

## Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities Launches the ability Cisco Academy Powered by **NYC: ATWORK**- the First Cyber Security Training for People with Disabilities

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***New Yorkers with disabilities now have the opportunity to be trained in cybersecurity to enter the tech industry.***

**NEW YORK---** The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities has launched the ability Cisco Academy powered by **NYC: ATWORK** at the Institute for Career Development (ICD), proudly funded by the UJA-Federation of New York and J.E. & Z.B. Butler Foundation, with corporate sponsorship by BNP Paribas and Standard Chartered Bank. This program uses a train-to-place model that will prepare individuals with disabilities to secure employment in the cyber security industry. It delivers an industry-recognized Cisco certification program through a curriculum adapted to suit various learning styles.

The ability Cisco Academy will provide employment opportunities for New Yorkers with disabilities while also meeting the need for more cyber security professionals.

This program is the first instructor-led Cisco Network Academy exclusively for people with disabilities. It uses a train-to place model with a curriculum customized for different learning styles in an accessible classroom. Combined with soft-skills training and business engagement opportunities, it not only provides the students with a direct connection to employment, but also provides an environment where they can thrive and build a professional network of their peers within the disability community. The first cohort of sixteen students will receive their certifications in February. After completion of the program, students will be placed in internships on track to full-time employment.

**NYC: ATWORK** plans on replicating this model in other sectors by connecting with businesses to identify where the demand for qualified employees is greatest. The next cohort of the ability Cisco Academy at ICD starting will begin recruitment in October. For more information on the program, please visit [icdnyc.org/eligibility-it-academy](http://icdnyc.org/eligibility-it-academy)

“Once again, New York City leads the way by creating the first IT academy Cisco certified IT academy for individuals with disabilities, providing them with an unprecedented opportunity to access trainings, certifications and jobs that will allow them to thrive in this vastly changing world,” **said Deputy Mayor Phillip Thompson.** “Technology gives us the power to invest in untapped talent pipelines. Smart businesses will follow the lead of this public-private partnership to improve their workforce and invest in future success.”

“The ability Academy shatters the notion that people with disabilities cannot compete for fast paced 21st technology jobs and careers,” **said Victor Calise, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities.** “With access to the proper education and resources, people with disabilities can do anything. MOPD is proud to be a part of this revolutionary program model that identifies a need in the business sector for cyber security and provides people with disabilities the tools that they need to fill it.”

“On behalf of the Board of ICD and the senior staff, we want to express our appreciation to our collaborative partners – the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, ACCES-VR, UJA Federation, BNP Paribas, and Standard Chartered for assisting us to launch this celebratory milestone in the start of our next 100 years of service to people with disabilities,” **said Dr. Richard Weber, ICD Board President.** “The Cisco IT Academy will afford many individuals with disabilities the opportunity to have training in the field of Networking and Cybersecurity that will result in a meaningful career in an area that has a shortage of skilled individuals.”

"For over 100 years, ICD has been helping individuals who face barriers to employment, particularly those with disabilities, transform their lives through employment," **said Susan Scheer, CEO, ICD-Institute for Career Development.** "As a leader in the field of vocational rehabilitation, we are proud to partner with **NYC: ATWORK** to launch the first-ever Ability Academy at ICD. This innovative, forward-thinking approach brings ICD and employers together to prepare our talented students for good-paying career path employment in the fast-growing fields of Networking and Cyber Security. Together, we will ensure that individuals with disabilities have the tools to be successful in 21st Century jobs and employers have a steady pipeline of qualified candidates to meet their needs."

“UJA-Federation of New York is thrilled to partner with MOPD, ICD, and the other funders to launch this groundbreaking new initiative, **said Alex Roth-Kahn, Managing Director, Caring Commission, UJA-Federation of New York.** “The combination of service supports for both the hiring companies and the potential jobseekers makes this a winning solution for the New York community, and especially those with disabilities.”

“The JE & ZB Butler Foundation is thrilled to support MOPD’s development of the Academy and excited to see that business community is a strong supporter of this project,” **said Pat Goldman, Vice President, JE & ZB Butler Foundation.** It is our hope that this collaborative endeavor will open up workplace opportunities to people with disabilities who graduate from the Academy.”

“BNP Paribas is proud to sponsor the AbillTy Academy,” **said Stephen J Casey, Managing Director at BNP Paribas.** The bank is committed to active engagement with our community and working to develop people with skills and expertise that are critical to the future of organizations like BNP Paribas.”