



# PARSE FULL COALITION MEETING NOTES

## APRIL 4, 2024

### Moderators:

**Jonathan Rosen** (PARSE co-founder, National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training; Industrial Hygiene Consultant at AJ Rosen & Associates LLC)

**Allison Weingarten** (PARSE co-founder, LMSW, MDB Inc., Communication and Outreach Consultant with the National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety & Health Training)

### Allison on recent PARSE Coalition accomplishments:

- The first PARSE symposium was held in December 2023.
- Earlier this year Recovery Ready Workplace legislation was introduced to the New York State Assembly and Senate. It's not likely that the bill will pass this year, but this is the beginning of the process and we have gained support from a number of influential elected officials to champion the effort. We also have over a dozen organizations that have signed on as supporters of the bill.

### Introduction of New Members:

**Danielle Palleschi**, Disability Resource Coordinator at Columbia Green Workforce Office, was recommended by Scott Curry.

**Amy Jau**, with Professional Staff Congress, union represents 30,000 faculty, staff, doctorate students at City University of New York and CUNY Research Foundation.

**Steering Committee Meeting Update with Kristen Chalmers** (Educational Specialist, LMS at Finger Lakes Occupational Health Services): meeting held on March 28.

- Legislation and Outreach: **Chris Assini** (Policy Director, FOR-NY) met with Assemblyman Bronson who is a key member and Chair of the Labor Committee. Bronson is likely to sign on as a co-sponsor of the bill being introduced into the Assembly. The following have signed on as sponsors to the bill: Senators Fernandez, Ramos, and May; Assemblymen Steck, Donald, Gallagher and Fahey. As with most bills, they don't pass on the first year they are introduced. Chris is continuing to meet with additional representatives to gain more support for the continuing effort to pass the bill next year. The initial response in the bill's introduction is very promising for next year's efforts.
- Research Update: **Paul Landsbergis** (Associate Professor, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences at SUNY Downstate School of Public Health - Brooklyn) is taking over the transition from SUNY Upstate to SUNY Downstate.

- Recovery Ready Workshops
  1. My Independent Living/Monticello NY: April 16 9:00 AM-12:00 PM; Flyer: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zEVCqSI9ce89\\_k6rDGNCJKSFGi-tqfw/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zEVCqSI9ce89_k6rDGNCJKSFGi-tqfw/view)
  2. Wayne County/Connections Begin Youth Clubhouse; : June 12 Newark, NY
  3. Anchor Recovery Center/Watertown NY: June 13 9:30 AM- 12:30 PM
  4. Montgomery County/SUNY Fulton Montgomery: Friday June 21

Scott Curry's workforce summit was held in early March, there were 58 unique businesses at the event.

- Funding Opportunities: Allison spoke with a staff member in Senator Gillibrand's office. Allison had contacted the Senator's office about sponsoring the next symposium and gained access to a document from the Senator's office listing who and what they funded and for how much. The grantees tend to be organizations that are not ordinarily funded elsewhere, and these earmarked awards are very generous. Allison noted this is also a good opportunity to get funding for Recovery Ready Workplaces. The application deadline to apply for these earmarked funds was April 5.

**PARSE Member Survey Update with Sarah Toledano** (Siena College Center for Academic Community Engagement)

- The purpose of the survey is to gather information on PARSE member organization activities and how those activities would expand or be strengthened if more funding was available. Sarah has received 14 responses as of April 4 and is looking to enlist more people to participate, it is a very brief survey. Link to member survey: <https://forms.gle/Sujto1mArx9cXod38>

**PARSE Member Activity:**

Jonathan noted that while it isn't in the budget, the RRW bill is still in the Senate and Assembly committees. The key is to keep organizing and mobilizing support for the bill. We need to continue reaching out to get more legislators and organizations to show their support and build momentum for the bill's future success. Tap into the tools that PARSE has provided, where you can look up your legislators, share outreach progress, and use outreach templates.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSexYKapAH8Lb\\_6r-BynOg3p8yBxowPQ-kmjMHIfMWwYuFHjg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSexYKapAH8Lb_6r-BynOg3p8yBxowPQ-kmjMHIfMWwYuFHjg/viewform)

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1gaiWt-s8j5Dhwmw3HL-xWI78RTZkE40E/edit?rtfpo=true>

<https://conta.cc/3wFne7P>

Allison attended the Capital Region's Monthly Labor Breakfast in March, held the first Friday of the month. The meeting was very productive with 75 people in attendance. Michael Blue, an influential retired PEF and area Labor leader, spoke at the event. Allison met Assemblywoman Fahey at the event, and she signed on to the legislation after that meeting.

Emily D'Angelo of NYSACHO noted that her organization is already working on a memo of support for the RRW bill.

**Dean Hale** (Training Specialist at OASAS) attended the PARSE symposium in December. He noted that as a direct result of the symposium he has issued \$16,000 in tax credits for Recovery Ready Workplace businesses this year. No tax credits were claimed last year. In two years prior, about \$6,000 to \$10,000 in tax credits were issued. Click the link to learn about the tax credit, which is a \$2M initiative for for-profit businesses to hire people in recovery:

<https://oasas.ny.gov/recovery-friendly-workplace-tax-credit>

OASAS is working to change the definitions of who are eligible employees and which employers are eligible in order to increase participation in the program. At this time, it's geared to people who have been or currently are in a substance abuse program. OASAS hopes to include people who are not in a formal substance use disorder program and would open the program up to people who self-report substance misuse. Dean provided a glimpse of employer sentiment about Recovery Ready Workplaces. He said after four years of outreach to employers, Dean has noticed the word stigma comes up. While many employers are interested in the concept, they are reluctant to actively advertise they are open to Recovery Ready Workplace policies. Some roadblocks involve confusion about confidentiality in 42CFR (which is much like HIPAA but for people with substance use disorder), regarding someone's former or present status in substance use treatment. He encounters lack of understanding, stigma, questions from employers about employee theft. They are not aware there are Federal incentives that offer insurance if and when that happens.

**Allison on Funding:** Allison explored earmark funding from Congressman Tonko's office but did not see a fit in their funding for RRW. Colleen from Congressman Tonko's office directed Allison to Senator Gillibrand's office. Allison worked closely with **Angelia Smith-Wilson** (Executive Director, FOR-NY) to submit the grant proposal for the Recovery Ready Workplace program before the April 5 deadline.

Jonathan noted that since there is currently no funding set aside for RRW in the proposed legislation. The legislation was geared to fund OASAS so they can establish an advisory committee, issue RFPs for grants to organizations to do outreach training, train recovery ready advisors, etc. The strategy for now will be to continue to do grassroots work with employers, unions, and communities. If we get the other funding from these efforts it will allow FOR-NY to hire a number of staff to get RRW moving forward and work with organizations in the coalition to do outreach training and supplement activities we are already engaged in.

### **Research Update with Paul Landsbergis:**

Paul has done nine interviews so far, discussing workplace achievements and goals. He plans to do another 30 interviews and asked for volunteers to conduct interviews.

### **RRW Training Initiatives and Brainstorm:**

About NYS Department of Labor involvement in RRW. Jonathan noted we haven't had direct participation from the DOL in coalition meetings, although we do have some representatives from the Workforce Development Institute in attendance. The WDI receives funding from the DOL. **Robin Fellrath**, WDI's Long Island Regional Director, said she will reach out to NYS DOL to connect them to the coalition.

Jonathan shared that he has a contact at SUNY who works with Department of Labor apprenticeships. Jonathan plans to invite her to speak at an upcoming coalition meeting to discuss how we could integrate the DOL internship/apprenticeship program with Recovery Ready Workplaces. The DOL lists funding opportunities and lists internship and apprenticeship opportunities on their website.

Scott Curry's organization, Sullivan County Center for Workforce Development, already works with the DOL internship/apprenticeship program.

**Carrie Dunn-Herrera** (Assistant Director, Healthy Capital District) is familiar with the program, and explained the process. SUNY is the "group sponsor" of internship programs. Kim Thurn is the business development officer of their apprenticeship program. Organizations can go through SUNY for their apprentices as it is a timesaver in terms of applying for the program and administering the paperwork. The Apprenticeship Expansion Grant offers \$15,000 per apprentice up to \$300,000. Half can be used towards wages, or ideally to make sure the role of Certified Peer Recovery Advocates (or other roles in health & human services field) have the tools and resources to do the job effectively, such as providing iPads for outreach and engagement and professional development workshops. Once in the apprenticeship, the organization is eligible for tax incentives such as the \$2,000 tax credit from OASAS, plus through DOL apprenticeship program in addition to the \$5,000, the program adds \$1,000 over three years up to \$7,000 per year. The apprenticeship program is a fiscal benefit for the organization supporting the pilot program, it's not as big a risk to the employer as it supports the apprentice with professional development and supports the business with tax incentives and employee pay. Carrie also shared that SUNY, as the group sponsor, pays for the student to take two three-credit courses related to the field in a year. The courses are required as part of the apprenticeship. There is also money left over to take additional courses.

**Ruth Riddick** (Community Outreach & Communications, ASAP-NYCB Trainer Registry Program) noted the NY Certification Board who awards certification in peer recovery just launched a peer supervisor professional certification for individuals from any discipline or background to supervise peers, which could be of interest in the workforce.

**Karl Auerbach**, a Medical Review Officer, has been involved with drug testing and realizes drug testing should not be considered a punitive type of matter but a potential deterrent. There needs to be a balance between a "drug-free workplace" and the "wild west" approach. Drug testing, when done properly, is an important part of a recovery ready workplace. The Fitness for Duty program is not necessarily drug testing to capture SUD, it is a safety measure. Nuclear power plants have a good model for drug testing that is not punitive but tests for safety.

On Recovery Friendly Workplace Recruitment, **Scott Curry** (Disability Resource Coordinator-Sullivan County Center for Workforce Development) finds champions in business to share their best practices in training sessions with other organizations.

Jonathan shared that he, along with Michael Carpenter are speaking at a conference, arranged by Anne Marie Gibson, for Health Departments from New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. They will discuss RRW initiatives at the event. The conference is being sponsored by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists.

The meeting was adjourned.

**The next Full Coalition meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 14 at 3pm.**

