.
5. **Employment Activities:** Through active engagement, the program facilitates job placements and offers ongoing support to ensure the successful maintenance of employment.

## Regional Strategies and Outcomes

Although the NY SCION program adheres to consistent overarching strategies for outreach, partnership development, training, service provision, and employment activities, the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) recognizes the necessity of adapting these strategies to suit the distinct needs and opportunities in each LWDA. Consequently, variations are evident across regions, demonstrating the program's flexibility in addressing the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities to achieve employment outcomes.

Presented below is a comprehensive overview of activities and outcomes, designed to provide valuable insights into the regional strategies employed and their resulting impacts.

## Synopsis of Regional Activities

### Capital District Workforce Development Board (Capital)

#### *Activity Highlights*

#### **Partnership Development**

During the reporting period, partnership development activities were aimed at connecting individuals with disabilities with the Career Center, hospitals, and mental health programs. A significant outreach activity was the establishment of a new partnership with the State University of New York (SUNY) - Albany Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) program, to connect beneficiaries interested in Ticket to Work with educational resources.

The new partnership with the SUNY Albany EOC focused on college admissions and financial aid advising. Additionally, there was a focus on providing occupational skills training and addressing service issues with the Social Security Administration (SSA) office.

DRC Banas also established a partnership with New York State Industries for the Disabled (NYSID), providing contracted employment opportunities for individuals with Autism. There was also an emphasis on resolving overpayment issues and supporting job retention through advocacy for transit services.

### **Direct Service Provision**

The primary service provided was benefits advising and work incentives counseling. DRC Banas played a crucial role in advising individuals on how working impacts Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Medicaid benefits.

### **Columbia Greene**

#### **Outreach**

During the reporting period, Columbia-Greene and DRC Palleschi's outreach strategies were diverse and strategically planned to maximize community engagement and awareness about Career Center and NY SCION services.

The year began with a focus on community outreach events, where the organization held three events to promote SCION services. These events utilized traditional outreach materials, such as flyers and brochures, to disseminate information.

The final quarter saw a significant ramp-up in outreach activities, with ten events held across both counties. This included outreach at a food pantry and a job fair, among other events. This period marked the highest number of outreach events and highlighted a strategic approach to reaching a wider audience.

#### **Benefits Advisement and Use of Integrated Resource Teams**

Benefits advisement service provision saw growth in its capacity to assist customers with disabilities. The development and implementation of IRTs demonstrated a commitment to a coordinated and integrated approach to service delivery. By the end of the year, IRTs were being used to coordinate referrals across partners for wraparound services.

### **Comparison between Capital and Columbia Greene**

#### **Outreach**

#### **Partnerships**

Both LWDA's have forged partnerships with several agencies to address various barriers to employment. Capital's focus on housing and services for the blind through partnerships with agencies like Joseph Mastrianni, Inc. contrasts with Columbia Greene's partnerships with educational and community organizations like Cornell Cooperative Extension. These collaborations aim to leverage resources and networks to enhance vocational training and employment opportunities.

#### **Training**

Training serves as a cornerstone in supporting employment for individuals with disabilities, with both LWDBs recognizing its importance. Columbia Greene adopts a comprehensive approach by covering a wide array of subjects, including employer and business engagement strategies and the impact of Long COVID on the workforce. In contrast, Capital's training is more tailored towards programs like Ticket to Work, focusing on navigating employment support services

effectively.

## **Employment Activities**

***Similarities Across Agencies:*** Both LWDAs actively facilitate employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, employing various strategies such as career fairs and job placement assistance. These efforts aim to directly connect jobseekers with employers and provide ongoing support services for career advancement.

***Differences Across Agencies:*** While the Capital Region Workforce Board leverages Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) for employment outcomes, Columbia Greene places a significant emphasis on career pathways and youth employment initiatives. Columbia-Greene's focus on programs like summer youth employment highlights its commitment to addressing the unique needs of young individuals with disabilities in the workforce.

### **Examples:**

Illustrating the effectiveness of collaborative efforts, Capital supported a customer referred from Ellis Mental Health Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS) to secure employment at SUNY Albany. The outcome of employment came through using the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) meeting approach.

In contrast, Columbia-Greene places a significant emphasis on career pathways through placing NY SCION participants in micro-credentials programs and supporting youth employment.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Diverse Training Approaches:** The Capital region focuses on specific employment facilitation programs like Ticket to Work, while Columbia Greene offers a broader spectrum of training topics, indicating a more comprehensive approach to workforce readiness.
- **Targeted Employment Activities:** Both regions actively engage in facilitating employment through various activities. Capital leverages IRTs for direct employment outcomes, whereas Columbia-Greene emphasizes career pathways and events like career fairs to support employment readiness and employment opportunities.
- **Direct Service Provision and Employment Activities:** The Capital Region highlighted the role of Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) in facilitating employment, particularly for clients from Ellis Mental Health PROS and referrals from LifePlan and the Community Support Center. Columbia Greene focused on benefits advisement, employer tours, mock interviews, and organizing career fairs, with a notable emphasis on supporting students through a micro-credentials program and summer youth employment.

Both regions are committed to improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities through varied strategies. Capital's approach is more targeted towards specific partnerships and engagement. Columbia-Greene in contrast, adopts a broader strategy that includes extensive training and community collaboration, with a strong focus on youth and education.

## **Fulton, Montgomery, Schoharie (FMS)**

### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Outreach**

FMS enhanced its community impact by actively participating in a reentry fair at a correctional facility. The DRC offered reentry resources to around 50 individuals with disabilities. FMS and the DRC also organized a large regional job fair, which brought together over sixty businesses and attracted more than 250 jobseekers, including about seventy individuals with disabilities. By providing crucial information on disability services, FMS played a key role in connecting jobseekers with disabilities to potential employers and businesses, promoting more informed and supportive hiring practices.

Building on these efforts, FMS engaged with educational and workforce partners to initiate collaborative projects focused on career exploration and creating accessible career paths. This collaborative work led to the organization of two reverse job fairs, a novel approach that reimagines the traditional career fair format. In the reverse job fairs, the jobseekers, including those with disabilities, were given the opportunity to set up their own booths to highlight their skills, experiences, and projects.

This reversal of roles allowed jobseekers to present their capabilities in a detailed way and offered employers the chance to directly observe the talent and skills on offer.

### **Partnership Development**

Collaboration with the Chambers of Commerce:

Outcomes of the collaboration with Chambers of Commerce included:

- **Resource Development and Dissemination:** The creation of a Disability Resource Guide for Businesses, spearheaded by the FMS Workforce Board in partnership with ACCES-VR, provided businesses with essential information on supporting employees with disabilities. This guide serves as a valuable tool for businesses looking to create more inclusive workplaces.
- **Increased Employment Opportunities:** Through events like the regional job fair, which brought together over sixty businesses and 250 job seekers, including around 70 individuals with disabilities, the collaboration directly facilitated connections between job seekers with disabilities and potential employers.

### **Training**

A robust series of staff capacity-building trainings were conducted, covering essential topics such as disability diversity, equity and inclusion, assistive technology, and more. Regular weekly trainings were shared with staff, focusing on disability awareness, workplace accommodations, ADA compliance, and assistive technology. The DRC also participated in numerous online trainings to further their expertise, which was then disseminated to staff to improve service delivery.

### **Employment Activities**

Various events, such as job fairs, career expos, and networking luncheons, were organized to facilitate employment opportunities. These events provided platforms for job seekers to connect with potential employers and learn about available job openings.

Mini job fairs were organized each quarter, bringing together job seekers and businesses. These fairs were instrumental in creating direct employment opportunities and facilitating connections between job seekers and employers.

## **Key Takeaways:**

- FMS had comprehensive training including topics such as disability diversity, equity and inclusion, and assistive technology. Additionally, weekly trainings on disability awareness and workplace accommodations were shared with staff to ensure they were well-equipped to support individuals with disabilities with their career and training goals.
- Employment activities were designed to directly facilitate employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This includes the organization of various employment-focused events like job fairs and networking luncheons, which provided platforms for job seekers to connect with potential employers.

## **Herkimer, Madison, Oneida (HMO)**

### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Outreach**

HMO employs a multifaceted approach to maximize employment prospects for job seekers with disabilities. This includes active participation in career fairs. These events serve as invaluable platforms for HMO to establish connections with businesses and potential employers. By actively engaging with employers during these fairs, HMO and DRC Sortino not only promotes the benefits of inclusive hiring practices but also facilitates direct employment opportunities for job seekers.

Recognizing the intersectionality between disability and substance abuse, HMO extends its outreach efforts to substance abuse recovery programs. DRC Sortino recently initiated discussions with a representative from Camden Life Center to explore potential referrals and introduce the comprehensive services offered by NY SCION.

HMO has promoted education and skill development through tailored training sessions focused on various aspects of disability employment. These sessions encompass a broad spectrum of topics, ranging from effective job search strategies to resume writing, interview techniques, and workplace accommodations.

#### **Partnership Development**

HMO's partnership strategy is characterized by its focus on collaboration and networking to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

During the reporting period, notable partnerships were established with ARISE at the Farm and the Regional Apprenticeship Development and Readiness (RADAR) grant project, which broadened opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

DRC Sortino also established connections with the Pathways to Apprenticeship Program; this program provided valuable career exploration and training opportunities for NY SCION-eligible participants.

Collaboration with the Advance 2 Apprenticeship (A2A) Program has resulted in a career pathway for seven individuals with disabilities. A2A is a Basic Manufacturing Pre-Apprenticeship Program, in close collaboration with the University of Rochester, the Manufacturer's Association of Central New York, the Workforce Development Board, and the NYS Council on Developmental Disabilities.



HMO recognizes the importance of collaboration to advance inclusive hiring initiatives. DRC Sortino recently visited Smart Carrier, a local company, to initiate discussions on inclusive hiring practices and reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Through these discussions, Smart Carrier opted to utilize On-the-Job Training (OJT) funds, culminating in the recruitment of an employee who openly disclosed their disability status. As part of NY SCION, assistive technology was put in place to ensure the seamless integration of the newly hired individual into the workplace.

### **Engagement with Potential Employer Partners:**

HMO facilitated connections with potential employers and business partners during the Mohawk Valley Community College Human Services and Business Career Fair. Key introductions were made with companies such as Indium, Meyda Lighting, and WURTH MRO. These interactions aim to create avenues for career exploration and potential employment prospects for HMO's customers.

### **Training Initiatives**

HMO's partnership strategy also includes training initiatives aimed at enhancing the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities. For example, DRC Sortino met with a representative from the Office of New Americans to conduct training on the Ramirez June Initiative. The New York State Office for New Americans Ramirez June Initiative was created to support new Americans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in New York State to connect with vital resources, information, and services.

### **Career Exploration**

Initiatives like the Pathways to Apprenticeship program and RADAR provide participants with exposure to potential career pathways and opportunities. The Regional Apprenticeship Development and Readiness (RADAR) Project (funded by the Apprenticeship Building America grant) advances the U.S. Department of Labor's efforts to expand and modernize Registered Apprenticeship by increasing the number of programs and apprentices, diversifying the industries that use Registered Apprenticeship and improving the access to and performance of Registered Apprenticeship Programs for underrepresented and underserved communities, with individuals with disabilities as the primary participants.

Linking NY SCION-eligible participants with Pathways to Apprenticeship and the RADAR Project aims to lay the foundation for future sustainable employment.

### **Oswego County Workforce Development Board**

#### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Outreach**

Direct engagement with twenty-nine businesses provided an opportunity to share information about Career Center services available to a significant number of businesses and laid the groundwork for future follow-ups and potential collaborations.

#### **Partnerships**

In Oswego, a proactive approach to outreach involves engaging with businesses, employers, educational institutions, and the wider community to raise awareness about available services and programs like NY SCION and Ticket to Work. Oswego has cultivated thirty-two partnerships,

including collaborations with organizations like ACCES-VR and the Oswego County Placement Network, expanding the network of support available to individuals with disabilities.

Ongoing engagement with the Oswego County Placement Network group is a strength of this program. The Oswego County Placement Network, which includes multiple agencies, aims to share updates, discuss employment opportunities, and plan events.

### **Training**

Oswego supports training in areas such as Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and medical billing while offering career guidance. Staff assist customers to enroll in training programs and provide personalized career advice and referrals to help them achieve their employment objectives.

Comparatively, HMO utilizes Integrated Resource Team (IRT) meetings to actively engage with employers, resulting in successful job placements. However, Oswego faces challenges with similar meetings, citing a lack of desired outcomes attributable to staff turnover and changes.

While Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) prove to be valuable, their use varies by region. HMO effectively leverages these IRT meetings to achieve positive outcomes, whereas Oswego encounters obstacles, potentially due to internal staffing changes.

### **CNY Works (Onondaga)**

#### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Outreach**

CNY Works has implemented a multifaceted approach to support individuals with disabilities in accessing employment opportunities and essential services. Outreach efforts have been focused on promoting work experiences and employment prospects for youth, marked by the re-establishment of the Adult Work Experience Program. This initiative aims to provide valuable opportunities for youth to gain practical skills and explore potential career paths.

#### **Partnerships and Collaborations**

DRC McDonald, who vacated the DRC position in late 2023, and DRC Dorey actively collaborated with a spectrum of community partners. Their efforts brought together twenty-seven diverse partners, with significant collaborations including Primecare Coordination, WHOLE ME, Inc., and Catholic Charities. A key development in their strategic initiatives was the establishment of the Inclusive Opportunities Board Committee. This development aimed at embedding accessibility more deeply into the workforce system, bringing on board influential partners like ACCES-VR, Access CNY, and Onondaga Community College.

#### **Service Delivery**

Service delivery was significantly enhanced through Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs), which played a pivotal role in connecting customers with essential resources, supports, and opportunities for employment, notably achieving full-time employment outcomes for participants. Even with staff transitions, the program held 16 IRT meetings, giving participants access to important resources.

Additionally, the consistent benefits advisement and the promotion of the Ticket to Work Program have notably increased awareness and participation, underscoring the positive impact of these efforts.

## **Career Pathways**

Focused efforts on career pathways emphasized outreach to youth and adult workforce development. This included conducting outreach events aimed at promoting work experiences and employment opportunities for youth and playing a crucial role in re-establishing an Adult Work Experience Program, which facilitated noteworthy employment outcomes.

## **Training**

A robust approach to training and capacity building was evident through participation in professional development opportunities and the facilitation of training sessions on critical topics such as ACCES-VR eligibility and services, aimed at enhancing the competencies of staff in supporting individuals with disabilities.

In addition, over seventy participants benefited from Benefits Advisement and Work Readiness training.

## **Benefits Advisement and Promotion**

The period also saw effective benefits advisement to new customers and targeted promotion of the Ticket to Work Program, which involved the development of marketing materials and the hosting of information sessions to raise awareness and participation in the program.

## **Analysis of Herkimer, Madison, Oneida (HMO), Oswego, and Onondaga**

All three Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) exhibit similarities and differences in their approaches to supporting individuals with disabilities.

All three organizations prioritize collaboration with other entities to enhance their service offerings. This includes partnerships with educational institutions, government initiatives, and other disability service providers.

Each organization emphasizes the importance of employment opportunities and training initiatives for individuals with disabilities, aiming to improve job readiness and employment outcomes.

## **Differences Across Agencies**

Onondaga demonstrates a broader range of partnerships, including a diverse array of organizations that support various aspects of disability services. HMO and Oswego, while also engaging in meaningful partnerships, have a more focused approach.

Onondaga's partnerships include a significant emphasis on community and educational collaborations, indicating a comprehensive approach to supporting individuals with disabilities through a variety of services and programs.

## **Key Takeaways Across Agencies:**

- **Partnerships and Outreach:** All agencies engage in extensive outreach and form strategic partnerships to expand their services and reach. The nature and scope of these partnerships vary, with some focusing on local community connections and others on broader collaborations.
- **Training and Direct Service Provision:** Training programs are crucial for equipping participants with the necessary skills. There is a need for alignment with market demands and continuous improvement in direct service provision to meet the needs of individuals

with disabilities.

- **Employment Activities and Integrated Resource Teams:** The use of Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) and targeted employment activities are highlighted as effective strategies, though their success varies across agencies.
- **Integrated Resource Teams:** All LWDAs participating in NY SCION utilize Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs). IRTs are designed to provide a coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach to support an employment goal. IRTs typically consist of professionals from various fields, including vocational rehabilitation, education, and businesses, working collaboratively to support the individual.

## **Finger Lakes**

### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Outreach**

Finger Lakes has strengthened its outreach efforts by establishing new partnerships with organizations like Finger Lakes Area Counseling and Recovery Agency (FLACRA), The Youth Advocate Program Inc, Catholic Charities, and Wayne Finger Lakes BOCES. These partnerships facilitate direct referral streams and broaden outreach efforts. Collaborative efforts with existing partners like ACCES-VR and the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board demonstrate a commitment to knowledge sharing and strategic service planning.

Throughout the reporting period, Finger Lakes successfully established new partnerships with local organizations such as Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes, Seneca County Department of Social Services, and Keuka College. These partnerships were crucial for expanding the reach and impact of the program.

Finger Lakes also organized job fairs, including one with nineteen jobseekers attending and another in Wayne County with over twenty-five jobseekers. The job fairs are examples of outreach that directly connect jobseekers with disabilities to potential employers and businesses.

#### **Training**

The program co-hosted training sessions with ACCES-VR on accommodations and assistive technology, which saw participation from multiple organizations. Additionally, DRC Kelley delivered a four-session training on SSI/SSDI in collaboration with Wayne Finger Lakes BOCES.

#### **Benefits Advisement**

DRC Kelley provided Benefits Advisement on topics including the program offered advisement Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE), Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) accounts, Trial Work Period, Extended Period of Eligibility, and Expedited Reinstatement. DRC Kelley worked closely with other local service providers and utilized integrated resource teams to facilitate referrals and ensure that individuals received the support they needed. This collaborative approach enhanced the effectiveness of the benefits advisement services.

## **RochesterWorks (Monroe):**

### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Partnerships**

Throughout the reporting period, RochesterWorks successfully established new partnerships with various entities, including PCHO (Person-Centered Housing Options), the Evelyn Brandon PROS program, the Rochester Central Library, AutismUp, and more. These partnerships are crucial for expanding the reach of NY SCION.

DRC Murphy conducted numerous presentations and workshops aimed at different audiences, including the University of Rochester's Strong Ties Health Home Care Management team, Teacher Ambassadors through a partnership between Rochester City School District and NYSDOL, and a presentation on work incentives at The Arc of Monroe's Project SEARCH.

These activities helped to educate and inform a wide range of stakeholders about disability employment topics.

DRC Murphy also conducted "Disability Resource Hour" sessions for service providers and established the "(dis)ABILITY Job Search Group", which provided targeted support and resources to individuals with disabilities seeking employment.

RochesterWorks hosted an Employment Resource Fair in collaboration with multiple agencies.

### **Training**

RochesterWorks provided training to multiple audiences on topics such as addressing reasonable accommodations, effective strategies for serving customers with disabilities, and American Sign Language basics. This training aimed to enhance the capacity of staff and partners to support individuals with disabilities effectively.

Additional training sessions on disability disclosure, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other disability-related topics were held, targeting both customers and staff. These workshops aimed to educate participants on the requirements of the applicable laws and sharing of best practices for navigating employment.

The (dis)ABILITY Job Search Group conducted training on various job search topics and included a focus on entrepreneurship. It provided practical support and guidance to individuals with disabilities seeking employment.

### **Direct Service Provision**

RochesterWorks held numerous IRT meetings throughout the year, linking customers to partners and community resources for occupational skills training and unsubsidized employment goals. These meetings aimed to provide a coordinated support system for individuals seeking employment.

Various workshops were conducted including "Disability and Disclosure" and "Increase Your Income", providing valuable information and support to people with disabilities that were navigating the job market.

RochesterWorks provided benefits counseling and work incentives advising to Social Security beneficiaries, assisting with Impairment-Related Work Expenses, ABLE accounts, benefits calculations, Benefits Planning Query (BPQY) requests, Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) plans, and Social Security reporting. This service aims to help individuals understand and utilize available work incentives and benefits to support their employment journey.

Direct support for employment included work experience placements that led to unsubsidized employment, assistance with job search groups, and exploration of support for apprenticeship

program enrollees.

## **Employment Outcomes**

Alex, a young adult with a hearing impairment, had been struggling to find meaningful employment for several months. Despite having a degree in graphic design, the challenges of navigating job interviews and workplace accommodations left Alex feeling discouraged. That is when Alex learned about the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) process.

At the IRT meeting, Alex was introduced to a network of partners and community resources. The team worked together to understand Alex's unique skills and employment goals. They provided Alex with training on disability disclosure in the workplace and how to request accommodations effectively.

Alex also attended the "(dis)ABILITY Job Search Group" workshop, where they learned valuable job search strategies and connected with others facing similar challenges.

The turning point came when the organization established a new partnership with a local design firm looking to promote inclusive hiring. Through this connection, Alex secured a work experience placement that allowed them to highlight their graphic design skills in a supportive environment. The placement not only provided Alex with practical work experience but also boosted their confidence.

Alex's work experience placement led to an offer of unsubsidized employment at the design firm. Alex is now thriving in their role, contributing innovative designs, and advocating for workplace inclusivity.

This story highlights the impact of IRT meetings, workshops, and partnerships, which collectively contribute to meaningful employment outcomes.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- RochesterWorks has demonstrated a strong commitment to expanding its local network and the impact of NY SCION through strategic partnerships and outreach activities. Establishing new partnerships with entities like Person-Centered Housing Options (PCHO), Rochester Central Library, and AutismUp, as well as engaging in presentations and workshops, have been pivotal in enhancing service delivery and reaching a broader audience.
- RochesterWorks direct service provision, including Integrated Resource Team meetings, workshops, and benefits advisement, has directly contributed to positive employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Stories like Alex's illustrate the tangible impact of these services, highlighting how coordinated support and targeted training can lead to meaningful employment opportunities.

## **Tompkins**

### ***Activity Highlights***

Tompkins held a Health Care Careers Expo co-chaired with Tompkins County Whole Health.

The event was attended by 246 high school students with and without disabilities. This event highlighted the commitment to engaging youth and promoting health care careers, indicating a

significant impact in terms of reach and potential influence on future workforce development.

Tompkins also held a recovery and reentry resource fair. The event targeted a specific audience, providing resources and support for individuals in recovery and re-entry, highlighting a focused approach to outreach.

Tompkins established ten new partnerships through intensified educational outreach and referral efforts. This demonstrates a broad and effective strategy for expanding the network and impact of the program.

### **Training**

Four virtual workshops were offered, covering an overview of services, resume writing, cover letters, and interview tips. Thirty-eight people attended the workshops.

Job readiness trainings were conducted, covering resume development and online job searching, leading to work experience placements and unsubsidized employment in diverse career pathways.

### **Direct Service Provision**

DRC Stanley facilitated IRT meetings to assist customers with navigating employment and benefits, aiding customers in obtaining full-time employment, and connecting to post-benefit cessation support services.

Four customers received WIOA funding for training in in-demand fields like heating/AC and phlebotomy, indicating a targeted approach to employment through skill development in specific industries.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- Tompkins successfully expanded its network and impact through effective partnerships and outreach efforts. This included establishing new partnerships, co-chairing events like the Health Care Careers Expo, and engaging in educational outreach. These efforts not only broadened the program's reach but also enhanced its capacity to serve a broader audience, highlighting a proactive approach to partnership development and community engagement.
- **Tompkins** demonstrated a comprehensive approach to supporting individuals in their employment journey. This included direct service provision through Integrated Resource Teams (IRT), job readiness training, benefits advisement, and work incentive counseling. The program's efforts to facilitate employment through targeted training, support, and skill development in in-demand fields were evident across all quarters.

### **Hudson Valley (Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan, Rockland, and Yonkers)**

In the Hudson Valley region of New York, Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) have employed diverse strategies to establish partnerships tailored to the unique needs of each county. These endeavors aim to enhance employment prospects and support services for individuals with disabilities. The following analysis delves into the specific outreach approaches and outcomes in each county.

### ***Activity Highlights and Analysis by County***

#### **Dutchess**

## ***Activity Highlights***

### **Outreach**

A notable achievement includes the creation of a neurodiversity hiring hub in collaboration with International Business Machines (IBM), highlighting a commitment to inclusivity and diversity in the workforce. The initiative has also launched extensive outreach and awareness campaigns, notably around the Ticket to Work program, aimed at enhancing public knowledge and engagement.

### **Partnership Development**

Dutchess maintained partnerships with thirty organizations over the reporting period, including the Anderson Center for Autism, Dutchess Community College, Schatz Bearing Corporation, MVP Healthcare, Gateway Hudson Valley, Central Hudson Electric & Gas, and Stockade Works, among several others. These partnerships highlight Dutchess's broad engagement with various sectors, including education, healthcare, utilities, manufacturing, and non-profits, to support individuals with disabilities.

### **Training**

Dutchess Works has focused its training on essential skills like benefits navigation, interview techniques, and inclusive hiring practices for neurodiverse individuals. A business roundtable event was held to discuss the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

### **Direct Service Provision**

Dutchess has enriched career exploration opportunities by integrating partnerships with community colleges and leveraging virtual reality tools, along with an online career platform that supports independent career assessments.

### **Benefits Advisement**

DC Works' engagement with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to provide benefits advisement services marks a significant step in assisting individuals to understand work incentives and navigate the benefits system effectively.

## **Orange**

### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Outreach**

DRC Jones and other Career Center management staff were invited to attend an evening dinner and meet and greet with members of the Orange County Workforce Investment Board which included the Orange County Director of Tourism, the Vice President of Workforce Innovation & Strategy Development, the Vice President of Human Resources for Orange Bank & Trust, the Orange County BOCES Continuing Education/Adult Education Coordinator, the Chief Operating Officer of Rapid Rim Repair, and the Human Resource Representatives of Mechanical Rubber (a local employer). Valuable contacts as noted above were made during this event, and information was shared with employers and businesses about NY SCION.

#### **Partnership Development**

In Orange County, a broad implementation approach was employed, centered on forging partnerships with educational institutions and local service providers. Notably, DRC Jones



successfully fostered twenty collaborations, with five being new partnerships. These collaborations facilitated resource sharing, bolstered support for job seekers, and significantly enhanced employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

### **Training**

DRC Jones provided Disability Disclosure Training. The audience for training included Social Security beneficiaries.

DRC Jones also conducted Social Security informational sessions. The sessions were designed to inform Social Security beneficiaries considering employment about Social Security benefits and work incentives.

Orange Works and DRC Jones prioritize customer training on topics such as disability disclosure and Work Incentive Seminar Events (WISE). Thirty-seven Benefits Advisement sessions have been provided over the past year. One SSDI beneficiary received training as a Security Guard and continues employment.

These efforts facilitated resource sharing and created additional employment opportunities, bolstering outreach and referral networks for individuals with disabilities seeking employment support. Orange County prioritized housing assistance and linkages to educational programs and community resources to further support and enhance the attainment of employment outcomes.

### **Sullivan**

#### ***Activity Highlights***

In Sullivan County, efforts were focused on forming strategic partnerships with specific organizations such as Peak Performers and The Alliance for Rights and Recovery. This targeted approach led to notable outcomes, including new referrals to workforce development services covering a wide spectrum of needs ranging from work readiness training to financial services.

Sullivan County also prioritized providing comprehensive support services and improving service coordination, specifically acknowledging the multifaceted needs of people with disabilities and individuals with employment barriers. Sullivan County highlighted the importance of linkages to support services and childcare supports to address various challenges faced by individuals with disabilities.

#### **Outreach**

DRC Curry attended Chamber of Commerce events to foster business relationships, which are crucial for developing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Three monthly roundtable events were held, with ten providers participating. A significant outcome of these discussions was advocacy for changes to mental health and substance use counselor certification requirements.

Additionally, outreach activities included promoting the Ticket to Work program through flyers in community locations, aiming to increase awareness and participation in this program that supports employment for individuals receiving Social Security benefits due to disabilities.

#### **Employer Hiring Events**

Ten in-house "Meet the Employer" events facilitated direct interactions between thirty-one local businesses and 149 unique individuals, creating a diverse hiring platform.

## **Education and Training**

Collaboration with SUNY BOCES led to an 8-week welding course, resulting in immediate employment for two participants. SUNY Sullivan introduced micro-credential courses (Restaurant Management, Basic Bookkeeping, Phlebotomy, Event Planning, Tax Preparer, Stagehand), enhancing career pathways.

Collaboration with SUNY BOCES led to an 8-week construction course, which resulted in eleven participants completing the course. Four individuals entered the local union, 4 others were employed in other construction sectors, two received increased wages at their current place of employment.

## **Rockland**

### ***Activity Highlights***

Rockland places a strong emphasis on community engagement in its outreach strategy. It actively sought partnerships with organizations while also participating in community events to enhance visibility and garner support. These efforts not only established an initial referral network but also fostered ongoing collaboration and assistance within the community.

### **Partnership Development**

Rockland Works and DRC Moldovan established relationships with organizations like the VISIONS Center on Blindness, United Way of Rockland, Summit Adult Day Health Center, ARC of Rockland, and Best Buddies. These partnerships focused on expanding the network, addressing transportation barriers, and developing referral processes for NY SCION.

#### **Career Pathways and Service Delivery**

DRC Moldovan worked with Rockland Works to develop workshops, training opportunities, and a new retail training bootcamp program. This includes facilitating meetings between organizations to develop referral processes and co-enrolling participants in work readiness programs.

DRC Moldovan and Rockland Works hosted presentations on work incentives.

Rockland Works and DRC Moldovan initiated the development of the Diverse Abilities Job Fair in collaboration with multiple partners to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

### **Career Pathways**

DRC Moldovan has played a pivotal role in forging partnerships with VISIONS, resulting in the successful co-enrollment of three participants in Rockland Works' Youth Connections Work Readiness Bootcamp.

Ongoing conversations with Career Counselors and Coordinators within Rockland Works ensure tailored services for customers benefiting from Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs).

## **Ulster**

### ***Activity Highlights***

### **Partnership Development**

During the reporting period, partnership development activities have been a consistent focus for the DRC Thomason in Ulster County.

DRC Thomason has been proactive in establishing new partnerships, particularly with educational institutions and other organizations focused on improving transitions for students with disabilities. This includes planning events like the Ulster County Transition Fair and participating in the Ulster County Transition Council meetings to share resources and collaborate on initiatives.

DRC Thomason is actively engaged in the Ulster County Transition Council (UCTC), addressing barriers faced by transition-age youth. The UCTC is a collaborative group that includes representatives from various educational, disability, and local community-based service agencies.

### **Career Pathways Discussions with the Workforce Development Board:**

Regular discussions with the Ulster County Workforce Development Board have been pivotal in improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The collaboration on the STEPs program, involving the Council of Industries, Fala Technology, and RCAL Independent Living Center, highlights innovative practices in career exploration and development. The STEPs program is a collaborative initiative aimed at providing individuals, especially those with disabilities, with pre-apprenticeship training and micro-credentialing in advanced manufacturing and technology sectors, offering pathways to high-paying jobs through industry-specific training, work placements, and opportunities for career advancement.

### **Direct Service Provision**

DRC Thomason provided benefits advisement and work incentive counseling to 34 individuals during the reporting period. The DRC conducted IRT meetings and job placements that led to unsubsidized employment.

### **Integrated Resource Teams**

DRC Thomason consistently engages in Integrated Resource Team (IRT) meetings, working closely with customers and collaborating with various agencies to address their unique needs. As part of this collaboration, the DRC regularly refers customers to local ACCES-VR partners, RCAL Independent Living Center (for SSA benefits applications, employment services, and job coaching), Ulster County DSS (for Medicaid, SNAP, and Temporary Assistance Units), Ulster County Office of the Aging HIICAP (for Medicare health insurance assistance), and Ulster County UCAT (for paratransit ADA service).

These IRT meetings have resulted in numerous success stories, highlighting the positive benefits of interagency collaborations. Some notable examples include:

A customer with a 15-year history of a traumatic brain injury sought assistance in finding employment as a Tire and Battery Technician at Sam's Club in Kingston, NY. Through the IRT, the customer secured a part-time position at Sam's Club, earning \$20 per hour.

Another customer, who worked part-time as a Special Events Specialist at Sam's Club for \$17 per hour, required assistance with navigating SSA benefits advisement. The ongoing collaboration between the DRC, customer, and AIM Case Manager has focused on understanding the impact of employment on benefits and utilizing NYABLE and benefits advisement throughout the customer's employment journey.

### **Yonkers**

#### ***Activity Highlights***

## **Outreach**

DRC Barclay sought to achieve NY SCION outreach goals through participation at multiple job fairs, including the Roosevelt High School Job Fair and the Community Job Fair at Bay Plaza. These events allowed for direct engagement with over fifty individuals, providing an excellent opportunity to promote NY SCION and the Ticket to Work program to a wide audience.

## **Partnership Development**

Yonkers partnership development activities highlighted in the reporting period focus on establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with various organizations to enhance service delivery and resource sharing.

Yonkers has successfully established eleven new partnerships. DRC Barclay also maintained relationships with key partners such as ACCES-VR, the Greystone Foundation, and Shoprite. These partnerships are crucial for resource and job sharing.

DRC Barclay participated in monthly Westchester Employment Network (WEN) meetings with ACCES-VR. These meetings serve as a vital forum for exchanging information, sharing resources, and coordinating efforts to support job seekers.

DRC Barclay collaborated with the Greyston Foundation to enroll customers in training programs, such as Microsoft Suite Training, and to facilitate employment opportunities.

## **Training**

During the reporting period, DRC Barclay conducted Work Readiness Training sessions, covering resume building, interview preparation, and essential job-seeking skills. Participants were also enrolled in Microsoft Suite training to improve their computer literacy. Additionally, mock interviews were arranged for NY SCION program participants, aiming to provide practical experience and valuable feedback to enhance their interview performance, collectively empowering individuals for success in the workforce.

## **Key Takeaways:**

- The Hudson Valley NY SCION Programs have seen notable achievements throughout the counties thanks to their varied outreach strategies. These accomplishments encompass enhancements in referral networks, better availability of employment services, and heightened community participation. The customized approaches adopted by each county have been instrumental in aiding individuals with disabilities in reaching their employment goals.
- Partnership development efforts across Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan, Rockland, Ulster, and Yonkers have broadened outreach, made resources more accessible, and catered to the diverse needs of the region.

## **Hempstead**

### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Outreach Strategies**

The outreach strategies used throughout the reporting period focused on establishing and maintaining partnerships with various organizations. These partnerships expanded career pathways and services for individuals with disabilities. Notably, outreach efforts included

collaboration with organizations such as Nassau Placement Network, United Way of Long Island, and Northwell Health Hospital System, among others. These collaborations were crucial in spreading awareness of inclusive hiring opportunities and identifying community resources.

### **Partnership Strategies**

Partnership development was a consistent theme throughout the reporting period, with new partnerships established each quarter to support the expansion of career pathways and services for individuals with disabilities. DRC Lombardi established new partnerships through participation in various workgroups and collaborative activities. This included establishing the Employment Resource Team to facilitate connections to training and employment opportunities. The DRC and HempsteadWorks hosted four workshops on accessing disability benefits.

The partnerships were diverse, involving community colleges, local businesses, and non-profit organizations, focusing on creating accessible career exploration opportunities, developing micro-credential programs, and promoting inclusive hiring practices.

### **Direct Service and Outcomes**

Direct service provision included benefits counseling, employment supports, and the use of Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) to connect customers with disabilities to training and community resources. The services were aimed at assisting with accommodations, identifying competitive integrated employment opportunities, and addressing barriers to employment.

DRC Lombardi established new partnerships through participation in various workgroups and collaborative activities. This included establishing the Employment Resource Team to facilitate connections to training and employment opportunities. The DRC and HempsteadWorks hosted four workshops on accessing disability benefits.

The outcomes of these services included the creation of new training and work experience programs leading to unsubsidized employment for some participants, as well as the provision of targeted training on disability disclosure, benefits advisement, and ADA rights.

### **Benefits Advisement**

The DRC provided benefits counseling and work incentives advising to several participants. Services included advising on Impairment Related Work Expenses and participation in programs like ABLE accounts and Medicaid Buy-In.

### **Key Takeaways:**

**Expansion of Services:** Partnerships were crucial in expanding career pathways and services for individuals with disabilities, demonstrating a collaborative approach to enhancing support systems.

- Benefits advisement and work incentives counseling were consistently provided across all quarters, offering comprehensive support to individuals with disabilities in navigating employment opportunities while managing their benefits.
- Training and Work Experience Programs: The development of specific training and work experience programs through partnerships was a key focus, leading to unsubsidized employment for some participants. These programs were designed to provide accessible career exploration opportunities and develop micro-credential programs in partnership with local community colleges.

- The use of IRTs to connect customers with disabilities to training and community resources was a significant aspect of service delivery, assisting customers in pursuing occupational skills training and employment goals.

## **Suffolk**

### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Outreach**

During the reporting period, DRCs Klassert and Carew engaged in extensive outreach, participating in job fairs, community meetings, and making presentations to various organizations. Marketing challenges were noted due to staff turnover.

Partnership Development: Continued collaboration with existing partners and the development of seven new partnerships, including notable ones with The Well Life Network, Long Island Community Hospital, and Stony Brook University.

#### **Training**

During the reporting period, a hospitality training program was highlighted, where individuals with Autism received industry-recognized training, with one obtaining unsubsidized employment post-training.

#### **Direct Service Provision**

Ongoing benefits advisement and follow-up with customers were maintained, emphasizing the importance of work incentives.

#### **Employment Outcomes:**

Employment placements in county government jobs and unsubsidized employment were reported as a result of IRT activities and training programs.

The report also aligns with literature on integrated service models, showing that benefits advisement, training programs, and employer engagement strategies like IRTs can effectively promote employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

## **Oyster Bay**

### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Outreach**

Notably, the DRC initiated dialogue with representatives from staffing agencies and in-home health services organizations, laying the groundwork for mutually beneficial partnerships and streamlined referral processes. Partnerships flourished with three prominent organizations: Peak Performers staffing agency, Our Care in-home health services, and collaboration with the vocational counselor from Northwell Health.

The DRC actively participated in advisory board meetings for the Long Island Educational Opportunity Center (LIEOC) and hosted booths at two job fairs in partnership with organizations serving individuals with disabilities and justice-involved individuals.

#### **Partnerships**

Partnerships included:

- **Island Harvest:** DRC collaborated with Island Harvest to promote and enroll individuals with disabilities in a 6-week warehousing and inventory control training program.
- **Amazon and Ikea:** DRC worked with the companies to streamline the application process for individuals with disabilities.
- **Peak Performers, Our Care, and Northwell Health:** The DRC established new partnerships to enhance referral pathways and coordinate services for NY SCION customers.
- **Long Island Educational Opportunity Center (LIEOC):** DRC and LIEOC partnered to host English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and refer customers to vocational training programs.

## **Training**

**Island Harvest's 6-week Warehousing and Inventory Control Training Program:** The warehousing and inventory control program was promoted by Oyster Bay in collaboration with Island Harvest. The goal was for participants to obtain employment with support from Island Harvest, Massapequa Career Center, and DRC Allocca.

**Career Readiness Trainings:** These trainings covered topics like resume writing, interview skills, and job search strategies.

**ESL Classes:** Through a partnership with the Long Island Educational Opportunity Center (LIEOC), ESL classes were hosted at the Career Center. This training aimed to improve language skills as a foundational step towards employment.

## **Employment Activities**

Collaboration with Island Harvest resulted in the 6-week workforce skills development course. A 3-week job readiness training was implemented in collaboration with Central Nassau Guidance. These activities were designed to enhance the employability of individuals with disabilities.

## **Key Takeaways:**

- The establishment of partnerships with organizations like Family Residences and Essential Enterprises (FREE) and the Long Island Educational Opportunity Center (LIEOC) supported referrals between organizations, expanding the range of services and support available to job seekers.
- By partnering with LIEOC to offer ESL classes and planning to expand vocational and academic training, Oyster Bay is creating clear career pathways for individuals. These educational opportunities are crucial for building a skilled workforce and facilitating career advancement.

Oyster Bay's approach to partnership development, training, and employment activities highlights a comprehensive and collaborative effort to support workforce development and create employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

## **North Country**

### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Partnerships and Collaborations**

North Country LWDA's proactive approach, led by DRC LeBlanc in fostering collaborations with

local disability agencies in Plattsburgh and Malone, coupled with active involvement on the NCCI Board, has significantly strengthened partnerships within the North Country LWDA. Notable initiatives include the establishment of an inclusivity advisory committee. North County has demonstrated effective development of strategic partnerships, enhancing outreach and program inclusivity.

### **Training**

North County has initiated Diversity Equity and Inclusion Training and is planning a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI)/Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) series. Partners TDC-Premier Industrial Parks, Adirondack Foundation, Workforce Development Institute, and the Behavioral Health Network North are developing a series of roundtables, including discussions on recruiting, hiring, and retaining people with disabilities, people who have had experiences with the justice system, people who identify as LGBTQ+, and persons who have been impacted by addiction.

### **Employment Activities**

The North Country NY SCION program and DRC LeBlanc helped one customer secure stable employment after 15 years without work, navigating benefits and accommodations. Training and capacity building efforts have impacted partner staff, frontline workers, and employment counselors.

### **Integrated Resource Teams**

Integrated service delivery is increasing, like a caseworker reaching out for information to form an IRT to help connect an individual with multiple supports. Work in Year 3 will include: Increasing direct referrals to the career center anticipating that emerging partnerships will result in a higher volume of referrals.

### **St. Lawrence**

#### ***Activity Highlights***

The departure of the DRC in July 2023 and the subsequent hiring of DRC Ashley in December 2023 marked a critical period for The St. Lawrence Project. This staff transition resulted in delays in program and service delivery, impacting the project's effectiveness and efficiency. Despite these challenges, the new DRC initiated engagement with the program by attending webinars, reviewing files and programs, and establishing communication with partners and existing DRCs to regain momentum.

### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

The project successfully maintained its commitment to staff capacity building, as evidenced by DRC Ashley's participation in multiple webinars and the commencement of Cornell University WIP-C training.

### **Promotional Activities**

Staff engagement in several community outreach activities occurred, including the Gateways Career Fair, the Chamber of Commerce business mixer, and local BOCES school counselor meetings.

### **Jefferson-Lewis (The Workplace)**



## ***Activity Highlights***

### **Outreach and Partnerships**

The Workplace of Jefferson and Lewis Counties actively engages in outreach and partnership activities to expand its network and enhance collaboration opportunities. Key initiatives included participation in the NYATEP conference, the Workforce Connections event, and the establishment of strategic partnerships with ACCES-VR and the Disabled Persons Action Organization (DPAO).

### **Direct Service Provision**

The Workplace's ongoing partnership with Urban Mission and the provision of benefits advisement underscored its commitment to providing holistic support to individuals navigating employment and benefits challenges. Services such as resume assistance and career planning significantly contribute to enhancing the employability of customers.

### **Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) and Benefits Advisement**

The utilization of IRTs to coordinate services and benefits advisement ensured that customers received comprehensive support tailored to their individual needs. Benefits advisement, including guidance on ABLE accounts and Medicaid, equipped individuals with essential information and resources.

### **Employment Activities and Outcomes**

Collaborative efforts with the Jefferson-Lewis WIOA Youth Coordinator led to notable employment outcomes, including job placements at Assemblyman Gray's office and the Grand Union grocery store. While successes were achieved, there is potential for further diversification and scaling of employment outcomes, particularly by focusing on high-demand sectors.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- Strategic partnerships were a focal point, with the establishment of relationships with ACCES-VR and the Disabled Persons Action Organization (DPAO). These partnerships are vital for enhancing the program's capabilities and resources, enabling it to offer more comprehensive services to its participants.
- The program's ongoing partnership with Urban Mission to connect individuals to employment opportunities highlights its dedication to direct service provision. This collaboration is essential for facilitating access to employment for those in need, directly impacting the lives of participants by providing them with valuable opportunities.

These takeaways underscore the program's strengths in building and leveraging partnerships, engaging in effective outreach, and providing direct services to meet the needs of its participants.

## **Broome-Tioga**

### ***Activity Highlights***

### **Outreach Activities and New Partnerships**

Broome-Tioga and DRC Cook conducted several outreach activities, such as presenting at events and meetings, to raise awareness about Career Center and NY SCION services. New partnerships were formed.

- A4TD administers training programs that help individuals obtain or retain employment. DRC Cook presented information about Ticket-to-Work and other Career Center services to A4TD program participants, resulting in follow-up meetings and direct benefits advisement. This partnership facilitated outreach and direct service delivery, showcasing the effectiveness of collaborating with training programs to present information about SSA work incentives.
- A new partnership was established with Northstar Digital Literacy for online skills training and certifications. This collaboration expanded the resources available to jobseekers, particularly in enhancing digital literacy skills.
- DRC Cook presented at the American Civic Association. The presentation included an overview of Career Center services and NY SCION, which helped raise awareness of services available under NY SCION. This outreach activity was instrumental in connecting with diverse communities and expanding the reach of SCION's services.
- DRC Cook attended the Southern Tier Association for Human Resources (STAHR) meeting. This engagement with the business community was crucial for understanding employer needs and facilitating job placements for individuals with disabilities.

These partnerships and collaborations exemplify Broome-Tioga's commitment to building stronger community connections to support employment and training opportunities.

### **Direct Service Provision**

Broome-Tioga and DRC Cook provided direct employment assistance, including benefits counseling, resume assistance, and job placement. Notably, the Advanced Manufacturing Training program and CDL training were highlighted as successful initiatives that led to unsubsidized employment for participants.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- Broome-Tioga and DRC Cook formed strategic partnerships with community organizations, training programs, and local businesses, such as Northstar Digital Literacy, A4TD, and the American Civic Association. These partnerships were instrumental in expanding the range of services and support available to individuals with disabilities.
- Partnerships with organizations like Northstar Digital Literacy and training programs such as Associates for Training Development (A4TD) have provided individuals with disabilities access to essential skills training and certifications. This has directly contributed to improving their employability.
- Through Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) and Benefits Advisement, individuals with disabilities have received comprehensive support services tailored to their needs. This includes assistance with navigating benefits, understanding work incentives, and resolving overpayment issues, which are crucial for maintaining employment and financial stability.
- Success Stories as Evidence of Impact: Specific success stories, such as an individual who obtained CDL training and a driving job through assistance navigating available funding sources, highlight the tangible impact of these partnerships on employment outcomes. Stories serve as powerful examples of how collaborative efforts can lead to meaningful employment for individuals with disabilities.

## **CDO Workforce**

### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Partnerships**

Collaboration with the Otsego County Chamber of Commerce and attending meetings have been instrumental in expanding the CDO network to support NY SCION, including establishing critical connections with local, county, state, and federal officials, as well as local business leaders.

Activities like joining the Housing Subcommittee and forming partnerships with Crossroads Inn LLC and ACCES-VR have broadened the reach and support for job seekers with disabilities, marking significant strides in collaborative service provision.

#### **Outreach and Service Provision**

Outreach and Service Presentations: Outreach and presentations at Huntington Memorial Library raised awareness about Career Center services. Presentations highlighted reasonable accommodations and the utility of assistive technology to support employment.

#### **Staff Training and Capacity Building**

Over ten staff members have enhanced their skills through training sessions on ADA requirements and compliance, disability disclosure, and case management, boosting organizational capabilities.

#### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Extensive Community Engagement:** Across the quarters, DRC DeAngelo conducted numerous community outreach events, job fairs, and presentations, reaching a wide audience, including individuals with disabilities, businesses, and local partners. These activities not only raised awareness about NY SCION and Career Center Services but also directly facilitated employment opportunities.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** A recurring theme is the establishment and leveraging of partnerships with local organizations, businesses, educational institutions, and workforce development boards. These collaborations were crucial in expanding the reach and impact of outreach activities.
- **Targeted Support through IRT Meetings:** Integrated Resource Team meetings were a cornerstone of the DRC's strategy, providing targeted support to individuals with disabilities. These meetings were instrumental in achieving tangible outcomes, such as securing employment and training opportunities for participants.

## **Cattaraugus-Allegany**

### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Outreach**

DRC Blessing Whitsell attended several career fairs to provide information on Career Center services and the NY SCION. DRC Whitsell determined event attendance is an effective way to directly engage with the community and potential NY SCION eligible customers.

#### **Partnership Development**

DRC Blessing-Whitsell developed new partnerships with REHAB TODAY and ACCORD CORPORATION for customer referrals and exploring education and employment training opportunities.

Cattaraugus-Allegany and DRC Whitsell partnered with Cattaraugus County Industrial Development Agency and the City of Olean to host a job fair with 37 employers and 78 job seekers.

DRC Whitsell established new partnerships with several local food pantries to increase awareness of work incentives and benefits advisement DRC Whitsell also formed a new partnership with the Cattaraugus County Department of Social Services employment unit.

The new partnerships with ACCORD Community Action Agency and ARC of Allegany County facilitated referrals and provided services to beneficiaries, enhancing the outreach to specific community groups.

Collaboration with Goodwill of Western NY: provided education and work experience to a specific local demographic that meets the employment needs of people over the age of 55.

These highlighted activities demonstrate a strategic approach to outreach, focusing on developing partnerships with various organizations, engaging in community events like job fairs, and targeting specific demographics such as seniors and those in need of benefits advisement.

## **Chautauqua**

### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Outreach**

DRC Tipping participated in resource fairs such as the Resource Fair put on by Goodwill Goodskills, where promotional materials were distributed. This strategy helped in directly engaging with the community and raising awareness about Career Center services.

#### **Partnership Development**

Chautauqua and DRC Tipping enhanced partnerships with local organizations, departments, and programs such as the Department of Planning and Development, the Goodwill Goodskills program, and the Chautauqua County Transportation Coalition. These collaborations were crucial for expanding the reach and impact of NY SCION services.

#### **Training**

Chautauqua and DRC Tipping focused on facilitating basic computer skills training for customers. DRC Tipping also collaborated with The Resource Center (TRC) to provide workshops for graduates of their Project SEARCH internship program, focusing on how work affects benefits and available work incentives.

Additional training offerings included disability disclosure training and training on reasonable accommodations.

Across the reporting period, the Chautauqua NY SCION program demonstrated a comprehensive approach to training, focusing on both customer and staff development. The training outcomes reflect a commitment to enhancing workforce skills, understanding of benefits advisement, and overall service provision capabilities.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- Participation in community events and direct engagement strategies were effectively used to raise awareness about Career Center services and NY SCION services. The distribution of promotional materials and the active promotion of specific programs like Ticket to Work played a significant role in outreach efforts.
- Customers benefited from workshops and training sessions aimed at improving their employment prospects and understanding of benefits advisement.
- The Chautauqua NY SCION program placed a strong emphasis on benefits advisement, helping customers understand work incentives and navigate the complexities of reporting earnings. This was crucial in supporting customers' transition to or maintenance of employment.

## **Niagara**

### ***Activity Highlights***

#### **Outreach**

Niagara and DRC Patterson implemented a broad range of outreach efforts, including establishing new partnerships and actively participating in multiple community events and fairs.

Outreach efforts also included presentations to the Niagara Falls Community Coalition and participation in community events like the Aquarium of Niagara's "Party on the Patio" and an event arranged by the Niagara County Department of Health.

The DRC established three new partnerships and continued two ongoing partnerships, including with the Parent Network of Western NY and Niagara Falls Public Housing Authority. The DRC attended outreach events, including veterans, health, and disability career fairs, and conducted weekly outreach at the Heart Love & Soul food pantry. The consistent weekly outreach at the Heart Love & Soul food pantry also indicates a sustained effort to engage with the community directly.

#### **Partnership Development**

The strongest partners during the reported period were agencies involved in collaborations and those that were part of significant outreach or service provision activities. Heart Love & Soul food pantry and the Lockport Family Empowerment Group are mentioned as ongoing partners in multiple quarters, indicating a sustained and impactful collaboration.

Additionally, the Goodwill Career Builder program and the Parent Network of Western NY are highlighted as new partnerships that could have a significant impact on the DRC's outreach and service provision efforts.

#### **Training**

The training activities conducted by DRC Patterson over the reporting period encompassed a variety of topics. DRC Patterson conducted a workshop titled "Using My Social Security Account for Wage Reporting" for ticket holders. DRC Patterson also conducted a training on diversity, equity, and inclusion for over 130 staff members of Belmont Housing Resources of Western NY. This training was well-received and opened the door for future training opportunities.

#### **Direct Service Provision**

DRC Patterson provided ongoing support to active Ticket holders. A highlighted example

included assisting an individual who completed their High School Equivalency Orleans/Niagara Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) with job searching, applications, references, and disclosure discussions. Benefits advisement and work incentives counseling were provided to several individuals receiving SSA disability benefits.

DRC Patterson also provided assistance to a new county resident with disabilities. Support included resume preparation, interview skills support, securing professional attire, and transportation assistance through partnerships, resulting in a new job within 26 days.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- During the reporting period, Niagara and DRC Patterson successfully established new partnerships and continued to nurture ongoing ones. Notable partnerships included those with Lockport Family Empowerment Group, Heart Love & Soul food pantry, and the Parent Network of Western NY. These partnerships were crucial for extending the reach of NY SCION DRCs services and facilitating direct support for individuals with disabilities.
- Direct service provision, including benefits advisement, was a consistent focus throughout the reporting period. DRC Patterson provided personalized assistance with employment-related needs, benefits advisement, and work incentives counseling. Although Integrated Resource Team meetings were not held in every quarter, DRC Patterson adapted to meet the current needs of customers.

Overall, the DRC's efforts in outreach, partnership development, and direct service provision across the quarters of 2023 highlight a comprehensive approach to supporting individuals with disabilities. The organization's adaptability and commitment to community engagement and personalized support have been key to its success in achieving the NY SCION program mission.

### **Final Analysis and Conclusion**

The NY SCION Cumulative Report illustrates a multifaceted approach to improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities across New York State. By leveraging a wide array of strategies, including Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs), comprehensive training sessions, benefits advisement, and fostering robust partnerships with diverse organizations, the initiative has made significant strides in enhancing accessibility to career services and fostering inclusive participation within the workforce.

Through detailed analysis across various Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs), the report highlights tailored approaches to address the unique needs of each region. Success stories from different regions, such as Tompkins' comprehensive approach to partnership and outreach, and Dutchess' creation of a neurodiversity hiring hub, highlight the tangible impacts of these efforts on individuals' employment journeys.

Key findings from the initiative include the critical role of strategic partnerships in enhancing service reach, the importance of targeted training programs in equipping individuals with the necessary skills, and the effectiveness of direct service provision in facilitating successful employment outcomes. The collective endeavors of all participating Local Workforce Development Areas, marked by innovative service models and collaborative efforts, underscore NY SCION's significant impact in promoting inclusive employment opportunities.

### **Successes**

- NY SCION established strategic partnerships with over five hundred organizations,

expanding the reach and services available to individuals with disabilities.

- NY SCION provided comprehensive training to staff and participants on topics like benefits advisement, disability awareness, and assistive technology to enhance support.
- NY SCION leveraged Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) and other employment activities to directly facilitate meaningful employment outcomes for many individuals.
- NY SCION increased enrollment in career center services and the Ticket to Work program through effective outreach and promotion of available resources.

### **Challenges**

- Staff turnover in some regions led to a discontinuity in services.
- Ensuring training programs align closely with in-demand skills and market needs to maximize employment prospects.
- There are variations across regions in utilizing strategies like IRTs, with some regions achieving better outcomes than others.
- Scaling up employment placements, especially in high-growth sectors, to meet ambitious targets.

### **Recommendations**

- Conduct periodic skills gap analyses to refine the training curriculum based on employer demand.
- Facilitate knowledge sharing across regions on best practices for strategies like IRTs.
- Foster new partnerships in high-growth industries and develop targeted recruitment pipelines for in-demand jobs.
- Explore innovative outreach models and the use of technology to engage broader audiences.

In summary, the NY SCION initiative has made commendable progress in supporting individuals with disabilities through a collaborative and multi-pronged approach. Continued focus on strategic partnerships, skills-based training, direct services, and outreach can help maximize employment outcomes over the remaining project period.

The NY SCION initiative has demonstrated a profound commitment to advancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The collective efforts across all participating LWDA, underscored by strategic partnerships, comprehensive training, and innovative service provision models, have contributed to meaningful employment outcomes.

NY SCION Performance Data Highlights

Please see the Excel Sheet for a full data summary.

<b>NY SCION Aggregate Data</b>	
<b># of active (local) partnerships with agencies that support NY SCION</b>	404
<b># of new partnerships in development as a result of NY SCION business engagement activities</b>	113
<b># of businesses engaged as part of NY SCION activities</b>	1428
<b># of NY SCION-eligible customers being served by NY SCION/ DRC</b>	2364
<b># of customers with disabilities trained as a result of NY SCION activities</b>	592
<b># of businesses trained as a result of NY SCION activities</b>	312

The cumulative totals across various metrics for the NY SCION initiative are as follows:

- There are a total of 404 active local partnerships with agencies that support NY SCION.
- A total of 113 new partnerships are in development as a result of NY SCION business engagement activities.
- The initiative has engaged 1428 businesses as part of its activities.
- A total of 2364 NY SCION-eligible customers are being served by NY SCION/DRC.



- There are 592 customers with disabilities who have been trained as a result of NY SCION activities.
- Lastly, 312 businesses have been trained as a result of NY SCION activities.

These figures provide a comprehensive overview of the initiative's reach and impact across various engagement and training metrics.

- The average number of active local partnerships with agencies that support NY SCION is approximately 15, indicating a moderate level of collaboration across LWDBs.
- LWDBs have been proactive in developing new partnerships as a result of NY SCION business engagement activities, with an average of four new partnerships being developed. This demonstrates the initiative's effectiveness in fostering new collaborations.
- Training provided to customers with disabilities and businesses as a result of NY SCION activities varies widely across LWDBs, indicating diverse approaches to implementing the initiative's training components.
- The analysis of NY SCION-eligible customers served across Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDBs) reveals a variation in the number of customers served. This variation suggests that certain regions or boards have a higher capacity or demand for the services provided by the NY SCION initiative, possibly due to differences in population density, the prevalence of NY SCION-eligible individuals, or the effectiveness of local engagement strategies.
- Regions with higher numbers of served customers may have more developed networks, resources, or strategies that effectively reach and serve the NY SCION target population. Conversely, areas serving fewer customers might face challenges such as limited resources, lower awareness of the initiative, or fewer NY SCION-eligible individuals in the population.

Baseline Summary	Participants are disabled adults with WIOA Enrollment between 04/01/2022 and 12/31/2023										
	Total number of adults with disabilities (ages 18+) served.	Total number of adults with disabilities receiving core and intensive services.	Total number of adults with disabilities entering Career Pathways training.	Total number of adults with disabilities completing Career Pathways training.	Total # receiving an industry-recognized /post-secondary certificate.	Total number of adults with disabilities entering unsubsidized employment.	Retention rate (180 days+)			Participants who received work experience under the WIOA Participation Period	SCION TAB
							Exiters employed in 1st and second quarter after exit (Numerator)	Total Exiters between 4/1/2022 and 06/30/2023 (Denominator)	Retention rate		
Participating Areas - Current qtr 04/1/2022 - 12/31/2023	11,185	10,357	595	399	419	4,300	3,030	8,622	35.14%	319	693
Participating Areas - Previous qtr 04/1/2022 - 09/30/2023	9,786	9,076	491	328	353	3,364	2,194	7,109	30.86%	284	520
Percentage Increase	12.51%	12.37%	17.48%	17.79%	15.75%	21.77%	27.59%	17.55%		10.97%	24.96%

- **Total, New York State:** Shows aggregate data for the entire state, with 11,185 individuals served by our Career Centers.
- 595 entered training.
- 399 completed training, and 4,300 entered unsubsidized employment.
- The retention rate (180 days+) is approximately 35.14%.