

Employment Newsletter



Employment & Day Services Updates

The Employment & Day Services (EDS) Division was created in 2018 to oversee DDS employment and day service options. EDS works with individuals, families, providers, community partners, and businesses to prepare individuals for competitive employment. The division currently offers a variety of day and employment services to individuals with intellectual disability and other developmental disabilities (IDD) across Connecticut, learn more below:

Congratulations Project SEARCH Graduates!

Throughout the end of May and beginning of June, Connecticut's Project SEARCH interns will be graduating their 9-month program. Connecticut's Project SEARCH programs boast a higher employment rate than the national average with 79.8% of interns finding employment upon graduation! Learn more about Project SEARCH [here](#).



Program:	Graduates
UConn Health <i>FAVARH</i>	7
Goodwin University <i>MARC of Manchester</i>	4
Hartford Hospital <i>MARC of Manchester</i>	6
Middlesex Hospital <i>MARC Community Resources</i>	7
Charlotte Hungerford Hospital <i>Litchfield ARC</i>	3
Greenwich Hospital <i>Abilis</i>	3
Darien YMCA <i>Abilis</i>	2
Norwalk Community College <i>Ability Beyond & Norwalk Schools</i>	7
Nuvance Hospital <i>Ability Beyond</i>	6



Supporting Transformation to Empower People

DDS has a variety of service options that can help meet a person’s support needs by assisting them in reaching their goals. Our system has historically relied upon more traditional models of support, which will continue to exist and may still be the best fit for some individuals. However, STEP emphasizes progressive supports that focus on independence, integration, and empowerment.

SEVEN CORE SUPPORTS

VIDEO

1. Self-direction

VIDEO

2. Community Companion Homes (CCH)

3. Supportive Housing

VIDEO

4. Individualized Home Support (IHS)

5. Assistive Technology (AT)

VIDEO

6. Remote Support

7. Employment

View the STEP Fact Sheet in [English](#) or [Spanish](#)

Sign up for the STEP newsletter [here](#)

View the June STEP Newsletter in [English](#) or [Spanish](#)

Fourth Tuesday Forums

June 27, 2023

• Children’s Services & Transition Age Youth

July 25, 2023

• Advances in Supportive Housing

August 22, 2023

• Staying Connected Through Technology

Each month, DDS Deputy Commissioner Elisa Velardo hosts a Fourth Tuesday Forum on different innovative options. These meetings are informational listening sessions to allow stakeholders to learn more about different DDS services. A new topic is discussed each month by DDS staff from the content area.

Meetings take place on the 4th Tuesday of every month from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm and are held on Microsoft Teams. Meetings links and past meeting recordings are posted on the DDS website [here](#).

Past Topics & Video Links:

[Supportive Housing](#)

[Individualized Home Supports](#)

[Assistive Technology](#)

[Community Companion Homes](#)

[Customized Employment](#)

[Remote Supports](#)

[Self-Directed Services](#)

[Residential Transformation](#)

[Employment Transformation](#)

National Core Indicators (NCI) National Report:

The National Core Indicators-Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (NCI-IDD) 2021-22 National In-Person Survey Report is now available. Click [here](#) for the full report, click [here](#) for the chapter on Employment.

Across the 48 participating states, **Connecticut ranked SECOND** in the percentage of individuals with IDD engaging in competitive employment. Connecticut was a leader across all employment data for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, ranking “Above Average” in almost all employment categories. Below is a brief summary of some of Connecticut’s accomplishments:

Has a paid community job: CT Ranked 2nd

Average number of biweekly hours by type of community job: CT Ranked 3rd

Average hourly wages by type of community job: CT Ranked 3rd

Use of Assistive Technology in Employment: CT Ranked 3rd

Has community employment as a goal in their service plan: CT Ranked 4th

Employment Outreach

The Employment & Day Services team had a busy spring presenting on the innovative employment options offered by DDS at multiple conferences and events. The Employment & Day Services team presented at the Conference on Adults with Disabilities on April 28th with DDS Self-Advocate Jossie Torres and members of the Marc Community Resources Project SEARCH Team. This included Nick G., a recent Project SEARCH Graduate. The team also presented at the Annual Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) Conference on May 11th as well as at multiple other conferences and events! To learn more about DDS Employment & Day Services, check out our recently updated webpage at <https://portal.ct.gov/DDS-EDS>.



16th Annual Project SEARCH Conference

In July Brian Gresko will attend the 16th Annual Project SEARCH Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The conference brings together members of Project SEARCH programs from across the **world** to learn, share, and connect. Multiple staff across the state’s 14 programs will be attending the conference.



Customized Employment: CSAVR Spring Conference

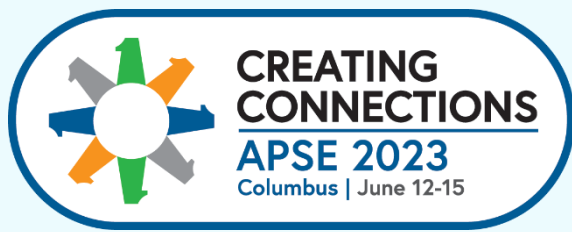


Trever Rogers, Torrey Morse, Stephen Wooderson (CSAVR CEO), and David Doukas (BRS Bureau Chief)

In April Trever Rogers (DDS Employment & Day) and Torrey Morse (ADS Education Consultant) presented at the Coalition of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) 2023 Spring Conference in Bethesda, Maryland. The presentation, titled “Innovative Partnerships”, focused on the interagency partnership between DDS and the Department of Aging & Disability Services (ADS) to deliver Customized Employment Services to individuals at both agencies. Trever and Torrey connected with subject matter experts from different states and will be meeting with these states throughout the Summer to share and learn about best practices.

2023 National APSE Conference: Creating Connections

Darrell Spears (DDS Employment & Day) will be attending the 2023 National Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) Conference in Columbus, Ohio from June 12th to 15th. Darrell sits on the Board of the



Connecticut Chapter of APSE with DDS staff Trever Rogers (DDS Employment & Day) and Cheryl Ellis (DDS Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion). Darrell will be representing the Department at the conference which will bring together subject matter experts from across the country to learn and connect.

Transportation: Community Transportation Association of America

In May Brian Gresko (DDS Employment & Day) attended the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) Annual Expo in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The conference, put together by the Transportation Accessibility Institute, brings together transportation professionals from across the U.S. to learn about innovative technology, workforce development, communication strategies, funding, and regulations. Multiple members of the DDS Transportation Workgroup attended the Conference with staff from Ability Beyond Disability.



Guyauth Gabbidon (HART Transportation), Brian Gresko, Elda Smith (Parent, Transportation Committee Co-Chair), Bridget Kopet (Ability Beyond Services Manager), Edwin Cruz (Ability Beyond, Program Manager).

Connecticut Customized Employment Technical Assistance Community of Practice

The 3rd meeting of the CT CE CoP will be held on Monday, August 14th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The focus of this CoP meeting will be the second phase of Customized Employment: Job Development, Negotiation, & Placement. The first half of the meeting will be information presented by the ADS-DDS CE Project team and the second half will be time for providers to discuss, ask, and answer questions.

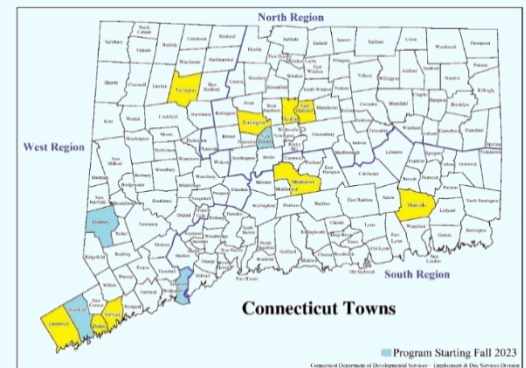
Quarter 3 – [RSVP](#)
August 14th from 9 – 12
**TOPIC: Job Development,
Negotiation, & Placement**


We will once again welcome staff from Job Path, a provider agency in New York with more than 10 years of experience in Customized Employment. All provider agencies are welcome to join: those curious about CE, those currently in a CE Certification Course, and those currently providing CE Services. More information can be found in the attached one-pager found [here](#) and on the DDS website [here](#).

Project SEARCH


There are now **14** Project SEARCH programs across Connecticut! Project SEARCH (PS) is a nine-month internship training program, available to school transition age students and young adults eligible for DDS services, who need more intensive employment skills training. **Four new Project SEARCH locations** will be starting in the 23-24 school/program year! The four programs are highlighted in blue on the map and their contact information is listed below. **Please reach out to the program's designated contact for more information about applying for the 2023-24 year.**


Connecticut Locations



NEW Host Site: Hospital of Central CT (New Britain)
Provider Agency: CCARC 
Contact: Jenny Bishop - jbishop@ccarc.com

NEW Host Site: Stamford Hospital
Provider Agency: Abilis 
Contact: Luis Velazquez – 203-531-1880 – velazquez@abilis.us

NEW Host Site: Danbury Hospital
Provider Agency: Ability Beyond 
Contact: Kaitlyn Appleby – Kaitlyn.Appleby@abilitybeyond.org

NEW Host Site: Stratford YMCA
Provider Agency: The Kennedy Collective 
Contact: Sara Schwartz sara.schwartz@thekennedycollective.org



Learn more about Project SEARCH [here](#). View the Updated CT Project SEARCH Contact List [here](#).

Working Interview Employment Incentive

Effective 6/1/2023, the Working Interview Employment Incentive rate is \$20.17 per hour to account for the CT minimum wage increase. The rate matches the ADS Consumer Wage Rate for similar services.

Self-Advocacy

June 2023 Self-Advocate Recreation Calendar



June Recreation 2023

TUESDAY 5:30-6:30PM **WEDNESDAY 5:30-6:30PM** **THURSDAY 3-4PM**

HELLO SUMMER!

(free) Zoom account needed to participate
<https://tinyurl.com/62rn5ujn>
Meeting ID: 222 399 8386
Passcode: 479813

1 **HEALTHY EATING & MOVING WITH Natasha**

6 **Body Music & Hand Dancing**

7 **THE GOOD LIFE WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?** with Ali

8 **JEOPARDY!** with your host, Carol TREBEK!!

13 **Yara's CRITTER CORNER**

18 **TRIVIA WITH**

20 **SING ALONG JUKEBOX with Ann Marie & Jason!!**

21 **Virtual Vacation with**

22 **Scavenger Hunt**

27 **Paige's Trivia & Video Dance Party**

29 **BINGO**

Virtual Recreation for CT adults (20 + up) receiving DDS services
Contact Corinne Jackson with any questions
corinne.jackson@ct.gov

Virtual Recreation for CT adults (20 + up) in DDS services.

Link to Join:

<https://tinyurl.com/62rn5ujn>

Meeting ID: 222 399 8386

Passcode: 479813

If you have any questions, Contact

Corinne Jackson

corinne.jackson@ct.gov

Employment Success Story: Sarah Liebeskind

Sarah Liebeskind started her business, Red on Wheels Creations, in 2016. She makes beautiful bracelets and necklaces out of memory wire. Sarah came up with the idea because she wanted to do something to inspire people like herself. The name of her business says a lot – she is the red head on wheels. Her artistic ability to make unique jewelry pieces is an inspiration. Sarah said, “I wanted to show that anyone can do anything that they put their mind to.”

Sarah explains that she was inspired to make hand crafted jewelry after she took a class on how to make bracelets using memory wire. She loved the class, and this began her business journey. Sarah said she did not do this alone, she had a lot of help from family and friends along the way.

In the beginning she found it hard to sell her work because she wasn't connected on social media. She realized that to get her business going she needed to be connected! Sarah is now on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube channel (Red on Wheels Creations) and she has a website, linked [here](#).

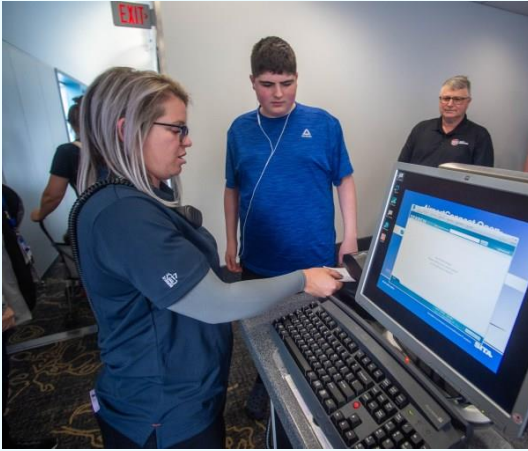
Read the full employment success story written by Self Advocate Coordinator James Louchen on the DDS website [here](#).



Links & Resources

DDS does not endorse or recommend any product, process, or service listed below.

Hartford Courant



Jake Hall, 17 of West Haven, gets his boarding pass scanned by Breeze Airways supervisor Courtnie Evans, before boarding a Breeze Airways plane as part of the Autism Flies program organized by Autism Doubled Checked at Bradley International Airport on Tuesday, May 16, 2023. (Aaron Flaum/Hartford Courant)

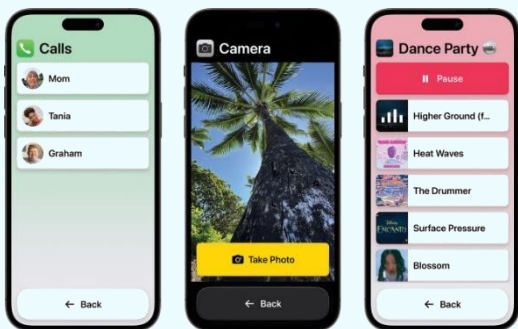
Kids with autism can hate getting on a plane. A CT program is helping families fly

Autism Flies is a travel training program led by Stamford-based [Autism Double Checked](#), a travel consultant aimed at making the travel and hospitality industry autism-inclusive. The Autism Flies program was created to encourage people with autism to travel and teach travel-industry employees strategies to better serve their clients with autism. Autism Double Checked also offers tutorials for hotels, resorts and restaurants which were developed with assistance from Southern Connecticut State University's [Center of Excellence on Autism Spectrum Disorders](#).

On Tuesday, May 16th dozens of families participated in an Autism Flies program at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, CT. Families got tickets and simulated the experience of navigating the airport and boarding, using a Breeze Airways plane as a classroom. The plane did not take off, families boarded and learned pre-flight procedures and other lessons before deboarding. To read more, access the Hartford Courant article [here](#).

disabilityscoop

Apple Rolls Out Accessibility Features Aimed At Users With Developmental Disabilities



Apple has announced new features that will be released later this year to make Apple devices easier to use for people with cognitive disabilities and those who are nonspeaking. New accessibility features will allow users to pare down the home screen or options within an app. For example, the camera app could be modified to display a button that says “take photo” rather than showing options for photo, video and other settings.

Another new feature, Live Speech, will enable those who are nonspeaking to have their device speak what they type. The feature will work for in-person conversations as well as on phone and facetime calls. Finally, a new feature called “Point and Speak” will launch to assist Apple users with vision loss. With this option, a user could run their finger across buttons on a Microwave for example and their device could announce each option.

To read more, access the Disability Scoop article [here](#).



Calé Jonathan Barlow, a Project SEARCH graduate, washes dishes for Morrison Healthcare food service at UConn Health.

CT employment program helps pair young adults with intellectual disabilities to meaningful work experience

The program boasts a 98% placement rate, all but one of the program's 45 graduates have found a competitive integrated employment position. FAVARH's UConn Health Project SEARCH graduates work for a number of local businesses, including the Holy Family Retreat Center, Price Chopper, CVS, Mintz & Hoke advertising and many others! Check out the Hartford Courant article on UConn Health and the Arc of Farmington Valley (FAVARH)'s Project SEARCH Program [here](#). The article includes more information about the program and some great success stories from some of the programs graduates!



Celebrating Olmstead: Exploring the 14c Report and National Trends in the Movement to End Segregation and Exploitation of People with Disabilities

The AoD Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center (DETAC)'s National Community of Practice (CoP) webinar will be hosted Tuesday, June 13, 2023, from 3:00 pm 4:00 pm. This webinar will introduce a new report, The National 14c Landscape, Implications and Recommendations to Elevate Competitive Integrated Employment. The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) will highlight the findings of the report including gaps, successes, challenges, and recommendations for systems change efforts to effectively phase out sheltered workshops and subminimum wages. DETAC and NDRN will also jointly highlight the transformative efforts to increase competitive, integrated employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Register [here](#).



Center for Disability Inclusion's (CDI)'s Annual Seal

Each year the Center for Disability Inclusion (CDI) awards companies a Seal of Accomplishment in Disability Inclusion. This seal recognizes business and organization partners across the US who are leaders and influencers in advancing disability inclusion. Recipient companies will have worked through the proprietary Disability Inclusion Process, designed by CDI, and have committed to continued work on the Disability Inclusion Process with CDI. To learn more about CDI's Annual Seal of Accomplishment in Disability Inclusion, click [here](#).

CT Assistive Technology Innovation Conference

Connecticut's Assistive Technology Innovation Conference on Thursday, June 22 is a full-day event to help enhance awareness, understanding, access, and acquisition of Assistive Technology devices and services in Connecticut. Individuals and families receiving supports from DDS will have their registration fee waived and can attend the conference at no cost. RSVP for the conference [here](#).

Informative breakout sessions with cutting-edge technology experts will include Assistive Technology for Employment; Accessibility Features for Your Smartphones & Tablets; Remote Supports to Foster Independent and Supportive Living; and Initiatives for Accessing Assistive Technology for Individuals with Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and Private Provider Incentives. The DDS AT & Me initiative will provide individuals eligible for DDS the opportunity to use, obtain and mentor others with technology products.

REGISTER TODAY!

CONNECTICUT'S ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION CONFERENCE

A collaboration between the Developmental Disabilities Council, Dept. of Developmental Services and CT Tech Act Project

JUNE 22, 2023 • 9am - 4pm
Sheraton Hartford South Hotel
100 Capital Blvd., Rocky Hill, CT 06067

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY EXPO HALL
Chance for hands-on experience with AT devices and interact with exhibitors & service providers.

TECH ACT
Connecticut Tech Act Project

DDS

Ädelbrook Community & Partnership Event

ÄDELBROOK

COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIP EVENT

Join us for a presentation on how sensory input is all around us!
We all process sensory input differently. How can we use sensory input to help our children and students' better function within the world around us?

JUNE 28th, 2023
6:00pm - 7:00pm
2000 W. Hill St / 06037-0000
org.adelbrook.org/6691337943

Scan the QR Code!

What is Occupational Therapy?

6691337943

A presentation on how sensory input is all around us! We all process sensory input differently. How can we use sensory input to help our children and students' better function within the world around us? Join the Community & Partnership Event on June 28th, 2023 from 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm.

Zoom link: <https://adelbrook-org.zoom.us/j/6691337943>

Questions can be directed Jackie Peck: jpeck@adelbrook.org or 203-710-0326

Rental Assistance Available for Participants of CareerConneCT

Governor Ned Lamont announced that his administration is designating \$30 million of federal COVID-19 relief funding to make rental assistance stipends available for qualifying participants of [CareerConneCT](#), the state's signature workforce training program. CareerConneCT connects jobseekers with free, short-term job training programs that provide them with the skills needed to obtain employment in several high-demand sectors, such as manufacturing, information technology, health care, and more. The program collaborates directly with Connecticut employers who are seeking to hire, giving participants an opportunity to directly connect with available job openings. Participants in CareerConneCT also receive free supportive services while in training, including transportation, childcare, and housing. Read the full press release [here](#).

Can you find all the words? After you find all the words, respond [here](#) for the answer key.

Employment Services Word Search

Can you find the words hidden in this grid? They may read backwards or forwards, up or down. The words will always be in a straight line. Cross them off the list as you find them.

S	G	J	Y	H	E	R	T	I	L	U	T	H	A	J	L	J	K	A	H	A
A	S	S	I	S	T	I	V	E	T	E	C	H	N	O	L	O	G	Y	A	C
P	B	N	N	I	A	A	A	E	U	F	X	I	C	T	I	B	E	D	P	C
P	P	Z	T	E	P	R	O	J	E	C	T	S	E	A	R	C	H	L	I	O
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N	S	Y	R	F	N	N	A	D	L	A	S	P	L	A	E	V	K	I	K	D
T	D	K	A	V	O	V	M	O	D	I	F	I	C	A	T	I	O	N	S	A
I	L	S	T	E	A	M	W	D	V	T	K	A	I	H	A	N	Q	T	N	T
C	J	Y	E	B	J	F	A	C	X	K	D	J	O	B	W	G	L	E	Y	I
E	H	I	D	I	S	C	O	V	E	R	Y	Q	H	O	C	D	P	R	R	O
X	V	T	W	L	T	U	C	T	T	U	B	F	A	K	P	T	P	N	Q	N
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F	R	T	Y	K	G	A	R	I	L	H	S	E	D	W	T	B	L	D	A	J
A	C	U	S	T	O	M	I	Z	E	D	E	M	P	L	O	Y	M	E	N	T

- Accommodations
- Apprentice
- Assistive Technology
- Competitive
- Customized Employment
- Discovery
- Employment
- Integrated
- Intern
- Job
- Job Carving
- Modifications
- Plan
- Project SEARCH
- Team

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