

May - June 2021

May is Displaced Homemakers Awareness Month

On January 28, 2013, Governor Chris Christie signed a bipartisan resolution into law to designate May as Displaced Homemakers Awareness Month. Read on to learn about the history of displaced homemakers centers in New Jersey. The content below was taken from the website of the Displaced Homemakers Network of New Jersey, Inc.

In the 1970s, the national divorce rate rose rapidly, as reported by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Women who had worked primarily in the home, raising a family, suddenly faced the daunting task of obtaining or updating skills and re-entering the workforce. In 1979, the New Jersey Displaced Homemakers Act was signed into law by then governor, Brendan Byrne. The Act did not appropriate funding, but mandated that action be taken to address the issue of Displaced Homemakers.

In 1982, the Vocational Division of New Jersey Department of Education appropriated startup funds for six Displaced Homemakers centers. Six pilot centers were established across the state to address the barriers faced by these women. By 1983, nine Displaced Homemakers centers had been started, but the funding of these centers by the Department of Education and the Department of Labor was being threatened. Recalling the slogan of "foremother", Trish Sommers, "Don't agonize: organize", the displaced homemaker centers organized. They met with the Division on Women, held meetings, wrote, and approved bylaws and formed a nominating committee which presented a slate of officers.

In January 1984, the first meeting of the Displaced Homemakers Network of New Jersey was held at the Lawrenceville Public Library and in 1990 the Network incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The number of centers increased throughout the years and today, a program can be found in every county throughout the state providing support to men and women needing to transition back into the workforce and become financially independent.

In honor of Displaced Homemakers Awareness Month, the Women's Center will be hosting two special events. The first, a lively panel discussion with three local businesswomen entitled: **Nailing It: Building Success to Re-enter Today's Workforce** will take place on **Thursday, May 6th at 10:30 am**. VP of Temporary Staffing Lisa Carver of The ExecuSearch Group, Director of Client Engagement Vicki Harte of Paradigm Marketing, and former Verizon Wireless VP of Connected Device Technology Rosemary (Ro) McNally will share their insights on the hiring process, the importance of social media and networking, and expectations of new hires. Then on **Thursday, May 20th at 10:30 am**, we will catch up with past participants during **Women's Center Alumni: Where are they now?** Come learn and be inspired by their stories. You may [REGISTER HERE](#).



May 6, 2021 - Nailing It: Building Success to Re-enter Today's Workforce

May 20, 2021 - Women's Center Alumni: Where are they Now?

June 3, 2021 - Interview Boot Camp (multi-session)



A New Chapter for Maureen Haggerty, Career Counselor

Endings and New Beginnings

I arrived at the Women’s Center in Fall 2010, to begin my new position in Career Counseling. Now, here I am, almost eleven years later, planning to retire in June 2021. We all realize how our new goals, changes, and transitions will create feelings of joy but also sadness. We find ourselves excited about tomorrow but unsure of the future.



As a Career Counselor, it has been my privilege to assist so many women in the midst of their own transitions, to explore the big question: *What’s Next for Me?* I wish each of you personal fulfillment and career success.

I will miss working with our dedicated, professional team here at the Women’s Center: Shannon Lengares, our Director; Kathy Vincelette, Employment Specialist; and Patty Borowski, Office Administrator.

I am joyful that I will have much more time for visits to my family out-of-state. I plan to stay active in my counseling organizations and attend professional seminars.

My sincere thanks to all members of the Women’s Center community!

In closing, I would like to leave you with the words of my favorite poet, Mary Oliver, from her poem, “The Summer Day.”

*Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?*

Warm regards,
Maureen



Staying Positive During Challenging Times

Scheduling time for **self-care** is essential. As you write your to-do list each day, schedule a few 15-minute breaks. Several suggestions are:

- ✓ Take a short walk around your neighborhood or a nearby park
- ✓ Play your favorite music - sing and dance
- ✓ Find a short, fun exercise routine on your phone or tablet
- ✓ Phone a good friend to just chat - even 10 minutes will be helpful
- ✓ Read a chapter from your new novel



When you return from this mini-break, notice if you feel more focused, motivated, and/or refreshed. Try making your self-care a priority. Your self-care is essential, especially in these challenging times!

Interview Question of the Month

Q: Why did you leave your last job?

A: How you answer this question tells employers about your character and values. They are looking to see if the reasons why you left seem valid or reasonable. Your best bet is to keep your answer short. Be honest, but frame it in a way that puts you in a good light. You don't want to go into the details about why you left, especially if the reality is that it was an unpleasant situation. You never want to badmouth a former employer/manager/coworker. An emotion-free, factual response works best!



Here are some examples of "safe answers" you can give:

- ◆ I left for an opportunity to advance my career/change career direction.
- ◆ A former boss or colleague recruited me to join their company.
- ◆ There was a change in management, and I felt it was the right time to leave.
- ◆ I was hired for a certain role, but over time that changed, and I was no longer being given the opportunity to do the work I was interested in.
- ◆ I had been with this company for a number of years and learned a lot but felt ready for a change.
- ◆ I reevaluated my career goals and decided a change was needed.
- ◆ I left the workforce to raise a family but am now looking to return full-time.
- ◆ I left my last position in order to spend more time with an ill family member. Circumstances have changed and I am ready for full-time employment again.
- ◆ I recently achieved certification and I want to apply my educational background and technical skills in my next position. I could not accomplish this goal in my previous position.
- ◆ I have been volunteering in this capacity and love this kind of work. I want to turn my passion into the next step of my career.
- ◆ I was commuting and spending two hours each day traveling back and forth, and preferred to be closer to home.
- ◆ My role was eliminated/my department was laid off due to the pandemic.

Interview Boot Camp Coming This June!



Are you tired of interviews that don't lead to offers? Or are you struggling so hard to get interviews that you haven't had time to practice your interview skills? Join us this June for a special 4-week Interview Boot Camp that will help you improve your skills and build your confidence. These workshops will be led by Professional Career Coach John Hadley who will share with you the exact strategies he teaches his one-on-one coaching clients.

John specializes in helping job seekers who are frustrated with their search. After graduating from Stanford University, he worked in the financial services industry for 25 years, in roles ranging from Product Manager to Chief Actuary. In 2003, John started his Career Search Counseling business, and has helped hundreds of professionals land the job and pay they deserve.

Mark your calendars for: June 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Watch your email and/or check our website for more details and sign up information, coming soon.

Career Corner Tips

1. **Stay organized.** Set up your work desk area and keep it neat. Organize and note all job-related programs at the Women's Center on your calendar.
2. **Do the research.** Explore the type of training that will be needed to enter the position you are seeking. The [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#), which is available online, is an essential source of current information. Talk to individuals in your careers of interest.
3. **Seek educational opportunities.** Continue to enhance your computer and workplace skills. There are many free educational and training courses online.
4. **Stay positive.** Reentering the job market is challenging, but maintaining a positive outlook will help you reach your goals.



Starting a Job Search? Be sure to...

- ⇒ Create a dedicated Gmail account for job search: typically [firstnamelastname@gmail.com](#) - just as long as it sounds professional (i.e. not catlady64 or flowerchild58).
- ⇒ Record a professional voicemail for both your home and cell phone. "Hello, you have reached _____. I'm sorry I missed your call. Please leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible. Thank you and have a great day!" And make sure your voicemail box is not full!
- ⇒ Check your email Spam folder and personally answer your phone whenever possible (even if you don't know the number) to make sure you are not missing any communications from employers.
- ⇒ Customize your LinkedIn URL. Go to your account profile (click on your picture) and on the upper right-hand side there is a box that reads: "Edit public profile and URL". Click on the pencil icon and remove the series of letters and numbers after your name, creating a new URL that contains just your name.
- ⇒ Clean up your social media accounts and check your privacy settings. Employers are going to "Google" your name and check out your social media. Be sure to remove anything that may be seen as inappropriate or controversial.

10 Common Interview Mistakes to Avoid



Arriving Late / Arriving Early

Arrive at your interview 5 to 10 minutes before your scheduled time but no earlier than 15 minutes.



Using your phone during the interview

Turn it off and stow it away in your bag before the interview. And if you forget to turn it off, do not answer it or check it if you receive a message notification.



Not bringing a resume

It is courteous to bring a copy for everyone you are schedule to meet plus a few extras, just in case your interviewer does not have it in front of them.



Not knowing anything about the company

Check out the "About Us" section on their company website, their social media pages (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter) and Google them for news.



Talking too much / Oversharing Personal Information

Read the interviewer's body language and be sure to pause and ask, "Have I answered your question?" before continuing with more details.



Not preparing for common questions

Prepare answers for popular interview questions and practice your responses with a friend, family member or Women's Center staff member.



Not having any questions for the interviewer

Prepare a list of 5-10 questions ahead of time. Be sure to NEVER ask about salary and benefits—let them bring up the subject first



Badmouthing past employers

Answer tactfully when they ask why you left your last job. Prepare answers to standard behavioral questions like "Tell me about a time when you had to work with a difficult supervisor/co-worker or work with someone you didn't like."



Displaying low energy

Make sure your posture is straight, that you are making eye contact, smiling and projecting your voice in a way that conveys enthusiasm.



Inappropriate attire

Always look professional for an interview, even if it is for a company with a casual dress code. Wear polished, closed-toe-shoes and go light on jewelry and makeup, perfume/cologne.