Please stand by for realtime captions. >> Please stand by for realtime captions. >>

 Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the Explore VR webinar how does the dual customer approach support dual VR outcomes my name is Katie Allen on the knowledge [ Indiscernible ] I will go over some logistics before you begin the webinar. First we ask that anyone calling in to listen to the webinar please mute your phones. This is to avoid broadcasting any background noise in your environment if you cannot find your phones mute button less \* six and it will mute most phones. We encourage you to listen from your computer speakers during the webinar if possible. Second I will explain how we handle questions and comments during the presentation. There's a question and comment box located in the upper right corner of the screen were many people are taking greetings. We encourage you to type all questions and comments related to the content of the presentation in the box. You can take your questions during the presentation, we reserved time at the end of the presentation to answer and address your questions and comments. After the presentation is complete there will be a link to the evaluation, which will appear on your screen at the end of the question-and-answer period. Please follow the link to complete the webinar evaluation. If you are a certified rehabilitation Counselor requesting CRC credit, you must complete the evaluation. To receive the credit. This webinar is worth one CRC credit. Finally, the webinar is being recorded and will be archived on Www.explorevr.org. After the live webcast. When you visit Explore VR you can find information about all archived webinars and upcoming ones as well. If you have questions about what I've said so far, I will be monitoring the cash does question and comment box throughout the presentation and will respond accordingly. Your host Cecilia Gandolfo will introduce the presenters and the agenda.

 Hello, everyone. I hope you are having a good day. I would like to welcome you to our webinar as Katie said how do the dual customer - - how does the dual customer approach support VR outcomes. The webinar is brought to you through the job driven rehabilitation technical assistance Center or JD-VRTAC. My name is Cecilia Gandolfo and I am the codirector of the Center along with my colleague [ Indiscernible ] today we are thrilled to bring to you our guest presenters Kathy West Evans, and that Butler - - Beth Butler.

The objectives for this webinar, RS follows, to explore why and how the our developed a dual customer strategy. To review the customer strategy and how it benefits both the individual and business. To understand the difference between job development and business relations. To learn how the national employment team or NET was built and what services it offers to business. To explore how the connection with business benefits VR counselors and individual customers in the career and employment planning process. To learn about the talent acquisition portal or TAP including why and how this tool was developed. What are the benefits of TAP to VR , individuals, and business customers. To discuss the new business related language in the rehab act which was amended by WIOA. Those are our objectives were today. Before turning things over to Kathy and Beth, let me tell you about the JD-VRTAC in case any of you are unclear - - unfamiliar with the center. >> The JD-VRTAC has goals which are to improve skills of state VR agency staff, other rehab professionals and providers of VR services, who are trained to provide job driven VR services and supports to people with disabilities, employers, and customized training providers. There are four core areas that the JD-VRTAC focuses on. They are business engagement, employer support, labor market information and customized training providers. The JD-VRTAC is funded through the rehab services administration. >> The JD-VRTAC consists of a partnership with several entities. First the Institute for community inclusion or ICI which is out of the University of Massachusetts in Boston. And we are working in partnership with jobs for the future, the University of Arkansas, the University of Washington, the United States business leadership network, the Association of University centers on disabilities, and the Council of state administrators of locational rehabilitation. We are working in collaboration with the national Council of State agencies for the blind. Or NCSAB. That said, I like to turn things over now to Kathy West Evans. >> I will watch for comments to see if I need to speak up. First they want to start by solving the Mr. - - mystery of what CSAVR is. If the membership director of the 80 public vocational rehabilitation agency directors across the country. That includes the programs that serve the general population as well as the individuals who are blind or have a vision loss and combined agency. We have programs

 in every state, the territories and the District of Columbia. The public system serves about 1.2 million people with disabilities each year. We have roughly 25,000 staff. We are also partnered with the true - - two other large programs in the country and that's the Veterans Administration both rehab in employment where we have 10,000 joint speakers and the American Indian rehabilitation program. The American Indian rehabilitation program for those of you who don't know, are 85 programs that are on or near native American reservations and Alaskan villages. For those of you working in the field, you know that we have several partners and those are a couple of them. Collectively we do serve the largest talent pool of individuals with disabilities. We are supported by our leadership and business consultants and we have a very strong community partner network as well as our university partners. Thank you ICI and our other partners. For allowing us to have [ Indiscernible ] we also have a strategic alliance with the USBLN the US business leadership network. We partner with - - we also partner with the national industry liaison group. Which is the acronym you see the NILG, and the NILG is the membership organization of compliance officers within companies and we will talk about 503 but these are the people inside of companies that focus on compliance for federal contractors. SHRM which is the society of human resource managers. We have memberships with them in various states around the country our business teams there. As well as our local chambers. That is who we are. The national organization. >> What we did was we had worked with the university partners and are - - NRSP to support a national employment conference for several years. In 2004 at that employment conference, we asked 35 of our business partners to join us. The purpose of this was that we were working in individual VR agencies and I was a VR counselor myself. I work in a community agency, I worked in the state of Washington for 14 years I was in the RSA regional office before coming to CSAVR. I also have family members that were served by VR. What we started noticing in our work with business, was as we were outreaching in certain states those businesses also wanted to be connected in other states. We did not know how to connect them. We also started to see businesses going national and global and having insight into what we could be doing to support individual customers as they built their plans. And provide information to VR. So we were not just building a [ Indiscernible ] but we were building it with intent. We were beginning with the end in mind. So that we understood what business look like and so those plans were tied to that. And that we were engaging our business partners upfront so we're meeting their employment needs, but also developing relationships to allow us to develop strategies for employing people. That can be anything from direct hires to bringing in people for internships on job training. Supported employment, the use of any kind of supports in the workplace. What we did was we listened to those 35 businesses, and we learn from them what would be valuable to them. This is what we call the dual customer strategy. Understanding that if we understand what business means, then we can build those that are plans and we have better outcomes for the individuals. If you individual - - InVision role of a VR counselor in vision that we are building together to make a good match between the two customers and support the success of the relationship. So what the business is told us was your hard-to-find we don't know were VR is there a different names in every state. We want to connect with you and work with you but how do we do that? We don't want to develop a model with you that we redevelop 80 times. So build a team, start working as a team. That's what you heard as the national M

 - - employment team or the NET. Each one committed a lead business person to work as part of the national team. I saw John [ Indiscernible ]'s name popped up so I'm sorry John but I'm going to pick on you. John is our lead NET connection for the state of Illinois. For example, when we have a company that we work with and you will see that Beth has worked in several companies, but I will use lows. They have a footprint in Illinois but they also have a footprint in California, they have a footprint in Georgia North Carolina, there are seven different locations for Lowe's when you look at them and their distribution center . Building a model with a company like that really required that we all come together, learn from the business but also learn from each other. Building the infrastructure that allows us to work as a national team, making the infrastructure easily accessible. If a business starts working with John in Illinois and wants to expand that relationship, John and I can work together and connect the other states. Or if a company comes to me I know who the lead points of contact are. So if I develop corporate relationships, I am able to pull the team together. And to do it with a network is sustainable. I think another key thing here is really building a business relationship. Not just looking at job development. I want to be clear about that because job development is really looking at an individual and what type of work they want to go to and what kind of employment they want to be in and then looking for a job that matches. It's focused on an individual situation. When we are looking at business relations we want to understand that company as a whole. They are not just an employee perk we had [ Indiscernible ] from Lowes - - join our conference and he says something that sticks with me all the time. We are not an employer we are a business. If you don't know the difference, meet me in the hallway afterward. What he said was we have employed all of these people with disabilities, I don't know who or what their disabilities are, what I do is that they contribute to our bottom line. That is the key in business is figuring out how we can support them. >> Really building that trust with the business. I think that's incredibly important in the age we are in right now with a focus on compliance. Whether we are working with the federal agency, the federal government that is under the executive order to hire people with disabilities or working for a contractor that is under the compliance of 503 and [ Indiscernible ] which is focused on federal contractors and hiring individuals with disabilities and being proactive in looking at voluntary self-disclosure . Whether we are working with either one of those types of entities, the key thing is building the trust. What business is telling us is we don't know what we don't know. We are afraid ask. For those of you in the field of VR you all know disability is a mystery to a lot of people. They don't know what it means, they don't know how to act. - - Asked. And with a lot of companies we are starting by building a strategic plan. Understanding that impacting corporate culture and opening the dialogue around disability inside of a company is a key element to develop a culture, develop a process and develop a company that is willing to consider individuals and by the way if they have a disability, that is part of what we do. That is not just hiring, that is also in retention. We know disability happens at any time during the employment lifecycle, so how do we look with companies to keep people working. We know that is particularly important with our aging workforce but also veterans and anyone that acquires a disability during their employment lifecycle. A lot of the work we do with companies at the corporate level in particular, is around that strategic planning peace. I think the benefits that VR brings to the relationship is we are not a compliance agency, we are not attorneys, we have a network of resources we can draw from whether it's at the national, state, or local level. We have partners we can bring to the table. If we need work with the ADA training, or help with assistive technologies or consultation on any number of things, we have a network that we can draw from to leverage and bring to that company to help increase the hiring and meeting their employment needs. Staff education and awareness is one of the services that we talked about and that could vary from the Americans with disabilities act as amended to any kind of an employment law looking at assistive technology in the workplace, building out and helping companies look at how disability is part of a diversity inclusion initiative and for some companies they have been there for a long time, for others they are just starting to realize that disability is the largest diversity community there is. And that it crosses every other diversity community that has been focused on in the diversity and inclusion initiative. Again retention, and focusing on how we keep people working . Companies are very interested in financial support and resource development. And whether it is a tax credit or a deduction, or the use of on-the-job training or paid internships, or developing business based training programs with companies, there's a variety of ways that we could support companies. I think when you're working with the smaller sized company that may not have their own HR department, VR plays a role in helping support that process.

 Not only of hiring, but how we can help accommodate people to be successful in the workplace. Around technical assistance and consultations, again,

 help us find resources out there and it could be anything from assistive technology to advice on compliance plans or customer service, marketing, because we all know that companies are looking at making their products more accessible as well as their work base. We want to be available for that. >> So one of the other things that business talked with us about is how do we easily access your talent pool? I talked about compliance. One of the biggest challenges of 503 and VEVRAA is the whole voluntary self-disclosure piece. Businesses are very confused about the difference between the ADA and 503 and VEVRAA. The ADA being in employment law, 503 and VEVRAA being an affirmative action program. As you know if you are a federal contractor, the voluntary self-disclosure piece is allowed upfront p.m. - - preemployment. A lot of people with disabilities have been taught how to work under the ADA and they don't want to disclose voluntarily because frankly they are afraid if they do then they will not be considered for employment. One of the things we talked with business about was how do we build out that talent pool. And how do we bring individual candidates and customers together with companies that want to hire. From this talent pool. We worked with companies, we work with the US via land we work with the NILG the liaison group. We consulted with individuals who were candidates in the VR system, who were very interested in looking at employment opportunities, maybe not in their own area, but potentially in other states. And we look for a partner who could help us build out platforms that are fully accessible. Our partner with the acquisition portal or TAP. It's a disability on company out of the San Diego area. They've been offering a [ Indiscernible ] which is fully accessible for about 15 years. We approach them about working with us to build that TAP. We engaged individuals who have a background in assistive technology and accessibility, because we knew that the thing we saw out there about the other platforms is that they were not accessible. With the talent acquisition portal individuals coming in are referred to the system only individual is with disabilities are on the system. Only people coming in are voluntarily self disclosing. It's open to the VR agencies, we have about 12 dozen candidates. We were just informed that we have a subcontract with the ticket to work team and will be bringing candidates out of the [ Indiscernible ] to TAP and we are also bringing - - we had all their partners were a discussion with AAP about bringing other candidates on board. Essentially, what TAP does is it allows an individual to put together a profile , and it walks you through the steps of how to do that. And you are done with you push a button and it creates a resume. You have a print edition. When you're ready, your profile goes up in the system, and you are able to indicate skill sets, do you speak a second language? What degree do you have? Experiences? And we also worked with Google to be able to use their Google map function. See you can look for positions in your specific area which we know

 is important for individuals who depend on transportation and maybe a public transportation system. Where they can only work in a certain area where they have access to that. It allows you to control that. Again, we also heard from individual customers of the system that they want to be able to look at relocating because they had family and other areas or - - for whatever reason. We also serve individuals who are willing to relocate for careers. It offers that opportunity as well. Part of our contract with Social Security and [ Indiscernible ] is that we built out accessible virtual career fair platforms, a job fair, and we will be launching our first one of those in April. Businesses will be online and candidates will have a chance to interact with them virtually online through TAP. We are building out a career fair piece and the difference here is we will use this with the school looking at how we start to impact a career discussion within a school. Thinking about how we can bring our business partners onto address students, teachers, and parents about potential careers. And get individuals thinking about how I transition out of high school and into a career , what are some of the other opportunities out there so we don't have opportunities - - individuals graduating and onto Social Security and into nothing. So really starting to work with some of our business customers who are excited about this and about engaging in a dialogue with young people. Because the talent acquisition portal is owned in a partnership between CSAVR and a person we have potential for building it out. We are constantly getting feedback from business, individual customers and staff and how we build it. >> I wanted to touch briefly upon the opportunities we have under the workforce innovation and opportunity act. In the past was under the rehabilitation act as a medic, there was section 109. It basically said that VR has the ability to educate employers about the ADA and about VR. It was the ADA of 1990. When we had a chance for reauthorization, we wanted to impact what that meant and how VR could have a more active role with business and how we could do that at the national level. If you reference in the new law section 418 you will see it talks about training and services for employers. This is specifically related to VR and our work with business. You'll see it reflects what I talked about in terms of the talent acquisition portal. But it includes the ability to work nationally between states and across states to provide work based learning opportunities, to help business recruit and train employees, to help promote disability awareness, to provide that consultation and technical assistance. And we even focused on states having the opportunity if the state is in an order of selection and we are contacted by a company or individual who is in danger of losing their job, giving the states the ability to lose - - move those individuals into a priority status to help them maintain employment. An understanding that it doesn't make sense to let someone lose their job and then come to VR. It's easier to really engage when they are still working and look at ways to keep them working. Under section 412 in the new legislation you will also see that emphasis on coordination with employers and having [ Indiscernible ] for state rehab Council and built-in with your plan. Again,

 the ability to look at a different role for VR in terms of our work with business and broader and more national scope. As we are partnering with the workforce system, really understanding we have a Nish and that niche is building relationships with businesses up front. So that candidates are coming in and if they happen to be candidates with disabilities, we are seeing as a resource, >>

 I think we are in a huge time of opportunity. As I said we have the federal executive order, for those of you who know about the national governance Association and the work that Governor. Montel did out of Delaware. They had initiative called the better bottom line which focused on individuals with disabilities being employed in the state. And bringing the governors together so we've seen great moves in Delaware. Washington state, Michigan is stepping up. South Dakota, these are states , governments who are working collaboratively with VR in the community partners to really build out strategies around increasing the hiring of people with disabilities and state government. Again, section 503 and VEVRAA are focusing on how we take the compliance out of this and how we help business understand that we have access to talent. We are not marketing a disability. We have talent. We know the individuals we are working with. We understand you. Want to help make a good match and supported. At the same time we are seeing is shrinking labor force. There are companies who are very excited about working with young people in high school because frankly want to engage them and get them thinking about careers in their industry but not just in their industry in her company. We are starting to see job fairs occurring in junior high school and high school and trying to find ways to get access to the talent.

 The federal government is the largest employer in the country. I believe that they employ about 2.5 million people. In the next five years, 40% of their workforce will be eligible for retirement. Think about what that creates in terms of career opportunities there. Again, we know the disability happens at any time during the lifecycle of employment. So as we are seeing individuals who are in auto accidents, or whatever situation they are in, that contributes to a condition of a disability, how do we keep them working? Whether it is aging, accident, illness or veterans returning from service. At the same time we understand we are working in a changing workplace. We have more companies looking at work from home, teleworking. As we build relationships with them, we are looking at how we build access to computer systems and working from home and working remotely and making that acceptable. It is again we have a great talent pool out there that business needs and they are people that want to work we just have to look at how we work together to make it happen. Businesses are starting to understand that, diversity brings innovation to a workplace. That dialogue within the diversity and inclusion market is striking home as we are seeing innovations start to realize things that people with disabilities have pushed for benefit everyone. The workplace has become more productive because we are using technology and making work better and easier for everyone. We are continuing to focus on VR's customers. The individual and the business as well as our partners which includes our community, universities, our strategic alliances with the USBLN and other [ Indiscernible ] organizations. We also continue to focus on why does this make sense ? It makes sense from the individual perspective and the company perspective because we are bringing talent. But for everyone in this country it should be something we all invest in because we know at a minimum, every dollar we invest in vocational rehab and keeping someone working or putting them back to work there's a seven dollar return in terms of the tax payments that individual makes and the dollars saved from coming on - - off of other government benefits. Whatever way you want to look at it when you're working with a company that is helping them understand, how a benefit is to them how working with them as a customer, building that trust, noting those relationships. Building those models that work for companies and work for individuals and being part of that talent solution. And part of that - - it's almost an extension of a company because they will call us and say wow there is a person that we think needs an accommodation, but I am sitting here in Seattle in my company is in Florida. Can you send someone out to take a look and make a recommendation. In a way that we could make that worker more efficient. When you have that partnership, that says a lot about the ability to be part of a team and really work with the customer and open that door to talent and that talent being individuals with disabilities. With that, I want to introduce my longtime partner and friend Beth Butler. When I talked about building out the whole strategy around the NET and TAP, Beth worked with Southtrust Bank in Alabama and she was part of that initial discussion in 2004. When Southtrust was acquired by Wilco via she moved the partnership . When [ Indiscernible ] was acquired by Wells Fargo she moved the partnership to Wells Fargo. Wells Fargo continues to be a partner today. And when I guess she got tired of being acquired in the financial interests or she moved to Lowe's and she's in a phenomenal job they are building out one of the very best centralized accommodations strategies within a company around this country. Other companies come to her. I want Beth to be able to share her personal story because for her this is a personal investment. She has been there building with us and a first year of partnership with Beth at Lowe's they had

 hired close to 600 people from VR. These are partnerships working, they are going to work in working for individuals in the company but it's not without company partners like death that this happens. With that, Beth.

Thank you, Kathy. I thank you for the opportunity to join today and speak with you all. It's funny Kathy and I have presented so much of the she tells my story better than I do. I appreciate that. This has been a journey. As some of you may know my journey was VR started as a person with a disability in obtaining services as early as their great down in South Florida where I grew up. VR was there that's where I got my first counselor. I left because I have to remind people that they're worth such things as a typewriter so I learn to touch type in third grade.

 I have low vision so reading my handwriting in third grade was difficult. So presenting on I really reconnected with VR a great deal in Birmingham Alabama where I attended law school. As I made the transition from law school into my career, again VR was there to partner with me and provide me the computers and the low vision software on the computer to equip me to become confident to begin my career as an attorney. As Kathy said, after the journey for me from a professional perspective in the human resources Department at Southtrust Bank that was located in Alabama back in 1997, which seems like a very long time ago. But as a federal contractor, that was really the platform in which I started to do the disability work. There was a company. I was the Io compliant administrator, so obviously we were very close with the OFCCP in terms of afforded - - affirmative action compliance. I was in to deuce to the liaison group and partnered closely with the vocational rehabilitation agency there. In terms of just supporting our employees that needed accommodations, we would actually engage with the counselors in the interactive process. This is before the ADA. We were engaging in - - I'm sorry it wasn't before the 88 was right on the onset. All of it was new for us. Because of the partnerships, the transition was very positive and very relational which is really key to this work. As Kathy said, later on, Wachovia acquired Southtrust and it was a great opportunity for me not only as a professional, to be a part of an organization that really had a tremendous culture

 and the diversity strategy that was really something we had not had it Southtrust. In leveraging that opportunity Wachovia was very open to exploring the opportunities of expanding their diversity strategy to include people with disabilities. I relocated here to Charlotte. Back in 2007, and began to lead that work. Again, I think one of the things that I am passionate about in this work is eliminating the fear anything there is still tremendous fear out there in both small and large companies when it comes to compliance. 503 has - - is no exception to that. Now that we have folks that are concerned about what they can ask and can't ask, if they disclose how does all of that work? Again, as Kathy said, this is really a great time for VR for the national employment team in the USBLN

 in all of these organizations about this work to collaborate and partner and start to develop strategies to help companies move the work through. Because it's clearly not going away. And Kathy, you said it, as we look at the retiring age, 2.5 million federal employees , 40% of which are going to reach retirement age. That is a huge opportunity . I see that more and more within the corporate world is it's not even a direct hires are the people disabilities, as much as it is what happens when in my employment cycle, something changes. I develop a disability at some point in my career. What if my employer does what is he going to do how will I be supported? That is really how we develop and transform the corporate culture particularly

 in Lowe's but we built that a centralized service delivery model. Were we supported the employees at Lowe's a huge footprint of over 265,000 employees. All across the country to really benefit from the national employment team and as Kathy said, the single points of contact so that if I am sitting in Charlotte North Carolina, and I have a need in the state of Washington, I have a point of contact that I can connect whether it's my local HR manager or regional HR director with to conduct either training or to come in and sit down and facilitate conversation. Maybe LinkedIn a community agency or partner that provides the services. Is a collaboration of effort in support and services. That is invaluable in business. Advising on what it is that you need to do. The issues we face on a day-to-day basis around accommodations. Some can be simple, but some can be very complex. It is a very sensitive time, for an employee who may be struggling whether it's in their performance or there is some type of accommodation practice made or the there has been a change. Something has happened whether it's externally perhaps a personal thing happen that triggered a recurrence

 of an issue whether it's mental health than those kind of things. How does an HR manager maneuver through that.? How do we partner with them to engage an employee that may be doesn't acknowledge that there is an issue going on? I really appreciate the retention piece of what you all do. I love to hear about section for 18 of the new WIOA that speaks directly to that because then that empowers you as VR professionals to reluctant to engage in that retention effort. That to me is one of the most critical opportunities we have. Is maintaining employment and retaining the talent that's there. One of the things I was most excited about as 503 came on, and that is I've always said and I've said this repeatedly so those that have heard this before but you can't legislate attitudinal change. I say that as a person with a disability, and as a person that is worked in this space for a long time. We can't legislate attitude change. It is the opportunity that we have where we are empowering people

 within companies like Wells Fargo, like Lowe's where we have the opportunity to empower senior and executive level managers

 to perhaps raise their hand and share their stories, about a disability that maybe they have struggled with. Or maybe a family member has struggled with, but opening that dialogue to include

 senior managers, executives, again they are out there. And to me 503 is an opportunity for us to really expand this. Not just with entry-level positions, not - - well that is absolutely important, and yes we are proud of the direct hires. When we really begin to transform this dialogue across this country, but we can give people the freedom to raise their hand and to stop - - self disclose. That to me will be a huge opportunity for us being able to retain the talent that is there as they do disclose. What are the sports that they need? I can see if someone's been in a senior executive position they been able to maneuver through and adapt and adopt strategies that work. Fantastic. That is something for us to learn as well. Being able to understand what made that individual successful despite the fact they have a learning disability. I think the dialogue will expand tremendously. In the next five or 10 years. I'm looking forward to what the results will be. Again, none of this, none of this can happen without the collaboration of the CSAVR the employment team and our trusted partners. That's who you guys are today. Again, I so appreciate the opportunity to speak with you and I will turn it back over to Kathy. >> Best before we go into the general questions, and I do have a closeout slide to hand out at the end. Can you tell the team here, what are some of the most important skills for VR staff to have in terms of working with his Mrs.? - - Is Mrs.

I think one of the biggest ones would be patients. Often what happens is whether it's they have a candidate that they are excited about. Our process internally tend to take far longer than we would like. That doesn't mean that there is a lack of interest or a lack of engagement on our part. It takes some time. I think patients is important. I think the other thing is to keep an open mind, and when I say that sometimes there is an idea that we have one solution and if this doesn't work then it's not - - won't work. And I think making sure that when we come to the table we are exploring all types of options. And that we are coming, we being business, are coming with our hand extended because we want to partner, and we want to find this as a successful solution. I know over the years, you tend to have a little different, depending on where you are, you may have more of a experience or you feel like you are defending yourself as a business having reached out to engage and ask for a partnership. We don't know what we don't know. We do consider you the experts in these areas. It's not a bad thing. We're not coming from a place - - we're at a point where we are managing performance and that. That is not the case. This is an opportunity for us to our two partner and find successful solutions. I think that is important in again, being responsive and making sure you are responding to whether it's a phone call an email - - and making sure that again, there is a trust that is established. I know a lot of times we found especially in the retail environment there were already relationships established at the local level with the HR partners there. That was tremendous. I would always ask the HR managers have you guys partner with anyone they are locally? And they would say will they know so-and-so. Fantastic they may not be the right person to maneuver through this issue but having a connection at the local level who can then help us partner with and identify the right resources. It's a huge help. I would say those are probably the skills that would be most beneficial.

Thank you. I think it reinforces the ability to build relationships and build trust into - - and to listen to business partners. And what the needs are and how we can be value-added. With that, Katie if you could flip back to the closing slide, 80 we can hit that the end. I know that there have been questions. If we could save a minute to come back to that final slide why do we go ahead with questions. >> I think the first question that came along was Sarah's about how do you balance building a relationship between businesses and corporate staff in the administrative VR point of contact with the relationship between the local site and local VR counselor. And Jean Miller commented on other there is a webinar plant specifically to address that topic. I did not know if you have any thoughts on that. >> A lot of our VR state agencies are building out teams at the local level.

 I just heard from Nevada. I believe they are hiring six new people to come on board. California has gone to a team strategy where they have got to VR counselors, a rehab [ Indiscernible ] any employment specialist. The point of contact for California was able to reach out to that employment specialist and local tea with any opportunities in the local team. At the national level we develop relationships with the new company partners altogether a business profile ~everyone understand the various lines of business and what we look out in terms of skill sets in the hiring process. And what their accommodation processes. That's the kind of information we can take back and VR counselors can use. I think there's a lot of reference to labor market information and when you work with a business you get real-time labor market information. Some of that we see before it comes out in research.

I hope that answer the question.

Great. I think that is good. Harriet asked the question any ideas about the common measure on business relations ? >> There's the magic $6 million question along with the regulations coming out in April. I don't know what they look like. Personally we've been asked about that and my response has been one of the measures has to be the business needed and did we meet their needs. So some level of customer satisfaction survey. I think that would be a good one. I don't know I have not seen them. Have you seen any indication of what's coming up?

Nothing.

 With a question from Jeanette regarding Mrs. a talent acquisition portal question consumers report that after entering their resumes they never hear anything from businesses. To the counselors have no way of contacting businesses to ask any questions or any other details about the job that is posted on the tap . Is not a question but an observation any comments? >> That's interesting we do have direct interface going back and forth with a lot of candidates. If you have a question. Send a question to

 tapability.org and we will get the answer for you. >> There was a question about what was the age again were we have 40% of the employees retiring next.

In the next five years they are looking about 40% retirement rate of federal employees. - - Some may stay longer but that is what they are estimating right now.

That is at all levels. As we are building the relationships with government entities we are working at bringing people in at all levels within government organizations.

I had a question from Sarah. How are we training our people to overcome the barriers presented by middle managers who historically prevent hiring individuals with disabilities?

Beth do you want to do that?

In terms of when you say what we are doing is that we has business and I will say in partnership with VR and in many cases, I think that one of the I know one of the things that we have done is to contribute to the increased awareness , the fact that we have a centralized service delivery model. And have accommodation options. I think most often for business, middle managers are not professionals in ADA or FMLA or any of those things. They are about the business. When a company steps up and begins to implement a centralized service delivery model that really manages the accommodation needs, that takes those worries and concerns off the business and puts it on to the professionals that made up my tea. Professionals that have background in vocational rehab or a background in short-term disability or long-term disability case management. They are exposed to that. That is what middle management needs is a partner to say it's okay. They could disclose they have a disability and here is what we do to partner with you. Here are the accommodation options we had. How can you support this? And oh yes. We can do it. Whether to request for intermittent absences for migraines for an employee that is not eligible for FMLA gay it. How about - - if they need absence helps it okay trouble for absenteeism. Our senior managers and middle level managers are often aware of their opportunities in that kind of thing. I think the successful partnership that we established as an accommodations team with those managers and then leveraging our partnership with VR when we need to. To identify successful solutions.

I think we are also seeing more and more of the employee resource groups or affinity groups and workplaces. These are groups that have traditionally been used with other diverse populations, race or ethnicity or gender , and now we are starting to see those formed around individuals with disabilities and family members as well as caregivers. That dialogue within the company is increasing and we are supporting the education of those teams as well. Which I think is important. >> Hopefully that will have a trickle-down effect for people when they apply for jobs that we don't encounter too many of these mid-managers. Kathy we have a question for you about the talent acquisition portal. Is it open to every state? >> Is open to every VR agency right now at no cost. We are growing it out with other partners. If you have a question about that a think my contact information comes up at the end. If you are not connected and you want to be let me know.

We had from Brian a comment businesses sometimes are very rigid requiring applicants to do many varied tasks eliminating the ability to job carved to focus on strength. Can we and if help prompt corporations to reconsider the range of tasks required for a position instead of perhaps establish two positions to handle everything? >> I'm going to let Beth weigh-in and I will say Brian to establish a relationship with that in company find out what kind of flexibility they have and how you will meet your needs and approach them with a proposal.

I would agree. It starts with the relationship. I will tell you one of the big challenges in that area is businesses consistently and I know we have heard this for years, but are asked to do more with less. It does become about the business and about the impact .

 By definition an employee with a disability has to be able to perform the functions of that position. Again, depending on the size of the company, and the types of things that resources of that particular department, that may or may not be an option to carve out certain tasks in that kind of thing and reassign tasks as an accommodation, that certainly is a common one which is reassigning nonessential job functions of the position. When you get down to cutting into the bone where you have essential functions that have to occur, in a position that is a tough situation for a business to be in. I think it has to start with the partnership that you are establishing with the manager.

If I could add one thing. Job carving is not a business term. Customized employment is not a business term. So when you say that they don't understand it. Think about reformatting how you approach it. You heard birth talk about job restructuring. There is the business term. It means the same thing you are trying to accomplish but it is in their language.

Thank you. I need to cut us off with our question and answer. We are just about at ending time. Kathy and Beth thank you so much for your time. I realize we docket to all the questions that have been asked. We do have Kathy's contact information at the end of the slide. So we can share that with you if you want to ask her a question directly. Did you want to end with something?

If Katie conflict back to slides. I just want to remind everyone and think that for always helping us build and focus here we are building a customer driven network. Which means we are building those relationships with the trust. We want to understand the business as a whole. A lot of times VR ghost HR if the company doesn't have policies and practices that support people with disabilities it doesn't matter how many candidates you get to HR they won't be hired. If there facilities are struggling with making them the business successful it doesn't matter how many candidates you get there. Look at the business as a whole. Particularly about that educational piece look at the real-time information what does it mean what does that company what did a project we have partnerships nationally with the US steel and - - USBLN the NILG and the office of personnel management. They have associations at the local level. Be engaged. We're looking at how we work together and when I say that I mean VR, the VA partners, partners in the American Indian program and mental health. How do we collaborate. So that we have the capability to deliver to business at the national state and local level. I just want to leave you with that vision. If anything?

 I would close with again the time is now. I know that sounds a bit cliché but really there are so many opportunities out there that are creating greater and greater dialogue within companies of all sizes and I encourage you and thank you all for continuing the work. It's important. >>

 Thank you very much, Kathy and Beth and Katie to have final words?

Thank you everyone for joining. Thank you and Kathy and Beth. I'm going to switch the screen to the evaluation screen. There is a link that will appear on the screen. Please take the evaluation. If you are relocation counselor seeking CRC credits you must complete the evaluation in order to receive the credits. There are links here to the webinar evaluation if you can't access it on the screen as well as to the acquisition portal. Me back >> Thank you all and have a great day.

Thank you.

[ Event Concluded ]