



# CES Partner Profiles

## CES Partner Profile: Gateway Services

**“Living supports should be provided in the least restrictive, most natural environment.”**

Gateway Services, Inc. of Princeton, Illinois a community-based organization, has found great value in implementing the College of Employment Services (CES) curriculums into their job coach training. Serving three counties in northern Illinois, Gateway Services provides a variety of services to adults and children with disabilities and their families. Part of their mission states that “living supports should be provided in the least restrictive, most natural environment”, and they work hard to ensure that as many people are engaged in their communities, living on their own, as possible.

In 1970, Gateway Services began in an old schoolhouse in a very small town near Princeton, with only program overseen by three staff members, and has grown to 125 Employees since.

Rachel Dean is the Communications Manager and Training Coordinator for Gateway Services. She is a graduate of Eastern Illinois University with a degree in Corporate Communication. With a background in sales and public relations, she came to Gateway Services in 2008.

“I have a younger brother with autism and psychosis and a nephew who has autism,” she explains. “So I’ve been around this industry my whole life. In my hometown my dad was president of an agency just like this!”

Dean began as a direct support professional (DSP), working in that role for just over two years, before working with Gateway Services’ transportation department as a marketing manager. She is also certified as a Qualified Intellectual Disability Professional (QIDP) in Illinois.

Within the organization, Gateway Services’ Community Employment Services operates as a program that helps individuals with disabilities attain and retain

employment in the community. “We have janitorial contracts with three companies in the local area,” Dean says, “and have 23 different businesses that employ our individuals with disabilities. In many of those cases, we have job coaches who actually go on site with an individual to make sure they stay on track with their job—and to make sure they retain their jobs.”

When it comes to employment, Gateway Services is involved from the very beginning. “We start with finding job applications, updating resumes, going through the interview process and looking at their interview skills and making sure they follow up with their interviews,” Dean says. By helping people from the very beginning of the employment process, and then helping them retain and thrive in their job, Gateway Services helps provide stability for people with disabilities who hope to be productive members of their community.

Job coaches are a significant part of this process. Gateway Services has two job coaches on staff who support over twenty individuals. Because Gateway Services already used the DirectCourse/College of Direct Support to train their DSPs, Dean thought the College of Employment Services would be a great fit for training their job coaches.

The ease and flexibility of CDS helped Gateway decide to sign on with the College of Employment Services for their job coaches. Dean notes that this was no different when implementing CES to train the job coaches. “They really enjoyed doing the training this way. People can work at their own pace, and don’t have to listen to me talk for hours on end. They can take a break when they need to, work it around their schedules. And the feedback is very positive.”

In addition, the CES curriculum allows organizations like Gateway to shape the lessons to suit their specific needs. “We created a few modules for our own job coaches,” she adds. The job coaches at Gateway, ▶

known as the Community Employment Services team, responded well to the modules that addressed their own organization's needs, which in turn allowed them to best address the needs of the people they support.

"We created a module about teaching individuals with disabilities—because everyone learns things differently, this is a general overview of how to tailor learning to each person's ability.

Another module that Gateway created was called Employment Supports. Dean notes that, "[w]ith this module, we have five lessons that go through the processes that our job coaches take each individual through—from the beginning, grabbing applications, going through the interview, etc. We were able to find lessons that perfectly fit going through that process from start to finish."

"The curriculum gives me flexibility," Dean says. "I can do my other job while someone is training. I don't have to be right there with them. I can rely on the curriculum to train people without having to focus totally on them."

She adds that their employees don't have to do each lesson one right after another. "They can do a lesson, some on the job training, apply what they learned online, and go back online."

"We still have classroom based training," Dean says. "The first day involves new employee orientation as well as Office of Inspector General (OIG) training, mandated by the state of Illinois. Anyone's who's

contracted with Gateway Services has to go through this training, which addresses potential abuse, neglect and/or exploitation of people with disabilities.

"On the second day, I teach people about Gateway Services, and then we go into the CES training." Dean notes that job coaches experience 40 hours of training at Gateway Services, of which half—20 hours— involves the College of Employment Support curriculum. "When I started in 2008 our training was between Princeton and another town a half hour away—and with all that driving and scheduling it took me three months to train." With CES, the training time is considerably shorter—a month and a half, which involves hands on training with established staff, which is augmented by the online curricula, which can be taken anywhere, at any time. "They get quality information, and it's so much more efficient," Dean says.

For many years now, the DirectCourse family of online curriculum has been a successful training tool for various state and local organizations, corporations, and non-profits around the United States. Some of these organizations are state-wide, employing dozens, if not hundreds, of dedicated individuals. Others are more modest, serving smaller communities with a core group that numbers just over a few dozen. For more information on the Direct Course curriculum and how it might help your organization—large or small—please visit our website at [www.directcourseonline.com/](http://www.directcourseonline.com/)

The College of Employment Services (CES), part of the DirectCourse suite of online curricula, provides employment professionals with training based on the APSE competencies, and gives them skills to assist individuals with disabilities and other challenges to find rewarding employment.

CES is developed by the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston, and is delivered in collaboration with the University of Minnesota's Research and Training Center on Community Living and Elsevier.

## CES Partner Profiles

College of Employment Services (CES) Partner Profiles share insight about the partnerships between Elsevier/DirectCourse and CES collaborators, advocates, and users. Their purpose is to identify and describe a variety of innovative and exemplary initiatives and activities that occur as a result of these partnerships.

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