

**Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative
Town of Hempstead Department of Occupational Resources
New Village Pathways Project**

Executive Summary

In March 2018, United Way of Long Island solicited proposals from entities with an established record of serving Village residents to propose projects that address one or more priority areas. In its application, the Town of Hempstead Department of Occupational Resources (DOOR), on behalf of the Hempstead/Long Beach Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB), proposed the **New Village Pathways** project under the workforce development area. The project was designed to address the high unemployment and poverty rates in Hempstead Village and has been operated by DOOR, which houses the HempsteadWorks Career Center.

The ultimate objective of the New Village Pathways project is to increase the employment earnings and career advancement for Village residents that will ultimately lead to an improved quality of life. Short-term goals of the project were to:

- 1) Provide 275 Village residents with career pathways and career counseling services
- 2) Provide 275 Village residents with wrap-around services
- 3) Enroll 37 project participants into classroom-based occupational skills training
- 4) Of the 37 enrolled in training, 60% are to become employed and 80% of them are to retain employment

As of November 2020, DOOR has provided 305 Village residents with career pathways and wrap-around services, and 50 participants were enrolled in occupational skills training. Of this group of 50, 18 have found employment and 16 have retained employment. Most of the balance of the 50 participants are still active in the program. DOOR is evaluating project outcomes based on the Primary Indicators of Performance (PIP) prescribed by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). PIP reports are provided to DOOR by the New York State Department of Labor on a quarterly basis and are calculated, in part, based upon Unemployment Insurance Earnings records. PIP employment is measured as a regression model, using cohorts of participants who exited services. Our success in assisting Village residents to enter employment is based on the criterion of whether or not they are employed in the second and fourth quarters after exit. Other measures include median earnings, credential attainment and skills gains. Because of the regression model approach, the positive impact of the New Village Pathways Project under ESPRI will not be fully realized until the PIP reports for ESPRI exiters are published. However, based on preliminary data, we expect the outcomes to reveal a high return-on-investment for the ESPRI grant in the Village of Hempstead.

Project Overview and Outcomes

- **The timeline for the ESPRI-funded portion of the program (start/end date);**

The ESPRI-funded portion of the program started on October 1, 2018 and will end on March 31, 2021.

- **Participant Outreach**

The recruitment process included the development of a program flyer that was disseminated to the partner organizations and various vendors of the HempsteadWorks Workforce Development System, as well as to the member organizations of the Town of Hempstead/City of Long Beach Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) and its subcommittees, which include the following bodies: Youth Standing Committee, Pathways-to-Employment Workgroup and Opioid Workgroup. In addition, we conducted queries of the New York State One-Stop Operating System (OSOS), which is the official data base for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program in New York State, to identify job seekers from the Village of Hempstead. Using this data to contact village residents, we mailed copies of our flyers and conducted eblasts and telephone recruitment activities.

- **Services to Participants**

Under the New Village Pathways project, DOOR provided services to a total of 305 Village residents, with priority given to individuals from low-income families. All services were augmented by non-ESPRI resources, primarily funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The following is a description of services provided with ESPRI funding:

- ❖ DOOR assisted participants to enter new careers and find employment by guiding them through sector-based career pathways by offering the services described in the following WIOA definition: “The term ‘career pathway’ means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that...align with the skill needs of industries...prepare an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options...include counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals...”¹
- ❖ In addition to career pathways services, each of these ESPRI participants had access to wrap-around services that include labor market information; assessment; development of Individual Employment Plans (IEP); workshops and individualized counseling regarding job search methods; interviewing skills; resume writing; salary negotiation; follow-up, etc.; workshops for using social media in job search; computerized job matching; referral to employers; on-site job fairs; referral to partner organizations; referral to basic skills training (reading, math, English language; referral to On-The-Job Training; referral to classroom-based occupational skills training; computer workshops, including: Microsoft Office

¹ Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – Public Law 113-128

Programs like Word I, Word II, Excel I, Excel II, PowerPoint, Access, and Intuit QuickBooks.

- ❖ As a part of the ESPRI request for proposals, applicants had to demonstrate the uniqueness and innovation of their projects. Unlike services DOOR had previously implemented, with ESPRI, DOOR used evidence-based practices that included the My Action Plan (MAP) and Career Portfolio tools. Each participant in the project worked with a career counselor to create a MAP that lays out the necessary education, training and credentials necessary for their desired jobs, as well as the supportive services needed to overcome any barriers to employment. This process helped participants clearly envision their career path, and it positioned them to attain stackable credentials, obtain employment, and progress to higher wages and occupational titles. Afterwards, the participants worked with career counselors to develop a Career Portfolio. The portfolio is a compilation of their resumes, cover letters, assessments, computer proficiency attestations and release forms. The portfolio presented each participant’s competencies and showcases their work experience, skills, and abilities to potential employers.
- ❖ Throughout its existence, DOOR has fostered relationships with various Long Island organizations. The organizations served as referral agencies for participants and supportive services providers. DOOR also leverages business partnerships to develop jobs and careers for participants. We continuously engaged these community stakeholders to elicit their participation in the ESPRI project.
- ❖ DOOR conducted job development by using the New York State Department of Labor’s (NYSDOL) job bank and the other employer connections described above. The job bank enables job seekers to filter their searches for vacancies by region, industry, employer and other factors. We also facilitated use of other NYSDOL resources, such as CareerZone² and JobZone,³ along with the U.S. Department of Labor resources of MyNextMove,⁴ which contains the O’Net Profiler.

- **Occupational Skills Training Enrollments**

After the participants had completed MAP and their career portfolios, they worked with career counselors to determine the education needed to achieve their career goals. The colleges and training institutions selected for training are listed on the New York State Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL). 50 participants were enrolled in the following skills training:

Training Programs	Number of Participants Enrolled
Certified Nursing Assistant	6
Commercial Driver Training Program	8
Computer Technician Networking	2

² Career Zone is designed for youth to identify strengths, skills interests and talents, explore occupations; search education and training databases, build and store resumes.

³ JobZone is a tool for examining career interests and skills; Creating customized résumés/letters; and Tracking job search activity.

⁴ <https://www.mynextmove.org/>

Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor Program	3
EKG + Phlebotomy Technician Program	3
Emergency Medical Technician Program	1
Entrepreneurial Assistance	1
Human Resources Management Certificate	2
Medical Assistant Program	2
Medical Billing Program	2
Medical Office Administration	3
Medical Records Certificate Program	2
Non-Profit Management Certificate	1
Physical Therapist Assistance Program	1
Project Management Certification Program	7
Security Guard	6
Grand Total	50

- **Employment and Employment Retention**

As of November, 34 of the 50 individuals enrolled in occasional skills training completed their training. The remaining individuals are still in school. Of the 34 participants who completed training, 18 found employment (52.9%). Of this group, 16 have retained their employment (88.9%).

- **Significant changes from the original program plan (e.g., such as adjustments made due to COVID-19)**

In response to the Coronavirus Pandemic of 2019 (COVID-19), to ensure the safety of our customers, staff, contractors and partners, the HempsteadWorks Career Center was closed to the public on March 19, 2020. In order to maintain continuity of services under the ESPRI New Village Pathways Project, a variety of initiatives were launched remotely and in person during the period of closure by the system staff. These initiatives are summarized below under each major category of services.

Job Seeker Services:

- Fully equipped Career Center staff to work remotely, using laptop computers and cell phones.
- Adapted our policies for career and training services enrollments and created fillable forms to meet compliance requirements.
- Posted an on-line **ESPRI Application** to our web site.
- Posted our on-line **Application for Career Services** to our web site.
- Posted our **Request for Job Search/Training Form** for jobseekers to use to request assistance to our web site.
- Created a series of online **Career Development Workshops**.

- Arranged for online **Computer Skills Workshops** to be provided by Nassau Community College.
- Enrolled participants into virtual occupational skills training at local colleges and proprietary schools
- Acquired **Metrix Learning**, an online tool that customers can use to improve their skills, gain certifications, and better market themselves to employers. It offers 1,000s of online courses in a variety of industry tracks and career pathways. Customers will have access to these courses and can complete them at their own pace. Our subscription to Metrix will allow access for 200 customers.
- Responded to inquiries from job seeker customers regarding job search, training, accessing unemployment insurance, continuity of programs, etc.
- Referred customers to the **Nassau United Together Program**.
- Posted helpful information to our web site.

Youth Services:

We provided the WIOA Youth Program Design and Program Elements via telephone, e-mail and Zoom. WIOA youth program services for Out-of-School Youth is contracted to EAC Network and Nassau BOCES.

Business Services:

Since the start of the pandemic, we seamlessly transitioned Business Services to an on-line virtual platform. We continued to work with businesses throughout Long Island to assist them with Recruitment Services, thus helping businesses to find new, qualified employees by holding virtual hiring events via Zoom.

Listed below are the local businesses that held a virtual hiring event:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • DII Deals & Discount Store | • Investors Bank |
| • Amber Court Assisted Living | • College Nannies, Sitters & Tutors |
| • Attentive Care | • G4S Secure Solutions (USA) Inc. |
| • Amazon Prime Now | • Guardian Bus Company |
| • Council for Airport Opportunity | |
| • Amazon Robotics | |

These events were well attended by job seekers. We promoted these events by creating a flyer, job matching in the New York State One-Stop Operating System (OSOS), posting it on our website, LinkedIn and Facebook pages as well as sending out an e-blast to all qualified customers. Interested participants then received a confirmation of their attendance and the Zoom invitation to attend.

Leadership Training Institute was impressed with our virtual job fairs and asked that we present at their first virtual job event for candidates with prior justice involvement. This event took

place on August 26, 2020 and was presented by the Nassau County Re-Entry Task Force in partnership with Office of Second Chance Employment and NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. Our Business Services Representative shared a PowerPoint presentation to the group and explained our services and how we can help them get back into the workforce.

Our Business Services Liaison also conducted cold calls to local businesses and emailed contacts to let them know we were still open to serve their needs. They were directed to our website where they could easily access our web-based forms. This allowed businesses to fill out our Job Order Form right from the website. All job orders were placed in OSOS and shared with partner agencies for maximum exposure. We also created flyers with various job opportunities and posted them on our LinkedIn and Facebook pages.

Additional business services initiatives undertaken include the following:

- Posted an online **Job Order Request Form** to our web site.
- Created fillable online forms for employers to participate in our **On-The-Job Training and Internship** programs.
- Responded to inquiries from business customers regarding filing **Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification Act (WARN) Notices**, listing jobs for new hires, accessing financing and loan programs, etc.
- Created and posted a **Business Services Survey** that will help us better understand local business' needs and challenges

Services Provided to Special Populations:

- Conducted a **Virtual Business Breakfast Meeting** to develop career pathways opportunities for youth with disabilities under our **Disability Employment Initiative Project**.
- Conducted staff training with the Young Adult Institute to help improve service delivery to and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Key Success Stories

Although many of our ESPRI participants have achieved favorable outcomes, the stories of some participants truly stood out. Below are success stories that we are especially proud of:

❖ *Charlene Allen*

In the months leading up to her enrollment in the ESPRI project, Ms. Allen faced family issues and eviction from her home. Ms. Allen was hired through Urban League of Westchester County to work at HempsteadWorks in January 2019. By the end of 2019, Ms. Allen had been hired full-time at HempsteadWorks under Goodwill Industries with full benefits. She works in the career center Resource Room and assists customers with resume

writing and employment opportunities. She now lives in Hempstead and has a short daily commute. A lesson Ms. Allen learned is “the human spirit can and will survive anything that life brings [her] way.”

❖ *Keith Martin*

Mr. Martin is a young man who served time in prison. Through the dedication of staff and compromise with Ms. Martin’s parole officer to find a Community Health Worker job. He has said, “if it was not for [HempsteadWorks staff’s] resilience in finding me a career, I would probably have a minimum wage job hoping to make ends meet.”

❖ *Deidre Washington, ESPRI Project Coordinator at DOOR*

“Obtaining work can become somewhat tedious. At my age and being a woman can make the process discouraging. Either I was overqualified or didn’t have sufficient skills. After working at my last job in Westbury, I was able to work with the Urban League, which is a Seniors Job program. While at Urban League, I was on staff at the main office in Amityville; handling the Payroll. I was given the opportunity to visit at DOOR in Hempstead to assist with fellow Urban Leaguers who were assigned there. Little did I know that this “DOOR” would be an answer to my prayers. Being asked to become a Career Counselor at DOOR was truly a blessing. After which, I was introduced to the ESPRI program which is geared for residents of Hempstead. And being from Hempstead, I was able to partake in some of the services provided. After the untimely passing of the Coordinator, Frederica Fearon, I was given the mantle to become the Coordinator. This opportunity has afforded me not only job stability, but has enabled me to learn about the people who live in Hempstead as well as enabling me to assist and guide them into becoming like myself, self-sufficient a person who will utilize one’s skills and be an asset to the community.”

❖ *D.A.⁵*

DA was enrolled in the ESPRI project and WIOA Out-of-School youth program. He receives additional services from EAC Network, a DOOR contractor. His barrier to employment is his involvement with the criminal justice system in which he was facing felony harassment charges.

After his admission into the program and conducting counseling with DA, staff instantly realized that DA was struggling with anxiety, depression, and anger issues because of his dysfunctional relationship with his family. After encouraging DA to seek additional help to address the problems he faced, DA agreed to have EAC enroll him into its extensive anger

⁵ Name withheld to maintain privacy of the participant.

management program. Staff also contacted the District Attorney's office to inquire about their program called alternative to incarceration, where DA was later enrolled into the Community Partnership program (CPP). In this program, he developed leadership skills and participated in peer-center activities that encourage responsible and position social behaviors. This enabled DA to become a peer mentor for at risk middle school youth where he assisted with coaching their basketball team. EAC staff continued working with DA to ensure that he successfully completed the anger management classes.

DA complied with all three programs by completing all the required tasks and demonstrated a change in behavior and was encouraged by his prospect for a brighter future. CPP and EAC staff wrote letters to the District Attorneys office on DA's behalf which led to his charge being reduced from a felony to a misdemeanor. Due to his criminal history DA was unable to pursue the career path he desired; however, having a fender-bender led him to an opportunity with Caring Home Care where he gained employment and enjoyed working with people in this field. DA discussed with EAC a career path and staff introduced him to the Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) program funded by DOOR. Staff made further inquiries to ensure that his criminal history would not exclude him from that career pathway. DA is currently enrolled at Molloy College pursuing his certification for the CASAC program where he desires to work with people that are incarcerated or re-entering society that suffer from substance abuse.