

# ELEIVERSITY

## Innovations in Employment Supports

*Training Catalogue • Class Offerings • Descriptions & Learning Objectives*

**Empowering employment professionals through practical strategies, innovative approaches, and person-centered learning experiences.**

### Before Registering

*Review each class description and learning objectives to ensure the course aligns with your role, responsibilities, and recommended prerequisites.*

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*Building Stronger Employment Supports Across New York State*



## Innovations In Employment Supports

<b>Series 1 – Take These First</b>
Vocational Services: Then and Now
Roles and Responsibilities of an Employment Support Professional
Career Assessment: Foundations of Discovery
Foundations for Vocational Success
<b>Assessment and Planning</b>
Career Assessment: Informed Choice
Career Assessment: Skills to Complete Discovery Activities
Vocational Assessment
The Vocational Development Plan
<b>Worksite Supports</b>
Coaching for Retention and Advancement
Coaching Workplace Challenges
Strategies and Techniques for Vocational Success
<b>Business Relationships</b>
Basics of Business Engagement
Connecting Talent to Business Needs
Disability Resources and Incentives
Engaging Employers: From Strategy to Actions
<b>Program / Services</b>
Community Based Prevocational Services
ETP 101
Pathway to Employment
<b>Skills for Managers</b>
Management Skills for SEMP Leaders – Data Driven Decision Making
Management Skills for SEMP Leaders — Strategies for Programmatic Success
Hiring and Onboarding Skills for Vocational Leaders
Supervision Skills for Vocational Leaders – Supporting Teams
Supervising Job Developers for Successful Employment Outcomes
<b>Additional Courses</b>
Public Benefits & Financial Literacy: What do you need to know?

## Innovations In Employment Supports

### Series 1 – Start here if you are new to Innovations Training or Vocational Services

#### **Vocational Services: Then and Now [3-credits]**

This required course will help you understand the progression of vocational services and the basic knowledge to deliver OPWDD services.

1. Be able to recognize and utilize the language of vocational services and related legislation.
2. Be able to describe the opportunities to explore and obtain competitive integrated employment.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities of an Employment Support Professional [3-credits]**

Come learn what Vocational Support Professionals need to know to support quality services for people exploring the world of employment.

1. Gain a deeper understanding of the importance of providing person-centered services for individual success.
2. Explore the benefits of competitive integrated employment through ethical service provision, social capital, and informed decision-making

#### **Career Assessment: Foundations of Discovery [3-credits]**

This course is an introduction to career assessment as directed by OPWDD in the discovery activities and processes.

1. Understand the mindset and skills necessary to complete a thorough vocational assessment.
2. Review the possible outcomes of discovery assessments and the next steps in career planning.

#### **Foundations for Vocational Success [3-credits]**

This course will present the purpose and expectation of a Vocational Support Professional when supporting a new hire. We will showcase a variety of tools and strategies to promote successful placements and retention.

1. Be able to recognize and demonstrate the professional expectations of the Vocational Support Professional that will elevate perceptions of people with disabilities in competitive integrated employment.
2. Will be introduced to the tools and strategies utilized by Vocational Support Professional during the different activities of the employment process.

## Innovations In Employment Supports

### Assessment and Planning

#### **Career Assessment: Informed Choice [3-credits]**

It is typical for most people to begin to explore the world of work during youth, and in fact this is considered a universal right. However, this same universal right has historically been denied for individuals with disabilities. The only way we can reverse the longstanding patterns of external control, promote informed decision-making and self-determination, is to provide them with opportunities to explore and experience vocational options.

1. Learn to use the file review and interview information to mindfully drive career assessment activities to discover the skills, interests, and abilities of the person.
2. Learn how each activity of Discovery drives the other activities and informs career planning.
3. Learn to identify patterns and themes within the Discovery Report from the initial File Review to the final Career Exploration.

#### **Career Assessment: Skills to Complete Discovery Activities [3-credits]**

***To fully participate in this course, please have completed all of Series 1 prior to registering.***

Get curious about the person you are supporting and develop a Discovery mindset for completing the career assessment and planning activities of the Discovery Report.

1. Understand the different components of Discovery – file review, interviews, observations, assessments, career research.
2. Dig deeper to uncover powerful vocational insights about the person.
3. Learn how to thread together perspectives, patterns, and realities of a person to identify interest, skills, abilities, preferences, and that person's unique brand of genius.

#### **Vocational Assessment [3-credits]**

***To fully participate in this course, please complete all of Series 1 and Career Assessment: Skills to Complete Discovery Activities prior to registering.***

Explore and utilize different evaluation tools to identify a person's vocational aptitudes and employability factors. Connect the outcomes to a vocational direction, strengths, and support needs.

1. Develop a better understanding of the role evaluations play in the OPWDD continuum of services.
2. Learn a variety of assessment types, when to use them, and why they're used.
3. Practice how to interpret, analyze, and document assessment findings.

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### The Vocational Development Plan [3-credits]

***To fully participate in this course, please complete Series 1 and Career Assessment: Skills to Complete Discovery Activities before taking this class.***

This course will provide attendees with an understanding of how to utilize the Discovery Report to implement the next steps in the OPWDD process for someone that is “Not Recommended” for Job Development in Competitive Integrated Employment.

1. Utilize an ETP Discovery Report to create the required Vocational Development Plan which supports individuals in building the skills needed to continue their journey toward employment.
2. Discuss the process for when and how to complete the Vocational Development Plan.
3. Using the Vocational Development Plan to support your Recommendation and to guide the conversation at the required meeting with the Circle of Support.

### Worksite Supports

#### **Coaching for Retention and Advancement [3-credits]**

***To fully participate in this course, please have completed all of Series 1***

The “*new job honeymoon*” is over! Come and learn the SEMP allowable services that can be provided for ongoing success of the employee. We will consult the Discovery Report to promote growth opportunities to benefit the employee and the business.

Identify allowable SEMP services to continue supporting the employee to maintain their current position as well as expand their opportunities for ongoing growth and development.

Recognize the opportunities presented by the business during performance evaluations.

1. Demonstrate to the business the benefits of continued skill building to support the employee retention and reduce turnover costs. Identify allowable SEMP services to continue supporting the employee to maintain their current position as well as expand their opportunities for ongoing growth and development.
2. Recognize the opportunities presented by the business during performance evaluations.
3. Demonstrate to the business the benefits of continued skill building to support employee retention and reduce turnover costs.

#### **Coaching Workplace Challenges [3-credits]**

***To fully participate in this course, please have completed all of Series 1***

In this course, attendees will learn how to view workplace challenges from a new perspective and explore how the following impact job retention: job match, coaching methods, mindset, societal attitudes, lack of skill, disrupted routine in the workplace, etc.

1. Advocate for supports and accommodations that will lead to success and dispel myths and stereotypes for people with disabilities in the workplace.
2. Recognize the internal and external factors that cause a workplace challenge and can lead to a crisis.
3. Process all variables that may be impacting workplace behavior and performance to design a person-centered coaching plan to promote vocational success.

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### **Strategies and Techniques for Vocational Success [3-credits]**

***To fully participate in this course, please have completed all of Series 1***

The strategies and techniques learned in this course are used for teaching and coaching learners in vocational settings. This learning event will demonstrate the instructional teaching methods an employment specialist utilizes to assist someone to acquire a new skill or build upon transferable skills. Attendees will engage through conversation, questions, practical application, and breakout room exercises.

1. Assess the vocational gaps of the supported employee and develop a solution-based approach to support needs.
2. Recognize how preferred learning style impacts training strategies as well as productive learning.
3. Align the most effective methods for assessing and implementing instruction and systematic training techniques to meet workforce expectations, using the following methods: learning style assessment, task analyses, job analyses, systematic training techniques, and how to fade prompting levels.

### Business Relationships

#### Basics of Business Engagement [3-credits]

***To fully participate in this course, please have completed all of Series 1***

The activity of connecting and partnering with businesses is a critical activity for job exploration and assessment leading to competitive integrated employment. Too often, providers view this function as the responsibility of an ESP with the job title 'Job Developer.' For providers to grow their programs, ensure informed choice, and increase placements, Employment Support Professionals need to expertly position themselves to build and foster ongoing relationships with businesses. In this course, you will learn to prepare yourself, prospect for businesses, and prepare for the meeting.

1. Evaluate and apply the steps necessary to plan and prepare for Business Engagement.
2. Strategize prospecting through labor market information, the hidden job market and Internet resources.
3. Assess the business' needs and concerns to determine the next steps in relationship building and handling objections.

#### Connecting Talent to Business Needs [6-credits]

***To fully participate in this course, please complete all of the Series 1 trainings and the Career Assessment: Skills to Complete Discovery Activities training.***

Elevate your job development approach by learning how to translate job seeker strengths into measurable employment outcomes. Come learn how to harness information from the Discovery Report to develop a strategic Job Development Plan to align candidate capabilities with real business needs. It is time to move beyond “applying online” and move towards proactive engagement—building connections, accessing hiring managers, and positioning candidates to stand out in a competitive labor market.

1. Develop a comprehensive Job Development Plan using key information from the Discovery Report, including the job seeker’s skills, qualifications, preferences, and support needs, to guide a targeted, person-centered employment approach
2. Apply the job seeker’s strengths and goals to research local businesses, analyze workforce needs, and effectively communicate the job seeker’s value to potential employers.
3. Gain skills to research useful information about businesses to understand their mission, services, and culture to help create conversations to determine challenges with staffing and workforce needs to support better employment outcomes.

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### **Disability Resources and Incentives [3-credits]**

***To fully participate in this course, please complete all of Series 1 and Basics of Business Engagement.***

When preparing to meet with businesses, Employment Support professionals may feel unprepared to speak regarding employment laws such as the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and the Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA). Additionally, providers may be missing opportunities for employment due to a lack of information about work incentives, such as Tax credits, Section 503, 55 A-B-C program, and Disability Resource Coordinators. In this course, you will learn about laws, resources and incentives that will deepen the provider and business relationship.

1. Identify key terms and concepts under the ADA, recognize ADA protections, learn ADA requirements for employers, and explore types of reasonable accommodations.
2. Define the purpose and scope of the FLSA; identify the criteria for assessments conducted at a for-profit business, and volunteering at a not-for profit business.
3. Differentiate the 55 A-B programs and discuss the types of employer tax credits.

### **Engaging Employers: From Strategy to Action [3-credits]**

***To fully participate in this course, please complete all of the Series 1 trainings and Basics of Business Engagement.***

This interactive training helps Employment Support Professionals have more effective and confident conversations with employers. Participants move beyond responding to job postings and learn how to build partnerships based on shared goals and problem-solving. Through discussion, reverse brainstorming, and small-group scenarios, learners practice identifying unmet business needs, explaining their services as valuable supports, and starting conversations without pressure. The training focuses on practical language, strong listening skills, and repeatable conversation frameworks that participants can immediately use in their work.

1. Differentiate between reactive job development and proactive, partnership-based employer engagement
2. Identify employers in their communities and suggest meaningful partnership opportunities based on business needs.
3. Recognize common employer challenges and explain how employment supports can help address them.
4. Respond to employer questions or concerns using clear, value focused language.
5. Apply a simple, repeatable conversation structure to communicate confidently and effectively with employers.

## Innovations In Employment Supports

### Program & Services

#### **Community Based Prevocational Services [2-day, 6-credits]**

In this course, attendees will learn the purpose and intent of the OPWDD Community-Based Pre-Vocational (CBPV) program. Designing and growing a CBPV program can be exciting and challenging; we will explore ways to identify people who may be interested in CPBV as well as the eligibility standards. A critical aspect of community vocational experiences is to ensure that we and the business are adhering to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). This class will outline important key indicators of the FLSA. Attendees will receive an expansive variety of resources to build business relationships, as well as broaden work readiness classes. We will review the documentation requirements and practice through experiential learning.

1. Identify the core components of CBPV, including skill development, workplace exploration, and community-vocational experiences.
2. Demonstrate how to design and implement community vocation activities (e.g., job shadowing, volunteering) for people to acquire essential employability skills.
3. Implement strategies to ensure compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act within CBPV programming.
4. Explore opportunities in the business community that will offer vocational experiences for people in CBPV.
5. Design non-job- task specific skill training activities that will prepare people to work in a variety of employment settings.

#### **ETP 101 [2-day, 6-credits]**

***To fully participate in this course, please complete series 1 and Career Assessment - Skills to Complete Discovery Activities.***

Have you ever thought that a person you support would greatly benefit from participating in an internship opportunity? That is exactly what the Employment Training Program is. Learn the benefits to job seekers and businesses when they partner for employment opportunities.

1. Discuss the ETP with people who might benefit from the Internship opportunity after completing a Discovery Report
2. Gain insight as to who might be a suitable candidate for the ETP Internship
3. Prepare required documentation for participants in OPWDD's Employment
4. Training Program, including a step-by-step process to follow for providing ETP services and supports
5. Illustrate for community businesses the benefits of partnering with ETP to obtain skilled staff
6. See the importance of the information in the Discovery Report needed to create a targeted job match for the internship site
7. Identify to businesses the benefits of an ETP Internship
8. How to provide person-centered coaching to support the Intern to become a paid employee

## **Innovations In Employment Supports**

### **Pathway to Employment [2-day, 6-credits]**

Career planning is particularly important for people with disabilities to bridge the vocational gap that results from limited exposure and experience with vocational activity. Pathway to Employment will bridge this gap through exposure, exploration, and experience with community vocational experiences.

This course will prepare providers of Pathway to Employment to engage in the wide array of activities required to fully know and understand the individual and all aspects that impact their career planning, as well as instruction on Pathway to Employment purpose, regulatory process and expectations.

1. Identify a good candidate for Pathway to Employment
2. Utilize the resources within the Pathway to Employment workbook to improve and guide the delivery of service
3. Recognize the importance of community vocational experiences to assess and identify what the person needs to be successful in employment
4. Develop an individualized Career Vocational and Transition Plan to provide specific recommendations and referrals

### Skills for Managers

*The Skills for Manager series is intended for those who hold leadership positions in SEMP programs. This includes titles such as director, manager, coordinator, team leader, and the like. Registrants who are not leaders should select trainings that pertain to their job function. If you are pending a leadership position, please have your supervisor reach out to [info@eleversity.org](mailto:info@eleversity.org).*

#### **Management Skills for SEMP Leaders – Data Driven Decision Making [3-credits]**

As employment service systems evolve, SEMP leaders may feel ill-prepared to balance the multiple expectations to ensure the highest quality supports and to meet the organizational and funding partner's expectations. SEMP leaders are tasked with ensuring billing requirements and documentation, supervising ESPs, quality service delivery, growing services and myriad other responsibilities that require strategic decision-making skills. In this 3-hour class we will explore how to utilize data to make an informed decision.

1. Prioritize data categories that will drive program growth, quality services, and maximize billing reimbursement.
2. Identify data currently being collected and determine how it should be applied to data-informed decision-making.
3. Create questions that will drive data collection and inform decisions.

#### **Management Skills for SEMP Leaders — Strategies for Programmatic Success [3 credits]**

A primary responsibility of the SEMP manager is to oversee the ESPs in documentations and billing, review and approve Discovery reports, coach ESPs in their caseload responsibilities, manage program design, and ensure compliance with Innovations Training. This 3-hour class will explore these manager responsibilities, including the allowable SEMP service, Planning and Managing SEMP services, and how to utilize to increase quality services and improve staff performance.

1. Be able to analyze the service needs and the number of staff required to ensure quality services.
2. Recognize the responsibilities of oversight in reviewing and approving a quality Discovery report.
3. Apply Planning and Managing SEMP services to common occurrences in SEMP programs.

#### **Hiring and Onboarding Skills for Vocational Leaders [3-credits]**

This course is designed for managers who oversee programs and people. Attracting and retaining talent can be difficult and discouraging. This class will explore best-practice strategies to improve recruitment, interviewing, and onboarding new employment staff.

1. Strategies for assessing program needs for skills, knowledge, and ability and how to interview and identify these qualities in prospective applicants.
2. Approaches for increasing employee confidence and competence through onboarding and professional development.

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### **Supervision Skills for Vocational Leaders — Supporting Teams [3-credits]**

Managing successful vocational programs requires a solid, well-trained, mission-driven team. Attracting talented applicants is a good start, but it is also critical that managers find ways to motivate, challenge and develop employees so that they want to stay and thrive. Supporting employees from onboarding to mastery requires managers have tools and strategies to reinforce good work and coach for change. This course is designed for managers who oversee programs and people.

1. Strategies to support vocational teams, establish the team's purpose and operating guidelines and garner buy-in from ESPs.
2. Strategies to support individual staff members through effective feedback, goal setting, and addressing performance expectations.

### **Supervising Job Developers for Successful Employment Outcomes [3-credits]**

Effective job development does not happen by chance—it is the result of intentional supervision, clear expectations, and ongoing coaching. This training is designed for vocational managers who supervise employment support professionals and want to strengthen outcomes for job seekers, build high-performing teams, and ensure job development practices align with person-centered services and evidence-based employment strategies.

1. Identify key supervisory practices that support effective job development, including setting clear expectations, monitoring performance, and providing structured guidance to employment support professionals.
2. Apply coaching strategies that strengthen the skills and confidence of employment support professionals, leading to more effective employer engagement and improved employment outcomes for job seekers.
3. Evaluate job development practices to ensure they align with person-centered principles and evidence-based employment strategies.

## Innovations In Employment Supports

### Additional Courses

#### **Public Benefits & Financial Literacy: What do you need to know? [3-credits]**

This course will include an overview of the case for employment, benefit basics, and financial literacy.

1. Be able to articulate the reasons why working is a good idea even if you receive SSA benefits.
2. Learn about resources for budgeting, saving, and spending.
3. Learn about the differences between SSI and SSDI and the healthcare benefits associated with each.