

Transcript of the Federal Exchange on Employment and Disability (FEED) Quarterly Meeting

June 10, 2021

2:00-4:00 p.m. ET

MICHELLE ALVORD: Welcome, everyone. My name is Michelle Alvord. I am one of your technical assistants today, along with my coworker, Samantha Strickland. I'd like to just give you a quick Zoom webinar tour. I'm sure most of you have spent quite a bit of time on Zoom, but I'd like to just quickly go through a quick rundown of the interface.

So, this is an example of what the Zoom interface looks like. Starting at the bottom left of the screen, you'll find your Audio Settings menu. You should see the chat box. Then to the center right of the chat box, you'll see a Q&A box where you can put any of your questions for our panelists today.

To the right of that is the Closed Captioning button. It's important that if you'd like to see the captions, that you click on the "Show Captions" button. To the far lower right corner is the red "Leave" button, but we hope you won't use that option today. And lastly, at the upper right is the option to choose "Full Screen" or enlarge your viewing area.

Now, we will go over some of those options in just a little bit more detail. As I said, in the lower left are your audio settings. You can select your speakers or a headset or choose to adjust your volume in that menu. If you're experiencing a lot of audio breakup today, you can select "Leave Computer Audio" and call in by telephone to listen. You can find the phone number in the audio settings menu, or you can find that number in the email that you received from me this morning.

We do have live captions. Thank you, Mary Kay, for being with us today. As I said briefly a second ago, you can enable those captions by clicking the cc icon at the bottom of your screen, click "Show Captions." You can customize the size of the captions box. You can also move it around on your screen by just holding down on it and moving it. You can also select "View Full Transcript" or in the chat box we have a stream text link for a full transcript as well.

We have our two ASL interpreters with us today-- thank you, Traci and Kaitlin. If you would like to see them in a larger view, you can choose "Swap Video" in Shared Screen at the upper right of your screen. That's if you want to see them in a much larger, clearer view.

To submit your questions to our panelists, we ask you to use the Q&A box. It's easier for us to track them this way. You can find the Q&A box-- it's the two word bubbles instead of the just one icon. If you're listening by phone and you have questions, you are more than welcome to email those questions to askearn@cornell.edu and someone we'll get back to you with an answer.

Lastly, if you have any technical issues, please put those in the Q&A box as well, and Sam and I will be happy to assist you. If you are on the phone and you're having technical issues getting in, you can email me at msa224@cornell.edu or Sam at sap43@cornell.edu. Now, it is my pleasure to stop the technical slides and turn things over to Lou Orslene.

LOU ORSLENE: No problem whatsoever. Thanks very much for that introduction, Michelle, and for going over all of the technical logistics for today. So good afternoon, everyone, and thanks so much for joining us. From what we're hearing at ODEP, we know that many agencies are in the midst of a hiring surge. And thus, I think this afternoon's presentations could really not be more timely.

We're really grateful for all the speakers for making time to be with us today and for sharing their initiatives, practices and tools so that we can ensure that all people with disabilities are included both in these hiring surges and in the broader COVID-19 recovery.

Let me introduce our first speaker, a long-serving leader in the space of workplace inclusion. Rick Laferriere is Director of Workplace Initiatives for CVS Health. CVS Health is one of the recipients of the Department of Labor's (DOL) Gold Award for Excellence in Disability Inclusion. DOL's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) and the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) partnered to create the Excellence in Disability Inclusion Award to recognize federal contractors who excel in meeting their responsibilities under Section 503. And also, of course, those are the companies that really exemplify the spirit of disability inclusion.

CVS was recognized for many of its efforts, including the Abilities and Abundance program, which provides training to people with disabilities to compete for a wide range of positions within the organization. We are very grateful for Rick for his willingness to share CVS Health's best practices, and we look forward to learning how to adopt these practices with the end goal of increasing employment for people with disabilities. And more importantly, creating those inclusive workplaces where people with disabilities feel they belong and are therefore much more likely once hired, to stay. So with that, take it away, Rick.

RICK LAFERRIERE (presentation begins on Slide 3): Thank you, Lou. I very much appreciate that introduction. And thank you for inviting me to be a part of your meeting today. I feel very honored to be here and to speak to the 142 and counting participants on this call today. This is very exciting and it's truly a privilege for me to be here.

I'll take some time today, about 20 minutes, to go through a presentation a little bit about how we approach disability recruitment and inclusion at CVS Health. You'll learn a little bit about our unique approach to [diversity and inclusion \(D&I\)](#). The team that I'm a part of, the Workforce Initiatives Team, is doing work unlike any other employer anywhere across the country. So it'll be hopefully something for all of you to see how we do the work that we do and potentially take what we do into your own workplaces and adopt some of the wonderful things that we do and are fortunate to do at CVS Health. Next slide (Slide 4).

So, that's me, Rick Laferriere. I'm Director of Workforce initiatives at CVS Health. I have spent the last 28 years of my life with CVS Health. I started as a cashier at my local CVS store in Danvers, Massachusetts back in 1992 as a 17-year-old high schooler, and spent the first 15 years of my career in our retail stores managing stores and growing up with CVS as an organization. And now I've spent the last 13 years as part of our Workforce Initiatives Team building partnerships in the communities that we serve all across the country.

I'm based in Boston. I've had the great privilege to work with many wonderful partners in Boston and in the New England area, including the folks in vocational rehabilitation, folks with community-based organizations who are doing great work in this space, and of course, our wonderful partners with OFCCP as well. And I want to shout out Rhonda Aubin-Smith has been a wonderful partner to us and our team over the years, who's the director here for the OFCCP. She's been a great resource for us and we're very grateful for her support and partnership over the years. We can go to the next slide (Slide 5).

I'm going to start a little bit top-down in terms of how our company approaches the work that we do. My team, the [Workforce Initiatives Team](#), is part of the Workforce Initiatives and Strategic Diversity Management (WISDM) group. We are under the direction of our Chief Diversity Officer, David Casey, and we are part of his umbrella, which includes three different teams working on D&I-type of work across our organization. My team works in the area of nontraditional talent pipelines, and our tagline is that we help to break the cycle of poverty for the communities that we serve.

The second group that is part of David's umbrella is our Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Affirmative Action (AA) group, and that's the group that is working primarily in the area of recruiting, hiring and training qualified people for jobs at CVS Health and ensuring that our workplace is free of all types of discrimination. Our EEO group also works very closely on our Self-ID campaign as well. Many of you may know my colleague Ivy Latimer who's a senior director of EEO and AA for CVS Health and is a great partner in the disability space and someone I work with very closely on many of many initiatives.

And then the third team is our Strategic Diversity Management (SDM) team, which is working mostly internally around education and development, really looking at how we build a strong bench of well-prepared candidates and ensure that our organization is aware of our efforts in the diversity and inclusion space, and build world-class ideas and programs that help support our nearly 300,000 colleagues across the U.S. and with our Aetna organization all over the world. Next slide (Slide 6).

So, here's a little bit about how we carve up what our WISDM team does. We really look in these four buckets here with workforce representation being the first bucket, and that's a bucket that my team, the Workforce Initiatives Team, works mostly in, which is ensuring that we have employees who reflect the communities we serve, not just in our retail stores, but across all of our business units and all of our customer-facing and office-related jobs. So, workforce representation is our chunk of the pie when it comes to our SDM objectives.

And then, of course, is building a culture of inclusion and belonging. That primarily is driven through our Colleague Resource Groups, our affinity groups. We have 15 affinity groups across our entire organization, and many local chapters of those affinity groups that really help drive that piece of the pie.

The third piece is talent systems and ensuring that we have development programs in place, access to training, the right types of programming to help folks internally grow and thrive with our organization, and ultimately grow into leadership roles with us. And then the fourth chunk of the pie is a diverse marketplace and ensuring that we have our doors open to partners of all backgrounds to help better our business and provide our customers with the products and services that they need. Next slide (slide 7).

So, here's a little history of what our company has done in supporting people with disabilities in the employment space. We actually started working in this space back in the late '90s in the very first iteration of our Abilities In Abundance program, which was established in Ohio. Our department actually dates back to the old drugstore Revco, and Revco was a regional drugstore chain in the Midwest. And CVS acquired Revco back in the mid '90s and we learned a lot from them about building a team that would support community involvement in employment initiatives. So, a program was born out of that back in '97 with the Cuyahoga County Workforce Board. And since then we've grown quite substantially from our roots there in Ohio to support the entire country.

Fast forwarding through the 2000s and into 2014 and throughout the latter half of the last decade, you can see some of the progress that we've made, not only in building talent pipelines, but also supporting

our own colleagues with disabilities in the workplace, including ensuring we have the right accommodations, Self-ID campaigns, etc.

We have a centralized reasonable accommodation team that supports the entire organization that has been a real asset to our team as we've worked with people with disabilities who are looking to access the world of work, and that has been identified as a best practice by the Department of Labor. So, it's wonderful to have that centralized team that can help us find resources and make decisions when it comes to reasonable accommodations.

We are very proud to have scored 100% on the (Disability:IN and AAPD) Disability Equality Index (DEI) for four straight years, and we are hoping that that will be a fifth straight year this year. Just this past year, we also launched an initiative called Spoken Rx which allows a prescription label to be read for someone who has a vision impairment, so they know what their prescription is for and how to take their prescription. And it's been a great addition to the many services that our pharmacy folks can provide. Next slide.

Let's dig in a little bit about what my team does. We're a very unique team. There are very few teams out there doing the work that we are doing, and the size of our team, now up to 35 folks, is unsurpassed in the American corporate environment. We are truly unique in what we do and the scope with which we do it.

Very simply, we enable our company's purpose of helping people on their path to better health by working in the nontraditional talent pipeline space. So, what's a nontraditional talent pipeline, Rick? Well, it's a talent pipeline that isn't an established talent acquisition pipeline. So, I'm sure you can come up with some ideas on what that looks like.

You think about recruiting through the many websites that are out there and the traditional recruiting methods that most talent acquisition folks have to attract people to jobs. We have a talent acquisition team and they do all of that. Our role is to do it nontraditional. We look at other ways to bringing people to our organization, and that's through setting up educational programs to a workforce. That can help skill people up for the jobs that we need in our organization. We do it in a way that is different from talent acquisition (TA).

We're not recruiters, we're not TA, we're straddling the line between workforce professional and hiring manager. We take a unique role in building those talent pipelines. I mentioned earlier that part of our goal is to help break the cycle of poverty in the communities that we serve. We know that by unlocking opportunity, as you see at the bottom of the slide, we can help people get jobs, keep those jobs and thrive in those jobs and grow with our organization so that they can reach their full employment and economic potential and support their families.

When I think about my own career journey, having started as a cashier 28 years ago and being very fortunate to be in the role I'm in now all these years later, what I think we really look at is unlocking the potential of the folks who come into our organization. We say, "Hey, you can be this person, too. You can achieve this, you can grow with us, you can stay with us."

So, that's a little bit of what we do. We'll dig in a little bit here on the next slide (slide 8). As we do this work, we don't do it necessarily for one particular population. And our team's work doesn't focus exclusively on people with disabilities, but I would estimate that a little more than half of what our team does do is focused around working with people with disabilities on employment pipelines.

We have four areas of focus that we look at across our team and spend some additional resources and time looking to support in their journey to employment (slide 9). [Talent Is Ageless](#) is our older worker programs, and we define older workers as individuals who are 55 years of age and older. We work with organizations that provide employment services to older Americans to provide them with opportunities to come work for us. We have a group that focuses on those organizations and on the specific needs of those individuals so we can target our outreach to ensure that they are touched by our programs.

Of course, [Abilities In Abundance](#) is why I'm here – that's our disability-related programming. MyCVS Journey Pathways is our youth focus program, which focuses on individuals who are 16 to 24 years old. Our work in the youth space takes us all the way from high schools through out-of-school youth programs all the way up through community colleges and even, in some degrees, post-secondary work as well. So really, the youth space being as wide as it is, we spend a lot of time working in there and have a national focus with many national organizations who are providing mentoring or employment types of opportunities to young people.

And then, finally our military alliances. We have a number of strong partnerships across the country where we work with individuals who are exiting the military or who are military-connected and attracting them to come to work for us. In fact, we were the first employer to have a dedicated recruiting site on a U.S. military base. We have what we call a Talent Connect Center on the base at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, North Carolina where we work closely with transitioning servicemen and women to place them into jobs and attract them to come work for CVS, and ultimately send them home, wherever home is for them, to a job with CVS Health.

These are our four primary areas of focus, but of course today, we'll be talking mostly about the disability space. Next slide, please (Slide 10). Our Abilities In Abundance program is, as I mentioned, probably about half the work that our team does. We have a number of really strong partnerships across the country that allow us to work together to find employment solutions and to find skills training and customized work development for this population.

When you look at our suite of partners, we have partners on every level. And we're so fortunate to be so closely aligned with Kathy West-Evans, who you'll hear from a little later on in this meeting, and her organization, CSAVR, the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation. They're an amazing organization, and all of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies that work across the country in each state we partner with very closely to build talent pipelines from the folks who are looking to come to work.

As an employer, we are part of the Disability:IN Network. We are and have been a longtime sponsor of Disability:IN. David Casey, who's our chief diversity officer, sits on the board of Disability:IN, and we're very proud to be a part of the many companies out there who are doing some great things in the disability employment space.

As I mentioned, at the state level, we work really closely with state VR agencies and state mental health agencies as well. And on the local level, we work with nonprofits and community-based organizations that are serving people with disabilities with employment resources. We work really closely with schools, with their transition programs, looking at that 18 to 22 age range to provide those students with the opportunity to have hands-on learning experiences in a workplace so they can be prepared for the workforce when they leave school.

We are so fortunate to have wonderful partners who want to work closely with us on providing skills training, hands-on training, and developing customized programs that work not only for the agency, but the individual, and also lead to us as an employer having access to well-prepared talent who we know wants to come work for us. Next slide (Slide 11).

Let's dig in a bit with [Abilities In Abundance](#). It's a collaborative effort between our Workforce Initiatives Team and a community partner. So, it's not Workforce Initiatives leading it, it's not the community partner leading it, it's us leading it together. It's us working together to combine resources to make something work in that locality and for that population.

What we want to be able to accomplish by working with our community partners is building programs and offering opportunities for folks who want to go to work to come to work. And that may mean a lot of different things. It may mean acquiring skills. It may mean overcoming barriers. It may be additional education. It may be offering a hands-on work immersion experience or providing the opportunity for someone to be assessed in the workplace.

All of those pieces connect into the programming that we build with our community partners, and it's really a joint effort. As the employer, we want to be able to provide what an employer can provide, which is jobs. And subject matter expertise, things like mock interviews with our hiring leaders. And of course the opportunity to engage with those leaders and potentially apply, be interviewed and come to work for us.

When we design our programs, we really design them with the population in mind, the locality in mind, the types of jobs in that market that are available in mind, and then the barriers that may be present as well. For example, we've long recognized that electronic applications can be a barrier, and so we offer training on our electronic applications, and we offer training on the assessment that is attached to those applications to help folks feel more comfortable with the application.

Interviews can be another barrier as well, because as many of you know, interviews can be challenging for some folks. So, the opportunity to offer a mock interview or perhaps a different type of alternative interview setup that we can brainstorm with our partners can help unlock that opportunity for an individual who wants to come to work for us.

When we think about building these programs, we think about blending skills training with job readiness training, with life skills training, soft skills, hands-on, you name it. We'll bring anything into the mold to make a program be job-driven in nature. Our training should lead to a job, which should be job-driven training.

All of our efforts, as we build customized programming, should be with that end goal in mind. We are also very fortunate to have nearly 50 sites across the country where we essentially have set up non-live environments that are like mock stores where we can bring members of our communities in and do training with them. So, it's a little bit like when you used to play store as a kid. And you were playing with a brother and sister and you had a cash register and you had a mini-store and someone was the cashier and someone was the customer. We have almost 50 of those sites across the country where we can do role playing, training and test to see if someone is a fit for the job.

All of those pieces combine to help us build the Abilities In Abundance program and ultimately look to put people not only into jobs at CVS Health, but maybe with other employers in the community. We've long viewed it as success when someone goes to work even for one of our competitors when they come

through one of our programs. These programs are for the greater good. We know we benefit from them as a company to bring people in through them, but we also know it's great for the community to have access to other jobs and other employers that may be a better fit for them or may offer them a different opportunity, and that's okay with us. Next slide (Slide 12).

Here's an example of one of our most successful Abilities In Abundance programs. And it is in my home state of Massachusetts, and we work very closely with the Massachusetts regional employment collaboratives, RECs as they're called. They are really a very forward-thinking organization that is led by Riverside Community Care, which is a provider of services to the communities here in Eastern Massachusetts. The RECs are built in a way that they are regional. And they are meant to take the many voices of community partners, smaller community partners in the region they're in, and bubble them up into one voice. There is one individual who leads the RECs and has the ownership of the partnership with us as a team, so instead of talking to 30 or 40 different organizations, we can talk to one person who represents them. It's a great concept that has led to a lot of success for us because it limits the number of points of contact we have as an employer, which is a great thing for us, and it allows more opportunity for those smaller organizations to become involved.

So, this particular program we've run since 2016, and it's a retail customer service training program. And we've seen amazing success from this program. In fact, last year, with COVID, we pivoted to an all-virtual presentation which worked out very well on short notice, and I have to give kudos to the RECs for how they pivoted so quickly. They were able to deliver a quality program that's normally delivered in-person virtually in response to COVID.

We do cohorts of retail customer service training with the RECs, and the individuals are of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. They are selected by our community partners to be a part of the program-- they're vetted and then entered into a 12-week program. And this is all customized, by the way. This is all work that we did with the RECs to build this program from scratch.

We built a 12-week customized program that are about two-to-three hours each session to limit the amount of time that folks are in class based on life or whatever may be the circumstances for these students. The REC team leads it, they teach it, but our Workforce Initiatives Team helps supports it.

The curriculum is designed to establish comfort and customer service, and with the cash register. The cash register's long been identified as a barrier to employment for some folks, and we want to be able to provide hands-on training to overcome that barrier so folks feel more comfortable with the technology.

As far as outcomes, we've had over 300 participants through the program. 74% have completed the 12-week program, 60% applied for jobs, and then 72% of those applicants received a job offer, whether it's from us or another employer. So, this is an example of a great partner who's been able to source candidates from all of their organizations, bring them to this program through a vetting process, and then we created a customized program using our own curriculum and our subject matter experts to be able to design something that was job-driven, that was not only specific to CVS Health, but general to the entire retail sector as well. This is one of our most successful programs across the country, but we have many more like it as well. Next slide (Slide 13).

Here are a few stats for you as well in terms of what it is that our team does. We've got some wonderful partners, over 1,400 of them across the country. We're a leader in the nontraditional apprenticeship area as well. Next slide (Slide 14).

Here's where you can find more information about what it is our team does and our focus around diversity and inclusion as an organization. You can go to both those landing pages if you have any specific questions or would like to speak to someone on the workforce initiatives team. You can use that WI.Info@CVSHealth.com general mailbox that goes to our team's executive assistant and she will hand those questions out to members of our team as appropriate. That concludes my presentation. I do have time to take some questions, which is great. Wendy, I think it is time to take a few questions?

WENDY STROBEL GOWER: Our first question is regarding to who you partner with. How does CVS help decide which service partners to partner with?

RICK LAFERRIERE: Yeah, that's a great question. And so much of what we do is relational. It's building a relationship and building a partnership. When we look for partners, the signs of a great partner are organizations that have a steady pipeline of available talent and have a structure in place to be able to support them both pre and post-employment. We look for organizations that have a bit of a workforce or education function and that are actively working with consumers to provide them with opportunities and skills training or connections to employers, and are willing to do so creatively and innovatively.

Our best community partners have folks who specialize in job development and in employment types of initiatives. Those are the partners that we tend to gravitate towards. Of course, vocational rehabilitation is designed to do that, so VR is a great example of an organization that really checks a lot of boxes, that has folks who know how to speak to business, that's actively providing employment services and looking to place people into jobs.

Certainly there's a lot of nuance as well in all of this in terms of building a relationship. I've long said that having strong personal relationships between our team and our community partners really makes the product better. We've got some great partners, some amazing organizations that when we talked to them, the first conversations are about family and life and not about the work. Those are partners we know will be our best partners, so I think it starts there. It's a bigger conversation than that, but hopefully that gives you some context on what it is that we look for in a partner.

WENDY STROBEL GOWER: Wonderful. Thank you so much. The next question is, how does a person with a disability apply for a job at CVS and receive supported employment services?

RICK LAFERRIERE: Our application process is the same for everyone. We do have an electronic application on our [Careers website](#). One of the things that our team does to provide support to individuals who are looking to apply is that we actually have an application guide that we share with our community partners. After years of using it, we actually got that guide posted to our Careers website directly for everyone to refer to, recognizing that the application and the assessment attached to some jobs, especially in the retail side, can be challenging.

Using that guide, along with targeted presentations that our team does, our workforce managers work really closely with partners to educate them on the application process from start to finish. We'll do presentations not only for job developers and the folks in that organization, but also for the job seekers as well. We'll walk them through the application and allow them to see what the application looks like as well. It's a combined effort between our team and the resources we can provide and the support we can

directly provide to job developers and also to the applicants, but it also involves using some of the resources that we can give to our partners to have them do that on their own and learn on their own.

So, that's part of the Workforce Initiatives difference. Someone who is going to apply for a job who may not be aligned with one of our community partners, who may not be aligned with our team, may not get that level of support that our team can provide. Engaging with our team and being partners with our team can unlock some additional opportunity to give folks who want to be applicants a bit of an advantage in the process.

WENDY STROBEL GOWER: The next question follows the last one I asked. How widely known or advertised is this program to the average customer in a CVS store? Is there any information or signage in the stores about this program or the fact that CVS actively works to employ individuals with disabilities?

RICK LAFERRIERE: Yeah, that's a great question, too, and I wish we had some signage and information in our stores. Being very honest with all of you, we don't. And so I like to describe our team as a bit of a well-kept secret, and that's not a good thing. I think our team does a lot of work to really show what it is that we do, but we are challenged to get the word out about what we do, especially more broadly.

The folks who are engaged with us we know will go to the ends of the earth for us and we'll work really closely with us, but we have a hard time sometimes getting that message out, I'll be honest. So the biggest touch points of engagement on our company's website. Beyond that, it tends to be word of mouth or tends to be opportunities like this where myself or other team members speak at events or at conferences to be able to share what we do.

So we're a small but mighty machine, and we oftentimes are in charge of our own marketing, which makes it challenging for us when we have a large company. I wish we did a better job, I'll be honest, sharing what it is that we do. Hopefully we can continue to do that, but that's why we do these things, to share this work and to inform people who want to be partners with us and work with us.

WENDY STROBEL GOWER: Great. We'll take one more question for you, Rick, and then we'll wrap up your section. The question is, do you recruit only for retail space or are there efforts to encourage diversity, including people with disabilities, at all levels of management as well?

RICK LAFERRIERE: These are great questions. Certainly our team has been really rooted in the retail space for many years, but we're beginning to broaden that out into non-retail types of positions. Positions that tend to have volume hiring, such as call center positions, or in some cases, community health workers. But we're very closely aligned with our talent acquisition partners who do diversity recruiting as well. And we have individuals who are working specifically in the recruiting space for those professional positions looking to recruit people with disabilities into our professional and leadership positions as well. So, we're really closely aligned. Even though our team focuses primarily on entry-level or second-level roles, we do work really closely with our diversity recruiting partners to advertise and to source for non-retail and professional and leadership roles as well. So, it's really an alignment. Even though we're two different teams, we have to work together. We work together in a lot of different spaces, we bump up against each other a lot. So the effort doesn't just stop there.

I will say this, as I wrap up here, one of the areas we're looking to get even more into is the IT space. And we are working with some great partners such as Computer Associates, Inc. and their Autism2Work program to identify ways in which we can take their program into our IT workspace as well. So, we're

always, always looking for opportunities. Our doors are always wide open and we hope to continue to build pipelines in those non-retail areas here in the coming months and years.

WENDY STROBEL GOWER: Thank you so much, Rick, that was great. And we appreciate your taking the time for questions. So, please do stick around with us so that if people have questions for you after the panel, you can answer them. I'm going to turn it over to Alison Levy who is going to moderate our panel.

LOU ORSLENE: Wendy, do you mind if I introduce Alison?

WENDY STROBEL GOWER: Oh, by all means, sure.

LOU ORSLENE: Rick, I just wanted to thank you as well. I really appreciate you detailing the recruiting initiative and all of the great practices that CVS Health has. I hope that the agencies do make the effort to cross-pollinate these practices between the private and public sectors.

In addition to Rick today, I'm really grateful also to another great leader in the disability and employment space. Alison will be moderating the remainder of the speakers today. So, I just want to introduce Alison for those who do not know her. Alison Levy is manager of the Disability Resource Center for the Department of Transportation (DOT). And really, it's under Alison's leadership that DOT has really become known government-wide for its forward thinking on disability.

I know in my previous work with the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), I often shared DOT'S policies and practices with others, and I really think that they have helped so much in normalizing so many of these exclusionary practices to throughout the workplaces. So again, I'm grateful for your willingness to speak today and also to moderate the rest of the discussion. So welcome, Alison.

ALISON LEVY: Thank you so much for your very warm introduction. I'm really touched and honored, so thank you. I'm really excited to be moderating today's panel. We have a full list of panelists with fantastic resources to share with you. If we could move to the next slide (Slide 16), I'd like to kick things off and introduce you to Kathy West-Evans from the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR).

You heard Richard refer to her as a great support to CVS's success, and I'd like to turn things over to her now and let her tell you a little bit more in detail about how they can support federal partners as well. Take it away, Kathy.

KATHY WEST-EVANS (presentation starts on Slide 16): Thank you, Alison. It's great to see everyone. Greetings from Seattle. And thank you for including me, Lou and team, and thank you, Rick and Alison.

So, I want to cover just briefly how we're working across the country and how we can be support of you and share some examples of that. I know that the slides will be available and there is a link for contact information in there as well, so please feel free to reach out if you have questions.

As Alison said, my name is Kathy West-Evans, and I work for the membership organization of the 78 public vocational rehabilitation programs across the country. We're in every state, the territories, and DC. And are funded under the U.S. Department of Education, but work closely with our partners at the Department of Labor, including ODEP and EARN (the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion).

How we are structured is that in each of the 70 agencies, we have a lead person that works with business. As we were working across the country, we noticed that many of us were working with the

same businesses, but often we didn't know if a business had a multi-state footprint in particular, how to refer people to other areas and other VR agencies.

When I use the term business, I mean public sector as well as private and nonprofit. So for all of my federal partners, I look at you as a business as well. What we learned from our business customers, including federal agencies, was, number one, we can't find you. So, start working together across the country. Number two, VR, what does that mean? Virtual reality? (Laughter). Vocational rehabilitation! How do we do this? And the third thing was something that you heard Rick address earlier, which was not just posting jobs, but developing a relationship with a company so that you can build a plan with that company, be part of their solution, as well as working with individuals and building careers that are in line with the needs of our business customers, including federal agencies.

So, we have done that under the umbrella of the [National Employment Team](#) so that it's easy for people to find us (Slide 17). And we do have a team, again, that we can bring to the table to work around the footprint of your agency. We built this strategy to be able to support in a number of different ways, including building the plan with companies, focusing on recruiting, building the talent pipeline, etc.

We also work with a number of partners. I have the privilege of introducing next after I'm done my partner at the VA's Veterans Readiness and Employment. So in the VA, there is a similar program to public VR. Public VR works with veterans who have acquired a disability after service, the VA serves those veterans who have acquired their disability during service, and we often work together to support a veteran. But we're also working at the national level on our partnership to support private sector companies, federal agencies, nonprofits, etc.

We also partner with the Native American Rehab programs across the country, there are 79 of those on or near Native American reservations and Alaskan villages. And then we have a number of community agency partners, close to 10,000 of them across the country, that will work with us to support an individual-- a candidate with a disability on their career path and/or a business in terms of that dual customer strategy. How do we work to develop the talent, how do we understand the need, and how do we fit the two together? Next slide.

On the slide there are a number of services listed. And I'm not going to go in-depth into all of them, but you know where to find me if you want more information. So, we are working with a number of companies, and you heard some of this, again, with CVS on those apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, internships, that preparation for candidates coming into the workplace. And because of the increasing demand for labor, we're seeing a number of our company partners working with us to help get the word out to even students while they're still in the K-12 system. How do you build a career as a student and how do we start moving people into careers at that point? We also work a lot with recruitment, building talent pipelines.

One key point that I want to hit is retention. We are already seeing the cutting edge of those COVID-- what people call long-haulers. COVID is really going to change the face of the disability community. We're starting to see individuals that are returning to work, and both our public and private sector partners reaching out where we've seen individuals who are coming back with vision loss, hearing loss, aphasia, diabetes, kidney disorders, other organs being impacted-- the lungs, for example, issues with stamina. And then what a lot of people describe as "foggy brain syndrome" - it sounds like something similar to what people call "chemo brain."

So, how do we support keeping people working and keeping talent in our workforce? It just doesn't make sense to let people lose a job and then come to us to help them get back into the workforce. So, we're working with a number of our business customers, and again, federal agencies in terms of that focus.

Let's talk about accommodations. Because we have a team that's boots on the ground across the country, we can help look at actual work environments and situations with companies and help business look at what an accommodation might be in that particular setting. We do a lot of staff training on disability awareness. We quickly have shifted to virtual training and have been contacting a number of sessions virtually with company partners across the country.

Universal design, I don't think we can say this enough. Continuing to look at, as organizations and companies are building out new locations or developing new systems, whether it's online, etc., how do you start by thinking about making that system universally accessible? Another increasing area of discussion is definitely around diversity, equity and inclusion. I'm excited to see this dialogue, and disability is part of that bigger dialogue, because as we all know, disability crosses every other diversity group, and it is the one diversity group that anyone can join at any time.

I think now is the moment in time to really talk about that intersectionality and to open up that dialogue around disability, because we all know that one of the biggest barriers is attitudinal, and if people are afraid to ask, we're not making progress, I could go on. We've worked with companies around product development, customer service, marketing and outreach, but let me move into the next slide quickly so that we can move on to our next presenter. So, translating all of those benefits to federal language-- and thank you, Alison, for always helping me think this through.

Some key factors for federal agencies to consider (Slide 18). When working with us, we'll have access to a national and diverse talent pool. We have a national team, again, across the footprint of your agency depending on what that footprint looks like. And we want to learn from you. We really want to listen to what you need, because we're not only bringing people into the workplace, but also we are in the early stages of training and preparation for candidates, and we want to make sure that it's in line with the careers that you have based on your definition of what that looks like.

We have a variety of staffing and retention supports available, including reasonable accommodation, and often for individuals you're serving that may need personal use items, like wheelchairs or hearing aids, we can provide that for the individual, because we know that technology is expensive and not every medical policy covers it. We provide a wide array of consultation, technical assistance and support.

I have listed two websites here, [The NET](#), which is the part of CSAVR, and then we also have a talent portal called TAP, the [Talent Acquisition Portal](#), where we currently have about 30,000 candidates. All of these are individuals with disabilities who have voluntarily self-disclosed and are looking for great career opportunities, including the federal government. Next slide.

Let's talk company partners (Slide 19). Rick mentioned DOL's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), and we do have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OFCCP. So we are working with a number of federal contractors as they're building out their plans to increase the recruitment, hiring, promotion and retention of individuals with disabilities.

We've worked with Microsoft on their autism hiring initiatives. And we now have, I think it's 115 people, working at Microsoft with the key factor of looking at an interview not being very successful in an hour for a person on the spectrum. But once you increase that to a two-week working interview, you really get to see the talent. So hats off to Microsoft on that. That partnership has led to partnerships with Hewlett-Packard, Dell. I could go on and on about the partners who are really interested in that space because there's a lot of talent, and they're not all IT companies.

CVS. We love CVS. Prior to this call I just got off the phone with Rick's team, we're working on some new initiatives. And in this slide you'll see a link to a video that we produced with CVS. And when you talk about getting the word out and setting an example and listening to that dual customer approach, the voice of individuals hired with disabilities as well as the company, this is a great link. We share that often as examples to our candidates as well as other companies.

Hyatt, we have a culinary arts training program there. Again, this is pre-apprenticeship, two weeks hands-on in the kitchens of Hyatt. We have a number of federal and state agencies and industry sector. Travel Unity has been a big partner recently, because the travel industry is up and hiring rapidly.

And then my last slide (Slide 20). I wanted to share just a few examples of federal agencies that we've worked with. The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is one that sits out in our area. They're a quasi-federal agency. We're doing a lot of recruiting with the BPA. The Department of Transportation, can't say enough about Alison, Dr. Walker, Tamera, the whole team. We've worked closely with the Disability Resource Center. We've worked on hiring.

And we're also working on an aviation development program with the FAA within the U.S. Department of Transportation that focuses on bringing people with disabilities into aviation careers, including air traffic controllers. With the Treasury, we've done a lot of work with the IRS in terms of seasonal employment as well as permanent employment, recruiting, and training for their team. With the USDA, when Alison was at that organization, we had a very proactive relationship as well, including an MOU with that federal agency. With the Department of Labor, we're recruiting all the time, and put a plug in for their upcoming career fair. And with that, please reach out if you have questions. The contact information is in the slides.

Now, I believe I have the honor of turning this over to a wonderful partner at Veterans Readiness and Employment, Billy Wright. You meet those people in your career where you just go, "Yep, we're going to work together," and Billy's one of those people. So, I'm excited to have him as a partner and to follow me here. Hello, Billy, we'll turn it over to you.

BILLY WRIGHT (presentation starts on slide 21): Hello. Kathy, good to see you again. And definitely thanks, Lou, and the ODEP team for inviting VA here for the meeting today. I'm just going to jump right into it. We're going to talk about resources that our federal agencies can use to hire veterans with disabilities and transitioning service members that have disabilities as well.

The Department of Veteran Affairs and our [Veteran Readiness and Employment](#) (VR&E) is definitely a great resource that federal agencies can use to recruit veterans and transitioning service members with service-connected disabilities (Slide 22). We have over 80 employment coordinators located who work closely with vocational rehabilitation (voc rehab) counselors at VA regional offices nationwide who can connect you with qualified candidates who match the skill that you're looking for.

They address their workforce needs, and the employment coordinators, they do several things. They adjust the candidate's workforce needs, education and skills required for placement and promote greater awareness of employment opportunities for veterans with service-connected disabilities and establish MOUs with partners if needed, and assure that that veteran is a match with the employer.

We have many programs, however, I'm going to share one of our most successful programs, especially among federal employers, the Non-Paid Work Experience (NPWE) is one of our programs we've been very successful with. And that provides eligible veterans and service members the opportunity to obtain training and real-time workplace experience, and allows the federal agencies an opportunity to see if that candidate is a good fit before making a job offer.

The NPWE program may be established in federal, state and government agencies only. You can set up an NPWE for up to three to 12 months, but typically NPWE will only last six months. You're not obligated to hire the candidate. If you like what you see and you feel that the candidate is a good fit, you may hire that veteran or service member directly at any point during an NPWE by using these special hiring authorities. So, if you want to set up an NPWE, please contact me or our team. We have three other national employment coordinators at VR&E's central office, so definitely reach out.

Another good resource is the Department of Labor's (DOL) [Veterans' Employment and Training Service](#) (VETS). Like I said, that's another great resource that agencies can use. They have six regional Veteran Employment Coordinators that engage with local, regional and national employers to connect you with the local resources to facilitate veterans' employment. And also with DOL VETS, you have the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) and the [Regional Veterans' Employment Coordinators](#). And you'll find them at [American Job Centers](#) or [CareerOneStops](#) throughout the U.S., and they can provide you with assistance and resources for recruiting, training and retaining a skilled workforce.

DOL VETS also has a [National Labor Exchange](#) where employers can post jobs. Veterans can find their job openings on the search results page. They'll be taken directly to the job opening and the application information that you provide. And lastly, they do have an [Employer Guide to Hiring Veterans](#) that is designed to assist employers with finding, hiring and retaining veterans. VA also having an employer guide as well. The link and contact information is all on the [slides](#).

Next, the [Wounded Warrior Project](#). Agencies, you can gain direct access to a pool of talented veterans who fit your needs when you registered. Just to give you a heads up, when you register with the Wounded Warrior Project, you need to let them know the type of positions you're offering, if you're recruiting locally or nationally, if you have full-time, part-time or internships, and they also ask for the number of employees that you are expecting to hire within the next 12 months. In addition, they have a feature where you can track your hires, and I'm sure many of you will find that useful.

Also, Paralyzed Veterans of America's (PVA) [Veterans Career Program](#), formerly known as PAVE, which is paving access to veterans' employment. They have eight regional voc rehab counselors who assist employers with finding qualified veterans that have the skills that you're looking for. On the website, you can click on "[Meet the Team](#)" and you'll be able to find the voc rehab counselor that's in your area.

And there are many more other veterans services organizations that you can contact to recruit veterans, but for the sake of time, I can't mention all of them. There's the [DAV](#), the [American Legion](#), [Marine for Life](#), [Army Recovery Care Program](#), I can go on and on. However, I can almost guarantee you that you

will find more veteran service organizations (VSOs) and employment service providers on the [National Resource Directory](#) (NRD).

And the NRD is a partnership among the Department of Defense, the Department of Labor and the Department of Veteran Affairs. It's a searchable database of resources from federal, state and local government agencies, veterans and military service organizations, nonprofit and community-based organizations, academic institutions and professional associations that provide assistance to wounded warriors and their families. So, there's information to be on the side of the NRD website, and they also have a tutorial that will show you how to use the site.

At this point I'll just turn it back over to Alison and you can bring on the next presenter. Thanks so much.

ALISON LEVY: Thank you, Billy, and thank you, Kathy, for your continued support and all the resources that you provide to all of us in federal service for increasing employment of people with disabilities, as well as veterans with disabilities. At this time I'd like to turn things over to Lauren Foreman with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). So excited to learn a little bit more about your agency talent portal. Lauren, take it away.

LAUREN FOREMAN (presentation starts on Slide 24): Thank you very much. Again, my name is Lauren Foreman. I'm an engagement specialist with the USAJOBS program office. Today I'll be talking to you a little bit about a recruitment tool that we have that you can specifically use to recruit individuals with disabilities. Next slide (Slide 25).

The [Agency Talent Portal](#) essentially allows you to find the right people for the right jobs. Essentially, this is the agency channel portal. Again, it gives hiring managers, human resources specialists, disability program managers or disability program specialists, or anyone who sort of works in the recruitment space within their agency, an opportunity to strategically recruit for talent (Slide 26).

If you have a current vacancy on USAJOBS or an upcoming vacancy on USAJOBS, or if your agency are going is going to host a series of recruitment events, you can come into the Agency Talent Portal and mine for resumes (shares screen to demonstrate how the portal works). I'm not going to go too much into the portal because we only have a limited amount of time, but you're able to come into the database and search depending on what you're looking for. If I'm looking for someone who is a human resources specialist, I can log into the system and it will identify everyone who has a USAJOBS profile who has made their resume who has identified that they have this set of experiences that I've put into the keyword search.

You may be asking, "Where are all these job seekers coming from?" The job seekers come from USAJOBS, and they have to opt into the system, meaning they have to identify that they want their profiles to be searchable. Once they opt into that system, their resume and profile information is then ported over into the Agency Talent Portal so that you can search and look at their resumes.

What's really great is that you're then able to filter out your search results. So, based on the job seekers that you'll find, you're able to filter out by federal employees. I know we talked a little bit earlier about veterans. And you're also able to look at individuals with disabilities amongst all of the other filters that you currently have on the side. You don't have to use all of them, but you can filter out your search results. Then it will yield the search results of the job-seekers who have self-identified themselves based on how you are filtering out.

You're able to look at job seekers. So you can click on their name, you can read their resume, see if they have the set of skills that you're looking for, and then save them to a campaign. I already created a campaign for the purpose of this demo, but let's just say I was looking for a disability program manager. I could create a campaign, which is essentially a board, and save job seekers to that campaign so that I can look at them at a later time and then collaborate with people on my team.

So, if I was a hiring manager and I wanted to work alongside of a recruiter or an HR specialist, I could create a board, save job seekers, to that board and then add team members to that campaign so that we can collaborate together. If I'm interested in reaching out to a job seeker, I can click this button here on the side and export all the contact information for everyone that I have saved to that campaign and reach out to them.

You may be asking "Why would I reach out to the job seeker?" Maybe you want to invite them to apply to a vacancy that you currently have on USAJOBS. Maybe your agency is hosting an event and you want to invite these individuals to an event that your agency is hosting. There's a plethora of reasons why you would look for the job-seekers in the Agency Talent Portal, save them to a campaign, and ultimately reach out to them.

Again, what's really unique about the system is that you already know that 100% of the people in this tool are looking for federal employment. And again, what's really neat is that you're able to filter out these job seekers based on how you're trying to bring them on board. So again, you can filter out by individuals with disabilities and all of the other filters that we currently have in USAJOBS.

One other great tool that we currently have is events. If your agency wants to promote their event on USAJOBS, they would create an event there in the Agency Talent Portal. Someone at the USAJOBS program office would approve it, and then it would get posted to USAJOBS. Just to give you guys a little background preview, these are some of the events that are currently posted on USAJOBS or will be posted on USAJOBS.

So as you can see, the Census Bureau currently has one, Air Force currently has an event that's posted on USAJOBS, and a couple of other agencies. IRS also has an event currently on USAJOBS. So, if your agency is interested in hosting an event and wants to promote that on USAJOBS, you would just easily fill out the form in the Agency Talent Portal and then somebody on my team would approve it and post it to USAJOBS.

I can give you an example. Three years ago, the Department of Homeland Security had a huge recruitment initiative where they were looking for veterans and individuals with disabilities to fill over 1,000 positions in law enforcement. So they utilized this tool to look for individuals who had law enforcement experience who identified themselves as veterans and individuals with disabilities, and they had a great success and turn out for their event.

You may be asking, "How do I gain access to this tool?" It is by invitation only, so you would need to request an account. I'm going to stop sharing and you can pull up my slides again, please. Thank you. Next slide, please (Slide 26).

So again, the Agency Talent Portal is a free tool that is open to all federal recruiters, HR specialists, or hiring managers, or again, anyone who sort of works in that recruitment space. So, if you are a disability program manager or disability specialist, you're able to have access to the tool as well. Your agency does

not have to pay for this. If you are a contractor at your agency working in the capacity of a recruiter or an HR specialist, you are also allowed access to this tool. Again, it is invite only. Next slide (Slide 27).

Again, we went over some of the tools that we currently have with some of the functionality that is currently in the tool. You can find resumes to meet your needs. You can collaborate using campaigns and utilize that collaboration method to work with hiring managers and HR specialists. And then, if you find the job seeker that you're interested, in you can contact them and invite them to attend an event or apply to a vacancy that you currently have on USAJOBS. Next slide (Slide 28).

Again, this is a snapshot of our search page. You're able to search based on particular skills that you're looking for, and you're able to filter out your search results. Next slide (Slide 29). You're also able to create campaigns. And campaigns is that board that I showed you. You can save job seekers to that campaign. You can create lists within your campaign, drag and drop job-seekers based on the list that you create.

You're also able to steer your campaign with a team member or a hiring manager if you have to collaborate. You can tag a job announcement to your campaign for tracking methods. And then you can also delete and export contact information from your campaign so that you can reach out to job-seekers that you are interested in. Next slide, please (Slide 30).

You can also create events. Again, you would fill out the event form in the Agency Talent Portal, but it is posted and advertised in USAJOBS. Next slide, please (Slide 31).

That is all that I have for you today. Normally this presentation takes me about an hour and a half, but I had to try to condense it for you guys. If you have any additional questions, please reach out to the USAJOBS Program Office at recruiter-help@usajobs.gov. If you want to request an account for the Agency Talent Portal, you would also email recruiter-help@usajobs.gov to get an account set up for you. If you have any questions, please let me know.

ALISON LEVY: Thank you so much, Lauren. It is such a great thing for us to us in federal service. And I wanted to just give folks a reminder to please post any questions you have in the Q&A box and we'll be reviewing those at the conclusion of the panel presentations. There's a lot of information, a lot of resources to go through here, and we want to make sure we answer your questions. So, as they come up, please just pop them in there and we'll be addressing them at the end.

Next up on the agenda is Lauren Karas, and she is working with the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) on the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP). So Lauren, if you could take it away and share the latest and greatest information about this wonderful resource.

LAUREN KARAS (presentation starts on Slide 32): Thank you, Alison. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Lauren Karas, and as Alison mentioned, I work at ODEP at the Department of Labor. I am one of the co-managers for the Workforce Recruitment Program, or WRP as we like to call it for short. I was actually a previous WRP participant myself and got my start in federal service through the program, so it's really a great privilege to now co-manage the program and be able to share the resource with all of you. Next slide, please (Slide 33).

The WRP is a free recruitment and referral program that connects federal employers with highly motivated current college students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to demonstrate their skills and talents in the workplace, either through internships or permanent jobs.

The program itself has been around for quite some time. It was started in the mid-1970s. By the Department of the Navy. In 1995, it was expanded to be a federal-wide program and is now managed jointly by us at the Department of Labor and our colleagues at the Department of Defense, and we are extremely grateful for this partnership with DoD. Next slide, please (Slide 34).

Who are the WRP candidates? Candidates are available for a wide variety of types of positions. You can find candidates who are looking for internships, part-time or full-time employment nationwide. Our candidates consist of undergraduate candidates, graduate students and recent grads with disabilities. So if you are looking to fill a permanent position at your agency, we do have a large number of recent grads who are looking for a permanent employment. So just something to remember there. And they're from a wide variety of academic and professional backgrounds. Next slide, please (Slide 35)

We wanted to give you guys a sense of how the WRP works. It truly is a program that runs on an annual cycle. School coordinators register their college or university for WRP in the spring, and actually, school registration is currently open. So if you have contacts at colleges and universities that you would like to get connected to WRP, let us know.

Typically these school coordinators are someone in career or disability services, and they help identify students and recent grads with disabilities at their campus who then apply in the fall. And as part of this process, the students and recent grads submit an application along with a resume and a transcript.

We then also have volunteer federal recruiters who conduct remote informational interviews with the candidates. And then federal employers can search for candidates year-round by going to wrp.gov and creating an account. We do not shut the database down at any time throughout the year, so feel free to register for an employer account at any time. Next slide, please (Slide 36).

I wanted to highlight the role that our school coordinators and recruiters play. We really wouldn't be able to run a successful program without them. So both our school coordinators and recruiters help prepare WRP students and recent graduates for federal employment. Our school coordinators help identify eligible candidates and help them apply and answer application questions that they may have.

Our recruiters conducts the informational interviews in which they are able to share aspects of their career journey with the WRP candidate, and the WRP candidate is also able to ask them questions about federal service. So, this is really a great way for candidates to get information about the federal government and have a robust exchange with a federal employee. And both the school coordinators and the recruiters help provide feedback on the WRP candidate applications and resumes to help ensure that the candidate is showing their best selves and that their resume reflects their skills and talents. Next slide, please (Slide 37).

This is just a snapshot of who is in our current database for 2021. So we have more than 2,500 students from 380 accredited colleges and universities nationwide. I did want to mention that our database is diverse and is representative of the US college student population.

I won't go through each individual statistic on this slide, but some that are of note are about 10% of our current database have self-identified as being veterans with disabilities, and you can search based on that criteria in our database. More than 20% of our database are currently pursuing an advanced degree or have recently graduated with one. So, that's just something to note there. Next slide (Slide 38).

Why should federal employers use the WRP? Now you know a little bit about the program and its structure. Why should folks consider using it? First and foremost, it's really easy access to candidate

information year-round, and we do post new applications every year each December. We do this because we like to keep our information as up-to-date as possible for federal employers when you're searching for candidates to fill your specific positions. We post new data each year in mid-December.

The tool really allows agencies to find individuals with the specific skills that you need. You can search based on a wide variety of criteria. It has been designated as a model hiring strategy by our colleagues at the Office of Personnel Management. And because all of our candidates have self-identified as being eligible for the Schedule A Hiring Authority for persons with disabilities, you can hire candidates without going through the competitive hiring process by using the Schedule A Hiring Authority. Next slide, please (Slide 39).

So, how can you get access to our database of candidates? Anyone with a federal email address can register at wrp.gov and search the database. And as I alluded to earlier, it's a pretty robust search function. You can search by major, degree, job focus, etc. Our job focuses are based off of the job series. You can search based on location, resume keyword and technical skills. You can search for multiple aspects at one time. So, it's a really robust search mechanism there.

You can easily save candidate resumes for later viewing and report your hires. I do want to mention that reporting hires to us is extremely important. We rely on federal employers to let us know if they've brought on a WRP candidate. And we use this information to continue to make the WRP database a robust resource for you all. Next slide, please (Slide 40).

I thought it would be helpful to highlight some strategies that you can use to help promote use of the WRP at your agencies. Incorporating the WRP into your agency's current recruiting and hiring practices is a really great way to get started. If you have a checklist or a list of resources that you provide hiring managers or specific kind of outreach strategies or newsletters, press releases, etc., remembering to incorporate and mention WRP as a recruitment tool can be really effective and helpful.

The next point I want to make is thinking about designating a WRP coordinator or a point person at your agency to specifically work with agencies and offices to search the database and find candidates for open positions. We often find that someone who is leading the charge at the agency and can work with other employees in that process, it can be really helpful, and also working with HR during the onboarding process for the WRP candidates.

The next point I wanted to make was remembering to continuously engage agency management and leadership. It's really great if folks from the top-down know about WRP and are championing it at your agencies and departments. So, remembering to incorporate them in learning about the program and promoting it is really key.

And then the last strategy I wanted to mention is one of my favorites. Be sure to communicate success stories throughout the agency. It's really helpful for other employees at the agency to see successes so that they can say, oh, we hired this intern and they were great, so we're going to be sure to bring them back or continue to use the database as a resource to find candidates.

Additionally, my colleague and I love to highlight WRP success stories and use various success stories in our marketing materials. So, if you know of anybody at your agency that was a previous or current WRP hire, we would love to know about them. Next slide, please (Slide 41).

That concludes my formal presentation. To register for an employer account, you can go to www.wrp.gov. If you have any specific questions, feel free to email us at wrp@dol.gov. Thank you so much for your time today. I'll turn it over to Alison now. Thank you.

ALISON LEVY: Thank you, Lauren. We all know and love the WRP and have used it greatly. So, if you're new to this resource, I really encourage you to visit the website, register and gain access to this great resource. Next up we have a team of folks who are sharing some really important information or resources from Department of Defense.

Let's move to the next slide, please (Slide 42). And while we're doing that, I just wanted to let folks know, as a reminder, we're going to be posting the recording from this session at the [EARN website](#), and we'll post that link in the chat box so that you have easy access to that following this session. And of course, we also have the [slide deck](#) and a [handout](#) posted as well.

So, we know there's a lot of information that you're getting today, and you'll need some time to maybe go back, review and reflect and maybe talk to your colleagues about some good strategies you can bring back to your own agency. So with that, let me turn things over to Department of Defense.

SAM DRUMMOND: Hello there and good afternoon. This is Sam Drummond. I'm the Associate Director for the Department of Defense Diversity Management Operations Center's Disability Program Directorate. And accompanying me today, as Alison said, is a team of people. I'm accompanied by Mr. Biffery Braxton and Dr. John Fuller and the rest of our support team.

And first, thank you very much for the opportunity to present the DoD's Shared List capabilities. The Shared List is a free online service. This application is available in addition to such capabilities as the Agency Talent Pool and the VRE's Wounded Warrior, etc. This capability is a web-based resume repository available worldwide at no cost. The HR specialist, as well as hiring managers, have an opportunity to review resumes seeking federal employment.

And I'd like to turn it over, for the interest of time, to our team to present the details of the Shared List. So Biffery Braxton, Mr. Braxton, if you're ready.

BIFFERY BRAXTON: Yes, sir. And today, Elizabeth Starek is going to be leading the presentation.

ELIZABETH STAREK (presentation starts on Slide 42): Great, thank you. So good afternoon. And as Mr. Drummond said, we would like to thank you all for allowing the Diversity Management Operations Center (DMOC), Disability Programs Directorate (DPD) and the Applied Development, LLC team to present our DoD Shared List to your group. Next slide, thank you (Slide 43). So roughly 25% of adults or 61 million adults in the U.S. live with a disability whether or not they choose to say they do. So next slide, please (Slide 44).

So the DoD Shared List is designed as a tool to help Schedule A-qualified individuals with a disability who are not only part of the WRP program and WRP Plus program, but have also phased out of those programs, as well as veterans and other individuals who are Schedule A-qualified find a job in the federal government.

This database will be at no cost to the user, agency, service or component, and will be supported by the DoD Disability Program's directorate. Our tool will utilize regular skill-building workshops, which teach individuals skills necessary to navigate the federal hiring process. Next slide, please (Slide 45).

The DoD Shared List is one-of-the-kind 508-compliant premier candidate recruiter database and connection tool that will allow more individuals with disabilities to become employed. The DMOC/DPD team will continue to maintain the current user friendly database and make sure all the information remains up to date. Next slide, please (Slide 46).

Currently, the DoD Shared List contains approximately 1,000 resumes of diverse and highly-qualified individuals who are eligible for federal employment under Schedule A Hiring Authority and is growing daily. Our overall goal is to assist the Department of Defense and other federal agencies in meeting the hiring goals of individuals with targeted disabilities as determined by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) or individuals with non-targeted disabilities. Next slide, please (slide 47).

Just like on USAJOBS, candidates have the option to choose multiple job series numbers based on their career interests. It is important to note that PII (Personal Identifiable Information) and PHI (Personal Health Information) are not collected in the DoD Shared List. Next slide, please (Slide 48).

There are two options a candidate can use to have their information entered in the DoD Shared List. The first option is emailing the resume to DMOC/DPD team info@dodsharedlist.com or dodhra.dmoc-dpd@mail.mil. The second is to have the candidate enter their information into the system themselves by visiting the dodsharedlist.com website. Hiring managers have the option to search for a candidate based on several criteria. For example, where they live, the job series number or if they have a security clearance. There are a vast number of different types of candidates in the DoD shared list, such as PhDs, system engineers and accountants, many of which already have clearances. Next slide, please (Slide 49). This is basically what I just referenced outlined on one slide. Next slide, please (Slide 50).

To conclude, the DoD Shared List is a turnkey solution to help meet the goals of presidential Executive Order 13548. Human resource managers can easily obtain a reporting matrix via the DoD Shared List, much like the WRP program and USAJOBS. There's a technical support system for individuals needing assistance as well as user-guided videos that are available at dodsharedlist.com Thank you.

ALISON LEVY: Thank you, Elizabeth. Next up we have Kendra Shock who is the disability program manager for Department of the Air Force, and she has a couple of wonderful resources to share with you as well. Kendra, take it away.

KENDRA SHOCK (presentation starts on Slide 51): Hi, thank you. I'm happy to talk to you about the Air Force's Schedule A repository and database that we have established. Just an overview of our database, we developed this just reduce the workload that was involved with receiving applications for candidates who were eligible for Schedule A, and also the Air Force's Wounded Warrior program, which is an internal program for airmen who are transitioning from uniformed service into civilian service.

The Air Force currently employs over 175,000 civilian employees at 100 locations across the world. So, you can imagine how difficult it would be for one selective placement program coordinator to manage all the inquiries related to Schedule A. So, we have gone to a database that allows individuals to submit their resumes directly to Air Force for positions that you may be interested in (Slide 52).

The database is available on the Air Force civilian careers website at the website that's posted. And as an applicant, you can submit your resume, supporting documentation, identify any occupational series that you're interested in and also search for positions via geographic location. Once an applicant submits their resume, they will receive an automated response from the database notifying them that the

package has been received, and then it will remain active for six months. So it's important for applicants to reapply after six months if they're still interested in employment with the Air Force.

From there, our Air Force civilian personnel services will screen the database and make referrals of available applicants to hiring managers. And our goal is to do this outside of the actual recruiting process before a position is posted. Civilian personnel services representatives will go in and scrub the database and determine, is there an applicant currently in this database available for this vacancy before we post it on USAJOBS? Next slide (Slide 53).

The database went live in March 2019, and as you can imagine, our execution of this database was impacted by COVID-19. We've had a few hiccups along the way, but the most exciting thing that's happened is that last October, a memo was signed and distributed by the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Manpower and Reserves requiring all civilian personnel offices to screen the repository and make referrals to selected officials when there's an applicant who has been identified as qualified.

This memo also requires managers and hiring officials to interview at least one Schedule A applicant that has been referred to them, and I think this is monumental. I receive inquiries every day from individuals who apply for jobs with the Air Force and they believe they're qualified, but they never receive an interview. I think it's very difficult for anybody to obtain employment in the Federal Government if you don't get a chance to interview for that job. So, the Air Force is making a commitment to this program by saying, you will interview at least one Schedule A applicant that has been referred to you.

Currently, we have a little over 2,700 applications in the database, and this represents over 700 resumes. Individuals can submit their resumes and apply for multiple positions at the same time. As of today, I don't have any data as to how many individuals have actually been selected or interviewed, but I hope to have that information the next time I provide an update.

ALISON LEVY: Fantastic. Thank you so much, Kendra. We appreciate you sharing. And I know that memo must have been pretty difficult to get signed, so I really applaud your efforts and the Air Force and all the work that you're doing on a regular basis. It's not only in recruitment, but obviously reasonable accommodations, too.

KENDRA SHOCK: Thank you. Last June the Secretary of the Air Force established a Diversity and Inclusion Task Force to address mostly racial diversity within the Air Force, but disability was also included as part of that task force, so this was one of the major pushes of that task force.

ALISON LEVY: Oh, that's excellent. It's something that we all can take away from today's webinar, is that let's continue to keep disability at the diversity table and in the conversations in our agencies, especially as the executive order on equity and inclusion accessibility is moving through all of our federal agencies. So, I appreciate that very much.

KENDRA SHOCK: Great. Thank you.

ALISON LEVY: Thank you to all the panelists for your time and energy and sharing your resources. We know there's a lot of hard work that goes into preparing these and actually implementing them. At this time I'd like to open up some questions, Q&A for a few minutes. I think we have about 10 minutes, if I'm correct. Then we'll have some concluding remarks at the very end.

With that, let's take a look at the Q&A box. If you have any other questions, feel free to pop them in there and we're going to get through the list. If, for some reason, we're not able to get to all your questions today, we'll try and wrap them up and share them in a follow-up message to you.

So, let's kind of scroll back here and go back to our first presentation. I think some of these questions were addressed already in the presentation, but just to kind of re-emphasize, I might be repeating something that was mentioned. So, back to the Talent Portal for OPM, how do people easily access the site? Is it possible for you perhaps to pop in the chat box the email address for gaining access?

LAUREN FOREMAN: Yes, I'll put it in the chat box. Hi, this is Lauren. If you are a federal recruiter or you work in federal recruitment, all you have to do is email recruiterhelp@usajobs.gov. Let them know what agency you work for, what capacity you work for in your agency. Again, if you're a hiring manager or an HR specialist, let them know that you want an Agency Talent Portal account. They will send you an invite and then you can set up your account yourself. I'll type that directly in the chat box.

ALISON LEVY: Thank you so much, Lauren. Just a clarifying question about that, because we referenced a couple of titles that are strictly HR-related, but I know many of our participants are also from the Civil Rights area. They may be the disability program manager for their agency with responsibility to help with outreach and supporting Equal Employment Opportunity or Affirmative Action efforts. Is there a list of titles or how is that determination made when somebody makes a request?

LAUREN FOREMAN: So, when you make a request, everyone essentially gets the same permissions in the site, regardless of if you're a hiring manager or an HR specialist or a recruiter or you're a disability program specialist, you all have the same role in the Agency Talent Portal. We just ask for that information so we can make sure that you work in recruitment to give you access to the site.

We want to make sure that people who should not have access to the site are requesting accounts, if that makes sense. If you don't work in recruitment, maybe you work in the mailroom, then you should not be having access to the site. If for whatever reason you work in recruitment to some capacity in your agency, you are allowed to have access - that goes for our disability program specialists and managers.

ALISON LEVY: Excellent. Thank you so much. A couple more questions about your resource. One is: "To share a campaign with a hiring manager, must the person have a USAJOBS account?" I'm not quite clear on that. Maybe you understand better?

LAUREN FOREMAN: I understand the question, but I want to be extremely clear that USAJOBS and the Agency Talent Portal are two different systems. They both belong to OPM, but they are two different systems. So, you do not have to have a USAJOBS account to have an agency account. You can create your own USAJOBS account if you are looking for a job that's a different capacity, but if you want an Agency Talent Portal account, then you would just email the address that I put in the chat box. But no, you do not need to have the USAJOBS account to have an Agency Talent Portal account.

ALISON LEVY: Very good. Thank you. Another question is: "Regarding, can federal employees see the full list of hiring events? And do you need a Talent Portal account to see the hiring events?"

LAUREN FOREMAN: So, you only need an agency talent portal account if you want to advertise your agency's event on USAJOBS. But anyone who goes to USAJOBS can see the full list of events that are being advertised. So, regardless of if you have a USAJOBS account or not, if you go to the USAJOBS website and you scroll to the bottom of the page, anybody can see the list of events that are being held by federal agencies.

But if you want your agency to have their event advertised on USAJOBS, then you would need an Agency Talent Portal account to fill out that event form that I showed you quickly, and then you would submit it to our program office. So again, the agency talent is where you fill out the form. When it's approved and submitted, and the event is then posted on USAJOBS.

ALISON LEVY: Very good. Thank you so much. We have a couple more questions. This is a question about the DoD Shared List. The question is: "How can non-DoD recruiters access that Shared List?"

ELIZABETH STAREK: Currently the DoD Shared List is only open to individuals who are federal hiring managers. So, if you are a federal hiring manager, you can get access to the DoD Shared List. But if you're from a private company like CVS or something, you will not have access.

ALISON LEVY: How do they gain access? Was there an email address that someone could request? Do you mind popping that in the chat?

ELIZABETH STAREK: Oh, sure. So you can send your request to info@dodsharedlist.com or to the other email address I mentioned, and they're both in the slides.

ALISON LEVY: Very good, thank you. Another follow-up question while we have you, Elizabeth, is, could you share how the DoD Shared List is different from or complements the USAJOBS Talent Portal and the WRP database?

ELIZABETH STAREK: So, the USAJOBS database is complementary to our database because we kind of have the same system where we have individuals who are Schedule A-qualified and who are self-identified as being individuals with disabilities. So everyone in there, as I said, Schedule A, but they also have the ability to have the diverse hiring managers and different candidates who may or may not be able to navigate the USAJOBS website. We actually work with the WRP database. Many of the individuals in the database are also in the DoD Shared List database. Being in the WRP database does not mean you're excluded from the DoD Shared List or if you're part of the WRP plus program or if you're part of USAJOBS. All you have to be is Schedule A-qualified.

ALISON LEVY: Very good. Thank you. I know we've highlighted several different shared lists or databases today, and I just wanted to emphasize to our audience that having access to resumes is just one step in recruitment, and really developing that talent pipeline is another strategy altogether. I don't want us to lose sight of the examples that CVS has shared in their partnering with community-based organizations, partnering with vocational rehabilitation, Kathy West-Evans' group called the National Employment Team, etc. We really hope that you can pick several different strategies, start doing things a little differently than just referring people to only a database, but trying to actually go to the database, identify some potential folks, encourage them to apply. If you're doing outreach to applicants, make them aware of these databases, but also try and use your flexibilities, like the unpaid work experience through the Veterans Affairs program that Bill Wright discussed.

Consider doing a national memorandum of understanding with one of these resources as well. That's a way to push this initiative to your high-level leadership and outline some very clear goals, and how your secretary or highest level of leadership can be committed to really integrating and including people with disabilities with diversity and inclusion efforts.

So please, I just want to encourage you, get into discussion with other people, touch back with some of the resources, the contacts that we've provided you today. Use this PowerPoint presentation as a resource in developing your strategic plans. Don't forget that October is [National Disability Employment](#)

[Awareness Month](#) (NDEAM), and now is a super time to really start planning some specific activities that are not only for October, but throughout the next fiscal year.

With this new administration in place, it's a great opportunity to prepare your elevator speech. Again, pick two or three very clear goals and make sure that you're at the table in the conversations about disability and diversity and inclusion.

I'm going to turn things back over now to Lou Orslene. He's got another introduction to make. So thank you all.

LOU ORSLENE: Thank you very much, Alison, I so appreciate you moderating. And I appreciate everyone keeping their speeches to the time allotted so that we could get through to everyone, and also answer questions. So a big shout-out to Rick, Kathy, Billy, Lauren Forman, Lauren Karas, Sam, Biffery, Elizabeth and the entire DoD team. And, of course, Kendra. So we're so grateful for all the information that you shared and so appreciate your collaboration today on this meeting. So, let me now turn it over to Jennifer Sheehy, our acting assistant secretary at ODEP, who will close us out.

JENNIFER SHEEHY: Thank you, Lou. I'm so glad that I was able to join for the last hour because I was floored by the incredible resources that we have right now in the Federal Government to bring candidates into the jobs that America needs most. I mean, we are at such a critical time with the COVID recovery, and we have so much new infrastructure funding from the American Rescue Plan, and we have a hiring surge in many of our agencies.

This is the time that we as the Federal Government can be a model employer for people with disabilities and ensure that people with disabilities are part of that recovery, not only getting jobs in the Federal Government, but using those jobs to help Americans. And that's the goal of ODEP, why ODEP exists, to make sure that people with disabilities are integrated like anyone else in the work of America and building a stronger economy. As you all know, in the work you do every single day, means that people with disabilities are alongside their non-disabled colleagues doing important work and adding their skills, talents, and abilities to the Federal Government, the most important work many of us have ever done will be recovery after the pandemic.

So thank you for mentioning NDEAM, Alison. And we did push out the [2021 NDEAM theme](#) recently. It is "America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion." So, it's pretty appropriate. I also just want to thank Alison Levy. Oh my gosh, you and I go way back, but you did such a fantastic job moderating these incredible speakers and sharing these incredible resources.

And also, of course, thank you to and a special shout out to our WRP team and to the ODEP folks who are instrumental in FEED and also to our amazing partners at OPM and the EEOC. Oh, and I can't forget Cornell. Cornell, you guys are terrific in managing FEED and helping us hopefully be helpful to all of you. So with that, I will turn it back over to Lou. Thank you so much.

LOU ORSLENE: Thanks, everybody. Well, we'll close it out for the day. We really appreciate your attendance today. Thanks again for all the speakers. And we'll be sure to get all of the resources out to you, all of the various links that were listed in the chat, before the next FEED meeting. So, thanks very much again. Everyone have a great afternoon.

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