



# Peer Mentoring for Students with Disabilities

## **Presenters**

Kevin Smith, Deputy Commissioner ACCES

Christopher Suriano, Assistant Commissioner Special Education

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# Successful Collaboration

- Office of Special Education (OSE) and Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES)
- Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers (RSE-TASC) and ACCES-VR District Offices
- Transition Interagency Groups
- Today's panel is an example of how the collaboration between ACCES and OSE is being implemented on the local level

# Peer Mentor Pilot

- Collaboration has resulted in more student referrals to ACCES-VR
- Students with Disabilities face multiple barriers to employment
- Exploring Peer Mentoring as an Option
  - Launching the Pilot
  - Partnership between ACCES and Independent Living Centers
  - Locations: White Plains and Rochester
- Successful Outcomes for adults and students
- Plans for expansion

# Rochester Peer Mentoring Initiative

## ACCES-VR Perspective

- Overview of the Rochester Pilot
- Peer Mentoring- Why it is Important
- Peer Mentoring- The Impact on Service Delivery

# Rochester Peer Mentoring Initiative

## Regional Center for Independent Living (RCIL)

### Perspective

- Types of Supports
    - Self Advocacy
    - Preparation for VR Services
    - Community Referral
  - Youth Specific Services
    - Financial Aid Assistance
    - Housing Assistance
    - Driving Assistance
    - Connection to other Government and Community Services
    - Independent Living Skills
  - RCIL Accomplishments
- Empowerment  
Communication Skills Training  
Life Skills/Problem Solving Skills

# Peer Mentor Participants

- Rochester

294 Participants/ 75 youth under age 25

- White Plains

436 Participants/ 112 youth under age 25

- Success stories working with youth