



The Training Post

www.nj.gov/csc

Winter Edition

January 2026

Olympic Spirit: Light Your Torch for Personal Growth

Happy 2026! This winter, get ready to bring it! While Italy hosts the Winter Olympics this year, we're bringing the Olympic Spirit right here to New Jersey.

Think about it, we're athletes in our own arena. We are emerging professionals on a journey with purpose. Whether you're seeking personal growth, perseverance, or a holistic approach to strengthen your mind, body, and spirit, a game plan is essential. If you're intrigued by what your plan can include, here are a few starting points: push your limits in whatever you pursue, seek to understand and build meaningful connections, embrace the process and honor your efforts over the outcome, bring balance and harmony to your life, and always, always aim to become your best self. As Olympic gold medalist Carl Lewis said, "It's all about the journey, not the outcome."

In this edition of **The Training Post**, we want to initiate your training cycle and build your skills with our featured training and development opportunities, professional growth advice, and beneficial updates and tips for the Learning Management System (LMS) and ePAR.



"It always seems impossible until it's done."

- Nelson Mandela

New Releases



In each edition of **The Training Post**, be sure to check out the list of highly recommended Quarterly Courses, Specials, and Training Promotions.

1. Excel Essentials

Mercer County Community College (MCCC)
January 22, 2026

2. NJ Supervisory Training Empowering Performance (NJ STEP)

MCCC
January 27 - March 10, 2026
February 25 - April 8, 2026

3. Customer Service

MCCC
February 12, 2026

4. Supervisor Success Series (S3)

MCCC
February 12, 19, & 26, 2026
March 17, 24, & 31, 2026

5. Excel Intermediate

MCCC
February 19, 2026

6. Business Writing

MCCC
February 25, 2026

7. Conflict Resolution

MCCC
March 4, 2026

8. Excel Advanced

MCCC
March 18, 2026

9. Advanced Business Writing

MCCC
March 24, 2026

Please contact CLIPTraining.Support@csc.nj.gov with any registration or program inquiries.



2025 National Learning and Development Month Recap

Last October marked the third year that the Civil Service Commission's Center for Learning and Improving Performance (CLIP) celebrated National Learning and Development (NLD) Month. In 2025, learners were invited to **Reach Your Summit: Push Your Limits, Reach New Heights**. This annual statewide initiative continued to highlight the importance of continuous learning, workforce engagement, and long-term employee development. NLD Month has quickly matured into an anticipated annual opportunity for employees to invest in their professional growth through high-quality, relevant programming.

Throughout the month, employees were encouraged to participate in NLD Month events supported by curated learning resources, suggested course lists, and eleven CLIP-hosted virtual learning sessions, delivered in collaboration with skilled facilitators and knowledgeable partners across the State. A special thank you to the Department of Human Services, the Department of the Treasury, the Office of Innovation and InnovateUS, and Microsoft for facilitating four of the eleven sessions.

NLD Month concluded, but learning does not stop when the calendar turns. If you were unable to attend the live CLIP-hosted virtual learning sessions, did not have an opportunity to complete the recommended microlearning or curated courses, or would like to revisit session content, many NLD-related resources remain available.

Employees are encouraged to explore the **Learning & Development Month** category in the Learning Management System (LMS), where courses from this year and prior years can be accessed on demand. These resources are available to support continued skill development and reinforce learning beyond October.



NLD Month serves as a reminder that learning is not limited to a single event or timeframe. CLIP will continue to support a statewide culture of continuous learning and growth. With ongoing executive support and strong agency partnerships, CLIP will build on this momentum to further elevate the learning experience and empower employees to reach new heights in their professional journeys.



Student Spotlight: Tania Thomas

“I truly believe that nothing learned is ever wasted.”

Tania Thomas is an Analyst Trainee with the Bureau of Safe Drinking Water at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Possessing approximately two and a half years in public service, Tania Thomas is responsible for processing applications related to the testing and monitoring of safe drinking water sources. Additionally, she is tasked with reviewing standard operating procedures (SOPs) and tracking the progress of procedural documentation.

During National Learning and Development Month (NLD), Tania’s enthusiasm for learning was on full display. She participated in a wide range of CLIP and agency-specific trainings, gaining the distinction, with another colleague, as a learner who completed the most trainings offered during NLD Month. Motivated by curiosity and a desire to grow both professionally and personally, she took advantage of a unique opportunity created by a division-wide file purging project. This allowed her the time needed to explore trainings on diverse topics that she might not have had time previously to take.

Expressing interests that extended beyond her immediate job responsibilities, Tania sought out trainings on Human Resources and Labor Relations policies, as well as programs focused on “environmental justice, DEI [diversity, equity, and inclusion], and the protection and restoration of waterways and coastlines.” She found the CLIP course offerings impressive, noting that they far exceeded her expectations and provided access to valuable resources beyond the standard annual trainings she is usually offered. Tania noted that topics focused on “health, work-life balance, and chair yoga, gave me the boost I needed ... for I truly believe that nothing learned is ever wasted.” Tania’s efforts genuinely exemplify the Olympic Spirit. As Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games believed, “the essence of the Olympics lies in participating and striving for personal improvement.”



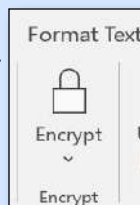
Security, a complex and multifaceted component of Olympics logistics, keeps athletes and spectators safe. In the same way, Outlook provides built-in encryption tools that allow users to keep their emails safe from unauthorized access.



Sending Emails with Olympic-Level Security

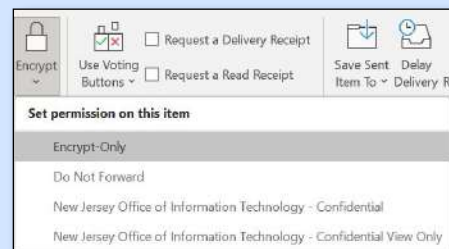
Encryption, a key feature of Outlook, enables users to send messages in an unreadable format to anyone except the intended recipient(s). If the email is intercepted, the message will be safe since the unauthorized user will need to have the “key” to open it. When sending sensitive data such as addresses, financial information, and other confidential data, follow these steps to encrypt the message:

1. Launch the Outlook application.
2. Compose a new message by navigating to the **Home** tab -> **New** group and clicking on **New Email**.
3. When the email window opens, click on the **Options** tab.
4. Go to the **Encrypt** group.



5. Click the down arrow and set the permissions by clicking **Encrypt-Only**.

You can also enforce restrictions on the message by selecting **Do Not Forward**. By selecting this option, recipients will not be able to forward, copy, or print the message. However, note that they **can screenshot** the message.



6. Send the email to the intended recipient.

If your recipient is using Outlook, they will be able to read the message the same way as an unencrypted message. If they are not using Outlook, they will receive an email message with instructions on how to read the encrypted email. **To use this feature, you’ll need to have a Microsoft 365 subscription.*

As a general best practice, avoiding the inclusion of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or sensitive information in email altogether remains the safest approach when using any email system. The next time you’re sending sensitive data to a recipient, treat it with Olympic-level security.

The BUZZ

Collaborate and Compete for Excellence

At CLIP, we strive to provide our newsletter readers and course learners with innovative and cutting-edge learning experiences. “The Buzz” features the latest training trends and noteworthy “buzz” about various professional development themes. In this issue, we explore how the Olympic Spirit forms the foundation of meaningful professional development and plays a key role in all of CLIP’s trainings.

Every two years, the world gathers to celebrate the Olympic Games—a global showcase of discipline, skill, cooperation, and relentless pursuit of excellence. While the games inspire millions, the real magic lies behind the scenes: athletes pushing one another to be better, learning through structured training, and embracing both rivalry and teamwork.

CLIP training emphasizes continuous improvement, peer collaboration, and reflective practice—principles that mirror the rhythms of elite athletic preparation. At the heart of the Olympics is the duality of competition and collaboration. Athletes compete fiercely for medals, yet they also train side by side, share knowledge, and push each other toward higher performance. In the same way, healthy working

environments can accommodate productive peer competition that constructively helps the whole team to aim higher. When coworkers and team members observe each other’s methods, exchange strategies, or reflect on shared goals, they can create a fruitful competitive energy that elevates everyone’s performance.

Yet, competition alone cannot drive sustainable improvement. Collaboration is what turns isolated moments of progress into long-term success. Like relay teams or synchronized squads, professionals grow strongest when they leverage the collective strengths of their peers. When colleagues learn with and from one another, individual excellence becomes team excellence.

In the end, professional development through CLIP training is not just an exercise in skill-building—it is a team sport. By embracing healthy competition and meaningful collaboration, individuals and teams alike can achieve breakthroughs worthy of a podium and improve New Jersey State government for everyone.



ePAR Insider: Test Your Knowledge of the ePAR System

1. What action should a supervisor take when their Ratee changes jobs or has a new supervisor?

- a. A final rating should be given.
- b. A closeout should be given.
- c. An interim review should be given.

2. An employee is eligible for a promotional opportunity if they have an unsatisfactory rating.

- a. True
- b. False

3. What action should be taken if the Rater is unavailable to sign an ePAR?

- a. No action. The ePAR becomes invalid.
- b. The Reviewer can sign and certify as the Rater.
- c. No action. The Ratee automatically receives a satisfactory rating.

4. When can an ePAR be edited?

- a. At any time during the ePAR cycle.
- b. After the Rater signs the document.
- c. Before the Ratee signs the document.

Answers are located on page 7.

For more information on all the features of ePAR, refer to the ePAR User Guide found on your myNJ page!

Professional Development Toolkit

Going for Gold: Workplace Boundaries You *Should* Push

Just as Olympians push physical and mental limits to achieve record-breaking success, you can push boundaries in the workplace to reach new levels of professional success.

Here are two to consider:

Comfort Zone

Intentionally pushing past your comfort zone at work can be beneficial. In fact, it was concluded from a study on intentional discomfort that “people who aimed to be uncomfortable were more engaged in their activities, felt more motivated to keep doing them, and believed they made more progress toward their goals compared to those who weren’t seeking out this kind of vulnerability” (Newman, 2022). This is because they viewed the discomfort as a positive and motivating signal toward progress, rather than a negative alarm (Newman, 2022). You can start by making yourself intentionally uncomfortable in small ways. If you worry about criticism and avoid sharing your work, reach out to a trusted colleague for feedback on a part of a project you already feel confident about. If you hesitate to ask for help because you fear being a burden, request a simple favor from a friend. Or if you struggle with conflict and rarely advocate for yourself, try asking for a short extension if your workload becomes too heavy. In the end, however you do it, getting comfortable being uncomfortable will pay off.

Skills/Roles

Boundaries involving your skills and roles are also worth pushing, as they



allow you to expand your skillset and knowledge, grow your network, and demonstrate your potential (Career Compass, 2019). One way to do this is by taking on a “project or task that is currently beyond your level of knowledge or skill,” commonly known as a stretch assignment (Stretch Assignments, 2019). Assignments like these are meant “to ‘stretch’ you developmentally by placing you in a challenging position in order to learn and grow” (Stretch Assignments, 2019). So, if an appropriate project or role arises that is outside of your typical duties, consider volunteering to take it on. Similarly, if a learning opportunity like a class, webinar, or conference that goes beyond your current skills or role responsibilities is presented—take advantage of it. CLIP classes such as Business Writing, Customer Service, and Public Speaking could all help you stretch your professional capabilities.

As you push these workplace boundaries, keep in mind that not all boundaries should be crossed. While stretching your comfort zone and skills is encouraged, be mindful of others’ personal boundaries, your workload limits, organizational authority, and all legal and ethical requirements. If you are unsure, having a conversation with your supervisor is a good place to start.

Signature Blends

(*available with a CLIP All Access Pass)

***Business Writing Tips: Edit, Rewrite, and Say it Right**

Classroom Complement: **Advanced Business Writing**

***Thomas Kilmann Conflict Resolution**

Classroom Complement: **Conflict Resolution**

Winter 2026



The “LMS Café” has something for everyone. In each edition of **The Training Post**, the LMS community can find information on new course releases, blended learning recommendations, and for our LMS administrators, system updates.



What’s Brewing

View our [CLIP All Access](#) themed courses for this quarter.



World Logic Day
January 14th



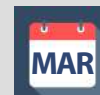
[Creativity: 02.](#)
[Logic vs. Creativity](#)



American Heart Month



[Everyday Well-Being: 07.](#)
[Sleep, Rest, and Renewal](#)



Ethics Awareness Month



[Professional Productivity:](#)
[Ethics for Everyone](#)

LMS Barista

For the Win!

This winter, we embrace the Olympic Spirit, a reminder that growth is a journey marked by discipline, resilience, and the drive to achieve your personal best. Much like a coach preparing champions for the Games of the Olympiad, we are introducing a new resource designed to help managers lead with precision, strategy, and purpose, and guide their team toward the win.

The [LMS Manager Overview](#) training takes you behind the scenes of the LMS from a manager’s perspective, demonstrating how to navigate key tools that support team development. Just as Olympic coaches analyze performance, track progress, and guide athletes toward finish-line excellence, managers will learn how to use the LMS to assign learning, monitor completion, and support individual growth pathways, inspiring team performance all year long.

Writing @ Work

The Champion's Pen: Mastering Business Writing with Olympic Precision



Gold medalist Mia Hamm was asked how she continually amplifies her prowess as a professional soccer player. Mia responded, "I am building a fire, and every day I train I add more fuel. At just the right moment, I light the match."

With her response, Hamm delivered profound advice wrapped in inspiration that, in the context of business writing, provides an adaptable ideal for our professional development as writers. Put another way, the purpose of the proverbial "torch" we carry as business writers is to ignite our readers' interests and fuel their actions based on how well we build the information we convey.

So, in the tradition of the Olympic Spirit of effort powered by practice, consider "fueling" your business writing by adapting the following key principles.

- **Preparation:** Know your purpose and audience; do research before writing.
- **Clarity:** Proofread to remove errors; use clear, concise language.
- **Persistence:** Review and modify your work to achieve the desired outcome.
- **Teamwork:** Collaborate with team members; obtain input.
- **Adaptability:** Be flexible in response to feedback or shifting timelines.

Applying the Olympic Spirit to business writing can enhance communication, relationships, and achieve greater work success.

To learn more, enroll in CLIP's [Business Writing](#) and [Advanced Business Writing](#) courses.



Who was the first woman to win two Nobel Prizes, showcasing lifelong learning?

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| a. Marie Curie | c. Dorothy Hodgkin |
| b. Gertrude Elion | d. Chien-Shiung Wu |

Answer located on page 7.



Click the icon to subscribe to **The Training Post**.



Congratulations to Tabbu V.

from the Department
of the Treasury!

You have been selected to receive the
"Free Single-Day Training."

*Thank you to all of those that
submitted a testimonial for our
2025 National Learning and
Development Month!*

Watch our 2025 NLD
Month Testimonial Video!



Question

Corner



Winter Question:

What aspect of the Olympic Spirit resonates with you with regards to personal and professional development, and why?

Respond >

Respond to be entered to win a FREE Single-Day Training. By submitting to the Question Corner, you are authorizing CLIP to publish your response.

Credits

LaVida Stalsworth, Chief Editor,

Writer: Introduction, 2025 NLD
Month Recap

David Allen, Writer:

ePAR Insider

Charleen Johnson, Writer:

TechTips

Eugene Lanzoni, Writer:

The Buzz

Tira McCants, Writer:

Student Spotlight

Ashley Rosati, Writer:

Professional Development Toolkit

Denise Salvatore, Editor

Janet Thompson, Editor, Writer:

Writing @ Work

Darrell Waytes, Writer:

LMS Barista

Julia Stillman, Designer



State of New Jersey

Governor Phil Murphy | Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way

Civil Service Commission

Chairwoman & Chief Executive Officer Allison Chris Myers

ePAR Insider Answers: 1. b; 2. b; 3. b; 4. c

Trivia Answer: a. Marie Curie

<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/physics/1903/marie-curie/facts/>

References

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https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/nelson_mandela_378967

https://www.azquotes.com/author/8806-Carl_Lewis#google_vignette

Spotlight:

https://www.azquotes.com/author/3327-Pierre_de_Coubertin

ePAR Insider:

Question 1 – Page 53 of user's guide, also in N.J.A.C. 4A: 6 – 5.2 (b) 1.

Question 2 – N.J.A.C. 4A:4 – 2.6

Question 3 – Page 21 of user's guide. Also page 60.

Question 4 – Throughout all sections (expectations, interim, final review) of guide.

Professional Development Toolkit:

Career Compass No. 73: How Do I Get and Benefit from a Stretch Assignment? (2019, July 8). Icma.org. <https://icma.org/articles/member-news/career-compass-no-73-how-do-i-get-and-benefit-stretch-assignment?>

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TechTips:

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Writing @ Work:

Key Principles for the Olympic Spirit and Business Writing (NJ Advanced AI 11/26/25)

Article Quote Source: "40 Inspiring Quotes from Olympic Athletes" by Kyle Eng <https://www.signupgenius.com/resources/olympic-quotes>

Did you Know?

<https://www.weforum.org/stories/2025/02/international-women-day-why-do-we-need-it/#:~:text=IWD%2C%20now%20celebrated%20as%20a,campaigner%20Sylvia%20Pankhurst%20was%20arrested.>