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**ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, NYC:ATWORK
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM RECEIVES THE ZERO PROJECT AWARD**

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio and Commissioner Victor Calise today announced that the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities innovative employment program, **NYC: ATWORK**, has received the [Zero Project](#) Award for 2021. The Zero Project focuses on the rights of people with disabilities globally. Their annual award honors the innovative and effective policies and practices that improve the lives of people with disabilities around the world.

"The International Day of Persons with Disabilities celebrates the global progress to increase access for the disability community in all facets of life," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "My Administration is fully committed to ensuring that New Yorkers and visitors have equal access to programs and services. The first-of-its-kind **NYC: ATWORK** workforce development program has greatly improved employment outcomes for people with disabilities and we look forward to continuing to make the city even more accessible and inclusive."

"To address a big issue like unemployment for people with disabilities you need a big solution," said **MOPD Commissioner Victor Calise**. "**NYC: ATWORK** is a network of passionate people actively creating solutions and opportunities for jobseekers with disabilities. We thank the Zero Project for the recognition and are excited to network with partners from around the world."

[NYC: ATWORK](#) is a public-private partnership that recruits, pre-screens, and connects New Yorkers with disabilities to job opportunities and internships with their established business partners in a myriad of sectors. Originally a three-year grant-funded initiative, **NYC: ATWORK** has grown into a powerful network of jobseekers, businesses, and service providers that will continue as a mainstay of NYC government.

The winners of Zero Project awards are announced every year on the United Nations [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) on December 3rd. This celebration aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development. As one of the awardees, the **NYC: ATWORK** team will be presenting the City's employment initiative to disability stakeholders from around the world.

[Full list of Zero Project Awardees for 2021](#)

"The city workforce should reflect the talents and abilities of all New Yorkers," said **Lisette Camilo, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS)**. "That is why DCAS is proud to support **NYC: ATWORK** and to help connect people with disabilities with rewarding careers in city government. The receipt of the Zero Project award is another affirmation that NYC is leading the way to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities."

"Ensuring accessibility in our city goes beyond physical spaces. It is a commitment to making resources, supports, and tools available that improve the quality of life of all New Yorkers," said **Jorge Luis Paniagua Valle, Deputy Executive Director of the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City**. "We are proud to support *NYC: ATWORK* to increase access to these vital employment services that help connect people with disabilities to the fulfilling careers they deserve."

"Through the *NYC: ATWORK* initiative, we are helping to connect hundreds of New Yorkers with disabilities to meaningful employment opportunities and providing a critical resource for companies interested in disability inclusion in NYC," said **Nancy and Fred Poses, Trustees at Poses Family Foundation**. "*NYC: ATWORK* is well-deserving of this recognition and the Poses Family Foundation is proud to support it as well as the New York City Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities."

"Thirty years after the establishment of the Americans with Disabilities Act, employment continues to be among the greatest barriers for people with spinal cord injury," said **Jane Otto, Program Officer at the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation**. "Meaningful work and gainful employment are vital to one's quality of life; the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation, the largest private funder of spinal cord injury research, rehabilitation, clinical training, and programmatic support in the United States and Canada, is proud to partner with the New York City Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities as a means to foster independence and leadership in the SCI community."

"Kessler Foundation is grounded in the belief that all people with disabilities have a right to pursue competitive, integrated employment, and live with dignity within our communities," said **Elaine Katz, Senior Vice President of Grants and Communications, Kessler Foundation**. "As an initial funder and thought partner, Kessler Foundation believed in the concept of *NYC: ATWORK*, as an alternative approach to workforce development for New Yorkers with disabilities. MOPD is uniquely poised to bring together the crucial players in creating a workforce development program that meets the needs of the 21st century workforce and is sustainable and replicable. We are excited that the Zero Project has selected *NYC: ATWORK* for this award and look forward to the continued success of the program."

"Transitional Services of NY, Inc. (TSINY) has partnered with *NYC: ATWORK* to benefit from the rich roster of talent they provide to business and organizations in all sectors," said **Larry Grubler, Chief Executive Officer of TSINY**. "But above all, the candidates that we have hired bring more than experience and motivation to their work. They are helping our organization become more diverse and inclusive, creating a change in our culture that we greatly appreciate."

"Uniqlo has been a stakeholder partner and Business Development Council member of MOPD's *NYC: ATWORK* since its inception," said **Daisuke Tsukagoshi, CEO UNIQLO USA, LLC**. "Hiring a diverse talent pool, including individuals with disabilities, is at the core of Uniqlo's mission and the partnership with MOPD and *NYC: ATWORK* has helped us build a truly inclusive workforce. We appreciate the business led, business driven approach this initiative has taken, and their understanding of our approach to recruit, hire, train and retain our workforce. We look forward to continuing this valuable partnership."

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