CSAVR Spring Conference

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>>SPEAKER: Good morning. Good morning. I hate to interrupt this beautiful, nice lively chatter. Good morning, good morning!

Good morning!

What's that voice they used to do good morning something, right? Welcome all of you to this spring 2019 CSAVR conference. I want to acknowledge all of our members here and teams that have come from around the states and the territories. We have our office of rehabilitation RSA colleagues and partners that are here. Folks from OSERS that are here and partners from academia and organizations that work with us welcome all of you. Our host state colleagues, thank you for the work you're doing. Supporting the conference. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge our CSAVR staff Steve and Rita, John, Teresa, Kathy, Ron, Danielle, for the work they do supporting us every day in the advancement for people with disabilities. Certainly a membership organization relies on the members to provide the leadership and our executive committee or officers who have stepped up for doing that. Thank you for the work you're doing. I understand tonight we have the reception, maybe a little bit of competition. There's a game going on between Virginia and Texas Tech [laughter] any Virginia fans in the house?

[Applause.]

Any Texas Tech fans the house?

[Applause.]

You might be outnumbered a little bit. Maybe the Auburn fans will route for Texas Tech. First of all, I want to applaud the hard work each of you do every day.

We have a long way to go before achieving perfection. There's no doubt in my mind that the opportunities for quality for people with disabilities have never been better. We know that the easy problems don't come to government, if a market could have solved it, it would have and would be making money doing so. We also know that there's no single system that has sufficient resources to meet the demand. This week, we have an opportunity to not only invest in ourselves, organizations, but to reenergize and pick up a few good ideas. There's a full agenda planned over the next two and a half days and I invite you to continue the exactly, the networking that you have, but also to pick up a couple of ideas that you can -- share with your colleagues. So I look forward to seeing you throughout the conference. Both here in the general session and the breakout sessions that follow throughout the agenda. I would like to invite our host State Director colt Dennis from Maryland.

[Applause.]

>>SCOTT DENNIS: Thank you. Appreciate it. good morning, everyone. Welcome to Maryland. I appreciate everybody being here today. On behalf of governor Larry Hogan, our state superintendent, Dr. Karen S. and I, want to welcome you to CSAVR 2019 Conference here.

To echo some of Joe's sentiments here I want to thank CSAVR staff for putting together what I believe is a very robust agenda for the next two and a half days. Be covering a number of important topics that effects all of us in the delivery of services and the people that we serve.

Second, would be remiss as a State Director to to say as your time here in the State of Maryland, the nation's capital, that you take advantage of the number of opportunities that are here. Maryland is a diverse state. There's a lot of cultural events, a lot of shopping and a lot of interesting places to eat around the area. As all State Directors know we appreciate when CSAVR comes to -- has a conference in their state that you spend your hard earned dollars enhancing our economy because we all have to meet that match and maintenance of effort requirements there during the fiscal year. So, again, thank you for coming enjoy the conference and welcome.

[Applause.]

>>SPEAKER: All right, so now, this guy needs no introduction, but what the heck. Our CEO Mr. Steve Wooderson who leads us day in and day out making sure that we keep moving forward. Steve, turn this over to you.

[Applause.]

>>STEVE WOODERSON: Good morning. That thing just shocked me. Did it shock you? Holy smokes. Woke me up. Jeepers. Good morning CSAVR, how are you y'all doing? Everybody happy to be here this monk? Doesn't sound like you're too happy. Are you really happy to be here? Gives me more comforts that everybody is happy to be here. We're happy you're here.

There's more than 300 folks registered for the conference this spring, but it seems like we push our limits up and we're really thrilled that you're here.

On the screen, I have a couple of things to bring to your attention. We're want to encourage you to tweet -- did I say it right? Tweet and I believe the access for wi-fi that you need to use capital letters F. you struggle with that be sure to use capital letters to access the wi-fi. We'll start today with just a brief moment introducing our new director since fall of 2018. This is a moment that, for us is really special because as you know our business, we have folks that come and go. There are a variety of thrones we have State Directors that retire, move on, change appointments, whatever the case may be. Although, we hate to see those that have been in the ranks leave us, it's also exciting to see folks come in with a new life, awareness and opportunity for us to learn from them as well. So we'll take a few moments to recognize those that have become State Directors or moved from interim to acting to appointment since our last meeting.

First one we want to recognize is from the great State of Alaska, Dwayne Mayers.

[Applause.]

Although, Scott got up here and presented with conference and awareness like he's been in the job forever, actually you were acting for six months, so I think we announced you last fall that you have moved into a permanent appointment. Congratulations, Scott.

[Applause.]

Very new is Larry Vroomam.

[Applause.]

Michigan general made it official Tina Fullerton. Where are you?

[Applause.]

Next, I don't know if Shawn is here from Georgia Combined give him a round of applause anyway. Kathy Trotter, North Carolina General, are you with us? She needs a round of applause as well.

In New Mexico, Robert Alvarez is a point of contact. I'm not sure if he has been appointed. Robert, are you here? Thank you for representing him, tell him we gave him a big round of applause. Thank you.

[Applause.]

I believe we announced Chanda H.D. for being here. Tell her we gave her a big round of applause, folks.

[Applause.]

And then similarly in Oklahoma, Melinda was appointed from Oklahoma.

[Applause.]

And then in the acting roles in Oregon General, Keith Ozols [ph]. Thank you.

[Applause.]

We want to take a moment during our coffee break this morning to say thank you to those new State Directors, please shake their hands, welcome them to their new job and we're thankful for the job you're already doing and look forward to you enhancing the organization through your knowledge and experience as well. Vision 2020 has been the driving force for three years. Our mission and objective has been repeated over and over again. We hope it has becoming somewhat embedded in your thinking and that our approach to everything we do at CSAVR is shaped by our commitment to people with disabilities and business at the intersection of career readiness and competitive integrated employment.

That activity began with our leadership back when Mark Schultz was president and has continued through Lisa, Robert, to Joe, will continue for the foreseeable future as being the foundation of the work of staff and the work of the leadership as well. Many of you have seen our four principles that are really what's driving some specific activities and I just want to highlight here in a few moments.

Our principles are based on innovating solutions which comes from the feel, the work you're doing, the activities you're about that we're able to bring back to DC and across the country and say: Here is the work being done in the field. Here are the good things, the innovation and the new activities. Some of those are highlighted in our Investing in America document for those of you going to the Hill and carrying that with you.

So much of what you're doing is working with the individuals seeking employment, folks with disabilities seeking employment and looking at how we surround them with the resources that they need to build their talented skills. In addition, this principle focuses on how we arm our professionals as well. Those that are working in the, how to we influence preserves? How do we influence inservice and those in supervisory ranks and those at the leadership levels as well? We've been fortunate to have a number of initiatives and activities that have been specific to this principle.

The third area is customized services and expertise., quite frankly, this comes as a result of us hearing across the country that VR is place to place and does different networks different people. Helping folks understand that that's why it's vocational rehabilitation. We customize what we do for the individual. Allowing individuals to have the freedom to choose, the approach they take in being able to achieve those talents and skills. The last principle is engaging in collaborate strategies. I'll speak to that in a moment. This came from the field in saying to vocational rehabilitation, how lug about engaging a community? Because we as an individual, the VR program, individual program is unable to unpack fully everybody in this community. How do we bring people together in a way that allows to us bring services and goods that benefits the entirety community of people people with disabilities seeking employment?

Something specifically since the fall that I want to briefly mention, bring to your awareness. The first is that we have a news letter launched in January called In Focus we hope that you've been able to see and get it. If you have not, then please see somebody, a State Director or somebody in the state agencies so that you can be sure and access that.

Even to those that are on The Hill and staffers and all across the country. We hope there will be a wide distribution that have. The next edition will come up after the conference.

Secondary area that has been launched since the fall meeting is in the area of language modernization. I was really encouraged by our early visits, this congress. Sitting down and others sitting down with members of the staff on The Hill and knowing WIOA is nowhere near being authorized, right?

For example, the word rehabilitation. How many much us heard that people say we're in the field of drug and alcohol rehabilitation?

There seems to be a tendency in some circles to drop the rehabilitation counselors, but we're rehabilitation counselors. When we talk about job placement, is it job placement or careers? These are the kinds of terms that honestly to the casual observer might seem to be insignificant. For those of us in the business of promoting and encouraging the gainful engagement in our community, we have to find ways to better communicate. To that end wave work group that has been started, looking at how we may be able to improve upon the language and the next reauthorization of WIOA, but not waiting until then hopefully make decisions and make those conversations early on so when the time comes we can actually make changes in language.

The encouragement from those on The Hill was that, if CSAVR would begin this process, we have folks on The Hill willing to bring together information and staffers on The Hill to extend this conversation as well. We're thrilled that this is on the horizon. The next activity that we're jumping into, feet first, is related to that fourth principle. The idea of vocational rehabilitation as a partner in the larger community. Going across the country we would hear concerns about what was kind of presented in the sense that VR is wanting to protect its own.

That there are those that feel that maybe we are not as open as we should be. We know better and feel like we've behaved in a way that's open and engage in the broader community, but it is an area that pretty consistent across the country, that we have opportunities to grow.

And so since fall, we have with the direction of leadership, a partner strategy where we're now beginning -- actually a small meeting Tuesday afternoon for a group of folks asking us to brainstorm, to help identify. So what does partnership mean? What does it look like? What's partnership? How do we define it and go about identifying some specific strategies within a foreseeable future that will impact the way that we, as a broader proliferation go about engaging the broader community? We're excited about that undertaking as well.

I don't want to steal RSA's thunder because our acting commissioner will be speaking Wednesday for their invitation on rethinking performance. Carol, I promise I won't take anything away from you.

It is an opportunity and in line with Vision 2020 to engage with RSA to think about our future as a profession and the impact of the amendments, WIOA and how we can rethink performance for the future.

I want to take in a few more moments to speak to all of us, not just directors -- even state agency staff, but all of us who come to CSAVR to participate in our conferences and then in the activities that are throughout the year, that impact you as partners in this community. Vision 2020, identified the four principles that we publically use in our messaging and communication.

In addition to those four principles we recognize that there is a need for an opportunity for, CSAVR to reflect on who we are as an organization as well. I've been around since Pluto was a pickup and some of you have been around longer than that. Our structure is basically saying -- since most of us have been engaged with CSAVR. So what that means is that our president has asked that a few of our directors pull their thinking together and engage the broader community about: How do we, as an organization, look at our economy structures? Lookow how we engage members and look at how we engage those are at our conferences. It likely results in some significant constitutional changes and operational changes as well. That's not easy stuff. That's the sausage making within the organization. It's not toes make those kinds of changes, but we do want to take the opportunity to, as many venues as we can -- starting with this morning and this past weekend -- to bring this to your awareness because all of you in this room have a role to play and providing us with the feedback. Your thinking, as it comes to: How do we as an organization better represent your interest and needs and engage you in a conversation that we're having?

For example, we have been operating -- Tuesday and we get together as economies, right? And those economies represent high interest areas that we've had in this organization. We want to restructure our thinking in the way that we use committees to drive the business of CSAVR and that what we now see is committees working that becomes more engaging you in dialogue, exchange, being able to still have those gatherings whether we call them -- I hate to use these terms -- learning exchanges. Communities of practice, learning circles, dialogues, whatever terminology we want to use. But we're not going to lose your engagement we want to enhance it in a way to broaden the work of CSAVR. So please, participate in your committee meetings and participate in your regional meetings because they'll be some dialogue in the next couple of days, in this area.

When we come to Wednesday morning, the directors are voting on this, but when it comes to the business meeting Wednesday morning, we're not voting on changes to the substitution, but we are voting on a concept to move forward and all of you have a role to engage.

We want to encourage you to Tweet. Here are those -- what's the word? Those things to screen hashtags, CSAVR Spring 2019 #Vision2020.

[Indicating.]

We want to have a bank of photos so as you go about your business the next few days, feel free to drop us your photos that you've taken, those that you want us to see obviously [laughter] and that represent the profession and the work we're about. Send it to: Info@CSAVR.org.

Please, let us know by going out and there's an opt-out sheet on the front desk. We're not sharing of those without anybody's permission. If there is something you want to be sure and eventually be something we would share. We're hoping to use these for our Vision 2020 celebration and next year.

We're always at the mercy of the hill's scheduling and a little bit different is that we'll be in Russell, Room 325. It's the Kennedy Caucus Room. It has rich history.

That aside, we only have a couple of hours 10:30-12:30. Plan on getting on the red line so that you are there.

We'll hand out several awards that morning. Our business award as well.

For those of you going to the Hill, we have a new -- Investing in America looks a little bit different, but we would ask that you take one of those per visit including your packets along with the other materials we have. So we're looking forward to you being there when your on The Hill you have pictures taken with your staff or members, please feel free to send those pictures to:

Info@CSAVR.org.

We'll sending out an view have you always link out once the conference is completed. Take note and provide us feedback. I want to let you know that our -- what's it stand for? Performance evaluation quality assurance folk cohort are here. They'll have some posters showing some of the work they've done out in the lobby. During the business session on Wednesday will be recognizing some of the graduates from the PEQ Program.

Our leadership forum which was referred to as new director trainee was wildly received this year. I think -- I'm so thankful for all of you involved in that. The NCSRC and we appreciate you being here. They'll actually report out first time during our business meeting.

If you have registered we hope you'll be on The Hill getting the nomenclature congress.

Our reason, are you here?

If you're one attending lunch the menu is on the back of your name tag. Absolutely last or least we'll say, thank you to Scott and to the Maryland staff out there helping run the registration.

I always feel that when I have the opportunity I need to be sure I share with you how much I appreciate the staff and the work they're doing. You know this doesn't just happen, but there's a lot of other stuff they're doing as well. I want to share with you on a personal note, Rita isn't here. Rita got a call Friday that her bother's greatly IL. So she left and she's in Florida.

We look to having you here the next few days. With that I'll pass it back to Joe as our president speaker.

[Applause.]

>>JOE XAVIER: Thank you, Steve, as always just a lot of work going on. So, again, thank you. It's now my pleasure to introduce our next speaker. Here today Mr. Johnny Collett to share some updates and perspective from the Department of Education. Mr. Collett comes to this role with a lot of personal and professional experience.

At the local level he was a special education teacher. At the state level, he served as the Director of Special Education. At the national level, he served as the Director of Special Education outcomes for CCSSO. I'll let Johnny explain to you what that is. I think it's the Council for Chief State Schools Officers. Johnny is now, the assistant secretary OSERS a year now.

Outcome raised the expectations for each of those. He believes that the family, community and nation can do a better job serving these individuals. He has an openness to confront the structures that present barriers to these individuals getting into competitive integrated employment he has a strong belief that there's a link between higher expectations, but with the appropriate supports that allow students with disabilities to learn and get ready for work and allows people with disabilities to prepare and achieve employment. Please join me in welcoming our partner, colleague, Mr. Johnny co-

[Applause.]

Johnny Collett: I got behind traffic and you know how that goes. I'm here and grateful to be here. I've spoken with this group a number of times. It's a pleasure for me to be with the individuals that we serve. Joe mentioned that's a large part of my background is having worked in the state Department of Education and one of the things I'm most proud of -- we all have things we're not so proud of in our professional career and things we would have done better, but one of the things eye proud of is how successful we are thinking across agencies serving individuals with disabilities. You know, not just get stuck in resting on our lulls and isolated impact, but how we have impacted across agencies and many times same individuals. To be with a group like yours is always a highlight for me. I am proud and really honored to lead this office and many of the team members are here. They're the real stars of the show, but what a great job they do. What an honortory lead an office that has the charge to impact the life of an individual with a disability. We think about those kids birth through 21. We think about them transitioning to life after they leave our systems of education and thinking about employment. Just a great honor it is to have such a unique office in OSERS to impact the life of an individual.

I've mentioned this, and if you've heard it before, check your email. I'll tell you when there's something new. [Laughter.]

The only way to ensure the success of all individuals with a disability is to focus on each individual. We've talked about this before. I'm still saying it because I still believe it is true. The only way for all to mean all is that it really means each. This is the interactive portion of our time together this morning. How many of you believe from wherever you lead that the focus of your work is the individual? I always think should I raise my hand, do I believe that? Is this a trick? I won't look. How many of you believe that we should work to ensure that each individual has what they need what they need it? Okay I'm not looking. Good.

I suspect it's everybody.

I do too. That's why limiting opportunities and options is counter provocation to the very values we just said we believed. If the focus is truly on the individual, and if the focus is making sure that individual has what they need, when they need it, then frankly, I don't understand how limiting options out of the gate gate get you there.

What does the individual need? We usually ask the right question. I worry about what we end with. We stop short asking: What in my view should be the very next question? If that's what each individual needs, then the next question auto to be: What does everyone in the system supporting that individual need?

We need to ask both questions because this is of utmost importance to you and me and efforts to meet the needs of each individual. We must not forget to address the needs of everyone.

That's why the partnerships that we have across agencies and across the workforce development are so important because we get that and you get that. We know how important it is not only to think about what individuals need, but then what do the people in the systems serving them need?

I want to be clear when I say this whether I'm talking about the school aged side of our house our talking about employment. It's equally true for us at the department. We believe that those closest to the individual know their needs better than we do. Because of that, we don't S think the best ideas come out of Washington, DC from some of us sitting in a building somewhere. We have some experience and happy for that and I think that informs the work positively, but the reality is that you're the ones doing the work every day and the people you're serving every day. Those innovative practices and approaches that happen locally and best happen locally are things that we support and want to encourage and try to empower as opposed to constrain.

We believe that you're in the best position and those you serve especially as closer you get to that individual in that is community and family. We believe you're in the best mission position to imagine and implement the changes need to do improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Something I know that is of great importance to you and me is systemic improvement in the work that you do every day to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. That includes the meaningful and collective collaboration that it takes to get us there. As you know better than me under the WVRAS, strengthened partnerships over the last five years with other workforce development programs for the purpose of benefiting those we serve. As incumbent upon those with disabilities.

Let's focus our individual purpose and commitment to an affective collaboration that it takes to achieve. It can't be over stated. I am have said this, but something I say often because it resinates with me -- keeps me focused every day. When I want to get into the weeds of other things to maybe something on my mind that -- just I want to pursue. That's not necessarily a bad thing.

And sometimes you can get in that lane and maybe forget to make the connections that you need to make or work as hard as you need to across agencies and across partners to really achieve what you're envisioning, but at the end of the day what keeps me focused is this belief that it is unacceptable. I hope it is to you. I believe it is.

I believe it is unacceptable for any individual that we serve to not achieve the outcomes they could have achieved just because folks like you and me can't figure out how to work differently or collaboratively. It's just unacceptable in my view. I believe also in yours. So we've got to commit to working differently, more collaboratively and I believe that's true across every level, certainly at the federal level, state and local and even more local you can get the better.

We must address systems. Joe mentioned this. It's something important to me and to us [phone dings] at the department. We must address systems that do not facility what we know is needed. Put the needs of the system over the needs of the individual. That's a hard thing to admit to the extent that it's true.

It always has been for me. None of us wake up thinking I'll do the most inefficient thing I can to make sure [laughter] that the people I serve are in no way prepared for what comes next. Nobody wakes up in the morning. There's not a legislation in your state or northern your agency or, on The Hill, DC. Nobody wakes up with that kind of thing in their head. The weeds of the work happen and the volume and complexity and pace take over and before you know it even though we don't wake up thinking or believing that, in practice, it sure looks a lot like it.

We have to address the practice that puts the needs over the system of the individual.

We must demonstrate that we're more concerned about the preparation of the individual than we are about the preservation of the system. I won't talk about this long, but I want to say it again. We must demonstrate that we're more concerned about the preparation of the individual than we are the preservation of the system.

The purpose of preserving the system is to prepare the individuals we serve. If the system -- it's not doing that -- then the system or at least something in the system is broken and needs attention. So our focus should never be on preserving the system for the sake of the system. It should be on improving the system for the sake of those that we serve.

That's why weary thinking our work in OSERS and I know many of you, because we've learned from you, that's why we know most of what we know, from you. We're learning to rethink and have been -- you may call it continuous improvement or any number of things, but we're all working to rethink our systems for those very purposes to make sure we benefit our customers and including our workforce across our Workforce Development System.

This includes not only folks going to work, but employers as well. As we think about our Workforce Development System, inform the conversation nationally around rethinking your work and making sure you're in the best position you're charged to serve is inspiring. It's something that we have taken very seriously.

Sometimes folks get nervous when you talk about rethinking. What does that mean for my work every day? Those are all fair questions. Sometimes folks get a little uncomfortable when you talk about rethinking and continuous improvement.

I'll be honest with you. I don't believe in leaving anything on the table. I want to be as transparent as I can. It doesn't bother me that sometimes folks feel uncomfortable. What bothers me -- I think it's fine that folks are uncomfortable as long as they have the information they need. What's not is to have the -- it's going to feel uncomfortable sometimes to challenge the things we've done before, challenge the status quo. If will feel uncomfortable to prioritize work and sometimes strategically abandon work that's important work, but doesn't drive the mission and purpose you're delivering on.

All of that can feel really uncomfortable, but being uncomfortable with the commitment to continuous improvement and the information you need, I suggest isn't a bad thing. I believe that's what healthy organizations do. That is strong statement. You can get ready for it and feel free to disagree because I'm wrong more than I'm right.

I believe healthy organizations from the time rethink their work. I believe unhealthy organizations don't. It's a sign and indicator of health in my view, that you from the time rethink your work. It's not healthy when we don't. Unhealthy organizations don't rethink their work; why is that? 100 reasons, one is quasi positive. The other is maybe not so positive.

Unhealthy organizations don't rethink their work. It is really hard to rethink your work. It's really hard to change systems. It takes a long time to do those things to improve almost always takes longer and almost always harder. Sometimes you have a lot of folks in your face, in your ear, in your email, on your phone, who are not okay with waiting any longer for things to change, but, you know -- you know as professionals that for the change that happen, that needs to happen, you know it's going to take time and difficult and you know you'll have to purse severe and sometimes folks don't give you that space and time. Folks write articles and newspapers that point out how long it's taking you to do these things. These things happen in states and it's hard to stay the course and to know that if we're going to see the outcomes improve we'll have to dig in rethinking and making some changes. It's hard and it will take times. Sometimes unhealthy organizations don't rethink just because it's really hard.

Another reason that's not as positive. You'll have to deal with this on your own like I do in front of the mirror or in a chair reflecting. Sometimes we don't rethink because if we be honest with ourselves we are content with the status quo. You know the numbers. You know the outcomes, all the information in your state.

Maybe you are at a place where that's working okay, but for many of us, we know the status quo hasn't gotten us where we want to be. And we can't be content with preserving the status quo. Then it gets worse. It's one thing content with the it gets intent on preserving it.

I would ask you to challenge us with. Because we have made a commitment to rethink our work and we believe that demonstrates. I think it does for you to. Rethinking our work as hard as it is demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement. What I call authentic stakeholder engagement. I try to give a non-example. Here is what it is not. Ready? It is not inviting all of our, so called partners in to a meeting in our offices on our turf, maybe giving them coffee and doe nets. At the end asking them to sign on the dotted line stipulate to the estimations we've already made. Not a great example of stakeholder engagement.

There's some things we're constrained by law, regulation and other issues in states that are nonnegotiable those are those things, but things that are not those things to have folks stipulate -- that's not stakeholder engagement. I believe that we need to empower our stakeholders across our Workforce Development System. The most important, the individual that we're serving. We must empower them to inform our conversations and influence our decisions. I think that gets a lot closer to what real shh stakeholder engagement is. When we rethink we have continuous improvement and I think to a willingness to do whatever it takes, and then to address whatever is standing in the way of improving opportunities and outcomes to the individuals we serve.

Guiding our work in OSERS and it is bumpy and continuous improvement always will be bumpy. Anytime somebody tells you continuous improvement -- especially when they're selling you something -- just a clue here. If somebody tells you that continuous improvement is easy and system change won't be hard if you trust them -- just a hint I may be wrong. That's a good example of who you probably shouldn't do a contract with, right? [Laughter] Because that's a good example of someone who has no clue what's so far what true system exchange. It takes time and it's hard. Weary thinking our work and how to best support states like yours -- within the constructs of the law for to you implement your programs. We benefited so much from many of you in the audience today helping us understand what you believe are some flexibility we can provide and the authority we have to provide it.

Sometimes we can answer yes and sometimes no. I have to answer no to that, but what we'll continue to do is keep the conversation going. I know we have worked hard to provide flexibility. I think there are some here and others who may think we have room to grow. Let's keep the conversation going. If there are flexibility you need and we have the authority to provide and can provide, then we want to consider how to do that.

We're committed to that and committed to partnering as well as we can and to groove on our partnering in individuals with disabilities, their families, stakeholders and we want to support new your efforts in your state.

You'll hear more about supporting you and rethinking your work. You'll hear more about that from Carol and her team. I hope you'll take the opportunity to be there. My hope and then I'll conclude, Joe and Steve. My hope is through all of these things and a lot more -- you can see throughout the department we are committed to confronting and addressing anything that stands in the way and improving outcomes of those we serve. We'll partner with anyone who is committed to raising expectations and improving outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The only thing I didn't mention is, I'm sure there are some of you interested in integrated employment. I know we signaled in the unified agenda in June. In the unified agenda. That's an estimated date.

So let me say it's an estimated date. Let me say that this is April and June isn't that far away. So we're continuing to work hard on this. I don't know -- I'll be honest -- I don't know if we'll hit the June date. It was an estimated date. If we don't hit the June date I promise you we're working hard on this and we are much closer than we were before and you can expect to see more progress -- public facing progress than you have in the past. Whether it will be June or not. I'm not going to promise June. It was estimated, but won't be long after. With that, I always feel that, you know, here they've come from all cover the country and another talking head presentation from somebody. [Laughter.] Maybe next time we'll talk about -- folks would prefer instead of a talking head, prepared remarks. Maybe they would prefer: Hey, let's sit around and talk. I'm open to that. Sometimes you get tired of the talking head stuff. I promise you I do. I don't know if we have time for anything else, but I'm happy -- I'm here. Joe said we can take a couple of questions. There are mics here. So folks come to the mics if there are any. [Indicating.] Just to reorient I have framework for questions. Anybody heard me say it before? It's okay if you have the. It's okay if you have forgot it. I'm a forgettable kind of guy. My framework for questions is simple. Three things:

1) If I know the answer and can tell you, I'll tell you.

2) If I know the answer, but I can't tell you, I'll tell that you I know the answer, but I can't tell you [laughter.]

3) If I don't know the answer I'm not going to keep talking to convince that you I do. Fair enough? With that framework, I'm happy to take a few....

>>: Assistant secretary, thank you for your willingness to take some questions. In the past both CSAVR and NCSAV have submitted some recommendations on our favorite topic prior written approval and I know you mentioned flexibility and if there's other ways to create flexibility. There is an exception and we do appreciate RSA's flexible on that. But I believe truly exceptional and an exceptional program audited by a number of state and other regulatory bodies. I'm not sure that prior written approval really achieves that objective of getting services to the individual on a timely basis, in the most affective and efficient manner.

So could you comment on that, please?

>>: Johnny: We're constrained across agencies and how far we can government Carol and her time supported by me directly on some of those calls. We are advocating for -- sorry about the mic here. We're advocating for as much flexibility as we can possibly provide at the Department of Education within the constraints that are on multiple agencies across the department. Two things:

1) We've identified areas where we can provide flexibility with prior professionally.

2) The conversation isn't over, and within the constraints which we work we will provide as much flexibility as we have the authority to provide.

>>: Thank you for taking questions. To create a cultural of change it really needs to be fostered in our interactions with RSA. So if we fear monitoring or auditing that is going to look at processes that are not uniform when working with people whose needs are very different, that's -- that really frustrates your -- customer design. Are you looking at the way that you conduct your monitoring? What you're measuring in order to foster a culture.

>>JOHNNY COLLETT: How do we get more efficient and better and more sensitive towards the needs of a particular and states? We will obviously do what we need to do in terms of discharging our duties and our federal role. Within that I think we should definitely keep a conversation going. How can our system, if we can, system of monitoring -- if there's room for us to be, um, more sensitive to the things that are occurring in states we want to do that. Again, it's probably one of these we'll run up against some things and won't be able to do discharge our duties, but we're happy to get better at that. I think you'll hear more on Wednesday about Carol -- from Carol and her team on just rethinking visioning and we're doing that with you as partners, so we're excited about that. I would suggest that -- again, if there's something you think -- if there's -- two things:

1) If there's a flexibility that you want and need to move your work forward. Tell us that.

2) I also want to you tell us why you think we have the authority to do it. If you can come with those two, that would be really helpful. We're committed with all of our -- all the things that bear on the performance of our VR program nationally and how we support you on that. We're happy to talk about how we continue to improve. That's something that I'm sensitive to. As a teacher and state Department of Education, I was always concerned -- for example, whether on assessments, for example -- whether we had assessments that were sensitive enough to determine growth for every child. Sometimes they weren't, right? Especially talking about kids with significant cognitive disabilities.

I'm talking about some sort of logic to anything. It is our system of monitoring sensitive enough to monitor for particular variances in states? To the extent that we can get better in your particular context we're going to the that. I keep plugging Carol's session on Wednesday. Anybody else?

>>: My name is Dwayne Maize from the State of Alaska recently appointed division director in January. Just a little bit about me. I come from a family of rehabilitation counselors. My older brother, younger sister all have degrees in rehabilitation counseling from University of Wisconsin and I married a woman who got her master's degree in rehabilitation so it runs in the family. Born and raised in a deaf family. Mom and dad are cultural deaf.

I believe my ability as a leader to know what it's like on the frontline. So I do that nine years.

So I left for about 12 years. I just came back and the one thing I noticed in talking to the staff and all the different offices, is just the level of reporting that they're now doing. I remember back in the day, when I was a counselor, being out in the field talking to employers, working with the clients and trying to find those good paying jobs. What I'm hearing now from staff is that they're glued to their computer because of all the reporting they have to do. I appreciate you saying engage your community, tubing your constituents and get out there and do all those things. I have been doing that. Staff and consumers and I'm concerned with the level of reporting now required.

>>JOHNNY COLLETT: So am I and so are we, right? Again, we're going to implement the law to the extent where there are reporting requirements prescriptive in the law we can't do our job if we don't do that. To the extent that there are reporting requirements that are not we should have conversations about that. [Indiscernible] -- there could be reasons for that that we could agree or give reasons to them extent that we could reduce burden on reporting we want to talk about that. We want to get your ideas on, again, why you think we can do that and why that would be helpful. So I hope you hear both thing. We're going to implement the law, but we're going to provide as much flexibility within the constructs of the law even to reporting requirements. If there are ways to reduce burden and provide flexibility so that you have the time to be more innovative, then we want to be able to do that.

Please continue to bring up those specific things and if we cannot do it, we're going to -- here is the thing. You may have heard this before and I always talk about this with states and with us we do it every day. It's an example and I hope this works. It works for me. Sometimes in a state, you can run up against -- let's call it a wall for a minute. It's some constraint, some barrier that you perceive toward the outcome that you are envisioning. You run up against that barrier. Sometimes in states and locally is that folks run up against a barrier and maybe not enough experience or getting started. They'll run up against a barrier and assume it's real and not proceed.

If you run up against a wall, try to knock it down first. Try to knock it down first. It may be a real constraint. It may be a perceived constraint. Maybe there aren't any flexibility, but maybe there are. Maybe you got one answer about that from somebody. Maybe you called two or three other people and got five different answers about that. They might all be wrong, but they're probably not all right. Don't just run up against a wall and turn around and go a different direction. Try to knock it down first. That's what we're doing. When we run up consequence constraints are those real constraints that we cannot pass flexibility on to states? Or is it a perceived constraint that symptom of us made up in the past and it was good in the past, but not now. If that's the case we'll do our best to knock the wall down. One more.

>>: Carol, question. Seems like there's been a shift over the last year or two with states asking for technical assistance and there's a delayed response. It can be months sometimes when a question is asked. Is there anything you've done around that?

>>JOHNNY COLLETT: It's the standard government answer, right? We're working on it. No, really. We recognize, even at the department, we recognize the multiple layers and burden that comes along with the clearance process we have. We are constrained in terms of clearance process with many things. It comes down to the same thing it comes down to in your state. The bandwidth, bodies, time. One of the things I want you to know -- so there are constraints. There's no question. The clearance process is an important process, but we understand sometimes it's slow and burdensome because of the limitations on capacity, human and otherwise.

One of the things Carol and I really committed to and we do this every day and often if something gets hung up somewhere, then -- Carol can tell you. Sometimes that becomes a phonecall from me to folks. And I did that periodically. It's not because someone is suggested on something because they don't want to do it. It's volume, complexity, capacity. When something gets hung up, Carol does a great job keeping me informed of where things are in the process and if there's a choke point somewhere. I'm never afraid to call my pier or call somebody in another office to figure out what the status of something else is. Sometimes that's helpful in kind of jump starting things. I'll continue to be committed to that. We're looking at our clearance process across the department for any number of things including grant notices et cetera. We're looking at the clearance process as a whole. We have a number of people looking at that now to be more efficient. That started in the last few months. The department is committed to trying to get more efficient with the clearance process. Thank you all so much for allowing us to be here today.

[Applause.]

>>JOE XAVIER: Thank you very much for your comments and for the conversation that focuses on person driven, a whole person care. Systems change, systems alignment. You covered a lot of territory. Very much appreciate that.

[Applause.]

We'll call up the next panel. We'll take a minute or two to shift some chairs around.

[Please standby for Realtime Captions.]

>>: Please try to find your seats. We're about to get started with the next panel.

Please find a chair.

Dwayne, can you hear me in the back?

...

...

[Please standby for Realtime Captions.]

>>SPEAKER: I've done this a long time stood in front of groups and this is about the best group I've stood in front of. You don't believe me do you? Take a look. Look next to you. That's some good looking people out there.

Welcome back to the next session. My name is Rob H. I'm the director for the Washington general VR program.

It is my privilege to introduce to you our next panel. We're always looking for better ways to provide services to our customers, partners, to business. Whenever we find that it's going, well, we want to share it, right. So with us today, are two teams that are just kind of providing you with a snapshot of how things are going well in providing opportunities for people to engage in competitive integrated employment. Let's hear it for competitive integrated employment.

[Applause.]

Here to show us what that looks like we have Dale Batten director DRS VDARS and -- I would like to turn it over.

>>: Good morning. Virginia is glad to be here to achieve integrated employment for our VR customers. I have a panel with me. I will introduce each of the panelists as I ask them questions. Let's get started. I'll first speak to Diane McBride. Business specialist for sure the department of blind and visually impaired. Diane, can you describe our services are provided from D V -- customers.

>>: Diane: I'm so excited to be here today and particularly in hearing our keynote speaker Mr. Collett in talking about the collaboration to put together resources to achieve competitive employment.

That's what we did and what this panel here today achieved. She provided services for D PV I services and at the time Simone was attending college in North Carolina. She would meet with her when she came home to Northern Virginia the for a break.

Initially, what she talked to Simone about was her accommodation needs while she was at college. Set up assistive technology evaluation. Identified that Simone would benefit from DVVI. Providing customized computer with zoom text loaded and as well a Ruby Magnifier. This helped Simone work her way through college with those documentations ensure she was able to complete her course work and graduate. Just before Simone graduated -- I'll back up a bit Enshaw -- guidance and counseling, low vision services and assistance with, um, determining her job goal.

So they worked together in piecing together those services, again, to ensure that Simone could attain the goal of employment that she was seeking after college.

Just before Simone graduated she was referred to me. I'm the business relation specialist. Simone and I met and chatted about -- now, that she has graduated, what she wanted to achieve as an employment goal. In our discussions, it became clear that she would benefit from our collaboration with our sister agency, The Department for Rehabilitation Services, Northern Virginia. VDARS out of the Alexandria office put together highly successful federal professional job club that had been in effect for a number of years. We were able to connect Simone and refer her to the job club. I'll let Simone and Scott share a little bit about that.

I worked with Simone in referring her to the job club. We worked together on, um, interview preparation, editing her resume, putting together a federal resume. All those tools and services, um, that would make her successful in her goal to attain, um, a federal career which she identified with me.

Uhm, so I will now turn that over to Simone.

>>SPEAKER: I'll introduce Simone first. She is in a great position with the -- [indiscernible] -- of a imitation administration. Federal Aviation Administration. Successful VR -- department of blind and vision impaired. Also, this is a great C-SPAN example of the dual customer enrollment. She was also for the --

Tell us about now more about the dual enrollment you did with both agencies and have been successful at becoming employed. Tell us about your VR process and what services you were able to provide for you.

>>: Simone: Can I review hear me? Great. Thank you Ms. Batten and Gwendolyn for providing me with this opportunity. My partnership with VDARS has been instrumental and I'm happy to share my success story with you all.

Just I briefly wanted to share that when Ms. Scott invited me I was thrilled and excited to share my story and my success story with you all today, that I actually came back from an out of town engagement just to be here. So thank you again for this opportunity.

[Applause.]

In part, my partnership with VDARS and DVR began in 2012 before freshmen year in college. I applied for services by submitting an application for eligibility and provided documentation as well as medical reports, um, once accepted into the program, my DARS counselors helped me to be successful in my career bats. They also assisted me in counseling me with my campus disabilities services office that helped me understand the tools that I could utilize and evened the playing field and feel empowered to perform and excel throughout my academics. Throughout the course of my college experiencing DARS and DVVI checked in on a regular basis. I had discussions with her. She were there when I needed support.

Diane McBride as well as their IT Services, rehabilitation engineer, Brad Miles, truly served as my team of advocates and collectively there to support me every step of the way.

DARS and DVVI supported me in my transition with the workforce connecting me with job club. I applied by expressing an interest with both Diane McBride and they connected me to Ms. Birch and Gwendolyn Scott and I sent my resume for consideration.

The timeframe in which I began any journey with job club was May 2017.

I had transitioned from a rather noninclusive work environment. Um, and it was a time in which I was a little uncertain about my career path, um, DARS and DVVI continued words of encouragement and high expectations motivated me to reach my optimum potentially. DARS and DVVI helped me to purse severe through my difficult transition into the workforce. I can recall the numerous sessions I had with Ms. Scott and Ms. McBride working on my elevator speech and mastering my interview skills as well. Job club exposed me to various government representatives that share invaluable information and really made me understand the significance of making a good first impression during the interview process.

Job Club enabled me to have direct access to agencies actively seeking federal government employees, which is a unique opportunity that I would not have otherwise had if it were not for Job Club. The affective efforts of Job Club have been truly instrumental with me obtaining my department of Federal Aviation Administration. And, in fact, they provided me with a unique circumstance of having two offer letters of consideration. One with DoD and one with DOT.

I can truly attest my success to the resources and tools that DARS and DVVI have provided. After I began my employment with.I was grateful for DARS and their service that I wrote a letter of precision to Ms. Scott and Diane McBride to demonstrate my gratitude for the service I received. Thank you for your time and I'm looking forward to your questions, um, thank you.

[Applause.]

>>SPEAKER: Thank you, so much Simone. We've been very nice and polite up here and excited about the work that we do for VVR. Gwendolyn listening to Simone you've been very much a leader and meant for, tell us what supports you offered Simone, Diane both, um, in your service delivery to her finding employment?

>>GWENDOLYN SCOTT: First of all, thank you Simone for all the wonderful things that you said about me. I think I speak for Diane. Simone is definitely a testament of the work that we all put in as a partner. So in the partnership is what we first offer. My position is unique because I am partnered not just with the job seeker, but also with the employer, so that puts us in the middle.

We do have the opportunity to find out what the employer is looking for in terms of a good candidate from the time they enter the room, what they want on a resume, how they want to -- applications to be filled out. And how they want to be contacted. So we have that type of information for the job seekers that we work with and we help to prepare them. We are fortunate at our Alexandria DARS office that we have employees come in regularly, rebelling, to meet with our employers. So it's more or less, like, a grocery store? Where they can come and select the best produce and the best meats that they can get.

So that's one of the things that we offer. Other thing that we have is our job matches job development, onsite recruiting and we're fortunate to be partnered with DVVI to get additional job seekers to work with.

I look forward to any questions.

>>SPEAKER: All right, Gwendolyn thank you. The best is yet to come with our wonderful business employer here with us this morning's. I'll introduce our business partner, Dr. Do you remember reason Walker. He is department selective placement Program Manager for the US Department of Transportation I've been to his hiring events. It is phenomenal. I want to ask questions based on CSAVR Vision 2020 that expresses partnerships and talks about customized services for individuals and business customers. You are a business customer, Dr. Walker so your questions are three-part. Feel free to answer them in any way you feel you would like to do so. Complain your partnership in DARS and DVVI. What process works for you as a business seeking qualified individuals for employment in your organization? Third, give us advice for state VR agencies for strength egg government for federal employment opportunities.

>>DURONNE WALKER: I would like to say greetings everyone and thank Virginia DARS and all the leadership. My partner in crime right here Gwendolyn Scott. You guys are elite agency. First question and I like to give you some insight about this Job Club event of the I am the department selective placement Program Manager. I like to meet and preparation. When I first came to the Department of Transportation and so one of my problems -- I called up and said hey I have a wonderful opportunities and bring some qualified folks on board. She said: Hey, Dr. Walker I want to you come to my Tuesday Job Club. What is your Tuesday Job Club?

I went to the Job Club, AKA, boot camp. They were ready to come on since day one. Folks had interviewing tips, know how to -- USA jobs they was ready to go.

I was so impressed and went back to the leadership and told them about the Job Club and Scott, I am so what you're doing with these folks here. Why don't you put my folks in front of these folks and get them hired [laughter] you're going to fast. I'm proud to say ladies and gentlemen, this is our fifth we're in existence we have brought the Job Club to Department of Transportation and so big now as well as -- and we have hired 25 folks.

[Applause.]

After I'm done I want you to bombard Ms. Scott and ask her about the model she has in place because it definitely works. Your second time question about the process. The United States Department of Transportation, I'm in a unique situation. At the Department of Transportation we're only handful of agencies that have a Disability Resource Center. In that resource center I meant a database of qualified applicants. We have a website where we have open vacancies posted and I am a person with a disability -- you know that I am blind. So I try to be transparent to those applicants that get in contact with me because I know how daunting it is for resume writing and how to improve USA jobs. Each agency process is different. But at the Department of Transportation I'm in a unique situation, because at the Department of Transportation at headquarters, everything that moves -- we have 13 agencies that's in the headquarters and I have HR specialists which is my coordinator in each agency. I'm in contact with them on a daily basis.

Third question, if I remember. Would you repeat it?

>>SPEAKER: I sure can. You have a few more minutes. We're cautious about time, but Dr. Walker wants to help you understand the process and success that we were able to work together. You have a few more minutes. Do you have any advice for state VR additions for strength he think our partnership for federal government employment opportunities? Maybe not so much federal government opportunities. Any working with business and trying to get our qualified contains opportunities.

>>DURONNE WALKER: Let me give you some advice. Each agency is different and they process varies and we have the same outcome in mind. Just to give you some insight of some of the challenges we face where I sit at. Hiring managers are afraid. That's some of the barriers. You know, it's hard to have a -- go to a highering manager say: Hey, I want to bring this person on board. To be honest if they don't know, you have to give them awareness. So my advice to you guys is -- when you get the opportunity to meet selective placement coordinators like myself, ladies and gentlemen, your task is to give them the best and the brightest, right? And in total honesty. One bad apple can spoil the whole bunch. My advice to you is when you talk to these coordinators and agencies, be honest and give them your best and brightest. I'm looking forward to any questions you may have for me. Thank you for having me.

[Applause.]

>>SPEAKER: Darlene.

>>DARLENE PEREGOY: Good morning I review. I want to thank Dr. Walker because he has worked on this Job Club several years and we've had success stories as well. Thank you very much. We're here, Maryland is here to talk about the dual customer approach and our experience with the private employer. I have to my immediate left Kerrie and Ziquiara Edwards SBM Management Group and on the end is Marvin Owens divisional operations director SBM management group. I would be remitt if I didn't acknowledge some of my team members. Wanda Peel. And Crystal McKay. Please stand up. There you are.

[Applause.]

These people are very key to this success story as I begin to tell you a little bit about it. I wanted to back up a minute and I was thinking about the dual customer approach and VR's focus on that. Last night it occurred to me that Maryland has actually made that commitment 15 years ago. That seems amazing it's been that long, but 15 years ago when we made that commitment. We had several iterations of that over the years, but about four years ago, we created the Business Relations branch consisting of eight regional business representatives across the state. Those are three of those individuals who I mentioned.

The role of the business services representative is really to serve businesses first, and to help them in their recruitment efforts to do disability training, education, awareness letting them know about tax credits, tax incentives, and we had about 1700 direct services to businesses that we documented and reported on our annual report.

So they do a lot of work.

On the flip side are also providing Technical Assistance to the counselors and consumers in terms of things that's been mentioned: Job readiness, whether employers looking for labor market information, if a counselor is worked with an individual and not sure if this is a good career path for them, business services representative can do some research and labor market analysis to determine if that might be a good path.

Today we'll highlight one of our great examples of the dual customer approach, and how that can result in helping businesses achieve their workforce needs and connecting our job seekers to businesses, and most importantly competitive integrated employment.

BSRs reach out or get connected to businesses in many different ways through networking events, job fares, um, reaching out to employers individually ask. many times a lot here recently is they're reaching out to us.

Because they want to be a part of this movement on disability and inclusion. We're helping them reach their goals. So this particular partnership began with an email. Basically to me. He had gotten information off the website. We have information for employers there. He basically said he was a business specialized in facilities management, housekeeping, custodial, floor, carpet maintenance services, and they had large contracts in several of our counties and wanted to know how we might be able to help them. He said he had actually heard a lot of great things about doors. So the first thing I did was connect them with an individual who could serve as a single point of contact. They want one person to reach out to them and work with them. I asked Wanda Peele to serve as that individual and she was able to meet with them and find out a little bit about their workforce needs and get a true understanding of their business is he got team members to help and information about the jobs and then she started the process prescreening those candidates for the business. I wanted to now turn it over to Mr. Owens first. If he could share with us his experience from the other side of what it was like working with Wanda and the team and DORS.

>>MARVIN OWENS: I am a Division Operations Director, SBM Management Group. The reason why we had to reach out is because in our industry custodial cleaning we experience high turn over, okay. Additionally, we need folks that are able to service clients customer facing clientele

I'm in the Maryland area. The experience started with a a gentlemen that worked with us Michael King. He introduced the idea about DOORS, okay.

The -- I experienced initially reluctance with regard to the DOORS program because of -- I I wasn't too aware of what folks with disabilities -- what that innocent workplace in an environment where I need to do have a service a customer. That was a strong rereluctant the answer so before the meeting with Wanda I explained to Mike that she will have to do a good job to help me understand how to communicate nomenclature my client that we'll have folks with disabilities working in the facility. It's almost as I've worked with DOORS, it's almost embarrassing to me that I had those initial thoughts because I was unaware of the program itself. And I was unaware of what a person with a disability was.

I had a very extreme thought about what a person with a disability was. When we initially met with Wanda, she said: You may have folks with disabilities already working for you. That was eye opening for me and opened my eyes and ears to hear more about the program initially. My client I worked for in the -- [indiscernible] -- and I knew I had to sell him on this program itself. Wanda did a great job and we understand. I was able to communicate the nomenclature our client and we've actually done a great job with DOORS. Turn over is one of my biggest issues.

I think some of our DOORS employees had been some of our longest tenured employees and do a great job.

So that was our initial experience when we met with Wanda. One of the keys to the counselors that was helpful to us as well is we have somewhat of a tensive screening process. We were able to provide Wanda with a hiring information and they were able to screen employees before brought them to us. We helped them understand what the needs are, you know, what the expectations are. We require a lot of our employees, ask them to do a lot of difficult work. Sometimes it can be frustrating because the custodial cleaning world you're only good your last 24 hours. Expectations are super high when working super hard.

If you look for something you'll find it in housekeeping. We need the folks that understood that motivated to do a great job and that's what we've experienced so far working with DOORS.

>>DARLENE PEREGOY: Thank you. I want to say that SBM's interviewed well over 40 individuals and hired over 20 individuals. So far we have 14 successful closures, more on the way as just a few weeks ago we had another hire and we understand they'll do recruiting this coming month as well. Even some of the individuals who were hired got some of their family members hired, which I think was a great -- another great outcome in this partnership.

I want to turn it over to Ziquiara Edwards right now because I want Ziquiara to share with you her experience in how she found out about the job and then working with business services team and her counselor.

>>ZIQUIARA EDWARDS: Good morning, everybody. I want to start by saying thank you to Ms. Wanda, Ms. Marvin, Ms.-- for giving me the opportunity to work with invest.

[Applause.]

>>MARVIN OWENS: She started working with us and we had her in various positions on this account she did -- her personality is just so great, okay. Whenever she went to an area, serviced a client they had some positive feedback. So we had a particular location that was extended away from us. And we needed someone to be self managed to take care of that location. We set Ziquiara up because she was a floater, sent her down to a location in another area.

From operational things not anything to do with Ziquiara, but we received so many emails from the folks there saying that you cannot take Ziquiara from this location, because she's done a great job [laughter] so we received a lot of heat. So I want to calm her down because she's done a great job and we're happy to have her working for us.

[Applause.]

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>>DARLENE PEREGOY: Do you want to learn how you learned about the job and how you prepared for your interview and some of the things I did prior to.

>>ZIQUIARA EDWARDS: My counselor played a big part in that as far as helping me prepare myself and get ready for interviews also along with Ms. Wanda and Mr. Shields making sure I was prepared -- practicing ways to go over first impressions and things to say and also how to dress, really.

>>DARLENE PEREGOY: What's it been like working?

>>ZIQUIARA EDWARDS: It's been a great experience working because before working there first it was hard for me to find a job that I liked really. Since I've been working there it's been perfect.

[Applause.]

>>DARLENE PEREGOY: I think I'll ask Kerrie if she wants to add anything.

>>KERRIE HANDAKAS: Good morning I am Kerrie Handakas Ziquiara's counselor. I want to congressmen her because the transition -- I work with Transition Youth as a counselor we want to see all of our participants succeed. Every once in a while you come across a shining star and that is Ziquiara, through all the transition process which can be difficult. I saw this perseverance, courage to keep trying and kept saying it will pay off. She did a wonderful job and I'm so proud of you.

[Applause.]

I also wanted to -- point to the role of our V SRs -- they're our right hand over here. Mr. Owens spoke to the hesitation -- I don't want to call it hesitation, but some barriers and concerns having some individuals making those relationships and our V SRs play so many roles and one of the biggest and most important for counselor is advocacy advocating to build those relationships and I personally don't know what I would do without you guys. Every time I call -- there to help us throughout the process. They're there -- you know as a counselor I can't be there every second, but I think Ziquiara can speak to this, every time you need something the VSR you worked with they would be right there helping, supporting anytime you need extra assistance so for that relationship I'm grateful to have that. We couldn't do what we do without our VSR team.

>>DARLENE PEREGOY: Thank you, Kerrie. The team worked tirelessly. You mentioned boot camps, but it was like that. Seemed like every week they were bringing them in helping them do their applications, making sure they were prepared for their interviews and I think that played a lot in how this relationship developed, because when these predicts showed up, I think the SBM staff knew they were going to get candidates and there was a level of trust there as well. They helped with the accommodations and in many cases they allowed Wanda to sit in on interviews and gave them an idea what questions would be asked of the it was helpful in building that trust. I know that they're constantly reaching out to us and direct line, they know they'll be able to call Wanda and get what they need.

>>MARVIN OWENS: In our industry turn over can average anywhere between 80-120% which is pretty high. [Laughter.] It really is. It's a difficult industry. We're a nationwide company and we're always looking for good employees. So I just wanted to extend, through Darlene, if there's any opportunity for us anywhere else in the country, please reach out and maybe we can connect with local SBMers ready to place folks. It would be key for us. We brag and boast from SBM standpoint that we -- lowest turn over because we have good employee programs, but it's still a challenge for us especially in particular markets. Any help assistance from this community could be beneficial to all.

>>DARLENE PEREGOY: Thank you. Marvin. I wanted to mention two other points. Everything we do starts with relationships, you know, it seems like not just relationships with businesses, relationships with the counselors and other consumers also relationships with our community partners because many times that's who we're purchasing our job development services from. So the business reps connect with those business partners and we've had great ones that have been helping us securing applicants for this as well. I know that if it wasn't for building those relationships, it would be hard to get all the applicants that we have to be able to get.

The other thing is retention services. A lot of the time when this is a true relationship, we don't want to put somebody in a job and walk away. We want to make note -- we want the business to know and the employee to know that they can reach time-out us at any point. This has been key. I know Wanda and the team worked tirelessly on retention services stopping in from the time making sure things are going well and just if they need anything, if there are any issues. Even sitting in on meetings with the supervisors to see how we can work this out. It's been a fabulous relationship we hope to continue for a long time and I certainly hope that other states will reach out to me and work with Marvin to connect you ecological with SBM.

>>SPEAKER: All right that's great information. Any questions for the panel? Do we have a microphone? Just this one? Okay.

>>: Marvin I appreciate your honesty and openness in terms of your preattitude as you pertain to understanding the disability community and working with people with disabilities. Two questions. You say urination wide employer?

>>MARVIN OWENS: Yes.

>>: Are you in Alabama? [Laughter.] Where are you located?

>>MARVIN OWENS: Up and down the East Coast. My territory is New Jersey Mid-Atlantic really, Northern Virginia. We have a gentlemen that takes care of our -- from my location down to North Carolina then South Carolina down to Florida.

>>: We need employers like you in Alabama seriously. [Laughter.] And if you are, you can identify, you know, your presence in Alabama. We have a lady over here [indicating] raise your hand. She would be interested in knowing where you're located [laughter]

>>MARVIN OWENS: The gentlemen said something very key. I believe awareness to the service you offer anda 2009 the types of in these cases you have in the program is very key, because it's just very key and helps us out a lot. Because we work for a client typically and if we can talk to them about this program in a positive way that helps out.

>>: Right. How prevalent do you think same type of attitude you had in the beginning exists within the business community and do you know of others that you associate with, who might be in that same area?

>>MARVIN OWENS: I think it's very prevalent. Only in that it's kind of a fear factor. You don't know what the end result will be if you have a person working in this space and all of a sudden something happens and -- program it's a trickle down effect for us. So there's that fear factor, and if we can educate our clients and the managers that work for me, on what the program is all about and what their experience may be working with someone with disabilities, could be very helpful.

I can't speak for the masses, but I do know when I spoke to client about the program, his facial and he thinks was hmm, I need to know more about that.

He workings with another client and wanted to be able to sell the information to that client as well. I just believe it's all about understanding and having enough material out that educate people. Exacted the programs, I believe.

>>: Good morning, Marvin we're here from Mississippi and whenever Alabama challenges us we're here. Josh is our business person. We would love for to you come to Mississippi and partner with us. We have great folks looking for jobs outside. Thank you.

[Applause.]

>>: We'll see who gets to marsh I knew first, I'm sitting on the front row. [Laughter.]

I can only go so fast.

>>: Do we have a question you're heading to already? I saw a hand over here. We'll hit you next and then Joe.

>>: I'm Paul from Austin, Texas. I'm a retired federal employee 38 years in the service and I was fortunate. However many of my colleagues were not, of my colleagues spent their 38-year career doing one job. I would hope that the VR agencies across the country would look at the people with disabilities, people that are serving, as people who can go all the way to the top and be leaders. I would also hope that with any business hires somebody with a disability they should in the beginning see the potentially that person can be in leadership roles in the organization thank you.

[Applause.]

>>: Good morning Jenny P. from the State of Michigan. Not to get entirely religious here, but a huge amen to the whole panel.

[Applause.]

Um, and I want to quantify that with what I continuously heard was talent and the folk's on talent and not charity and that this is a demand driven environment we're in. To be responsive to that to both sides of the house is a beautiful thing to see. Just a congratulations to the whole panel. Thank you for that messaging. It's great.

[Applause.]

>>JOE XAVIER: Let me add an hallelujah and to the panel great job.

One of the things that's key for us to expand across workforce, the attitude and the approach that you bring, what advice can you give to us as employers on how to have employers engage with other employers to help overcome those barriers, fears, those concerns? I ask that question because in every profession there's a secret handshake, that secret language. We know that employers share that language. I was a private employer so I understand that. We're all employers in the room because we hire, so what's your advice on how we can leverage you to engage other businesses?

>>DURONNE WALKER: That's a great question, sir. From where I sit that's why the burden is on Ms. Darlene and Scott and agencies to make sure that you give me the best and the brightest because once you give me someone that's qualified and once I bring them to the employer and highering managers and prove themselves then I come with the attitude and aggressive -- see, I told you. I brought this person to you. Just because they have a disability they can be an asset rather than a liability if you give them the tools that they need. If you give them the best and brightest and qualified, they'll hire them and the word will go out to other hiring managers. If you get the best and the brightest then employees will bring more on board.

>>: I'm Judy Smith from Arkansas. I think I was next. I have a question for Darlene, I believe. Darlene, you stated that you guys have eight Business Relations representatives. And the job description, the list of services that you provided seemed quite intense. My question is -- you guys are doing a lot of work, and I heard the counselor say it helps the counselor to do their work. So how are you able to have these eight people talk about tax credits, talk about accommodation needs to the businesses -- attend meetings, interview prep and accompany them in the interview, the list was very long and I wrote down everything. Please explain to me how you're able to get those deliverables from eight people in your state?

>>DARLENE PEREGOY: Well, it starts with having a great team. And I think I mentioned we've had several iterations of this along the way, but making sure that if you can do it under a single unit so that you have consistency so that we can rely on one another. We have a fantastic staff, fantastic team and I always use the word team because in every situation, even though they have a region they're responsible for, you see three people here today. They worked on this initiative with this particular employer. Because they worked as a team. And then somebody in PG County may have -- we'll converge and help out in every situation it is a lot of work and I get a lot of questions about -- you know, they're not sitting in the office. People are wondering what are they doing? Sometimes I hear the BSers don't do anything. I don't want them sitting in the office because if they're sitting in the office they're not doing their jobs. They need to be out there and talking to employers, and they need to be sharing this information.

Our number one service is education. I think that shows that in this instance that was very helpful.

>>MARVIN OWENS: Just to follow up on this question. One thing that would be helpful in my history, case study information is very helpful. If you're planning, trying to expand your services. If you have strong case study information we can show successful programs on how to implement it at these ghost companies that, would be helpful. Also, we were fortunate to go by a location where they have vocational activity going on training floor techs to see that from an employer standpoint, that really instilled confidence in us that they're doing a lot of training for these employees.

So if you have information that you can compile, we're very visual in the facilities and we like to see proof of implementation without any problem. That's helpful to. If we can, as part of your case study information, you share some of the trainings and information about how you train these folks vocationally in your industry, instantly want to share that.

>>: This will be the last question before we break -- [Overlapping speakers.]

>>SPEAKER: I just wanted to share a little bit of the role of the B DARS. What is -- like DOORS we share information about employers. I will reach out to other agencies, other resources, workforce boards. If I'm working with someone -- do you have a connection with such and such company? We love to share. We're not just holding on to this information, but sharing with each other, because ultimately, it's about the person we're working with. Having that single point of contact and with the workforce boards, the business teams, solutions teams, working with them, just lots of resources. Recently, I had an employer, a federal agency, but she had some opportunities in California. Reached out to me and asked if I had a contact in California with the VR program there. I didn't, but, you know, I made calls and dug down and able to share that with her. It's all about collaboration.

>>: Last question.

>>: Just a statement. I'm Wanda Peele VSR. I want to thank my team because we pull it together when it's time to get business and get people hired. I want to thank counselor and branch manager who I will call and whine when things get tough. He never looked back not once. I appreciate Ziquiara and she's my shining star too. [Laughter.] So everybody did a great job and I appreciate all of you.

[Applause.]

>>: A hand for our panel. Thank you very much time for our break. Please go out and enjoy the coffee break and meet our new director.

[Recess taken until 10:45 a.m.]

[Please standby for Realtime Captions.]

>>SPEAKER: If everyone could move to your seats.

[Please standby for Realtime Captions.]

...

...

[Please standby for Realtime Captions.]

>>JANE ELIZABETH: Good morning, as soon as people come in we'll get started. We have valuable information we want to share with you during this session and I know that we want to give them all the time that is available. I'm Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw. I know that's a mouthful. I apologize. I'm from Alabama and you can probably tell that from my accent. I'm thrilled to be here and glad I'm one of the co-chairs for the employment committee and getting to know those folks and the good work they've they do. I'm excited to spend time on the monthly calls with the net points of contact. And if you don't know who those people are I would like to take liberty and ask the net points of contact to stand if you are here.

[Applause.]

We've heard a lot of business and industry this morning and great comments from Assistant Secretary Collett. About the dual relationship and dual customer and the people we serve and the employers that we serve. The net points of contact are innocent that single point of contact for that region, so that as we meet with SBM corporate industries that we can push those referrals down to those points of contact and out to the states. We hope that system works well and continues to be developed in the coming years.

I'll let Kathy do all of the formal introductions, but I just wanted to say that it is also exciting to be in meetings when we talk about WIOA and while we want to support that workforce, I think about the IOA as actions. Think of it as a verb, act.

I'm excited to hear about those in the next session and thank you for being here.

[Applause.]

>>KATHY WEST-EVANS: What a great panel and really seeing that model of serving the individual customer in the business customer. So excited about that. Congratulations to that team.

I'm Kathy West-Evans and I'm the Director of Business Relations for CSAVR vocational rehab. And I am very, very fond of those points of contact because without them we don't get our work ton. I want to say thank you again and to Jane Elizabeth. It's great to have her as the co-chair. We knew once Peggy retired -- Alabama or Leslie go. We kept them going here.

Today's panel is about innovation. It's innovative work VR around the country. So you'll have three individual sessions up here. We'll open up with a very innovative film clip of the the producer of this film. Has contacted us. This is a film called Hearts of Glass, about a business in Jackson, Wyoming. Vertical Harvest. What I'm excited about -- I'm excited about everything. It's an innovative business. It's a greenhouse that goes illustrate up. You'll see photos of it. And they do hydro-phonic growing. What's the temperature in the winter.

>>: About 30 degrees.

>>KATHY WEST-EVANS: 30 degrees and snowing and they're producing produce in this vertical harvest growing. Another thing is that they have focused on hiring the talent of the community we serve, people with disabilities.

This film clip is about that. They're also reaching out to us to partner. So you will be given the link and it will be posted to the website share it. At the fall conference we're arranging to have a premiere of the full film 68-minute film and 2020 it will be featured on PBS. We're excited to have you see the film and for to you meet Avery Bedford is the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in Jackson Wisconsin. Thank you to her director, Jim, when we were asked: Can we have the person who is working with this company on the ground joining us? He said absolutely. [Phone rings.]

Thank you for being here and sharing information about the partnership that you've worked so hard on at the local level. That's really where it makes the difference. So let's start by seeing the film clip and then Avery will talk to you about her local involvement.

[Video Captioned.]

[Applause.]

>>: AVERY BEDFORD: I am a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in Jackson Hole. I'm proud to be from Jackson Hole, it's a small town, but we have a lot of ambition. Vertical Harvest has come to life, and as your counselor, I've had an opportunity to work along side to benefit my clients. To tell you a little bit more about how to look as a DVR counselor. My client's name is Sarah.

Becauser her degree in biology her dream job was to work at the hospital. I wasn't sure it was Sarah's dream job as much as mom's dream job, but I went forward with it anyway.

I had a lot more meetings with her to express what she was interested in doing and I couldn't get her to tell me anything. I knew she needed a job. I decided to move forward with what I knew. She had a mastery of math and science and very meticulous. She didn't necessarily like working with strangers so I set her up at the library. She did work experience at the library three months with a job coach and everything went pretty well. Accept that your questions successful job claimant because she wasn't challenged, didn't learn, didn't grow and didn't find out anything more about herself in terms of what she wanted to do as a career.

At this point I tested the theory that Massachusetts mamma knows best. I billion built a relationship with the HR department at the hospital and try to get her in there. This would make everyone happy except for maybe Sarah. But after a while, HR was opening a lab assistant based on the strengths and biology this could be a good fit. I told mom. And she was eustatic. Sarah was ambivalent, but I went forward with it anyway. The night before the Nevada mom called and had concerns. -- mom's concerns were so strong that when the interview came around she decided not to take her. It was heart braking because she had a dream for her child and suddenly didn't seem realistic. Again, Sarah was ambivalent. I saw Vertical Harvest as this creative innovative approach that's literal winter all year around and a place where a lot of science is going on. It screams science. A lot of science going on. [Laughter.] I was hope was that Sarah felt the same way.

I got them there under the guys who were going for just a tour. When we got inside Vertical Harvest something different happened. Sarah started talking, asking questions about the plants and questions about the people who worked there. She started asking questions about the building, gave her opinions on the correct times for micro greens and the best sauce to make with the tomatoes they were growing. Sarah told us that she wanted to work there and some political reasons she had, but it was motivation nonetheless. We ran forward with it. [Laughter.]

I got Sarah in there as fast as as I could and set her up with a job coach and a behavioral therapist because I had word that when things were tough and didn't know how to voice how she was feeling, she would run away. Sarah ran away quite a few times and -- with employees and boycotted when the bins they weren't right order, but she continued to go to that job every day. She learned, grew and built relationships with the people she worked with. Now, she's independently, cross trained in multiple departments and has a path for upward mobility should she choose to pursue it, and when I called Caroline, who is the co-founder of Vertical Harvest you'll see she's an integral TA parts of the business. I was frequencies because I had to speak in front of all of you and public speaking scares me. She had something more important to talk about. Sarah hosted her own birthday party. She had asked a coworker if she could use their apartment, made herself a a cake and designed a game that she asked everyone to play. The party lasted two hours Sarah decided that was enough birthday party for her and sent everyone home. [Laughter.]

It was the perform birthday for her and none of us would have ever expected she wanted before working at Vertical Harvest. I think as vocational rehabilitation professionals in whatever capacity work in we run into this Sarah problem often. We know they have strengths, but not toes convince employers of that.

I think we heard that a little bit when we talked with Marvin earlier today to. The question is: How do we get employers to see the types of clients we're working with and all of their strengths and get the clients to advocate tore themselves and when they socially struggle, especially to get them to be visible when they're used to be invisible?

Vertical Harvest has been a solution for me. They do things differently than traditional employers that set them up to be inclusive specifically for people with disabilities. Seemingly small things that have found a big impact on the way the clients see their value in the overall business.

First, they host a weekly meeting which every staff member is encouraged to attend. Meetings start off saying this is what is happening and changes and deadlines, but they end up being: Hey, this is who I am as an employer and what I'm struggling with and see, things I can do well to contribute.

These conversations don't happen with every employer and I think valuable way for each to see their perspective is parts of the business.

Second thing that happens is that there's a big focus on social activity outside of the workplace. When I ask Caroline why had this was she told me she had known a lot of the people working at Vertical Harvest and she hadn't had an opportunity to plan things for themselves in their community and with their friends. Everything had been planned for them. So now, they attend happy hours, celebrate birthdays and holidays and participate in sports and generally practice building healthy relationships. Third thing and I think this was brought up by the gentlemen from Austin today, is that there are people who worked at Vertical Harvest since the beginning and have now moved into supervisory roles. That means when one of my clients goes to Vertical Harvest to start working, they don't look up and see a ceiling. They look up and see someone a lot like them attending top of the ladder. They know their opportunities are not limited by the fact that they have a disabilitie.

I think that's important and I hope to see that happen more frequently.

[Applause.]

Vertical Harvest does not claim to be a perfect employer. They know a lot of things need to change to continue to provide opportunities for people working there and growing opportunities using skills they've lender there.

They're under a lot of pressure to reproduce their system. What you see in the fall is that their structure is born out after sheer will of doing things differently and didn't have a plan. They had make it up as they go.

As a result, things are not totally polished, but what is important is that they set up the changing the way people saw people with disabilities as employees and they're doing that.

As VR professionals they'll reach out to us -- us as business to increase the impact of this type of employment. I hope that we together can be courageous in our efforts to do this to.

[Applause.]

>>KATHY WEST-EVANS: The future is bright when we have people like her out in the field, isn't it?

[Applause.]

Great job. Thank you, very much. Wow, Avery, no one knew nervous.

Kristen is the deputy director and John is also the net point of contact Ohio Ohio.

They're a resource that's there every day supported by the agency.

They're not only supporting the individuals, but the business on a day-to-day basis. So Kristen and John, come up.

>>KRISTEN BALLINGER: Thanks Kathy. We thought we would start off and we don't have a nice graphic for this, but we wanted to give you agency information and then some information about the Business Relations unit, which is housed within the Division of Employer and Innovation Services. Ohio is a combined agency. We are not on order selection. We have no waiting list. We serve all categories of disability immediately. Susan P. our Deputy Director of The Bureau of Vocational rehabilitation is back there. [Indicating.]

Primarily we focus on Business Relations, we do lean sigma and reporting in the it division as well, but the Business Relations unit includes a Business Relations manager, John [indicating] he is also the net point of contact and the liaison to disability in Ohio.

He works with statewide employers and projects like industry liaison Group, industry sector strategies that we develop with business partners. In addition to John we have a assistant deputy director and she oversees five regional Business Relations specialist s. high quartered in the field. Ohio is unique. We have major cities in the Ohio. It's a small state, but we have Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati and Toledo. -- pro-football hall of fame. And we have five that are headquartered in the field and their responsibility is to liaison with business. So they are our account managers. They work with employers and they introduce them to OOD, that's our acronym, Opportunities for Ohio with Disabilities. Services to businesses we can provide. And the services that we provide are recruitment services, no cross-training and Technical Assistance. Windmills Disability Awareness Training.

We have 25 trained facilitators within our agencies to train staff on disability etiquette and those things. We have a work, accessibility specialist who is headquartered at our central office. We have one of the staff people, but she spends a lot of time on the road. This was a new position that we created in November. We surveyed our disability and members and asked them -- okay, here are the services you know, we provide. What's missing? What other services would you like for to us provide to you? The number one thing that they told us was: We need more information on thousand how to make sure that our work sites are accessible, doing reasonable accommodations expect understand more about what the ADA says in terms of employer and we hire to certified -- certified organist and providing do a consultation and learn more about what that employer's work site looks like and how to make it more accessible. Do a report, she will walk the employer through it, help them prioritize what they'll do next. Trainings for employers. She kind of does the whole scope some of the she she will Um, do it based on what that employer looks for and what that employer's need it.

That's the overview of Business Relations in Ohio I wanted to give that you quick overview before we get into the business partnerships that we have.

One other thing.

>>: To mention -- we have five business relation specialist big territories, several counties that they cover. And then we also have 12 talent sourcing coordinators. VR staff, case load assistant level staff. Two of those talent sourcing coordinators are embed birthday our employer partners. We'll talk about that this morning.

A general talent sourcing coordinator not embedded within an employer partner, the way they operate is that they hold monthly meetings with every counselor in their area. Five areas of the state, ten of those general talent sourcing coordinators and two per area. They will hold monthly touch based meetings with counselors, in person if possible, Skype or phonecall. And they will talk with them about business opportunities that are available with our employer partners, kind of a chain of command. Business relation develops the relationship with the business, learns about the hiring needs and opportunities available, takes that information back, shares it with the talent courses coordinators. Then they work directly with the counselors, to talk about those positions and employers. Help the counselors identify candidates on their case load who may be looking for that type of opportunity where it may be a good fit for them and make that connection.

Then we have a process for how they put the candidates forward and those types of thing. I'll let John sneak in here and start the introduction with some of our partnerships.

>>JOHN HACKATHORN: Thank you, Kristen. Good morning everybody. Thank you for this opportunity and thank you, Kathy for providing this to us and having us here. We appreciate it. How this came about was through an initiative that began in 2013, with the Poses Family Foundation.

We started working with them in partnership with our affiliate and for the purposes of working with businesses and linking those businesses with OOD job seekers in a way that Kristen was describing, that's how we came about with the talent sourcing coordinator position. We had deliverables that we need to do make. We needed a way in order for this to happen. That's how the talent sourcing coordinator position came about.

In 2013 we started in Columbus, and counties with a a small group of businesses. That grew over time. We had a first year deliverable of 08 jobs. We had 96. Poses Family Foundation was happy. PFF we went into the areas that Kristen talked about headquartered in other parts of the state. We hired talent coordinators and that has grown and grown to the point now, through this initiative, over 2,000 OOD job seekers placed in employment and that number rose every day.

Towards the end of the first year -- phase of the grant was a 3-year grant -- I'm sorry, FPFF challenged us wanted ever wanted us to -- third year, but to identify something new and innovative. We had worked on that talked about it about the concept of embedded personnel VR personnel within an employer. We didn't know how that would work. We were, you know, talking about it with ourselves, but it took a willing partner as well in order to do that.

Ohio disability member affiliated with OSU, Tara M. affirmative action coordinator came up with this concept. We worked together as employer partner and agency to define what the roles and responsibilities of what a embedded VR resource, within an organization like Ohio State would look like.

OSU Ohio State university, background for you. Fourth largest employer of 33,000 employees. On the main campus the medical center and its affiliates. It is the third largest university in the United States over 24,000, um, attending at any given time. As a result it has one of the largest alumni networks in the world. I walked down F Street the other day, I was wearing some colors, I have to admit and I got two shout outs within a block of each other. It was OH -- see for any Buckeyes -- OH exactly what happened. We are legion. Main campus is and the Ohio State University weather conditions letter medical center located in Columbus and five regional campuses throughout the state as well which we are partnering with this initiative we want to talk about the successes of this initiative, but as you can imagine the University of That size and scope, there are a lot of positions that need to be filled. Currently there are more than 1,000 job openings at Ohio State.

>>KRISTEN BALLINGER: To talk to you a little bit about what the process looks like so that talent coordinator who is actually embedded out of Ohio State University in the human resources office working directly with talent and acquisition, as well as, diversity inclusion EEO, they're able to identify those high demand jobs weekly. There are a thousand jobs posted every Monday. So that's a lot of jobs to go through. To identify candidates for those opportunities.

That talent sourcing coordinator has regular meetings with the counselors in the Columbus office. If they're identifying a person who would be a good fit, then assists with that application process. Many cases them be working with either internal job interval or external job developer with the community rehabilitation program.

They'll help that person apply for that job and the talent sourcing coherent advocates. Within the university coordinates -- that's no small task. Hiring within Ohio State is decentralized. So each division -- 30 or more of those. She's had to build relationships with the hiring managers at each divisions.

Communicating back to the counselor or keep the counselor in touch with what's happening with that person's status. Another great benefit of having a partnership with an employer and embedded resource is the back and forth communication. So we're able to get feedback from the employer on an interview, how they did in the interview process. We're able to take that feedback, share it with the counselor and participant who interviewed to know what to work on next time. That's a great benefit we have from this embedded process.

Here is an overview of the structure [indicating] that talent sourcing coordinator is embed Ted HR office. They have office space, park downtown at the university, able to build those relationships with the hiring managers. Again, 30 or more of those hiring managers that they built relationships with.

Our talent sourcing coordinator is seen as a parts of the team. Her coworkers are dual, in the VR office, counselors she meets about the job and the HR folks at Ohio State that see her as parts of the team.

She can be a resource for existing team managers at Ohio State who may be experiencing a disability and need VR services in order to keep their job. She can facilitate an application, referral for VR services for that staff person. She has access to the hiring portal and able to track realtime, the interviewee's progress before applying for a job at Ohio State. She has an OOS email address and able to communicate that information back to the counselor so that everybody knows the status of that particular applicant.

>>JOHN HACKATHORN: We just ended the second year of the partnership. It is a three-year partnership. We fully expect to extend it beyond the three years. First two years, you can see [indicating] we've had close to 1500 OOD job seekers. These are not unique individuals, but 1500 applicants have submitted applications to Ohio State University. There has been 57 job offers and 44 hires from that. That's Tennessee indication -- you'll see a graph statistic later on -- showing you how competitive it is to get a job at Ohio State. It's highly coveted position. A lot of alumni would love to go back home.

We've had a lot of individuals go through at any given time, we'll have close to 100 people active applicants and 10-15 interviewing at any point in time as well.

Very competitive. I'm waiting to hear on a job I applied for in 2004. [Laughter.] Still holding on.

This is information that we got from Ohio State, affirmative action office. Based on the first two years, OSU's hiring rate of individuals with disabilities has increased 65%."

OSU being a 503 contractor. This is great information for them to have.

You can see how important the talent sourcing coordinator is working with the individual through the process and helping with the navigation the facilitation has had with these stats.

"Average hourly wage $13.34 we have a 77% retention rate and both of those are higher than what we have with individuals who are not working at Ohio State."

Also individuals working 35 hours a week."

That again is consistently higher than what we have. Some of the jobs that we have placed individuals with at OSU, there's entry level positions, janitorial, landscaping and we have also had -- a person got a job with WOSU radio station for advertising sales, lab assistant, lab instructor and other positions as well to. So a various opportunities.

>>KRISTEN BALLINGER: We've been able to de navigate hiring process. We have decreased application to hire time. That's a goal building and strength those relationships with the hiring managers so that people are not applying and getting lost in the vortex. That sometimes happens, but we're able to build those relationships and navigate through that, so this a folks can find out decisions quicker. So we have a decreased application to hiring time.

Uhm, we're also getting increased referrals from the VR counselors. It's a new initiative and process to go with the jobs to the counselors and share that information regularly. Counselors think more about the people on the case load that may be coming up to be job ready status and knowing that those Ohio State opportunities are there to make those referrals. Some operational things that we work through because of strict requirements at the \medical center and they university. We've worked with the university to streamline with onsite job coaches.

There was an agency that was allowed we want to make sure participants had the ability to select the provider of choice and working with Ohio State to open that up to all job coaches and agencies.

And then we have hiring events. We've done a few of those and successful. Plans in the future is to increase those and schedule those hiring events to coinciding with the hiring increasing that takes place in the fall semester. We're scheduling those hiring events now to be prepared for the increased hiring that will takes place.

All right, so then the next partnership that we wanted to talk about is with Giant Eagle. They are a chain of supermarkets in Ohio more than 100 supermarkets and 60 Get-go Gas Stations. We started working with corporate and they approached us because they wanted to take a fresh look at how they were increasing hiring and inclusion, people with disabilities within their stores. They wanted to know if we would be interested in partnering with them in a new approach.

We shared what we had done for the last year with the Ohio State University. We put their corporate in touch with our tact at Ohio State and they were able to talk about how the partnership worked and share that with them. Over a few months and meetings and several phone calls we were able to establish a partnership and memorandum with Giant Eagle Corporate and we launched January 2019.

Again, we have a talent sourcing coordinator who is embedded with human resources at Giant Eagle stores. This is where we started the first partnership with them. We have a goal that we established with Giant Eagle and it's a little bit different in terms of a goal because it has retention attached to it, but the retention is six months.

Six months of retention for at least 24 people within the first 12 months. If you do the math, means that we have to have 24 people hired by June 30th in order to be close to that goal. We set an internal goal that was higher than that understanding that there may be some folks that decided this isn't the opportunity for them. Moving on to something else.

We'll share a little bit further in the presentation where we are within the first three months. This goes back to the name of the initiative: Sourcing talent and retaining team members. Retention is huge reimportant to Giant Eagle and, of course, it's very important to us too in the job seekers that we're working with.

Through this embedded sourcing coordinator being engaged with the business, part of that person's responsibility is the retention aspect of it supporting the employer so that people can maintain their employment longer.

>>JOHN HACKATHORN: The process, while similar, is a bit different than the Ohio State embedded partnership because of how the structures are within -- between the two organizations. Giant Eagle being more centralized than Ohio State. The talent sourcing coordinator receives weekly job openings from Giant Eagle. I get copied on those as well. So everybody knows 242 job opportunities at Giant Eagles in northeast Ohio currently. Kristen talked about the structure and the flow of business experimentations how opportunities get out. Counselors are made aware of what jobs are available. That is districted out to our counseling teams and also the other talent sourcing coordinators that happen to be in that area as well. The dynamic occurs where notification of the job occurs. Then if an OOD individual is interested in applying for the job, either the counselor coordinator many times job developer helps with that application.

This is where it's very important, in this particular project, the Giant Eagle sourcing coordinator needs to be notified of that application. That way he can start tracking that individual within the Giant Eagle system, knowing where they are, what store, what job. Also, act as that point of contact to the local store hiring manager or whoever is in charge of that particular hiring decisions for that store. So that any advocacy can be tracked. His interaction with the hiring managers is then also able to help notify the job developers or the counselors if any additional supports are needed for that individual, as they move through the process and keeping them aware of what their progress is through the process.

He helps facilitate on boarding needs, accommodations, coaching for the individuals, as they are on boarded to Giant Eagle. The structure, this is a part where it is similar to Ohio State, embedded with Giant Eagle HR, but they have an office -- within VR office in the alleviate area and in the areas working with individual store managers. Just being very present in this capacity. He's also serving as a resource for Giant Eagle team members who might not be aligned with OOD or VR at that time. If something occurs where VR resources might be helpful to that individual our talent sourcing coordinator is there to get that person in line with VR services.

He is well-known in the organization and seen as somebody as parts of the team as a resource, and well connected within the area store managers. Like, similar to OSU has a Giant Eagle email address to be easily contacted. They're not confused by an OOD email address. And he also has access to the hiring software as well to be able to keep in touch with how the applications are going. While serving as that single point of contact with the Giant Eagle and get-go gas hiring managers.

>>KRISTEN BALLINGER: Just hot off the presses got the numbers for march. 24 hires by December of this year continuous employment. And we currently have 21. We have 19 who are still working. So a couple have moved on for various reasons to other employment. But we're thrilled with the process so far and crossing our fingers that we'll succeed getting to 24 and then helping those team members to maintain employment for the long-term.

We're also tracking how many individuals our talent coordinators. 12 referrals to VR services. Still have an OOD case with retention services. Those are the stats in the first three months. That is it.

[Applause.]

Feel free to reach out [indicating] if you would like to hear more information about the partnership or businesses that we're working with. We would be happy to answer those questions.

>>KATHY WEST-EVANS: If we have questions for Ohio team or Avery, let's go ahead. Sherry is running to the mic to help out thank you.

>>: Impressive. For the Ohio programs, how do you set your numerical goals? How do they compare to your general VR population?

>>KRISTEN BALLINGER: John mentioned that giant being has had partnerships similar to this in other part of it state and with other partners and the 24 goal was established by Giant Eagle. We did look at what our numbers looked like through our tracking software to see how many playmates we had, but we weren't tracking necessarily the same way they were tracking that six-month retention. We rely on wage record and looking at much further back in history through the wage record.

So it was just kind of a joint negotiation or decision with them on what that looks like we think we will exceed it, but I will say that Giant Eagle in previous partnerships have never surpassed that goal. We went into it with that.

>>JOHN HACKATHORN: With with OSU, that number, it's a three-year partnership and we have a goal of 100 hires for three years and we're currently at 44 now. Looking back on what we had done previously with Ohio State, the year before the initiative there were eight individuals hired. We increased that by 25% the first year and we had a total of 14 hired in the first year. We've more than doubled it this second year where we've had over 30 placements as well. We're still lagging behind a little bit, but we're out performing what we had done with this partnership.

>>: What skills are you looking for with your talent coordinators.

>>KRISTEN BALLINGER: They do public speaking, presentations, trainings, we look for that talent. They are not necessarily the business contact. That's what the business relation inspectors is. However, in the case of the two embedded sourcing coordinators they are the direct liaison to the business. We got lucky. Last night two talent sourcing coordinators assigned were internal promotions or internal assignments. They were more of a support case load assistant or general case load assistant. We got lucky with them that they, um, have a great personality and go getters and don't hesitate to find solutions to barriers that them run into.

>>: I have a question about your MOU. Just wondering what you agreed upon in the MOU and did you have a challenge -- I'll stand. Did you have a problem negotiating terms with Giant Eagle.

>>KRISTEN BALLINGER: It went back and forth sometimes between legal people on what they could agree to and couldn't agree to, what we could agree to or not.

But the MOU is simple. It's just a couple of pages outlining the roles and responsibilities of each party and it says we will embed a talent sourcing coordinator. What the talent coordinator -- we have a great chief legal -- up until Friday. He was promoted.

He was great at going through and talking it through with Giant Eagle. Same thing with Ohio State and we have an MOU with them. And outlines the responsibilities of each party.

>>: I'm Joan Phillips from Massachusetts. Standing confirm that this strategy works well. Massachusetts has implemented this same strategy with a hospital in Massachusetts. The key is having the individual embedded in the employer site and getting to know the hiring managers is priceless because you're not only getting to know the culture of the organization, you're getting to know the culture of the different departments within that organization.

One of our major successes included when Spalding created a new position within the hospital called VA agency first informed us of those positions and every position was filled with individuals with disabilities.

Beyond that, they introduced us to staff at the mass General Hospital under the parent's umbrella. When you have an employer speaking for you, that's something that you can't pay money for. That has generated significant opportunities for our consumers, so congratulations to you and this is a confirmation that works and we encourage others to do the same.

>>KRISTEN BALLINGER: We didn't put it in the presentation, but president Drake, who is the president of the Ohio State University, included information about the partnership on his -- in vision 2020 as well. He has a Vision 2020 web page where he sees the university going and on the diversity and inclusion page, this is known and well respected by the president of Ohio State. It reaches all the way up and how you were able to share that information with other employers.

>>: Yes. Good morning, I'm with Virginia DARS business development manager. One of the questions I have is: Did the partnerships also include any disability education for some of the managers, department division managers helping them understand, you know, how to properly engage with people with certain disabilities what have you?

>>JOHN HACKATHORN: Great question and absolutely with both partnerships. As Kristen said earlier, we have 25 Windmill facilitators in our agency. Part of getting them trained to be able to present Windmills and help out with our presentations, we brought in five business partners to take part as well including a couple of state agencies.

Also, Giant Eagle and Ohio State brought in, I think six representatives. They took part of that, week long training -- Wright was the founder presented it with Dr. P. and everyone came in as certified Windmills trainers and Ohio State has implemented Windmills and disability inclusion training into their core educational expectations for all of their employees as well. They're looking to expand that more in coordination with OOD as part of a refute Executive Order by governor. The answer is yes and we have expanding that with Giant Eagle. They have a business resource group called: Ability Resource Group we'll provide training to them HR leaders in the near future.

>>: Thank you for sharing your stories Avery, I can't think of better success and thank you for sharing that.

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Question I had I know we've talked a lot about the talent sourcing coordinator and a lot of sharing across state lines, which is so appreciative. Your program with Ohio State, I heard you mention about the foundation grant that got things launched. Was that a one-time thing with Ohio State University?

>>JOHN HACKATHORN: That partnership started with the second cycle of the Poses grant Jenny and we utilize that for match. Ohio State provides other resources for this partnership specifically office space and access for our talent sourcing coordinator to work within the university structure as well. So the match is what we would do for regular VR services, but it comes from the foundation dollars. That's what we summit for match.

>>KATHY WEST-EVANS: Any other questions? I just want to say I'm really excited because this is the new VR. This is the dual customer strategy. This is what we've all invested in when we talk about the national employment team, when we've got our directors like Jane Elizabeth and ray Hopkins stepping up and promoting the business. Thank you for sharing the models across the country.

[Applause.]

We'll be posting the PowerPoint with the contact information. I want to and I see my coworker John Connally talking about the Ohio State University. I want to know why "The" has to be in front that have. What is that? We'll have that conversation afterwards. I want to end this session with something I'm excited about. I want to have Brian join me, okay. Brian is the executive Vice President of Operations for disability -- you'll notice that Jill isn't here, but this is even better.

So we're here to announce a new strategic alliance agreement between disability In and the -- [indiscernible] -- where we're committing to mutually collaborate and drive disability inclusion and expansion of career opportunities for people with disabilities. And to work jointly with our business customers. As you heard in the Ohio story, their disability and chapter was very involved in that. And so we'll ramp it up and take it to the next level. I'm so excited to be working in partnership,.

>>B:

>>BRIAN: Next generation programs -- I'm not sure how much people are aware of, but several years ago we started a program for college students with disabilities. That is two-part program: Mentoring program, six-month experience as well as the talent accelerator bringing these students to the annual conference giving them a crash course in networking, LinkedIn profile, resume, and setting up one-on-one interviews with our corporate partners to try to get them into jobs. Really thanks to Kathy and the NET we've been able to bring many VR clients. Last year we had -- 33 students who were actually offered jobs onsite at our and five were VR clients. This year our program will be 171 students. 45 of them are VR clients from 23 state, District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. We'll reach time-out directors who have clients who have been accepted in our program this week to let you know about that, who are they are, who their mentor is, companies mentoring them. We're excited to continue this strong partnership.

Also on our affiliate front. VR leads our affiliates in Alabama, Arkansas and Georgia. Greater Atlanta. We hope there's more to come on that front. You heard in Ohio, they're so involved in our affiliates. Big thank you to Kathy.

>>KATHY WEST-EVANS: Thank you. I am really excited about this. Thank you, Brian.

[Applause.]

Jill wasn't able to make it and Brian jumped right in. I like working with those kind of people that say: Let's make it happen, right?

With that, Jane Elizabeth, there's a lot for to you wrap up.

>>JANE ELIZABETH: Were there any additional questions for anyone on the panel? I think you've heard some innovative approaches -- different approaches. Some started from just a counselor thinking about her consumer, and the grassroots effort that she made there at Vertical Harvest. Then embedding with employers. Innovative partnership with disability In and the opportunities we provide. Thank you and all of the panel we appreciate it.

[Applause.]

Before we break for lunch and some of you for regional meetings I believe Steve has an announcement.

>>: Steve: How many will be going to the Hill tomorrow? All right, so you have a job before leaving. There are packets available at the registration desk. I briefly mentioned in this morning. Before leaving today, pick up the number of packets you need for your hill visits. We'll take them tomorrow as well, but if upper you will pick up the packets you need for tomorrow and there are talking points. The talking points are not to be put in the packet. They're for you to use as reference.

One announcement to make Oregon the past weekend for those involved in some of the conversations and leadership and director's forum and NCSRC -- we've commit proportions request. First time we've done this in many, many years. We felt the time was right, the appetite was right. We don't know that they'll be -- that it's much of a reality, but we wanted to get our money on the table, our requests on the table. I mentioned this to RSA, requested 54 million. I went back to the folks that we were working with and we were able to raise that appropriation request. So the packet that you have is 54 million that we've requested. Looks like we've been able to push through, up to $440 million. A little bit of difference. So I'll bring it to your awareness. It says $54 million, but we'll -- looks like that's gone through. I just got the word this morning's. So if that comes up in conversation I want to you know that the talking points made are not accurate there.

We will appreciate seeing those of you on The Hill tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. and we'll break until regional meetings. Lunch is now. 3:00 o'clock committee meetings and hope to see everybody at the reception tonight.

[Applause.]

[Lunch break.]

[Realtime event is concluded by:

Shanti Lira, Realtime Stenographer.]

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