# Arkansas Rehabilitation Services webinar: Equation for Success: “Collaboration + Creativity = Success

## Slide 1: Job-Driven Technical Assistance Center (JD-VRTAC)

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services

**Title:** Equation for Success: “Collaboration + Creativity

**Presenters:**

* Rodney Chandler, Business Engagement Director
* Ashley Cross, Corporate Accounts Manager
* Yvonne Rowland, Business Engagement Administrator

## Slide 2: Webinar Objectives

* Explain JD-VRTAC goals, partners, TA, and Learning Collaborative
* Describe Arkansas Rehabilitation Services background/services
* Explain ARS JD-VRTAC project background
* Discuss ARS JD-VRTAC project purpose & goals
* Describe ARS JD-VRTAC project implementation
* Share ARS JD-VRTAC project accomplishments
* Share challenges & lessons learned from ARS JD-VRTAC project
* Describe current status of ARS JD-VRTAC project
* Discuss what was most helpful from the TA and Learning Collaborative throughout this process
* Share next steps, future direction, & goals for Arkansas

## Slide 3: JD-VRTAC Goals

To Improve the skills of state VR agency staff, other rehab professionals & providers of VR services (who are trained to provide “job-driven” VR services & supports to PWD), employers, and customized training providers.

## Slide 4: JD-VRTAC Partners

* Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI), Univ. of Massachusetts/Boston

***In Partnership with:***

* + Jobs for the Future (JFF)
  + Univ. of Arkansas/CURRENTS
  + Univ. of Washington
  + Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)
  + United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN)
  + Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)

***In Collaboration with:***

* + National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB)
  + Technical Assistance Center Collaborative

## Slide 5: JD-VRTAC Learning Collaborative

* As part of receiving intensive TA, states attended 2-3 in-person Learning Collaborative meetings to provide project updates, collaborate across agencies, and participate in topical discussions.
* Learning Collaborative states participate   in conference calls with their cohort to discuss job-  driven topics.
* 18 state VR agencies are part of the JD-VRTAC Learning Collaborative.

## Slide 6: VR Background

* 10 Districts and 19 field offices across the state
* 12 Business Services Specialists
* ACTI
* 60 VR Counselors
* Access and Accommodations Team

## Slide 7: ARS BE Model Pre-TA

* BER’s dual role of business engagement and business development.
* BERs work directly with clients referred by VR counselors
* Traditionally involved at end of client’s vocational rehabilitation
* Skilled clients underemployed due to lack of skill set demand in their geographic area.
* Business Relationships developed based on client need

## Slide 8: Rethinking the Process

* Jeanne Miller, UA Currents
  + Explore VR
  + Successful BE models
* Team assembled
  + What are doing right?
  + How can we improve?
* Core objectives identified by team

## Slide 9: JD-VRTAC Project Purpose

The JD TA project is designed to strengthen and broaden business relations in Arkansas and integrate the use of data and labor market intelligence leading to the next level of customer engagement resulting in improved employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

## Slide 10: JD-VRTAC Project Goals

Project objectives:

* Foster Increased Collaboration between Field Services and Business Engagement Staff
  + Develop strategies and data collection tools
  + Training at all levels to integrate business strategy for increasing outcomes
* Understand and apply labor market information
  + Evolving process
* Increase Agency engagement with business leadership and partner service agencies
  + Business Customer Satisfaction Survey

## Slide 11: JD-VRTAC Project Implementation

* Business Engagement initiated communications meetings with ARS leadership in conjunction with support form JDVRTAC to introduce shift to business as a customer.
* Senior leadership joined Business Engagement unit in customer visits throughout the agency.
* Marketing materials were rewritten to speak from demand side.
* VR counselors and BE team collaborated to discuss LMI and strategy to align around the client at the beginning of plan service.
* The Business Summit seen as benefitting the agency as a whole rather than solely a departmental endeavor.
* Business Engagement visits and presents to partner workforce agencies to enhance collaboration.

## Slide 12: JD-VRTAC Collaboration

*Images of people working collaboratively.*

## Slide 13: Customer Visits

* Senior Management and BE
* Employer feedback
  + Trends
  + Skills needs
  + Employer support

*Images of customer visits.*

## Slide 14: Collaboration and LMI

* BE and VR
* Career Index Plus
* O\*Net
* Employer Field and Site visits
* DWF Labor Market Reports
* Chamber of Commerce

*Images of staff working collaboratively.*

## Slide 15: WIOA Business Panels

*Images of WIOA Business Panels.*

## Slide 16: Arkansas Business Employment Summit

*Images of Arkansas employers and ARS staff at the Business Summit*

Slide 17: Arkansas Business Leadership Network

Image of Rodney Chandler, Yvonne Rowland, and Ashly Cross holding a sign that says “2017 USBLN Affiliate Network”

Slide 18: JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

* Engagement across agency
* Awareness of critical use of LMI
* Increased business involvement
* New deliverables
* Career index + implementation
* Development of customer satisfaction survey

Slide 19: JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

Field Office Business Engagement Action Plan

*Image of the Plan chart*

Slide 20: JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

*Images of brochures and materials about ARS Business Engagement and Business Services*

Slide 21: JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

Video: [Employing Possibilities –TJ Maxx in Little Rock, AR](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKHgbScnyyQ)

Slide 22: Project Challenges

* Inadequate/Ineffective collaboration among departments
* Reduction in staff/resources
* Inconsistency across field offices in the area of customer engagement
* Restrictions of working within state agency parameters (business services from a social services budget/operation)
* Developing marketing plan in keeping with state guidelines/resources
* Lack of integrated data system with other partners in workforce
* Status quo
* Inconsistencies in leadership and administration

## Slide 23: Lessons Learned

* Change takes time
* Cross-communication is necessary
* Buy-in with rehabilitation partners is critical
* Don’t be afraid to challenge the “status quo”
* Creativity and Flexibility are critical

## Slide 24: JD-VRTAC Project Today (current status)

* Increasing effective communication across agency and with state partners, continued growth of ARBLN
* Business Survey near completion
* Career index plus being implemented
* Developing social media strategy within confines of state agency to promote business engagement

## Slide 25: What was most helpful about receiving TA?

* Changed agency culture to shift paradigm to business as a customer
* Ability to learn and connect with other states
* Focus on business engagement and skills needs to better serve our future workforce
* Helped promote shift to employer-driven workforce development
* Increased Awareness and Use of Labor Market Information
* Encouraged framework for cohesion across the agency

## Slide 26: Next Steps, Future Directions, and Goals

* Launch the ARBLN to operate independently
* Social media platform for business engagement
* Survey sent out for business customers

## Slide 27: **Questions?**

## Slide 28: Contact Information

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