



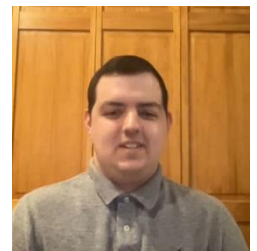
Employment & Day Services Division

Employment Newsletter

Summer 2022



No matter what you do to achieve your goal, whether it is school or a career, there will be people who will support you. There are always people that are on your side and who will fight for you to succeed and be happy with the process of achieving your goal.



- Nick, Mitchell College Graduate

Nick, originally from the West Region, was interviewed by the EDS team about his success in achieving his educational and employment goals. Nick graduated from Mitchell college with a BS in Communications (2021) and has an entrepreneurial spirit. He is interested in writing, film making, and performing and works at different parties and gatherings as a costume character. This allows Nick to make money doing something he enjoys and is interested in. Nick was also pursuing different internship programs when he sat down with the EDS team.

Nick wants other people to know that there are supports along each step of the way; there are people who will assist when needed and different programs such as college preparation and campus supports to help people achieve their goals. Other state agencies such as Bureau of Revenue Services (BRS, part of ADS) can assist with interview skills and employment preparation. As Nick says, “There will always be people and there will always be services”. DDS stands firm to this commitment. Our mission is to support lifelong planning and to join with others to create and promote meaningful opportunities for individuals to fully participate as valued members of their communities.

CEO Letter on Disability Inclusion

To mark the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in July 2020, more than 100 Chief Executive Officers (CEO)s signed a letter on disability inclusion. The [CEO letter on disability inclusion](#) was sent to CEOs across the nation to recognize and help advance the employment of people with disabilities. The 120 CEOs who signed the letter are asking CEOs from other large corporations to

1. Participate in the Disability Equality Index (DEI), the leading corporate benchmarking tool for disability equality, which is administered by the non-profit organizations, American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and Disability:IN;
2. Share important information on disability inclusion that details its impact on business performance; and
3. Raise awareness of investor interest in understanding how companies are inclusive of people with disabilities.

Two national corporations headquartered in Connecticut, Cigna (President & CEO David Cordani) and Synchrony (President & CEO Brian Doubles) signed the letter. Dozens of other organizations with a large presence in CT have also signed the pledge and are committed to employing people with disabilities. Some of these corporations include Walmart, Target, BestBuy, Lowes, Cox Communications, CVS Health, and many others. All the companies signed on to the letter to leverage the [Disability Equality Index](#) and help build better products, stronger workforces, and innovative supply chains.

Local Businesses Support Disability Inclusion

There are many local businesses operating with the mission of creating meaningful employment opportunities for those in the community with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).



Good Cause Gifts has three locations in Connecticut and is run by Futures, Inc., a DDS community provider. Locations in Berlin, West Hartford, and New Britain, CT employ more than 20 individuals with disabilities. Learn more about Good Cause Gifts [here](#).



The Nest Coffee Shop is a sensory friendly coffee shop opened by A Little Compassion, a nonprofit in Deep River, CT. The shop employs more than 20 staff with IDD, autism or other neurodiversity and almost a dozen high school interns! Learn more about The Nest Coffee Shop [here](#).

EDS Updates

Stay up to date with the Employment & Day Division! This section provides news and updates on different programs and services offered/overseen by the EDS Division Team.

The Employment & Day Services (EDS) Division was created in 2018 to oversee DDS employment and day 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 across Connecticut, learn more below:

Customized Employment

Customized Employment (CE) is an alternative method of finding competitive integrated employment that focuses on the strengths, skills, and abilities of individuals with significant disabilities and the unmet needs of employers. It is a highly structured, person-centered process, carried out over time in three components: Job Discovery; Job Development, Negotiation and Placement; and Post-Employment Supports.

The application for the next iteration of the CT CE Certification Course opened on August 1st, 2022. Four overlapping iterations of the course will be offered between September 2022 and July 2023.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Session A: <u>September 6, 2022- February 3, 2023</u></p> <p>Module 1: 9/6/22-9/30/22 Module 2: 10/3/22-11/4/22 Module 3: 11/7/22-12/9/22 Module 4: 1/3/23-2/3/23</p> <p>LIVE SESSIONS Tuesdays at 9:00 on: 9/27; 10/18; 11/1; 11/29; 1/17; 1/31</p> <p>Session A Application Link <small>Application Deadline 8/25/22</small></p> | <p>Session C: <u>Feb 6, 2023- June 23, 2023</u></p> <p>Module 1: 2/6/23-3/3/23 Module 2: 3/6/23-4/7/23 Module 3: 4/17/23-5/12/23 Module 4: 5/15/23-6/23/23</p> <p>LIVE SESSIONS Tuesdays at 9:00 on: 2/28; 3/21; 4/4; 5/2; 6/6; 6/20</p> <p>Session C Application Link <small>Application Deadline 1/19/23</small></p> |
| <p>Session B: <u>October 3, 2022- March 10, 2023</u></p> <p>Module 1: 10/3/22-10/28/22 Module 2: 10/31/22-12/16/22 Module 3: 1/3/23-2/3/23 Module 4: 2/6/23-3/10/23</p> <p>LIVE SESSIONS Wednesdays at 9:00 on: 10/26; 11/16; 12/7; 1/25; 2/22; 3/8</p> <p>Session B Application Link <small>Application Deadline 9/15/22</small></p> | <p>Session D: <u>Feb 27, 2023- June 30, 2023</u></p> <p>Module 1: 2/27/23-3/24/23 Module 2: 3/27/23-4/28/23 Module 3: 5/1/23-5/26/23 Module 4: 5/31/23-6/30/23</p> <p>LIVE SESSIONS Thursdays at 9:00 on: 3/16; 4/6; 4/27; 5/25; 6/15; 6/29</p> <p>Session D Application Link <small>Application Deadline 2/9/23</small></p> |

To learn more about the application process and the CT CE Certification, review the overview document which includes application links, [here](#).

4th Tuesday Forums

Attend the next fourth Tuesday Forum! Each month a different topic is discussed by DDS staff from the content area. These meetings will be informational listening sessions to allow stakeholders to learn more about different DDS services. Meetings are recorded and posted on the [DDS Website](#) under 4th Tuesday Forums.

View the flyer with the link [here](#).

Fourth Tuesday Forums on Innovative Options

July 26, 2022 – Supportive Housing

August 23, 2022 – Individualized Home Supports (I.H.S.)

September 27, 2022 – Assistive Technology

October 25, 2022 – Community Companion Homes (CCH)

November 22, 2022 – Customized Employment (CE)

December 20, 2022 - Remote Supports



Kaitlin Appley (Ability Beyond)
Excellence in Employment Outcomes

Project SEARCH



Kathy Riberdy (LARC)
Celebrating 100% Placement Rate

Connecticut shined at the 15th Annual Project SEARCH Conference held in Baltimore, Maryland from July 25-29. The DDS Statewide Project SEARCH Coordinator, Brian Gresko, and representatives from all active CT Project SEARCH programs participated in a week packed with informational sessions and lectures. The conference boasted over 700 participants from across the US and the international community, including Canada, the UK, and Iceland.

Making CT proud, Sandra Finnimore, the Project SEARCH lead for FAVARH, presented material regarding Project SEARCH curricula and pre-curricula, of which she was instrumental in creating. Additionally, 4 CT Project SEARCH programs (LARC, Ability Beyond, FAVARH, and MARC) all received awards for Excellent Employment Outcomes. Congratulations!



Michael Parente & Tara Traver (MARC)
Excellence in Employment Outcomes

Pictured with Susie Rutkowski (left) & Erin Riehle (right) Project SEARCH cofounders

[Connecticut Project SEARCH Contact List](#)



Sandra Finnimore & Tammy Annis (FAVARH)
Celebrating 100% Placement Rate

There are **10** Project SEARCH programs across Connecticut. Project SEARCH 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. Learn more about Project SEARCH [here](#).

DDS providers qualified to offer Transition Services interested in starting their own Project SEARCH program can contact the EDS team [here](#) to determine if there is a geographic need and for other start up information.

UCP is pausing their Project SEARCH Program for the 2022-2023 program year in order to evaluate and develop a new host site. It is our expectation that UCP will have a new host site established in time for the September 2023 Project SEARCH cohort.

Employment & Day Conversations

Individuals & Families

EDS will be holding quarterly meetings for individuals and families to learn about and discuss employment. All individuals and families served by DDS are welcome to join, use the RSVP link below for a link. Meeting dates are listed below:

September 22nd, 2022 @ 5:00PM

January 19th, 2023 @ 5:00PM

April 20th, 2023 @ 5:00PM

July 20th, 2023 @ 5:00PM

[RSVP](#)

Case Management Corner

Topical information to DDS Case Managers, Resource Managers, Transition Advisors, and other DDS staff involved in the planning process

Supporting a Vision for Employment: eLearning

DDS has partnered with SELN to offer the Supporting a Vision for Employment E-learning course for DDS case managers, transition advisors, and employment staff. The 4-module course is self-paced, and learners must complete all assignments during the 4-week section. The course has been offered multiple times throughout 2022 and will allow a new round of learners to start in Fall 2022. To request the RSVP information and link, use the intake for linked below:

Supporting a Vision for Employment emphasizes the critical role case managers play in ensuring opportunities to experience competitive integrated employment.

This course fits your busy schedule.

- ❖ Complete the course anywhere with internet access - at your desk or on the go with a mobile device.
- ❖ Finish the whole course at once or in smaller pieces. Save your work and pick up where you left off using the course navigation.

This course is interactive and immersive.

- ❖ Take your time to reflect and analyze problems before answering the questions.
- ❖ Explore real-life scenarios, case studies, and stories and check your knowledge with quizzes.
- ❖ Download additional resources to continue studying over time.

[Request Information](#)

EDS Monthly DDS Conversations

On the second Wednesday of each month at 10:00AM, EDS will hold meetings for DDS Divisions/Units. These meetings will allow EDS to discuss employment and topical projects/information as well as other units to share information that is topical to EDS. DDS Divisions/Units can request to attend with the RSVP form where one can request a specific topic/question on the agenda.

[Request Information](#)

DDS STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Let's Talk about
Employment & Day Services

**EDS Pathways
Monthly
Discussions**

1 Hour
Conversations

[RSVP
Here](#)

MICROSOFT TEAMS MEETING

**2nd Wednesday
Monthly**
10:00AM - 11:00AM
Monthly updates on
EDS projects, time for
DDS units & divisions
to meet with the EDS
team.

Presented by:
Amber Burke EDS Division Director
Brian Gresko | Darrell Spears
Trever Rogers EDS Transition Advisors

Links & Resources

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

LEADCenter
WIOA POLICY DEVELOPMENT



**In-Depth Q&A Event:
Blended, Braided, and Sequenced Funding for
Employment, Equity, and Inclusion**

Webinar: Thursday, August 11, 3:00-4:00 P.M. ET

[RSVP](#)

The LEAD Center is offering a unique Q&A event that brings together professionals from Arizona, Colorado, Maryland, North Carolina, and multiple federal agencies to answer detailed implementation and policy questions related to blending, braiding, and sequencing resources and funding. These best practice strategies support positive employment outcomes, and promote equity and inclusion for people with disabilities.

HIRING AND SUPPORTING NEURODIVERGENT WORKERS: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

EARN ADVANCING
WORKFORCE
DIVERSITY

Employer Assistance and Resource
Network on Disability Inclusion

In this webinar, participants will hear from a panel of neurodivergent professionals as well as employers who have developed successful neurodiversity programs. To register or learn more about the topics, click [here](#).

Wednesday, August 17, 2:00 - 3:30



**INTERVIEWING TIPS AND MOCK INTERVIEW TRAINING
FOR JOBSEEKERS**

JOBS.DISABILITYTALENT.ORG

[RSVP Here](#)

**DISABILITY
SOLUTIONS**
@ABILITY BEYOND

Join this webinar Aug 18, 2022 12:00 PM to learn:

- What employers need jobseekers to know
- Soft skills to impress in the hiring process
- Application and interview preparation tips
- Opportunity to mock interview

Disability Pride Month 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.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------------|
| P | J | W | R | G | N | F | P | E | R | S | O | N | C | E | N | T | E | R | E | D | Ability |
| R | F | R | L | O | K | A | F | J | P | K | H | G | E | H | D | L | T | G | U | E | Assistive |
| O | E | I | E | D | D | S | C | P | L | K | A | A | D | A | R | E | O | F | E | E | Communication |
| U | H | B | L | W | R | S | B | I | O | E | T | F | H | K | P | M | P | Y | I | Q | DDS |
| D | Q | A | B | I | L | I | T | Y | J | Z | T | F | Q | J | O | P | V | T | U | U | Diverse |
| I | X | K | V | U | L | S | C | Q | E | Q | U | I | T | Y | Q | L | K | E | H | A | Employment |
| R | D | L | A | E | J | T | B | K | I | T | H | A | L | S | U | O | G | C | Y | L | Equality |
| C | I | I | V | R | U | I | N | C | L | U | S | I | O | N | Y | Y | U | H | P | I | Equity |
| G | V | O | W | J | G | V | R | W | D | Z | P | K | R | O | T | M | R | N | L | T | Inclusion |
| S | E | R | V | I | C | E | S | F | U | I | Y | F | P | U | R | E | L | O | F | Y | Person Centered |
| L | R | T | R | E | R | J | T | L | Y | H | B | A | R | H | H | N | D | L | S | G | Pride |
| V | S | Z | S | E | L | F | D | E | T | E | R | M | I | N | A | T | I | O | N | X | Proud |
| K | E | J | E | U | Y | T | F | N | T | C | U | Q | D | R | Q | I | T | G | W | Y | Self Determination |
| U | M | P | H | G | X | A | B | E | R | S | J | L | E | E | C | Y | D | Y | A | O | Services |
| C | O | M | M | U | N | I | C | A | T | I | O | N | T | X | V | C | H | K | L | J | Technology |

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

Want to receive the newsletter via email from EDS? Subscribe below:

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Contact Employment & Day Services:

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