

I. Proposal Summary

Briefly explain why your organization is requesting this grant, what outcomes you hope to achieve, how funds will be spent and the total dollar amount requested.

Bergen Community College and its partners are requesting a Henry H. Kessler Foundation Signature Program Grant in the amount of \$500,000 to establish a Regional Center for Disability Employment. Designed to address workforce development needs of people with disabilities, it will operate in the Meadowlands region of northern of New Jersey. The project will attain two equally important outcomes. First, is to increase the number of people with disabilities who secure employment, who are retained on the job, and who advance in their careers. As importantly, the second outcome is to increase the number of private and public sector employers that hire workers with disabilities.

The Henry H. Kessler Foundation grant will fund three full-time staff positions (Project Director, Employer Liaison, and Employee Liaison) and part-time computer job bank, data base and web programming support. Additional resources, including corporate and foundation grants as well as substantial partner in-kind support (noted in attached partner letters), will ensure project success and long term sustenance. The investment will establish the Center as a single point of contact for people with disabilities seeking employment and for employers. Toward this end, partners will:

1. Formalize communications and collaborative connections that promote and expand service delivery and resource sharing by disability employment providers and related workforce development efforts in the Meadowlands and North New Jersey.
2. Implement a single point-of-contact employment clearinghouse that facilitates placement, retention, and advancement in family sustaining careers for individuals with disabilities.
3. Strengthen and expand barrier-free career pathways for youth as well as adults to obtain training, education, and supportive and transitional services needed to secure employment and advance on the job. Initial project emphasis is on career paths leading to high demand positions opening in the Meadowlands Xanadu complex and on links into immediately available and emerging training programs.

Lead partners include: Colony Capital (Meadowlands Xanadu), Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce, New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, Bergen County Technical Schools and Special Services School District, Hire Disability Solutions, LLC, the Workforce Investment Systems of Bergen, Hudson, and Passaic Counties (Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop Career Centers), Bergen County Division on Disability Services, Hudson Community Enterprises, State of New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the Partnership for Community Health, Inc. and the Northern New Jersey Disabilities Network, and Palisades Learning Center, Inc.

II. Narrative

- ***The need or problem that Bergen Community College works to address, population served, including geographic location, socio-economic statistics, race, ethnicity, gender, age, physical ability and language***

Bergen Community College (BCC) is a comprehensive, publicly supported two-year college located in Bergen County in Northeastern New Jersey, just twenty miles from mid-town Manhattan. Committed to equal educational opportunities for all students, the college maintains an open access admissions policy. Its instructional programs are designed to prepare students for immediate entry into a career or for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. An array of non-credit courses provide specialized training for those seeking personal enrichment or improvement of specific skills. As of Fall 2007, over 15,000 students enrolled in more than 90 degree and certificate programs through day, evening, and online offerings. An additional 10,000 students engaged in professional development, continuing education, welfare-to-work, English as a Second Language, and personal development programs on the main Paramus campus as well as at the Ciarco Learning Center satellite campus in the City of Hackensack. A new South Campus in the Meadowlands area will provide additional opportunities, beginning on July 1, 2008 in temporary facilities and by 2010 in a newly constructed comprehensive campus in the midst of Xanadu.

The College offers three types of degree programs: Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science (AS), and Associate in Applied Science (AAS). AA degrees are offered in Liberal Arts and Fine & Performing Arts. AS degrees are offered in Natural Sciences, Mathematics, Engineering Science, or Professional Studies. Career AAS programs are offered in Allied Health, Art, Business Administration, Business Technologies, Human Services, Industrial & Design Technologies, Nursing, and Science Technology. BCC also offers one-year certificate programs.

Bergen Community College provides an exceptionally rich learning environment and a wide range of supportive measures as part of its commitment to educational access. Its diverse student population is 26.6% Hispanic students 12.8% Asian, 7.1% Black, 0.3% American Indian, and 53.2% White. Over half of the students are female. Furthermore, the college's welcoming environment, commitment to equal access, and specialized supportive services have attracted a growing population of over 2,500 students with disabilities, more than any other college in the state of New Jersey.

The college's commitment to diversity is also evident in its support for economically and educationally disadvantaged students. Almost thirty percent of Bergen's students receive financial assistance; last year the college distributed approximately \$11 million in financial aid, grants, and scholarships. Additionally, the Bergen Community College Foundation recently awarded over \$70,000 in scholarships and the Surgical Technology program, with a Governor's Work Force Excellence award, distributed over \$100,000 in scholarship aid. But the commitment involves much more than scholarships and financial aid. All students have access to academic advisement

and registration support, transfer counseling, personal counseling, career development and assessment, state-of-the-art tutoring for personalized instruction, and more.

- **Qualifications, current programs, and accomplishments of our organizations**

Bergen Community College has a long history of commitment to expanding educational opportunities for students with disabilities. The college provides more than 90 degree and certificate programs that are fully accessible to people with disabilities through a range of academic and support services. Services include a tutoring center, on-line tutoring, group and individual counseling. The college also maintains an Office of Specialized Services to ensure availability of a comprehensive array of accommodations (e.g., note-taking and sign language translation) and adaptive equipment and software throughout the institution (including the library and all twenty-seven computer-technology laboratories). With funding from the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, Bergen is also New Jersey's Northern Regional Center for Collegiate Deaf Education. Working closely with education and other agencies throughout the county and the state, the college's commitment to full participation by students with disabilities has attracted to Bergen's Paramus campus and the Hackensack Learning Center almost half of all students with disabilities in the state of New Jersey. Attachment 7 provides an description of services provided by the college for its these students as well as others who are underrepresented or economically disadvantaged.

Bergen also eliminates barriers for disabled, underrepresented, and disadvantaged students by building educational and occupational pathways from local school districts, social services, and the Workforce Investment System to higher education and to employers in private as well as public sectors. BCC, as only one example, leads a partnership of five school districts, five local hospitals, and two additional institutions of higher education in the Health Career Occupational Program funded by the US HRSA. Such Bergen Community College efforts are widely recognized. The College won two Governor's Workforce Excellence awards from the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education. The first, in the amount of \$580,000 provided a state-of-the-art surgical technology training facility in recognition of the program's 100% success rate in preparing and placing high-skill technicians for employment in area hospitals. The second was \$1.3 million for the college's exceptional Northern New Jersey Consortium for Veterinary Technician Education. This current project also builds upon those successful networks.

- **Organizational and/or Collaborative Relationships**

Bergen maintains reciprocal relationships with numerous organizations working to meet similar needs and providing related services. These range from health care organizations, K-12 and higher education institutions, government agencies, business and industry, and others. A number of these relationships are described more fully below in the section dealing with "Collaborative partners." Bergen is the only community college in the County, and its mission, goals, and programs and services differ

substantially from other organizations in the region. Given its emphasis on open educational opportunity for the community, however, it is essential for the college to collaborate with organizations that can provide health care, social services, education, employment, and related services for BCC students and staff.

- **Project description, explanation of why the project is needed, population that will be served, (including geographic location, socio-economic statistics, race, ethnicity, gender, age, physical ability and language), project's feasibility, and sustainability**

Project Description. The goal of this project is to establish a Regional Center for Disability Employment that will serve as a single point of contact supporting the employment efforts both of job seekers with disabilities and of employers in the Meadowlands area and throughout the northern region of New Jersey. Coordinating and focusing available and new employment services and resources will be a management team that includes a full-time Director, a full-time project assistant, one full-time Employer Liaison, one full-time Employee/Job Seeker Liaison, and one part-time computer data base and website programmer. An Advisory Committee operating as a coordinating council of public and private sector partners will oversee and guide project efforts and monitor and evaluate progress on attainment of two equally important outcomes: First is an increase of employment and career advancement opportunities for people dealing with disabilities, as measured by the number of people with disabilities who secure employment, who are retained on the job, and who advance in their careers. As importantly, the second outcome will be an increase in the number of private and public sector employers that gain access to the economic and competitive advantages gained through employment of this special workforce. This will be documented by similar measures of people with disabilities who are employed, retained, and advanced in family supporting positions. Specifically, the project will implement three key objectives:

1. Initiate operations of the Regional Center for Disability Employment and formalize communications and collaborative connections that promote and expand service delivery and facilitate resource sharing among tri-county disability employment providers, the eight-county regional WIRED Alliance, and related workforce development efforts.

2. Develop and put into service a "single point of contact" employment clearinghouse that supports the job placement, retention, and advancement of individuals with disabilities in family sustaining careers.

3. Strengthen and expand barrier free pathways for youth as well as adults to obtain training, education, and supportive and transitional services needed to secure employment and advance on the job. Initial project emphasis is on career paths leading to high demand positions opening in the Meadowlands Xanadu complex and on links into immediately available and emerging training programs.

Why the project is needed. Making the transition from student to adult and from school to the workplace, is a daunting task under any circumstance. For individuals diagnosed with a disability, this has been described as “a potential minefield.” Is it any wonder, therefore, that an estimated seventy percent of people with disabilities are unemployed or underemployed? Some are unaware of or lack access to education and training needed for competitive positions. Others find it difficult to leave supportive environments and move to independent living situations. Many face transportation difficulties or simply find worksites lack essential accommodations. For myriad reasons, too many are blocked from jobs that can provide family-supporting careers and financial security. There has been much recent progress in addressing these and related difficulties, yet serious needs and service gaps persist. To successfully navigate this transition to the workplace job seekers with disabilities require a fully integrated program of transitional supports, that promote achievement in and linkage between education and skills training, industry driven career paths, worksite (environmental) and workplace (employment skills). They also need proficiency assessment opportunities and access to inclusive worksites.

At the same time, private and public sector employers face serious and growing challenges to their competitive positions in a volatile economy. Key to their success is a highly skilled and motivated workforce. However, their search is often thwarted by candidate pools with inadequate skills, training, and credentials. Furthermore, many employers are unaware of the potential competitive and economic advantages to be gained through access to an important sector of the workforce, the disabled population. Employers need opportunities to learn about these advantages, about employment policies that promote inclusion of a diversified workforce, and about resources that ensure worksite accessibility. Perhaps most importantly, employers need access to follow up support that aids employment, retention, and advancement for people with disabilities.

Population to be Served: To meet these dual customer needs, the population to be served includes both people with disabilities and employers who will provide job and career opportunities. The first customer base, people with disabilities, includes four target populations: (1) out of school youth and adults who are unemployed, (2) incumbent workers who are underemployed or seeking career advancement; (3) young people transitioning out of school into jobs, training, and further education; and (4) in school youth working their way through pathways to careers and independent living. Ethnically, this customer base is expected to be consistent with the student population described above in part one of the narrative. Economically, they will mirror the region, ranging from high income to poverty level, with more than 30% from families considered to be economically disadvantaged on the basis of Federal low income standards. In general, about 21% of the target populations with disabilities have physical limitations associated with hearing, vision, orthopedics, mobility, and multiple disabilities. An estimated 80% are dealing with learning disabilities and ADD or ADAH. About one-third come from households where the primary language is other than English. Approximately 4% communicate via Sign Language. While the project addresses needs of job seekers dealing with the diverse disabilities reflected in demographics of the

North New Jersey region, 65% of the participating target populations are expected to be participants who deal with physical limitations.

The second and equally important customer focus is employers, in both the private and public sectors, who will provide the jobs and career opportunities. Round table discussions and conversations between business leaders and the Meadowlands Chamber, Bergen Community College, and other partners have revealed a clear need for a single point of contact that employers can use as they work to diversify their workforce. This need appears to span a wide range of industry sectors. However, the Center's initial target population for this project includes employers in three industry clusters with high demand positions growing out of the Xanadu complex: (1) hospitality, retail, and entertainment; (2) supply chain, including wholesale trade, transportation, and warehousing; and (3) corporate and supportive services. These employer customers will benefit from access to the Center's single point of contact that will support their efforts to employ, train, retain, and promote career advancement of qualified individuals with disabilities. At present, approximately 750 businesses in the Xanadu and surrounding area who are members of the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce are targeted as beneficiaries of project activities. These range from relatively small independently owned businesses and restaurants to such national brands as H&M, Forever 21, The Children's Place, Legoland Discovery Centre, Zeytinia, and Cabela's that have already contracted with Xanadu management for space in the complex. It is expected that nearly all of them will be seeking to take advantage of the partnership's employee training support.

Project feasibility and sustainability are strengthened by the success and the duration of ongoing collaborative efforts among members of the partnership. For many years, their collective efforts have contributed substantially to the high quality of disability services delivered throughout the region. Furthermore, it is the policy of Bergen Community College – indeed all the partners -- to provide equal access to programs, services, and benefits, without regard to religion, race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, marital status, sex, disability, or veteran status. The College complies with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1990, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Older Americans Act of 1975, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The College's Office of Training and Compliance proactively monitors institutional conduct, provides assistance in complying with both the spirit and the letter of the law, and addresses allegations of violations of rights.

Operationally, the college demonstrates its commitment to educational access through numerous supportive actions. Not the least of these is its annual investment of over \$200,000 to support its Northern New Jersey Regional Center for Collegiate Deaf Education, which also receives \$118,000 in funding from the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education. As importantly, the project is directly related to the missions of Bergen Community College and those of other key partners. By integrating project direction and implementation functions with the ongoing efforts and commitments with

this Xanadu initiative, the likelihood of project institutionalization is substantially increased.

Institutional commitment to MOSAIC Regional Center for Disability Employment success and continuation is further affirmed in the attached Bergen Community College Board of Trustees authorization to apply for this grant as well as in the letters of commitment from: Bergen Community College President G. Jeremiah Ryan; Robert J. Aloia, Superintendent, Bergen County Technical Schools and Special Services; Anthony Corsi, Executive Director, Hudson County Workforce Investment Board; Cynthia Forster, Director, The Record and Herald News, Newspaper in Education Program; Jeffrey Kahn, Chief Executive Officer, Partnership for Community Health, Inc. and Northern New Jersey Disabilities Network; Jim Kirkos, Chief Executive Officer, Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce; Jeff Klare, Chief Executive Officer, Hire Disability Solutions, LLC.; Salvatore Mastroeni, Director, Bergen County One-Stop Career Center; Tammy Molinelli, Executive Director, Bergen County Workforce Investment Board; Madhuri Rodriguez, MSS, Executive Director, The C.A.P.E. Special Services Resource Center; Jim Thebery, MA, CSW, Director, Bergen County Division on Disability Services; and Maureen Walliser, President, Hudson Community Enterprises.

These lead partners in the project bring long standing collaborative relationships that have been focused on this particular disability employment initiative for well over a year. Substantial resources are already arranged, ensuring project feasibility and strengthening capacity for long term sustenance following the Henry H. Kessler Foundation funding period. Resources are more fully described in the Collaborative Partners Section below. In short, however, the initial partners have committed: facilities, office space and equipment; testing and assessment tools and resources; job training and workforce readiness preparation; transitional services; publicity and program promotion; websites and online job banks; accommodation and accessibility assistance; job coaching, and more

- **Methodology and implementation strategies, describing activities and possible limiting factors that may affect project progress and anticipated results**

The primary goal of this project is to establish a Regional Center for Disability Employment that will operate as single point of contact for job seekers with disabilities and for private and public employers in the Xanadu Complex and throughout the northern eight-county region of New Jersey. The Center will initially operate at an interim facility opening on July 1, 2008, but will relocate to the new Bergen Community College South Campus in Xanadu when that is completed, which is expected to be spring of 2010. The interim location is at 1280 West Wall Street in Lyndhurst, New Jersey. It contains office space and necessary equipment designated for Center operations and includes other facilities the Center will share for meetings, assessment and testing, counseling and support, and employment training and education.

Bergen Community College will serve as lead agency and provide fiscal management and project oversight as well as overall project direction and support. The project will be implemented by three full-time staff, including a Project Director, an Employer Liaison, and an Employee Liaison. An information technology consultant will provide job bank data base and website programming, building on the platform/portal provided by the Meadowlands Regional Chamber. The director will report to the Bergen Community College Vice President for Student Services. The project team will work closely with the Advisory Committee which will function as a coordinating council of public and private sector partners to oversee and guide project efforts and monitor and evaluate progress. The Vice President for Student Services will report on Center progress to the Bergen Community College Executive Council and to the President.

The staff and advisory committee will implement strategies in three interrelated areas. The first is to establish the Regional Center for Disability Employment and formalize communications and collaborative connections that promote and expand service delivery and resource sharing by disability employment providers and related workforce development efforts in the Meadowlands and North New Jersey.

. To accomplish this, team will design the communications structure, electronic and telecommunication chains, meeting schedules, committees and working groups, and other mechanisms needed to ensure clear and open channels for communication, work flow, oversight, and accountability. Biweekly meetings of the Advisory Committee and the project staff will be conducted during the start-up period, after which monthly Advisory Committee meetings will provide for on going project review and facilitation. Quarterly reports will be delivered to the College's Executive Council and President. The project team will also:

- Map and update workforce development and disability employment related assets, resources, and opportunities.
- Identify service gaps and transitional needs, develop and implement plans for addressing, monitoring, and responding to emerging needs and opportunities for education and training, employment and career advancement, support services, and business and economic development.
- Design and conduct public awareness and program promotion campaigns, initially to include publications, press releases, and public service announcements, and later in the second quarter, introducing workshops, seminars, and conferences for employers, job seekers, and youth and parents.
- Establish/strengthen working procedures and relationships with Xanadu business community and employers.
- Develop assessment procedures and materials and a coordinated system of intake to recruit participants, assess individual needs and interests, and facilitate referrals, job placement, and/or enrollment in training, supportive services, and education.
- With an external evaluation consultant team, design process and outcome evaluation measures, procedures, and timelines.

- Design/develop data base and information management system for recording and reporting client/employer service usage, job placements, and related outcome measures.

The second objective to implement is Center's employment clearinghouse function for job seekers and employers. To support the placement, retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities in family sustaining careers the Center will provide access to up-to-date disabilities employment information (including accessibility and accommodations assessments), resources, and referrals for education/training, employment, support service (e.g. transportation assistance, follow-up) and workforce development. Toward this end, the team will:

- Develop and implement a virtual job placement system to include up-to-date job openings, required position skills and abilities, assessment tools, employer and worksite accessibility, education, training, and follow-up requirements. The Meadowlands Chamber will provide the Website Portal for this system, which will build upon and integrate with several currently functioning job banks operated by the Meadowlands Chamber, Hire Disability Solutions, LLC, and that of the New Jersey Department of Labor Workforce Development System.
- Program Web Portal and Job Bank Site to conform with universal accessibility standards and with Bobby and related Certification.
- Develop and Integrate system for virtual job fairs and for capturing and publicizing employee and employer success stories and accomplishments as well as new opportunities and developments.
- Conduct assessment of and document worksite accessibility, job task and job accessibility analyses, and employment readiness and skills for job matching.
- Develop and implement follow-up mechanisms to support and track impact of work toward accessibility, job placement, job maintenance, and advancement.
- Develop /implement hot-line contact system employers in the event of needed position replacement and for employee access to needed transportation, accommodation, mentor and job coach support, and related measures.

The third area to implement concerns strengthening and expanding barrier-free pathways from the K-12 system to jobs and to further training, higher education, and career advancement. Much of the foundation needed to accomplish this has already been put in place by the project's education, training, and workforce investment system partners. They have at present: (1) refined and are at work to more fully coordinate assessment procedures and tools, (2) aligned secondary basic skills exit measures with training and postsecondary entrance criteria, (3) integrated, to a large extent, target sector business and industry competency requirements (especially soft skills competencies), and (4) they have or are in the process of articulating career related education and training programs that accelerate credentialing.

With the immediate emphasis on career paths leading to high demand positions opening in the Meadowlands Xanadu complex and on links into immediately available and emerging training program, the project team and its partners will focus on:

- Connecting and coordinating transition services – providing a single point of contact –for individuals transitioning through school into jobs, training, and further education.
- Further aligning and articulating career pathway programs and transitional services to enable dual high school/college enrollment, early college credit, and accelerated progress to careers and independent living for in-school youth.
- Coordinating with the Workforce Investment Board, One-Stop Career Centers, DVR, and related secondary and postsecondary providers in order to implement training and support for National Workforce Readiness Credentialing that will facilitate job entry for new members of the workforce.
- Assessing industry specific skills training and certification needs and providing interventions for out of school youth and adults who are unemployed.
- Expanding and refining collaborative working relationships with commerce and industry partners to connect their incumbent workers who are underemployed or seeking career advancement with the available (and newly developing) secondary and post-secondary degree and certificate programs.

Possible limiting factors that may affect project progress and anticipated results include transportation, tight time constraints, economic conditions, employer cooperation, and more. Members of the partnership are working with the Department of Transportation as well as with the Access program and independent contractors, but variously scheduled individual commutes to and from work may very well pose some difficulties. The partnership is already at work to deal with the tight time frame required to maximize new employment opportunities opening in the Meadowlands area of Bergen, Hudson, and Passaic Counties. As noted above, region-wide coordination and alignment of education, support, and employment services to ensure necessary segues into jobs and careers is underway. Economic conditions state-wide may pose some challenges, especially if business and industry employers are hard hit and reduce the anticipated number of job openings. Certainly an investment by The Henry H. Kessler Foundation with leveraging by partners provides critical start-up funding, but substantial support will also be required through grants and from such other sources in development as employer fees for service. These and a range of other key issues, such as how best to sustain and enhance the coordination of services and how to infuse careers of the future into the regional initiative, will continue to be examined and addressed by partners.

- **Proposed staffing pattern for the project, and names and titles of individuals who will direct the project**

Bergen Community College Vice President for Student Services, Mr. Raymond Smith, is serving as interim Project Director until an appropriately qualified professional can assume the full-time responsibilities. That position will be secured as of October 1, 2008, for formal start-up of this project. The project director, reporting to Vice President Smith, will serve as the single point of contact for both employers and employees be

responsible for making connections to appropriate services and for directing staff and overall operations, including communications, marketing and outreach, program promotion and support, and incorporation of partner resources.

Tarin Tomlinson will serve as the full-time Employer (business) Liaison who will conduct outreach and recruitment support with public and private sector employers, assess job skill requirements and responsibilities, conduct job task analyses, conduct worksite and job accessibility needs, and deliver training and consultation as well as follow-up services to employers and hiring managers in human resource departments in order to facilitate the hiring, retention, and advancement of qualified employees with disabilities. Debra Ludwig of Hire Disability Solutions will provide additional support.

Ms. Madhuri Rodriguez, Executive Director of the C.A.P.E. Special Services Center, will serve as interim Employee Liaison until a full-time professional is identified to assume these responsibilities. The Employee Liaison, a Master of Social Work level professional, will be responsible for supporting job seekers through individual as well as group counseling and consultation, needs assessment, referrals to required services and education/training, job coaching, workplace environmental scanning, and technical assistance as well as direct intervention that may be required for transportation, tuition assistance, and accommodations or adaptive equipment.

These project professional team members will work collaboratively with one another. Together with the Advisory Committee, they collectively they comprise the Management Team that will coordinate project activities through biweekly meetings and ongoing email and telephone communication. Team members each contribute unique perspectives to guide and direct project efforts, to provide technical expertise and assistance, and to ensure timely attainment of benchmarks and accomplishment of project objectives. Their diverse points of view to keep the project current with critical aspects of and emerging developments of disabilities employment. This team will also aid the partner organizations in their individual and collective efforts to institutionalize the project in order to sustain the Center when Foundation funding concludes.

Under the Project Director, the team reports to the Bergen Community College Vice President for Student Services. The College's President and Board of Trustees have overall fiduciary and programmatic responsibility for the project. The Bergen Community College Office of Grants Administration and the College's Grants Accountant are responsible for project management and budget. Meeting minutes and reports will document Management Team activities and inform project evaluation.

- **Collaborative partners and/or other working relationships for this project**

More than a dozen collaborative partners have close working relationships with Bergen Community College and leverage substantial resources for this project. Their individual project related relationships are described the attached letters of commitment to and support for this initiative. Key collaborators include:

Colony Capital and Meadowlands Xanadu, a principal collaborative partner in this initiative, through ERC 16W Limited Partnership, donated \$2 million to the BCC Foundation for construction costs associated with the college's workforce training center, the new Bergen Community College Campus to be constructed in the Xanadu complex of the Meadowlands. The Regional Center for Disability Employment will operate there. Until construction is completed, however, the Center will initiate and operate the disability employment project at a temporary facility made possible with \$500,000 from the construction grant. The temporary BCC training facilities are slated to open on July 1, 2008. All operations, including those of the Regional Center for Disability Employment, will move to the permanent campus when that is completed.

Bergen Community College itself is providing the space, facility and administrative support as well as ensuring access to adaptive equipment, counseling, education and training, and academic assistance to clients of the Regional Center.

The Meadowlands Regional Chamber brings over 750 business members to this project. In addition, the NJ Meadowlands Commission provided seed funding enabling the Chamber to educate employers as to available resources and also to determine, through surveys and roundtable discussions, employer workforce needs. A critical component of the project is their online Job Bank located on the Chamber's website that is used as a central portal for businesses and job seekers alike. Hire Disability Solutions, LLC. will collaborate to integrate their own Disability Job Bank with Chamber's Job Bank Web Portal as the electronic gateway for the Center. Both will be universally accessible in order to educate, inform, and serve the business community as well as job seekers with disabilities. The Chamber is also providing publication and promotional support through its Meadowlands USA Magazine as well as electronic media.

Hire Disability Solutions, LLC. is bringing the job seeker skill assessment tool that will be combined with the National Employment Readiness Certification testing for new employee support; training workshops on needs of employers for the nonprofit organization partners that will prepare and refer clients for job placement; the Monster-Based Virtual Career Network data base for resumes, job descriptions, referral and tracking of placements; their Constant Contact alert system for communications support.

The Bergen County Division on Disability Services will provide support services leadership and bring to the project EASE Information & Assistance (Easy Access, Single Entry), respite services, and they are able to refer individuals with disability to numerous support services for themselves or family members. BC DDS will also bring its connections to their own Advisory Board the members of which will also serve as a referral source and a resource for work ready candidates.

Bergen County Technical Schools/Special Districts brings an extensive array of services and partners to this project. It will leverage these through its CAPE (Collaboration, Access, Planning and Education) Special Services Resource Center and

provide access to employability services (travel training, job coaching, assistive/augmentative technology training, customized internship development, and individualized environmental assessments of the worksite) to support the placement and retention of youth up to age 21 and of adults transitioning from rehabilitation facilities.

Bergen and Hudson County Workforce Investment Boards. The WIBs bring vital support and services to this disability employment project, including a leadership role in the North Jersey Wired Alliance that ensures the MOSAIC Regional Center connection to workforce development opportunities throughout the eight county region. Working closely with Passaic and the other county WIBs and One-Stops, they focus a range of training, job readiness, employment services, tuition assistance, job fairs, and more – not to mention employer services – to help ensure success of this disability employment effort.

Bergen and Hudson County One-Stop Career Centers bring significant resources to this effort to prepare job seekers with disabilities for entry and advancement in career opportunities, including: training funds for individuals with disabilities up to \$4,000; literacy, basic skills, and workforce readiness assessment; support in obtaining the National Work Readiness Credential; and more.

Hudson Community Enterprises HCE brings distinct advantages to this project in terms of achieving its goals. It has a long rich history of advocacy on behalf of and with persons with disabilities. HCE has in the absence of an Office for the Disabled in Hudson County has taken the lead in the community to create employment parity for individuals with disabilities. Two current initiatives will also support the efforts of the project; HCE has a vibrant Hispanic Outreach Program that can involve an underserved minority segment of those who deal with disabilities. For more than 50 years of operation, HCE has an unrivaled track record of programmatic accomplishments in the employment of persons with disabilities that will contribute substantial knowledge and insight to strengthen efforts of the Regional Center.

The Partnership for Community Health, Inc. and The Northern New Jersey Disability Network bring an extensive array of collaborating agencies and organizations that will facilitate information dissemination, program promotion, recruitment, and referral. In addition, task forces that are already in place and that deliver such specific services as cultural competency training will also bring their resources to this initiative.

- **Anticipated length of project**

Grant funding is proposed for a two year period, from October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2010. However, the partnership intent in submitting this proposal is that the project will establish a permanent Regional Center for Disability Employment that will continue to serve as vital resource for employees and employers long after the Henry H. Kessler Foundation Signature Grant funding period conclude.

- **How project fits within the employment focus of the Foundation and leads to employment of NJ Citizens with disabilities, and how the project contributes to your organization's overall mission**

The proposed project is fully consistent with the employment focus and the priorities of the Henry H. Kessler Foundation Signature Grant Program. It is specifically designed to increase employment of individuals with mobility and/or physical disabilities, as well as individuals with other disabilities. The diverse and broad-based MOSAIC partnership involves education, human service, workforce and economic development, and other public and private sector partners who have been working together for well over a year on collaborative solutions to problems of disability employment. All the partners bring to this project extensive and long standing experience in developing and implementing successful programs. Equal access for all individuals is an essential part of the mission of Bergen Community College and of all partners in this initiative.

The project is also consistent with Kessler Foundation priorities in that it is expected to serve as a region-wide model for coordinating, extending, and enhancing existing services in order to fill identified service gaps and meet emerging needs. Furthermore, the formative and summative evaluation components will facilitate and document project activities and outcomes. The Regional Center's partners will disseminate findings, resources, and guidelines through a variety of means to industry groups, the Workforce Investment system, education and human services communities, and other potential users seeking to replicate the collaborative effort.

- **Describe your plan for publicizing, publishing or promoting information about this project**

Each partner has committed resources and time to publicize, promote, and publish information about the project. Advisory committee members and project personnel will share information and promote the Center at respective organizations and, as the Center documents its success, also plan to prepare articles for publication as well as presentation at professional association meetings. Collectively, with financial support from corporate and private foundations as well as other sources, a substantial and concentrated public awareness campaign will be mounted. Partners will also bring substantial individual resources to the effort. For example, the Bergen Community College Office of Public Relations will prepare and submit press releases for print, radio, and television media; will publish information, resources, and links to partners on the BCC Website; publish informational articles in *Perspectives*, the college's online journal and in the *Monday Report*, the internal publication. The Web pages of BCC's Office of Special Services, the Grants Office, and the new South Campus will each carry information and links to the Center for Disability Employment.

Importantly, The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission with the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce will promote the program and services through sponsored Roundtable Discussions, Websites and Online Job Bank, and through the published articles in the Chamber's Meadowlands USA Magazine. Working closely with

Xanadu management, the Commission and Chamber will also promote and publicize services directly to the businesses and industries leasing and operating in the Meadowlands complex. Similarly, The Newspaper In Education program of The Record and Herald News will disseminate information through its regional conference as well as continue production of its popular **Diffabilities, Not Disabilities** program that includes teacher aids, curriculum materials, and student activities.

In addition, the Bergen, Hudson, and Passaic County Workforce Investment Boards, with their strong links to the North Jersey Wired Alliance, will ensure dissemination as well as leveraged resources and referrals through the eight county region, while the one-Stop Career Centers and respective Divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Business Resource Centers are geared will provide information, support, counseling, and technical assistance to job seekers and employers. The Business Resource Centers are also integrating information and resources into Business Tool Kits they will be distributing to new employers in the Xanadu Complex.

Furthermore, Hire Disability Solutions, LLC. Is committed to disseminating information as well as assistance through its consulting activities, training workshops for nonprofits and businesses, its own website and national disability employment job bank, and through its regularly published newsletter, *Solutions*. Bergen County Technical Schools and Special Services, C.A.P.E., and Palisades Learning Center will promote Center services and resources through their respective newsletters, network meetings, and associations. The Partnership for Community Health and the Northern New Jersey Disability Network will disseminate information and promote the Center at monthly meetings as well as through such working groups as the Cultural Competency Task Force.

III. Timeline

A regional partnership drawn from K-12 and higher education, the Workforce Investment System, human services, and business and industry has developed this initiative over the past eighteen months or more. Educational and support services planning is underway to initiate project activities for a July 1, 2008 start-up when the Bergen Community College South Campus will open in the Meadowlands. The Regional Center for Disability Employment will be housed there and integrate its efforts with the large scale workforce assessment, training, and support programming needed to meet employment needs of the region when the Xanadu complex opens and begins hiring in October/November 2008. Full-Time Disability Employment Center staff will be in place for formal implementation of proposed project activities on October 1, 2008, as indicated below.

<u>Year 1: 10/01/2008 – 09/30/2009</u>	<u>1Qtr</u>	<u>2Qtr</u>	<u>3Qtr</u>	<u>4Qtr</u>
Activate budget and subcontracts	X			
Convene Advisory Committee for implementation kick-off	X			
Finalize communication, workflow, oversight, accountability	X			
Map & update assets, resources, opportunities	X			
Plan and initiate initial promotional campaign	X			
Announce award and issue save-the-date for Kick-Off meeting	X			
Designate Task Force/Committee Members	X			
Meet with external evaluators to design process & outcome plan	X			
Design/develop data base and information management system	X			
Identify service/transitional gaps and plans to address needs	X			
Coordinate employee/client intake procedures	X			
Establish/implement relationship procedures with employers	X			
Conduct promotional "Kickoff" Meeting with constituents	X			
Program Web portal and job bank to ensure accessibility	X			
Integrate job banks with virtual job placement system	X			
Quarterly Task Force progress report to Advisory Committee		X	X	X
Quarterly Center progress report to Advisory & Exec Committee		X	X	X
Quarterly review/report from external reviewer		X	X	X
Conduct & document worksite accessibility assessment		X -- and ongoing as needed		
Implement follow-up employer and employee tracking/support		X -- and ongoing as needed		
Fully implement virtual job placement system		X -- and continuing		
Single point of contact clearing house fully operational		X -- and continuing		
Annual program and fiscal reports prepared for Kessler				X
<u>Year 2:10/01/2009 – 09/30/2010</u>	<u>1Qtr</u>	<u>2Qtr</u>	<u>3Qtr</u>	<u>4Qtr</u>
Quarterly Advisory Meeting and Project Review	X	X	X	X
Analyze available data and continue evaluation data collection	X	X	X	X
Plan and implement regional promotional campaign	X	X		
Conduct Annual Community/Constituent Celebration meeting		X		
Secure additional funding from grant and other sources	X	X and ongoing		
Meet with external evaluators to review findings	X			
Assess data base and information management system	X			
Update information on service/transitional gaps	X			
Review/update employee/client intake procedures		X		

Timeline continues on next page....

Year 2:10/01/2009 – 09/30/2010 (Continued)

	<u>1Qtr</u>	<u>2Qtr</u>	<u>3Qtr</u>	<u>4Qtr</u>
Cultivate relationship procedures with employers	X	and ongoing		
Assess/report on portal and job bank accessibility	X			
Quarterly Task Force progress report to Advisory Committee	X	X	X	X
Quarterly Center progress report to Advisory & Exec Committee	X	X	X	X
Quarterly review/report from external evaluator	X	X	X	X
Assess/review follow-up employer & employee tracking/support	X -- and ongoing as needed			
Annual program and fiscal reports prepared for Kessler			X	X

IV. Project Evaluation Plan and Criteria

A comprehensive system of formative and summative evaluation will be integrated with the project. It will build upon and coordinate with the Workforce Investment System assessment and evaluation standards that are already in place and used in workforce development programs throughout the tri-county region. Adult outcomes will include education/training program completion, job placement, job retention, and more to be assessed in terms of both qualitative and quantitative measures. Formative – or process – evaluation will inform project implementation effort and alert the advisory committee as well as project staff to needed adjustments and interventions or corrective actions. The summative evaluation will document outcomes and provide next steps for project continuation and improvement.

Specifically, the first phase of evaluation will primarily monitor completion of planned objectives and tasks and identify actions needed to ameliorate any impediments to progress. The second phase will concentrate on process as well as outcome data that will be collected by the external evaluation team through a variety of college and partner offices. The final phase of evaluation, also conducted by outside evaluators, will concentrate on collection and analysis of qualitative as well as quantitative data to identify specific outcomes and assess the impact of efforts by the Center for Disability Employment. We are also interested in participant's (both employers and employees) levels of satisfaction as well as perceived benefits from their involvement with the Center for Disability Employment. We also want to know if they would recommend Center services to colleagues and friends.

Data will be collected through surveys, arranged group discussions, and interviews with employers and employees as well as documentary review, usage and placement records, aggregate assessment and test scores, and related sources. Outcome questions and measures of particular interest to the college, the project team, and the partners will include:

How many individuals with disabilities – and specifically individuals with physical disabilities that impair mobility -- were recruited, assessed, and referred?

How many such individuals received training and in what types of programs?

How many received transitional and related supportive services and of what specific types and from which providers?

How many successfully completed training, certification requirements, or obtained other credentialing, or demonstrated skill improvement (how was improvement measured)?

How many dropped out of the training or program involvement and why?

How many individuals with disabilities – and particularly those individuals with physical disabilities that impair mobility – obtained jobs, at what level and pay rates?

How many such individuals were retained by employers for 90 days or for longer periods?

How many received pay increases at those or other intervals? How many individuals advanced on the job?

How many employers and what specific companies or organizations received training or other supportive services concerning the employment of individuals with disabilities?

How many employers and what specific companies or organizations actually hired individuals with disabilities – especially individuals with physical disabilities and mobility impairments?

How does this number compare with historical levels of such employment at those companies or organizations (in other words are they hiring more such individuals now that they did previously)?

Project managers, in collaboration with the advisory committee, will report findings of both to the College Vice President for Student Affairs, The President, and the Board of Trustees., who will oversee the overall effort. Findings will also be reported to the Henry H. Kessler Foundation in the first year annual report and the second year final report. We expect findings will also be of interest to Xanadu and other employers as well as the larger community.

Initial discussions have been conducted with the Heldrich Center for the purpose of securing its service as the external evaluator for this project. Other individuals too have been approached, both of which have substantially lower fees for the service. However, it is expected that Heldrich Center will be selected as external evaluator because of its national reputation and its considerable experience in the assessment and evaluation of workforce development and of disability employment initiatives. Consequently, additional funding beyond the \$15,000 budget in this request to the Kessler Foundation will be sought from other disability employment funding sources.