



**JOBPATH**

WORK · LIFE · COMMUNITY

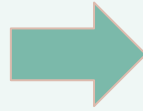
# Next Step

The Career Path Project



# Job Path History - A Growing Need

- Job Path - History of Individualized Support
- Customized Employment - since 2004
- Good Job Matches **AND** A Desire for More



**NEED** to invest more in Career Development

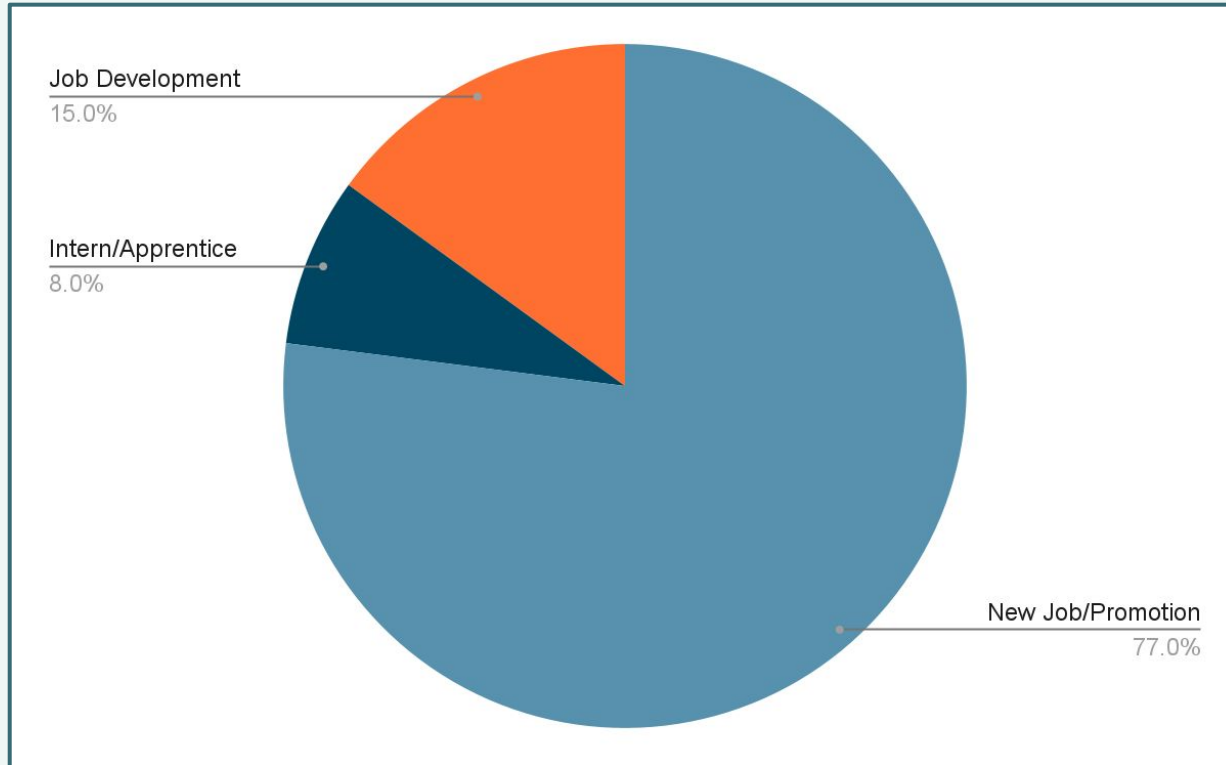
# The Scope of Project Next Step

- Pilot project, funded by a combination of a foundation grant (The Far Fund) and NY State Funding (OPWDD)
- Assist individuals to develop a career advancement plan and move into jobs that offer them higher pay, more hours or the opportunity to use their skills and talents in new ways
- 2017-2019: initial goal of working with 25 individuals on the **autism spectrum** over a 3 year period
- We are currently in the 2nd stage of the grant (2020-2022)

# The Scope of Project Next Step (Cont'd)

- Customized Employment- Project Next Step grounded in CE strategies
- Increase capacity for benefits advisement across the agency
- Learn how best to assist people in their careers:
  - try out new tools and strategies for documenting career interest
  - learn how to better assist people and their families in taking risk
- Create a blueprint of how we want to incorporate career development into the Employment Department and across the agency

# Project Outcomes (2017-19)



# Rooted in Customized Employment

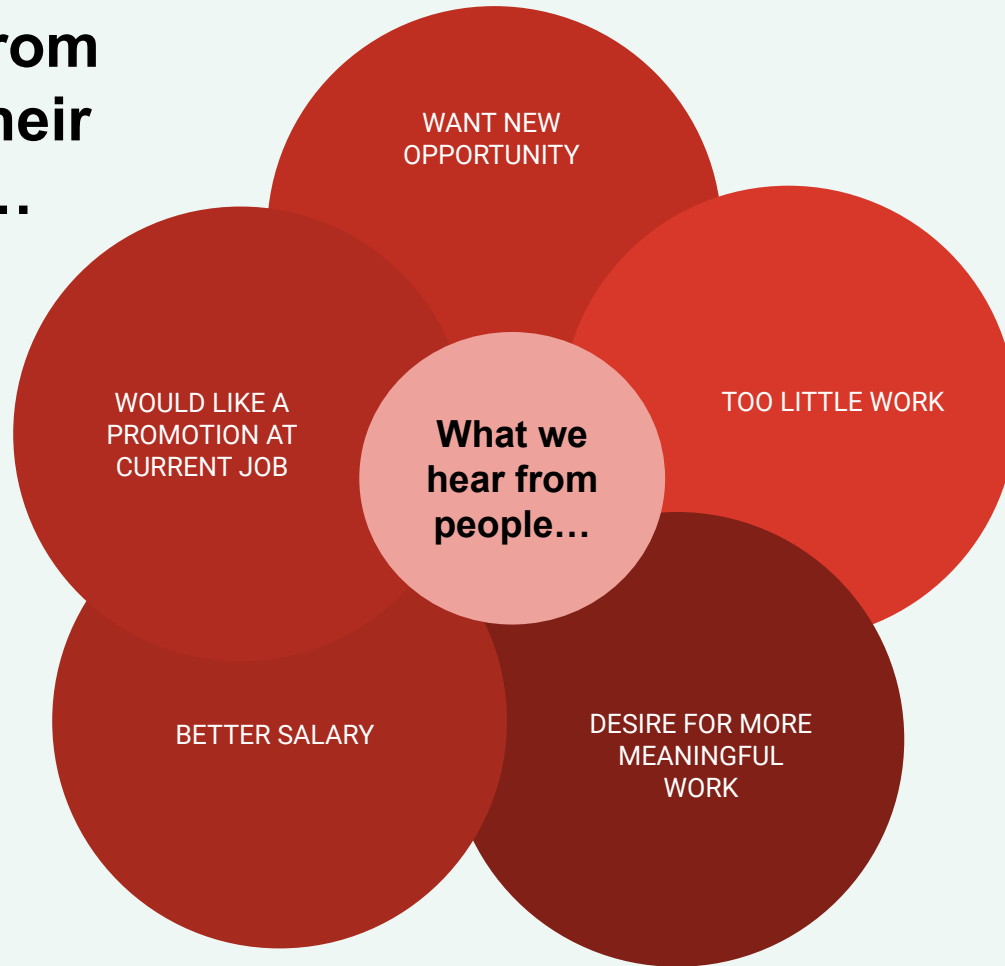
- Job Path - utilizing Customized Employment Strategies
- Long history of working with Marc Gold and Associates, as well training/exposure to other organizations- Griffin Hammis and TransCen Inc.
- Project Next Step:
  - People with autism who had been through an initial Discovery
  - Capitalize on knowledge of current counselors (what works/what doesn't work), engage in a modified Discovery process and Planning Meetings
  - Resume updates and Customized Job Development

# Existing Program: A New Lense



- Long Term Employment Support Program
- Counselors traditionally focused on assisting individuals maintain and grow in their current jobs
- Staff Strengths: Support, Counseling and Partnership vs. Job Development
- Increase capacity for Job Development

# What we hear from people about their current jobs...



....what have you heard?

# More Opportunity

- After applying to other positions at current company (discussion with supervisors/ researching opportunity in other depts), no success in obtaining upward mobility
- Additional skills participant has are not being utilized
- Educational experience and/or knowledge is not being fully realized
- The road to the Include NYC:



# Desire for More Work

- A customized job changes over time - tasks someone was hired to do no longer exist due to tasks being completed or there are fundamental changes in daily operations
- Once on the job, employee realizes there is too much down time, which can cause significant anxiety
- Work schedule is not consistent - desire for a more set schedule w/ more hours
- The Road to Douglas Elliman:



# Desire for More Meaningful Work

- Someone feels an emotional pull towards a specific talent and/or type of business for the benefit of a deeper purpose
- Desire to make better use of one's educational background
- Influence of family members to work in a certain field - be part of a family legacy
- The Road To The United Nations:



# Better Salary

- Current jobs is customized based on interest and skill, but desire to earn more hours/income
- Desire for FT benefits
- Desire to provide for oneself and one's family
- Different needs as someone gets older/may have more responsibility
- The Road to Streamline Dental:



# Promotion

- Building up experiences over time (volunteer to PT to FT)
- Ability to “try new things” - importance of counselors keeping an eye and ear out for new tasks
- 
- Advocacy with direct supervisors, as well as with HR
- 
- The road within the New York Public Library:



New York  
Public  
**Library**

Meet James:



# Taking A Risk: What We Have Heard

- I know this job. I don't know the other job.
- My current job is not the same as when I started. There is not enough for me to do. I want more, but there are still things I like about my current job (coworkers, manager, etc.)
- What if the new job does not end up working out? Then what?
- If it doesn't work out, how long will it take me to find another job? This job took me a while to get. At least I have something now.
- If I take on more hours/pay, will I lose my benefits?
- This job has been stable for many years. I don't want my child/sibling to be without any work.













# Managing Risk - Things We Have Learned

- The Dignity of Risk - a career change may not always be 'successful' (in a traditional sense) but it will be an opportunity to learn more about what works/does not work and will be part of person's journey
- Mitigating risk through developing long term, meaningful relationships and partnerships with employers:
  - employers can advocate/want what is best for their employee if advancement is not possible at current location
  - ability to build in safety net in certain circumstances

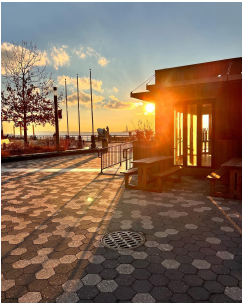
# Managing Risk - Things We Have Learned

- Developing trust with families - knowing that you have their best interest and will be there to support regardless of outcome
- Assisting individuals in weighing the pros and the cons of staying vs. leaving a job- importance of strong relationships between participants and their counselors- hiring staff with ability to provide this service and/or training
- Understanding that career development is not necessarily about finding a “dream job” but about finding the next best niche based on current circumstances

# Other Considerations:

- 1) Balancing individual and family desires and concerns for career development
- 2) Toxic work environments: decision to leave or stay
- 3) A personal decision- may not be decision you would recommend

# Chris' Career Path:







# Chris' Career Path (Continued...):



**WAYFARER**  
STUDIOS



# Lessons Learned:

- We learn more about the people we support and their potential by seeing them in different environments
- Work experiences build confidence as a result of being valued and recognized for the skills they have / what they bring to the table
- The type of support of and when to provide it changed over time
- The pandemic gave us time to provide individualized skill development - we want to do more

# Jessica's Story - A Glimpse into Building Skill through Internships



# Funding Career Development

- Project Next Step: A combination and braiding of funding sources to improve career development outcomes
- Foundation Funding: The Far Fund
- NY State: ACCES-VR and OPWDD
- Requires creative ways to think about funding and staffing



# Agency Need to Balance Priorities

- There are real challenges - people coming into the program to engage in a their 1st Discovery
- COVID- in addition to people looking for their 1st job, assisting people to get back to work, in addition to people who want career development
- Support from management is key
- Understanding that investing in career development services benefits **ALL**
- Teamwork makes it so much more fun....



# Impact of COVID on Project Next Step

- Individuals who wanted a change prior to COVID wanted to stay and/or return to their jobs
- Pivoted from Career Development to Job Restoration
- Training staff on Unemployment Benefits
- More time = More desire for a change
- Career plans affected by other life events
- Remote Discovery and Planning Meetings
- Remote Skill Building Activities
- Job Development, and jobs that would have been in person starting remotely

# Looking Back:

## What We Would Do Differently

- Re-evaluate the process of candidate selection
- Engage with additional partners/mentors for individuals to develop more customized internships
- Build in more job development capacity from the beginning

# Reflecting On:

## Essential Parts of the Program

- Universal aspect of Career Development
- Reaffirmed our belief in the importance of Customized Employment
- Teamwork and building a culture of Career Development is essential
- Work-Life Balance is important to consider in Career Development

# Moving Forward:

Where are our next steps in Project Next Step?

- Expanding the program to everyone at Job Path (beyond people with autism)
- Counselors evaluating risk with job seekers and their families
- Broadening our reach in Benefits Advisement
- Developing a new division of Job Path's Employment Program



Thank You!!

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