



Association Seeks Level Funding

ACCSES New Jersey and its member organizations are asking the Legislature to restore \$5 million to the state budget for job programs for people with disabilities that Governor Christie did not include in his spending plan for the 2018 fiscal year (7/1/17 to 6/30/18). The request is being made in testimony before legislative committees and in individual meetings.

The Association thanked the Legislature for working with the Governor to provide these critical funds in prior years but noted that while they reversed deep cuts to the funding for these desperately needed jobs for individuals with disabilities, they essentially left the funding where it was in FY 2002, adjusting for inflation.

In his legislative testimony on behalf of ACCSES NJ this month, North Jersey Friendship House President & CEO Len Nicolosi said: "It is critical that funding be preserved in the same amount that was appropriated in the current year's budget to maintain jobs and other services for the state's most disadvantaged citizens. We will continue to use the funds mainly for Extended Employment (Center-based jobs), with healthy

portions going to Extended Employment transportation and Long-Term Follow Along services for jobs in the community."

Testifying with Mr. Nicolosi was Tyrone Simpson, a Friendship House program participant. He told the committees how the agency helped him to overcome his mental illness and become a productive worker: "Without the support of Friendship House, I do not know where I would be," he said. "Most likely I would be either in jail, in the streets of Englewood; or in a psychiatric hospital." He now works on multiple assignments for the agency.

National studies consistently demonstrate that people with disabilities want to work, but their participation in the labor force is astoundingly low. Only 30.8 percent of workers with disabilities, nationwide, hold jobs, compared to a 76.2 percent employment rate for the general population.

ACCSES NJ is emphasizing to legislators that the state receives a strong return for the funds it allocates to job programs for individuals with disabilities. New Jersey's investment is generating *continued on page 3*

CNA Notches Another Jobs Record

Jobs were at record levels for 2016 under ACCSES New Jersey/CNA Services' operation of the State Set Aside program for people with disabilities. The program provided work for 6,869 individuals, an increase of 106 jobs from the 2015 total and a gain of 2,814 jobs since 2010. Total wages paid by the program shot up to \$11,617,549 last year, which was \$155,372 more than the prior year. The average hourly wage was \$12.36, a slight increase from 2015.

The recent jobs growth has been driven primarily by the expansion of CNA Services' janitorial unit, which comprises some 40 percent of CNA's overall business. Other CNA units also are showing strong growth, most notably the sale of drug-screening kits, which recorded an increase of

33.77 percent, and imprinted specialties, which was up by more than 38 percent in 2016.

Call Center Services to the Division of Consumer Affairs also continues to grow, with CNA now serving all of the 43 licensing boards in the State. Vice President Floyd Nesse expects Document Imaging services to add more growth this year as well. Several projects from cooperative purchasing participants, including NJ Transit, have fueled the growth. Although 2016 saw only a slight increase for this service, CNA anticipates additional growth in 2017, primarily through cooperative purchasing contracts.

CNA held its first CITS 101 (Cleaning Professional) training for janitorial service workers *continued on page 4*

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MESSAGE

FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

By Mark Boyd

We are now two months into the administration of our new President & CEO, Mohsen Badran, and I am pleased to report that our Association has not missed a beat.

Many of you have met Mohsen via our internal meetings or through his visits to your organizations. He has undertaken an ambitious schedule of these excursions, with the aim of obtaining your views on ACCSES New Jersey/CNA Services and exchanging ideas on what we can do to make us more effective in pursuing our joint mission to assist people with disabilities and other disadvantages.

One new feature that Mohsen has introduced – the Weekly Information Summaries that are e-mailed to members – should be helpful to all of us. The summaries highlight Mohsen's activity on behalf of the Association; contain other useful internal information; and capsulize a number of communications that we receive from outside organizations that could be of benefit to many of us. I encourage you to take the time to review these weekly summaries and to provide any feedback you feel would be of value.

You will note in the page 1 article that we have completed our annual testimony before the New Jersey Legislative Budget and Appropriations Committees on the state budget for fiscal year 2018. My thanks to Len Nicolosi and Tyrone Simpson for delivering the testimony, and to our President/CEO Emeritus, Nils Richardson, for assisting with this task, as he has on other items during the transition to our new executive. We now face the task, as we have so often in the past, of continuing our efforts with the legislature to secure adequate funding. Mohsen will be meeting with key legislators to pursue that goal, and some of our member-organization executives have volunteered to contact legislators with whom they have good relationships. I urge more of you to take similar action.

It is becoming almost routine for me to comment on new heights reached by our CNA Services division and this writing is no exception. As reported in the other page 1 article, CNA set another jobs record last year and is off to a good start in 2017. Nevertheless, none of us should take this program for granted. An incredible amount of hard work and coordination is required to obtain these kinds of results, both from our central CNA staff and from our member-CNA affiliates. The reward is the satisfaction we obtain for providing this continuous flow of good jobs for people with disabilities. I congratulate all those who made this possible and I pledge the continued, vigorous support for the program from our Executive Committee.



Mark Boyd

M E S S A G E

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Mohsen Badran

While it was the final budget message delivered by Governor Christie, on February 28, it was the first time I had the opportunity to attend this annual ritual, which takes place before a joint session of the State Legislature. The address, one of the major events on the New Jersey political calendar each year, is well-attended by lobbyists and political insiders and is widely followed by a multitude of organizations and individuals that have a stake in the state's spending plans.

As always, ACCSES New Jersey's purpose in attending the address is to gain insight into the Governor's recommendations for funding jobs and other programs for persons with disabilities. Governor Christie made no direct reference to this concern in his speech but the details of his plans, revealed later in a detailed budget compilation, show that he did not include \$5 million for job programs for people with disabilities that is part of the current year's budget. We are attempting to have these funds restored by the legislature.

One of the main themes of the Governor's budget address was jobs; he expressed great interest in job creation. The Trump Administration also has focused heavily on this issue. This is completely in line with what our Association is all about. ACCSES NJ and our family of member organizations must help advance the state and national agendas voiced by Governor Christie and President Trump by creating the greatest possible number of jobs for people

with disabilities, including Veterans with disabilities, with special effort on Veterans to honor them for their service to our country.

To achieve maximum job growth, we must place more emphasis on jobs that are not dependent on the fees for service that our member organizations receive from government. At a recent meeting, I asked our staff to think about how ACCSES NJ can help our family of members develop more jobs in the private business sector for individuals with disabilities. This is a challenge all of us must meet if our Association is to continue to thrive. I welcome the opportunity to work with you on this initiative.

In closing, I wish to assure all of you that my staff and I are fully committed to the **Mission of ACCSES NJ**: We are dedicated to providing leadership and support to members who advocate for and serve persons with disabilities through community-based programs located throughout New Jersey.



Mohsen Badran



Len Nicolosi (left) and Tyrone Simpson testifying before the NJ Senate Budget & Appropriations Committee.

Funding

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nearly \$110 million in net economic impact this year. Some of the highlights:

- Our members employ over 8,000 people with special needs in their vocational divisions, including more than 6,800 in our state set-aside program at an average wage of over \$12/hr., producing an annual economic impact of over \$32 million in taxes paid and entitlements reduced. This doesn't count the curtailed use of expensive rehabilitation and/or correctional programs, or the economic impact of their wages and buying power; adding those would easily triple the economic impact, according to valid studies.
- New Jersey gains \$4,745 in entitlements reduced and taxes paid for each person with a disability who is put to work in the contracts performed by New Jersey Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs).

SUPRA Focuses on Issues

A strong contingent from ACCSES New Jersey/CNA Services attended this year's State Use Program Association's (SUPRA) 19th Annual Conference, held in Savannah, Georgia in January.

The event opened with a vibrant message from SUPRA's President Vince Loose. Loose, of UniqueSource of Pennsylvania, echoed a quote from Alexander Graham Bell about the challenges we are facing: "When one door is closed, another one opens. Our charge is to build the open door to increase employment for people with disabilities."

ACCSES NJ/CNA Services Vice President Floyd Nesse, a former Chairman of the organization, said the conference was marked by strong information sessions and energetic interaction among the attendees. Mr. Nesse is now Chair of SUPRA's Governmental and Legislative Affairs Committee and presented its report during the conference's business meeting. He noted that the committee had a very active year, highlighted by developing cooperative agreements with national ACCSES and engaging members to contact their Federal elected officials to oppose the proposed Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations and recommendations emanating from the Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities (ACICIEID).

The national ACCESS and SUPRA conferences were scheduled back-to-back for a number of reasons; one was to coordinate and collaborate on a number of public policy initiatives. The Governmental and Legislative Affairs sessions were very similar in messages and, most importantly, they reinforced to the respective members that the two organizations are aligned in principles and motivated to act on common goals.

Kate McSweeney, ACCSES's VP of Governmental Affairs and General Counsel, participated in the SUPRA Governmental Affairs sessions. The big issues of the day primarily remained the same. As a trade group, SUPRA must remain united and keep its members' voices heard on the key issues. Although WIOA seems well on its way to full implementation, there seems to be considerable feelings among the membership that we



ACCSES NJ/CNA Services VP Floyd Nesse giving report of SUPRA's Governmental and Legislative Affairs Committee.

may be able to make a few inroads relating the regulatory over-reach on the definition of Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) and the sub-definitions of a work unit contained in the rule. McSweeney has drafted alternative amendments that would keep the good parts of WIOA and carve out the parts that are untenable.

CNA Services

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outside of the Trenton area on February 23rd at CVR in Monmouth County. Twenty-five individuals from CVR and The Arc of Ocean County attended, and all passed. Several more of these programs will be conducted in the coming months. Over 300 clients have taken and passed the Cleaning 101 program so far, and CNA is aiming to have over 450 trained by the end of this year.

CNA Services, a division of ACCSES NJ, markets a wide variety of commodities and services to state, county and municipal governments and other public entities under the New Jersey State Set-Aside for people with disabilities. The products and services are provided by workers with disabilities who are trained by CNA-certified, non-profit agencies throughout the state. The program provides jobs for individuals with disabilities and builds skills that enable them to advance in the workforce.



(Standing from left) CNA's John Ganley and trainers Bill McGarvey and Paul Chrzanowski at "Cleaning 101" janitorial training session held at CVR in Eatontown

National ACCSES Spearheads Action

National ACCSES is keeping up the pressure on two federal issues that are high on ACCSES New Jersey's priorities list. The organization is urging its members and supporters to push for Congress to make no Medicaid changes that will harm people with disabilities and to fix the definition of Competitive Integrated Employment in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations in order to allow employment choice.

Medicaid:

ACCSES's position is that Congress should NOT restructure Medicaid. Block grants or per capita caps on Medicaid will drastically reduce the funds provided by the federal government to the states. This will have a direct impact on people with disabilities who are provided waiver services, rehabilitative and habilitative services, home and community-

based services, durable medical equipment, and other services that assist people with disabilities to remain in their homes and attached to the workforce. These programs are a life force for people with significant disabilities and provide important economic and social benefits that will not be able to continue without federal support.

RSA Interpretation of WIOA:

The Rehabilitation Services Administration recently issued an interpretation of WIOA that will cut off choice and limit employment options for people with significant disabilities. ACCSES has drafted a letter asking lawmakers to stop this redefinition of employment for people with disabilities. To be part of the campaign, please visit the national ACCSES Action Center online (www.accses.org/action-center).

County Partners with Friendship House

North Jersey Friendship House is now providing food services under a partnership with the County of Bergen. The agency will operate The Bergen Bistro Food Service Operations at the two county administrative buildings and at the County Justice Center.

The Friendship House training kitchen and serving area underwent a complete renovation last year with Community Development Block Grant funds presented by Bergen County Executive Jim Tedesco on December 8. Just a week later, Friendship House received the official notice of being selected to provide Food Service Operations for the County. Immediately following the announcement, the Friendship House Food Services team began the planning and execution for the project. The dedication ceremony was held on February 28.

"Friendship House is helping adults with disabilities learn valuable skills and how to support themselves," Tedesco said. "With access to the right opportunities, they are not limited by their disabilities or personal circumstances. Bergen County government is leading by example and providing an opportunity for these men and women to succeed. At the same time, we're now going to be able to offer a greater variety of affordable, healthy food options for county employees and visitors."

The county partnership with Friendship House employs a combination of individuals with different abilities and disabilities, including members of the non-profit's Supported Employment, Autism, and Vocational Programs, as well as returning U.S. Military Veterans.

Customer comment and feedback have been very favorable during the first few weeks of operation.



(From left) Dave Bein, NJFH Director of Food Services; John Cox, NJFH Executive Director of Strategic Development and Operations; Bergen County Executive James Tedesco III, and Hansel F. Asmar, Director/Health Officer at Bergen County Department of Health Services in kitchen at County Administration Building.

Senate President Visits Abilities Solutions

Abilities Solutions in Westville welcomed New Jersey State Senate President Steve Sweeney, Assemblywoman Patricia Egan Jones and representatives from ACCSES New Jersey for a tour of their facility, which provides transitional and extended employment opportunities to individuals with developmental disabilities.

The visitors had the opportunity to meet consumers and staff, and quickly acknowledged the outstanding work ethic, pride and

compassion of the workforce. Nearly 1,000 individuals with disabilities and veterans are served through onsite programs and community partnerships each year. These critical programs and partnerships provide opportunities that prepare individuals for transition to community-based employment.

Senate President Sweeney commented "Having meaningful employment *continued on page 7*



Leadership Changes at Jersey Cape



Joseph Sittineri

Jersey Cape Diagnostic, Training and Opportunity Center, Inc. has been undergoing a transition of leadership in the Executive Director position. Joseph Sittineri was hired in 2014 to be mentored under long-time Executive Director George Plewa. The Board of Directors named Mr. Sittineri Acting Executive Director in July 2016. The Board believes he brings the skills, knowledge and abilities to carry out Jersey Cape's mission and goals and anticipates his full transition to

the Executive Director position on July 1, 2017.

"I see a lot of potential for Jersey Cape and look forward to bringing innovative ideas to this organization and greater opportunities to the individuals we serve," Sittineri said. "I am thankful for the great mentorship that George Plewa has provided, and the support of our Board of Directors, employees, consumers and community."

Congratulations, Joe!

Celebrating 50 Years

1966: Simon & Garfunkel's "Sounds of Silence" reaches #1; 1st soft landing on Moon; Dow-Jones Index hits record 995 points; Medicare goes into effect; and Pamela joins the O.T.C. team.

Each March, the O.T.C. celebrates its consumers' years of service with a special recognition program. For the past 50 years Pamela has been a part of the O.T.C. benchwork team and is looking forward to her next anniversary. Shortly after the O.T.C. was formed in 1964, Pamela's mother enrolled her in the benchwork assembly program and, to insure the organization continued its good work, joined the O.T.C. team herself. For almost 50 years, Kathleen Wright was a member of the O.T.C. Board of Trustees, including Board President. Recently, a newly renovated O.T.C. residential home was named in her honor.

When asked about retiring, Pamela says she cannot picture herself away from the O.T.C.; she is enjoying herself too much at work. But it's not only the work that keeps her occupied. Because of her experience she helps new workers acclimate themselves to a full day's employment and is always there to help her friend Marvin, who is blind, navigate the workshop area when necessary.



Pamela, celebrating 50 years at OTC

Goodwill Initiates Venture

Goodwill Industries of Greater NY and Northern NJ has launched Maker's Market, an Etsy store, to help individuals with disabilities sell the products they design and produce at the nonprofit's Makerspace.

These entrepreneurs with disabilities participate in Goodwill's "Make Your Job!" program. The program, funded by the Kessler Foundation, provides workshops on how to launch your own business and offers access to high-tech equipment like 3-D copiers and laser cutters.



Goodwill North participant using laser cutting machine to make Valentine's Day hearts.

Some individuals with disabilities prefer to be their own boss and others have joined the "Make Your Job!" program, frustrated with the long interviewing process with companies. Last fall, Daniel K. joined the program where he learned to use the equipment. Daniel thinks outside the box and has learned 3D modeling to turn his designs into tridimensional objects. During the Holiday season, Daniel sold three-dimensional acrylic snowman ornaments at the Hudson County Community College Holiday Marketplace.

INROADS Offers New Programs



Inroads participant in the Serv Safe Food Handler program.

Inroads to Opportunities is now offering two certificate programs for individuals with disabilities: Serv Safe Food Handler and Janitorial Skills and Training.

The Serv Safe course will include Food Safety, Personal Hygiene, controlling time and temperature, preventing cross contamination, cleaning and sanitizing. The hands-on training will include experience working in a cafeteria and in a restaurant kitchen.

Janitorial skills and training will include chemistry of

cleaning, equipment and supplies, storage, above-floor surfaces, carpeted-floor surfaces and hard-floor surfaces. The class will be a combination of hands-on training and classroom course work.

Interested individuals must be referred by DVR, School System for Transition Students, or if already an extended employee at Inroads, they may take advantage of the programs to help transition into a competitive job market.

Arc Somerset Unveils Two New Programs

The Arc of Somerset County recently started two new day program curriculums.

The “Accessing Music Promoting Success” program promotes a sense of well-being and success for individuals with disabilities through music. Specifically, individuals have the opportunity to participate in an adaptive, high-tech system that allows them to successfully play music and engage with others, regardless of experience, training, or ability.

“The Rhona Levine Arts Center” is designed to expose interested adults of all abilities to the process of art making in various forms. It was dedicated to Rhona Levine, a 28-year resident with The Arc, who passed away in 2015.

Chris Corvino, Curriculum Coordinator for The Arc of Somerset County, said: “Both the music and the art programs are providing adults with Intellectual and Developmental disabilities access to the Arts in a way that breaks down barriers and allows for full and individualized expression.”



Arc Somerset Program Attendee Marinela C. shows off her artwork

Sweeney at Abilities Solutions

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(From left) Lorrie Covolessky, Abilities Solutions Director of Clinical Services; Production Manager Diann Cheeseman; Susan Perron, President and CEO; Assemblywoman Patricia Egan Jones; and Senate President Steve Sweeney.

not only provides economic freedom for individuals with disabilities and allows them to learn new skills that will help them in their daily life, but it also instills a great sense of pride and fulfillment. Abilities Solutions recognizes this and helps remove barriers to employment by identifying job opportunities and matching individuals to suit their needs. I applaud the community and the businesses that partner with one of South Jersey’s valuable resources.”

Assemblywoman Egan Jones added, “While some individuals may do better working at local businesses, center-based work may be more suitable for others. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Abilities Solutions has a successful formula that works for the people they train and employ and for the businesses and the community that benefit from dedicated and productive individuals.”

The Abilities Solutions center serves between 700 and 800 people with disabilities or other disadvantages each year and works with over 200 South Jersey employers to match workers with jobs in the business community and at the center.

“I want to thank our elected officials for recognizing the importance of our work in the community to help youth, adults and veterans with disabilities and other disadvantages find meaningful employment. With their support, we can continue to build relationships to fulfill our mission and serve our community,” said Susan Perron, President and CEO.

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