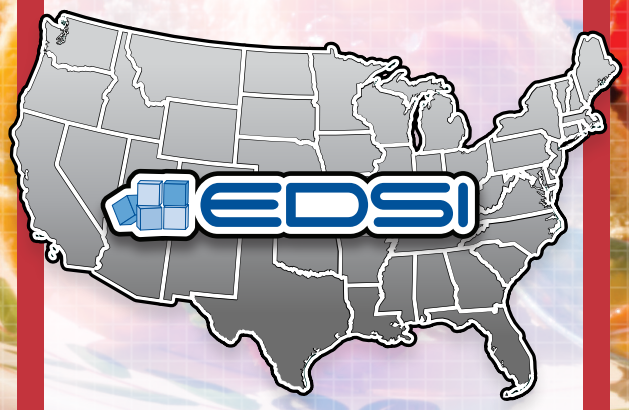
National Appeal Local Feel

In This Issue:

- Awards & Accolades
- Program Innovations
- Best Practices
- Conferences Recap
- Consulting Spotlight
- Exciting EDSI Updates
- New Business

July 2023 | Volume 4



EDSI.com



Introducing This Month's Issue



SHOW-UP
SMILE
SUPPORT

Click to hear from our Director of Marketing Casey White as he introduces the July 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

EDSI Wins Elite Award for Employee Education and Development

Besides being named to the 2022 National Best and Brightest Companies to Work For list, EDSI was also recognized as an Elite winner in the category of Employee Education and Development. Elite winners are the organizations that scored the highest, above all other National applicants, in that specific category.

Chief Servant Leader Kevin Schnieders shares his pride and excitement:

“I wanted to thank our Talent Team, for the extraordinary effort they make for all of us. They show up, smile, and support their colleagues and all those we serve. The Best and Brightest Employee Education and Development Award is well-deserved recognition of their constant commitment to others. Thank you to every member of our dedicated team.”

BEST AND BRIGHTEST® COMPANIES TO WORK FOR IN THE NATION
2022 ELITE WINNER

Click to visit the Best and Brightest Companies to Work For in the Nation website for an overview of the award and for a complete list of winners.

EDSI Named to The Philadelphia Inquirer’s Top Workplaces Awards List

Thrilled to announce our **Top Workplaces 2023** designation! The **Philadelphia Inquirer’s Top Workplaces awards** program recognizes the best employers in Greater Philadelphia in the public, private, nonprofit and government sectors.

Earning the designation as a **Top Workplaces award** winner signifies an organization’s commitment to developing and sustaining a culture that supports, promotes and values its employees! 2023 winners will be honored in a glossy magazine published and distributed to all Inquirer subscribers on Sunday, August 20th. The magazine will reveal the rankings in each of the large, medium and small business categories as well as featured company story highlights.

A special thank you goes out to employees from the **Philadelphia**, **Berks**, **Bucks**, **Chester**, **Delaware**, and **Montgomery** county programs who engaged in the award application and survey.

TOP WORK PLACES 2023 The Inquirer

Click to visit the Philadelphia Inquirer Top Workplaces website for an overview of the award and for a complete list of winners.

Facilitator Diane Mapp Receives Recognition Award From Drexel University

Philadelphia, PA

Congratulations to **Diane Mapp**, who received recognition from Drexel University for her outstanding work with **Project Career Launch**, a school-to-work transition program to prepare young adults on the autism spectrum for career-focused employment.

Drexel notified **Diane** of her award with this message: “We are delighted to inform you that you have been selected as one of the award recipients at the **Breakfast and Award Ceremony** on June 2, celebrating the 7th anniversary of **Project Career Launch** and **Project Search**. Your contribution to Project Career Launch has been instrumental, and it is our pleasure to honor you and your partnership.”

The **Project Career Launch program** adopts the framework and program principles of **The Learning Academy at the University of Southern Florida**. Participants engage in self-discovery and career exploration through peer mentoring, community-based learning and internships. Through an expanded partnership with the **Community College of Philadelphia**, students also have the opportunity to take dual enrollment courses and participate in further education. Upon program completion, students will either be employed or connected to further training/education to support their personal career plan.

System Wide Services Director Daniel Rivera also shared his excitement - “This is such an amazing recognition. Thanks for your dedication and commitment to our youth, **Diane**! I have seen you in action and am in awe of how you transform the children from project youth in the very best way. You give them hope, inspiration, and a chance for employment in the real world.”



EDSI and our team are thankful for, and humbled by, the recognition we have recieved for the efforts we take to create enthusiasm in our clients, see through their eyes, understand their needs and deliver more than they expect.

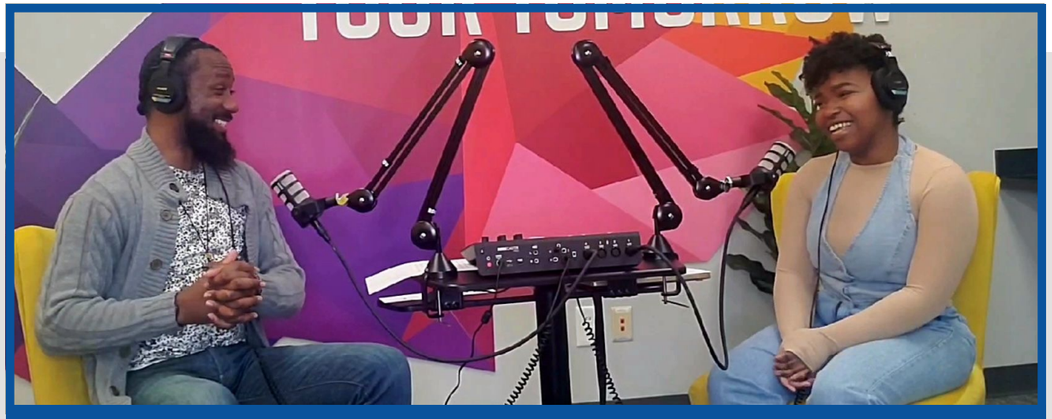
Click here for a complete list of our awards.

Program Innovations

NextGen & Friends Podcast Project

Guilford County, NC

The Guilford County team is thrilled to announce the launch of our **NextGen & Friends podcast**! **NextGen & Friends** is a podcast that is tailored to invite former participants interested in sharing their success story back to explain their experience with the **Guilford County NextGen Program**. Currently, the podcast is in an audio format and in-person until we receive the equipment to transition to a visual/video format. In the future, we also would like to host debriefings with program participants that attend hiring events and invite them back for a group podcast session that will be entitled **“NextGen & Friends - The KickBack.”**



Guilford County’s NextGen Digital Skills Instructor, Lee Howell, Jr., with NextGen Ambassador, Anuquet, discussing her success through the NextGen Program.

Podcast article continued on p. 8

Podcast article continued from p. 7

We aspire to use the podcast as a marketing tool to reach out to other Guilford County youth by way of our program's success stories. In the future, we would love to invite community partners and employers that have assisted our participants to share what their program does as well as employers that have hired our program participants after they received additional training. This innovative addition to our outreach repertoire has already garnered positive feedback from the funder and our community.

Common questions we ask during the podcast:

- How was your experience with the Guilford County NextGen Team?
- Do you feel that the NextGen Program has benefitted you? If so, how?
- How has NextGen helped you in your professional career?
- What are you currently doing as far as work goes?
- Is there anything else that the NextGen team can do to assist you moving forward in your professional career?
- How did you first learn about the Guilford County NextGen Program?





Department of Corrections Hosts Behind the Walls Hiring Event at Bucks County Community Foundation

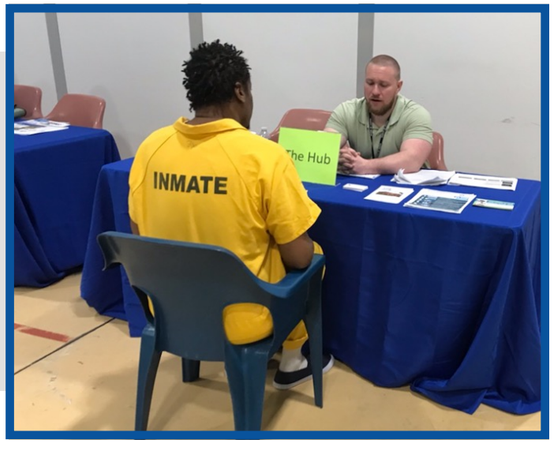
Bucks County, PA

Jobs for the formerly incarcerated population are often hard to come by, but many workforce advocates are trying hard to change that. For example, in Pennsylvania a collaboration between **Bucks County Community Foundation**, **EDSI** and the **Department of Corrections** led to another successful Behind the Walls Hiring Event joining together soon-to-be released individuals with potential employers.

Special literacy programming was coordinated through EDSI and VITA, the lead literacy agency in Bucks County and the largest provider of education programs in the Bucks County Correctional Facilities. Organization representatives held educational job sessions with offenders so that they would be prepared for the interaction with the employers. The sessions included resume preparation, mock interviewing, communication, how to answer questions related to their background, and more.

Seventeen out of 20 offenders attended the event with four employers (**UPS**, **Double H Plastics**, **Delta Products and Arbonite**) along with the other agencies present to interact with the offenders (**Bucks County Community College**, **Bucks County HUB**, **EDSI's WIOA program and Bucks County Probation / Parole**). VITA representatives were also present to help facilitate the event and provide support to the offenders as they met with the employers.





We received positive feedback from both the offenders and the employers and hope to host more events in the future.



Berks County Virtual DEI Symposium: Hiring Individuals with Disabilities

Reading, PA

EDSI's Business Services Team in Berks County along with **Media & Compliance Coordinator Kelsi Phares** for **Bucks & Montgomery Counties** organized a groundbreaking DEI Symposium this spring. More than 50 regional employers were featured at the virtual symposium to share knowledge and expertise about the importance and benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities in a labor market where employers claim they cannot find talent, yet overlook this potential jobseeker base.

"Advocating for differently-abled individuals is something **Kelsi** is passionate about. She previously worked for OVR, has a wealth of experience in this subject area, and has done a lot to upgrade our **Montgomery & Bucks County** locations with new technology so that individuals who have disabilities can access and use our onsite services. She also facilitates trainings on **DEI** as a part of **PA Equal Opportunity and Compliance** mission with the **DOL** with both the **Bucks and Montgomery County** locations," shared **EDSI Regional Director of Operations Andre Hardy**.

Because of the great relationships between counties, **EDSI** collaborated with the **DEI Subcommittee of the Berks County Workforce Development Board** to create the symposium content and featured the following topics and employer/employee testimonials in the form of videos:

- **Best Practices/Do's and Dont's:**
  - Recruiting, Hiring, Interviewing, Onboarding, Training, and Retention
- **How ADA policies are Employer-Friendly**
- **Defining & Understanding "Reasonable Accommodations"**
- **Dispelling Myths about Employing Individuals with Disabilities**
- **Benefits of Employing Individuals with Disabilities**

Great Results!

- 225 attendees representing 180 different employers across PA.
- BST followed up with the employer community to garner feedback on whether employers had made strides toward employing individuals with disabilities.
- Post-event survey responses showed that 71% of employers are more likely to consider hiring differently-abled individuals after attending the symposium.



Think your region will consider organizing a DEI Symposium? Here are a few tips to remember:

1. Collaborate with community partners, schools, higher education, and others to bring a well-rounded perspective.
2. Plan way ahead! When asking employers, guest speakers and others to participate, you need a generous amount of lead time: two-to-three months is ideal.
3. Create a timeline, including tasks and deadlines for those helping to organize or participate.
4. Use as many different outreach methods as possible by creating a detailed communications plan that includes social media updates, Eventbrite for sign-ups, save-the-date notices sent via email or postal service, word-of-mouth, signage, posting in professional organization groups, etc.

Taking the time and resource investment to serve an under-represented jobseeker population in your local area has a big ripple effect. By educating employers and partners about the skills, strengths, and often negative connotations associated with differently-abled individuals, we are expanding the talent pool and helping employers find talented workers that they may be overlooking, and in the end, reducing the number of job openings in the workforce.

Best Practices

EDSI Middle Tennessee AJC Partnership with TAEM Helps Our ChanceTN Families Overcome Benefits Cliff

In 2021 **EDSI** was approached by **TAEM**, the **Tennessee Alliance for Economic Mobility**, to assist with a TN Dept of Human Services grant the organization was pursuing. **EDSI** provided **WIO**A consulting and assisted in mapping out a referral process to help individuals and families after they are no longer eligible for government assistance through **Families First Services** (**Tennessee's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families -TANF**).

Once the $25 million grant was secured by **TAEM**, **Our ChanceTN** was born. **Our ChanceTN** is an initiative supporting families in moving beyond the benefits cliff. The benefits cliff is the single greatest barrier to self-sufficiency for low-income families, estimated to be impacting 22.5% of Americans (Carey, 2018). The benefits cliff occurs when a family's increased income triggers an abrupt loss of public benefits that outweighs the increase in income, often substantially. Because the value of the family's increased income is less than the value of the lost benefit(s), the family is left in a worse financial situation.

By partnering with **EDSI**, **TAEM** is now able to refer their **Families First** participants to a sort of bridge program to receive helpful services that **TAEM** can't offer due to funding guidelines.

"**TAEM** has a whole team of people who have been hired to help facilitate the referral of families to **EDSI** after they transition out of the **Families First** program. Our partnership involves our **Career Advisors and Community Outreach Specialists** working with **TAEM** to fill in any gaps to meet the families' needs as they work toward self-sufficiency, whether it be training, pre-employment workshops, connecting with employers or help with other life needs from a financial or social support standpoint," explained **Liz McLaughlin**, **EDSI Program Director**.



McLaughlin adds that the referral process is still being streamlined and fine-tuned as they prepare to receive active referrals and she looks forward to offering a later update as the program evolves.

The **TAEM** partnership is made up of 32+ community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, government agencies, political subdivisions, economic development organizations, and community and technical colleges in seven Middle Tennessee counties.

You can see EDSI listed on the TAEM website alongside all the other great partners by clicking here.

What is a Career Acceleration Program (CAP)?

Spotlight on Manufacturing CAP With an Emphasis on Re-Entry Participants

Career Acceleration Programs (CAP) are employer-driven, industry-sector training programs that enhance customers' skills in high-growth industries such as manufacturing. What makes **CAPs** so effective is the fact that the curriculum is vetted with local employers to ensure the necessary hard and soft skills relevant to the industry are incorporated into the training. Each **CAP** explores career pathways, incorporates contextualized learning, and includes a certification participants can list on their resumes.



The team in Montgomery County, PA organized a **Manufacturing CAP** that featured 12 students completing the program, six of which were Returning Citizens. Of the six, three participants who completed the program were in a county facility's pre-release program. Incarcerated participants were able to take part in the program as a result of the great partnership between **EDSI's ILS Team** along with **MontcoWorks**, and **Montgomery County Corrections**.

Participants received packets and workbooks in the corrections facility and were able to participate via Zoom. This particular program also featured the use of virtual reality to simulate safety protocols and driving a forklift for the participants who were not in the facility.

The non-incarcerated participants who completed received incentives and an OHSA-10 certification while those who were in the pre-release program were able to pick up their incentives and credentials from the One-Stop once released. This **CAP** also featured employer panels discussing opportunities in the local manufacturing labor market. Of the 12 participants, two are in training, three are employed (two of which were formerly incarcerated, including one connected to employment via an OJT), and remaining individuals are in job search or are awaiting release.

Besides manufacturing, **CAPs** are also offered in these high-priority industries: healthcare, customer service, construction, and IT, and are available both in-person and online. Online programs include both synchronous and asynchronous learning via our **Keywe LMS**, which allows for student/teacher interaction, small group breakout rooms, whiteboard and chat functions, and recording. Thus, the interactive classroom experience is available anytime and anywhere. All **CAPs** can be customized per local employer needs and can be paired with work experiences.

Reach out to EDSI if you're interested in offering CAPs in your local area.



Partnership Between EDSI & City of Philadelphia Highlights Transitional and Permanent Career Opportunities

Q&A Spotlight: Community Life Improvement Program

When you have two entities who care deeply about improving the quality of life, it leads to a perfect partnership and positive outcomes. The impactful community partnership happening in Philadelphia, PA called **Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP)** is a program aimed at improving the quality of life in Philly neighborhoods. Carrying out such an important initiative requires a lot of hands, and **EDSI** has many talented hands. Learn more about this innovative program partnership in the blog below.

What is CLIP?

CLIP is a City of Philadelphia program that partners with **Philadelphia Works, Inc** and **EDSI**. The **CLIP** program has been around for many years going back to 2017. When Covid-19 happened in 2020, this program supported Philadelphians who lost their jobs during the pandemic with temporary employment until they were able to secure permanent employment. Currently, funding for the project has remained in place through other funding sources, including **WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act)**.

What is EDSI's Role in the Partnership?

EDSI works with **CLIP** coordinators to offer participants being served in our local career center the opportunity to receive on-the-job training with the possibility of being hired full-time with the City of Philadelphia after their time in the program commences.

Who is involved in coordinating the program and working with participants?

Our **EDSI team** helps to support the project along with a supervisor under the **Ascend Staffing** group who works directly with **CLIP** supervisors. The Project Specialists manage recruitment, time and attendance, placement support, and worksite mediation/coaching.

To read the rest of the blog, click here.

Giving Back in Tampa Bay – Wreaths Across America 2022

Tampa, FL

In December, for the second consecutive year, members of the **EDSI/Career Source Tampa Bay** team donated their time and resources to **Wreaths Across America**. **Wreaths Across America (WAA)** is a national nonprofit that raises money for wreaths to be placed on the gravesites of fallen Veterans and other memorial sites during the holidays. According to their website, in 2021, **WAA** and its national network of volunteers laid 2.4 million memorial wreaths at 3,137 locations in the United States and beyond, including 66 tractor trailers that delivered 250,000 wreaths to **Arlington National Cemetery** and placed by 38,000 volunteers. Built on a mission to "Remember. Honor. Teach.," **WAA** seeks to honor our fallen service members and their families during this special time of year.

The **CSTB/EDSI** team collected $285 in donations, which allowed us to sponsor 19 wreaths. Additionally, eight team members attended the memorial ceremony and wreath laying at the **American Legion Post 5 Veteran's Cemetery** in Tampa, FL on Saturday, December 17. Thank you to all who donated their time and money to support this very worthy cause and thank you to our Veterans and their families for your service and dedication to our nation!







Conferences Recap

TN Colleagues Attend SETA Spring Conference

Big shout-out to our Tennessee team members **Danielle Ellis**, **Liz McLaughlin** and **Katie Collier** for representing **EDSI** at the **Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) 50th Anniversary Spring Conference** in Memphis, TN where they hosted a booth, learned about the latest in workforce development and connected with industry partners and colleagues.

EDSI was also honored with an award from **SETA** for being a great conference sponsor and supporter.



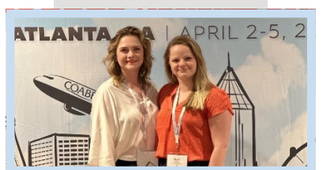




Innovative Learning Solutions Team Members Represent EDSI at COABE Conference

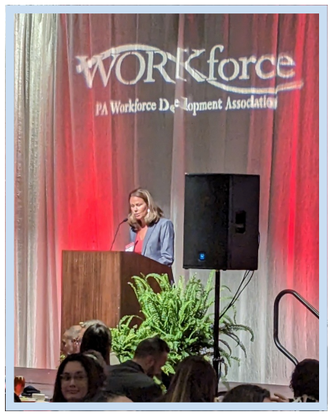
Innovative Learning Solutions Director Kim Glenn presented a workshop on Change Management to a packed crowd at this year's **Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE)** conference in Atlanta, GA. Also attending the conference was **Instructional Designer Kylie Reiman**. Thank you both for representing **EDSI** so well!





Director of Strategic Partnerships, Roe Falcone Serves as Emcee for Annual PWDA Conference

EDSI is grateful to **PA Workforce Development Association** for giving **Roe Falcone, Director of Strategic Partnerships**, the opportunity to emcee the annual **PWDA** conference awards ceremony last month. We are proud to continue partnering with so many great communities and colleagues in PA!



Consulting Spotlight

EDSI Launches $2.1M Workforce Training Initiative for Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI) was selected through a competitive bid process by the **Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)** to conduct a $2.1M, year-long project to analyze, update, and deliver training that will impact up to 10,000 **MBTA** employees and contractors. The multi-phase project is in response to a **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)** request that the agency modernize their employee training programs to ensure they maintain a highly skilled and informed workforce that provides safe and efficient transportation services throughout eastern Massachusetts and parts of Rhode Island.

EDSI, which began work on the project in April, will complete tasks in three phases:

1. **Performing a detailed analysis of MBTA's current training curriculum, matching it against current job and safety requirements to determine courses that need to be updated.**

2. **Preparing a technical career path analysis to foster retention and promotion of entry-level employees to the executive level.**

3. **Developing and delivering new training content.**

The first major milestone was updating **Right of Way (ROW)** training to reinforce safety procedures for employees and contractors working around train tracks. **EDSI** helped **MBTA** develop and deliver new training to employees and contractors in response to the **FTA's** requests. Future **EDSI** deliverables will help formalize and standardize On-the-Job Training policies and integrate emergency response procedures. This project will help develop a highly skilled, responsive, and engaged workforce that boosts **MBTA's** reputation as a great place to work.

EDSI's Innovative Learning Solutions Manager, Michael Lang, notes, "this is an ambitious project, and it speaks to **EDSI's** long history of supporting the public transit industry and our core strengths of curriculum development, customized training, and talent solutions. I'm looking forward to partnering with **MBTA's** training professionals to implement cutting-edge instructional design and learning technologies on such a wide scale."

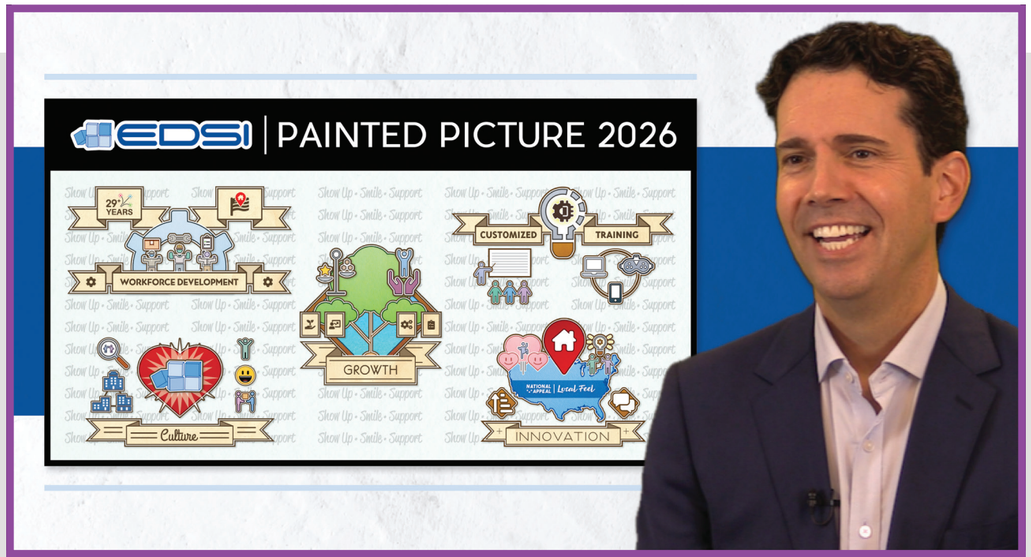
Click Here to download the Press Release version of this article.

Exciting EDSI Updates

2026 Painted Picture Now Live on Website

Dearborn, MI

On behalf of our **Chief Servant Leader Kevin Schnieders**, we are excited to share our newest **Painted Picture** video that looks ahead to 2026 and highlights the company's strategic thinking. The 3-year vision story touches on **EDSI's** history, our organizational growth, program innovations and more.



If you haven't had a chance to view it, check it out on the homepage of our website by clicking here.

Our 2023 B Corp Recertification

EDSI became a certified **B Corporation** in 2020. **Certified B Corporations** must be recertified every three years, and this year **EDSI** is preparing for the recertification process by September 23, 2023. After the recertification committee reviews our submittal, they will update **EDSI's** overall score and scores in the following impact areas:

- **Governance**
- **Workers**
- **Community**
- **Environment**
- **Customers**

One of the ways EDSI can improve our overall B Corp score is by creating an Impact Report, which is available by clicking here. Be sure to check out all the ways we're making an impact.

EDSI

2022 IMPACT REPORT








Making a positive impact in our communities starts with living our values as a team to deliver life-changing services to our customers in need.

Announcing EDSI.com –

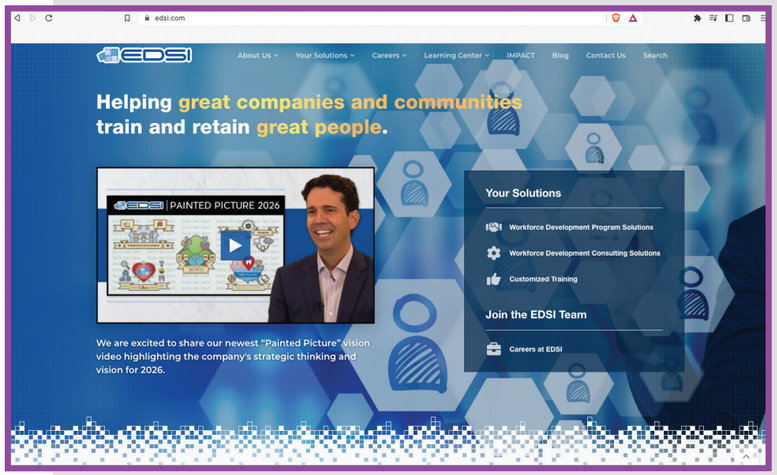
IT Transition Complete

EDSI made an important and exciting IT transition last month, with our primary domain changing from ***@edsisolutions.com*** to **@edsi.com**.

Please note that all previous links and email addresses utilizing **@edsisolutions.com** will still automatically forward to the new **@edsi.com** links and emails – so we do not expect any communication interruption. :)

This change was made to simplify our brand and improve our online presence. Thank you for your continued partnership, and we look forward to continuing our great work together.





Click here to visit EDSI.com today!

New Business

Contracts Won Between February & June

Massachusetts
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Operations Training Services

Missouri
- St. Louis County ADW & OSO Emergency 3-Month Contract
- SLATE Skill-Up CDL Edition Program

North Carolina
- Kerr-Tar WIOA ADW
- Kerr-Tar WIOA Youth
- Guilford County WIOA Youth
- Capital Area (Wake, Chatham, and Lee Counties) WIOA Youth

Pennsylvania
- Montgomery County Compensation Consultant
- Luzerne WIOA and TANF Young Adult Career Services

Here's to an AMAZING SUMMER!





Stay Connected

EDSI.com/company-info

National Appeal Local Feel

July 2023 Volume 4

EDSI is a Federal Contractor – Equal Opportunity Employer & Programs — Minorities/Women/Disabled/Veterans. Reasonable accommodations will be made upon request.

Click here for Stevens Amendment information.