

Westport Commission on People with Disabilities Employment is for Everyone Committee Meeting

**Thursday, June 3, 2021 9:00am-10:30am
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES**

Attendance: Jim Ross (Chair), Diane Johnson, Marina Derman, Stacie Curran, Tom Holleman, Joe Anastasi.

Present from Human Services: Elaine Daignault, and DHS Intern Anabel Sollinger

"Westport Employment is for Everyone"

Mission: To cultivate and enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities while enriching the consumer experience on a local business level. With the support and coordination of Westport's Department of Human Services and leading local disability organizations, the initiative aims to educate and actively support local businesses that want to recruit, hire and promote people with disabilities.

The purpose of today's meeting is to discuss the framework for the initiative, the current status of potential partners, and how to engage community partners, including the Westport Chamber of Commerce, Westport Downtown Association, Rotaries, and service providers.

Joe Anastasi and Jim Ross discussed the attached document as a jump-off point for the Chamber and Association to offer a landing page on their websites for employers to refer to as they consider employing individuals with disabilities.

Discussion: Customized Employment vs. Supportive Employment

Several models exist for employing individuals with disabilities. Some of the PowerPoint refers to Star's customized employment model, which may not fit all aspects of our proposal. The PowerPoint will be re-evaluated to be more encompassing of naturally existing jobs available.

Discussion: We need to research and approach existing program providers to engage them in our project by offering supports to potential employers and potential employees. (see a draft of potential partners below)

Each organization has its specialty and should be contacted to determine its participation. Ex. BRS, DDS,

Discussion: Current Employers whose mission is to employ people with disabilities vs. Employers who may offer a model for best practices in hiring

individuals with disabilities as a whole. Outreach to existing agencies to request their participation.

Discussion of Marketing: How to identify and highlight those organizations doing it well, helping to demystify and encourage other employers to consider hiring more individuals with disabilities. Provide video content with employers, agencies, and employees.

Next steps:

1. Re-work big picture of initiative with high-level descriptions
2. Identify models and logistics of existing models; clarify some of the DDS/BRS regulations/funding
3. Create Case studies
4. Return to WDA & Chamber
5. Committee members were assigned to specific organizations to do outreach and come back with an update for the next meeting.

<u>CPD member</u>	<u>Name of Organization</u>
Marina	Abilis Abilis
Marina	Ability Beyond Access Independence
Jim	ARC CT
?	Chapel Haven
Joe	CLASP
Elaine	Disability Resource Network
Marina	Kennedy Center
Elaine	Laurel House
Marina	Marrakech Inc.
Elaine	Laurel House
Joe	Star, Lighting the Way
Stacie	Westport Public Schools

OTHER RESOURCES:

Elaine	Bureau of Rehab Services/DDS
Elaine	Goodwill?

Employers for Best Practices

?	Westport Library Bookstore
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Elaine	The Porch
Diane	Tauk
Diane	Marshalls
Diane	Parks and Rec
Stacie	Gold's
Stacie	Sweet Pea
?	CVS
?	Trader Joes
Marina	Remarkable

Organizational partners

Tom	Sunrise Rotary
Tom	Westport Rotary
Jim	Chamber of Commerce
Joe	Downtown Association