

PASS TIMES

Spring Edition

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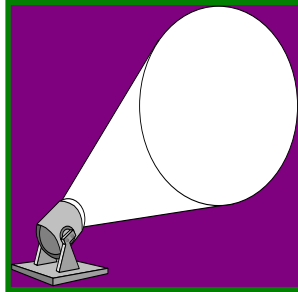


If you have any questions about Plans for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), please contact us:

Cheektowaga PASS Cadre
(Northern New York State)
2875 Union Road, Suite 75
Cheektowaga NY 14227-9926
Phone: 1-800-510-5680
Fax: (716) 681-6243

New York City PASS Cadre
(New York City, southern New York State, New Jersey)
PO Box 1826, Church St. Station
New York, NY 10277-0612
Phone: 1-800-551-9583
Fax: 212-264-6069

SPOTLIGHT



Center for Independence of the Disabled in New York, Inc. (CIDNY)

CIDNY, the **Center for Independence of the Disabled in New York, Inc.**, opened its doors in 1979 as New York State's first independent living center. CIDNY is a non-residential center, staffed by and for people with disabilities. CIDNY's mission reflects the principle that a person with a disability should have the same

opportunities to work, have a family, go to school, obtain health care, etc. as a person who does not (yet) have a disability. The independent living movement, of which CIDNY is a part, holds that persons with disabilities are more likely to make better-informed choices about options available to them to promote independence if they learn about them from other persons with disabilities. Consequently, a majority of the staff and Board of Directors at CIDNY are themselves persons with disabilities.

CIDNY provides services free of charge and serves individuals of all ages, with every type of disability and from all racial, ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds. CIDNY provides so many valuable services that we cannot cover all of them. Services include, but are not limited to:

- ✦ Information and referral: Providing information on services, equipment, access, disability groups and rights advocacy, etc. as well as accepting referrals from other agencies;
- ✦ Deafness Services: The coordinator of deafness services is ASL-fluent and assists deaf and hard of hearing consumers to obtain and maintain housing and benefits;
- ✦ Traumatic Brain Injury Program: The TBI program provides service coordination under the New York State Department of Health TBI Medicaid Waiver. Support groups are provided for individuals who have sustained a TBI.
- ✦ Managed Care Consumer Assistance: Under the Managed Care Consumer Assistance Program (MCCAP) CIDNY assists individual consumers in navigating managed care for their medical needs, and provides information, referrals, counseling and education through the CIDNY hotline and community presentations.
- ✦ Client Assistance Program: The Center houses a CAP program that assists consumers in obtaining services from VESID, CBVH and other rehabilitation agencies. CAP provides information on and assistance in writing PASS plans.
- ✦ Peer counseling: persons with disabilities sharing their personal experiences in dealing with their disabilities and life situations.

CIDNY is one of the benefit providers for the New York Works project. They can be reached at: **841 Broadway, Suite 205, New York, New York 10003**

Telephone:
(212) 674-2300 TTY:
212-674-561



Did You Know?

A PASS can continue after an individual begins working in their chosen occupation.

A PASS does not end until the individual:

- is working in the chosen career path; and,
- is earning enough to pay for living expenses, any out-of-pocket medical expenses, work related expenses and any unpaid items or services approved in the PASS.

SI 00870.006A.1, SI 00870.055.C.2.a

What's going on in the PASS Cadres?



There have been a lot of changes since the last issue of PASS Times.

Roberta Pomeroy, former ESR, former PASS Specialist, is now an AAA in the new Area 6 AD's Office. The Employment Support Representative (ESR) position in Cheektowaga NY has been taken over by Erwin Beljan, former PASS Specialist in Cheektowaga.

The Cheektowaga PASS Cadre has just been reinforced with two new PASS Specialists, Diana Winter and Christine Mandiak.

We're beginning to believe that the New York City PASS Cadre gives "Ruby Slippers" to each new PASS Specialist. They do come and go so very quickly!

Hello, and goodbye, to the PASS Specialists who joined us for a brief period and are already moving on: Everett Lo, Lai Lau, Bobby Skelton, and Angelita Gonzalez.

Late breaking news is that the NYC Cadre will receive two new PASS Specialists effective May 7th, Alba Jimenez and Andrea Moore. . Also, we are very pleased to hear that Bobby Skelton will continue to work with the NYC Cadre in his new position as TE (Technical Expert).

The PASS Specialists in New York State (as of 05/01) are:

Cheektowaga NY Cadre	N Y C Cadre
Leslie Thompson	Joseph Abounader
Carol Masternak	Alba Jimenez
Diana Winter	Andrea Moore
Christine Mandiak	

We're doing our best to brief the new Specialists, catch up the work, proceed with outreach, and keep up with the NY WORKS project.

Success!



The letter that follows was received from a former PASS client. It is an account of her struggle, and her success, in her own words.

During the depth of mental illness, I was diagnosed with panic disorder and agoraphobia. I found it hard to even leave my home for several years. The only time I left my house was to go to doctor appointments with my case manager. For those who don't understand the meaning of agoraphobia, it is a disorder in which a person is extremely fearful of open spaces. For me that meant that my safe place was in my home and in order to leave home, I required someone to hang on to. I avoided people and places. I would retreat into my bedroom when company arrived; I couldn't handle being made fun of and misunderstood. During these times even thinking of employment was like an impossible dream. I was unable to support myself financially. Even after being declared disabled, the SSDI/SSI I received was barely enough to live on. As my psychiatrist and case manager began to guide me to a more stable environment. I was able to move into a place of my own, which increased my independence. My case manager talked to me about employment opportunities and mentioned Housing Options Made Easy, Inc. She believed in my abilities and made me feel that with my personal experience and personal growth that I would make a good peer advocate as well as role model for others. In order to attend the employment training at Housing Options Made Easy and complete my goal, I would require reliable transportation. An individual at the local Social Security Office and my case manager and I were able to write out a PASS plan for a car. In order to obtain the car from the PASS plan, I was required to complete the training and be hired for a position as a peer advocate specialist. I was able to complete the training successfully, received my certificate of completion and started working on a part time basis. My job coach from STEL (Southern Tier Environments for Living, Inc.) and a vocational counselor from the Work Force Tri-County Employment Services office offered continuous support and encouragement. When I had difficulty writing my case notes due to my arthritis, he assisted me in writing a PASS amendment to purchase a computer so that I could be more proficient in my case notes. Thanks to SSA/PASS, I was able to obtain a car as well as a computer to have the basics to start working. Equally important, I received a strong supportive system from my job coach, my supervisor at Housing Options Made Easy, and my case manager. I have successfully worked 14 months. Without the support and guidance, I would not be where I am today. I enjoy my job at Housing Options Made Easy. I feel that I make a difference in the

lives of others. If I could help just one person that strives to achieve their goal of employment through my example, I will feel that I have done my job as a peer advocate specialist.

Linda, PEER Advocate Specialist



New York Works

Self-Sufficiency through Employment Incentives

The Social Security Administration is funding a number of research projects across the country to assist adults with disabilities who have left the workforce and want to reenter the workforce. New York Works is one of the research demonstration projects. A partnership between the New York State Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration, the New York Works project is intended to develop and test innovative models of services and supports that will increase job opportunities for people with disabilities. Increased employment opportunities will, in turn, decrease dependence on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Who are the participants in the NY Works project?

In order to participate in the New York Works research demonstration project, an individual must:

- Reside in Erie County (including the City of Buffalo) or New York City
- Be an SSI recipient with a mental illness diagnosis (can be concurrently SSDI entitled)
- Be age 21 or older
- Not be: a resident of a nursing home, inpatient at a psychiatric hospital, or incarcerated

How are participants enrolled in the project?

Individuals are enrolled in the project in one of two ways:

- By responding to a survey sent to selected SSI recipients
- By an agency referral program

What happens to participants enrolled in the project?

Individuals who **choose** to join the project (**participation is voluntary**) will get different things depending on the research group to which they are assigned. Not all participants will get the same incentives or services. Participants will be assigned to one of three groups:

- **Full services:** a client-centered team approach with a vocational case manager/employment coordinator; intensive benefits counseling and management; all SSA-approved waivers, as well as housing subsidy waivers approved by HUD and OMH; expedited access to a Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS); and presumed vocational rehabilitation (VR) eligibility.
- **Enhanced services** will not include the team approach or employment coordinator but will include the other services.
- A **control group** will receive none of the special services. Basically, they will be provided information about existing services.

How will these cases be identified and handled?

Only PASS Cadre members should be working on any aspect of NY WORKS Cases.

All NY WORKS clients have to be carefully identified and controlled in order to ensure that SSA gives its full support, cooperation, and participation to the project. Implementation of the waivers is pending final approval from Central Office. A Regional POMS will give details. As each case is identified as a State Partnership Initiative (SPI) case, PASS Cadre members will code the CG and remarks fields of the SSIRD:

- **The CG field will be coded: "SPIW"**
- **The remarks field will be coded: "New York Works Waiver Case: enrolled MM/YY call PASS Cadre xxx." DO NOT DELETE!**

FO/TSC employees can contact the PASS Cadre for assistance.

If any consumer has questions regarding NY WORKS, FO/TSC employees should give them the toll free number for New York WORKS: **1-800-732-7697** or advise them to contact their NY WORKS benefits adviser.