

ASSOCIATION FOR CHOICES IN COMMUNITY SUPPORTS AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

WIOA Solutions Pursued

The protracted struggle over the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is continuing on several fronts, with no signs of a resolution. While the law itself contains positive elements for people with disabilities who are working or want to work, the problems lie with troublesome regulations and guidance that have been advanced for it. If they are not altered, thousands of jobs will be in jeopardy and work choices will be limited.

The main battleground is centered on the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), which is part of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). The RSA developed the regulations that govern WIOA but it went a step further by issuing "guidance" on how the regulations should be interpreted. One of the guidelines states that AbilityOne and State-Use Program contracts are not considered to be competitive integrated employment and, therefore, jobs held under those programs are not eligible for federal and state funding. Unless changed, this policy could have devastating effects on the State-Use Program that ACCSES NJ manages and comparable federal programs. The State-Use Program is a major source of the jobs that are staffed by several of our

member organizations. Janitorial Services, the largest segment of our State-Use work, could be affected.

Impact on Employment Horizons:

The AbilityOne provision noted above already has disrupted operations for one of our larger members: Employment Horizons in Morris County. The RSA guidance that AbilityOne contracts are not considered to be competitive integrated employment means that the agency's traditional referral sources and funding for program-participant services at Picatinny Arsenal have come to end. At the same time, the mandate to have the majority of its work performed by individuals with disabilities has not changed. In order to meet these requirements in the face of lost referrals and funding, Employment Horizons has utilized grant funding and more creative means of recruiting qualified individuals with disabilities for its jobs at Picatinny. While Employment Horizons has not lost any jobs yet at Picatinny Arsenal, Executive Director Matthew Putts says openings have become much more difficult to fill. He has taken on a leading role in

continued on page 3

Job Support Targeted

ACCSES New Jersey is fighting to have \$5 million restored to New Jersey's Fiscal Year 2019 state budget for jobs and related services for people with disabilities. The funds were added to the budget last year but Governor Murphy has not maintained them in the budget he proposed to the Legislature for FY 2019 (7/1/18 to 6/30/19).

Susan Perron of Abilities Solutions represented



Susan Perron (center), testifying before the State Assembly Budget Committee.

ACCSES NJ in presenting budget testimony to the State Senate and Assembly Budget and Appropriations Committees early this month. She told the panels that many workers with disabilities will lose their jobs if the funds we are requesting are not restored to the FY 2019 budget. Those put out of work would face bleak prospects. Many would be confined to their homes and others would have to be placed in state-supported programs that are far more expensive than the job programs.

The \$5 million we are seeking would be used for Extended Employment (Center-based jobs), with portions going to Extended Employment transportation and Long-Term Follow Along services for jobs in the community.

We will be following-up on the testimony by meeting with legislative leaders, writing to members of the budget and appropriations Committees, and sending automated messages to all legislators.

IN THIS ISSUE

P2

Chairperson's Message

P3

President/CEO's Message

P5-7

Member News

P8

Member Roster

UPCOMING MEETINGS

General Membership

August 16, 2018

Executive & DVRS Liaison Committees

August 2, 2018

Business Development

May 3, 2018

July 19, 2018

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Mohsen Badran
President/CEO

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

By Mark Boyd

One of our prime pursuits at this time of year is testifying on the state budget for the upcoming fiscal year. I am sure you will join me in thanking Susan Perron of Abilities Solutions for representing us before the two legislative Budget and Appropriations Committees. Her testimony painted a vivid picture of the importance of the job programs for people with disabilities that many of you provide and the need to adequately support them. And, as always, the testimony included a strong reminder that the State of New Jersey receives a substantial return for its investment in these jobs.

It is a very positive development that we are repeating the two-day ACCSES New Jersey STAR Conference in Atlantic City this year. The event will be held in October. Our members, partners and potentially-interested parties will be receiving updated information shortly.

Overall, I am pleased to report that our Association is performing at a high level while undertaking a substantial number of endeavors. You can read about several of them in this issue, including those that our CEO, Mohsen Badran, has covered in his column on the facing page.

ACCSES NJ's purpose is to augment our members' resources and help them strengthen the high-quality jobs and services they provide to individuals with disabilities and the community-at-large. I am particularly impressed with the improvement in the following areas:

- Communications between ACCSES NJ and its members, all related public and voluntary agencies and the public, to ensure the regular exchange of essential information.
- Training and education services for the benefit of members, the programs they operate, and the individuals they serve.
- Enhanced use of technology that supports advocacy, sales, billing, training and social media.
- Commercial sales of products and services that our members originally developed under the State Use program, which are now being offered to the private sector.
- Greater participation, along with ACCSES national and other partners, in advocating for our positions on the federal level.

Keep up the good work and please maintain your involvement in the Association's activities.



Mark Boyd

The Mission of ACCSES New Jersey is to provide leadership and support to members who advocate for and serve persons with disabilities through community-based programs located throughout New Jersey.

MESSAGE

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Mohsen Badran

We are in the midst of an extremely active time for many of our Association's projects, perhaps none more important than the quest for state support for job programs for people with disabilities. Details are in the page 1 article. It was disappointing to learn that Governor Murphy's proposed fiscal year 2019 state budget does not include a \$5 million appropriation for job services for people with disabilities that was added to the current budget last year. We will work vigorously to have these Extended Employment (EE) funds restored. Our campaign kicked off early this month when Susan Perron of Abilities Solutions represented us in testimony before the State Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. You can read more about our efforts in the article.

Efforts are moving along on our Compliance program, as we continue to refine policies and procedures that adhere to all State-Use program requirements and help us respond more effectively to customer expectations and the wishes of our family of member organizations. High on this list is how we assign State Use contracts to CRPs. Our team has worked diligently on this issue and we will be rolling out a new policy soon that will enhance the prospects for more members to receive the work assignments.

I am very pleased that our new website has had a positive impact on our marketing and social media campaigns. Web sales have grown nicely and continue to do so. I will continue to report specifics in my weekly information summaries that are e-mailed to our members at mid-day each Wednesday.

We are undertaking strong advocacy efforts this year in support of ACCSES NJ's major priorities. Floyd Nesse and I attended the national ACCSES winter summit in January, where we gained more insight on the federal issues of concern to our Association. We also participated in the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce's annual Congressional Dinner in Washington D.C. in late February, honoring the state's congressional delegation.

This event draws a "Who's Who" of state and federal legislators, government officials, and business leaders, and we had the opportunity to talk to many of them about our issues. Two major events are still ahead of us. We will repeat last year's successful Day on the Hill in the nation's capital in June, and we are introducing a Day at the State House for which we will have a date soon. Member participation is encouraged for these two events.

I will keep our family of members updated on all these issues in my weekly summary.



Mohsen Badran

WIOA

Continued from page 1

the effort to change the regulations and guidance. One of the agency's strongest arguments lies in the wages paid for jobs it supports at the arsenal, which average over \$14 an hour. Mr. Putz notes that the workers also receive medical, dental and vision benefits, which make the overall compensation package more favorable than many private industry jobs.

Advocacy:

Putts and ACCSES NJ Vice president of Government Relations Floyd Nesse met recently with top DOE and RSA officials in Washington. They were joined by representatives of New Jersey Congressmen Peter Frelinghuysen and Leonard Lance. Putts worked with

Congressman Frelinghuysen's office to arrange the meeting to discuss the restrictive RSA guidance. The DOE and RSA officials seemed open and receptive to our position and asked us to re-send our comments, which were previously submitted. Thus far there has been no response from them but Putts says Congressmen Frelinghuysen will continue to work for one. ACCSES NJ and Employment Horizons will also keep trying.

While in Washington, Putts and Nesse also met with aides to Senators Cory Booker and Robert Menendez. Both were receptive and pledged their help with the situation. We are being jointed in this endeavor by national ACCSES, SUPRA and SourceAmerica.

One additional factor is President Trump's recent nomination of Mark Schultz of Nebraska, to be the new RSA Commissioner. While his position on the WIOA issue is unknown, his background offers hope for our endeavor. He has over 35 years of experience with the development and provision of services for people with disabilities at the national, State, and local levels. The nomination is subject to Senate confirmation.



Matthew Putts (left) and Floyd Nesse at the U.S. Capitol.

State Use Program

ACCSES New Jersey's operation of the State Set-Aside program for people with disabilities has been humming along at a brisk pace, with sales up \$640,000 for the first quarter.

Our sales representatives are always on the lookout for new business that will create additional jobs for people with disabilities. They have been receiving a high level of inquiries from municipalities across the state for Janitorial Services, which is program's largest segment. The team is aggressively pursuing these opportunities and has some promising possibilities for expanding our range of janitorial work.

HVAC filter inquiries also have increased, giving us more opportunities to increase our product mix with new customers.

The trade show and conference season got underway last month.

The events are a crucial component of the program's marketing effort, offering the advantage of reaching out to different groups of potential customers in one place. Our representatives are attending and exhibiting at many of them, with the aim of developing new business for ACCSES New Jersey's member organizations. First up was the Schools Building and Grounds Conference, attended by facilities managers and maintenance personnel. Upcoming in April, May and June are the Government Purchasing Association, an educational conference for Purchasers and Municipal Administrators; the Association of Counties Conference, attended by County Administrators and department heads; the New Jersey Conference of Mayors; NJ School Business Administrators Conference; NJ Association of Clerks Conference; and the Rutgers Educational Purchasing Conference.

Janitorial Training



ACCSES New Jersey is continuing its CITS (Cleaning Industry Training Standard) training program, which is aimed at bringing all of our janitorial services to the top level of industry benchmarks. Recent sessions were held at Goodwill North and North Jersey Friendship House, focusing on restroom care, cleaning and restoration. Training leaders shown above (at front, from left) are John Cox of Friendship House and ACCSES NJ Building Services Managers John Faranda and Garth Hutchinson.

Commercial Business Unit Progressing

The Commercial Business division of ACCSES NJ, formed last year, is moving along on several fronts. The unit is now serving new clients and recently submitted proposals to other businesses for janitorial services in northern and central New Jersey. The division has expanded our outreach by becoming members of the Middlesex County Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Gloucester County Chamber of Commerce. Through participation in events hosted by these chambers and the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce, we actively promote the products and services available to NJ businesses through our affiliates.

The effort is beginning to pay off. Director of Commercial Business Development Kyle McCormick says two new commercial clients recently began utilizing our janitorial services: Lez Bistro restaurant in downtown Englewood and Dean Michaels Studio (photography) in Madison Township, Morris County. We are partnering with two of our member organizations on these contracts. North Jersey Friendship House provides the janitorial workers for Lez Bistro and Hudson Community Enterprises does the work at Dean Michaels. Both clients have expressed enthusiastic satisfaction with the level of services.

ACCSES NJ created the Commercial Business division with the aim of creating more jobs for people with disabilities.

Staff Profile: Kevin Regan

(This is the first of a series of profiles on ACCSES NJ's sales staff)

Kevin started his journey in the not-for-profit/disability field in 2004 with the Arc of Bergen and Passaic Counties. His duties centered on assisting in the expansion of their embroidery and screen printing business with ACCSES New Jersey's State Use Program and private companies.

He joined ACCSES NJ as an Account Executive in 2006, assigned to the north region, and later took over the scheduling and attendance at the many government conferences in which ACCSES participates and exhibits. In 2016 he became Sales Manager/Director of Government Sales. In this role he is currently involved with all of the organization's government sales activities, working with Account Executives and the Operations Division, developing new business throughout the state.

As a Roman Catholic Deacon, he regards his work as more of a vocation than a job. He believes in our mission of providing jobs for people with disabilities and is motivated to continually seek new opportunities to increase job opportunities for them.

Prior to entering the disability field, Kevin had over 28 years of sales and design experience in the office furniture industry and five years in sales for an espresso machine company.



Kevin Regan

HCE Launches Print Training



Trainees at work in HCE's digital production printing program.

Hudson Community Enterprises (HCE), is partnering with Xerox Corporation, the Graphics Arts Education Research Foundation and Intellective Solutions to offer a unique training program in graphics arts and digital production printing: the Digital Career Pathways Program. Open

to all, the program prepares individuals for employment in the digital print and related industries. Job opportunities such as Digital Press Operator, Bindery Operator and Prepress Operator are available in the marketplace today but with no training programs to feed the

industry need, these jobs often go unfilled or require an extensive training period.

HCE's 12-week program combines classroom learning and hands-on instruction, resulting in a nationally recognized Certificate of Achievement granted by the Graphics Arts Education Research Foundation and SkillsUSA. Additionally, HCE enriches the experience with seminars on Life Management Skills, Job Search Skills, Interview Skills and enhanced development in the areas of reading and math. The program includes a four-week Internship that places trainees in a commercial printing, retail print or facilities management environment, where they can gain real-world experience and develop the job skills necessary to making the transition to employment.

HCE's Job Placement team develops industry relationships and sources job opportunities for the students/clients, putting people to work in our communities and filling an industry need for trained, skilled employees.

Agency Partners with Project SEARCH

North Jersey Friendship House is a participant in Bergen County Project SEARCH, a collaborative partnership between business, education, workforce and government agencies; vocational and community rehabilitation providers; long-term support agencies; and families. The one-year internship program for students with disabilities in their last year of high school provides the opportunity to explore careers and develop transferable job skills. The combination of instruction and immersion in the workplace prepares them to make successful transitions from school to productive adult life. Friendship House provides the program's Job Coaching services.

Project SEARCH held its second media day earlier this year at Hackensack University Medical Center. The day started with invited guests touring three internship sites of current students. The first, Cassie, interns at the Center for Ambulatory Surgery. She has a variety of tasks, such as preparing patient's folders, sanitizing stretchers, transporting patients to the operating room, answering phone calls, and interacting with patient's families. The second stop was the Security Department where Justin interns to help improve his communication skills. His tasks involve interacting with incoming guests, checking their IDs., patrolling each building, calling headquarters to update on security

checks, and performing office work. The final stop was at the Children's gift shop where Barbara independently opens the store, assists incoming customers, performs cash and credit transactions, organizes merchandise, conducts inventory, and prices items.

A number of honored guests attended a formal reception after the tour, including those pictured below.



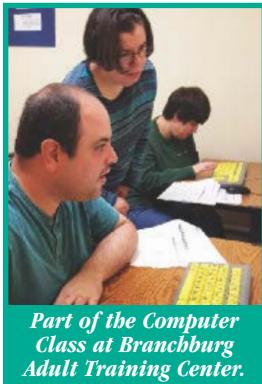
Guests at the Project SEARCH media day (from left): Bergen County Executive James J. Tedesco III; Ibor S. Sawczuk, M.D., President, Hackensack University Medical Center; and Leonard J. Nicolosi, CEO, North Jersey Friendship House.

STAR Conference

ACCSES New Jersey's second STAR Conference is being held October 16 - 17, 2018 at Bally's Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City. The event will feature workshops and classes on Legislation, Advocacy, Leadership, Purchasing and Business Development, among other topics, along with a host of exhibitors and networking opportunities. A highlight will be presentation of the STAR Conference awards, including those for Outstanding Consumer Employees. The ACCSES NJ Annual General Membership meeting will be held during the conference's first day.

Registration information will be available soon.

New Computer Class at BBATC



The Arc of Somerset County has added Computer Classes to the day program curriculum at the Branchburg Adult Training Center (BBATC). The program starts with the basics,

such as describing the functions of the keys on the keyboard, teaching how to double-click a mouse, and identifying items on a computer screen. Once the participants are comfortable with these concepts, they learn how to surf the internet utilizing Google and all its functions.

The individuals with disabilities in this small group class are encouraged to search for ideas that interest them, like a hobby or a place they want to visit. This provides the Arc a new opportunity to learn more about the interests of those served, provide them with

additional ways to express themselves, and teach a new skill.

"The class fulfills a long-held desire to present basic computer-use skills to our participants," stated Chris Corvino, Associate Executive Director. "A computer is a tool to communicate with others and search for items of interest. In this way the computer skills classes follow our music and art programs as a continuing new way for consumers to express themselves and tell their personal stories"

Marketing Goodwill Medical Equipment

Goodwill South Home Medical Equipment is hosting a series of warehouse sales with the aim of getting affordable, refurbished medical equipment into the hands of the people who need it the most, at the lowest price point possible. The sales have been scheduled for the first Saturday of every month (May 5, June 2 and so on), with proceeds going to the agency's job training programs and career services that help local residents with disabilities and disadvantages get to work.

Agency President & CEO Mark Boyd said: "Here at Goodwill, we realize health insurance, Medicaid and Medicare don't always cover the cost of home medical equipment—which can be true life changers for individuals with medical conditions. We do not require insurance or a prescription. We just want to make a positive impact on peoples' lives."

Goodwill Home Medical Equipment's vast inventory includes: wheelchairs (manual and power), walkers, canes, crutches, hospital beds (with new mattresses), bath and shower items, scooters, unopened medical supplies and much more. Warehouse savings are significant. Beyond the monthly warehouse sale, Goodwill Home Medical Equipment operates a retail store in Lawrenceville. Medical equipment and other items can also be purchased online at www.goodwillhomemedical.org.



Physical Therapist Dawn Morgan from Weisman Children's Hospital and Goodwill's Director of Business Development Lorraine Melani are shown with Goodwill medical equipment.

Media Highlights Autism Services

A recent issue of NJ Biz magazine featured a story entitled "Abilities over disabilities: Vocational organizations give persons with autism a chance." It included an interview with Pam S., the mother of a JVS program participant who had been confident she had the information necessary to set her son Max on a successful path into adulthood.

Max was born with autism and received special education through the public school system. However, once he turned 21, he would age out and would have to find the right program to keep his development on track. "That 21 is like jumping off a cliff," Pam said. "It was the scariest experience ever." She had a list of highly-rated day programs, but soon discovered many of them weren't designed to effectively transition Max to adult life. A crucial component was missing. "A lot of them didn't have a vocational piece, which means he'll do arts and crafts all day but that won't

get him a future," she said.

Max cycled through a number of programs over several years but was routinely asked to leave each. Pam grew increasingly concerned for her son, so much so that she was forced to quit her job to dedicate more time to finding a place that would accept and nurture him. After four long years of searching, she found Jewish Vocational Service (JVS), a program that provides vocational training to individuals with disabilities. JVS has a network of employers where program participants can participate in work experiences and have the opportunity to be successful in a work environment.

Today, Max, now 26, continues to be part of the jobs program at JVS, with access to work opportunities in his local community. His mother has returned to work as a teacher in her hometown of Scotch Plains. Pam said Max's two years with JVS have done more for him than any other program.



A participant at work in the JVS "Abilities over disabilities" program

Grant Expands EE Initiative

A\$50,000 Career Pathways Initiative grant that Abilities of Northwest Jersey received from the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) is enabling the agency to expand its career pathway program, designed to lead to community-based competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The term “career pathway program” means a clear sequence of education coursework and training. These objectives are met by Abilities

Star, a 2017 initiative that includes classroom soft-skill training at Warren County Community College (WCCC), internships and employment supports. The DVRS grant creates opportunities for individuals currently receiving job-readiness supports in Extended Employment (EE) to receive additional educational and employment support services. The first cohort of Star students began classes on the WCCC campus last September, developing job readiness skills through soft-skill instruction and community-based career exploration services.

Job Sampling

As a part of their weekly activities at The Arc of Union County, consumers with disabilities are taking part in a program called “Job Sampling with a Purpose.” The Arc and the Kenilworth Inn have worked together since January to provide them with the opportunity to train in the hotel industry. Six individuals have taken part in this groundbreaking new training. They attend training twice a week for three hours a day. The ultimate goal is to gain employment in areas of customer service.

Program job coaches and staff are inspiring participants to find a job they are passionate about and make their chosen careers more than just a job. The Arc staff and management of the Kenilworth Inn are motivated to do more than just get the job done: They want to create job sampling training that will inspire program participants to obtain skills that will help lead them to employment, as well as assist them in their everyday lives. As advocates for people with disabilities, The Arc of Union County strongly believes that such investment of time is urgently needed in preparing individuals for today’s workforce.



An Arc Union worker in hotel maintenance training

Career Exploration

Journeys,” a vocational program for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities supported by The Arc Ocean County, gives participants an opportunity to explore careers through job sampling. By volunteering their time, they are able to sample a variety of tasks in different fields. Clients then recognize their greatest strengths for future career goals.

“I love volunteering my time at Hillcrest Academy, Ocean Medical Center, and Home Goods,” said Tiffany B., who has been with the Journeys program for five years.

Employment supports allow individuals to increase their self-esteem, with the goal of achieving income independence while being a contributing member of their community.

The Arc Ocean County is regularly looking to partner with local businesses for job sampling and competitive employment. Those who would like to learn more about the program should call the Arc’s Vocational Services at 732-363-3335, extension 148, or email them at info@arcocean.org.



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