

**Revisiting Braided Funding**  
**March 16, 2011**

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>> ROBB SEWELL: Good afternoon, everyone. Sorry about that. We apparently had some technical glitches this afternoon with our webinar service, but we're now h ready to begin. h

My name is Robb Sewell, and on behalf of the NTAR Leadership Center by like to h welcome you to today's webinar "Revisiting Braided Funding: Learning from Employer h Response Models for Recruiting and Hiring People with Disabilities." h

Today's webinar is being captioned in realtime. To access the captioning you h must enter the following URL into a separate Internet browser window. This URL was h circulated to all registrants yesterday afternoon as well as this morning. And in just a h few moments I will send the URL to all of you via the webinar chat feature. Simply copy h and paste the URL to access the captioning. h

I'm going to take a minute to describe today's format. The presentation slides h will appear on the right side of your screen. A chat feature on the left side of your h screen enables you to communicate with me should you have any questions or h encounter any problems. Simply type your message and click "Send." Click the "Hide h Chat" to temporarily remove the chat feature and click "Show Chat" when you want to h restore it. You can click "Full Screen" so the webinar occupies the full height and width h of your display. The only voices today you will hear are those of the presenters. We'll h have time after the presentation for Q&A and at that time I'll provide you with h information about how to ask questions of our presenters. Nonetheless, throughout the h presentation, feel free to forward your questions to me via the chat feature. I'll then h relay the questions to our presenters during the Q&A. h

This webinar is being recorded. A direct link to the webinar, including audio and h web content, will be available on the NTAR Leadership web site by noon Eastern time, h Thursday, March 17th, 2011. The webinar can be accessed at [www.ntarcenter.org](http://www.ntarcenter.org). h Finally, after you exit the Internet portion of today's webinar, your web browser will h take you to a brief survey where you can give us feedback about your experience today. h Please take a few minutes to complete that survey. h

At this point I'd like to turn things over to my colleague, Nanette Relave, who is h director of the Center for Workers with Disabilities at the American Public Human h Services Association. Nanette? h

>> NANETTE RELAVE: Hi, Robb. My name is Nanette Relave and I'm with the h Center for Workers with Disabilities. Before we get started I'm just going to briefly h provide a little background information about our center. We were established in it a h

2007 with Grant from the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the U.S. Department of Labor, and our center represents a collaboration of partners with expertise across a variety of different fields, including Workforce Development, disability employment, and other important fields. We were created in order to help build capacity in leadership at the federal, state and local levels in order to help facilitate change across Workforce Development and disability systems in order to ultimately help increase employment for adults with disabilities.

Over the past several years our work has been guided by a set of principles. I won't read them all. They're down here on the slide. Just in relation to today's webinar I wanted to emphasize that strategies that leverage funding across different systems and programs are something that's been important to our work over time and to the work we've done with states. So that's something that we're going to be really taking a look at during this webinar.

I'm delighted to have two of my colleagues here today to present some of the findings and strategies that they have been researching in regards to braided funding and employer response models. Our two presenters are Bob Nicholas, who is a senior visiting fellow at the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University, and also Ronnie Kauder, who is a senior Practitioner-in-Residence at the Heldrich Center as well. And both will be sharing some really fantastic information on models that they have explored and the ways these models have been able to tap into a variety of different funding sources and sources of support, and just as importantly, I've been able to braid those together and weave those in ways that are able to result in more hiring and placement and retention strategies for adults with disabilities.

I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to my colleagues at this point. In order to unmute your line, all that you need to do is press star-7 and you will be unmuted.

>> RONNIE KAUDER: Hi, this is Ronnie Kauder. Can everybody hear me? That's great. Thank you.

I'm here with Bob Nicholas, and if -- we're -- this is what we hope to accomplish over the next hour. We're going to provide some background in the sort of research that we've done with the NTAR center, specifically on employer-driven or employer-friendly initiatives that have and have the potential to increase employment for people with disabilities.

We're going to talk a little bit about why you would want to braid funding in these kinds of employer-driven models.

And then Bob will talk about three specific employer responsive models. One is Lowe's, the second is the Project SEARCH model, which many of you might be familiar with, and the third is the Baltimore SOS model. And then I'm going to talk about braided funding in a One-Stop system. Specifically, the model -- or the case we're going to be discussing is the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board. Then we'll talk a little bit about conclusions and implications for the future. And we want to reassure

everybody that we will leave plenty of time for questions and answers. We expect that our presentation part of this will take an hour or less.

So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Bob.

>> BOB NICHOLAS: Thank you. It's a delight for me to be here with all of you this afternoon. We're hopeful we can provide you with some helpful information as you go about your work in planning for to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

As Nanette had laid out in terms of the NTAR center, and many of you have been involved in other webinars and are familiar with our work, but basically we have taken a position of looking at the ways in which we can meet employer workforce needs with people with disabilities. As we looked at our research agenda and tried to kick that off, we did, obviously, reviewed literature on employer perspectives on the employment of people with disabilities.

As many of you probably know, the literature is primarily focused in what I'd call a negative sort of way, which is that all the reasons why employers don't hire people with disabilities and what's behind that. While that literature is important for our understanding of how employers function, we also found information on initiatives by employers to actually recruit people with disabilities. This is exciting certainly to me as somebody who has spent my career in the disability service system in trying to convince employers to hire people with disabilities, to know that employers are actually looking to us in these initiatives.

So we chose to try to add to the body of knowledge on those employer-driven initiatives to look at what's working and why it's working and to highlight that. That led to our first study, which was -- is called ready and able addressing labor market needs and building productive careers for people with disabilities through collaborative approaches, and that study is about to be released, and some of you may have had opportunity to be involved in the webinar last year that we did on that study.

However, we were real excited by the outcome of that study. One of the reasons was that we found not just one but numerous models that were being used to support employers that wanted to recruit an employee, people with disabilities. We found local and national models. We found single employer, multiple employer models. We found people of various ages and various types of disabilities being served through different models. And so this seemed to show us that there are options that are available to you all in the -- working at the policy and service provision level in terms of supporting opportunities that come your way in this regard.

We also found that a number of these initiatives weren't just hiring one or five or 10 people, but in many cases it was 50 and 100 and even 200 people in a couple of situations, and they were -- the people being hired were getting well-paying jobs with full benefits packages from the company. This, again, is exciting for me as a person coming from the disability field and knowing that job developers are frequently out on

the streets pounding on doors looking for a job on behalf of one person and to know that you have a company calling you saying that they want to hire 50, 100 or 200 people is a complete sort of reversal of that process.

I want to say there were two other, I think, important elements that we highlighted in ready & able. There were other common elements between these initiatives as well. But two that we want to highlight here is that one is that the employers that were involved routinely had accepted a business case for hiring people with disabilities and viewed people with disabilities as adding value to their workforce and positively affecting their bottom line. And you are probably aware there are a number of formal business cases, one by ODEP and one by Disability Works in Chicago and there are a number of others as well. But the common theme, again, is the perception by employers that people with disabilities bring value to the workplace. And that again as a person who has worked in disability systems and have lived with the stigmas and the biases of our society against people with disabilities seemed to me to be a revelation. It also, as I talked with employer after employer after employer after employer who was involved in these initiatives in one way or another, I was amazed by the very positive thinking approach that they had to employing people with disabilities. They didn't almost -- almost ignored the notion of disability and were looking totally at a person. It was all for them about capability, and in some cases the job that people were being recruited for were very technical positions that required significant training, yet they never batted an eye in terms of assuming that people with disabilities could do those jobs. And at a time when we're still as a disability system arguing with each other about whether people can be in inclusive employment or not or whether we ought to be building more workshops or not, the notion that an increasing number of employers are viewing people with disabilities in this positive way, I felt, was extraordinary.

Second, the -- routinely employers were relying on partnerships of local workforce and provider agencies to support them in their disability recruitment initiatives, and I want to talk a little more about that. We found that employers really don't want to have to have relationships with the multitude of entities in disability and workforce supplying systems to be able to access quality employees with disabilities. Employers express to do us that they're sort of turned off by bureaucracies of disability systems in terms of eligibility, in terms of funding, which is today's presentation, or who provides what services. They're just looking for quality employees. Therefore, in terms of point two, they are looking for a single point of contact to coordinate any assistance and support that the people they're recruiting will need to be able to do the job. A single point of contact is something that's not natural to our local disability and workforce systems. Many of our -- especially on the disabilities side of things -- programs have their own organizational integrity and have their own contracts and their own funding streams and are not willing to sort of drop their personal interest and work under the direction of a single point of contact. But, again, that's a challenge we have

because that's what employers want. They basically want somebody to coordinate all of that -- all the supports with them. n

Thirdly, the supports that are provided to people need to be based on what the employers' needs are, and so as we looked at the various profiles in both the first study and this study, employers had their way of doing business. They had their specs for how they wanted people trained, and these strategies, single point of contact and the partnerships that support the employer initiatives, need to pay attention to that. n

So in summary, employer-driven initiatives challenge our local systems, but they come with incredible opportunities. So I'm going to turn back over to Ronnie and talk a little bit about how braided funding fits into this paradigm. n

>> RONNIE KAUDER: Thanks, Bob. n

So why are we talking about braided funding and what do we mean by braided funding? As we all know, there are many different programs, there's different legislation, there are different requirements, there are different modes and methods of operation. Some programs are run directly by state employees. Some are contracted out to community providers or any combination. Local governments run some of these programs. Nonprofit organizations. So there's a complex array of programs, services and funding streams that support individuals, both within and without disabilities, to become employed and remain employed. However, sometimes people might need the services from multiple programs to achieve their employment goals, or one type of program might provide one sort of service or support and another program might provide another service and support that the same person might need. And then there are also programs that are flexible so that they can kind of proceed support or programs where it's -- provide support or programs where it's needed. A little later on Bob is going to be talking about different models, for instance, the Project SEARCH model, which is kind of the same model program but he'll describe how the funding sources can be different to provide exactly the same types of services. So I guess the point is, in an array of programs, there's some flexibility in some of these programs, and from the point of view of the employer, you know, the employers don't really care what the funding source is as long as they get the person they need and as long as that person, if they need training or education or support, gets that support. So, you know, they don't really care if the person gets support from WIA or vocational rehabilitation or something else. They just want the training and support for the person who can do the job. As we said, the braiding allows multiple funding sources to be used to accomplish these goals. n

As Bob has said, it's a significant challenge for community partnerships to braid resources from multiple funding sources. It takes a level of knowledge, and especially it takes a real desire to be responsive to what the employer needs in order to put the package together, to put the resources together, to help people become employed and remain employed. n

So what do we mean by braided funding? What we mean here, sometimes the n

term blend funding is used, and we're using the term braided funding. What it means is to access and coordinate multiple sources of funding. However, the funds still remain visible, meaning they still meet the -- all the requirements of their funding source. They're not -- the identity of the fund isn't lost in some pool. Braided funding uses the funding sources and meets the requirements of all the different funding sources, however, they're braided together so that it's stronger, essentially, like a braid is stronger, to provide the services and supports needed by people with disabilities. So the funding streams are visible but used in common to provide greater effectiveness.

We're now going to give specific examples of what we're calling profiles of success. We're going to look at four employer -- what we're calling employer-responsive models that have some of the following features.

First of all, since we're talking about employer-driven or employer-responsive, in each case there's an employer or group of employers that either wants to recruit and hire people with disabilities or at the very least wants to include people with disabilities in their recruitment and hiring efforts.

In all of these profiles also there's a partnership between the employer or the employers and one or more community organizations or, in one case, a Workforce Investment Board, and that organization, that partner provides the supports so that the employer or the employers can hire and retain people with disabilities. And use of this braided funding is essential to making the partnership and the model work. So it's employer-focused or employer-driven, and there are all different kinds of braided funding approaches which we're going to discuss today.

Bob?

>> BOB NICHOLAS: Thank you, Ronnie.

The one thing I would want to emphasize in the next three -- in the three profiles that I will present is that these are all being replicated as we speak in different places, and people like yourselves are getting calls from employers that are involved in these three areas constantly saying, "We want to recruit people with disabilities. How can you help us?"

So we chose these profiles to study in this report amongst the ones that we looked at in the ready & able study because they are the ones that are the most ubiquitous, most being replicated.

So, having said that, the first one -- the first profile is on Lowe's, which is the home distribution center. Lowe's is the second largest home improvement retailer worldwide. It has 1700 stores and 238,000 employees. So it is nationwide, and in 2008 inspired by the success of the initiative in the Walgreens distribution centers, Lowe's made a decision to recruit employees with disabilities throughout its distribution center system.

We have profiled Walgreens in the ready & able study in terms of how they made their work, and this -- the Lowe's initiative came about because of discussions between

the two companies. And that's, I think, significant from two vantage points. I mean, q one is that the power of business to business communication, that if I had gone to knock q on Lowe's door and say "Gee, you ought to be doing something like" whatever, describe q the initiative, they probably would have sent me packing. But the fact that another q major company was showing success and it was in the trade journals and other things q that made them want to do the same thing in their system. And second is a mutual q interest in the bottom line. Obviously Lowe's interest here was in more efficient q operations, and so their interest in doing this was not benevolent. It had to do with q increasing their bottom line. And that is the next -- as the next bullet says: It's not q charity, we are looking for great employees. That's a quote from the vice-president for q the supply chain in Lowe's. That's what he was interested in doing with this initiative. q

In starting off this initiative, again, in the theme of the partnerships that were q highlighted in ready & able Lowe's sought a partner to provide that coordination, q technical assistance, single point of contact role, and they found it in the Arc of Luzerne q County, Pennsylvania. The distribution center is located in Pittston, which is in Luzerne q County. The Arc, I'll talk a little more about that in a second, but they initially -- the Arc q of Luzerne County doesn't provide services as such. It's an advocacy organization. And q so in terms of recruiting the agencies to provide supports to the employees who are q being recruited, Arc assisted Lowe's in recruiting two local service provider agencies, q and the Arc continues to serve as the single point of contact in terms of the involvement q of those two agencies. q

The Lowe's initiative focuses on people with intellectual and developmental q disabilities but includes job seekers with a range of disabilities. Just this past year they q also added an internship program for students with disabilities with their regional q educational services agency. Basically the way in which the initiative works is that that q the -- both the two local service provider agencies and the regional educational agency q is involved in recruiting people for jobs that are available in the Lowe's distribution q center system. People who are interested in applying for those jobs are supported to do q so and go through what is called the trial work experience. Those of you from VR q systems, this is not the trial work experiences as in that system, but it's basically an q opportunity for people to see various types of jobs that are in the plant and to judge q their -- so they can make some decisions about what they're interested in doing and q then being able to be trained to do the job that they want and train up to the skills q necessary to be hired -- to be hired by Lowe's. With the people who are coming in q through the CRP agencies, they are hired at the end of the trial work experience when q they can do the job that they have chosen. q

For the students, once they complete their internship, they are eligible to be q employed by Lowe's when they graduate. q

As of October 2010 Lowe's had hired 48 people with disabilities at the Pittston q distribution center and an additional 110 people with disabilities at other distribution q

centers nationwide. And they talk about at the Pittston center, which was their first major initiative, they started with several targeted positions in these centers but found almost immediately that people with disabilities could do all of the jobs, and they now have people hired in every section of the distribution center.

In terms of braiding funding, how this is paid for, the basic elements of this initiative are that there is a service coordination technical assistance piece, there is outreach and screening of employees, there's job training, and there there's supports for job retention.

In terms of the first, as I said, that's the Arc of Luzerne County, and the executive director of the Arc does that and basically does that in an unfunded fashion. She sees the role as an extension of the Arc's role to enrich the lives of people with [ inaudible ] and sees the Lowe's initiative as an opportunity for people to get good jobs and benefits. So in this particular site that's done on a volunteer basis by the Arc.

The outreach and screening is done by both special education and vocational rehabilitation -- actually the outreach is actually done by the community resource providers, the two that work with them in partnership, and they're funded by vocational rehabilitation to do that. The local -- it's actually called the Luzerne intermediate unit which is their local educational agencies. Basically uses special education funds to fund the internship program, and they recruit students for the program.

Job training, which is done through that trial work experience, for the people coming through the CRP's, that's funded by VR, and for the students coming through the local educational agencies, that's done by -- educational agencies, that's done by special education funding.

In terms of supports for job retention, the -- both of the CR P's are also contractors to the local board of mental health and developmental disabilities, and while they have received some funding for transportation and some other things, they have not been routinely getting funds for follow-along supports, and so those two agencies have been providing follow-along supports to the supports to the people who work there at the distribution center without funding from that agency.

>> RONNIE KAUDER: I just want to throw in one other thing on Lowe's to clarify. The role of the Arc of Luzerne County in Pennsylvania, they actually reached out to some of the community providers and helped Lowe's select the community providers that it chose to work with. I believe they chose to work with two. So it wasn't the vocational rehabilitation state agency necessarily but the Arc, again, that service coordination and technical assistance role, they did the legwork on behalf of Lowe's, so Lowe's did not have to go directly to the providers themselves. That single point of contact. I wanted to reemphasize that.

>> BOB NICHOLAS: Thank you. That is important. Again, that is what Lowe's was seeking from them, both in terms of technical assistance, in terms of doing adaptations to the center and other kinds of things, but also they ended up recruiting the two

community services -- and still serve as a single point of contact. If Lowe's has an wish n an employee or whatever, they call the Arc, and she handles the follow-up. So that's -- n thank you for that. n

Project SEARCH, many of you are familiar, I think -- Project SEARCH is one of the n older initiatives but it still is an incredibly impressive one at that. Project SEARCH was n developed at Cincinnati children's hospital medical center in 1995 in response to a n business need for reliable employees. The program prepares students and adults with n intellectual and developmental disabilities for entry-level hospital jobs. n

The program at CCHMC was started in partnership with the local developmental n disabilities board, the local technology institute, Cincinnati public schools and the voc. n rehab agency in Ohio. n

Basically, it is primarily at this point a high school transition program where n students with disabilities spend their final year of school, what they call immersed, at n the hospital in both coursework and rotations through various types of jobs so people n get an opportunity to both see things that they may be interested in but also have the n hospital get to know them. And these are unpaid internships, by the way. n

Once a student has successfully completed the rotations, a job placement n process is started, and after the student is placed in a job at the hospital, job retention n supports are provided. As of October 2010, the CCHMC has 62 employees who had n been hired through Project SEARCH. n

Based on the success of this program, SEARCH has grown exponentially to 150 n sites in -- it says 42 states here. I think it's actually 39 states plus the United Kingdom, n Australia and Canada, 42 different locations. Predominantly in hospitals, but we see n them now in other sectors, which include banking and government service work. n

A couple things here. One is, I think, again, the replications that are happening n around the country are based on the business success of starting at Cincinnati children's n hospital and then the replication success that has gone on throughout the country. n Basically many states at this point are looking at expanding the number of Project n SEARCH sites in their state. So this is, to my way of thinking, a great opportunity to n create employment opportunities for people with disabilities in their state because n there is a template to this, and they now have a licensing process by which they help n maintain the integrity of the model, which has maintained also its level of success, and n hospitals and banks and whatever can feel comfortable in the -- in terms of starting one n of these sites in their business. n

Again, we're talking here about well-paying jobs with benefits. n

Just in terms of looking at the braided funding aspects of this, we in the study n looked at other project search replication sites to try to get a broader view of the n strategies that they're using at the local level to support project search sites, and as n Ron ie mentioned before, there are a diverse number of ways to support the same n model. You can use different sources of funding. That's happening in project search, as n

we'll talk about in a second. So we looked at and talked with people in the state of Washington. We talked with people in the state of Georgia. We talked to people in the state of New Hampshire in terms of their replication sites and came up with a longer list of options in terms of braided funding strategies for search replication sites. The basic elements of project search as we see it, and I think as they see it as well, are program development and start-up, the internship stage, job training and placement and supports for job retention.

The program development and start-up piece, you know, as we said in the narrative here, there was assistance from both the DD board in Cincinnati and the VR agency in terms of getting that program up. We also found that in the state of New Hampshire doing Project SEARCH replications was an important element of the state's MIG money, so that MIG money was being used to help in the start-up of replication sites.

Finally, we talked to the state of Georgia, and there is a Project SEARCH replication coordinator on the staff of the council on developmental disabilities, and they provide funding for technical assistance to Project SEARCH start-up sites. I was really impressed with that approach because in Georgia they were -- the year before last they started seven sites, Project SEARCH replications, and this past year they're putting online six. So they've started 13 Project SEARCH sites in two years. And when you just think about the job opportunities that they've created for people they serve.

In terms of the internships, this is, again, a partnership with the local school districts, and so special education funding is being used in all of the replication sites we looked at to support the internship element of this -- of the replication sites, and that's an important -- as you're out trying to do a replication site, it's almost essential to have the school district be a partner and willing to contribute to this.

The employer also plays a significant role in terms of mentors on staff who mentor the people -- the students during the internship period. They also provide the site, phones, desks, classroom space for the Project SEARCH replication sites.

In terms of job training and placement, each of the sites was using VR money and VR Oz with a partner -- VR was a partner in the sites.

In terms of support for job retention, we found most of the sites were actually having success in accessing long-term funding from the DD agency for supports. We also found at Cincinnati that they have been successful in accessing Ticket to Work milestone payments that they use to support their job retention specialists who are on staff at the hospital. They're even getting those milestone payments for some of the people who are also getting DD agency funding. So they're doing a nice job of kind of developing a pool of dollars and then being able to have job retention specialists who can support whoever happens to need support.

We also talked to the state of Washington that is also while getting some funding from their DD agency for job retention, they are also accessing Social Security work

incentives through a process to supplement the costs of job retention supports for the people who are hired. p

The last of the three profiles is the Baltimore Start on Success program. Start on Success is a school-to-work transition model for students with disabilities that was developed by the national organization on disability. The Baltimore SOS program was started in 1997 and serves 50 graduating seniors each year. The core of the SOS program is a program of vocational class work and paid internships at a range of local employers for students with -- in their final year of school. And at the conclusion of the internship, the student is prepared to be placed into employment so they graduate into jobs. Participating employers view this program -- Start on Success as a pipeline of qualified employees and one of the employers that Baltimore Start on Success partners with has hired 35% of the interns that have been placed there had. But all of the interns, whether they're hired by the employer where they do their internship, are supported to have jobs in the community, and the post-secondary and employment rate for SOS graduates is 75 to 85%. So they've been extraordinarily successful in terms of outcomes for students. p

Start on Success programs are now operating in 30 schools nationwide, and this is again a replication model, and it's -- it's something that's an opportunity for any of you to pursue. What we did here was to also provide -- in our study provide a point of comparison between the Pittsburgh SOS program which we profiled in our ready & able study and the Baltimore program which we profiled here to show again variation in terms of how you can support this model. p

Here you have, as we look at the braided funding strategy here, the -- there's four elements to this program, program development and start-up, program coordination, p internships and job placement and training. Program development, each of the sites p has been given a grant for start-up by the national organization on disability and p technical assistance from NOD in providing that, so that's a standard. p

In terms of program coordination, there is a program coordinator in -- the program coordinator in Baltimore is basically covered by VR funding, and it's the funding that they receive for the students to go through both the internship process and get p jobs. So that's the support for the coordinator. p

In Pittsburgh, the coordinator is actually an employee of the Pittsburgh school system and is funded through special education funding. So there you see a different way in which the same role is funded. p

The internships, in Pittsburgh, the school district provides the support. They're called itinerant teachers there, who support the students in the workplace, they're not actually at the workplace, but they work with the employers to develop natural supports for the students in the workplace. So that's funded by the LEA. But they also have a unique piece in Pittsburgh where they have a grant from the workforce system of WIA money, WIA youth money, that supports the salaries for the interns, because they're p

paid internships. Mm

In Baltimore, the internships are effectively support by VR funding, and VR is an m enthusiastic partner in this program. And the program also gets a grant from the local m education agency, but it's Carl Perkins Act funds, which is vocational education funds, m that they get that actually pays for the salaries for the interns. So there you have m another way in which they've been able to get funding to pay for the salaries of the paid m internships. m

Finally, in terms of job placement and training, that's done through VR, VR m funding, and again, students are graduating into jobs. m

So those are three profiles, and I look forward to your questions on those and I'll m turn it back over to Ronnie. m

>> RONNIE KAUDER: Thank you very much, Bob. m

So, in a way, the Pittsburgh Start on Success program is a great segue into what I m will talk which is, which is the generic public workforce system. As Bob mentioned, a m Workforce Investment Act youth funds were in fact used to support the Pittsburgh Start m on Success program in Pittsburgh. So that's just beginning -- one small example of these m systems working together. m

But what we're going to do here for a couple of minutes is just step back from the m explicitly employer-driven examples and replications that Bob has been talking about to m what I would call something more of an employer-responsive model within the public m workforce system that explicitly includes people with disabilities. m

So, first of all, I want to say just as Bob has spent his career in -- most of his m career in the disability specific system, I spent most of mine in the generic public m workforce system. So that possibly explains why each of us is presenting the pieces m we're presenting. m

But let's just look for a second at the role of the public workforce system, which is m to provide services to all job seekers and employers to facilitate skill development and m job placement. With the advent of the One-Stop system, which is about a little more m than 10 years old now, it's the role of the public workforce system, and specifically the m One-Stop system, to broker and coordinate relationships with employers for the benefit m of all job seekers and partner organizations, and to do the same on the job seeker side, m to bring staff and resources from all of the One-Stop career system partners to the m table, around one table, to better help local residents access local jobs in the m community. And to educate -- this is where the disability part comes -- it's also the role m of the public workforce system to educate all staff about resources to help people with m disabilities so that the people who work in the generic workforce system, that they m know what's available for people with disabilities, many of whom are customers, job m seeker customers at the public workforce system. Many, many customers are not m necessarily in the disability specific systems even though they have disabilities. m

So we could go to the next slide, please. So the specific workforce board that m

we're going to -- that I'm going to discuss, which has done a tremendous amount in this area and all of the areas I just talked about is the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board. That's who we profiled. I just want to put it on the map for all of you, where is the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board? It's in Eastern Connecticut. It's the home of the big names. It's the home of the big casinos, Foxwoods, Mohican Sun. It has a big submarine base in New London. Because of that it has a big defense contractor, General Dynamics. So it has these big employers. But mostly it has lots of small employers. And so the challenge for the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board, they work with the large employers, the challenge is how to work with all the smaller employers who help people who need help through the One Stop Centers access jobs with all those small employers in the area.

So the area, the Eastern Connecticut workforce area has four One Stop Career Centers which in Connecticut are called Connecticut Works. These four... New London, Norwich, Willimantic and Danielson. What it has done a good job to do is to integrate and streamline employer services to make it easier for employers to use this Connecticut work system and to take advantage of the incentives available from all different funding streams. You know, we keep saying over and over again, whether it's -- whether you're working with people with disabilities or all job seekers, employers don't want to have to know the ins and outs of all the programmings, incentives available, funding available. They want to rely on an intermediary to be able to set it up for them, because, as I said, they don't really care if the money comes from Voc. Rehab or WIA or any other system. So Eastern Connecticut WIB has done a lot in this area. Their goal is they want to provide access by employers to the full range of job seekers and to provide all job seekers access to the job openings and training that they've identified regardless of what funding sources they might be eligible for.

So, I mean, the concept sounds simple, as we all know with the different programs, the actuality is more difficult, and you know, they've definitely done a very good job in putting this together.

So the vehicle for doing this that they have, first of all, a business services team. The core members of this team are the Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce and the Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce and these have memberships of all the small businesses in the area. The Workforce Investment Board contracts with both of them to be members of this team, and the Connecticut Department of Labor, specifically the employment service, which has this function as well, is a part of the team. And the team works together to establish relationships with companies, to know what they're looking for, and then to communicate with the -- all the provider agencies so that they understand what employers are looking for. As I said, there are these core members of the team, but every month the business services team meets with all -- the additional members, and additional members include the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services, which is the vocational rehabilitation agency in Connecticut, the department of

social service, which operates the TANF program and all these other community provider organizations that also on their own have job development and placement responsibilities for all different types of programs.

So the role of the business services team is to be the single point of contact between employers and the public workforce system. They coordinate resources of the system to benefit employers. And as I keep saying, the employer doesn't care or even want to know what funding source you've tapped for assistance. In this case it's exactly the same as what Bob was saying with the specific models he discussed. The employer just wants the resources. They don't want to know -- they don't care about what the funding source is. They just want someone suitable for the job who will be able to do the job and, you know, if there's training money available to help that person learn to do the job better, then, you know, they are definitely interested in that. They don't really care if the OJT, the on-the-job training funding, as an example, is WIA money or voc. rehab money.

On the other side, on the service provider side, the Eastern Connecticut WIB has -- they have an entity that actually coordinates the provider side, and in their case they contract with the Community Action Agencies, the Thames Valley Community Action Agencies known up there as TVCCA and they coordinate within each of the One Stop Centers and across all four One Stop Centers. They coordinate all of the One-Stop partners, which in their case includes the Connecticut Department of Labor, TVCCA itself as a provider of services to the WIB, the bureau of -- voc. rehab agency, the regional educational services center, the Social Security Administration funds, transportation consortium, and the board of education and services for the blind, and their role is to coordinate day-to-day activities of the partner agencies in partnership with the Eastern Connecticut WIB. I think what they've found, in three out of the four Connecticut work centers there, the voc. rehab center is low -- completely collated into the One-Stop center. They have found that makes a big difference actually. They're not only collocated, but they're kind of fully integrated into the operation. They find that the more closely they work together, all these different agencies, the more they discover they can do together. So one example, which, you know, is kind of like the Start on Success, like the SOS program, is that in Eastern Connecticut the summer youth program is kind of -- the voc. rehab agency is funding it along with the Workforce Investment Act. So they're funding it together to include more youth with disabilities, they could be older youth, in the summer youth program with funding from both of those sources.

Also I have to mention that there is a Disability Program Navigator who plays a crucial, critical role in Eastern Connecticut. He spends a day at each One-Stop center, two days in one of them, and he's been a terrific educator for staff, for families and for individuals with disabilities so that the level of awareness of what's available for people with disabilities is really quite high.

So the subject here is braid funding. So the question is, what sources of funding

have been braided in this larger effort to include people with disabilities in the One-Stop system and in the One Stop Centers? Again, from the generic workforce point of view, the Workforce Investment Act, Title I, which funds adult dislocated worker and youth services, provides a core of services which for employers and job seekers, they provide workshops for job seekers, courses, workshops in computer basics, using e-mail, and people with disabilities fully participate in these core services. You know, to a greater extent, frankly, than I've seen elsewhere. As I mentioned, co-location helps, but it's evolved over the years. They have accessible technology and so that the One-Stop center is friendly for people with disabilities, and Connecticut has definitely been a leader in this area. The Wagner-Peyser funds which funds the employment services is a partner in funding lot of the core services and a lot of the workshops and they also offer E-learning to anybody as a core services, and I would say, I've been told, that many people with disabilities have taken advantage of the E-learning courses that are offered in this case through Wagner-Peyser and the Workforce Investment Act.

The voc. rehab agencies and the board of education and services for the blind fully collocated in three of the four centers, has -- offers a full range of services and there's a very high level of awareness among the WIA staff of what is available through rehab, I mean a very high level of awareness, so they can work out what services they can pay for through WIA and what services the voc. rehab can pay for.

A very interesting and -- aspect of braided funding up there is the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program. The WIB, the Eastern Connecticut WIB, is an Employment Network under the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program. I believe they're signed up for the milestone/outcome method. And they have actually collected on quite a few tickets. I don't have a number in front of me, but the amount of money that they've generated through the Ticket to Work Program partially offsets the salary and benefits of the Disability Program Navigator, who is very high on the Ticket to Work Program. He thinks it's terrific.

And in this case it's been facilitated by the Connecticut voc. rehab agency which is fully behind the Workforce Investment Boards -- or the One-Stop operators becoming Employment Networks, and, as a matter of fact, voc. rehab will actually refer people to the Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop operators after they finish voc. rehab services and they will allow the WIB to have the Ticket assigned to the WIB. So voc. rehab has definitely worked with them and encouraged them to become Employment Networks and to hold those tickets.

There have also been services, as we know -- transportation is an issue for many people with disabilities, especially after an initial period of time, and so they're also coordinating transportation services. And they've also gotten education funding through EASTCONN, which is the educational services agency for summer youth. So summer youth is now a combination of voc. rehab funds, education funds and WIA funds. These are just examples of the funding sources.

So when I asked, what are your keys to success, why do you think this has worked so well, and, by the way, there are examples of how -- if case you're wondering, how people with disabilities have been matched to jobs that are generated by the business services teams. The keys to success are first of all the single point of contact for business, that all job leads are fed to the business services team. Would also add that the business services team includes the two major chamber in the area. So they have relationships with those businesses already. There's close communication between the business services team members and the front line staff in Connecticut works centers. So the staff knows exactly what kinds of jobs are coming in, what kinds of people employers are looking for, and we're talking about in terms of skills.

There's joint funding of the business services team and commitment to reaching out to all job seekers. As I said earlier, E WIB is an Employment Network and the revenue partially offsets the Disability Program Navigator cost. And the DPN is active in staff development and has resources and making sure everybody is educated. And co-location of the voc. rehab agency. Last but not least, there is strong leadership o Workforce Investment Board itself. They've put this together from the -- they're constantly pressing month after month, year after year, to allow employers access to the full range of job seekers. I think they truly believe that everybody benefits. This is where I'm saying exactly the same thing as Bob, that employers benefit by having access to the full range of job seekers based on their talent, based on their abilities and based on their skills. And the WIB has really fought through that.

Back to Bob.

>> BOB NICHOLAS: Thank you.

Just in conclusion, I think Ronnie and I, I think I speak for Ronnie, continue to be excited by what we see in terms of the growing, replicating models of employer-driven initiatives to hire and retain people with disabilities. We think that some of the lessons in this study will be helpful in terms of supporting that and putting people at the local level, professionals at the local level who are confronted with the extraordinary opportunities that these companies and these employers present us to will help.

One of the things that is critical, and we've talked about it probably as gnaws yum here, is the whole notion of partnerships because they are everywhere, and even as we look at new companies coming on like Lowe's as a result of the Walgreens initiative, they immediately sought partners, and the other companies that are growing from the Walgreens initiative, which includes Sears and Best Buy are doing the same thing, looking for local partnerships. So one of the things that I challenge people when I talk about this is what are you going to do when Walgreens or Lowe's or someone calls you and says we want to hire 200 people? And that takes partnerships at the local level, because, one, in terms of the net, in terms of recruitment of people, that's significant, but secondly, and most important, is that the employer is going to look to you to handle both the service provision and the funding braiding for those services.

We think that these three -- that the three profiles that I presented are profiles that are being replicated and so next year this time we could talk about other companies and what they're doing. We also see in term of the workforce system the Eastern Connecticut profile, as being a model which other workforce systems could adopt, and we hope will adopt and braided funding is at the core of what they're doing as well.

Just to point to another thing on the slide is the whole notion of the single point of contact being an extension of partnership need that employers have, and in virtually every model that we've looked at, that is an element that is there. Again, local workforce systems we think are -- need to play a greater role in disability employment services, and this whole notion of model of being the single coordinator of a local partnership that supports employer is certainly an appropriate role for workforce systems.

Finally, one of the things that we are troubled by, although, as we saw, there were some strategies used to provide greater access to Ticket to Work milestone payments for supports for job retention, the overall notion of follow-along supports, especially for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, given that many, many state AD agencies have astronomical waiting lists, so that as students are graduating or as people who are in segregated employment want to have jobs in the community, those supports are frequently not available. So we think that's a major problem from a public policy standpoint that needs to get addressed.

But we think that the movement in the models that we have highlighted and other models that we highlighted in the ready & able report is extraordinarily promising in terms of the future of people with disabilities.

I want to turn it back over to Ronnie to finish. The.

>> RONNIE KAUDER: The last slide. One more slide. The implications for the future. So as we've said quite a few times, we feel that these employer-driven initiatives represent new and rich opportunities for increased community employment for people with disabilities. We've presented some successful models that have been replicated and can be replicated in many communities with different braided funding strategies, even within the same model.

Second, disability service and Workforce Development organizations should foster these collaborative relationships among workforce-supplying organizations that make it easier for employers or employer organizations to work with these publicly funded programs. We said again adopt a single point of contact approach to dealing with employers. And be creative in braiding funds from various sources in the sense that even though each funding source has its own requirements and its own accountability, most of them also have reasonable flexibility. So, you know, use the flexibility, be creative in examining the different sources of funding and how they can be used in services in these types of strategies.

Do we have any questions, Robb? i

>> ROBB SEWELL: I have a couple questions. I will mention to everyone, you ever i two ways to submit questions to us. First, what you can do is you can click on the "raise i hand" button in the upper left-hand corner of your screen. I will then call on i participants and provide instructions on how to ask your questions. Second, you can i commit your question by using the chat feature on the left portion of your screen. i Simply type your message and click "send." While we're waiting for some additional i questions to come in, I will relay the ones that have been submitted. The first one is, i have there be any collaborative efforts from Employment Networks to assist in the i single point of contact? i

>> RONNIE KAUDER: You mean among -- is the question whether -- has there i been a single point of contact among Employment Networks? i

>> ROBB SEWELL: All they said was have there been any collaborative efforts i from Employment Networks to assist in the single point of contact? If the person -- the i person that asked the question is on the line -- still on the line, what you could do is i press star 7 tune mute your line and then you could ask the question yourself. i

>> BOB NICHOLAS: The one piece, as I understand the question, Project SEARCH i at Cincinnati children's hospital has established itself as an Employment Network. So as i I mentioned in the presentation they are collecting Ticket milestone in people they i employ and maintain in employment in the hospital. But the other thing they've done, i which is really innovative, is they're also an administrative EN. So there's some project i search replication site wants to access Ticket milestone payments but doesn't itself i want to become an EN, they can process their paperwork through Cincinnati and i Cincinnati is -- for a fee is entertaining that relationship with their replication sites. So in i a sense, that's coordinating and providing a point of contact for Ticket payments, but -- i so I hope that that gets at the root of the question. i

>> ROBB SEWELL: Another question that was submitted was: How is Project i SEARCH planning its sustainability after the funding is gone? i

>> BOB NICHOLAS: They were using the MIG funding for start-up. That's i one-time money. And they have a funding strategy where they have relationships with i the local school districts that will pay for the -- each year the internship program that i occurs. VR will pay for the job training for specific jobs in the hospitals that are i participating. And then they'll access the supports for job retention through their -- i either their DD agencies or Ticket to Work. i

>> RONNIE KAUDER: I think the point in at least two of the models that Bob i talked about is, you know, kind of an extra effort is required at the beginning. That's i why we're talking about start-up funding, just to get everything going. And so, as he i said, the MIG money in this case was one-time money. Or in the case of SOS, the i National Organization on Disability provided a one-time award really just to get i everything started, and once it started, then you just need money to maintain it. i

>> ROBB SEWELL: Nanette has a question. Do you want to just press start 7 on your telephone keypad to unmute your line? I

>> NANETTE RELAVE: Great. I guess I'll go ahead and exercise my moderator privilege and throw a question throughout. As I was listening to the presentation and I thinking about recent DBTAC webinar I heard, one of the things I didn't see on the slides I that I'm thinking about in terms of bringing together different funding sources relates to accommodations that are developed or made on the job site, and I know some of the employers that you referenced, some have actually undertaken significant redesign efforts, but I'm wondering if there was any work that you know about within the model that you described to bring in, whether it's tax credits or financing to support the employers on the accommodations front. I

>> BOB NICHOLAS: I can't think of one that we have gone into depth with in terms of the employer. Now, as we had profiled Walgreens in South Carolina, and they had gotten economic development funding which was ultimately used for some of the accommodations for people -- the employees that they sought to hire with disabilities. In terms of the tax credit piece, I haven't in the profiles run across an example of that, but that's certainly something to be followed up on. I

>> RONNIE KAUDER: The other thing I would say, I don't have an example, a specific example of this, but, of course, Ticket to Work money can be used for anything. You know, you generate it -- it kind of goes into a pool. It's not attached to -- once the Employment Network gets that money, and it could -- and in many cases an Employment Network is the employer. I mean, I know Walgreens, of course, is an Employment Network in Connecticut. I know that. There's nothing to say they can't use the Ticket money to hire job coaches on their own staff, which I know they've done, or to provide any accommodations that they need to provide. So I would say the Ticket to Work money is definitely a flexible source that can be used for accommodation, and as Bob said, I know there was economic development funding in Connecticut as well as South Carolina, which is another also flexible source of funds. Yes. I

>> NANETTE RELAVE: Again, I was wondering because sometimes we in terms of thinking about things that we can pull together, you know, from sort of the provider or the state agency side, we talk about being able to make those connections or leverage those resources. Let me ask one other question. It's something that when I've heard about sort of braiding or leveraging funding in any system, it's one of the sort of issues that comes up many times, and that's around performance measures, and I'm wondering if any of the programs that you spoke with in depth if they sort of touched on this issue of, how do you share the glory? How do you address sort of the performance measurement among the funding sources in a way that helps to make these models work? I

>> RONNIE KAUDER: I mean, I would say -- I mean, it's my understanding that if you are -- if you serve an individual with more than one source of funds, what WIA and I

voc. rehab, and the person gets a job and keeps a job, that counts in the accountability or performance measures for both programs. You know, as far as I know, there's absolutely no requirement that it has to be one or the other. So my -- I think that's true of all of these programs. So a successful outcome is a successful outcome for both programs in terms of accountability. I

>> BOB NICHOLAS: I think also the different partnerships organize themselves differently in terms of maintaining accountability over the partners in terms of seeing that -- because, again, these models are really -- I mean, in lots of ways, I mean, you've made a deal with this employer who has presented this rich opportunity, and you can't fail the employer or the rich opportunity is going to go away. So the issues of making sure that funding is available when it's needed for the services and the services are provided in a timely fashion among the partners is something they talk about. The South Carolina Walgreens partnership has a whole partner agreement that has both ethics and performance standards in it. So they handled it that way. You know, we have, I guess, been more wowed by the positives of those partnerships in terms of how well they have been able to collaborate and meet, as Ronnie says, both of their -- both two or three -- in some cases there's three or four partners, funding partners, but everybody wins when someone gets a well-paying job with benefits. I

>> RONNIE KAUDER: I wanted to say one other thing about the Ticket, the Social Security Ticket to Work Program, I know that there are arrangements between service providers and Workforce Investment Boards where there are -- I don't know whether it's a memorandum of understanding or some sort of letter agreement, where there are agreements to split the Ticket payments because the idea is that more than one organization has contributed to the success of that person. So if it's a cash payment, like the Ticket to payment, I know that there are agreements sometimes with two parties, I sometimes with three parties where everybody benefits by the success of the person, I everybody gets a share of it as they negotiate it among themselves. I

>> NANETTE RELAVE: Thank you. Ronnie, that's a great example to bring up. I believe we have one last question, so I am going to turn it back over to Robb to share our last question. I

>> ROBB SEWELL: This question was submitted via the chat feature. It is: Were most of the VR funders a fee for service or outcomes based, much like the Ticket? I

>> BOB NICHOLAS: In the profiles that I highlighted they were performance based four-step VR process where you get a payment for achieving a milestone in the placement process. I don't recall a fee for service relationship in the middle of this, I but -- you know, as I understand, they were performance based. I

The other piece that we seek to highlight is that VR also has the ability in that start-up phase to provide what's called establishment grants, and so that can be a source of dollars. So they have grant capability within their system as well, which is not highlighted as much as its routine job placement system. I

>> NANETTE RELAVE: Thank you so much, Bob. We're going to get wrapped up. I just want to remind our listeners there is contact information on the slide. So if you think about the material and have any last questions, you're very welcome to contact our presenters. We will also have this webinar and the presentations will be available on the NTAR Leadership Center web site, so if you want to go back and take a look at the materials or share the presentations with one of your colleagues, you're most welcome to do so. Just before we ring off, I want to give a very deep thanks to Bob and to Ronnie for sharing the really excellent research you've been doing. Also want to thank Robb for always doing a great job running the webinar and a special thanks to ODEP as well for their support to help us to continue to provide these ongoing webinars. And with that, we have come to the end. I want to again thank everybody for participating and wish all of our listeners to have a very good afternoon. So thank you and bye-bye. I

>> RONNIE KAUDER: It was our pleasure. I

>> BOB NICHOLAS: Thank you. I