

Program puts participants' abilities to work

by Stacy Dunn

The **Abilities@Work** program supports people with disabilities, including people with mental health issues, by offering wage subsidies to employers.

Program Manager **Darcy Beck** says the program, offered through the PEI Council of People with Disabilities (PEICOD), has been extended for the next three years. "It offers a 50 percent wage subsidy for up to 22 weeks to the private sector, non-profit organizations, and municipalities."

People with mental health issues are now eligible to access this wage subsidy. "Statistics from the Government of Canada say one in five Canadians will experience mental illness at some point in their lives."

People do not need a doctor's referral to participate in the **Abilities@Work**, but they do need a case manager from a recognized PEI employment assistance service agency. "They should not have drawn employment insurance in the last three years, but some exceptions can be made, so it's worthwhile to call us to discuss options."

Program features

"Abilities@Work offers supports such as an ergonomic keyboard or mouse, or speech-to-text software," Darcy says. "We look at what would help participants succeed on the job. This may also include employment counselling, where we come up with strategies to search for a job, network, and retain a job. Plus, we identify any training or further education the participant may pursue."

The **Abilities@Work** program is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities program.

Other features include enhanced employer supports. "It's important to us that we make good matches. We can have a job coach on hand until participants are comfortable doing the work. We can also act as a mediator if any conflict arises."

"A major part of my job is meeting with employers to educate them on accommodation requirements and dispelling myths."

"There are many hidden disabilities to consider, such as a learning disability, autism, ADHD, chronic fatigue, diabetes, stroke or cancer."

Positive feedback

Darcy says previous employers have contacted them saying they want to participate in the program again.

"Clients have told us the opportunity to have someone advocating for them on the job has been life-changing. Our goal is to have clients employed part-time or full-time after the wage subsidy runs out."

PEICOD statistics for employment assistance 2017-2018

- 125 Islanders living with disabilities secured employment or became self-employed
- 50 job seekers with disabilities accessed **Abilities@Work**



Darcy Beck, Program Manager, **Abilities@Work**, PEICOD.

To learn more about **Abilities@Work**, contact **Darcy Beck**, at 902-892-9149 ext. 234

Email abilities@peicod.pe.ca

Visit the PEI Council of People with Disabilities at www.peicod.pe.ca/programs_workabilities.php



Applying for scholarships to UPEI and other post-secondary education

by Heidi Riley

The time of the year to apply to post-secondary is coming up and so is opportunity to apply for scholarships, awards, and financial aid.

"A number of entrance scholarships and supports are available for students coming from high school, and there are funding programs to support mature students looking to start their studies," says **Adrienne Montgomery**, Manager of Scholarships, Awards & Financial Aid at UPEI.

Tips for applying for scholarships, awards and bursaries

1. Start looking at what scholarships are available at the same time you apply to post-secondary.
2. Do your homework and start early. "There are hundreds of awards available, so it takes time to read through and find ones you might be eligible for."
3. When applying for an award, make sure you are aware of the deadline for submission to avoid being screened out.
4. Make sure to fulfill the requirements and speak to the criteria of the awards.
5. If a letter of reference is required, make sure it is the right type – for example academics or personal. Tell the reference what type of scholarship you are applying for, so that the reference letter can be tailored to those requirements.
6. If the application requires a resumé, tailor it to the requirements of the award.
7. Many scholarships are based on more than academics, and consider volunteerism, leadership, and extracurricular activities as well. "Get involved with activities on campus or in the community, athletics, with clubs or societies, or paid work."

Reach out for guidance

"Reach out to the UPEI scholarships office if you have any questions about the type of funding available, because each person's situation is different," says Adrienne. "We can look at the individual situation and let students know what they may qualify for."

"We meet with students to review the scholarship application process and make suggestions on what to include before they submit. We can also help students determine why an application may not have been approved, and if there is an appeal process available."



Adrienne Montgomery, Manager of Scholarships, Awards & Financial Aid, UPEI.

For more information about applying for UPEI scholarships, call the **Student Financial Services and Awards Office** at 902-620-5187 or visit www.upei.ca/studentlife/scholarships-and-awards

For a full list of scholarships, awards, and bursaries available to Island students, visit these websites: www.employmentjourney.com and search **grants and bursaries**.

www.upei.ca/studentlife/externalawards

www.findmyscholarships.com/canadian-scholarships-2018-2019/

www.scholarshipscanada.com

www.studentloan.pe.ca

www.canlearn.ca



Jobs & Java program supports job seekers

by Stella Shepard

Jobs & Java is a weekly group for job seekers. They meet every Tuesday from 10 am to 11 am at the **Career Development Services (CDS)** Boardroom at the Down East Mall in Montague. Pre-registration is not required. Everyone is welcome, and coffee and a slight snack are provided.

The Charlottetown CDS location offers a similar networking program. It's an opportunity to share information and to network with others. "Looking for and securing employment can feel like a full-time job," says **Krista Soper**, Career Development Practitioner with CDS.

"This group offers the opportunity to share job leads, review resumé, offer suggestions, and discuss job search techniques. We wanted to offer a program that meets the needs of job seekers in Kings County by offering a drop-in service where you can get assistance tailoring a resumé and cover letter to suit the targeted employer."

"We plan to invite employers to make presentations about open positions they may have, the qualifications they search for, and to discuss the application process. We would also like to invite other service providers to speak about the programs and services they offer."

About CDS

CDS provides confidential assistance with career planning, training, job search, and applications for funding. This free service is offered in Souris, Montague, Charlottetown, Summerside and Bloomfield, and helps unemployed and underemployed Islanders find and secure employment in their desired field.

Each location houses a resource center with an abundance of information about training options, resumé and cover letter development, and interview preparation.

For more information about the **Jobs & Java** program, contact **Krista Soper** at 902-838-5179 or email at ksoper@cdspei.ca

Visit www.cdspei.ca to check the online job board listing available positions in each region of the province.



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