

# RI Developmental Disabilities Council Chosen to Lead Two National Community of Practice Webinar Series

WARWICK, RI, USA, March 20, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The federal US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and the national Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center (DETAC) recently invited the RI Developmental Disabilities Council (RIDDC) to lead two of their National Community of Practice Webinar Series. The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is the only non-regulatory federal agency that promotes policies and coordinates with employers and all levels of government to increase workplace success for people with disabilities. The DETAC Center provides evidence-based training and technical assistance to the Administration on Disabilities (AoD) grantees aimed at improving competitive, integrated employment and economic outcomes for individuals with disabilities across the nation.



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*Sue Babin, RIDDC*

RIDDC's "Self-Employment Business Incubator Project...The Spirit of Individual Enterprise For People With Disabilities", includes a multi-faceted entrepreneurship program and is now in its sixth year. The program is spearheaded by Project Director and founder Sue Babin, who was also the lead presenter of both webinar presentations. Additional

presenters were entrepreneurs who successfully completed the program and launched their own businesses, together with family members who support them.

The two topics were:

- DETAC February 13: Supporting Self Employment for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities: Family

Perspectives -

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEP4lazFjQk&list=PLtV6jg4SO-0j9MJQNo6uPP3dCt1vxL\\_Gx](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEP4lazFjQk&list=PLtV6jg4SO-0j9MJQNo6uPP3dCt1vxL_Gx)

- ODEP February 28: Stories of Entrepreneurship and Competitive Integrated Employment

The self-employment program, which has recently been adopted in Maine and is under consideration in other states, consists of eight weeks of business classes, one-to-one, ongoing support from staff and peers, weekly entrepreneurship networking forums, business portfolio development, mini-grants, and assistance with direct selling platforms.

Ms. Babin prepared a slide presentation which featured the elements of the program along with information on the various businesses of the featured guest presenters. Family perspectives seminar included entrepreneurs: Bryan Baron of “Double B Photography”, with his mother, Sue Baron; Alton Stuckey of “Alton Stuckey Portraits and More”, with his mother, Iraida Williams; and Rachel Rasnick of “Rachel Rasnick Art”, with her mother Karen Rasnick.

During the February 28, 2024, discussion Sue Babin was again the main presenter. Other presenters included Rebecca “Becca” Beaton of “Rebecca’s G Cards”, Ben Del Rosario of “Ben del Rosario Photography”, and Michael Coyne, of “Red White & Brew Café/The Budding Violet” retail shop, who shared their experiences as entrepreneurs with disabilities. Each presenter’s segment featured examples of their work.

In addition, Ms. Babin highlighted the unique features of the program, including funding for the project from the State Department of Labor and Training (DLT), hiring of business professionals as instructors for the project’s curriculum, support to community DD agencies on business development to assist entrepreneurs, mini-grants, statewide “Speakers Bureau” promoting self-employment and ongoing support to small business owners through a weekly Entrepreneur’s Forum.

According to Ms. Babin, “Entrepreneurial education teaches each person very important life skills. And you know what, whether they start a business or not, it’s all useful information and experiences including working with a team, speaking in public, and talking about your business. It’s problem solving and thinking creatively. People gain and increase self-esteem, we’ve seen it. It’s just incredible. Another important point is that RI’s self-employment program has progressed in six years from what was a little-known option for employment for people with disabilities to

RI Self-Employment Business Incubator Video Link:  
<https://riddc.org/self-employment-project/>

A cross-section of RIDDC Self Employment Project Participants

one which is prominent statewide and nationally recognized as a model for other States!"

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