

Recovery Works

Improving Employment Opportunities for Adult Mental Health Consumers

Sponsored by the Maine Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health

Time for a Career Change

Chelsea, a woman in her early 20's, was referred to the CES program by her case manager. She completed a *Need for Change Scale*, expressing a strong or urgent desire to transition out of her current employment and requesting to begin working with Employment Services within the next three months. Her case manager shared that Chelsea experiences symptoms of anxiety and depression but noted her strong motivation to secure more fulfilling employment with greater potential for long-term career growth.

Chelsea met with the Employment Specialist for her intake appointment. She arrived focused, energized, and clear about her intention to "hit the ground running." Chelsea had been working as a shift leader at a local coffee shop for the past two years. Although grateful for the experience, she was feeling stagnant in the role and expressed that she was "very ready for a change."

Through the IPS career profile process, Chelsea shared valuable insight into her skill set. She demonstrated strong money-handling abilities, excellent customer service experience, and a reliable work history. During the discussion, she shared that she had always been drawn to the idea of becoming a bank teller, stating, *"I feel like there's room for growth in that field, and I've always been interested in working in a bank."* She viewed the financial industry as one where she could build a long-term career path.

Chelsea disclosed that a few years earlier, she had interviewed with a local bank and had even been invited for a second interview. However, she ultimately chose not to pursue it, explaining, *"I didn't think they would actually hire me."* She went on to say, *"I don't look like a bank teller,"* revealing the self-doubt that had previously held her back. She accepted the coffee shop role instead, believing it to be the safer and more realistic option at the time.

Motivated to rewrite that narrative, Chelsea and the ES immediately began updating her résumé and writing a cover

letter tailored to the banking field. They also practiced interview strategies, emphasizing her customer service strengths and transferable skills. Although Chelsea remained nervous throughout the process, frequently expressing concerns about not being "good enough" for the role, she continued to take each step with determination. At one point, she commented, *"Maybe I should just stick to food service,"* but her desire for change continued to outweigh her fears.

With support, Chelsea applied for a teller position at a local credit union. Shortly after submitting her application, she was contacted for a phone screening. The ES worked closely with Chelsea to help her prepare, reviewing common questions and helping her articulate her qualifications with confidence. The phone screen was successful, and she was invited for an in-person interview.

To support Chelsea's success, the ES provided guidance on interview attire, reviewed professional etiquette, and assisted in selecting strong references. Chelsea reported back that the interview went very well, and the hiring manager informed her that reference checks would begin shortly.

About a week and a half later, Chelsea was officially offered the full-time Teller position. She was overjoyed. Chelsea promptly submitted her two weeks' notice at the coffee shop and is preparing to begin her new role at the credit union at the end of April 2025.

This opportunity represents more than just a new job, it is a major step forward in Chelsea's personal and professional development. She is now transitioning into a field she has long admired but previously doubted she could enter. Her story is a testament to the power of persistence, self-belief, and the impact of targeted, compassionate support. Chelsea is not only changing jobs, but she is also building a brighter future.