

Easterseals Expanding Employment Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing



General Business

On Jul 1, 2022

Easterseals NJ (ENJ), the largest disability services not for-profit in New Jersey, has expanded its employment services program for the deaf and hard of hearing to encompass the entire state. ENJ's Career Pathway Connections (CPC) received a five-year grant for more than \$1 million from the State of New Jersey's Human Services to encompass Central Jersey.

This grant will now allow the organization to offer employment services in all counties statewide for eligible individuals who are referred to CPC by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) and are noted as having hearing loss. According to the New Jersey State of Human Services, currently an estimated 850,000 New Jersey residents have varying degrees of hearing loss.

CPC partners with DVRS to provide services to over 200 deaf and hard of hearing individuals who are looking to enter the workforce per year in New Jersey. Easterseals NJ first launched CPC in North Jersey in 2017, and in 2019 expanded the program to South Jersey. With those two regions already established, Daniela Rivera, CPC director, and Lauren Weishaar, CPC manager, pushed hard for the need to reach participants statewide. Weishaar found the expansion to be incredibly rewarding as she herself is deaf and experienced obstacles when looking for employment earlier in her career.

“Being deaf and hard of hearing is literally a silent obstacle for thousands of people in New Jersey seeking employment. It's exciting to see the numbers of individuals who have benefited from CPC's services, and

even more exciting to be able to offer that support statewide. This is a great win for this community, and we are grateful for the grant,” Weishaar said.

The services CPC provides are: Vocational Evaluation, Pre-Employment Transition Service, Out of School Youth Service, Job Readiness Training, Preplacement, Job Coaching, and Assistive Technology Demonstration. CPC offices are located in: Maplewood, East Brunswick, and Woodbury.

Easterseals New Jersey (ENJ) is determined to knock down the physical and systemic barriers keeping people with disabilities from getting “on the other side” of their goals and working to help make New Jersey a more accessible state where people with disabilities can thrive. For more information, please visit website.

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