

2016 AJFCA Kovod Award Application
Category: Replicable Programming

1. **Agency Size/Group:** Category A
2. **Agency Name and Community:** Jewish Family & Children's Service of Pittsburgh
3. **Agency Budget:** \$6,836,989
4. **Date:** February 12, 2016
5. **Contact Information for Point Person on Submission:**
Elizabeth Waickman, Director of Communications & Fundraising
6. **Staff Listing By Title (of staff involved in program):**
April Artz, EmployAble Coordinator
Sarah Welch, Director, Career Development Center
Drew Graf, Career Counselor
Pam Harris, Career Counselor
Mark Lepore, Career Counselor
Lisa Zwagerman, Career Counselor
7. **Summary:**

The EmployAble program of the Career Development Center (CDC) of Jewish Family & Children's Service (JF&CS) began in 2014, initially providing services to professionally-driven jobseekers with mental health diagnoses. With support from the AJFCA, United Way of Allegheny County, Trees Charitable Trust and the Fine Foundation, EmployAble expanded to provide additional employment support for jobseekers managing autism spectrum disorders as well.

Through EmployAble, clients who have completed post-secondary education have access to one-on-one career counseling, personality assessments, specialized workshops, support groups, career fairs, and networking events. Typically, initial career counseling sessions are very intensive; clients meet their career counselor on a weekly or bi-weekly basis in order to address social, emotional or mental challenges, build trust and establish rapport. The initial phases of the program involve development of a client's resume, discussing job opportunities and goals and attending a variety of jobseeker-specific workshops. Once initial employment is gained, clients are provided with additional follow-up services through the CDC, with the goal of increasing job retention rates and providing necessary ongoing supportive services.

EmployAble's expansion to address the ever-increasing need for career services tailored to individuals with "invisible disabilities" and its programmatic model is highly successful and replicable because it takes an individualized approach to every client; addressing and meeting specific needs and allowing individuals to access opportunities and to

obtain and retain meaningful employment with support available throughout every step of the process.

8. **Total Program Cost:** \$178,000

9. **A pdf file or link pertaining to the program or as part of the strategy**

10. **Three Major Outcomes:**

- a. Proven placement of more than 72 individuals with mental health diagnoses and autism spectrum disorders in meaningful work environments, with supportive services provided to both clients and employers for continuing success throughout the duration of employment
- b. Promoting and showcasing the value and benefit of inclusiveness in the workplace and the building of a diverse workforce in the Greater Pittsburgh region that includes individuals with “invisible disabilities”
- c. Specific programming and services designed to help individuals with mental health diagnoses and autism spectrum disorders develop the soft skills critical to achieving, maintaining and retaining continuous and fulfilling employment