

PROGRAM: Career Strategies

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By Sasha Rogelberg, The Jewish Exponent

JEVS Human Services, Philadelphia is expanding its programming due to its partnership with Project EM: Empowering and Employing Our Community, a consortium of 19 members of the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies.

The Project EM initiative offers a large slate of workshops — sometimes up to 10 offerings per day — as well as personalized support for those recently unemployed or who are looking to switch careers.

Workshops include “Mindful Career Strategies,” “How to Get Your Resume and Cover Letter Noticed” and “Using Age to Your Advantage.”

The partnership announced Jan. 31 comes at nearly the two-year mark of the onset of the pandemic, which caused unemployment numbers to spike across the country.

“The ups and downs of the pandemic have thrown a curve ball into this jobs market,” said John Colborn, JEVS chief operating officer and vice-chair of the NJHSA board of directors, in a press release. “Many workers remain on the sideline, find themselves severely underemployed, work multiple jobs, or lack access to benefits. Others, who have upskilled during the pandemic, need help breaking into new fields.”

In Philadelphia, in the weeks following the first wave of COVID restrictions, Jewish nonprofits were forced to lay off employees, said Peggy Truitt, program director of JEVS Career Strategies

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and Helping Hands. Many of those nonprofits turned to JEVS to give support to recently laid-off workers.

“That was a population that we were very familiar with, that we could provide services to,” Truitt said.

Throughout the pandemic, JEVS, with its Career Strategies and Helping Hands programs, was able to continue to provide one-on-one support to those unemployed or looking to switch careers and guidance on using social media to find a job, crafting effective resumes and interviewing well.

“We also lent a lot of emotional and motivational support, building confidence for people who have been unemployed for a while and need to get back into the job force,” Truitt said.

Project EM allows JEVS to further its impact by providing additional services, such as workshops and more personalized support and consulting.



Peggy Truitt, program director of JEVS Career Strategies and Helping Hands | Courtesy of Peggy Truitt

“We are able to refer our clients to resources that we do not necessarily have an expertise in,” Truitt said. “We’re only able to do so many public workshops due to the size of our staff and other things that we’re committed to.”

For example, if a veteran came to JEVS needing assistance, the agency could refer the individual to another member of the network or a specific workshop through Project EM that wouldn’t otherwise be available through the Philadelphia agency.

Not only will the partnership give more resources to Philadelphians looking for job resources, but it can reach individuals not living in metropolitan areas with robust Jewish Federations and human services.

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Project EM partners include Career Connections of Palm Beach County, Jewish Family and Career Services Atlanta and JVS SoCal, Los Angeles.

The programming through Project EM is free of charge, which Truitt hopes will be instrumental in expanding the reach of its resources.

“People come to us and, a lot of times, they just don’t know where to begin, how to start, how to get the help,” Truitt said. “So it just really just gives us a lot more opportunities to help our clients, and of course, the more that we can help them, the more they can be successful in terms of reaching their goals, whether it’s finding a job, bettering their employment or learning something new to make them more employable.”

To sign-up for personalized support or workshops through Project EM, visit [jewishtgether.org/project-em](https://www.jewishtgether.org/project-em).