

# **Lessons from the Field: A Learning Exchange Between the State Leaders Innovation Institute and the State Peer Leaders Network Webinar**

*July 2009*

**[Robb Sewell]** Good afternoon this is Robb Sewell, and on behalf of the NTAR Leadership Center, I would like to welcome you to today's webinar, *Lessons from the Field: A Learning Exchange Between the State Leaders Innovation Institute and the State Peer Leaders Network*. Before we begin I'd like to take a few minutes to review some important information. For those unfamiliar with this particular webinar format, the presentation slides will appear on the right side of your screen. A chat feature on the left side of your screen will enable you to communicate with me, should you have any questions or encounter any problems. Simply type your message and click send. You will also see an option for full screen on the left portion of your display. Clicking this will maximize the area where the presentation slides appear and will minimize your chat box so that it appears as a floating window. Please note that this webinar has been arranged so that during the presentation, the only voices you'll hear are those of the presenters. We have a lot of time assigned after the presentation for a Q and A session. At that time I will provide you with information about how to ask questions. Please note that this webinar is being recorded. A direct link to the webinar including audio and web content will be available on the NTAR Leadership Center Web site by 10 a.m. Eastern time, Friday, July 24th, 2009. The NTAR Web site can be accessed at [www.ntarcenter.org](http://www.ntarcenter.org). That is [www.ntarcenter.org](http://www.ntarcenter.org). At this point, I'd like to turn things over to the Nanette Relave who is the Director of the Center for Workers with Disabilities at the American Public Human Services Association. Additionally, Nanette is the Director of the NTAR Leadership Centers State Peer Leaders Network, Nanette.

**[Nanette Relave]** Great, thank you. For those who are in DC, you know it's actually very stormy here, so if you do hear some thunder in the background, please excuse me and ignore that. Robb, if we can move to the next slide number three. The NTAR Leadership Center has two major activities in which we worked with the state, Our State Leaders Innovation Institute, which is comprised of three states: Connecticut, Maryland, and Minnesota; and our State Peer Leaders Network which is now comprised of 21 states which is wonderful. And we're delighted today to have an opportunity to have a learning exchange between our two networks of state, and we'll have presenters from all three of the state who are in our institute who will be sharing information with us today. If we can move to the next slide, and as Robb mentioned, the materials from this webinar will all be available on our NTAR Center Web site. The next slide please. I know that many of the listeners on the call today are familiar with our center, but if we do have any new listeners, I just want to provide a quick overview of what we are. The NTAR Leadership Center was established in September of 2007 through a grant from the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. And as a center, we are a collaboration of partner organizations with expertise in workforce and economic development, disability employment, asset development, as well as leadership development. And we're established really for the purpose of building capacity and leadership at the federal, state, and local levels to enable the kind of systems changed and partnerships across systems that will work to improve and increase opportunities for the employment of people with disabilities. Next slide please. Our center is guided by a set of principles called from research through ODEP and these include increasing partnerships and collaboration, increasing the use of self direction, also, strategies around asset development and financial education, increasing the use of universal design in our workforce development and other systems, and increasing needs of customized and other forms of flexible work options for people with disabilities. And today in hearing from our three states,

we're really be hearing about their activities that really do cut across all of these guiding principles that are helping us develop models and examples of how these principles can be put into practice. Next slide please. And with that, I'm going to turn it over to the State of Maryland, which will begin our presentation and to Cathy Raggio who is Secretary of the Maryland Department of Disabilities. And so I'm going to turn it over to you, Cathy, and you simply need to press star 7 and that will unmute your line and you'll be ready to begin presenting.

**[Cathy Raggio]** That's great. Well, welcome to Maryland and our governor has a principle that we follow here. And that is, "There is no such thing as a spare Marylander." So could we have the next slide please? The Maryland Project has been pulled together via leadership team and the leadership team is co-chaired by myself and by Secretary Thomas Perez from the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation. Next slide please. On the next slide, you can see the members of our team and I'm not going to go through each person's name and their responsibilities because you can look at that but what we tried to do was pull together a very high-level team comprised of state agency leadership as well as some folks from the private sector. And we've [inaudible] across the various state agencies and you'll see why as we get into some of our activities. Next slide please. Our objectives were to identify and link job seekers with disabilities to opportunities that were going to become available in our state as a result of the base realignment and closure, and that begins in 2011. So in essence, what we were doing was bringing people with disabilities to the table for discussion around of the new job opportunities with BRAC. We want to enhance the skills of job seekers with disabilities by retooling or realigning existing training programs and funds and determine work incentives and strategies to ensure that work will pay for people. And we also want to develop livable and inclusive communities. And we talked a little bit in the next slide about

BRAC and then refer back to some of those objectives so we could have the next slide. That would be good. As I said, BRAC is an acronym that means Base Realignment and Closure and this is the congressionally authorized process that the Defense Department uses to reorganize its military bases to more efficiently and effectively support our forces. And in 2005, Maryland was chosen to accommodate a significant expansion in military installations in certain parts of our state. And this is a result of one base closing in New Jersey and other jobs being shifted from the Defense Intelligence Agency in Northern Virginia. So Maryland will become the future home to thousands of people in our country from the federal civilian and military, while we will be experiencing the largest single employment growth activity since World War II. As a result of the base realignment and closure, funds have been appropriated to create BRAC zones or--into BRAC zones. I said I wanted to refer back to one of our objectives and that's the livable inclusive communities. We saw an opportunity that as long as new funds were going to be available for development or redevelopment of certain areas around the bases that we wanted to see the funds used in a way that would create more livable inclusive communities instead of suburban sprawl, and we think that by doing this, it will be good for everyone, not just people with disabilities. So one of first things we did before the NTAR project happened was to prepare a position paper on livable inclusive communities and circulate it with our transportation and housing agencies. Could you go to the next slide please? Once we were selected to be part of the NTAR project, we began developing in action plan. We brought our team together and had a series of meetings where we began looking at the states BRAC action plan that had been developed by our lieutenant governor and BRAC sub-cabinet. And we chose the sections on housing transportation and workforce development. And then we began crafting disability-specific recommendations that related to some of the recommendations that were in the larger BRAC action plan. And if you wanted to look at the larger BRAC action plan, you

see the Web site there that you could go to. Let me highlight some of the key activities today in the workforce development section. One of the recommendations is to coordinate and increase cross-agency employer engagement and outreach and thanks to Heldrich Center folks. We held an employer focus group, which they facilitated with BRAC employers in New Jersey. And they presented us the report of the discussion that occurred with that focus group and that was very enlightening for us. Universal design is also to be a topic at the annual state workforce development conference and a third highlight is that the GWIB, Governor's Workforce Investment Board Interagency Workforce Committee is going to review proposed technical assistance plan to increase universal design at the One-Stop employment centers and then make that recommendation to the GWIB. Next slide please. Okay, we are about to sign MOUs with the Department of Business and Economic Development and the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, both of whom have representatives on our leadership team, and they are for employer outreach with an emphasis on BRAC jobs and creating a web portal for employers interested in hiring people with disabilities. It won't post resumes but it'll have a live information about where to find individuals with disabilities with specific skills, and the employer outreach folks will be doing regular contact with the BRAC employers who will be coming into the state. And some of them have begun coming in already. We're creating marketing materials that will be distributed with the BRAC relocation guide that's being given out to about 11,000 people. Next slide please. For the job seeker, we're trying to facilitate access to BRAC jobs for individuals with disabilities. So up in the Aberdeen Proving Ground area, which will be receiving the jobs coming from Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, we'll be holding a job fare and a No Spare Marylander Job Seeking workshop in the fall. We've submitted requests for proposals for the creation of some new work matters fact sheets. We have a whole series of these that we'll make available to either employers or to job seekers. We have some for each group and the latest topics

include BRAC employment and security clearance and how to get through that process and the importance of maintaining a clean credit and having a credit history. Next slide please. Also for the job seeker, the team has been identified and a curriculum is being developed for a statewide consistent approach for job seekers with disabilities in One-Stops. Probably, our state is no different than most of your states and that is the One-Stop employment centers vary in their ability to meaningfully assist job seekers with disabilities. Some make a lot of referrals to our division and rehabilitation services at our vocational rehab program, and others assist people to find jobs who don't need to go through the door system. So we want to make that more standard across the state so that's underway. We've hired an AmeriCorps volunteer to do outreach to college students with disabilities to link them to internships that will be created hopefully through the employer outreach through the MOUs that I mentioned a couple of pages ago that we're about to sign with our Economic Development Department and our Labor, Licensing, and Regulation Department. Some of the highlights in the area of housing, we hosted a meeting on Transit-Oriented Development in the BRAC areas and that was attended by local housing and disability staff within Maryland. All of the major counties, large counties and Baltimore City have commissions for individuals with disabilities and so we brought them to the table and asked them to bring a key housing person from their locality and we brought the Real Estate Chief from the Department of Transportation in to talk about the Transit-Oriented Development areas that are targeted in Maryland. Some are underway and how to get involved in that whole process so that was really successful and then our last bullet there indicates that we're going to continue to monitor that and follow up both with MDOD and with the local commission. We're also researching best practices in asset development and financial literacy in order to develop a curriculum or adopt the curriculum there. Some of our activities in transportation, I just mentioned the DOD activity and also we're continuing to

monitor the implementation of MDOD action steps and some of it was to identify stations which provide outstanding access and which do not on the mark commuter train line that runs up and down the Baltimore-Washington quarter and there are a couple of different tracks for that. We have some next steps that we're about to embark on and that's to convene a state group on asset development and financial literacy and develop an action plan for that. And then continue to monitor all the plans for the key agencies and develop disability-specific questions for kiosks at relocation sites. We're finalizing white paper and MOUs for the first data run for WORKSTAT. And WORKSTAT is a system that we're creating across all of the agencies that provide employment services so that we can monitor hopefully an increase, not a decrease in employment of people with disabilities. Although in this economy, we're just kind of holding our breath on that and we're going to be revisiting essential workplace skills needed and determining an alternate action plan there. If you could go to the last slide, we've given you our contact person Jade Gingerich unfortunately could not be on the call today and she's our director of Employment Policy within MDOD and there's her contact information, and at the end we will be glad to answer any questions that you have. Thank you.

**[Nanette Relave]** Thank you so much, Secretary Raggio. And with that Robb, if we can move on to the next slide and we're going to turn to the State of Connecticut and I believe that we have two presenters joining us, Joyce Barclay who is manager of Strategic Initiatives at The WorkPlace Incorporated which is Southwestern Connecticut's Regional Work Force Development Board, and Chris Tymniak who is Director of the Governor's Southwest Office. So both Joyce and Chris, you'll need to press star 7 in order to unmute your lines and I'm going to turn the presentation over to you. Thank you.

**[Chris Tymniak]** Hello. Thank you, Nanette, can you hear me?

**[Nanette Relave]** Yes, I can.

**[Chris Tymniak]** Oh fantastic. And I just want to say that I'm going to be dealing the first couple of slides, about 9 of them, and then Joyce is going to do the remainder of the slides and then I think we'll both rejoin at the end of the overall presentation for the Q and A question, if anybody has any questions so which they will let us answer, so let me begin. Can you turn to the next slide, please? Thank you. We feel that the last three months in Connecticut have been very exciting, considering the state of our budget and the state of the economy. We feel we made good strides towards our goals and this presentation will show our work to this point. The presentation will show the goals we set forward, highlight of the activities we're doing, our accomplishments, and some of the lessons we've learned along the way. Next slide, our goals were--are, not were. The goals have evolved during the last year, first of all, one was to expand our collaborations amongst all state agencies. Pretty much from the beginning we had a buy in from a couple of the city agencies but we expanded that number conclude we're upwards over, I believe, nine state agencies now who are all invested in this. Two was to increase the awareness among state agencies, also amongst different work force investment groups and other community organizations and corporate offices in the state. Three, we wanted to improve our capacity development. Four, we are looking for universal design, something which we can use to spend for the entire state which everybody can relate to and, if one person has got a question, everybody is on the same page when it comes to knowing the answer. And five was to create the state government, state of Connecticut as a Model Employer. Certain state resources we've had have impacted our--our levels of participation. I've been on state employee travel, also getting back to May 28 of 2008, we've had a state hiring for you so whereas state goes forth in trying to be a model employer, we're also sort of handcuffed with the reality of today's economy so we're putting so much into place for the

future. That's something we're excited about. Goal number one, expand collaboration, our outreach continues led by the good governor of Connecticut, Governor Jodi Rell. We have pulled in a whole bunch of other state agencies, here they are, let me read them off, the Department of Labor, the Bureau of Rehabilitation Service, the Services to the Blind, Administrative Services, the Department of Corrections, Developmental Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Economic Community Development and our community colleges. We also receive outside collaboration from our workforce investment boards, the Business Leadership Network in Connecticut has jumped in and really been active. I want to say in the last three months since we got back from Baltimore, headed by Melissa Marshall. She's just done a fantastic job so we thank her for everything. And the Connecticut Business and Industry Association has also been very helpful to us to the last couple of times, and it began with the state agency. As we look to expand, we'll continue to look towards our business community for that help. Next slide. Our expanded collaborations started off with the Walgreens Project in upstate Connecticut. Walgreens was our catalyst. They created a new distribution center approximately 700,000 square feet, a giant facility. They had a commitment to hire at least one third of their employees for people with disabilities so, about 180 workers out of 550 employees, which is a fantastic goal. Questions they had were, is there a ready workforce for them? Walgreens was the driving collaboration, the state provided incentives for Walgreens to build and the state's ability to meet that commitment, to hire people with disabilities including the developmental delays, autism, mobility, vision, and the list continues, but Walgreens was our catalyst towards that and all the agencies were involved in getting Walgreens the table and getting the commitment from them and I do want to say that the facility is fantastic and well underway. There's going to be later on in the presentation more about the Walgreens facility. The next slide please. Our expanding collaborations, we did increasing the service access, Assistive Technology Inventory,

the Connecticut Department of Labor and the Workforce Investment Board have committed to doing a survey distribution amongst One-Stop centers and community colleges. We wanted Tech Pros Recommendations for Department of Labor, the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, and the Services for the Blind all committed to that. We want to create a statewide communication like I talked before, so every state agency is on the same page, everybody knows exactly what we're doing, and we wanted to make sure we had joint and cross-agency training. Those initial dialogues expand to look at the entire service delivery system. Not all the career centers are created equal, including in the area of assisted technology but what was being used, some staff didn't know what was going in the same building, so the commitment from the Department of Labor and the workforce partners to inventory the centers, we listed partners in the community colleges engaged in higher education learning in the process with the statewide inventory job seekers and employers can learn where to gain access as technology needs. Next slide please. The next goal is to Increase Awareness. We wanted to create our Web site, bring that up to speed, allow a career center, our employers create video vignettes for people to see exactly how we can go ahead and help other people find work, let the employers see exactly what the state can offer them, wanted to create awareness amongst the youth, the parents, we currently have toolkits which are soon to be added to the Connecticut Web site. Also the Connect-Ability Web site is going to be adding the toolkits from what I understand so that people can go on. They'll look and see exactly what the state can offer you for this. I want to offer transportation and a repository for news and events calendar. This is originally started using the [inaudible] we've received for creative awareness so, part of our awareness was to do a Statewide Multi-Media Campaign using TV and Radio called "See the Ability" and in this we have several TV commercials. We also have radio ads going on throughout the state of Connecticut. More and more people we feel who watch this and more people understand

exactly what we're trying to do in the State leading as a model employer. Unfortunately, the last couple of years where the economy goes, we have not been able to add to this program but it has remained intact and is completing, I believe they just finished completing all of their TV commercials they have for the future so you can see also a print version of the campaign on the Web site and you can also view the commercials on them. That's on the Connect-Ability Web site, I believe. Then, next slide.

The next slide, Increase Awareness final, we expanded as I said to include the Connecticut Business Leadership Network. They have an extremely dedicated administrator, statewide activity. They are getting around to the four corners of the state involving as many of the employers as they can. She's coordinating the Employer Outreach Program and Researching State Best Practices for Business Engagement. She last spoke at our meeting we had about 2 months ago and sort of blew away the table with her ideas and enthusiasm. So again, I'd like to thank to her for her help and helping carry on this talk. At this point, I'm going to pass it over to Joyce Barclay to discuss goals three through, I think it's five, and go over some other details so thank you for attending this.

**[Joyce Barclay]** Thanks Chris. And I think great minds think alike because Maryland, we're doing some of the things you are too. Our next goal, if we get the next slide please.

**[Robb Sewell]** Just a little FYI, we're having some problems with our internet connectivity here today too so eventually turn the slides a little bit slower than normal so just bear with us with that.

**[Joyce Barclay]** Sure, okay, thanks Robb. But like Maryland, we too are looking at Capacity Development because disabilities awareness and etiquette training was provided in Connecticut a number of years ago and this was really the catalyst for that was really the conversion from the Job Training Partnership Act

into the Work Force Investment Act where there was more emphasis, I think, on collaboration and disabilities awareness. So it was really heightened at that time, but really not much emphasis has taken place since then. So, and staff turnover and retirement, Chris had mentioned that we have hiring freezes. We've had hiring freezes for the last year and now we've had to help our budget along, an incentive for retirement, another huge exodus of staff just on July 1st, and it's really become very evident that there is a need to do this again. And the business leadership network is really going to help us in this regard by compiling materials, as a matter of fact, as Chris already mentioned, the executive director has been attending the meetings and her enthusiasm is like infectious. And so she's out there, she's compiling materials and she's planning on all the great stuff that can happen and how we're going to sustain it and it's really a beautiful thing really. And the great news is that, and we think Connecticut, the disabilities program navigator position has been extended for another year, so that's going to help us coordinate locally for a lot of the activities. Anyway, a lot of that activity will be coordinated through the disability program navigator at the local level. And also to make sure that the capacity development continues and doesn't just stop just because the training program is no longer going on. We are exploring methods to sustain the training beyond the workshop formats and plans are also being investigated to capture the information on video for instance for inclusion and new hire orientations both at the state and local level. They don't have to have a trainer in place. You can actually have a video or a webinar where that kind of information can be conveyed to new hires. Next slide please. And again, universal design, I think it's going to be big all over the place because it makes so much sense. We are exploring the ways to develop an exemplary workforce system that will help meet the needs of the widest possible range of customers, and those would be both employers and job seekers. And here the thought is to address the gap proactively and develop policies and services

that can meet the needs of all the customers in the Work Force Development System. And through the assistance of the entire center, during the summer months, we are beginning a statewide study for baseline assessment or universal design and the plan is to continue that activity during the next year by developing a strategic plan anticipating that the implementation will occur during the next couple of years, that will be a long-term process. I don't know about anyone else but one thing we have learned is that things don't happen too quickly when it comes to getting the state involved but it's moving and that's the important thing. And also we'll be having a workshop about the need and the benefit of universal design for key stakeholders to gain their commitment to participate in this planning process because this has to be inclusive if it's going to really be beneficial and meaningful. Our experience this past year has been that we've had the greatest success in maintaining momentum when we have small achievable goals to lead to small but ongoing successes, so that's most likely the way we will establish this new plan, that it will be a long term process over a few years and planning for very small but definitely forward moving goals to move us along. Next slide please. The next one is State Government as the model employer for Connecticut State Government to be a model employer. After all in Connecticut, anyway, the state government is the largest employer so it just makes sense that the state leads by example when it comes to the hiring and promotion of people with disabilities. And for some time the discussions have been underway to have the state become a model employer and the plan had been reformulated to present to the state administration outlining the benefits, the steps and the strategies for achieving the goals and the timeframes that would be attached to all of those. Like I said one thing we learned is that things don't happen too quickly but as long as the forward motion keeps going, that's terrific. And we're looking to build on the great work that's already been done in New England and around the country actually with regard to including people with disabilities in all the

diversity activities of state governments. And their expertise has shown that surveying existing state employees about their experiences in state government is of great value that if someone has a disability, are they receiving accommodation? How did that process work? Do they feel that they're being supported in their employment? That will give us some base knowledge from which to work. We'll know what we have and probably have identified some gaps there to start from. Then it's moving in to training and that training will be specifically for supervisors and people making hiring decisions, because one thing we've learned is, we might be preaching to the choir we have the high-level executives of state government involved, sitting around saying, "Yes, this is great. Yes, we're going to do it," but if the supervisors and the people who actually do the hiring aren't involved in this decision and haven't gotten the training and haven't bought into it, it's still going to be status quo so we've got to keep that moving forward, and then after all this activity will be centrally coordinated, currently much of this work is being done as part of the Medicaid infrastructure and those activities we actually refer to as the Connect-Ability program. Skip two slides please up to 34. We're going to be talking about the accomplishments and as Chris mentioned, the Connect-Ability Web site, this is just a shot, a screen shot of the home page. And in the lower left hand section actually is the URL, and that's [www.connect-ability.com](http://www.connect-ability.com). Now while you might think, "Oh yeah, what can you possibly have here?" Well one of the coolest things is what Chris has already mentioned. I mean, this isn't just another Web site. Connect-Ability really is a process for the state. So when we talk about Connect-Ability, it's really branding the activity. So when we talk about Connect-Ability in any venue, people will associate Connect-Ability with the whole forward movement initiative for the promotion of people with disabilities. And it's also creating awareness among our residents as Chris mentioned, there is this huge media campaign that's not only in print ad but it's also on TV and it's on the radio. As a matter of fact, my radio station that I listen to every morning as I'm brushing my teeth, I hear

Connect-Ability and it's really terrific. And if you have an opportunity, you'll notice in the very top center there is a tab that says "Media Gallery." If you have an opportunity to go on to the Web site, definitely go to the Media Gallery 'cause that's where you're going to meet great people like, you meet people like Colleen, Kathy, James and actually James is the person who was in Chris's slide. He is the fellow who drives this huge truck and he had it completely retrofitted for his purposes and has created his own trucking company. So really it shows that people have abilities no matter what people's abilities can be emphasized. It also has other great information like the Career Center where it has tabs that tell you about well, why should I work? You know, what's going to happen to my benefits when I'm working? What can I do? What are some paths to success? Also there are tabs with talk about transportation. It outlines transportation options, owning and modifying vehicles, it has a transportation glossary, and there's also a section for employers that talks about building diversity in their workforce and becoming a top employer of people with disabilities, and a great section with myths and facts about the employment for people with disabilities. One of my favorite sections is the parent section because high school transition for students with disabilities is really important. And parents, they often times, don't have a clue on how to help their children. So this is a great section that provides a lot of good information about why your children should work, what can they do, getting job experience and the list just goes on. And then of course there's a section that's just for youth and that this is done in a very user-friendly format that looks like almost like a journal and actually, there is a journal where the students can become their own bloggers. So it's a great Web site and I encourage you to take a look at it when you have a chance. Next slide please. And the next one--oh yes, here's Walgreens, fantastic. And let me just tell you about some of the photos here because it really exemplifies what a business can do, not only to help increase employment and promotion opportunities for people with disabilities, but helping their business grow and

helping expand their bottom line because for them, that's what it's really all about. The first slide on the left, the largest slide is really just a picture of the facility itself. It's just very modern, clean and wonderful. And then there is this sign, if you look in the upper right hand corner it says, "This place changes everyone." That's actually the sign that's outside their front door that the center features automated technology that was developed to enable people with physical and cognitive disabilities by meaningful employment, and integrating everyone together as Chris mentioned, the third of the workforce, there are people with disabilities. And that sign in the middle, the them with the slash, there are no them. Everybody is equal and everybody works together. And then the lower right hand corner is a picture of an employee opening a package at one of the stations. And these stations are designed with visual technology. You can see that screen behind him with visual technology that enhances the strengths of people with cognitive disabilities to be able to do the work as well. Next slide please. And continuing along with our accomplishments is the partnership and opportunities for collaboration to continue to grow as we move along on this journey. As Chris mentioned, the Connecticut Business Leadership Network is working very hard to become a partner for the business community and to maximize the employment opportunities for people with disabilities. They're also surveying their members and prospective members regarding their needs so they can develop responsive programs. And they've been going around the state not only connecting with businesses, but providing services like ADA awareness and so forth. And we've taken the first step to make sure that our career centers and community colleges are more accessible for people with disabilities through the inventory that was conducted earlier this summer. We've compiled all the research or all the inventory information and now the technology pros from the Bureau of Rehab Services, the Board of Education and Services for Blind and the Connecticut Department of Labor are going to get together to review those results. To see what exactly is missing in

each of the centers because not all One-Stop centers are created equally. So this will give us the opportunity to take a look at what's out there but also to communicate that information. So if for instance one section of state has a person with vision impairment who needs something in Braille, and another One-Stop at the other side of the state has the Braille, we can share those resources through technology by faxing and FedExing and so forth. So it's really going to be a great opportunity also for students, the transitioning high school students to make better decisions about where to go to community college because they won't know what type of accommodations already exist there if they need them. And we are on an ongoing quest to identify gaps in institute policies and programs to fill them, so that's something that both continue, I hope forever. And we're well underway in making sure that state government has inclusive policies for the hiring and promotion of people with disabilities and that we have inclusive work environments as well. Next slide please. And some of the lessons we've learned, we've got quite a bit in the last 12 months. One of the first lessons was that it really takes high-level involvement to move the process along and to keep it going as Chris mentioned. We've had some [inaudible] with the economy and with hiring practices and with retirements and so forth. But because we've been able to maintain a high level of involvement in state government, this has stayed at the top of the front burner and hasn't been pushed off to the back. And also we've learned that partnerships never stopped growing, that the more we expand our activity, the more things we undertake, the more we find room for more new partners, and the need for more new partners. So it's a continual outreach. And we're also finding that a lot of the social networking that we do on an informal basis really has been helping us in our formal processes in state, who knows who and who can get into this agency or having trouble with this, who can you call. So social networking has really been very good as well. And then we've also learned that we need to be realistic. I think initially when we first started out, we were a little grandiose

and we needed to scale it back a couple notches to be more realistic in setting our goals and developing our strategies. There's opportunities for achievement, both large and small, but to keep our group working together and to keep the momentum behind us, we have to make sure that we start looking at smaller steps so we have those ongoing successes that keep us all engaged. And the last slide please. And that's basically from Connecticut and we thank you for the opportunity to share our experiences with you today but you know, please feel free to contact either Chris or me. And we may not have the answers and we probably won't have the answers ourselves, but through this wonderful network we can certainly put you in touch with the right resource, so thanks.

**[Nanette Relave]** Hi. Joyce and Chris, I want to thank you so much for your presentations and Robb, if we could move to the next slide. And we are going to turn it over to the State of Minnesota and Kathy Sweeney who is Special Projects Manager at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. And Kathy, you'll simply need to press star 7 to unmute your line and you'll be ready to begin your presentation.

**[Kathy Sweeney]** Thank you so much for that introduction and thank you again for this opportunity from Minnesota to participate in this seminar today. We have, like the other states that have already presented, Maryland and Connecticut, it's been a great opportunity for us to learn from our peers and to have the support of so much great technical assistance and learning. As we've been listening to the presentation today, we've really been struck by the commonality that each of the state teams had in approaching these issues. Next slide please. You'll see as you review these principles, very similar kinds of thinking as we launched our state team. Next slide please. We have, like other states, been looking at how we really take advantage of leadership at all levels including regional and local leaders, community-based organizations, advocacy

organizations to really add to the stretch and reach of what state leaders can do. Next slide, please. This is our guiding principle, our one sentence Minnesota Value Proposition that we try to really use as the centerpiece of everything we do. Will what we do contribute to having everyone in the workforce so that businesses thrive and communities prosper? Next slide, please. We're looking here at living examples. If you really are going to live that value proposition, what will that end up looking like across Minnesota? How would you know if that were working? And these 4 points give you a sense of how to measure the value of that proposition. Next slide please. The three slides that are here are again kind of fill in the picture of how we see living examples being enacted throughout the community. I'm going a little bit quickly here because I'm feeling like a lot of these first few slides are to some degree review for you? You'll find that in our slides that we've gone through so far with our overview, principles, goals, and so on, I see that there's a tremendous amount to complementarity with Maryland and Connecticut. And this will give us a little more time in a couple of slides that are coming out to spend a minute or two with you, so I know you'll have an option if you'll go back and review those. We could talk about them more but I find that there's a bit of common ground here so far so I've been going through these kind of quickly. Next slide please. Okay, here is an example, I think, of a slide I want to spend a little bit of time on. In particular, the second point, when Minnesota began setting up the Workforce Center System in 1993, a critical partner in those discussions in the network was Title IV of Workforce Investment Act, [inaudible] rehab. That partner was at the table of the Minnesota Workforce Center System from the very beginning. And there were lots of challenges to making that real, to making that live, and as many people have mentioned today in the presentations already, Workforce Center have certainly varied in their ability to walk the walk. And yet, we have to say that having been at this work since 1993 and believed since 1993 that this was an essential way to approach workforce development work. We

feel that in some ways, even back then, we were trying to get at universal design. We didn't have the tools. We didn't have the techniques, but there was a value proposition in place all along. But all really means all and we've really got to make sure that persons with disabilities are fully included in the Workforce Development System and that we have everything in place we need to make universal design really come to life. Next slide please. So, as we begin looking at how we can really make sure that this Universal Design work comes to life, we've certainly been able to take a tremendous amount of learning and value from the work going on here in Minnesota with the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant. In our case, our pathways to employment work and this work has been so instrumental for us in really helping us push forward to a whole other level of performance and really being able to make this dream come to life. And right now, in that work, we're guided by looking at how we build on our most promising activities, how we leverage our grant resources in MIG to make sure that our core priorities of full employment for our whole community are advanced, how we really make sure that people with disabilities are supported and working, unless there's a choice involved and an individual dropped out, and again, how we build our systems of accountabilities so that we continue to keep our eye on the end result of full employment. The MIG work that we've been doing here really has made a big difference. And soon, in another slide or two, and you can go to the next slide, we'll take a look at that. You're seeing, by the way, pictures of customers, persons who've been served in our various efforts here as part of the MIG grant, as part of the entire work. We have been involved in a particular service design that we call Camps to Careers. So here is a little about that as we move forward but right now on some of the slides that you have on your screen, you're seeing pictures of individuals participating in Camps to Careers activities. Next slide please. Okay, now this is a challenge for you to see just how well your eyes are holding up after all these slides. It's a little bit hard to read on screen but Robb is going to be sending

out a PDF to the people registered for this webinar after the webinar and so you'll be able to get a look at this and with a slightly bigger font. But, let me just take a minute here to walk you through the basic idea of the slide. You'll see that what we have done here is to map out the inventory or portfolio of key strategic initiatives we have going on in the photo. All of which build on Minnesota's vision for 21st century regional prosperity. And what that top heading says underneath that is, "Transforming Workforce, Education, and Economic Development at the Regional Level to Increase Individual Business and Community Prosperity." And you'll see when you get your PDF that the work we're doing here was the National Technical Assistance Research Center and the State Leadership Institute is helping us to take full advantage of that work and incorporate it and embed it into all of our other strategic efforts going out of the state. That is an example of how we are really making sure that we don't kind of go off and do this work in a vacuum but instead, this work really is at the heart of everything else we're doing and that as we look at our other strategic initiatives underway in Minnesota, we're always able to ask ourselves, does this really help us advance that that Minnesota Value Proposition that we need everyone in the workforce for businesses to thrive and communities to prosper? So, let's take a look at that next slide then, please. Okay, let me take this opportunity to tell you a little bit more about the Camps to Career model. Now you see a picture on the slide of some young people who are involved in one of our camps. The camp model began with one manufacturing camp and we've started doing this work of about two years ago actually. We had one camp and we found that this model of providing students with an opportunity to really immerse themselves in a career by encouraging and enabling the students to actually spend time at a site doing the work, getting a variety of hands-on opportunities to actually experience the work rather than to just hear about it or think about it. People actually get a chance to dig in and see what it feels like to be involved in a manufacturing career. And there is such a terrific response from

this as we rolled it out and the buzz really began, how do we get a camp? And how do we get a healthcare camp? And how could we take this camp that has been so valuable to the participants in it and give people a post-camp experience that would allow them to take what they learn in the camp and extend it out even further, and really also to give employers an opportunity to train actually on the job with people who've already gone through a camp, had a successful experience, and now want to take the additional step to offer training opportunities at the work site? And that's what we're doing now with what you see in the slide, described as the extended training opportunity. This slide I must say, we could spend 20 minutes on this slide alone just telling you more about the different experiences people have had in communities as they've worked with this model of Camp to Career with the feedback we're getting on the ETO opportunity. What I wanted to say about ETO also is that what you have here is kind of a variety of activities that we know from research work. You have customized training, working in an employer setting, utilizing incumbent workers' talent as the trainers. And this gives you an opportunity to just kind of embed activity after activity all of which have been proven successful in a package. And we're very excited about this and we look forward to being able to build this particular activity out as part of our SLII efforts. Next slide please. We also have a joint venture underway between our SLII work in what we call in Minnesota, Fast TRAC. Fast TRAC are efforts here to blend adult basic education with post-secondary skill training in a very customized and individually friendly way. As many of you know, so many individuals who would really benefit from post secondary skill training in a career credential or certificate-oriented program have difficulty with learning in that particular way. And so what we've been able to do in Fast TRAC is really customize our learner approach and make it much friendlier. We have been working with the adult basic educators across the state to turn their attention away from just classroom training alone and much more toward applied learning and on the job training,

and internships and work experiences that also take the basic educational learning needs of individuals and give people an opportunity to learn by doing. Rather than again focusing on learning academically, we focus more on learning by doing and then embed the academics into that. And that just seems to be an approach that's so much more value for so many more people. So that is going very well and this year we have been able to add a number of additional funders to that Fast TRAC work so that we now we have five different kinds of workforce development resources being used to fund that work, which of course makes it more likely that we'll be able to continue doing it and more importantly, I think, that we'll be able to do this work in a way that supports universal design. And speaking of universal design, you'll see that we plan on ruling out additional universal design work this year. In this particular training institute, we're going to focus on mentoring, work-based learning, apprenticeships, all to lead to stackable credentials. By that, we mean, you take an experience and you can build upon your previous experiences in order to gain an industry credential or a set of short-term credits that add up to another set of short-term credits that gets you to a goal. And so often, we have found that the short-term skill training has not offered people that opportunity to build and stack on earlier learning, so we want to make sure that we give people that chance. Next slide please. We have a great picture here to show you kind of our final slide. Again, we want you to know that all this work is about doing a better job for Minnesotans, and doing a better job for individual people that sort of boils down to, we have to continue to work out what we're doing it is certainly doesn't just happen and [inaudible] over the last 12 years is great but there's so much more to do and there's so many more lessons to learn. So again, thank you for your help, to the folks who have sponsored this work ODEP and Heldrich, we've been so pleased to be part of it and thank you to Maryland and Connecticut for teaching us what you've taught us already and with that, we'll end our presentation.

**[Robb Sewell]** Thank you, Kathy, that was just an awesome presentation. At this point, we'll be taking questions from our participants. You essentially have three options to submit questions. First, you can click on the Raise Hand button in the lower left hand corner of your screen. I will then call on participants and provide you with instructions on how to ask your question. Second, you can submit your question by using the Chat feature on the left hand portion of your screen. Simply type your message and then click send. Also, third, if you happen to be on Twitter, you can also send us your questions via a tweet. In your Twitter account, in the box mark of what are you doing, type in the @ symbol, directly followed by the acronym NTAR, then insert a space and type your question. When you're finished, click the update button, and your question will be submitted to me. Of course, it's challenging with tweeting that your tweets have to be no more than 140 characters, so keep that in mind if you decide to use the Twitter option today. So we actually do have a question from Joyce Spur from Minnesota actually, "How long are the camps, and who develops the curriculum?"

**[Kathy Sweeney]** Robb, I'm just making sure we have the question, how long are the camps, and who develops the curriculum?

**[Robb Sewell]** Yes, correct.

**[Kathy Sweeney]** The camps are one week, and the curriculum was developed between the industry partnership in the community working directly with the staff from the Technical Institute, working directly with--where in--just one moment please...we've got some technical experts here in the room, you can tell I'm consulting with them. So, I think I answered the question, did I?

**[Robb Sewell]** Yes, most definitely. We have a couple of other questions that have been submitted via our chat feature. Will

the partnerships with economic and workforce development, and with governor's office as be sustainable after NTAR? So this is really available, open to any of our presenters today. And Chris and Joyce and Secretary Raggio, if you're still around, just press star 7 to unmute your phones if you like to answer these questions.

**[Cathy Raggio]** This is Cathy Raggio. Yes, we believe our efforts are going to be sustainable as we continue further this and on into the future because we've built terrific relationships with the various people on the various departments and we're excited about being able to continue and just continuing to build on what we could accomplish hopefully.

**[Chris Tymniak]** This is Chris Tymniak on, I agree exactly with what Cathy Raggio just said. From Connecticut's standpoint here, we're building a foundation, which is going to be found for many years to come with our cities that she is involved. It's just going become a regular part of how we do the things in Connecticut, so I don't see any problem with whatever Governor Rell I certainly don't think is going anywhere anytime soon, but with the next administration, whenever that may be, we'd certainly be ought to pick up and continue on.

**[Joyce Barcley]** This is Joyce, I'd like to just add on saying that, because we are doing some infrastructure change in the way we do business, it definitely will continue because the way we do business will be changing and so that will just continue, continue that activity and continue that momentum of looking at integrating people either through inclusive policies, or by changing the way we offer services that are One-Stop centers, and the way we coordinate activities between our colleges, our One-Stops, and our high schools, so we do see that as a definite change in the way we do business which will continue as we continue to operate the new way.

**[Kathy Sweeney]** This is Kathy from Minnesota. It's definitely true here that this is very much a sustainability effort that will continue. The changes really being imbedded at the regional and local level, as well as at the state level, and I think that is the key to a sustainable future.

**[Robb Sewell]** We have a couple of other questions that have come in, first up is Carol Boyer. Carol, all you need to do is press star 7 on your telephone keypad, and your phone line will be unmated, and then you can ask your question.

**[Chris Button]** Okay, thanks, well actually, it's Chris Button and Speed Davis here at ODEP using Carol's link to the Web site. I have couple of questions, one is to Kathy Sweeney first of all, they commented you on the slide of the manufacturing camp with the blowtorch, that was just a fabulous slide. I think I understand the camp versus an apprenticeship program versus the regular training based on your last question. It seems like the camps are customized training as opposed to any kind of apprenticeship activity or just a regular training that's available, is that correct? Because the...

**[Kathy Sweeney]** Yes, that is correct.

**[Chris Button]** Okay. I also have a question for Joyce about the state of the model employer activities that they are involved in. Does your state have the equivalent of a schedule A authority that's available to the federal government, and can you talk to us a little bit more about what you're doing specifically to get people with disabilities into the state government as employees.

**[Joyce Barcley]** Okay. I can't address the schedule A authority and I can get you that information though. To talk about getting people in the second part of your question, if I understand it correctly is, what is it that we're doing to have people with disabilities apply?

**[Chris Button]** Mm-hmm.

**[Joyce Barcley]** Okay well, when we have openings which we don't right now, but when we have openings, the plan is that there will be--I'm not going to say there's going to be a hiring preference. It's going to be an inclusivity, it's going to be almost the same process except the people doing the hiring will have changed where--and we're also hoping that the outreach mechanisms that are used to have people enroll or have people apply to state positions will offer things like, if it's a notice online it'll say please notify us if accommodations are needed or something to identify that it is inclusive, to identify that people can ask for accommodations if they're needed during the whole application and hiring process. And those are the kinds of details that actually need to be worked out which Department of Administrative Services--our Connect-Ability folks are working with the Department of Administrative Services to actually get all those details worked out. So it's a working process. So right now there is no mechanism that I'm aware of to actually encourage people with disabilities to apply and that's what we want to change.

**[Chris Button]** I see. Interesting. As an FYI, we have had some conversations with OPM here at the federal government level within the broad umbrella of workplace flexibility of how tasks can be repackaged, if you will, in a way to enable people to come in and contribute in ways that they might not otherwise have been able to do so it'll be interesting to see if your path takes you down that road. I also have a question for all three of the states because you've all talked about various relationships that you have with other state agencies and I'm wondering, are there MOUs that are being developed? Are there joint policy issuances? How formal are these relationships at this point in time?

**[Kathy Sweeney]** This is Minnesota. Can I be heard?

**[Chris Button]** Yes.

**[Kathy Sweeney]** Okay great. I just wanted to answer that. We have certainly been able to utilize interagency agreements to our benefit. In addition to that though, we also have more informal agreements and what you might call task forces going on in a variety of kind of practical applied learning areas and sometimes those are specifically called out in interagency agreements. Other times, they evolve into part of the interagency agreements after we learn more about what the kind of, I think, sustainability strategies are with regards with the specific activities we're working on in the task forces. But we do have interagency agreements and if those would ever be of value to people in terms of taking a look at them as templates, they'd certainly be happy to share those. I wanted to also mention that we do have inter-organization agreements as well between community partners and state agencies with regard to how to work together that might be of value.

**[Chris Button]** Very interesting.

**[Kathy Sweeney]** Thank you.

**[Robb Sewell]** We actually have a couple of other questions that have come in. This question is for Connecticut. Is the youth toolkit already on the Web site under the youth section? If not, what are the topics and when will it be publicly available?

**[Joyce Barcley]** Oh okay. I don't know whether the youth kit's online yet or not. At our last meeting, we were talking about whether making sure that everything was up soon, and the last time I checked, I don't even believe. As I said in my report, the toolkits were soon to be online. So as of now, I don't believe they are online. What is in the toolkit? I don't have the answer to that either, unfortunately. That I'd have to get back to you on and I'd be happy to get you that information.

**[Joyce Barcley]** Well, I think I can answer some of that. I'm trying to find my file of that. The toolkit--the youth toolkit is actually online not at the Connect-Ability site at the moment and I'm trying to find my file where I so effectively filed it yesterday. Oh, here it is. It's the high school transition toolkit. Now it's actually located at the Bureau of Rehab Services Web site. If you go to [www.brs--that's Bureau of Rehab Services-- .dot.ct.us/schooltowork/toolkit.htm](http://www.brs--that's Bureau of Rehab Services-- .dot.ct.us/schooltowork/toolkit.htm), and maybe if you just do Bureau of Rehab Services and Google school to work toolkit, it might bring it up as well. It's actually got probably 70 or 80 documents in it and it's developed in a guidepost format like guidepost number one, is school-based preparatory experience. Guidepost number two is career preparation and work-based learning experience. Guidepost number three is youth development and leadership. And guidepost number four is connecting activities. Guidepost five is family involvement and support, and then there's a list of manuals, workbooks, and reference materials. So it's a toolkit that's not quite user friendly yet, and I think that's what they're working on to get it into the Connect-Ability Web site because it will attach to the youth section which is very user friendly. It's, you know, very bright and it's very easy to read and versus this current toolkit which is very link based, and the employer toolkit is actually in the finalization stages, the Connect-Ability group has actually put together most of the material, and I believe we have a group session either in, I think it's in August, to have all of the team members sit down and review the toolkit to make sure that it's inclusive of all the information from all the agencies, to make sure we--it haven't missed anything so once that has been reviewed, then that one will go up online and I think they anticipate having that up by November 1st.

**[Robb Sewell]** Okay, we do have another question that came in via the chat feature. HHas the Recovery Act accepted the activities of your state team? If so, how?

**[Kathy Sweeney]** This is Minnesota to follow up on that question. Yes. The work that we were mentioning earlier, the work of the camps to be following on by the extended training opportunities, we have found a variety of opportunities to invest additional ARRA dollars in those activities. And we're also learning from the camp opportunity and extending that training into services for a variety of customers. We're looking at camps for adults who've been out of work for a long period of time, we're looking at the ETO opportunity for new types of costumers. So the work we've been doing in this institute has enabled us to learn some new models and now have some resources to invest.

**[Robb Sewell]** Okay, we have a question for Maryland. How difficult has it been to get housing and transportation agencies to participate?

**[Cathy Raggio]** It hasn't been difficult at all. I mean, they eagerly came to the table and they've been very active participants with us. And an answer to the previous question, no. The ARRA money has not impacted our project due to the nature of our project in preparing for the influx of people into the state and new jobs in 2011.

**[Joyce Barcley]** This is Joyce from Connecticut. I don't believe that the ARRA money has impacted us as well. Although we do, Connecticut doesn't have a state budget yet so a lot of services that were being planned are kind of just on hold until that gets resolved but it really hasn't affected what we are doing with the leadership institute although it has somewhat hindered or slowed the progress of some other activities and that's the state budget, not the ARRA money.

**[Robb Sewell]** Okay, we have a question for Minnesota. When will the Fast TRAC model be up and running? Will it be tied to high-growth industries in the region?

**[Kathy Sweeney]** The Fast TRAC model is actually up and running. It came into active status probably two years ago and ever since then, actually there's been more and more momentum. That's a really good example of an area where additional ARRA dollars have been invested because there's such demand for this type of training. And yes, the Fast TRAC kind of approach is definitely focused on high growth industries that are identified at the regional level, as is true for many states, our economy is very regional. We have different kinds of industry profiles in our regions, so it's important for us to identify skill training that is regionally focused, so that it gives the maximum opportunity for individuals to get the maximum benefit from skill trainings and go to work at in-demand industries up to the highest possible wages. So you should know too that when we started that work two years ago, we had fundings from the Joyce Foundation in Chicago as part of their Shifting Gears Initiative that they are doing in six upper midwestern states and I do want to mention their name because their investment has been very helpful to us and like this work, we've been in a situation where we've been able to learn from our partner states in that work as well as from the Joyce Foundation. So if you want to get information on the entire initiative, you can look at the Joyce Foundation Shifting Gears Initiative and we'd also be happy to provide you with links to our Minnesota Fast TRAC information and offer you an option to look more at that model. Thank you.

**[Robb Sewell]** Wait, we have one more question. How do you as team leaders keep momentum going? What techniques do you use as leaders?

**[Kathy Sweeney]** This is Minnesota. I would say that we have been fortunate from the beginning of this work to have a group of leaders who volunteered and raised their hand and said, "I really want to do this work." And in order to kind of build our momentum, I think that first step of making sure that everybody who was there wanted to be there and really wanted to

commit to this work above and beyond everything else that people do day to day. I think that's been really important and I think, when you take on it after like this, you certainly have to have that kind of people leading from their own personal principles and desires to be part of it. If you have that then I think you can make it work from then on out.

**[Chris Tymniak]** All right, this is Chris Tymniak from Connecticut, I think that the leadership aspect has been an important part for us. We had a whole bunch of small different projects going on in Connecticut and this leadership institute has allowed us to tie together. We have a common voice and a brainstorming group, which has been a support system for everybody in Connecticut to lean on and make sure that we're heading in the right direction. So I think the momentum carries through just by the people we have in Connecticut working towards this so, that's my [inaudible].

**[Cathy Raggio]** Hi, this is Cathy from Maryland. Okay. I think having two cabinet-level secretaries lead the Maryland team was key to keeping people involved and keeping the momentum going and we don't bother people when it's not necessary. But when it is, they understand that they need to make a priority and come to the table again or follow up with something they said they were going to do and had committed to so I think those are the two keys. The high-level leadership and the respect for how busy everyone is and not asking them to do things that aren't really necessary.

**[Nanette Relave]** Okay. Great. Again, this is Nanette Relave from the Center for Workers with Disabilities and I want to express our deep appreciation to the presenters from all three of our institute states for joining us today to share your experiences and the findings of your work, and also to members of our State Peer Leaders Network for joining us for this learning exchange. I really have the privilege of getting to spend time with our institute states as well as working closely

with states in our network and I just want to say that we're very proud of the accomplishments of all of our states and we brag about your activities to lots and lots of folks. It's sort of been, I guess, my kind of observation being able to look across a lot of the different state activities that the sort of goal number one that was listed at the beginning of the slide presentation around, sort of building and enhancing partnerships and collaborations really seems to be kind of a foundational aspect of the work of our different states and something that really provides kind of a strong cornerstone for helping state leaders to be able to work towards and achieve the other goals as well, whether these are goals that relate a policy development such as employment first policies, whether these are goals that relate to programmatic and infrastructure development like the universal design approaches that we heard a lot of, or whether these are goals that relate to enhancements in practice in service delivery such as customized employment training and approaches, which I know that both states in our peer network as well as states in our institute are developing and growing across their state service delivery agencies. So again it's been wonderful to have the opportunity to work with our states and to be able to see your progress and share that more [inaudible]. So again I want to thank our presenters as well as our participants for joining us, and as always to thank the Office of the Disability Employment Policies for its support of the NTAR Leadership Center in our activities. Robb has just put up a slide that has contact information for myself and my colleagues at the center, as well as Kathy Krepcio who is the project director at Rutgers University and Maria Heidkamp who many folks work with. She is the project lead for the institute states and if we can move just to the last slide, and again all of the materials as well as an audio, the presentation and the audio from this webinar will be available on the NTAR Center Web site, if you want to look at those again or share with those with other colleagues in the field, you might be interested in this presentation. So again, on behalf of the NTAR Leadership Center, I want to thank everyone for participating and wish everyone a good

afternoon and a good rest of the week. So thank you very much. Bye bye.