

# Universal Design for the Workforce Development System Webinar

September 2010

**[Robb Sewell]** Good afternoon. This is Robb Sewell. And on behalf of the NTAR Leadership Center, I'd like to thank you for joining us for today's webinar, *Universal Design for the Workforce Development System*. 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 enables you to communicate with me, should you have any questions or encounter any problems, simply type your message and click send. You can click hide chat to temporarily remove the chat feature and just click show chat when you want to restore it. Clicking the full screen option will maximize the webinar so that it occupies the complete width and height of your computer display. 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 after the presentation for Q and A. And at that time we'll provide you with information about how to ask questions. However, throughout the presentation, please feel free to forward your questions to me via the chat feature. I'll then forward the questions to our presenters during the Q and A. This webinar is being recorded. A direct link to the webinar, including audio and web content will be available on NTAR Leadership Center Web site by noon Eastern Time, Friday, October 1st. The NTAR Web site can be accessed at [www.ntarcenter.org](http://www.ntarcenter.org). That is [www.N-T-A-R-C-E-N-T-E-R.O-R-G](http://www.N-T-A-R-C-E-N-T-E-R.O-R-G). Finally, after you exit the Internet portion of today's webinar, your web browser will take you to a brief survey where you can give us some feedback about your experience today. And we ask that you take a few minutes to complete that survey. And at this point I'd like to take turn things over to 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 Center, State Peer Leaders Network. Nanette?

**[Nanette Relave]** Hi, thank you Robb. And if we could go ahead and move to slide number four. I'm just going to take a couple of minutes to talk about the NTAR Leadership Center in case we have listeners who haven't been on one of our webinars before or may not be familiar with us. The NTAR Center was established in September of 2007, with a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy. And as a project, we're a collaboration of partners with expertise in a variety of fields, including workforce and economic development, disability employment, asset building and leadership development. And our center was created to help build capacity and leadership at the federal, state, and local levels to help facilitate change across the workforce development and disability-specific systems in order to increase employment for adults with disabilities. And if we could move to slide five. Our work is guided by a set of principles. These include increasing partnerships and collaboration across systems, increasing the use of self-direction and greater integration of funding, promoting greater economic self-sufficiency through things like financial education and better leveraging of work incentives, increasing the use of universal design in employment services as well as the framework for employment policy, and of course this is one of the guiding principles that we'll really be focusing on today, and our last one is around increasing the use of customized and other forms of flexible work options for persons with disabilities and others that may experience barriers to employment. And slide number six. I'm really delighted today that we have three presenters who are joining us to talk about this topic of *Universal Design for the Workforce Development System*. And also present us with a state and more of a local perspective, of a regional perspective, on how this is really happening in the field. So we're joined today by Cori Di Biase, who's Director of Special Initiatives at the National Organization on Disability; Ellen

Flowers-Fields, who is Director of Regional Economic Development with the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland; and Jade Gingerich, who's Director of Employment Policy at the Maryland Department of Disabilities. And we're going to start out our presentation today with Cori who is going to begin by providing us a framework that can help us better understand universal design. And of the universal design as it really applies in our workforce development systems. And so Robb, I think if we want to go ahead and move on to slide number seven, and I'm going to turn the presentation over to Cori as well. You just need to press star seven to unmute your line and then you should be ready to go.

**[Cori Di Biase]** Excellent. Well, to start out here, and I think this is really the most key point to make. A lot of these concepts around universal design have come out of work in workforce development for people with disabilities, work in architectural and learning design for people with disabilities. But really what this is about, at the heart of it, is diversity. Everyone who works in a One-Stop Career Center setting or in a public workforce development or educational setting of any kind knows diversity is absolutely a reality. They are looking at serving as you see on our list here on slide seven, are displaced homemakers, ex-offenders, welfare recipients, both youth and older workers, as well as people with disabilities, and veterans, some with disabilities, and some not. And added to that, aside from the sort of demographic features that we discussed, we also see people coming in at very complex situations, low literacy, poverty, language barriers, cultural differences, and on and on and on. Really one of the breakthrough moments for us is we were first thinking about universal design and its implications as a workforce development strategy. We're then we're speaking to a number of WIB directors around what we, as advocates for people with disabilities, could do to really assist them to ensure that their services were working very well for people with disabilities. This was one of the sort of one of the people participating in the group sort to call a time-out with us, and he

said, "You know, listen let's be honest about our system here. We're trying to serve everyone, every One-Stop director, every WIB participant, WIB director, is trying to serve every person in their community as well as they possible can. But if we have to think of our customer-base as hundreds of different small groups, all these different people meeting, all these different strategies, then I can guarantee you were not going to be successful in serving all of them. What we need is strategies that help us think about serving everyone as well as possible. And strategies that are going to open our doors wider so that no matter who comes through, we're going to be able to provide high-quality services." And we can move onto the next slide. The other, of course, reality of this system here that it's not just career seekers who we're trying to serve, we're also trying serve businesses, and businesses are equally diverse. Businesses come from a variety of different industries, a variety if different sizes. They are looking to accomplish a variety of different tasks, making different products, providing different services, and each of them, just like all of us, have their own sort of internal culture. They are as diverse as the people who own them, the people that operate them and the people that are employed by them. So and of course, as we really look at a workforce development system that passes the idea of dual customers, both career seekers and businesses being equally important to the system, we see equal diversity on both sides. So again, as we're thinking about how we're going to serve businesses, it's much easier to think about strategies that work well for the vast majority of businesses than it is to think about a certain, to think about discrete strategies that will serve one business at a time. So we can go on to slide nine. Universal design, I'm sure folks have heard of the concept in the past that actually started with some very simple stuff. Of course, we first think about architecture when we think of universal design. We think about the way a physical space is designed, we think about a certain kind of door handle, maybe we think about a certain kind of technology. Of course the ultimate example that we always use is around curb cuts. Curb cuts were first made standard in a

way we construct our sidewalks. Curbs cuts being the divots of course that allow us to get from the sidewalk to the street without a step up or a step down and back again. This of course first became standard around the passage of the ADA, when it was required that we think about people who use wheelchairs to get around when we were designing our physical and our public spaces. But when we really think about, okay, this thing started as a disability idea, where is it gone? Who is it actually benefited from this? We see that everyone, anyone who pushes a stroller, anyone who pushes a grocery cart, anyone who is riding on a skate board is going to benefit from this. We even see now since the institution of curb cuts and since we've started designing most of our physical spaces this way, most of us now pull our luggage on wheels. We didn't use to do that, we didn't do that prior to this very simple little innovation. And yet now, we see with this very simple improvement that really benefits everyone, we're all doing things in a somewhat more economic, somewhat more efficient way. So it's really that idea that we want to push through everything that we think about. So we started with architecture, which is, of course again, very simple innovations that are designed to make a space as usable for everyone as it can possibly be. And we move from there into learning. And it really, again, it's the same idea. We're not talking about a specialized curriculum for every single student. We're not talking about different classrooms for people who learn in different ways. We're talking about trying to make things work so that as we're providing a training seminar or as we're standing in front of the classroom, we're equally appealing to students who learn by hearing, students who learn by reading, students who learn by doing, students who learn from sort of colorful pictorial demonstrations. We're trying to design the way we teach people in a way that is really going to suit all those different learners, not have to create a new strategy for each person who learns in a different way. So we can move on to slide 10. So this is where we come, again, business idea of Universal Design for the Workforce Development System. And this really

when we came around to design this, this came down to the design of environments, products, communication practices, as well as the delivery of programs, services, and activities that meet the needs of all customers of the workforce development system. So again, this is not about one segment, this is not about one goal within the system. This is about doing things, this is about a standard way of doing business. It's going to serve the widest possible variety of customers. So we can move on to slide 11. So Universal Design for the Workforce Development System is based in these five concepts, and I think these explain it pretty well. First of all, the best practices invariably serve the most customers. We very rarely see that we come up with a great idea or a great service delivery strategy or a great new program, but it's only great if we're working with this one very specific kind of customer. We find that when we've come up with a good idea, when we're providing services that are really effective, they're going to be effective for the widest range of people. So we're not going to have think about, well, who is this going to work for? Is this going to work for this one little segment or is this going to work very well for everyone? I think we find that when we see something that works really well, it works really well for anyone who comes to our doors. The second is that every agency, every organization can benefit from collaboration. Now, we all know this in the One-Stop Career Centers. This has been a premise of our work since, prior to the Workforce Investment Act, that we're all there trying to accomplish the same kind of goal. But one of the things that this process really examines is, okay, most of us are here in this same physical space, are we really working together? Are we really benefiting from one another's services in the way we provide services to our customers? Number three, again as we mentioned before, businesses and career seekers are equally customers of the workforce development system. So you're not going to provide really, really good services to businesses and yet not good services to career seekers. Probably, if you're not providing good services to one of those two groups, the other group is going to end up suffering because most of the reason

they're there in the center in the first place, is to be able to access that other customer group. Highly coordinated services, and this is reminiscing of point two, highly coordinated services are essential for all of our customers. We all know, we can all imagine the frustration of someone coming in and feeling like even though they only went to one address, they're dealing with 20 different bureaucracies when they come to the door. We all know how frustrating that can be for our customers. So what we want to do is, really again, present, to use this word, a very seamless system, a system which to our customers feels like something that they're accepting and be able to access in a smooth fashion regardless of different agency affiliations and turfs and things to that effect. And then finally, and I think this a very important point, greater alignment between workforce development and economic development. When we think about the real purpose of our One-Stop Career Centers, and the workforce development system as a whole, we see that really the idea, it's about building our economy. It's about building the talent within our communities, it's going to build our economy as a whole. So we really want to look at strategies whereby these two systems are going to work very well together. So we can move on to slide 12. And here, we see this is just a framework that we look at. And we see this, of course, everything we're talking about here, it's very broad, it covers the entire range of this workforce development system. So we're looking first, and this is kind of a grid that we image everything through. We're looking at everything from strategic planning to partnerships, capacity building. We're looking at administration, management, and evaluation. And then we're looking at our actual operations, our marketing, our outreach, our orientation, our assessment, our service coordination, our service delivery, and our business services. So we can move on to slide 13. Now, here's a tool that we have on the Web site that I think is very, very powerful. And this is at our central Web site which is [onestop.info](http://onestop.info). And this is really a tool that's going to help us go through our different service practices and examine everything that we have within the system through the lens of

universal design, as well as linking it back to Department of Labor regulations. And this also gives us examples of strategies that have been implemented successfully in the past. So this is a really important tool that's going to help us look at our whole system through the lens of these different ideas. And we can go to slide 14, and this is where we can hand it over to Jade.

**[Jade Gingerich]** Hi, this is Jade Gingerich, and I'm with the Department of Disabilities in Maryland. And the department, for those of you who aren't familiar with it, is a pretty unique entity. It was elevated from office to cabinet-level position as a full department a couple years ago and we don't actually have oversight for a significant number of direct service programs. For the most part, we're charged with systems change and policy guidance across the broad array of disability issues. And as part of the NTAR opportunity we put together, in conjunction with the governor and his team, a proposal that looked at a significant workforce development activity that was occurring here in Maryland and also nationally called the Base Realignment and Closure. And as a result of that federal activity, Maryland is experiencing its largest influx of jobs and growth in terms of development and housing and retail and so forth to support all of these jobs and workers coming to Maryland since World War II. So in putting together our proposal and talking about what we wanted to do as part of the NTAR project, keeping in mind the goals that were set forth by Nanette, we had a couple of objectives. We wanted to identify and link job seekers with disabilities to this influx of opportunities. We wanted to enhance the skills of our job seekers with disabilities by looking at how our current dollars are flowing and how we can make them work together a little more effectively. We wanted to also look at strategies and incentives to ensure that "work pays" because that's a critical piece, asset development, Medicare buying, all of those are critical pieces to actually tapping into the potential workforce of individuals with disabilities, and then to develop livable and inclusive community. And while we focused on BRAC, Base Realignment



and Closure, as a starting point, we recognize that in focusing on somebody's activities, we would then be extending it out to the broader systems that we were working with. It just gave us something a little more manageable to get our hands around, and as you'll see this is one of our activities that has, around universal design, grown beyond just our targeted BRAC region. Next slide, please. Some highlights, we've accomplished quite a bit as a result of our NTAR grant and planning activities and so forth, across three key areas, workforce development, housing, and transportation. For the purposes of this, I'm just going to focus on a couple of the workforce development activities, one of which is our employer outreach strategy. And that was an area that we've discovered all of our activities. We're really working across purposes. And so we wanted to coordinate our employer outreach and do a better job serving our employer customers. But we also then needed to do a better job of ensuring that our One-Stops were serving our customers with disabilities. And one of the things that we found with the disability navigator and so forth is we have a number of people with disabilities who are not eligible for division of rehabilitation services or developmental disabilities funding or mental hygiene funding where we've been operating our cost containment for a number of years. So in fact a number of the folks who are out accessing services in the generic workforce aren't actually people with disabilities who, if we have more funding available or were in a different state, might be eligible for vocational rehabilitation funding. So knowing that we have this influx of people particularly with hidden disabilities that are accessing the generic workforce systems, we really wanted to look at how we could a better job of serving them in a more holistic manner. One of the things that Maryland has, as a part of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, is something that used to be called the sub-cabinet, but it's now called the Interagency Employment Workgroup. And the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, of course, is represented by secretaries of the various departments, business and so forth. But then the next, here down, the former sub-cabinet, the Inter-

agency group, is the Deputy Secretaries, the folks that are usually the ones that are hands-on, charged with making things happen from a diverse array of all the key partners in the workforce development. Correction, our Department of Human Resources, which the social services, vocational rehabilitation sits on that. And so as part of the process of sort of gaining the support for universal design in Maryland, a presentation was made to this group as well as being shared with the Governor's Workforce Investment Board because when you get time on GWIB's calendar, it's a few minutes. And so with a broader group we're really able to do some in-depth discussion of the benefits of universal design not just to a disability specific population. And we were very clear in Maryland that when we were going to be doing this technical assistance and presenting this while the emphasis was to be on individuals with disabilities, we wanted it to be true to its origins, which is serving all populations effectively. And so toward that end, as a result of some of the education and background, our Governor's Workforce Investment Board actually issued a proclamation or resolution highlighting the benefits of universal design and strongly encouraging the local One-Stops to take advantage of the technical assistance that was being provided through the NTAR center. In addition, we have some [inaudible] activities, DORS, DBED which is our Business and Economic Development, and our Labor, Licensing, and Regulation has been working with our department in conjunction with the national marketing campaign to create a single employer portal from employers that were seeking to hire job candidates with disabilities, and the Web sites and all of those resources are there. That was just another related activity because for getting more customers in the door then we also need to be figuring out how we can more effectively identify some of those customers and lift them up to employers who are actively seeking to higher, specifically in this instance, job seekers with disabilities. Next slide, please. So Universal Design in Maryland. As I said, we have this resolution and it was part of the GWIB's commitment because they recognize that in making our local

area Workforce Investment Board and One-Stops more universally designed, not only were they serving job seekers with disabilities and all of their customers more effectively, they're also going to be providing a better service to their employers. So, again, they strongly supported the adoption of the principles of universal design. And by having that, and we did provide a copy of that resolution, having that path, which didn't make any sort of major action, commitments and so forth, it allowed us to then leverage the action and to then move forward with obtaining support from the locals and moving forward on that. So I think that it's a really key piece that set the course and to turn into leadership for then the actually hands-on direct activities that you'll be hearing from our Southern Maryland representative shortly. Next slide. I think that Cori has certainly articulated the value of universal design. And at the state level, we recognize that. We also recognize that we're constantly being asked to do more with less funds, and so therefore we don't have the luxury of being able to develop these tailored specific best practices in programs that are only serving one population. The other thing is that we recognize that in fact the lines are not nearly as black and white as they used to be amongst our various specialized population. Within the correction population you have a number of individuals with disabilities, within our human resources population or social services population, a number of individuals with disabilities are there. And so when you start to draw the line to be in and to realize that there are so many shared characteristics and that in fact an individual with a disability may have multiple barriers, and by looking through the framework of universal design, I think that as a state, we recognize that we are better serving our individuals and we're not forcing them to be bumped between agency and agency to get the different support and services that they need, but rather were looking at them holistically and then are able to connect an individual up with the various supports and services based on their needs and not having it be, we'll go over here because you need this, now you need to go over here. So I

think that's on a state level, we recognize that this is really a critical strategy for being able to improve our employment outcome and also to better serve the needs of the populations that we're seeing that have multiple different issues and activities that they're dealing with that they're attempting to reenter the workforce. Next slide.

**[Cori Di Biase]** So I can jump back in. This is Cori, again. One of our first steps in Maryland we, at the National Organization on Disability and our colleagues at the Institute for Community Inclusion through the NTAR center, started our work in Maryland. The first thing we did was to head into five local areas that has its local workforce development areas that had expressed interest in this, in the universal design system. Just to do an initial needs assessment to meet people to hear from the leadership, from the staff, from customers, what were folks interested in? Where do folks feel like they were barriers in this system? Who did they feel like they weren't serving as well as they could? What was their strategic vision, a year forward, five years forward? What was the ideal vision they had for their center and for their local system? And I will say as we went around, as I said we went to about five different spots and we got to meet folks and talk to folks. Now, if Ellen Flowers-Fields is not on this call, I would definitely be telling everyone on this call that all the great stuff in Southern Maryland that was happening was entirely because of me. Unfortunately she is, so I'm going to have to go ahead and be honest about it and say that when I first got there, I saw that here was a system, here was the leadership of this system that had recognized intuitively, all these things that we talked about, all these ideas about, okay, we got to do certain things to serve folks, we got to do certain things to create a system that is universally welcoming, that is sensible, that's easy to navigate, that just feels intuitively rational to our customers. Here was a system that the leadership was already well down its road and already have these goals in mind, that was already making great, amazing progress in this direction when we first got there. So it

struck me as a fantastic opportunity to see, okay, how far can we push these ideas with a group of folks that's already so forward thinking in the way they look at these different things. And really when we arrived there, we saw a system that was already thinking about what happens in the first five minutes? One of our customers this year in our centers, what's their experience like? How did that impact them? What do they want? What are they getting? What are they not getting? And then from there, what's the flow that that customer is going to follow depending on who they are and what their needs are and where they want to go, and is it really working? And asking these kinds of questions. So I will hand this over to Ellen and look forward to hearing everything she has to say.

**[Ellen Flowers-Fields]** Thank you, Cori. Next slide, please. Just very briefly, the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland is the fiscal and administrative agent for the Title-I Workforce Investment Act Funding. And we have career One-Stop Centers in three counties, Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's. Our comprehensive centers in Charles County. And we have satellite centers in the other two counties. And as Cori so graciously articulated at the time when we were introduced to the universal design concept by the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, and Cori presented his first presentation, it was like the bow on a gift that we had been trying to fashion at that point for about six months prior to meeting him. We had the convergence of a perfect storm as many systems do when you begin to change or begin your new strategic plans. We had some new partners that were engaging with us in the One-Stop systems, some that had no previous presence in our centers, some that had presence that was beginning to increase. We also had the vision of our board, which was really pushing towards a demand driven delivery system, and how we begin to align our services in our service delivery with the demand driven models that could support economic development initiative in the region. So the leaders within our organization as well as some of our partners, the Department of

Labor, Licensing, and Regulations and the Department of Rehabilitative Services, some of our local community-based organizations start engaging in a discussion. So we really need to sit down and meet and form a committee and talk about how we can better serve our customers and examine our customer flow to assure that we're engaging customers at the right time. So we created a cross-agency committee and started meeting. And one of the very first tasks that we assigned ourselves was to develop a "process map," delineate on paper. What happens to a customer from the time they enter the door to the time they reach the front desk to service delivery I, II, III? Well, I guess shamefully so that was probably the most difficult process to go through because when you're so used to talking the jargon and not ever having set and really mapped it out on paper, it became a real process for us, it was one that we developed a great appreciation for. And so we took each step of sort of our customer engagement, we started with the job seeker as a customer. And from the time that they walk the door, meeting the individual at the front desk, utilizing the career resource file, getting to an orientation, to being referred to a Workforce Investment counselor from more intense services, what was happening to them? What information were they receiving at each of those process points? How quickly were they being directed from one process point to another? When they were directed, were they sent in the right direction? And we found ourselves stuck right at the resource desk. When it came to where our initial challenge is, it was at gate one. And we really had to step back and begin to look at it in order to really move forward effectively with the universal design strategy for all of our customers, we had to set some objectives in place. And those objectives were to optimize our customer service, to assure that everyone accessing our doors receives the same information. And when I say the same information, it's relevant information that's universal to all the customers that we serve. And that there's efficiencies in a way that we deliver that information both with the staff that are being utilized as well as the resources that will

be garnered to ensure that it's like spokes on a wheel if people needed to be directed in specific directions, that they were being done so adequately. And that we needed to begin to evaluate a timeline for customer impact. How long was it taking for an individual who walked through our doors to be referred to the next appropriate service, whatever that service was and how were we tracking that? So those were the some various lofty goals that really began the discussions for our engagement. And so as we look at the intake process from the front desk to really where most of our information was being provided, it was in the orientation. And we really wanted the front desk intake process to be a triage. But we found that because individuals at the front desk weren't always our direct staff. Sometime they were partner agency staff, sometimes they were senior service volunteers or [inaudible] work experience workers that we needed to do a better job at training and providing resources to those individuals so that they could make the appropriate triage referrals at the intake process. And knowing that that part of what we needed to address was going to take a little bit longer, we started working on that from an administrative standpoint but immediately started looking at the orientation. And so as we one by one set an orientation, the next customers has set an orientation and started to ask you for feedback regarding the orientations. We realize that if you really didn't understand our system before you went in there, you were more confused when you came out because there were so much information being shared. All beneficial information but is happening too much too fast and probably confused more job seekers than we were trying to do. We were providing a lot of information about how to look for a job, job seeker skills, directly ending orientations. We decided that we needed to focus on the One-Stops Center Services specifically in the orientation, both the services offered by the Wagno-Peyser, which is our Department of Labor Licensing staff, the Workforce Investment Act staff and our other partners. So we created a standardized orientation that included an overview of all of the services of the One-Stops Center and

who we were there to serve. And concurrently, the Maryland Department of Labor Licensing and Regulations was working on a video which was a further enhancement to what we were attempted to do, which provides that very same overview. It's an eight-minute video that talks generically about the One-Stop. And so all of the detail that we used to get into, and that one, in that orientation about this is how you register in the Maryland Workforce is saying and you have to put your resume in and this is how you begin to look for jobs, we separated that out and created separate job-seeker skills workshops. We looked at our sign-in and check-in process for first time visitors that came in to our front desk. We've discovered some things initially about the layout of our One-Stop that we're working with the state to see if we could change where the intake desk is and in relation to the front door because we see that as maybe creating some barriers or confusion. But we also saw that there was a bottle neck that was occurring at the front desk particularly in high volume times that we're seeing over 4,000 visitors a month in our One-Stops. It's very difficult for one individual at the front desk to respond to the inquiries of all the customers who are coming in both businesses and job seekers that are coming, as well as getting basic information on everyone and triaging them effectively. So, we, through the assistance of some of our partners, now, we have two individuals that are front desk. And right now our front door, it indicates that if you are first-time visitor please go up to line A, and if you had been here before, an employer, goes to line B. So this was segregating the function of the front desk so that individuals who are there for the first time receive a certain set of information and guidance that assures that it's standardized for all people who've come in for the very first time. And then we've created a protocol for providing additional assistance and direction to this first time visitor. There is a standardized sheet, sort of a checklist that each of the first-time visitors is given when they come in that provides the list of dates and times of the upcoming orientations so that they can go to the orientation first. And then the next process that we engage



them in is registering in the Maryland Workforce Exchange, and then seeing one of the counselors in the career labs to assist with particular job openings. So a customer has the option to engage in all of those activities on the same day or split those activities out on different days, but they're provided the schedule right there as soon as they come in. Next slide, please. We realize that in addition to the orientation, which needed to be standardized that we were offering various job developments and job seeking skills workshops that were being offered by different partners and different staff who each had their own flair style and opinions about resume development and job search skills. None of which were detrimental to our customers, but we thought it needed to be standardized. You can have one customer come in and say I went to a workshop and we learned about this. Another customer could be sitting next to him and say we never talked about that in my workshop. So we wanted to make sure that the core of what customers were receiving was consistent across the workshops that were being developed. And so we sat down with the course agency staffs that were delivering these various workshops and talked with them about what it is they do. We allowed a lot of economy in the past to bring in supplemental materials, videos, et cetera. But really evaluating what everybody was using and deciding what made sense collectively. We also, with each of the individuals providing the training, started talking about their strengths, which workshops do they feel the most confident presenting, and developing teams that say, okay, this group, you'll do the resume workshops, you'll do the interview skills workshops, you'll do the job search type of workshops to place the right staff with the right skill set in the right workshops and then create standardized packets which we gave. We empowered them to come back to us with the materials that they've had now looked at collaboratively and put together the best designs. And then of course gave our opinions and inputs, standardized packets for each type of workshops. So that now it doesn't matter who the trainer is. There's a standardized curriculum

being delivered and standardized information being handed out in each of the workshops. And so we continue to engage those staff teams because as new resources become available or were educated about new information, we want to infuse those into our workshops, but we want to do it across the board and not have one workshop doing it and not another. We also started talking in a management level with our partners about the development of a consistent brand. And this fell right in line with some of the operational headings that Cori talked about earlier under the framework for universal design matrix where marketing and outreach is a key component to really consider. And our local Workforce Investment Board had engaged the marketing firm, and that firm is still engaged and working with management and members of the Workforce Investment Board to develop a brand for Southern Maryland, not just for the WIB or for the One-Stop, but for our community's workforce development system. What's the message that we want to say? So that the message is one that's embraced by all of us and allows us to speak to that singular message while, independently remaining with the autonomy that we need to have as individual organization. So we're continuously developing that piece of it. And we needed to create a system where we could take all of the information and the program updates and the great services that were happening with all of our partners in the One-Stop and put them in one place, because we have just a [inaudible] of partners and everybody have their own handout. And if staff weren't cross pollinating, you may not know that your door's partner is doing a really great workshop next week or Department of Aging partner has a really great opportunity coming up that we can make a referral to. So, all the partners agreed that we would use the calendar, the electronic calendar system that the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation has in its Maryland Workforce Exchange System. And that all of our program updates and events will be posted at least 24 hours in advanced of them happening so that staff could refer individuals to these opportunities and then individuals could

also refer themselves. And the other thing to that that we agreed that would be very beneficial in outreaching to the community and the job seekers in businesses was to host regular open houses, semiannually, have an open house or customer appreciation event where not only we could have individuals come in, see what it is that we do, showcase our abilities as a system, but also show them that we appreciate the fact that they utilize a system and get their feedback on how we can improve. Next slide, please. The next difficult task that we started tackling and really turned to Cori directly and said, you know, our internal information exchange and customer flow, how we share our customer and how we, when you duly case managing someone or when you're trying to get an individual from one partner to another, we needed a better understanding of best practices on how to do that. We saw that in beyond the engagement of having our customers come from the front desk and get to the appropriate orientation, sometimes the referral mechanism for where do I go from here, who is the appropriate partner? There was no assessment being done. So the post orientation that gave the customer a direction of what would be the next best step for me because of things that I've self identified in my life make it the best direction for me to begin in. So we wanted our staff to be better educated and empowered about making these referrals and helping our customers make the decisions about who they needed to see. We didn't want our staff making referrals to vocational rehabilitation, for example, because an individual says that they need help with a car or vehicle because they buy accessible equipment. And we send someone there and they want to buy a car and find out that, well, you can't get money directly for buying a car for yourself. That was one example that we provided. So we really felt we need to educate our staff, give them as many descriptions as we could about each of the agencies and we're working on that, creating this highlighted column, technical assistance or cheat sheets that each of our staff will have so that if customers respond favorably to a particular question that we can learn

better to make the appropriate referral. Next slide. So what we have created for the staff is a one pager. Brief checklist free to the staff to begin to look at as they ask individuals questions during the orientation and the individuals respond to their questions as to whether or not they are receiving any services from the Department of Rehabilitative Services or if they're receiving services from the Department of Social Services, and these are a little more detailed but those are the general umbrella types of questions that are asked and then there're questions asked such as in the last 30 days, have you needed assistance with food, have you needed assistance of child care, have you needed to sort of get the customer to disclose, have you been provided utility assistance, to try and understand what's going on in the individual's lives. And then from those check lists, we're using it to determine when and how and for what services we can begin to offer individuals based on the eligibility guidelines that we're hoping to begin to fully develop in these technical assistance sheets that we're receiving support from Cori to develop for all of our staff. Next slide. So in addition to all the things I just mentioned, we're trying to clearly document the process and the services offered in the One-Stops by all of the partner agencies. Specifically, by how that agency does businesses and what benefit these services they provide will be to the customer, and how their performances measure--really meaning how, what type of outcome are we looking for? For some of those that we serve in our One-Stop they're our customer, our outcomes for them very often may be educational attainment outcomes, part time employment, while they're in school. For many of the adult population that we serve, full-time employment may be the objective. So making sure that we send them to the right referral partner and that they're engaging in the right process so that we can then assure that our customers, their ultimate goals aren't delayed by confusion within our service delivery standards. Next slide. Why we're involved as the system in this initiative is important question. And I've been asked several times over the last, almost a year now, as we've gone down this

road to begin looking at our service delivery system. And it's fairly simple. It boils down to customer service. And ensuring that customers, their time is not wasted, it's valuable, and that we're engaging them in the process as quickly as possible so that they can obtain that employment outcome or the training that they need or get the needed support of services that they need from the Workforce Investment Act System or any of our partner agencies. We want to ensure that we have a comprehensive set of standards that allows us to measure efficiencies, is very difficult to measure efficiency when you're consistently comparing apples to oranges on what's being delivered and what a customer receive. So we wanted to have more valid data collection on our surveys, on our tools. And overall, it's truly about systems improvement to make sure that from the time you walk in the door to the time you report your full-time employment that all of the services that you truly wanted to receive, and we have the capability to deliver, were offered to you in a timely, customer-friendly, and professional manner. And so we're very grateful to be a part of this project, and we still have a lot more to go but we believe we're moving in the right direction.

**[Nanette Relave]** Hi, this Nanette. Again, I want to thank our presenter. Cori, I don't know if there's anything you want to add at the end or should we move into our Q and A?

**[Cori DiBiase]** Well, we can move into the Q and A. I think just to, if we look quickly at the next slide, this is just giving credit to the two centers that developed this. Another work that continues with the NTAR Center, of course, but this came out of two other ODEP funded projects, the National Center on Workforce and Disability for Adults and the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, and the One-Stops, so those two centers are right there. That onestop.info has a lot more detail in terms of a lot of the tools that we reference, the matrices, the different frameworks that you can go through, a lot of actual examples from the field of

what we consider to be the universally designed practices out of it where we've seen them operating and we've seen them working very well in the field that are related back to all these matrices. You can go on onestop.info and see a lot of this information, just get a lot more sort of depth behind it, but I think that's the last thing to note and we're good to go.

**[Nanette Relave]** Great. The next several slides also have our contact information for our presenters. And I know again, we've heard a lot of great information. And for some of you listening in, you may want to follow-up to get a little bit more, but we also have some time for questions and I'm going to turn it over to Robb just to remind folks how to submit your questions.

**[Robb Sewell]** Oh, thanks, Nanette. Well, essentially, everyone has really two options to pose your questions for our presenters. First, what you can do is you can click the raise-hand button in the upper left-hand corner of your screen. And I'll then call one participant to provide them with instructions on how to ask their question. Secondly, you can submit your question by using the chat feature on the left portion of your screen. Simply type your message and click send and then I'll relay it to our presenters. And while we're waiting for some additional questions to come in, I will relay some of the ones that have been submitted during today's presentation. The first one is, for Maryland, did you feel the resolution from the state with to be an important element to local One-Stop's interest in universal design?

**[Response]** In Maryland, we have very much a locally driven One-Stop and local Workforce Investment Board. So well, I think that the GWIB Resolution heightened awareness and importance of it. We're not a state in which we can operate from a sort of top-down sort of you-shall, I think that it helped, as part of the education awareness strategy, to then work with the local to make it a priority because they have many competing things on their plate. But I don't think that that's the only strategy that can be utilized. I think that it was one tool as

part of a series of different strategies that help engage the locals and get them on board which is a critical piece in this.

**[Robb Sewell]** Great. Another question we have is, is the One-Stop assessment tool available on the info.onestop site?

**[Cori DiBiase]** And the answer to that is yes. Absolutely, there are a number of different tools you can actually--there's a wealth of information there, everything from sort of direct matrix that can give you some of the highlights of what the different topics are that we cover down to something that if you go through the entire thing, I think you're looking at 40 plus pages of self-guided questions that you can use as leaders within your own system, within your local system to ask yourself about, okay, is this something we have, is this something we do? Just again, questions that are really there to help you do sort of self exploration around these points and just to get you thinking about what different areas can be improved to a system. And then finally, those are also linked back in most cases to under the same heading. So if you're curious about well, how do we market to people to ensure that we're not just getting one segment of our community that the entire community sees what kind of resources we have for them. If that's your concern, you can also click on a link to look at different examples of marketing strategies, marketing plans, et cetera, from across the nation, from different workforce development systems that we have examples posted up on the site, and we're continuing to add more of those kinds of examples as we go along as we learn about the great work of systems like Southern Maryland and other spots nationally, so.

**[Robb Sewell]** Okay, another question we have is do you feel that the concepts and levels of universal design extend across everyone of your One-Stops? If so, how did you achieve that level of consistency?

**[Ellen Flowers-Fields]** This is Ellen. Our response to that, we really do feel that the concepts that we are developing will be able to be deployed in each of our One-Stops. In fact, the standards of service delivery will be common, I believe regardless of the shape or size of your One-Stops 'cause ultimately, you have the same goal and objectives in mind in terms of customer service and customer outcomes leading to employment. We started the project focusing in on our comprehensive center because it is our largest center and receive the most customers in that facility. So we can work that a keen side of the design to see what would work. But we engaged our partners and our managers from all three of our centers so that as we were designing specific elements such as the orientation and some of the hand-out, they could begin to integrate some of that in our satellite centers and we'll later evaluate that integration and come back to the meetings and discuss impact or change. And I can't quite say, yes, if it's a direct impact of that improved information sharing with our customer that has created an increase in our satellite center of visitation and workshop participation, but we are seeing it [inaudible] and our satellite centers in terms of individual accessing the workshops, and I do believe just having information readily available in a compact way should allow visitors to do that. So I do believe this approach can be applied in multiple centers.

**[Robb Sewell]** Okay. We have a couple other questions that are submitted via chat. The first one is how has Maryland been evaluating whether these efforts are making a difference?

**[Cori DiBiase]** Certainly, I can, yes. First of all, I would say that we're at the early stage of having an initiative. We've really been doing this work on the ground for about six months. But primarily for right now as we're setting these things up, we're doing most of our evaluative work through qualitative interviews. I just, speaking with different folks, speaking about the impact on the system. As we look, however, at formalizing a lot of these processes, as we look about different standardized



settings, I think that's when we will then have the opportunity which is very much part of our goals to attach numbers to this. 'Cause at the end of the day, I think there's, as much as we all have a good story, and as much as we need absolutely to understand the perspective and the thoughts of our leadership, of our staff, of our customers, at the end of the day, numbers are what move the system, and numbers are what tell us whether or not the changes we're making are helping more people get jobs, or improve their skills, or improve their careers. So we have not gotten to that point yet but that is absolutely part of what we need to do to, I believe, prove the validity of what that work here.

>> I will also add that separate from this, but of course all these things are related, we made a change awhile back in our system that allows individuals with disabilities to self-identify when they come in to the system. Because part of the challenge is knowing if a person has a disability and might benefit from additional services or if we get employers who want a hire specifically job seekers with disabilities. So we've had the capacity to measure individuals with disabilities on a self-identification basis, which has certainly helped us in terms of our data. What we've also done is recently overhauled our Maryland Workforce Exchange, which is a system that you register in and seek opportunities. And we are putting an emphasis on outreach to individuals with disabilities, encouraging them to go and access Maryland Workforce Exchange, identify themselves as individuals with disabilities so that, A, you know, we have a better sense of who's out there, and B, as part of our national marketing campaign, one of our fulfillment strategy will be when we get employers to say, "Yes, I want to hire individuals with disabilities who'll be--to go back and access those individuals with disabilities who have registered in Maryland Workforce Exchange." And I think that some of that data may also allow us to identify the impacts particularly in the five areas that are taking advantage of the universal design and looking at the growth in those areas versus

the areas that aren't receiving that additional support because we may find that less individuals are actually engaging with the One-Stops if they're not walking in the door and having a positive experience, so.

**[Robb Sewell]** Okay. Another question is, are specialized services better delivered in a segregated setting or should all staff have the ability to serve all customers?

**[Cori DiBiase]** Well, I will start with that on kind of a theoretical level then I will definitely appreciate hearing Jade and Ellen, I think, will also have a lot of valuable perspective on that. I think that generally speaking, the One-Stop Career Centers, the Workforce Development Systems have got to be a mixture of very generalized services that would work for anyone of us, any person seeking the services of the system at large. But part of the challenge of course is that then there are services that are very particular and very much driven by given demographics, very much designed for given individuals with very specific needs. So the idea is how do we create these systems in a way that we can get from the front door that should be opened to everybody into a very specific kind of service without necessarily losing access to everyone else. We don't want people referred away out of the system. So, we don't want someone saying for example that they are veteran and, okay, then, you get veteran services and only veteran services and everything else, every other door is suddenly closed for you because we found the right spot for you and that's it and now you're done with this system. We found the right destination and it's over. I think there is a great benefit in terms of just a space issue. I think there's a great benefit to having different service providers, different folks to provide different types of services to different types of people sitting side by side, working in the same kind of centers and providing their services in a way that I, as the customer, have easy physical access from one to the next and that I, as a professional, have easy access to someone providing a different kind of service that I can,

maybe it's just over lunch, maybe it's just over the water cooler, I can sit and speak with someone else who has a different set of expertise, a different perspective on the community, a different perspective on workforce development so that I can very much learn from them. So generally speaking, well, I think that there are, of course, there are always going to be specialized services in these systems. I think that the largest, the greater extent to which we are ensuring that these services operate in a way that it's strongly related to others, operate in physical locations that are involved with other service system and operate in sort of bureaucratic ways that are related to other service systems. The more those systems will benefit, the more the customers will benefit. But as I say, I think both Jade and Ellen will have a real perspective on this from the day-to-day perspective as well.

**[Response]** Well, and I want to echo some of what Cori says and then actually I take it sort of a step or two further. I think that you're intake processes needs to be designed in a way that everybody comes into the system and experiences at least some of the first initial things equally. And then I think that a close analysis needs to be done to look at when and where it's more appropriate for specialized service, and I don't think that it should be done just on the basis of, oh, you've identified as an individual with disabilities so you get tracked over here. Because I think that, again, the principles of universal design are that designing the system that everyone can benefit from. And I think that you will find some commonalities across broader populations than to break them out and provide services based on that. And I would also encourage a system that really has looked at and identified there's a need for this specific piece that specialize and then to roll that person back over into the generic workforce. In part, because we don't have the systems to support all these specialized group. And in part because it should be, you know, specialized for the specific purpose and then immediately, you know, ones it's unable to accomplish that, maybe it's computer work or, you

now, assistance with reading materials or whatever, that whatever that specific piece they need that specialize assistance for, they're being redirected back into the mainstream as soon as possible, creating these separate parallel tracks, I do not think is ultimately the best approach. The other thing that I would do is again, looking at it from a generic population, break it up into are these individuals who were looking for entry-level jobs? Are these midlevel and or skilled jobs, or are they high level and be looking at organizing my system around the skills and the employment outcomes that they're seeking and providing the supports and services along that because I think that that means more effectively serve the broader base with the minimum amount of resources.

**[Response]** And in my [inaudible] resume all the information that has been shared, and my vision for our One-Stop System is the collaborative, once we fully implemented, this Universal Design model is to see it running like a very efficient, I would say, hospital or professional medical services model. I mean, if you really think about how large medical institutions are structured, they are collaboration of multiple doctors, practices, labs. The organizations who come together with a common objective of services to a customer try to create efficiency, developing systems to share information and to cross-refer in a seamless way so that the customer is never lost within the system itself. And so, I think, you know, when, as the One-Stop system matures, it's going to find a way utilizing technology and utilizing a sort of a partner referral systems internally to operate in the same mechanisms. So while a person maybe going from a more generic level of services to a specialist in a particular discipline that they still feel a part of the sort of Maryland Workforce System and not that they've been referred out to another practitioner. So, we're moving towards that and believe me, I'm talking to my colleagues that run emergency rooms and health care, how do you do that? How did you get everybody to agree to share and work together and how can we do that well in our system?

**[Robb Sewell]** Okay. Couple more questions. Where should the state start when pursuing universal design for its workforce system? What partners are vital to involve?

**[Cori DiBiase]** Well, again, I think I will take that off. Of course I, in a self-serving way, so could start with some of the Web sites that we've provided. But to pass that, it really, it starts with the core group which is pretty consistent across any state. The core group that is responsible for the workforce development system, and that's WIA, that's like [inaudible] that's the school systems, that's vocational rehabilitation, that's veterans service systems. And then past that, I think on every state and local level they are going to be, I'm sure there are departments that I have not adequately named and then there are going to be a lot of others that we know in any given system are going to be key to this equation of how do we deliver in the most comprehensive sense, workforce development services. But I think in the question, inherent in the question is the ideal first step, which is we need to get these folks together as broader group as possible. We need to bring together and start talking about these ideas. Again, there are a lot of self-guided tools along here which I think, on the Web sites here that I think can add a lot of, what we consider those kinds of conversations to give us the chance to explore every different aspect of our service delivery system. But it starts with gathering our different partners as broader group as possible. And identifying a core group of folks who are going to take responsibility for this process, and then as a group identifying where we want to start. Of course but one of the most powerful thing about this system, and yet also one of its challenges, is that this is extremely broad. We can't do the whole thing at once. We can't do marketing service delivery assessment and economic development all in one shot. It's just too much. So, as a group, we need to decide where do we begin? In Maryland, most of the groups really started with we want to begin where our career-seeking customers begin. We want to begin with that

the first time we open the door and with everything else that I've got going on in my life I take a look around this place and I try and figure out what's going on, what's happening here that I can benefit from. That's where most of the places, including Southern Maryland, that's where they started the process. In other states we've seen them start with the business customer or start with economic development or even start with information systems on the state level. But it's really taking that place to start and going from there. And again, I think a lot of these tools can be very helpful. But I would also again invite Jade and Ellen to kick it in with the conversation here.

**[Response]** I do think that you need to start with a core group. We had the existing group as I reference, the sub-cabinet that had representatives from corrections that were all the partners that deal with workforce development. And I think that they we're really critical to help frame it in the broader context of universal design and not have it because we had to spend a lot of time saying it's not just individuals with disabilities. It's not a silo, it's not a separate piece. So, I would encourage you when you pull your group together to make certain that you're getting a broad group so it doesn't get shuttled off on through the, "Oh, this is another disability special project." I think that really diverse group of partners from the NTAR workforce who are most likely to benefit from this universal design, are really key partners to have in the dialogue and discussion and to move it forward.

**[Response]** And through us, I think it was important to have the power brokers at the table, the managers and directors who had the ability to implement the things, the ideas that we were talking about, and that we were able to broaden our dialogue and give everyone at the table a piece of the planning to come back to the table with for the entire group to respond to and the supportive direction from the state to say, "Let's provide some technical assistance and let's get some feedback from you on how things are going and knowing that the ultimate

goal is improve customer satisfaction and improve customer outcomes. It gave us a common goal." So, I think that the engagement of partners from the state level down to the local level have the ability to make the changes that, once the decisions are made this is what we need to do. The decision may proceed, have been at the table, so your efforts aren't awarded later on.

**[Robb Sewell]** Okay. At this point we have just two more questions but, you know, feel free to submit your questions to me via the chat feature or again by clicking the raise hand button. But our next question is, is there anything you would have done differently in the assessment implementation process?

**[Cori DiBiase]** I guess again I'll start over that. I think, again, Jade you might have some thoughts on this 'cause you are very much involved in this. I think one of the lessons that I learned in our process with Maryland here was that we did need to come in, again, noting that sort of benefit challenge of universal design that it really does apply to everything. I think when we were first talking about it on the state level we were talking so broadly and we work in, that part of that was trying to make sure that people in the field understood, that again as Jade said, this is not a disability. This is not a special disability project. So, get the usual disability suspects together and see what happens. This is about everyone and particularly every sort of "undeserved population" really being able to benefit in these centers. But I think that the cost we paid for that was that we came across with an extremely broad, extremely comprehensive idea that we needed to narrow down very quickly. Now I think the minute we walked into the local centers, they've provided the clarity for us. There wasn't where we didn't sit back and sort of, ruminate and philosophize at that point in time. When we were in the local centers it was folks who knew the challenges, knew their needs, had a clear sense of direction and really like okay, this is what's in front of us right

now, this is what we want to accomplish, how does that goal fit into this system? And that's where the clarity really came in for us. Again Jade, I wonder if you guys had some thoughts on that.

**[Jade Gingerich]** I think that there's definitely a need. We were in a situation where we had a tight timeframe that we had to be trying to get to buy in and support and so forth, and it was sort of circumstances beyond our control. But the fact that we were under the pressure to really get locations identified and be able to roll this out. If I were to do it all over again I would prefer that we had the time to be able to really invest in laying the ground work and adequate communication strategy because details got lost and things got skewed in that process. And so I would make certain that there's a process by which we're making everybody understand what universal design is. You know, we had requested to get on the agenda and for some reason that didn't happen. And as a result of missing that one meeting, all sorts of misinformation started and it started to get a little--spiraled out of control and we weren't able to get it back on track. But I think that it's really, really important to be educating all of the partners including the locals right at the outset about what universal design is and the benefits. And again to make certain that you're controlling the method so it's not being framed and cast as, oh, this is another disability activity.

>> And, you know, speaking from a customer of the services that are being provided, for us it really was the appropriate timing. As Cori mentioned earlier we were engaging in discussions around these concepts. We had put an umbrella over at our framework, over in the back that was unfamiliar what the universal design model and concept prior to how the Governor's Workforce Investment Board engagement was it, so really gave us a strategic platform and resources [inaudible] and strategically direct from what it was we were trying to do. And we're very happy that Maryland provided some additional



time because it was a very short timeframe initially and we've felt that we had multiple sets of priorities including our marketing, and our orientations, assessments and coordination, and service deliveries. How are we going to address it all in such a short period of time? And so we had to prioritize, and it's still going to take a while but because of this system of engagement we have been able to prioritize and address some things that we already are seeing has a cross-cutting outcomes.

**[Robb Sewell]** Okay. At this point we just have one last question which I'm just going to call Nanette to address. The question is, is there an opportunity for other states to receive technical assistance for the NTAR leadership center on universal design? If so, who do I contact?

**[Nanette Relave]** Hi, this is Nanette. For folks that are listening into the phone call and maybe very interested in the types of technical assistance and support that have been talked about today, we certainly do have some opportunities to talk with you a little bit more and find out what your needs are and see if we're able to assist you. On slide number 32, there is contact information for project leaders with the NTAR Leadership Center. So if this is something that you want to find out a little bit more about, I would encourage you, you can contact Kathy Krepcio, who is the director for this whole body of work. And her contact information is on that slide. You're also welcome to contact our partner and colleague at the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts. Her name is Sheila Fesko, her last name is spelled F-E-S-K-O, and her e-mail address is sheila.fesko@umb, that's for University of Massachusetts Boston, dot edu. My contact information, again, this is Nanette, is on slide 32. And you are very welcome to shoot me a quick e-mail if you didn't get that and I will forward you all of Sheila's contact information and that actually may be easiest that way. I'm sure that you'll get it in the correct format. So again if we have any listeners who are interested in learning

a little bit more about some of the technical support, we can provide around universal design, you're welcome to contact Kathy or Sheila. Or if you want to get a little bit more contact information for Sheila just e-mail me and I'll get back to you. And since we have a couple of minutes I think maybe I will ask one last question. It's a little bit more conceptual but I'm just kind of interested, and this may be one for you Cori. When we think about sort of the workforce development system and really the intention through the Workforce Investment Act with One-Stop Career Centers, of course they were really designed to be essentially centers that could serve a universal customer. And so I think kind of the ideas and principles of universal design make so much sense for us to think about applying in our One-Stop Career Center System. In other systems that also provide employment services and supports to people with disabilities or people who may experience barriers to employment, I'm also seeing in the field an orientation to what are called sort of person-centered approaches or person-centered planning, so that whether it's assessments, evaluations, the way that services are organized, they've become very driven by the individual and their needs. And they may even be person-directed. And I'm wondering how you see the interplay between person-centered approaches and universal design?

**[Cori DiBiase]** Well, you know, it's very funny that you should bring that up. One of the things that's come up across a number of systems, and I know this is true in our conversations with Ellen and her team in Southern Maryland, it's been true in Baltimore county, it's been true in the lower shore, it's been true in other states that we've done this. And one of the conclusions we keep coming back to here is that if we try and look at this system as a system that is going to be able to control the way people move through it, absolutely, sort of direct them without questions step by step, well, we'll figure out this demographic piece of information amount, we'll figure out that you are six feet tall or higher so you'll go to door B and that will be that.

There'll be no questions asked. If we try and do that, we're not going to do it in a way that's going to benefit the customers. No question about the fact that the customer, we need to create a system wherein the customer has ultimate control for the way they direct themselves through this process of the One-Stop Career Center System. But what we need to do and to facilitate that in the best way possible is to ensure that at every turn they have the information they need to be making good, intelligent, self-interested choices in the steps they take through the system. So it's all well and good to say we're giving someone total control. We're giving someone the keys to the car. If we don't give them any directions whatsoever, if we don't even give them a map or any sense of where they can go, ultimately their self control won't mean much. They need the information to facilitate it. So I think that when we look at those concepts of person-centered systems, I think those are concepts that make perfect sense to the One-Stop Career Centers. Even to folks in the One-Stop Career Centers that have never worked with people with disabilities before, I think the idea of course we need people to be making their own way through these systems. Of course, we need them making their own decisions. Of course, we need them providing their own sense of direction. We don't have time to provide it for them that we're depending on their sense of direction. So I think the key middle point, and this is just as true of person-centered planning as it is of universal design, is that the primary responsibility for us as workforce development professionals is to be putting forward that information in a way that I, as the customer, know what choices I have, the power to make and I know the consequences of them. I know I had some sense of what some of the next steps I can take are. I know what the resources are that I have at my disposal. And I know what my responsibilities are to get to those resources. So I can't just walk in and say, well, you know, I know I just got here, I need a big expensive training course and I need it this afternoon. I need to know, look, okay, these are the steps to get me there. Maybe that is something I'm eligible for. But this is how I get from my first

visit to eligibility for that kind of service. Or maybe I need vocational rehabilitation or veteran services or both or whatever. The point is that I have it within my power to have the information, to make the decisions in the best way for myself. So really, again whether it's person-centered planning or it's the One-Stop Career Center System and universal design, we're talking about providing information in a way that it is most usable and most actionable to the people, to the career seekers that we're serving. So that's it in summary. Again, and I don't know if Jade, if Ellen, you have thoughts on that as well.

**[Nanette Relave]** Actually if we can move to the last slide, slide number 33, which has the web address for the NTAR Leadership Center, which I would encourage folks to go and visit. We will have the materials from this webinar posted onto our Web site. So if you were scribbling notes seriously this will also be available. And in fact we have all of the webinars that we've done over our several years of project work that are available on our Web site as well as lots of helpful resources and materials. Again, I want to thank our three fantastic speakers for these great presentations that I think have given us a lot to consider. As I was listening to the presentations, what really jumped out at me is that universal design is good practice. Coming really for myself, from a social work perspective, it just sounds like it's very good practice. And so I can truly see that there are many applications for universal design and ways for us to think about applying this not just in our sort of physical structures but really in our client interactions and in our programming and policies as well. So again thank you to our presenters. I also want to thank the Office of Disability Employment Policy, which has made this webinar series and all of our work possible. And of course, I thank my colleagues from Rutgers University for helping us, as always, have a very fluid and a very good webinar. So with that as we are just approaching three thirty, we are going to ring off. But again I invite folks to follow up with our presenters or with those of us who are staff at the NTAR Center, if you would like more

information or have any last questions. So again, thank you to all of our listeners for joining us today and I wish everyone a wonderful rest of the day.