Locating and Engaging Federal Contractors and Subcontractors
3 – 4:30 p.m. EDT

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Operator:	Ladies and gentlemen thank you for standing by. Welcome to the Section 503 Community of Practice for Employment Network Service Providers Webinar. Today's topic is Locating and Engaging Federal Contractors and Subcontractors.
	During the presentation all participants will be in a listen-only mode. Afterwards we will conduct a question and answer session. At that time if you have a question please press the 1 followed by the 4 on your telephone. If you need to reach an operator at any time, please Star 0.
	As a reminder this Webinar is being recorded Wednesday, September 10, 2014. I would now like to turn the Webinar over to Sallie Rhodes, Ticket to Work Specialist. Please go ahead.
Sallie Rhodes:	Thank you (Darrell). Good afternoon everyone. Welcome to the September Section 503 Community of Practice Forum and again today's topic is Locating and Engaging Federal Contractors and Subcontractors.
	My name is Sallie Rhodes. I'm a Ticket to Work Specialist, and I work with the operation support manager for the Ticket to Work Program. I am pleased to introduce my co-presenter today, Marie Strahan. Marie is an attorney by trade. She actually has worked 20 years at the Social Security Administration, retired recently, and some of those years she spent working on the Ticket to Work Program.
	During today's presentation we will be referencing and visiting several Web sites. If you're in the listen-only mode, you're going to miss the value of the live searches that we are going to conduct. The PowerPoint presentation for today's COP is found in the information center on the Your Ticket to Work Web site.

Click on Upcoming Events and look for the Section 503 COP listing for September the 10th to find the link to the PowerPoint. Please be patient with us during this presentation as we are going to attempt to conduct several live searches. As a result we will be moving back and forth between our PowerPoint to several Web sites.

Since we are going to be using very large and active databases it may take a little time to conduct each search. We are going to hold all questions and opportunities for audience participation to the end of the presentation. Consequently, you may want to jot down any questions that arise during the formal presentation and/or any ideas or tips that you might want to share with the audience on your ideas of how to promote Section 503.

We will open the discussion up for audience participation after the formal presentation. Before we begin with today's topic, I want to do a quick overview of the key requirements of the changes to Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act that took effect in March of this year.

Section 503 prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating in employment against individuals with disabilities. Under the revised 503 regulations the affirmative action requirements apply to all federal contractors and subcontractors with $10,000 or more in awards. These are the general affirmative action requirements.

In addition, federal contractors that have $50,000 or more in awards and 50 or more employees must prepare and maintain affirmative action programs. These federal contractors are required to undertake appropriate outreach and positive recruitment activities reasonably designed to effectively recruit qualified individuals with disabilities.

Examples of such outreach and recruitment activities listed in the regulations include but are not limited to enlisting the assistance and support of groups such as American Job Centers, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, employment networks, and local disability organizations, the Department of Veterans Affairs and disability student services offices at universities and community colleges.

You can learn more about the new 503 requirements by visiting the section 503 page on the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Web site listed on this slide. You can also visit the Section 503 page on the Your Ticket to Work Web site.

When you go on the Your Ticket to Work Web site you want to go to the information center and look for Section 503 in the left navigation. You also find 503 information in the information center under Events Archive.

I have listened to a number of 503 Webinars and training sessions in the last eight months. During the question and answer sessions of almost every presentation, somebody always asks, "Where can I find information on organizations that are federal contractors and subcontractors?"

The answer is always that there is no specific place to find this information. While staff at the Ticket to Work Operation Support Manager agree that there is no one source of this information and there is no Web site designed specifically for this purpose, we have identified several Web sites that Ticket to Work service providers can use to identify organizations that are federal contractors and subcontractors.

Using a tool for something other than its stated purpose is something we all do. We have all repurposed or jerry-rigged something to make it work for other tasks at some time in our lives. People often use a shoe as a hammer, glass jars to store nails and screws, and pillows as weapons in a pillow fight.

The objective of today's training is to introduce three Web sites where organizations awarded funding by the federal government are catalogued for specific business and administrative purposes. We will explain how these Web sites can be used to locate and learn about the work of federal contractors and subcontractors and conduct sample searches on each Web site.

Since identifying federal contractors is only the first step in helping Social Security disability beneficiaries to access employment opportunities with federal contractors, we will provide tips on what to do after identifying a few federal contractors for targeted outreach efforts for Section 503 employment purposes.

What we are suggesting in this presentation is that the Web sites we are going to explore can be good sources of information on federal contractors. You need to remember that each Web site has its own specific purpose and we are going to take the information we find on each Web site and repurpose it to develop a strategic plan to assist your Ticket customers to take advantage of recent changes to Section 503.

I also want to point out that these Web sites - in addition to being very large databases - they are updated constantly. And at this time of year, the updating activity is at an all-time high because of federal contractors being let at this time of year.

So when you do a search on any of these Web sites, you're going to probably want to print or certainly make good notes on the information that come up because if you do the same search the next day you may have a hard time finding that exact same federal contractor.

Now I'm going to turn it over to Marie to provide some information on federal contractor employment opportunities and to do our first live search. Marie?

Marie Strahan: Thank you Sallie. Hello everyone. I want to start by saying that the employment opportunities available through federal contracting are significant. In August of 2013, approximately 22% or an estimated 34 million workers in our nation were employed by over 200,000 federal contractors and subcontractor companies.

While these numbers have probably dropped a little in the past year due to cuts in federal spending it is still estimated that 2.7% of all private sector jobs are directly funded by federal contracts. When the Department of Labor published the Section 503

revised regulations it estimated that federal contractors would need to hire an additional 594,580 individuals with disabilities to meet the new 7% utilization goal established in the 503 regs.

I want to start us out in this search by looking at three Web sites maintained by the federal government as data banks on organizations conducting work for the federal government. These are administrative Web sites.

Now we have a slide that shows some links to the three federal searchable Web sites that we're going to cover today. For those of you who are not on (Gather Place) you may want to jot these Web sites down so that you can follow along with the live searches we are going to conduct.

The first is the federal procurement data system. It's located at https://www.fpds.gov/fpdsng_cms/index.php/en/. The next Web site is the system for awards management. The e-mail or the Web site address for that systems is https://www.sam.gov, G-O-V. The third Web site we're going to cover is USA Spending. It's www.usaspending.gov/.

Okay, so we're going to begin with the Federal Procurement Data System. The FPDS is the central repository for all federal contractor data. The purpose of FPDS is to provide up to date information and ongoing reports on federal contracts whose estimated value is $3000 or more.

Every modification to an organization's contract, regardless of the dollar value of the contract, must be reported to FPDS. Information on grants and cooperative agreements awarded by the federal government are not reported to FPDS. Again, information on grants and cooperative agreements are not reported in the FPDS.

In addition to federal procurement reports the Web site also provides a list of the top 100 contractors by fiscal year and a small business contracting report. FPDS is probably the most highly searchable database for basic information on all federal contractors. ENs can use this Web site to identify local and

regional companies who are potential employers that have contracts with the federal government.

Once identified, the EN would need to visit the company's Web site to find information on job openings. When you visit the Web site for FPDS it is advisable to spend a few minutes reviewing the successful search techniques section prior to using the system.

Okay, now we are going to conduct a few live searches on the FPDS system. Our goal here is to show that searches can require multiple attempts and a hint of creativity. For example, you may want to try and use three or four descriptor words for the same type of job or you may want to try to reduce or expand your search by location and with other types of filters offered on the Web site.

There are many, many variables and you need to be willing to spend some time playing with this search engine. Remember it is a very large and highly active database and it changes from day to day and sometimes from hour to hour because of constant and ongoing data input by over 60 federal agencies and literally for hundreds of federal contracts - actually 200,000 federal contracts.

Let's start with a couple examples of state-only searches. The state-only searches work best when you have a sparsely populated or rural area with only a few federal contractors. But many of these states have military bases with a fair amount of opportunity for federal contracting. These searches do not work for states like Florida, New York, California, Illinois, and states with concentration of federal agencies like Maryland or Virginia.

So let's begin with just a couple of key words. Let's plug in to the search engine - can we go to the search engine?

Sallie Rhodes: They're there.

Marie Strahan: Okay great. And let's plug in "Tennessee, 2014." I think you have to put - yeah.

Sallie Rhodes: Yes.

Marie Strahan: There we go. Okay if you'll notice right at the top of the page it says "Results Page." You'll notice that there are ten pages or I'm sorry eight pages of results. Now if you go to the right column and you click on "Action Obligation $," that will help us to get to the higher dollar figure contractors. Let's look at the first contractor that pulls up - Aphena Pharma Solutions.

In order to get more information on that contract than what we see right here, we would go to the award ID number and click on "View." But first let's look - okay, go ahead. That's good. First let's look at the action obligation amount. Can you point to that for us, Sallie? It's 1,857,454. So that clearly meets the requirements of Section 503 of over 50,000.

Now let's go to View, back to the award ID, and click on View over to the right, correct. Okay, now you see a lot more information about this particular contract. We see that the contracting office agency name is the Centers for Disease Control at the Department of Health and Human Services.

If you scroll down on this data page for this particular contract you will see the date signed, the completion date, the information on the contractor address and phone numbers -- and let's see what else we have here -- and the congressional district. Sometimes that's important. All the information about this contractor, including location and contact data and the type of work that the contractor does is on this particular data sheet.

All right, let's try another one. Let's go back to the search page and let's go to another rural state - Nebraska - and type in "2014."

Sallie Rhodes: Can you see it Marie?

Marie Strahan: Yes I can. Okay so now let's go to Action Obligation and the money sign over on the right hand column. Okay and we have a $2 million contract up here at the very top of the page. But I'm

going to point something out to you here. We're not going to go into the larger file.

But if you notice, this is a Nebraska company, okay? And the vendor city is St. Paul, Minnesota. The contracting office is in Omaha, Nebraska. So you do have to read these very, very carefully. Read through the contractor information and look at the location of the company but also remember to look at the place of performance of the work.

It may be a Nebraska company that's doing federal contracting work in Texas, in which case you'll probably not want to contact - you're not going to want to contact that company.

Okay now another option is to search by product or service and then by location, typically by the name of the state. This works best in highly populated states or in areas with a lot of federal agency presence. For example, let's look at a search for landscaping - let's type in landscaping comma Maryland - MD - comma 2014. And then let's go down and refine that search by action obligation again. We always want to pay attention to the amount of the contract.

Okay so we have the very first - let's just go to the very first one on the list - Global Engineering Solutions, Inc. They work for the National Institutes of Health. The action obligation is $195,499 - clearly over the $50,000 requirement.

And they work in general landscaping, interior layout and design. They are located in Rockville, Maryland. And if we clicked on the award ID view section we would find out more information about the type of work and the full amount and the numbers of years in the contract.

As you can see, the contract was signed in 2013. The completion date is not until 2015. The total contract amount again is $195,499. And below that information you'll see the address and location and phone number of the company.

It looks like you see socio-economic data. If you'll notice it's a minority owned business and a woman owned business. They are for profit, so they're a for-profit company, and they're SBA certified. You can get all kinds of information. You can also see that the company's annual revenue is $2.8 million, so it's a pretty sizable company.

All right, now let's look at one more. Let's go to food service in California, another big state and see what we get. 2014 - You always want to go by date. This goes back to the early '90s, the database. No results found.

Sallie Rhodes: And this is interesting because at another time when Marie and I were doing this contracts came up here.

Marie Strahan: Can we switch - can we do...

Sallie Rhodes: Okay.

Marie Strahan...foodservice, all one word?

Sallie Rhodes: I'll try that, okay. Nope.

Marie Strahan: How about food? I know there's a lot of food being served out there in those California military bases. Go. Nope.

Sallie Rhodes: Why don't you try - let's try 2013 and see if it's possible that they have an extended contract or something.

Marie Strahan: Yeah. Or just leave off the date altogether.

Sallie Rhodes: That's a good idea.

Marie Strahan: And then you will see maybe multi-year contractors.

Sallie Rhodes: There you go.

Marie Strahan:	Yeah. So you really do have to play with the search engine a little bit. Now if you go down to - if you go down the right column, the column where you can refine the search you can sort by - if you'll see you can sort by date signed. You see that? It's about five down, Sallie, way down the - date signed.
	Okay, so even though we had 2014 in there here we have a date signed contract for $14,000 for July 9, 2014. Now let's go and go by action obligation because that $14,000 contract is not going to meet our $50,000 requirement under 503.
	Aha, this one was signed in October 2012 - $5,247,000 - Forest Service. Let's go up and look at View. Let's find out a little bit more about this contractor. Let's click on the View button. Aha, date signed 10/20/12. The contract will not be completed until 12/20/14. It's a contract total amount of $8,819,000.
	If you scroll down the contacting office agency name is the Forest Service. And I believe this feeds the firefighters. The National Interagency Fire Center. It's Blagg - the name of the company is Blagg's Food Service. They're located in Bella Vista, California, and there's their phone number. Their annual revenue is over $10 million, so this is a big company, a lot of potential of opportunities for employment.
	Okay, again I want to stress that FPDS is a highly searchable database. Don't be afraid to get creative, do a lot of scrolling, refine the searches by agency, by location, by action obligation, amount, and etcetera. You really need to do a little bit of playing around and be creative with this.
	Now I'm going to turn it back to Sallie. And I think she's going to do a live search for us on the SAM Web site.
Sallie Rhodes:	Thank you Marie. That was very interesting. I do want to say one thing before I talk about SAM though, is that if you go to the Ticket to Work Web site and you go to the section - the information center and the Section 503 page - when you click on Section 503 and you look at the information on finding federal

contractors you will actually find a step by step guide to locating federal contractors on the Federal Procurement Data System. So in addition to this Webinar and PowerPoint you can use that as a resource too when you're looking at this Federal Procurement Data System.

All right, so a second source of information on federal contractors is the System for Awards Management or SAM. It is used as a primary information source of federal agencies and federal contracting officials. The information at SAM is a combination of information from two other federal procurement databases - the Federal Procurement System and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistants.

Federal contractors must register when doing business with the federal government. Once of the differences here is that it's not just federal contractors that are listed here. You should all be familiar with SAM as your organization had to register in the SAM as a requirement of the EN Request for Quotation. And the quotation must be there for you to get your blanket purchase agreement.

Registration in SAM is quick and easy. Updates to an organization's SAM registration are made at a minimum once a year and more often if changes occur in the organization's name, address, contact information, and -- most importantly for ENs - banking information.

What is important for the purpose of today's presentation is the fact that all federal contractors must register in the SAM and update their information regularly. With the same information being available in all federal contractors registered in the SAM, the Ticket to Work Service Provider Network can use this database to perform simple searches to identify organizations receiving federal funding and/or to determine if a particular company that you want to check into is receiving federal funding.

To conduct a search on SAM you're going to go to the SAM Web site which we already told you was www.sam.gov -- that'll get you there - and click on search records. Let's go to the Web site as we go through this.

Okay so on the SAM Web site, you go to Search Records. Click on that. And then what you want to do when it comes up - it didn't come up yet - give it a minute - you're going to want to click on Advanced Search Entity. And you're going to want to make sure the active registration is checked. See that it is checked. You only want to have active registrations.

And I would advise that you also check registrations with delinquent - no for registrations with delinquent federal debt. That's just my advice. You may want to deal with companies that have federal debt, but I think I would eliminate those.

If you are researching a particular business to see if it's a federal contractor, you want to click on entity and enter the name of the business and the D-U-N-S number. So let's do a quick search here. Let's enter Maximus Federal Services, Inc. Click it right there. There it is.

Now some of you may know the D-U-N-S number of the organization but I'm just putting in a name so that - all right, and then go up to the search and let's see if Maximus is a federal contractor. There you go. So you do know then that Maximus is a federal contactor.

All right let's go back. In most cases you're probably just looking for organizations. You're trying to identify organizations that are federal contractors instead of researching a particular one. So if you're not looking for information on a particular business, you want to start by clicking on entity type to narrow your search to a particular type of business.

Click on it and you'll see here entity type, okay. And you'll see here there's a bunch of options under entity type -- federal government, other government entities, local government, other types of entities, educational institutions. You have all of those options for narrowing your search.

All right let's go back and unclick that, all right. And let's click on location. You would click on that to identify organizations in a

specific city. You have the option here of entering a city, a state, a Congressional district, and/or a ZIP code, all right?

Now let's click on Socio-Economic Status, which is another option for narrowing your search. And this is where you would be able to narrow it to minority owned businesses, veteran owned businesses and woman owned businesses.

All right, if you want to limit your search to small businesses, you want to click on Products and Services. And you'll see there's two codes here to choose from - NAICS and PSC. These codes are defined in the SAM user's guide. And you can go up here if you want to see the definitions of all the terms in the SAM user's guide. You saw where that was clicked on.

Okay, go back. All right so - and you want to make sure - you saw where that is. The results of the search will only provide you with limited information in this case. It's not going to provide you with as much information as you got from the Federal Procurement Data System but if you do see an organization that looks interesting you will probably want to visit their Web site to learn more about that particular company.

Of particular interest in the SAM Web site is the fact that the search results can be saved at the PDF file, exported to an Excel spreadsheet or printed. So let's do a live search on SAM now, okay?

Let's go to Entity Type - Entity Type okay - and check in this case hospitals - let's see - hospitals. And we're also going to narrow it down to manufacturer of goods under other types. And let's go for for-profit. So we used three criteria here.

All right, now go on down to Location. And let's do Oklahoma City. And then put the state - Oklahoma. It's a drop-down menu for the state. Oklahoma. And then go back to the top and hit Search. And let's see what we come up with.

Okay we'll let's look at the first one. You've got the name of the organization - Temple & Sons Funeral Home, okay? What you

can do here is you can click on View Details to learn more about the organization. And when you get here you will see some basic information.

You can go into the entity record and learn more about this. What I want to do on the entity record though, I want to look under reps and certifications. When you register in SAM you had to do representations and certifications and there is a particular one that has to do with affirmative action compliance.

And as this comes up -- and when you do the reps and certs it takes a little while because it's a big document. Is it coming up? Let's see. Let's see what we're doing. And the one that you're going to want to look at when the reps and certs comes up is FAR52.222-25. That is the indication of affirmative action compliance. It is very slow in pulling this up today.

Okay, maybe we should go back and pick the second one in the - okay there it is. All right, now scroll way down - 52.222-25. There it is. Click on - now you want to click on this. And you'll see a box comes up. And if they have done an affirmative action plan program - and remember if they make $50,000, they have $50,000 or more in rewards and 50 or more employees, they have to have an affirmative action program.

This particular organization does not have that clicked. So it either means that they have not had that large enough contract in the past to have to have a program or they're in that kind of waiting period under the new regulations. They are allowed to wait until their next affirmative action plan would be due.

So I would say this is not one that I would probably want to look at because I don't see any indication of affirmative action. All right, let's go back.

Marie Strahan: And Sallie isn't it also that they may not have enough employees?

Sallie Rhodes: That could be it, yes. It could be a smaller organization with a sizable contract, yes. Thank you Marie. Okay and then - well

let's do another one. Let's pick this time education institution under Entity Type, okay?

And I'm going to do just the generic all education institutions. All right, then go down to location. Let's do Colorado. And then go back and do search. And you'll see a number of educational institutions came up. And again you can - let's do the View Details. I want to show you something else.

Now where you have here core data - click on Core Data under Entity Reference. Okay, that's the core data. Oh, under the POCs, click on point of contact. This is where you're going to get information. Now this is not necessarily the point of contact you're going to want, but this is a point of contact at the organization.

And you will like government business POC here, the second one listed. If you don't have the name of the affirmative action officer or the human resources person, you can probably call this point of contact and ask for that information. Okay, they're back.

You can also - let's click on Assertions. See what comes up there. All right, there are - doesn't have anything there - there are references here. Look at the service contract report under services. What I want you to do is click around and learn what's here. I want you to note that I cannot access some of these reports because I am not registered in SAM.

As a SAM registrant you should be able to access some of these reports and get a lot more information than I'm able to get, okay? All right, so those are some ideas. Again, SAM provides you some basic information -- to me not nearly as much information as the Federal Procurement Data System -- but it can give you an indicator of some organizations that you might want to do further research on.

And probably what you're going to have to do is go to their Web site for the business and find information there. Now I'm going to turn it back over to Marie to conduct a search on USA Spending. Marie?

Marie Strahan:	Thanks Sallie. You know I do want to point out that I skipped a search on FPDS. You can search by organization. And if you have the PowerPoint you will see that we were going to search by military installation.
	Many of you, even in rural states, you know where the military is located in your state. So if you search by the military installation - we had an example of Fort Meade - you will pull up all the contracts with the military installations in your state. Okay let's go to USA Spending. I wanted to make sure and not miss that search by contractor or location entity.
	Okay, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 required that the Office of Management and Budget establish a single searchable Web site accessible to the public at no cost which includes for each federal award the name and entity receiving the award, the amount of the award, information on the award including the transaction type and the funding agency, the location of the entity receiving the award and a unique identifier of the entity receiving the awards.
	The USA Spending Web site is promoted as a public information source for identifying government spending at your fingertips. And I want to distinguish here between the USA Spending versus SAM versus FPDS. FPDS is maintained by the federal government as an administrative information site.
	SAM of course is primarily for contractors to register with the federal government for all sorts of other kinds of administrative reasons. USA Spending is a public information site and really has a lot more to do with transparency in government than it does with administrative requirements.
	Our interest in USA Spending is for Section 503, and it's only for contractors. The USA Spending serves as a repository for data on all different types of contracts, grants, loans, and other spending mechanisms. USA Spending is best known for information on the trends associated with federal spending by state, county, and Congressional district.

With regard to federal contracts - let me go to the next slide - the USA Spending Web site houses information on new contracts over $20 million, new contracts with a prime contract value greater than $550,000, new contracts with a prime contract value of $25,000 or more, and subcontracts of federal contracts where the subcontracts are $25,000 or more.

Note that there are three options for searches on USA Spending. You can conduct a general search, an advanced search by prime award, and an advanced search by sub awards.

Prime award contractors are those receiving funds directly from the federal government and sub award contractors are those that receive federal funds through a subcontract with a prime contractor. Remember the Section 503 requirements apply to both contractors and subcontractors.

The USA Spending Web site is designed to allow users to use a wide variety of criteria to refine a search. It provides a number of search options which include location, spending type by recipient, by department or agency providing the funding, by fiscal year, by place of performance, either by ZIP code, state, or Congressional district or even county, and recipient location by city, ZIP code, state, Congressional district or county.

The results from the USA Spending search includes information on the recipient contractors or grantee's name, the federal agency or department providing funding, the product or service associated with the contract, a description of the purpose of the contract, the date the contract was signed, and the obligation amount.

Employment networks may want to apply their own screening type criteria to the results of a search. For example it may make sense to screen out contracts signed more than three years ago and contracts with small obligation amounts.

Now let's try to conduct a live search on USA Spending. We're going to do a general search by state, so let's go to Arizona. If we'll type Arizona into the general search criteria box...

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Sallie Rhodes:	Okay.
Marie Strahan:	Now what should happen - click Search.
Sallie Rhodes:	I will tell you the computer is moving slow. And a few minutes when we lost track this computer actually froze on it.
Marie Strahan:	Oh no.
Sallie Rhodes:	It may be overwhelmed by all of this moving around.
Sallie Rhodes:	All right we've got Arizona for you.
Marie Strahan:	So when you do a search, when you type in your state, it will bring up the US map. And then you'll see more information over on the right hand side in terms of the number of contracts in the state of Arizona. Apparently there are 482, 778 contracts in the state of Arizona.
	So let's look at contracts only. We're going to click on Contracts Only. Then we're going to go down - you've got to scroll down that column on the right and go to Contracts in Fiscal Year 2014. You have to go way down.
	Again we're repurposing these Web sites. So by fiscal year, try and find 2014. What it's giving us is a numerical listing.
Sallie Rhodes:	And note that we had to hit the more fewer because 2014, the years are not in numerical order.
Marie Strahan:	Exactly.
Sallie Rhodes:	Okay.

Marie Strahan:	You have to keep playing with these Web sites. They're huge repositories of data. Okay did we find 2014? Yes we did. Yes?
Sallie Rhodes:	Yes we did.
Marie Strahan:	Okay great. And then let's try - let's go over and look at food again by product or service code. It's in the first part of the list. So let's go to an easy part of the list - by food, cooking, baking. I know there are lots of military bases in Arizona too. Okay let's see what we get there -- 542 contracts.
Sallie Rhodes:	Okay.
Marie Strahan:	Okay now let's begin to look at what we've got here. Okay. Okay we've got a company by the name of Gill Group. And it looks like Gill Group has a lot of work with the Department of Defense. They are located in Phoenix, Arizona. It looks like they do food equipment.
	And if you click on the PIID-MOD number at the top - yes thank you - that will give you more information about this particular contract. Again it looks like Gill Group has a number of contracts.
	So we see that $983,359 has been obligated in this contract by the Department of Defense. It's a defense logistics agency contract. The date signed is March of 2014. It's purchase order. Scroll on down. Let's see if we can find a place of performance.
	Gill Group is Arizona. That's the location of the company. The product or service is food, cooking, baking, and serving equipment. Let's see. And it looks like this is a manufacturing company located in Phoenix and providing this type of equipment to the Department of Defense.
	The other thing that I wanted to point out is that you can take information from either SAM or the USA Spending site and plug it into the Federal Procurement Data System site to get even more information on each of these search results. You can

cross reference these three different federal Web sites to dig up more information.

Okay, you'll find different information on all three of them but as you know, the more you have - the more information you have on a company - the better your chances of success of engaging that company and working with them to hire beneficiaries - our beneficiaries with disabilities.

Okay Sallie I'm going to turn it over to you again.

Sallie Rhodes: Okay and I want to point out once again that on the Ticket to Work Web site there is a user's guide to locating federal contractors on USA Spending.gov. It's also on the 503 page in the information center. And again you're going to look under the information when you click on 503, the 503 page, you'll see a section that talked about finding federal contractors. And you will see these resources in that section, okay?

Now let's talk about some next steps - identifying federal contractors of interest in your geographic area is really only the first step in assisting your Ticket customers to take advantage of the changes to Section 503.

We're going to spend the remaining time discussing the next steps in an effective 503 strategy. What I'm going to do is highlight today it's really going to be a wrap-up review of what your EN peers have discussed during previous 503 community of practice forums.

We encourage you to revisit the archives of the May 7 and July 9 Community of Practice forums during which your EN peers provided tips and tools for establishing successful employer identification and referral relationships.

The Webinar archives and resource materials are located on the Your Ticket to Work Web site. Again visit the information center. And then in this case you want to click on Events Archives in the left navigation.

And then click on 503 community of Practice and the archives of all of the Community of Practice forums will come up. The information from this one hopefully will be posted by next week.

Using the information you gather on federal contractors and subcontractors serving your geographic area you want to use this information to narrow your list down. You don't want to try to approach too many.

Most likely you will want to review each contractor's Web site - their own Web sites now - to get additional information such as the size and the age of the company, the number of employees, the kind of work the company does, the types of skilled and unskilled labor required to do the work, the minimum qualifications associated with each job category, etcetera.

Look for any information on the organization's application process. For example, are job seekers required to apply online? Does the company require any type of testing such as skills testing, drug testing, security clearances, etcetera?

You want to continue to narrow your list until you have selected a few key federal contractors and/or subcontractors that offer job opportunities that from your research you feel are in line with the skills, ability, and interest of your Ticket customers. Create a file on each company selected for your targeted outreach efforts.

Make sure you include information on key contacts at the organization such as the human resources manager, the affirmative action officer, or the diversity officer. Again the point of contact you might get on one of these Web sites may not be that person but you can certainly call that person and ask for the name of these key contacts.

It may also be helpful to develop an introductory e-mail, letter, flyer, or brochure that can be used when you're requesting meetings with the key contacts at these agencies. Develop a three to five minute marketing pitch that briefly describes your organization, who you serve, the services you offer as an EN

under the Ticket to Work program, and the value of those services to perspective employers.

For example you may want to stress the fact that the individuals with disabilities that your EN serves and the companies that employ them have access to the support when initially starting a job and ongoing support as needed to ensure that the placement results in long term employment success.

Be sure to mention any special services or resources your EN offers such as expertise on job accommodations, benefits counseling, etcetera. As you develop your introductory letter and comments, you may find it helpful to review the new (awesome) resource titled "Tips for Discussing Section 503 with Federal Contractors."

This resource is located again in the information center. Click on the Section 503 in the left navigation and then click on the Tips resource which is under Finding Federal Contractors.

Now you're ready to start contacting the human resources managers, affirmative action officers, or diversity officers at the companies you have selected for your targeted marketing efforts. Remember every company is organized different and the person that you want to talk to may have a different title.

When you call, provide a brief explanation of who you are and request a date and time for an in-person meeting. If an in-person meeting is not an option, ask for a meeting by phone at a time that is convenient to the person being contacted. You don't want to try to have the discussion right then. You want them to actually set some time aside for this discussion.

Regardless of whether you secure a face to face meeting or agree to on the phone conversation, offer to send your 503 marketing materials prior to the meeting or call. If your EN has a great public Web site and a good online presence, you may want to invite your contact to visit your Web site to learn more about your organization and its past history in serving individuals with disabilities.

During your meeting be prepared to respond to any questions that may arise from the review of your Web site. Be aware that some federal contractors will already be working with one or more organizations that provide them with access to a pool of job seekers with disabilities.
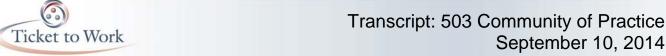
If you are informed of an existing referral relationship with organizations such as the state VR agency, the state or local work force agency or other local service providers some ENs have found it useful to simply shift their marketing focus from the contractor to the primary placement liaisons working with these contactors.

Prior to each meeting you want to review all the information you have on file for that business. If you have not already done so, this would be a good time to review the resource titled "Tips for Discussing Section 503 with Federal Contractors."

You may also want to develop a list of questions to ask to clarify anything that might help you make your case and be prepared to offer thoughtful suggestions on how your end can work with this particular employer to help it meet its Section 503 obligations.

During the meeting if you can, cite specific facts about the company to let that contractor know that you've done your homework. Highlight any features of the company that positively support the idea of your EN and the employer working together. Be prepared to discuss the basic requirements of Section 503 and how your organization can assist the organization as a federal contractor to meet its 503 obligations.

If there is additional information that you need that was not available on the employer's Web site you will want to prepare a list of questions to ask. For example, are there any special requirements associated with applying for the job? If you didn't find out on the Web site, if they have to apply online, if they have skills testing, if they require medical exams or security clearance or drug testing, this is when you're going to want to ask questions and get that information.

These questions can help to make this meeting an exchange of information rather than a one-sided conversation. During the meeting, briefly explain what you do and the population your EN serves. Describe the mutual benefit of a partnership between your EN and the employer.

Note that Social Security disability beneficiaries represent an untapped pool of qualified job applicants. You can stress the fact that your organization prescreens job seekers to ensure that only those that are most qualified are referred for openings.

Note that as an EN your organization stays involved with the beneficiaries you place to ensure long term employment success. Explain that your organization is required to maintain contact with beneficiaries you place for the purpose of identifying and resolving any problems that might arise.

Note that as an employment network under the Ticket to Work program your organization is required to initiate contact with employed beneficiaries at a minimum on a quarterly basis and that the ongoing availability of post-employment support ensures that additional assistance is available if needed.

And finally, offer suggestions on how your organization and the federal contractor can work together to meet the employer's 503 obligations.

ENs active in 503 recruitment activities have identified the following ideas for partnering with federal contractors. Discuss the possibility of establishing agreed upon process for sending and receiving information on job openings to ensure that your EN has quick access to information on job opportunities with the employer.

For example you might ask the employer if they would send you a list of all job openings every Monday. Agree on a process for referring candidates who may or may not choose to disclose a disability prior to hire. Determine if and how you will post job

opportunities or share information on job opportunities with your Ticket customers.

Since the goal is really to refer qualified candidates, it is important to screen applicants before referring them for job openings. As a result it may not be a good idea to simply blast out information on specific job openings with federal contractors to all your Ticket customers.

There will be times when your Ticket customers simply do not qualify for a position that is listed with a federal contractor that you're working with. In those cases, you may want to explore ways to recruit qualified beneficiaries that are not currently working with your EN to fill those positions.

Some ENs have identified the following methods as useful tools in matching federal contractor opening positions with qualified Social Security beneficiaries. Use your EN's Web site to advertise the availability of certain types of job openings and to screen potential applicants by having them complete interest forms.

This is not saying we have an opening for a particular type position with particular employment but to just generally say we have openings for telecommuters or telework people. So that though would bring people in. You can have them fill out an interest form and then you can begin screening them.

Consider marketing efforts that are targeted at bringing more beneficiaries to your EN. Some ENs use mailings. A few use robocalls. Some post announcements on community or church bulletin boards and some do presentations at Lions Club meetings or other types of community meetings.

If an EN has a job order to fill positions in a specific geographic location, the beneficiary referral CD can be used to do a targeted mailing to the geographic area encouraging beneficiaries to sign up to participate in the Ticket program. The EN can then screen the beneficiaries for the available positions as a part of process for developing the individual work plan.

Explore other resources that might be used for information sharing - for example the National Employment Network Association, blogs, job clubs, e-mail listservs, Web sites, etcetera. Consider developing tools, best practices, processes, and partnerships, both informal and formal, that allow your EN to coordinate its efforts with other service providers such as the state BR agency, independent living centers, state mental health agencies, American Job Centers, and other ENs.

The goal of this type of coordination is to expand the pool of qualified ticket holder job applicants and share job leads.

One EN active in 503 recruitment noted the importance of including your organization's name and address on all marketing materials, along with the name, titles, phone number and e-mail address of your primary EN contact. Several ENs have developed customized marketing materials such as flyers or brochures that are used when approaching federal contractors about recruiting, interviewing, and hiring Social Security disability beneficiaries.

One EN recommended including marketing information for employers on your organization's Web site as a recruitment tool and as an information source for 503 compliance. You may also want to consider providing employer interest form on your Web site.

These forms typically include information on what the EN does and how it can help employers that are interested in hiring individuals with disabilities. Employers that are interested in additional information are asked to complete the form and indicate the type of services and assistance they are seeking.

Before referring beneficiaries to apply for openings with federal contractors, you will probably want to prepare them for Section 503 participation. The key to getting employers to view your EN as a viable source of qualified applicants is to only refer beneficiaries who meet the minimum qualifications of the job being sought.

The first step is to have each beneficiary identify their key areas of interest as well as their knowledge, skills, and abilities. When you have identified one or more beneficiaries to apply for a specific job or a number of jobs, next you will want to prepare any qualified ticket customers for the section 503 application process. This may include discussing basic information on Section 503 and sharing the standard Section 503 forms that employers are required to use such as the voluntary self-identification form.

If you're working with beneficiaries who have no work experience, you may want to discuss the importance of work-related soft skills such as arriving at work on time, good grooming, dressing, talking, and acting appropriately, asking questions for further clarification if a work assignment is confusing, and asking for leave in advance whenever possible.

Consider ways to assist your Ticket customers to prepare for interviews with federal contractors. Talk to them about the idea of voluntary self-disclosure as a person with the disability versus the right of non-disclosure. We really don't have time today to go into the issues surrounding self-disclosure.

If you are interested in learning more about Section 503 and voluntary self-disclosure, you might want to listen to the two archived Section 503 Community of Practice forums that dealt with this topic. The archives of the April 2 and the July 9 COP forums are located on your Ticket to Work Web site in the information center under Events Archives.

Several ENs have suggested creating a standard process for making and tracking referrals and applicants for jobs with federal contractors. These ENs typically maintain an ongoing list to reflect the applications submitted by each beneficiary, the date and outcome of each application submitted, the date hired if applicable, and if not hired, any feedback received from the potential employers.

The feedback from potential employers can be reviewed regularly to see if your EN needs to do more to prepare beneficiaries to apply for jobs with federal contractors. Now I'm

going to turn it back over to Marie for some closing comments. Marie?

Marie Strahan: Thank you Sallie. Okay folks, that's it for today's presentation. We want to encourage you to join us for the next section 503 Community of Practice which will provide an overview of key Web sites that have been identified as good places to search for jobs and to post resumes.

The October Community of Practice will highlight how to use the National Labor Exchange U.S. Jobs Web site. It will also include information on using work force job banks and two or three other Web sites listed on the OFCCP's resource page under Job Banks and Job Posting Services, resources for service providers and employers.

This resource was recently updated, expanded, and reposted to your Ticket to Work Web site on July 28, 2014. Please visit the information center and click on Section 503 in the left navigation and then on 503 Resources. The link to the job banks and the job posting services resource is located just above the assisted technology resources.

The next Section 503 Community of Practice is scheduled for October 8 from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time. For additional information on how to take advantage of the new Section 503 rules to find employment opportunities for Social Security disability beneficiaries, visit the Your Ticket to Work Web site at yourtickettowork.com.

Click on the Information Center and then on Events Archive. You will find all of OFCCP's 503 Webinars archived under 503 Readiness Training. You will find all of the section 503 Community of Practice presentations under 503 Community of Practice. Am I going too fast for you? Okay.

Sallie Rhodes: We are actually going through the Ticket to Work Web site as you talk and showing exactly where all this stuff is.

Marie Strahan: Excellent, okay. Now I want us to open the lines to let people from the audience ask questions and offer additional suggestions on activities that can be used to assist disability beneficiaries to take advantage of these job opportunities. So we're going to open the lines up for questions.

Sallie Rhodes: All right (Darrell) can you tell people how they can call in? And then we're also - in between we're going to do some chat room questions. So (Darrell) you want to explain to people how they can come in to ask a question or make a comment?

Operator: Certainly. Ladies and gentlemen if you would like to register for a question please press the 1 followed by the 4 on your telephone. You will hear a three-tone prompt to acknowledge your request. If your question has been answered and you would like to withdraw your registration, please press the 1 followed by the 3. Once again to register for a question please press the 14 on your telephone.

Sallie Rhodes: And this is both questions or if you have some additional ideas on some of the things about developing a 503 strategic plan we're here to listen to you. All right, is anybody calling in? Oh let's take a chat question first. (Jimmy Wackerbach) is on the chat. (Jimmy) what do you have for us?

(Jimmy Wackerbach): Yeah the first question came from (David Romeo) and it was about the time of the federal - while you were going over the Federal Procurement Data System - and he asked, "How would someone find open positions and convince the company to hire a person with a disability?

Sallie Rhodes: Okay this is all we're talking about here is how to identify federal contractors. Again we're suggesting that you go to the individual organization's Web site. Learn more about that employer and that's where you're going to find information on job openings. There's no information on any of these three Web sites about any job openings at these companies.

                      You have to go to their Web site, learn about them, and see what they have in terms of types of jobs and whether they have any openings or as was mentioned - develop a relationship with

them and have them maybe send you weekly or bi-weekly list of job openings. Okay? Marie, anything to add to that?

Marie Strahan: No that covers it Sallie.

Sallie Rhodes: Okay, all right. (Darrell) anybody calling in?

Operator: There are no questions at this time but as a reminder please press the 14 to register for a question or a comment.

Sallie Rhodes: Okay (Jimmy)?

(Jimmy Wackerbach): Okay this question came up while you were exploring SAM.gov from (Jeannine Culver). Does the individual have to register or are employees covered under the federal contractor we work for?

Sallie Rhodes: The SAM registration is organizational registration. But I believe that if you have your company's D-U-N-S number - and since I don't have SAM registration you would be able to go in probably using that. If we can go back to the SAM Web site, there is a way to go into the SAM, to go in as a SAM registrant. And obviously I can't do that.

Up here at the top user name and password. You can go in that way too. We did what would be called a public search. So since I think your company probably has a user name and a password and that's how you would find out if you can get more information because what we can get on a public search is somewhat limited.

SAM to me is only an indicator of who you might want to start researching and find more information about that organization. Anything to add to that Marie?

Marie Strahan: No I think you can start with SAM just because you have good access to SAM information and then get more information. Take that information from SAM. Get more information about the

company and its federal contract work with the FPDS Web site - Federal Procurement...

Sallie Rhodes: Yeah Marie and I in looking at these Web sites both definitely agree that the FPDS one is the one that you're going to find the most helpful information on. But you can cross reference things on these Web sites and pull out as much information as you possibly can. Okay, (Darrell) anybody calling in yet?

Operator: There are no questions on the phone line at this time.

Sallie Rhodes: All right we have one more chat question I believe? Two. (Jimmy)?

(Jimmy Wackerbach): Okay this one comes from (Mary Lynn Renior). If the federal contractor who has activity level needing to comply with Section 503 is located in one state and the subcontractor vendor in another state, I understand the subcontractor vendor would need to comply also with Section 503. Therefore an EN could approach the vendor if the vendor was located in a state that EN is seeking to hire someone. Is this correct?

Sallie Rhodes: (Mary Lynn), hi. Yes that is correct. I think the only thing you need to look at is the size of the vendor's contract and the size of the vendor's work force because the same $10,000 general affirmative action requirements apply if they have $10,000 or more. If they have $50,000 or more in award and 50 or more employees, the higher level like the 7% aspirational goal of 7% of the work force being people with disabilities would apply.

But absolutely by way of a subcontractor it shifts again. You have to look at the size of the contract, subcontract. Okay? (Jimmy) you got something else?

(Jimmy Wackerbach): Okay (Gloria Free) asked - sorry I entered the conference in the middle. Where do you go to search for employers on the Web site?

Sallie Rhodes: (Gloria) hopefully you can download the PowerPoint and you will see on Slide - I'd have to go back and look for a minute, but

the slide early on that has the three Web sites that we did the live searches on today - they are all listed.

And you can - if you need to know where the PowerPoint is, right now it's in the information center on the Your Ticket to Work Web site under upcoming events. And it will be moved probably next week to the Events Archive page of the information center. Slide 7 is where the three Web sites are located. Okay? Another question (Jimmy)?

(Jimmy Wackerbach):   Okay and there has been a question. When do case management services start? And this is (unintelligible).

Sallie Rhodes: Okay I don't know. Case management services is not a part of this discussion. I mean obviously the idea of creating a tracking system for the people that you're referring for jobs is a type of case management. Okay, anything else?

(Jimmy Wackerbach): That was it.

Sallie Rhodes: Again operator if there's anybody out there that has some other tips - you know ways that they have approached federal contractors, information that they have found that resonates, that maybe when they're talking there's some particular thing they say that resonates, we'd love to hear from you.

Operator: As a reminder to register for a question please press the 14 on your telephone. And there appear to be no questions or comments on the phone line at this time.

Marie Strahan: Okay.

Sallie Rhodes: Okay that's it for today's 503 Community of Practice Forum. We hope to see you on October the 8th and thank you very much for joining us today. And thank you Marie.

Marie Strahan: Thank you Sallie. It was a pleasure.

Sallie Rhodes:	Okay. Bye everybody.
Operator:	Ladies and gentlemen that does conclude the Webinar for today. We thank you for your participation and ask that you please disconnect your lines.

[Call Ended]