



October 5, 2020 | For Immediate Release

Contact: Quynh Thai, qthai@nextforautism.org

Freddie Mac, Cintas, JP Morgan Chase & WhiteFox Defense to discuss best practices for corporate disability employment programs with NEXT for AUTISM.

A Virtual Panel on October 14, 2:30PM to 3:30PM EST

To honor the 75th National Disability Employment Awareness Month this October and the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act this year, NEXT for AUTISM will host a discussion with representatives from Freddie Mac, Cintas, JPMorgan Chase and WhiteFox Defense about their disability employment initiatives. These Fortune 500 companies and technology company have committed significant resources to hiring and retaining employees with autism and other disabilities. In the panel discussion, they will explain their approaches and share best, result-oriented practices for disability hiring.

In February 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic, the US Department of Labor [reported](#) that 19.3% of people with disabilities were employed, a dismally low number that had not changed from previous years. Yet [studies](#) have shown that people with autism and other disabilities are an untapped talent source. They are underutilized by businesses that may not be sufficiently positioned to mine this valuable segment of the workforce. NEXT for AUTISM, through its corporate employment consulting program, has been working with companies such as Freddie Mac and Cintas to support hiring programs and workplace accommodations that are not only easy to adopt, but also cost-effective. With greater unemployment resulting from the pandemic, this work has taken on greater urgency.

Panel Speakers

- **Sarah Crump, Manager in the Office of Inclusive Engagement, Freddie Mac**
"The business case for neurodiversity hiring is very strong. We look broadly at neurodiversity in order to capture the talent that we need in a still competitive job market."
- **Jessica Huhn, Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Cintas**
"There are people with autism and disabilities at all levels at Cintas. It's a deliberate part of our company's culture, and we've worked consistently to create and maintain that culture."
- **Lee Corless, VP Global Technology Communities & Inclusion, JPMorgan Chase**
"Neurodiverse individuals are an important resource for our organization, especially in the backoffice operations, but also across all of the business. Our Autism at Work program has truly been a game changer."
- **Julia Webb, Neurodiversity Specialist, WhiteFox Defense.**
"There's no doubt in my mind that creating a culture that centers around enabling all employees to thrive will, in turn, allow the company to be successful. Neurodiversity in the workplace, built on a foundation of education and empathy, is a core component of modern innovation."

Moderator

Randy Siegel, North American CEO of Dennis Publishing, former CEO of Advance Local Publications, NEXT for AUTISM Board of Directors
"Companies are recognizing the value of this labor force, and NEXT for AUTISM is committed to creating greater opportunities for people with autism and other disabilities to thrive with meaningful work."

Register for the Panel Discussion: <https://www.nextforautism.org/our-work/disability-employment-panel/>

NEXT for AUTISM is a 501(c)(3) which seeks to transform the national landscape of services for people with autism by strategically designing, launching, and supporting innovative programs. For more information about NEXT for AUTISM's Corporate Employment Consulting Program, please visit our [website](#).