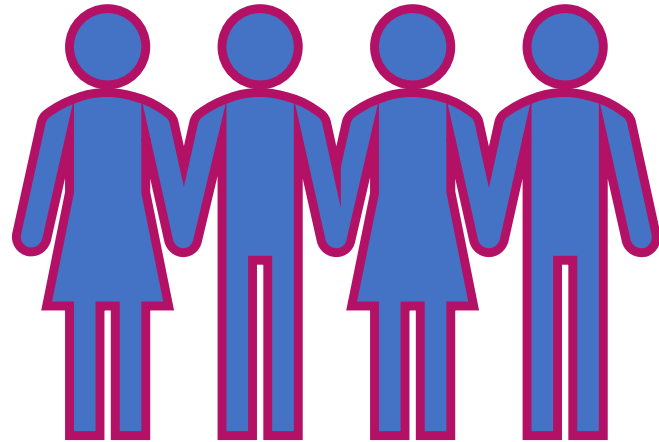




# Westport's Commission on People with Disabilities General Meeting

Thursday, September 23 at 9am

- Welcome - First Selectman Jim Marpe
- Introductions - Jim Ross, Commission Chair
- Overview of the Employment is for Everyone Initiative – Marina Derman
- Roundtable discussion of disability employment services, priorities, and opportunities for collaboration. (Organizations discuss their slides)
- Next steps
- Adjourn



# Westport Employment Is For Everyone

Westport Commission on People with Disabilities  
Westport Department of Human Services



WESTPORT™

## Employment Is For Everyone

### Mission

- **To enrich** customer and workforce experience by hiring staff who are representative of our entire community.
- **To encourage** local businesses to recruit, hire and advance people with disabilities.
- **To enhance** employment opportunities for people with disabilities.



WESTPORT™

# Overview of the Initiative

- Target audiences: Westport-Weston Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Association, Westport Means Business, Rotary groups, etc.
- Fall presentations
  - Benefits of hiring people with disabilities
  - Statistics on under-employment of this population
  - Call to action
- Partnerships – connections with individuals looking for employment, guidance for employers as needed, direct supports as needed
- Ongoing publicity



WESTPORT™

## CPD/DHS Ongoing Supports

Contact point if needed

Human Services list of hiring opportunities

Connection with disability agencies who can provide on the job supports if needed

Ongoing tracking of the Employment is for Everyone initiative

# Abilis Competitive Employment Services

Director Matthew Miceli

5 Staff members

Supporting 90 individuals across 59 different workplaces

Competitive Employment defined - an individual is employed full or part time in an integrated setting, working alongside coworkers with and without disabilities and is supervised directly by the employer. Wages are at least minimum wage or higher and at a rate comparable to a non-disabled workers performing the same tasks.



# Process

Career Plans – process meeting with individuals and developing career goals that are established into a road map to employment success.

Customized Employment - is a job development process that is a flexible blend of strategies, services and supports designed to increase employment options for job seekers with more complex needs. This approach may include job carving, job creation, job sharing, self-employment and other types of entrepreneurial approaches. Customized employment gives an advantage to the job seeker since that person will drive the employment process and uniquely fit a job position that meets their individual needs and interests.



*“At Ability Beyond, we celebrate the ability  
in all people.”*

Began in 1953

Array of Service Offerings

Support 2500 people a year

Geographic Locations:

Westchester, Dutchess, and Putnam Counties in NY

Fairfield, Litchfield, Hartford, New Haven, Middlesex  
Counties in CT

National footprint with our Ticket to Work Service line and  
Disability Solutions



**Scott**

**"Ability helped me  
rebuild my life."**

Who and Where We Are





Office: 61 East Avenue, Norwalk CT- but services take place in all the surrounding towns as well!

Our Employment team: Employment Specialists=  
Bachelor's Degree or 8 years experience in the field.

- College of Employment Supports
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Certified Employment Support Professional

Our ESs provide the entire array of employment related services- from start to finish.



**Bill**

**“Ability has given me confidence and hope.”**

Who and Where We Are



Individually provided services serving approximately 1000 people per year.

### Multiple funding options to access our services:

- Aging and Disability Services: BESB, BRS and Workers Rehab -Level Up, Adult Services and Industry Specific Training and Placement Programs
- Department of Developmental Services (Individual Supported Employment)
- Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (Individual Placement and Support Model)
- Social Security Administration: Ticket to Work
- Private pay contracts
- School contracts - Individual and Project Search at Norwalk Community College



**David**

**“I do this job because it allows me to meet new people and earn money.”**

# What We Do: Employment Services



Coming in early 2022, DDS funded Transition Services will also be an option for those who need some additional support and work experiences prior to beginning employment in the community.



What We Do: Employment Services



Individual Supported Employment services at Ability Beyond assist individuals in obtaining and maintaining competitive, independent employment in the community. A trained Employment Specialist works with each individual to find the right job and ensure long-term success.

All services are based on the individual, and can vary depending on each person's needs and abilities. Services range from resume preparation, job seeking skills training, interview preparation, job development, networking with employers, and intensive job coaching to long term follow-up support.

We also provide evaluations and assessments to help individuals determine strengths and weaknesses, as well as vocational interests...all in real work settings.



# What We Do: Employment Services





# HEAR WHAT BUSINESSES HAVE TO SAY ABOUT PARTNERING WITH US

## Recruitment & Talent Sourcing A Resource for Business

### Tier One Machining

*"After learning about the requirements of the position, Ability Beyond identified a super candidate and provided a dedicated Job Coach to ensure success. Amie has been a wonderful addition to the Tier One team and brings a smile and enthusiasm to her job everyday that is contagious to her co-workers. We feel very fortunate to have a business partner like Ability Beyond."*

**-Mike Iassogna**

### Dottie's Diner

*"We like partnering with Ability Beyond because the individuals they recommend are fully capable and motivated to do the job. They step up to meet expectations and then some!"*

**-Ken Sperry**

### Wyndham - Southbury

*"We've been very happy with the work performance from the persons we've hired. We like the relationship we've developed with your agency and feel it's been beneficial"*

**-Ayman Agamy**

### Digiscribe International

*"They work hard to find the right fit for your needs and they care about you and give excellent support to the people they recommend. If there ever is an issue, they are right there when you call them. The individuals are hardworking, reliable and dedicated. We can always count on them to get the job done in a timely manner."*

**-Andrew McGowan**

### The Award Group

*"Working with Ability Beyond has been a great experience. They led us to a great employee who has different skills to offer the company."*

**-Thomas Melendez**

### Compass-USA FLIK

*"They are professional and also willing to work closely with us to insure that we hire the right people for the job. Ability Beyond will work diligently to ensure that their individuals can perform their job responsibilities as per our standards."*

**-Adriano Jimenez**

### Unlimited Signs, Designs & Graphics

*"We've worked with Ability Beyond for three years. The individuals we've worked with from Ability Beyond have always been very helpful and friendly. They help us with different tasks around the business and do well. The staff from Ability Beyond are all very sweet and have helped me find resources for my son who is autistic. It's win win."*

**-Marian Goldstein**

### United Hebrew of New Rochelle

*"You cannot find a more dedicated and responsible individual as the one we have working on staff, many thanks to Ability Beyond."*

**-Carrie Deppong**

### Rizzo Companies.

*"There have been many benefits about our working with Ability Beyond. Their team of passionate employees go above and beyond to connect us with candidates who are qualified and capable. I would recommend Ability Beyond to another business looking to employ people because they have a pool of qualified candidates whom they work extremely closely with to ensure their personal success, which in turn means further success for our business."*

**-Krystin Sheahan**

### Colonial Automobile Group

*"The satisfaction of knowing that we have been able to provide a job and a sense of worth to someone in the community who might not otherwise be able to work"*

**-David Beylouni**

# Bureau of Rehabilitation Services is Connecticut's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program

Operated out of the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS)

The purpose of the VR Program is, in part, “to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society”

1. ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive the support they need to acquire the skills necessary to obtain, maintain, and advance in competitive integrated employment; and
2. ensuring that employers receive the necessary training and technical assistance needed to better understand and receive the talent potential individuals with disabilities can bring to the workforce.



<https://portal.ct.gov/AgingandDisability>

<https://rsa.ed.gov/>



## Business Services Include:

- Talent Recruitment
- Diversity and Inclusion Assistance
- Employee Retention
- Training for Business (Understanding the ADA, Accommodations, Assistive Technology)
- Training for Employees (Disability Awareness, Occupational Skill Building, On-the-Job Training)
- Tax Credit and Incentive Assistance

## BRS Consumer Services may include:

- Vocational counseling
- Benefits counseling
- Job search assistance
- School-to-work transition services
- Skills training and career education in college and/or vocational schools
- On-the-job training in business and industry
- Assistive technology services such as adaptive equipment for mobility, communication and work activities
- Vehicle and home modification
- Supported employment services
- Services to assist in restoring or improving a physical and/or mental impairment
- Help accessing other programs and services



### Work Services Program

The DMHAS Funded Work Services Program assists individuals with psychiatric disabilities to explore, obtain, and maintain competitive employment in the community. Vocational counseling, job development, job coaching (on or off the work site) and follow-up services are provided.

If you have a psychiatric disability and are looking for employment, contact us and we will help you get on the right path.

#### LOOK AT WHERE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN WORKING:



CONNPOST.com  
CONNECTICUT POST



Let us help  
**YOU** find  
your next job!  
We can help you  
be successful!!

The Kennedy Center, Inc.

Joanne Van Vlack  
Employment Services Manager  
696 West Main Street, Suite 1A  
Waterbury, CT 06708

203-568-5823  
[ivanvlack@kennedyctr.org](mailto:ivanvlack@kennedyctr.org)





# Employment Solutions



starct.org

# It's a win-win!

## Supported Employment

Over 150 local businesses in partnership with **STAR, Inc.**, have provided employment to qualified candidates with disabilities.

# 85%

of individuals with disabilities are unemployed, consequently there is a significant pool of talent available to work.

### STAR EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS

**STAR** matches employer needs with job seeker skills.

**STAR** provides onsite support with job coaches.

**STAR** develops an ongoing partnership with employers providing follow along services.

There are no fees or costs for **STAR** employment services!



**Charkit** Chemical Company  
an LBB Specialties Company



**ACME**



**NORWALK** Public Schools

**Chartwells** School Dining Services  
Eat · Learn · Live



**ED'S GARAGE** AUTO PARTS & SERVICE



# Benefits to your business

STAR, Inc., *Lighting the Way*, is a not-for-profit organization serving individuals of all ages with developmental disabilities, as well as providing support services to their families. We create opportunities for individuals to live full lives with independence, freedom of choice and personal growth by providing support, services and advocacy. We inform and encourage the community to recognize and appreciate them.

STAR provides comprehensive services from early childhood, transition from school to

work, employment services, residential services and family support.

▶ Labor force needs are met by qualified candidates. Internal benefits include inspiring staff and impacting morale and productivity. Hiring individuals with disabilities just makes good business sense.

“Businesses that hire people with disabilities statistically perform better relative to their peers and competitors.”

— Accenture Research Project 2019



**LDC.**  
Louis Dreyfus Company

“ Having a diversified staff at Louis Dreyfus Company LLC is a professional and cultural commitment for our organization.

This includes hiring individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Our STAR employee has been an asset to our firm; he's a hard worker and his fellow employees respect and are inspired by having him on the team.

I would highly recommend the STAR Employment Program to companies as a source of employment for reliable and well trained individuals.”

**SHARON FARROW**  
Louis Dreyfus Company  
Executive Assistant/  
Trading Floor Coordinator



**SOLUDE**  
AIR ROASTED COFFEE

“ Here at SOLUDE we are so pleased to partner with the STAR organization. They do incredible work and we're happy to support in any way we can. Denise has been a wonderful addition to the SOLUDE team. She is a hard worker, reliable and takes great pride in her work. She brightens our work place. We're lucky to have her!”

**JAZMINE COX**  
SOLUDE  
Director of Operations



**RANGER READY**  
WHEELS

“ We love working with the STAR Employment Program! Jamie is a great addition to our warehouse team, and the entire STAR staff is great with communication and collaboration in facilitating his success at Ranger Ready!”

**LAUREN GULLIVER**  
Ranger Ready  
Vice President  
Operations/E-Commerce  
& Administration



**DARIEN**  
EST. 1948  
SPORT SHOP

“ We have been partnering with STAR for several years. Bjorn has always been a productive employee and we enjoy having him on staff. We recently placed our second STAR employee, and they did a great job of finding the right candidate!”

**RICHARD ANDERS**  
Darien Sport Shop  
General Manager



STAR is certified by the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Aging and Disabilities to provide Customized Employment Services

Customized Employment (CE) is an employment strategy that is especially useful for job seekers with significant disability. CE strategies result in competitive, integrated employment that is **based on a determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the job seeker**. The specific abilities of the individual are matched to the business needs of an employer. CE is a **relationship** between an employer and an employee that is negotiated to meet the needs of both parties.

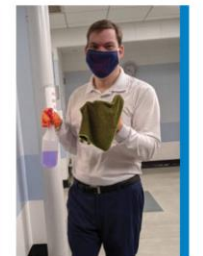
## Customized Employment includes:

- Discovery
- Profile
- Customized Plan for Employment
- Visual Resume
- Customized Job Development
- On the Job Training
- Follow Along Services



**COSTCO**  
WHOLESALE

**groove**  
COMMUNITY FITNESS



**REMA**  
Dri-Vac Corporation

**the**  
DARIEN

**STAR, INC.**  
LIGHTING THE WAY...

## Department Of Developmental Services

### Mission

*The mission of the Department of Developmental Services is to partner with the individuals we support and their families, 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.*

In April of 2011, DDS was officially recognized as an Employment First Agency:

*Employment is the first and preferred outcome of people with disabilities. Community-based, integrated employment is the priority for individuals with disabilities in employment services.*

## Employment Services:

### **Individualized Supported Employment (ISE)**

Supports individuals working as paid employees in settings that also employ people without disabilities, designed to provide support and supervision, not ongoing long term 1:1 support.

### **Customized Employment (CE)**

A collaborative approach with priority placed upon creating opportunities for competitive work in the community providing for integration, economic self-sufficiency, challenge, and career growth.

### **Employment Transition Services (ETS)**

Designed to provide employment skills, job development and advocacy skills over the time frame of six months to three years for individuals looking to be integrated and completely employed.

### **Group Supported Employment (GSE)**

A facility-based program that focuses on developing meaningful skills in the area of work, socialization and community participation.



## Employment & Day Services Division

### Strategic Planning Committees

DDS has started to convene Strategic Planning Sub-Committees to address the State Employment Leadership Network's (SELN) Finding & Observations Report (February 2021). The report commends strengths, reviews areas of improvement, and makes recommendations for action.

### Project Search

The division oversees Project SEARCH, an internship program that rotates interns through three host sites (businesses partnered with DDS committed to Employment First) and is led by the business. Interns receive onsite training at their host business and are fully integrated into the workplace to foster an inclusive environment with natural supports.

### CT Job Developers Leadership Network (JDLN)

The division has chair members on all 3 regional JDLN's in CT and coordinates semi-annual JDLN Statewide meetings.

Employment & Day Services Brochure Links:

English Version

[:https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DDS/employment/EDS\\_Employment\\_Brochure\\_Final\\_12\\_2020.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DDS/employment/EDS_Employment_Brochure_Final_12_2020.pdf)

Spanish Version

[:https://portal.ct.gov/media/DDS/employment/EDS\\_Employment\\_Brochure\\_SPANISH\\_Final\\_12\\_2020.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/media/DDS/employment/EDS_Employment_Brochure_SPANISH_Final_12_2020.pdf)



# THANK YOU

Amber M. Burke

Director of Employment & Day Services

460 Capitol Avenue Hartford, CT 06106

(860) 418-6006 [amber.burke@ct.gov](mailto:amber.burke@ct.gov)



- Helps individuals and families achieve and sustain mental health
- Operating since 1984
- Covers Greenwich to Westport from Resource Center in Stamford
- Contractor to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)
- Free Services to low-income individuals with a mental health diagnosis
- Resources to Recover Family of Services
  - Supported Employment & Education; Thinking Well; Supportive Housing and Community Support Services; Social Rehabilitation Workshops
  - [www.rtor.org](http://www.rtor.org) – connects families to expert mental health treatment

# Supported Employment (SE)

- Evidence-based program developed by Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center
- Audited by DMHAS for fidelity to the model and for outcomes
- Sessions are one to one with a Counselor and are in-person or virtual
- SE uses Individualized Placement and Support model (IPS) to help participants get and keep competitive jobs
- Aligned with client's strengths and talents
- 106 program participants served last year with 68% competitive employment



# Disability Rights of CT

Tom Cosker, an advocate with Disability Rights CT (DRCT)

DRCT is the Protection and Advocacy organization in CT. We are a non-profit organization that advocates for the rights of individuals and provides legal advocacy and rights protection to people with disabilities. We have a number of focus areas. Regarding employment we provide some individual advocacy and systemic advocacy for individuals who are applying for or are receiving vocational rehab. services and/or are SSI or SSDI recipients. We have a focus area around advocating for Competitive Integrated Employment. You can find more information at our website <https://www.disrightsct.org/>.