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For immediate release: May 10, 2022

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### **Civil Service Commission Launches**

#### **"State as a Model Employer of People with Disabilities" (SAME) program**

**TRENTON, N.J.** – The New Jersey Civil Service Commission (CSC) launched the "State as a Model Employer of People with Disabilities" (SAME) program on Monday, May 2, 2022. The SAME program, in accordance with P.L.2021, c.465, provides fast track hiring and advancement employment opportunities for people with disabilities, thus ensuring a more equitable and inclusive State workforce that will be better able to respond to the needs of New Jersey's ever more diverse population.

"The CSC and the State of New Jersey remain unwavering in their commitment to the principles of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The SAME program represents a necessary extension of that commitment and a significant step toward making those principles a reality for all New Jersey residents, no matter their background or circumstances," said Civil Service Commission Chair/Chief Executive Officer, Deirdré Webster Cobb, Esq. "State and local governments that do not reflect their constituents cannot properly serve them, and SAME is a makeover that's long overdue."

In an effort to increase representation and access to public employment for persons with disabilities, SAME will allow appointing authorities to appoint qualified persons with significant disabilities to unclassified, or noncompetitive temporary or noncompetitive permanent, civil service positions. Eligibility for these positions will be determined based on a candidate's employment history, performance, education, and other relevant experience.

"To accomplish sustainable equity for people with disabilities we must recognize the barriers to satisfying employment as well as the benefits of their participation in the workforce," said Senator Vin Gopal, D-Monmouth, who is a primary sponsor of the SAME enabling legislation. "The SAME program recognizes that the State must be a leader in making sure people with disabilities have the employment opportunities as well as the opportunity to engage in meaningful social relationships and to express their skills and talents, which are all critical components of

community integration.”

This development marks the state’s commitment to providing attention to critical issues affecting disabled citizens of New Jersey who may otherwise experience barriers in the hiring process or face challenges in receiving proper accommodations.

“The State as a Model Employer of People with Disabilities program is an important step forward in our efforts to eliminate barriers in the application and hiring process that prevent people with disabilities from finding adequate employment,” said Assemblywoman Shanique Speight (D-Essex), who is also an original sponsor of the SAME legislation. “With its implementation, we are making progress on our commitment to creating a more inclusive workforce where all people, regardless of their disabilities, can find a job and achieve financial independence. The SAME program will improve the lives of many New Jerseyans with disabilities while setting a positive example for employers throughout the State. I commend the N.J. Civil Service Commission for working to establish this program and making our State a better place to live for residents with disabilities.”

The CSC's Division of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EEO/ Affirmative Action) will be spearheading a phased-in implementation of the program in the coming months. The near-term objectives for this roll-out include:

#### **Phase 1**

- Establishing a task force with representatives from constituent State agencies who serve the employment with disabilities;
- In partnership with the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Disabilities Management, providing a centralized accommodation program and educating State agencies on the availability of services to assist in the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities in the State’s workforce;
- Updating the N.J. State Survey on Persons with Disabilities for new hires with additional self-identification methodologies and Improving agency tracking outcomes for self-identified hires;

#### **Phase 2**

- In conjunction with the statewide Workforce Development Plan, compiling baseline demographic data on the current percentage of persons in the State workforce with self-identified disabilities;
- Building out a detailed recruitment and referral program that connects State departments/agencies with college students and recent graduates with disabilities, in partnership with the N.J. Department of Labor and Workforce Development’s Division of Vocational and Rehabilitative Services (NJLWD/DVRS) and the New Jersey Career Pathway Partnership for Employment Accessibility (CPPEA);

### Phase 3

- Providing each State agency with its baseline EEO disability workforce statistics and identifying a methodology for collecting data for required quarterly and biannual reporting;
- Designing and issuing a model methodology for State agencies to utilize for the initial assessment of existing policies and barriers to employment of persons with disabilities in State government;
- Identifying prospective employee populations in partnership with pertinent State agencies serving the employment needs of persons with disabilities, with a hiring and recruitment goal of increasing the percentage of persons in the State workforce with self-identified disabilities to 7%;
- Working with NJLWD/DVRS to establish model internships or similar work-based learning experiences for employees with disabilities that can be utilized by State agencies; and
- Developing a model mentoring program with a specific focus on supporting employees with disabilities and providing training to State agencies on creating and implementing such programs.

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For more information regarding the SAME program and its roll-out, please contact:  
CSCCommunications@csc.nj.gov.

For more information about the NJ Civil Service Commission, please visit: [www.nj.gov/csc](http://www.nj.gov/csc).

New Jersey is an Equal Opportunity Employer

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