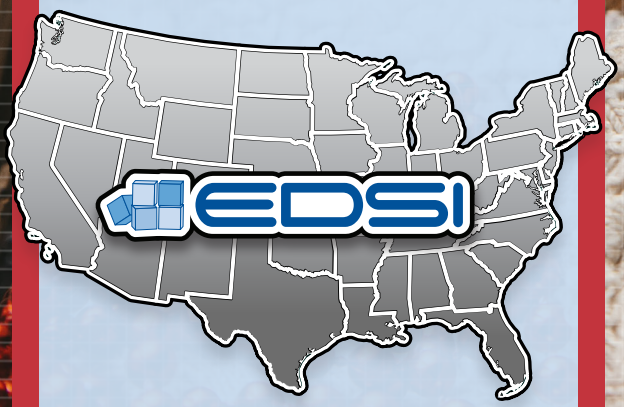
National Appeal Local Feel

In This Issue:

- Awards & Accolades
- Best Practices
- Program Innovations
- Special Projects
- Resource Fairs
- New Business

Feb. 2023 | Volume 3



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Introducing This Month's Issue



Click to hear from our Regional Director of Operations Danielle Ellis as she introduces the February Edition of *National Appeal Local Feel* and speaks on EDSI's commitment to sharing its Best Practices, Innovations and Services, while also thanking and celebrating its customers, employees and communities.

Awards & Accolades



Congratulations

KUDOS well-done BRAVO

APPLAUSE



Reina Kimso Honored as Salute to Diversity Business Leader by Corp! Magazine

EDSI Talent Director Reina Kimso was selected by Corp! Magazine as a Diversity Business Leader honoree for the 16th Annual Salute to Diversity Awards Program. Reina was recognized at an in-person awards ceremony and conference at The Henry in Dearborn, MI, accompanied by Kevin Schnieders.

EDSI Chief Servant Leader Kevin Schnieders shared his excitement about Reina's award:

"I am so fortunate to work with Reina. I get to see, first-hand, how she always attempts to see through other people's eyes. Reina also strives to ensure every member of the EDSI family benefits from our collective culture, while being seen, and fully appreciated, individually. Even though the context of our conversations are sometimes challenging, I always look forward to collaborating with her. I greatly appreciate Reina and how much she cares about all of us. I could not be happier for her to receive this well-deserved recognition."

PWDA Policy & Advocacy Fellowship Program Announces Fellows

EDSI Regional Director of Operations André Hardy and Business Services Manager Ashlee Phillips were selected for the second class of PA Workforce Development Association (PWDA) Policy & Advocacy Fellowship, along with industry peers from across Pennsylvania – all interested in progressing the collective voice and impact of workforce development.

As Fellows, these individuals will receive intensive training on the federal and state legislative, administrative, and appropriations processes, and tangible experiences in developing sound policy proposals and applying them utilizing advocacy strategies. The Fellowship includes in-person seminars, individual and group assignments, field trips, and a graduation ceremony in February.

Congratulations André and Ashlee - we are so proud of you.



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WDB CHESTER COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Advancing Chester County's Workforce

EDSI

Best Practices

Chester County Youth Program Success

Chester County, PA

In Chester County, the Career Corp Youth Program has seen a significant improvement in the 2022-2023 program year. EDSI has redesigned how we gain participant interest and engagement, conduct community outreach and marketing, and provide intensive case management.

Some indicators of our success are:

1. A significant enrollment increase from the last program year of 13 enrollments to 26 enrollments so far in the first 5 months of PY 2022-23
2. Consistent program engagement
3. Tripled the sustainable employment and post-secondary education placements
4. Increased average hourly pay at the time of exit from $15 to $18.12

Some best practices to gain participant interest have included developing an easy-to-use program interest survey, being present in the community both in-person and virtually, and increasing marketing and social media efforts. Participating in community events and presenting program services to community partners on a regular basis has not only strengthened partner relationships but also significantly raised program referrals.

To enhance program engagement, EDSI's Youth Coordinator, Brianna Seiler, has outlined a clear enrollment process from beginning to end, with a focus on individualizing program services, setting SMART goals, and providing consistent daily to weekly communication with participants. New participants often have multiple barriers to success, including, but not limited to low-income, disabilities, housing insecurity, criminal justice involvement, and high-school dropouts. Providing individualized services and approaches to each participant based on their barriers and goals, as well as intensive case management and daily to weekly communication has resulted in continuous engagement and youth success in the program.

Brianna has set a focus on boosting career readiness workshops and emphasized collaboration with the Business Services Team and Chester County employers to influence the increase in sustainable employment and educational placements, as well as an increased average wage. Overall, the team has worked collaboratively to drive these best practices forward and create opportunities for the youth and employers of Chester County.

Community Partner Program

Feasterville-Trevose, PA (Bucks County)

The Bucks County One-Stop is inviting non-mandated community partners to rent space onsite (in-kind) to hold meetings, present workshops, or host events. This includes Probation and Parole officers meeting individuals on their caseload at our Bucks County office for job search and registration.

During a strategic planning session of co-located partners, The Bucks County One-Stop Team came up with this reverse-engineered approach to community engagement. Instead of going out to our community partners, we are incentivizing them to come to us. This initiative is mutually beneficial for our workforce center and for CBOs. CBOs have limited resources and needed more space to meet with their clientele. This clientele is potentially made up of people who would also benefit from career center services. This effort is also creating a convenient, central location for our target group of job seekers.

Bucks County explored this idea by inviting CBOs to take tours onsite with our One-Stop Operator. Outreach materials inviting the community to use space at our location were also distributed locally.





Delco Team Direct Reports Boost Leadership

Chester, Delaware County, Pennsylvania

The Delaware County leadership team commits to a cadence of meeting with each staff member bi-weekly for a direct report meeting. The leadership has found that meeting bi-weekly supports them in creating and sustaining strong relationships among staff. During these direct report meetings, our leadership staff focus on strengths and opportunities regarding performance while also connecting about life/work balance.

The leadership team has received feedback from employee surveys that prove bi-weekly direct report meetings provide employees an opportunity to express ideas and concerns. These meetings also provide a safe space for employees to have a voice and they are welcome to discuss any successes and challenges to their workweek. Meetings have proven to influence performance and employee growth and happiness.

In addition, the leadership team in Delco has implemented quarterly meetings which discuss the success, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Staff review budgets, PTO schedules, upcoming events, and develop strategies for the next quarter. Leadership finds that by prioritizing these meetings, both the bi-weekly direct report meetings and quarterly leadership meetings have influenced employee engagement and prove staff have a better understanding of performance measures and quarterly goals.

Spotlight On Youth

WIOA Youth Success Story: Donovan Johnson

Williamson County, TN

When it comes to determination and drive, Donovan Johnson could teach us a thing or two. Donovan is a WIOA Youth client who dealt with a learning disorder throughout secondary school. During his first year at a community college, Donovan realized that he needed to complete a hands-on training that was more in line with his interests, so he reached out to the WIOA program.



With WIOA tuition assistance, Donovan completed CDL training and obtained his CDL license within 2 months of his enrollment date. Soon after earning his credential, he was placed in an internship as a CDL driver for a company called E. Jackson Trucking. Ironically, Edgar Jackson (the owner of the trucking company) was also a WIOA adult client several years ago.

Edgar completed his CDL training with WIOA in 2020 and started his own company about a year ago. Edgar is now so self-sufficient that he is able to share his knowledge and expertise with others, while mentoring Donovan through the WIOA Youth Internship program. With Edgar's guidance and foundational training from the WIOA program, Donovan is gaining powerful truck-driving experience and skills, which will enable him to enter the labor market quickly to obtain living wages and self-sufficiency in his new career field.



Blog: Grow Detroit's Young Talent Summer Youth Training Program

Detroit, MI

The City of Detroit has been instrumental in securing community partners to offer a virtual youth summer employment experience that pays youth ages 14-24 as they explore careers, build skills and receive training and instruction from local employers. In partnership with Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation (DESC) and EDSI, students are offered hands-on, innovative learning and work experience related to high-priority industries such as healthcare, IT, construction and customer service.

Click here to read more about the Detroit's Young Talent Summer Youth Training Program in this blog!

Program Innovations

EARN Program Spotlight: Take A Breath Video

Montgomery County, PA

Last quarter, a story was featured on the Montgomery County EARN program's 15-minute outreach video that explains the orientation and enrollment process. You can view the "Take a Breath" video shorts by clicking on each 5-minute section shown here.



Click to Watch the Montgomery County EARN Program's 'Enrollment & Orientation' Video.



Click to Watch the Montgomery County EARN Program's 'Program Service Overview' Video.



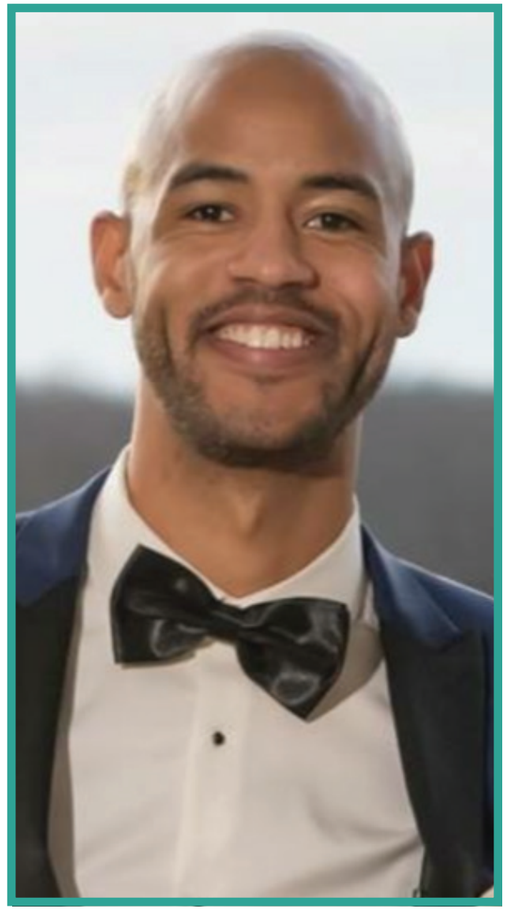
Click to Watch the Montgomery County EARN Program's 'Retention Bullet Points' Video.

Regional Director of Operations, Andre Hardy shares how the videos help customers take a breath and learn about the program and process in a relaxing, organized way.

"The videos have done a lot to help reduce the stress and anxiety of our customers stepping into a new program during what could be a rough season in their lives. By helping customers understand the services the program offers, the support from the staff that they will be receiving and showing success stories, our customers are able to be encouraged and engaged before and during orientation to put them at ease as they begin their employment journey."

If your program is interested in producing a video like this for customers, there are several methods to consider. For example, Montgomery County used an outside company to create the video, but another option would be to leverage the digital media producers that we have throughout EDSI.

If anyone has questions about the video or the process, email Andre at: ahardy@edsisolutions.com



CareerSource Tampa Bay Career Clarity Pod

Tampa, FL

Career Source Tampa Bay launched the Career Clarity Pod as a new initiative to provide better hands-on support for local jobseekers. The Career Clarity Pod is an extension of the Resource Room and is staffed by Sector Strategists and Recruiters for a 3-hour block every day. During this time, participants can utilize a career pathways portal, virtual reality, or observe a sector presentation to help them identify the career pathway that is the best fit for them. In addition, a local employer visits this area once a week to speak with job seekers in the room. This is a great resource for job seekers who visit our office to explore and define a career pathway for themselves and connect 1:1 with employers and knowledgeable staff. The Career Clarity Pod was presented a few months ago and recently had a soft launch with great success.

To get started, the team at Career Source Tampa Bay clearly defined the goal and location for the pod, and then conducted outreach to explain the purpose of the area to participants and employers.

What is a Belonging Ambassador? Q&A with Reina Kimso

EDSI Talent Director

In a discussion with Talent Director Reina Kimso, she was eager to share about the growing team of EDSI Belonging Ambassadors who are committed to leading DEI efforts at the local level.

1. **Tell us about the Belonging Ambassador program.**

   The Belonging Ambassador program is a talent initiative led by our Talent Specialists who provide support to the Ambassadors located among our offices.

   Belonging Ambassadors are individuals who commit to learning and promoting the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion and actively serve as champions in their local offices to identify initiatives that support impartial, fair, and equal outcomes for all team members. A DEI Belonging Ambassador, above all else, supports a sense of belonging in the workplace.

2. **What responsibilities does a Belonging Ambassador have?**

- Model inclusive behavior by being open, curious and compassionate
- Work with the whole team of Ambassadors to participate in think tank sessions and develop expanded or new DEI activities and staff development opportunities
- Attend trainings and digital summits/meetings
- Document and share local office feedback, resources, and celebrations
- Ensure company produced content is in line with EDSI DEI standards

3. **How can a team member become a Belonging Ambassador?**

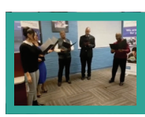
   Local leaders identify team members based on their passion for DEI, leadership and availability. Any team member who is interested in becoming a Belonging Ambassador is invited to talk to their manager as a first step. Initially, offices were asked to nominate a Belonging Ambassador from their group who they felt embodied diversity, equity and inclusion. Managers then selected the top 2 staff members who received the most nominations from their colleagues.

4. **Where are the Ambassadors located?**

   The Talent Team is still working with local leaders to ensure their region has an Ambassador, but the goal is to have one Belonging Ambassador for each office. To give as many people as possible a chance to serve in this role, we rotate Ambassadors every six months.

5. **What are examples of things Belonging Ambassadors are doing in their region/office?**

   Belonging Ambassadors have been talking with staff to find out what DEI passions or projects are important to them to celebrate or recognize. For example, in North Central Connecticut, some of the staff joined together to sing the Black National Anthem in honor of Black History Month (click on the link below to view). In New York, two teams joined forces to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month by playing Hispanic Heritage Month Jeopardy. There are endless options offices can choose to promote or celebrate that involve sharing and learning about different cultures, hosting a lunch and learn, doing community service around a certain cause, sharing learning resources to increase awareness, etc. We look forward to seeing this initiative grow as more offices become involved.



Click to Watch the Black National Anthem Performed by the North Central Connecticut DEI staff.

Special Projects

First Step Program

Delaware County, Pennsylvania

In November 2022, EDSI launched its first cohort of the First Step Program, a program designed to work with incarcerated persons out of George W. Hill Correctional Facility. EDSI and the team at George W. Hill teamed up and remained flexible to ensure that clients were getting the best experience possible.

The first group of 9 clients worked with the team and attended class daily. Each person was able to create a resume with the instructor and was eager to schedule mock interviews to expertly navigate discussing their criminal background during an interview. Once workshops came to an end, each client created a Career Pathway plan to reach their individual employment goals as well as create a successful transition plan upon release.

This includes gaining documentation such as a State ID, Social Security Card, and a plan to enroll in any trainings upon release. Participants have the opportunity to work with their Career Coach as well as our Business Services Representative to gain and maintain employment upon release. Currently, 3 clients have release dates this month and will continue to work with the EDSI team to reach their goals, get the resources they need, and maintain support upon employment.

As we continue to offer programming out of George W. Hill Correctional Facility, the program currently has a wait list of 40 individuals. We look forward to continuing to see our clients and the First Step Program grow and succeed in the coming months.



Resource Fairs

Community Partner Resource Fair
Toms River, NJ (Ocean County)

Our One-Stop Center in Toms River, New Jersey, recently hosted a Community Partner Resource Fair. Now that we are offering services in person, we were looking for innovative ways to increase foot traffic to our local office. This event was a collaboration between the local board, other workforce vendors, and employer partners to better engage and serve job seekers.

During the event, local job seekers were connected with 25 partners to learn about community resources, programs, and job opportunities available to them. To get started, work with your One-Stop Operator and local team to put together an onsite community event.

Partners Resource Fair
Tallahassee, Florida

In December, the One-Stop Operator at Career Source Capital Region in Tallahassee, FL, hosted a Partners Resource Fair. During the event, 31 job seekers were connected with 13 community partners to learn about housing assistance, food pantries, career training, and health services in the area. Attendees enjoyed learning more about the resources to help them find long-term sustainable employment.

Additionally, our partners appreciated the opportunity to network with one another. Due to the success of this inaugural event, Career Source Capital Region plans to annually host this event.



Collaborative partnerships lead to effective participant experiences.

New Business

Contracts Won Between November and January

- **State of Delaware Employment Equity Project -Skills Gap Analysis**
- **Delaware and Montgomery Counties, PA - Statewide Activity Grant LGBTQ+ in conjunction with the WDBs of Delco and Montco, PA**

CHEERS to a Great 2023!



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February 2023 Volume 3

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