



Winter 2024 Edition

JOBS Program at Work

Erica Watt

By **John Bond**
Court Services Supervisor 2
Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage



Struggling with a substance use disorder since the age of 17, Erica Watt was involved in a series of incidents that resulted in her admission to the Pretrial Intervention Program (PTI) in 2009 when she was 21.

Still active in addiction, Watt continued to amass a series of charges that resulted in unsuccessful probationary terms, including recovery court, and a prison sentence.

It wasn't until she was sentenced to recovery court a second time in 2021 when she was 23 - this time for a probation violation and a new charge - that she began to turn her life around. She is now a peer recovery specialist with AtlantiCare.

As part of her ongoing case plan and after a relapse, Watt was connected with Apex Solutions Group's Atlantic County cohort last fall, excelled in the program, and was selected to speak at the graduation on Dec. 20, 2023, at Stockton University. Apex

has partnered with the Judiciary Opportunities to Building Success (JOBS) to provide participants with the education and management skills needed to qualify for employment.

During the graduation ceremony, Watt said Apex not only gave her the workforce development skills she needed, but the program also enabled her to grow as a person, instilling confidence and inspiring her to strive for excellence and live a purpose-driven life.

She said the cohort could not have come at a better time, as she had recently relapsed, felt stagnant was not sure in what direction her life was going.

Kyle Saludes

By Daniela Cerisola
Senior Probation Officer
Hudson Vicinage



Kyle Saludes, a probation division client in adult supervision, was referred to the [JOBS program](#) by his supervising probation officer, Lisa Adiele. Although Saludes had work experience and a resume reflecting his work history, he [was](#) having difficulty getting a job.

After Senior Probation Officer Daniela Cerisola spoke with Saludes about the JOBS program and the available opportunities, he became motivated and eager. He did not give up in his quest to [find](#) a job.

Cerisola, who also is an employment liaison, was in contact with Saludes weekly. He participated in JOBS events and was encouraged to have patience with the process. Within three months of participating in the JOBS Program, Saludes [got](#) a job as a general maintainer with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. His job duties require knowledge of carpentry, landscaping, painting, paving, roofing, and gardening as well as how to use tools and read blueprints.

Saludes is now working at the Lincoln Tunnel maintenance garage in Weehawken. He is grateful he was given the opportunity to start over and have a better future regardless of his life challenges. He remains in contact with Cerisola and [said](#) about his job, "I am loving it!"

Ashley Dietrich

By Barbara Regan
Senior Probation Officer/JOBS Liaison
Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage



Ashley Diettrich. is one of the first clients to participate in the Mental Health Diversion Pilot Program in Atlantic County.

Although she was required to attend a partial care program and work full-time, Diettrich wanted something more, acknowledging that while she had addressed her substance abuse issue she had not, until recently, focused on her mental health.

Seeking employment through the JOBS program, she hopes to become a peer recovery specialist.

Diettrich completed pre-employment classes through the JOBS program at Stockton University, where she participated in mock interviews and her resume and cover letters, and now volunteers as a peer recovery specialist at John Brooks Recovery Center, which has several locations in Atlantic County. Her goal is to earn an internship leading to a peer recovery specialist certificate.

Diettrich wants to help people like herself, who must address mental health and substance abuse issues and move forward with their lives.

John Miller

By Heather Kull
Senior Probation Officer/JOBS Liaison
Morris/Sussex Vicinage

John Miller, a probation client in Sussex County, was referred to the Morris/Sussex Vicinage's JOBS program and met with the JOBS liaison in October for an initial in-person office visit.

Miller, a veteran of the U.S Marine Corps, showed sincere interest in giving back to the community and working with kids.

He was motivated to find full-time employment despite gaps in his prior employment history.

During his second office appointment, the JOBS liaison helped Miller format and update his resume to include his prior work history and military service and provided him with hard and electronic copies to give to potential employers.

By the end of November, he called the JOBS liaison with exciting news: he secured a full-time job in mountain operations at Winter4Kids in Vernon. Winter4kids is a non-profit organization with winter and summer outside programs that help to create positive attitudes in youth.

Miller was praised for his dedication and motivation and follow-through while seeking employment.

JOBS Hero

A regular feature of each JOBS Journal is highlighting a JOBS Program hero, someone who demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to helping probation clients with employment and training opportunities.

Prior to her retirement at the end of 2023, Sharnett M. Clark was the probation division manager in the Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage and was involved in the JOBS program from its start.

A Judiciary employee for 32 years, Sharnett was a leader and asset to the Judiciary Opportunities for Building Success (JOBS) program in the Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage, leading the state in employment referrals and jobs added and accepted.

In addition to helping coordinate employment and resource fairs for probation clients, Clark recruited five Stockton University students who worked as probation interns, including one who was a former recovery court client who received a scholarship to attend Stockton and major in psychology.

Two of the interns were hired employees in probation and in the criminal division's pretrial services unit.

Clark played an integral role in the successful completion of her clients' participation in the Apex Solutions Group and Mid-Atlantic States Career and Education Center cohorts, which were made possible through a grant from the state Department of Labor. Twenty participants graduated from the Apex cohort and 16 received their certification in project management, among the largest number in the state.

Through the vicinage's collaboration with Mid-Atlantic, more than



Sharnett Clark
Probation Division Manager
Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage

"Progress and success of this nature doesn't occur by accident, and Ms. Clark's guidance and inspiration to our workforce and the JOBS' clients are a testament to her commitment to this initiative," said Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts.

"One needs to find something they love to do. They must love how they do it and they will hopefully make a difference in the lives of another," Judge Grant said.

110 clients completed soft skills employment classes and were connected to vocational services. Clark's motto is, "It is said that no man is an island, so we need others to support and transform."

Clark was part of a team that traveled statewide to speak with probation officers and supervisors to discuss roles, expectations, and procedures of the JOBS liaisons as well as data analytics and the inclusion of child support enforcement.

"Ms. Clark's career has been a shining example of this philosophy. Her work in both the probation division and more specifically with the JOBS initiative are demonstrative examples of that dedication and commitment to helping others."

Senior Probation Officer Sejour Stephens oversees the sex offender caseload. Stephens is committed to helping clients obtain employment and assisted one client with securing a job at Meridian Furniture in Trenton.

Stephens never allows the nature of the charges against clients prevent her from motivating and inspiring them to better themselves.



Sejour Stephens
Senior Probation Officer
Mercer Vicinage

Child Support Investigator Janine Pinckney has been at the forefront of making referrals to the JOBS program, assisting clients and answering JOBS-related questions.



Janine Pinckney
Child Support Investigator
Mercer Vicinage

JOBS Program at Work



Morris/Sussex

Staff from the Morris/Sussex Vicinage's probation division hosted a JOBS career and resource fair in Sussex County on Nov. 2, 2023. Interested job seekers and probation clients attended, meeting with representatives from 11 potential employer companies in various industries. Some clients had preliminary interviews on the spot.



Passaic

Staff from the Passaic Vicinage's Probation Division hosted a JOBS career and resource fair on Sept. 13, 2024.

More than 115 people met with and applied to jobs with 15 potential employers.



Hudson

The Hudson Vicinage Probation Division hosts bi-weekly job and resource fairs in the Justice William J. Brennan Jr. Courthouse in Jersey City.

Participating employers, agencies, and organizations include Blessed Ministries, Council for Airport Opportunities, New Jersey American Water, NJ Transit, Transitioning Professionals, Wakefern, Anti-Violence Coalition, Hudson County Rental Assistance Program, Hudson School of Technology, and Amazon. During the job and resource fairs, clients meet directly with potential employers, complete employment applications, and apply for services.

The division also hosts mock interviews, in collaboration with Assignment Judge Jeffrey R. Jablonski and the vicinage's law clerks. The program's purpose is to provide clients with a personalized experience in resume building, practicing interview questions, and reviewing interview etiquette.

The division also has connected and worked with New Jersey City University (NJCU) to better support and assist Hudson County residents. Through this partnership, clients can earn their high school diplomas as part of the ongoing efforts to prepare them for the workforce.

Mercer

The Mercer Vicinage held a Judiciary Opportunities for Building Success (JOBS) career and resource fair Oct. 19, 2023 at the criminal courthouse in Trenton.

A total of 12 potential employers and organizations were represented, including African American Chamber of Commerce, City of Trenton Reentry, Father Center, Mercer County Board of Social Services, MVP Staffing and WorkWell.

Attendees met with future employers and received job-related resources and referrals to community organizations. Information about court-related matters such as the expungement process and child support payment options were available.

JOBS Program in Action

Hudson

In addition to the in-person events it hosts, the Hudson Vicinage's JOBS Program aids in job readiness, resume writing, and financial education. Job readiness seminars are held virtually twice a month, each in person and via a virtual platform.

Resume workshops also are held twice a month, in person. FDIC Money Smart trainings are conducted monthly via virtual platform.

The vicinagc also hosts a clothing closet to assist help clients who need business attire for interviews or to help them build their employment wardrobe.



www.njcourts.gov

STUART RABNER
CHIEF JUSTICE

GLENN A. GRANT, J.A.D.
ACTING ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COURTS