



South Suburban Cook County American Job Center at Prairie State College

Monthly Partner Meeting
October 21st, 2021
10:00 am

Meeting Attendees:

Angela Young, Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS); Audrea Wilder, Prairie State College; Carmela Ochoa, Moraine Valley Community College; Craig Schmidt, Calumet Area Industrial Commission (CAIC); Christopher McElroy, South Suburban College; Debbie Newman, CAIC; Georges Sanon, Prairie State College; Kisha Brown, Prairie State College; Letice Johnson, Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES); Loretta Coleman, Veterans Forward at National Able Network; Meredith Thetford, CAIC; NuDonna Williams, Youth Job Center; Raylynn Stokes, South Suburban College; Regina Rizzo, Legal Aid Chicago; Rena Bryson, IDHS; Renee McClinton, South Suburban College; Rocío Montoya, National Able Network; Roselyn McGhee, IDHS; Valencia Funches, IDHS; Vicky Garcia, Prairie State College; Megan McGinty, Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition (CCLC); Nidia Mejia, CCLC, Robert Guzman, CCLC.

Agenda:

- OSO Project Working Group Updates
- Trending Topics
- Partner Updates

OSO Update:

- Nidia provided an OSO project update. She discussed the current status of the AJC Orientation, Customer Satisfaction Survey, Cross-training, Calendar of Events, and Referrals as well as their respective goals and timeline for the next year. Partners are invited to participate in the OSO Project Working Groups. If you are interested in joining a Project Working Group please contact the OSO at oso@chicagocitywideliteracy.org. The OSO team plans to hold training sessions as final versions of the AJC Orientation, Customer Satisfaction Survey, and Calendar of Events are ready for distribution. More information about these projects will be shared in future meetings.
- Nidia shared the Trending Topic for this month. DCEO recently announced a \$20 million Job Training and Economic Development Program (JTED) Notice of Funding Opportunity. This is funding for job training and support activities for individuals impacted by COVID-19. The application deadline is October 29th at 5:00 pm. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Partner Updates:

South Suburban Cook County American Job Center at Prairie State College Building Update

- Staff at the South Suburban Cook County AJC at Prairie State College continues servicing clients by appointment only. Staff is in person 3 days a week and work from home the remainder of the week.
- All workshops and services continue online.

Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA Title I-B)

National Able Network

- CASAS testing is offered on-site weekly.
- The Resource Room is open by appointment only.
- Everyone at the AJC must wear masks and follow safety guidelines.
- National Able Network is looking for eligibility specialists. [Click here to view open positions at National Able Network.](#)

Trade Adjustment Act (TAA)

- Recent TAA orientations have been very well attended.
- Daniela Cueva is the Program Manager for the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) Program and you can refer individuals to Daniela at dcueva@nationalable.org.
- National Able Network provided an updated employer list. Individuals may be eligible for additional benefits through TAA if they have been affected by these layoffs: AT&T Services, Inc.; HERE North America, LLC; A Finkl and Sons; Allstate Insurance Company; Encompass Group, LLC; Capgemini American, Inc.; Follett Corporation; Mercury Plastics, Inc.; Pactiv LLC; Korn Ferry; Solo Cup Operating Corp; Mercury Plastics Inc; Castwell Products; ATI Holdings; and Alight Solutions LLC.

Youth Job Center (YJC)

- YJC is onsite at Prairie State College on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Staff can meet with young people in person.
- YJC is looking for youth who are choosing to pursue career pathways.
- Reach out to NuDonna Williams, Senior Programs Manager, at nwilliams@youthjobcenter.org.

Adult Education and Literacy

Prairie State College (PSC)

- Late start classes and ICAPs at Prairie State College started this month.
- Registration for the Spring semester will open up on December 1st. Classes start in January.
- To learn more about Career Pathways at Prairie State College, reach out to Vicky Garcia at vgarcia2@prairiestate.edu.
- Georges Sanon shared several updates and upcoming events.
 - National Veterans Small Business Week is November 1st - 5th. The U.S Small Business Administration Illinois District Office is hosting an Access to Capital for Veteran Entrepreneurs Post COVID-19 event on November 3rd from 9:30 am - 11:00 am. [Click here to view the event information.](#)

- Starting November 1st, PSC Student Veterans can receive a 25% discount for services at the PSC Dental Clinic. Appointments can be made by calling the Dental Hygiene Clinic at 708-709-3707.
- Starting December 22nd, 2021, the GI Bill Update will take effect and Special COVID-19 Rules will end. Veterans will no longer receive the full Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) for online courses. Veteran students will need to take in-person courses to receive the resident (in-person) rate.
- For questions about these updates and other Military Students Affairs information, reach out to Georges Sanon at gsanon@prairiestate.edu
- Tutoring for the Adult Literacy program will begin on campus. Tutors will be available to students needing math or reading tutoring. Some tutors can also help students with writing. They are still looking for volunteer tutors. New volunteers will need to provide a resume and attend a brief training session.
 - Reach out to Kisha Brown at nbrown1@prairiestate.edu if you have interested participants.

South Suburban College

- South Suburban College is in the middle of the Fall semester.
- In November, registration for January classes will open. There will be online and in-person classes for ESL and GED.
- South Suburban College also has ICAPs programs, where students can earn their GED and complete credit programs, for CNA and Welding.
- [Click here for more information about South Suburban College Adult Education and see any recent updates.](#)
- Reach out to Christopher McElroy at cmcelroy@ssc.edu with any questions.

Moraine Valley Community College (MVCC)

- MVCC just finished open enrollment for the Fall semester.
- The office is open 5 days a week and staff have staggered shifts, so someone is available throughout the day.
- MVCC has the Adult Learning Crew, which is a support group for Adult Education students to help them discover careers and develop job readiness skills.
- There is also an Empowering Latino Leadership in Alliance group for ESL, GED, Career Pathways, and Conversation classes. Latino students can come and share their experiences and perspectives with other Latino students.
- Reach out to Carmela Ochoa at ochoa@morainevalley.edu and Meg Dawczak at dawczakm@morainevalley.edu with any questions.

Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)

- IDES offices are open by appointment only.
- IDES is partnering with E&ES and IDHS DRS on the upcoming Coalition of African American Leaders (COAL) Virtual Hiring Event on Tuesday, October 26th, and Wednesday, October 27th. Day 1 will consist of job seeker workshops and Day 2 will consist of informational presentations with participating employers. [Click here to learn more and register.](#)
 - The following employers plan to attend at this time: Misericordia Home, The Bazaar Inc., Purpose Workforce Solutions, Addus HomeCare, Walgreens, Chicago Lighthouse, Metra, Lawrence Hall, Alverno Laboratories, and Chase.

- There are new criteria for unemployment insurance. Due to the amount of fraud, there is a new identity verification process called ILogin. [Click here to learn more about this new process.](#)
- Reach out to Leticia Johnson at Leticia.M.Johnson@illinois.gov or Rosylen McGhee at Rosylen.Mcghee@illinois.gov with questions about local IDES offices.

Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) SNAP and TANF

- IDHS shared several policy changes effective October 1st.
 - TANF and SNAP benefits were increased and recipients should automatically receive an increase in monthly CASH assistance.
 - Customers who receive TANF who are work eligible will be required to participate in work training programs or have an exception. Employment and Training Liaisons at IDHS are referring customers to community partners at this AJC.
 - [Customers with Class X or Class 1 felony drug convictions are now eligible to receive CASH assistance.](#)
- Reach out to Valencia Funches at valencia.funches@illinois.gov with questions or to refer participants.
- The 2022 WIOA Summit will be held on April 28th and 29th. It will be a hybrid event, with an in-person component in Bloomington, IL at the Marriott Hotel and Conference Center. The 2022 theme is Equity in Service Integration. [Presentations must be submitted by Friday, January 28th, 2022. Click here to submit a request for a presentation.](#)

Vocational Rehabilitation

IDHS Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)

- DRS staff are providing service to local office customers and accepting referrals online. Partners and customers can call the local office to contact a specific Rehabilitation Counselor.
- Reach out to Angela Young at angela.s.young@illinois.gov with any questions or to refer individuals to the local DRS office.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

National Able Network SCSEP

- Reach out to Jackie Owens at jowens@nationalable.org with questions.

Veterans Forward at National Able Network

- Veterans Forward orientations are offered in-person and online on Wednesdays at 10:00 am.
- Staff are interested in coming out to speak with veterans at partner sites. If you'd like to set up a site visit for Veterans Forward staff, reach out to Loretta Coleman at lcoleman@nationalable.org.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

The Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC)

- Reach out to Emily Orenstein at orenstein@thehacc.org with any questions.

Job Corps

- There is new leadership at the Joliet Job Corps Center.

- Job Corps was authorized to bring back regular enrollment and they are waiting for approval to begin. Job Corps is actively enrolling virtually until they receive approval for traditional enrollment.

Additional Partners

Legal Aid Chicago

- Legal Aid has a Veterans Legal Clinic where veterans can receive assistance on public benefits (VA benefits), discharge updates, etc. [Click here to learn more about Legal Aid Clinics.](#)
- Additional Legal Aid programs include Victims who are Trafficked, Tortured, or Other Crimes (VTTC), School Prison Pipeline, Free Legal Help for Suburban Seniors, and more.
- Legal Aid Chicago has a consumer team providing support to fraud victims. Individuals in subsidized housing who have experienced fraud can receive assistance from Legal Aid.
- On Saturday, October 30th from 12:00 - 4:00 pm, there will be a Returning Citizens Fair where Legal Aid paralegals can register individuals for public benefits and provide additional information and support to returning citizens.
- Cannabis Equity Illinois and Legal Aid Chicago are having their final RAP Sheet Assistance Day for the year on November 12th from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. At this event, individuals can receive transportation to Chicago Police Department Headquarters and begin the record clearing process with Legal Aid Chicago at no charge. [Click here to register.](#)
 - Adult expungements typically take 18-20 months to complete. Legal Aid provides expungement services for adult and juvenile records.
- Reach out to Regina Rizzo at rizzo@legalaidchicago.org if you have any questions.

Calumet Area Industrial Commission (CAIC)

- Through the One Workforce Program, CAIC can cover tuition, books, and fees for students pursuing manufacturing at 10 community colleges. All three of our South Suburban Cook County AJC at Prairie State College Title II providers partner with CAIC.
 - [Click here to learn more about the One Workforce Program.](#)
- CAIC is working with several high schools to implement a Bridge to Manufacturing program to follow high school. This program would prepare students for college or employment in manufacturing and would follow the summer school schedule.
- Staff is contacting colleges and high schools to market the manufacturing program and apprenticeship week, which runs from November 8th to 14th.
- CAIC was awarded the Career Pathways Grant by the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership. In partnership with South Suburban College, CAIC is building a bridge program that focuses on individuals who are not ready to enroll in college or enter the workforce just yet. Students will be able to earn 10 OSHA certifications and receive career readiness training. This is a 4-week program and they are looking to expand and connect with high school summer programs.
- Several CAIC representatives attend our Partner Meetings. Reach out to Craig Schmidt, craig@calumetareaindustrial.com, Debbie Newman,

debbie@calumetareaindustrial.com, and Meredith Thetford,
meredith@calumetareaindustrial.com, with any questions.

Next Steps:

- Partners are invited to volunteer for the Calendar of Events Project Working Group Meeting on November 3rd at 1:00 pm. Partners who are onsite at the AJC and/or host AJC associated workshops are also invited to pilot the Customer Satisfaction Surveys.
- Updated flyers can be submitted to the OSO email address, oso@chicagocitywideliteracy.org.
- [Sign up to receive the South Suburban Cook County AJC at Prairie State College Resources Newsletter here.](#)
- The next South Suburban Cook County AJC at Prairie State College Monthly Partner Meeting will be held on November 18th at 10:00 am.