

**Effective Ways for ENs to Realize Section 503 Opportunities –
Conversations with Your Peers
3 – 4:30 p.m. EDT**

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Operator: Ladies and gentlemen thank you for standing by and welcome to Section 503 Community of Practice for Employment Network Service Providers Webinar.

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 press star zero. As a reminder this conference is being recorded Wednesday, July 9, 2014.

I would now like to turn the conference over to Ms. Sabra Gardner. Please go ahead.

Sabra Gardner: Thank you (Frank) and welcome everyone to the fourth of our Section 503 Community of Practice forums on this lovely summer day in July.

Today we carry forward discussions and information sharing on two previously presented Community of Practice topics, Voluntary Self Identification of a Disability to Federal Contractor and Subcontractor Employees, and EN Capacity Building and Resource Sharing to Increase Your Success in Placing Job Seeker Beneficiaries with Federal Contractor and Subcontractor Employers.

Slide 2, thank you. The Part I Webinars with in-depth information and resources were presented in April and May. You can visit the Your Ticket to Work Web site at www.yourtickettowork.com and click on the Information Center in the left navigation.

When you get to the Information Center click on Events Archive in the left navigation and then click on 503 Readiness Training. That will get you to the 503 Community of Practice Archive link. You can also go directly to yourtickettowork.com/web/ttw/503-community-of-practice.

If you did not attend the previous Webinars we do encourage you to do so through the archive. Today's Webinar PowerPoint and the handout that will be discussed will be available on the Web site under Events archive later this week.

We also encourage you to visit the other Section 503 trainings found under the Events archive and the resources found on the Section 503 page in our Information Center.

And then also visit the Department of Labor Office of Federal Contract Compliance Web site for in-depth Section 503 information, and to retrieve a copy of the Voluntary Disability Self Identification form that we're going to discuss today. The OFCCP Web site is also provided for you as well; the DOL.gov.

We did run out of time on the Q&A portion in both of the Part I forums. And as a result today's Part II forums will feature EN topic facilitators who will carry forward these topics using a strategic conversations approach.

The facilitators will share their thoughts and effective practices and then open the conversation to you, the call-in audience, to share your thoughts and effective practices, and of course ask questions.

As always we're going to ask you to stay on topic with today's discussion topics and conversation teams. If we start to veer in our discussion from the topic, we're going to put those thoughts, questions, or concerns into what we call a parking lot. OSM staff will capture the parking lot input and then work with you to make sure that we address all of your discussion needs, either on this call today or as soon as possible.

I will introduce each conversation team in turn and their topic, if I can get Slide 3 -- thank you very much.

I am very pleased to welcome your EN leader peers who are going to kick off the dialogue on Disability Disclosures and Self Identification.

Susan Webb is the Director of ABIL Employment Services in Phoenix, Arizona.

Kate Kingree is the Ticket to Work Program Manager for ERI Plus, Inc. in Madison, Wisconsin.

And Judy Sanderson is the Director of Vocational Services for Granite State Independent Living Center in Concord, New Hampshire.

Susan, I believe you want to review the goals for today's dialogue on Slide 4 before moving into the discussion.

Susan Webb: Thank you Sabra. Next slide please. What we're going to talk about today has to do with three important goals. One is how employment networks preparing our Ticket users for disability disclosure and self-identification during the application and hiring process.

Each of the peer panelists on this segment will be talking about what we're doing in regard to this, but then we want to allow a lot of time so that you can chime in and give us what you're doing in your area.

And also not only the stuff that's working, but things you may have tried that may not have worked. Sometimes it's good to learn from the failures as well as the successes.

Another topic we want to get in to is how often and why, during the job application interviewing and hiring process, can disability disclosure and self-identification inquiries be made by an employer?

There are actually three different tracks if you will, for the applicant. And what we found is that there is some confusion about that, and we'll be talking about that in just a moment.

And then the third is how are Ticket users responding to pre and post-hire self-identification inquiries? They're into it now. They're seeing some of this so what are they coming to you with? What are their concerns and how are you handling those.

Now for purposes of 503, employment network -- I'm sorry, go ahead and go to the next slide.

For purposes of 503 that's what we're really talking about here today. And we have been talking about that actually for several months now in the former Community of Practice as well as the trainings.

And it has come up that when we talk about 503, and this is the first time that Affirmative Action has allowed an employer to ask pre-offer as to whether a person has a disability.

That raised some controversy as being against the ADA, and of course the EEOC came out and said no. For purposes of 503 it's okay to ask if it exists.

The rub here is that on the pre-offer, and employer cannot ask what the disability is or require any kind of documentation or validation as to whether you truly have a disability.

So we've been talking to our Ticket users about this and saying okay, be careful now. It's okay to say you have a disability but don't get into that discussion about what it is. But then they'll come back and they'll say well wait a minute, I'm applying for these jobs and they're asking me.

So we wanted to talk a little bit here about some of the other - two circumstances in which you might find your Ticket users. The first is using Schedule A.

Some of you might be familiar with Schedule A. This is when an applicant applies for a job with the federal government, directly to work for the government as opposed to working with a contractor which is what 503 covers. And on that they are asked if they have a particular disability, and they are asked to provide medical documentation.

So you're going to hear from them well wait a minute, why are they asking me and they told me that they're not allowed to ask what the disability is.

So with Schedule A you just need to be aware that you tell them there are three possible ways that you might be asked, and in some of those ways it might mean that you do have to disclose, if you choose. It's always voluntary. But if you choose then you're going to be asked what your disability is.

I'm sorry, go back to that previous. The second circumstance that - well actually the third, is that your applicant might find themselves in is they're asking if a person has a disability and a general category of what that disability is, in jobs where they give preference points, you'll see this sometimes in state and local governments. That's primarily where I have seen it.

And so again they'll say well wait a minute, they're asking me to disclose what my disability is. And of course if they want the preference points then they have to follow those rules.

But in all cases what you can assure your Ticket user is that their disclosure does remain confidential and is kept in a separate file. So there's those protections on all three, but there will be possibly some confusion among your Ticket users as to when they're being asked and what they're being asked.

And this gives you the tool so that you can explain the difference between these three options.

Now -- my screen just went dark -- the voluntary pre-hire inquiry must be made by certain federal contractors and subcontractors, and that's to document their recruitment efforts. That was part of the controversy. Why are they asking pre-offer. They never did that before.

Well the reason is because over time, even though these contractors have always had an Affirmative Action obligation, we have heard from contractors and others that well, you know, I'm willing to hire them. They're not applying for the job.

And of course we know that perhaps the reason for that is that they're not doing effective outreach to find it.

So the idea here is to now put a requirement in so that they have to ask for an applicant pre-hire, or pre-offer actually. I should say pre-offer rather than pre-hire, to voluntarily self-identify. But again under 503 it is just that they have a disability without any kind of validation of it or what it is.

And then employers must use of OFCCP Voluntarily Self-Identification of Disability form which by now I think pretty much all of you are familiar with. So why don't we go to the next slide. I'm not going to go over this because as I said, you guys have already seen this probably ad nauseam and are very familiar with it.

But that is a form that every contractor must use. This does not - this may be a form that you will see in those state and local governments use too because they're a federal contractor. Not in all cases but I think it's fair to say in most.

So those state and local governments have to use the form too, but they also are going to ask for the preference point issues. So they've got some issues there to deal with marrying those two programs together. And I guess the jury is still out as to how they're going to do that.

But just be aware that that form is the form that must be used and it cannot be modified in any way, shape, or form.

Okay, next slide please. Okay, so I don't want to belabor this, that the EEOC came out and said, you know, this applies only to pre-offer, what I talked about before.

Once they get into the post-offer and existing employee stage then the same rules apply under the ADA as always have, that employers may not ask disability related questions or conduct medical exams until after they make a conditional offer of the job.

And then once that's made and the employee starts work then they can ask any disability related questions they choose. None of us like that very much but nonetheless, that is allowed.

And an employer may ask an employee with a known disability whether they need a reasonable accommodation. And we've given you the source there where that comes from.

Okay, next slide. All right what you have here is the contact information for myself, for Kate, and for Judy. And what I'm going to do now is I'm going to

open the discussion with Kate and Judy, and welcome to both of you. I'm glad you're here today.

We're going to have a discussion among ourselves for a few minutes about what we're doing and then we will open the phones up so that you can tell us what you're doing, maybe make some comments on some of the things that we've said, and get some discussion going as we indicated our goal was in the first part of this presentation.

Judy why don't we start with you. Why don't you talk about what you're doing up there at Granite State.

Judy Sanderson: Okay, I think Susan did an excellent job of covering what is at least for the first year, going to be a pretty confusing situation. It's something brand new coming in on top of other rules and regulations that were in place. And not to mention that many federal contractors do not need to move on to these new forms if they have a current Affirmative Action plan in place.

It's recommended that they do, but they can wait until their current plan runs out and then assume these new procedures and forms. So there could be multiple forms from multiple sources out there at the moment.

Our first approach was like oh my heavens I've got to make sure my staff understand it too, because they're the ones that the beneficiary is going to come to and say I've got this, I've got that. What is it, what's it coming from, so that they have a fighting chance of figuring out which form is what and what needs to be done so they can help the beneficiary find their way through the system and make the best choice for them.

And so to do that we have had several mini trainings. The first was basically just on the new 503 in general. And then the second one which we just had this past week was on okay, the Voluntary Disclosure and all the ins and outs that Susan ran over on that so that people could start figuring it out.

It's like you need a chart to figure out what's going on. And so that's been our first approach with it. And I'm still getting questions. I mean people are coming back and saying well, you said this but what about that. And its Tuesday so it must be Belgium, so how about - what do I do next.

It's going to be a confusing year coming up I think, as people face all kinds of different forms and procedures. So that's what we're up to at the moment.

Susan Webb: Thanks Judy. Before we get to Kate; because Kate's got a very different model and she's doing some different things than we are, primarily because Kate is working for an EN that is primarily Partnership Plus which takes on a whole different flavor than what some of the rest of us who don't do Partnership Plus as our main business might have.

I'm going to follow-up on Judy's plan to say that that of course is very important because our staff is the front line. But we've done some additional things at ABIL to get ready for this.

Of course the rules were actually published last August but they didn't take effect until March 24th of this year. We started talking about 503 and the opportunities that represents in our orientation for our new Ticket users. We started talking about it in our resume workshop; our interviewing skills workshop.

So we've been indoctrinating our Ticket users for quite some time now to what they can expect and the opportunities that are available with this.

But I also developed a one hour Webinar specifically on 503. A lot of discussion on self-disclosure; those three different scenarios that I talked about, and that seems to be really well received. And it's a great way to get that information out to our Ticket users in a way that they can interact too and ask their questions and express their concerns about some of the things that they're fearful of disclosing and why.

So that has been - we haven't - we just started doing that, and it hasn't - we haven't done many of them yet. But the comments and questions that we've gotten from those who have participated so far are pretty excited. They really are excited about this opportunity.

The other thing that we have done is every state has a job exchange that is managed by the -- there's a different vernacular -- by the American Job Centers or the One-Stops, whatever vernacular you're used to.

The Workforce Investment Act Entity if you will, are managing their state job exchanges. And what we have done here is to instruct all of our Ticket users to get on to that Exchange and put their profile on there and use that as a key way to apply for contractor jobs because that is a place where federal contractors are used to posting their jobs.

They were doing it before under the old rules and there's no reason to think that they won't continue to do that.

In our state -- I'm certain this is happening everywhere -- but in our state the One-Stops and our VR agency are partnering with us a lot to get us those job leads.

Every day I get a notice from our VR agency on their Listserve where they're giving us all of the new jobs that have been posted on the Job Exchange.

So the partnership that we've established with our community partners, specifically the One-Stops and with VR, and all of us using that Job Exchange to get our candidates out there is the approach we're taking. And so far I've gotten really good feedback from our Ticket users that they're finding a lot of really good information there and they're finding it's nice for them.

This isn't the only place for them of course, but it is a nice centralized place where they can go, and we know that contractors will be looking there for candidates. So those are some things that we're doing.

((Crosstalk))

Susan Webb: Go ahead Judy.

Judy Sanderson: I like (unintelligible) because using these already established places to find their jobs, our agency, we're on a couple of national databases and we've had a couple of federal contractors -- more than a couple -- call us up and say they want to let us know about this job or that job. We got real excited.

And then we follow up and met with them. And what we're finding is that yes they'll be polite when they're talking to us, but they didn't really expect us to have candidates.

They were using that more as the way they were going to reach the recruitment requirements that's on them now.

Susan Webb: Right, right.

Judy Sanderson: And the outreach requirements.

Susan Webb: But again, it's not necessarily - that's not necessarily about disclosure, but it kind of does get to disclosure because we have to keep reminding our Ticket users that when they do go on these job exchanges and they do find these contractors that they will be asked about disclosure.

And if they ever have any questions or concerns about the way that those jobs are being presented to them and the way they're being asked about disclosure, then they need to bring that back to us and talk with us about it.

It's also a great way for us to monitor what those employers are doing as well. Again to make sure that disclosure is being done properly. I have found right now that one of the cities in our area is not doing this right, and the OFCCP is investigating. Not to use a hammer, but to correct the situation.

So that - having that centralized place does help with disclosure and monitoring to make sure the disclosure is being done properly. So that's - those are some of the things that we're doing.

So with that I want to turn it over to Kate. Hello Kate?

Kate Kingree: Thanks Susan. I was on mute. So yes, I just want to follow-up what Susan said is that yes, our agency; our EN has a very different model than more of the traditional ENs.

We do consider ourselves a Partnership Plus EN, so our agency does not do the job placement and job searches for helping the individuals find a job. Our EN individuals come right after their successful case closure from VR.

However this does not say that our consumers don't face similar questions about disclosure and 503. And I want to first make mention that because they're 503, the individuals are asked not just during the initial application period, but throughout the duration of their employment that the conversation that I have with my consumers are around, you know when, if they're working with a 503 employee, that they are likely to ask these questions after the hire and that they can also disclose throughout the time in which their individual is employed in that position.

I also discussed, you know, that the disclosure is not confession and that if an employer is asking for an individual to disclose a disability, they can limit to just making that specific disclosure and that it will be housed differently as Susan mentioned, in a separate from the individual's personnel file.

But again, we just come at this very differently because - and I'm actually in the process of doing more listening than teaching my consumers because I'm hearing about what is happening after the individual is on the job.

So again, I'm doing a lot more learning from my consumers than educating at this point.

Susan Webb: One of the things that I thought was particularly fascinating about your point though, is being Partnership Plus, you are taking handoffs from VR. And by definition the folks that you're going to be working with are likely more

significantly disabled than other ENs might - Ticket users might be. And so they're more likely to need an accommodation as well.

And one of the things that's problematic about the form is that it's tricky because on the form it says they have a duty to let the applicant or the employee know that they have a right to an accommodation. But it also implies that if you need one, let your - let us know.

But then it doesn't say how to let them know. And if you let them know it's very likely that if you need an accommodation and the form is kept separately, you'll never hear anything back about it. And you'll think you requested what you need and expect it, and it is in a data file somewhere.

Plus by virtue of asking for an accommodation, in many ways you are also disclosing the type of disability. And that's more likely to happen with your population.

And so how are you handling that with the folks that you work with in a handoff situation?

Kate Kingree: Well we haven't specifically had individuals have that question on the form, but I think you make a really good point.

That I have had individuals who have worked for other federal employers that when they thought they checked the box that they have a disability, they didn't actually think that they needed to talk to anyone about it. That people would just come to them and ask them what type of accommodation that they needed and that it was pretty much on the employer to investigate their needs.

And so oftentimes, I think you made a really good point, that just by disclosing on that form and saying what your individual disability is, doesn't mean that the employer has any idea on what that means for you and your unique situation.

So I always try to talk to them if they're going to, then ask for an accommodation, how they have disclosed besides just checking a box.

So then we talk about how to move forward from just doing the disclosure that is housed in a separate place that yes, you're an individual with a disability that's been hired versus what accommodations and who do you need to talk to, to make accommodations on the job which is a separate conversation.

Judy Sanderson: Yet it's on the same form which is why they're confused.

Kate Kingree: Yes.

((Crosstalk))

Woman: And there is a big difference.

Woman: Yes.

((Crosstalk))

Susan Webb: Okay, we've got a time check so we're going to open this up for the conversation. Was there one final point that you wanted to make Kate, or was that Judy?

Judy Sanderson: That was me. I was just going to say, it is different now. When it was just the ADA the disclosure was if you aren't going to need an accommodation then it's questionable whether or not you really need to make a disclosure.

Now it's the federal contractors have a whole different reason why they want to know, totally aside from whether or not any accommodations are needed. And that's kind of been added to the picture.

Kate Kingree: Yes.

Judy Sanderson: So that was it.

Susan Webb: It's kind of like a two-edged sword isn't it?

Judy Sanderson: Yes.

Susan Webb: And so it's up to us to prepare Ticket users as to how to handle that and to support them in it.

Okay (Frank), would you like to open this up for the audience to discuss with us some of their thoughts and questions?

Operator: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen if you would like to register a question please press the 1 followed by the 4 on your telephone. You will hear a three-toned 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 if you have a question or comment, please press the 1 followed by the 4 on your telephone.

Susan Webb: While (Frank) is compiling that, (Sally) do we have anything in the Chat room? Any questions or comments there?

(Sally): The questions have all been things that we've been able to answer about pre-offer versus the post-offer questions and what they can ask about where the information is in the archives - Events archive on the Information Center.

And then when you click on Events Archive you'll see the top 503 COP and all the archive information from all the COPs will be there. Those are the primary ones.

Susan Webb: And also the transcript from this Chatroom will also be posted as well.

(Sally): Yes, that will be today.

Susan Webb: To those answers. Okay (Frank), do we have anybody on the phone? Oh go ahead (Sally), I'm sorry.

(Sally): I was going to say, PowerPoint is up but I think you're right, the transcript will go up in a few days, okay.

Susan Webb: Okay, thank you. (Frank), do we have anybody on the phone?

Operator: There are no questions at this time.

Susan Webb: Okay that said, do we want to talk about anything else Kate or Judy that we didn't get a chance to discuss?

Judy Sanderson: Yes, one other point I had in terms of staff training, one of the things, we're an independent living center so we have additional services that many of the people who are getting employment service also take advantage of, service coordination and so forth.

And so we have done some additional training with the service coordinators on the 503 and the disclosure information because they could be tripping over it too in the course of talking about other issues with individuals.

So, we thought it was important that they also be informed and know what to say or at least know who to refer them to if the question comes up. We've done that too.

Susan Webb: When we talk about, you know, the experience that people are having out there, you made a point about how some of the implementation is a little delayed depending on when they have to update their Affirmative Action plan.

And (Charlene) if you're here, do we have any answer back from OFCCP about when they're going to be using the - when they're required to use the form? Did we get an answer as to whether they're required to use it now, even though they have not updated their Affirmative Action Plan yet?

(Charlene): Yes Susan. I actually was able to find that answer by a couple of levels down in a FAQ on the OFCCP Web site.

And OFCCP is encouraging everyone to use the form now; right away. But they do have until they update they update their Affirmative Action Plan to - that's the timeframe for when they have to start using the pre-inquiry form.

So it's, you know between March - I would imagine then between March 24th of this year and March 23rd of next year, the plans will be updated during that cycle. And by late spring of next year everyone should be using the form.

Having said that there's a very strong encouragement by OFCCP to start using it earlier.

Susan Webb: One of the - when I did the Webinar I talked about with our Ticket users, we had about - I think about ten people on the line and three had seen the form.

So it is out there even though - and I would think that some contractors are probably welcoming it because it is - it's easier for them because have a sure thing. Even though we don't really like some things about the form itself, it's certainly better than the hodgepodge we've had in the past.

So I do think employers are probably going to welcome it. And I would think want to use it because it is definitely something that's, you know, that's there and they don't have to worry about gosh, am I asking it the right way or not. So I think there's an incentive there.

No, I don't want to get into the other discussion because I'll eat into (Tam)'s discussion.

(Frank), do we have any callers waiting?

Operator: There are no questions at this time.

Susan Webb: We talked about this...

(Sally): We have one coming off the Chat. (Donna), can you read it?

(Donna): Certainly. The question is, does anyone know how the 7% rule will be enforced?

Susan Webb: Yes, you know, I've got to be honest with you, as excited as we are about this, there really is not a big hammer associated with this. Just the language

of the 7% itself, it's called a utilization goal, and that the employers must work towards that goal.

But the language is kind of we're not going to be beat up on you if you don't make it. We're going to provide you with some technical assistance if you don't, but there are specific things in the rules about their outreach activities.

And I think that's where things are a lot different than they used to be. They can't say any more, look I have an Affirmative Action Plan and I want to hire people. They're not coming to my doors.

They can't say, well under the old rules it used to be that you had to - they had to establish linkage agreements with the VR agencies and with the One-Stops. And they - if they did that and they put their jobs out there, that was kind of all they had to do.

And if that wasn't successful in enticing people to apply for their jobs, well gee sorry.

But now the 7% is definitely a good goal and we're pleased to have that. And there are very specific rules that are actually in the regulations of the outreach efforts that they have to go through. And employment networks are definitely listed there as one of their target groups that they should be working with to try and find candidates.

So even though enforcement isn't the hammer that we might have, like the other things that require them to do more outreach, I think are good because we can do a better job, especially because we're written into the rules now.

And again, those partnerships with ER and with the One-Stops and with the ENs and all the other community based organizations that are out there, those are the things that we now have in our back pocket that they must reach out to us.

And so that's really I think, a good way now, that we will see more opportunity actually happen, even though if they don't make it they will have to answer to the OFCCP if they don't in fact show a really effective way of doing outreach to recruit people.

So it's kind of a double-edged sword. I hope that answers your question. That was (Carol) who asked that? Oh no, that was (Ryan) who asked that.

Woman: Susan correct me if I'm wrong, but there isn't even a deadline by which they have to be meeting the 7% established. Is that correct?

Susan Webb: Yes, there isn't, no. We do know informally that they're kind of going on a three year cycle, that the OFCCP in general, they're looking at a three year cycle to evaluate after the end of three years okay, how is everybody doing.

Because again, this pre-offer thing is really completely brand new. And I think if we all partner together and we do our job well and get some of these central things put together where we can all - where everybody can converge, I think we can really make this happen.

But it is not - it's more of a carrot rather than a stick, which I think we all really like. We'd like to see that happen. We don't want it to be a hammer. But if you feel like well, employers are just filling in the boxes and they're not really serious about this, we do have some of that happening. We know that.

It's been like that, you know, all along. But gosh, they represent 22% of the workforce. And we do have now a 7% goal which we never had anything like that before.

We have a standardized form for them to use for recruitment. I mean there's so many things in this now that represents such great opportunity that I'm pretty jazzed and pretty positive that we can make this happen.

((Crosstalk))

Man: I think it's probably better as opposed to be part of the hammer.

Susan Webb: Okay, I think we're - yes, I think we're ready to move on now. Just to double check again with (Frank) one last time, do we have anybody in queue?

Operator: We have no questions at this time.

Susan Webb: okay, well those of you who are listening, it would be really, really helpful. Our contact information is on the PowerPoint. It would be really helpful to hear what you all are experiencing and what your goals are in terms of what your Ticket users are telling you.

So on that I will go ahead and pass this back over to - I'm sorry, yes? Did I hear somebody say something that I was not doing right?

Woman: No.

Susan Webb: Okay. Okay, let's pass it over to Sabra. Sabra would you like to go ahead and introduce Pam's group. And thank you again Judy and Kate.

Sabra Gardner: Yes, and thank you as well Susan. You and Judy, and Kate for leading today's discussion, and especially for sharing your approaches to preparing job speaker beneficiaries to manage both self-disclosure and reasonable accommodation decisions and employer conversation.

Slide 9 - let's make sure we're there. It is now my pleasure to welcome the EN leader peers who will kick off the dialogue on EN Capacity Building Part II.

Pam Walker is the CEO of Alliance Professional Services, LLC in Collierville, Tennessee.

Ann Austin is the Ticket to Work Program Specialist at Laradon in Denver, Colorado.

And Barbara Rodriguez is the Director of Employment Services for Employee Rewards Solutions, Inc. in Florence, South Carolina. Slide 10 please. Thank you.

Before I turn it over to Pam to review the goals for this dialogue and kick off the conversation, I want to remind everyone again that you can view the Part I Community of Practice Webinar on Section 503 EN Capacity Building and Sharing, again by visiting the Information Center on the Your Ticket to Work Web site, yourtickettowork.com, and clicking on Events Archive in the left navigation. Then click on 503 Readiness Training.

That will take you to the 503 Community Practice archives, and look for the May 7, Community of Practice that we held on Capacity Building and Sharing. The link is also listed for you as well, directly on screen right now.

I also want to note that our EN leader peers will be referencing a few listings from a resource that was developed specifically for this 503 Community of Practice session. Thank you (Sally Roach).

The handout provides links and brief descriptions of a number of job posting and job listing Web sites that have been identified as particularly useful in finding jobs with federal contractors and subcontractors. And where federal contractors may visit to review resumes.

That handout was sent to you with the PowerPoint in the reminder for this forum yesterday I believe, and will be listed with the archived materials for this Community of Practice session in the next few days.

So with that I will turn it over to Pam to review the goals of this discussion. Pam?

Pam Walker: Thank you so much Sabra and good afternoon everyone. We should be on Slide 11, EN Capacity Building Part II.

And during the second part of today's teleconference we will be continuing our discussion on capacity building and finding ways to get involved with Section 503 which will ultimately create more job opportunities and placements for our Ticket holders.

We know that there are opportunities for everyone to be involved in 503. Whether we want to be proactive in reaching out to federal contractors or finding ways to let federal contractors reach out to us, preparing our Ticket holders so that they are knowledgeable about Section 503, or establishing strategies to share information about open positions with each other's, you know, peer-to-peer, it's all good.

During the discussion today we're going to be talking about employment with federal contractors and how ENs can prepare their Ticket customers for those positions. Job posting boards and resume uploading sites that can be helpful to ENs and employers, and strategies for locating and sharing qualified ticket customers to fill openings with federal contractors and subcontractors.

And just as a side note, we're not going to have an opportunity to discuss all of the Web sites listed on the document that we've provided, but I encourage you to review the documents and add it to your resource toolbox.

From a personal standpoint I can share that our organization has had multiple successful placements with several of these sites, including Bender Consulting, Getting Hired, and American Job Center. And Skip the Drive is a great one for telecommuting and work from home opportunities.

With me today, Ann Austin, the Ticket to Work program Specialist for Laradon in Denver, Colorado, and Barbara Rodriguez, the Director of Employment Services for Employer Rewards Solutions in Florence, South Carolina will also be sharing information about their 503 participation.

And we encourage those of you who are on the call who have also been involved in 503 projects to join in and tell us about what you're doing and how you're doing it. Everyone is interested in what's working and even what's not.

So hi Ann and Barbara. Thank you so much for agreeing to share with us. And Ann, let's start with you. Can you tell us a little bit about your organization and your involvement in Section 503?

- Ann Austin: Sure Pam. Hi everybody, I'm Ann Austin and I work for Laradon which is a non-profit and statewide EN here in Colorado.
- And how we've gotten involved in 503 was we took part in reading our emails from Maximus and we - when we were given the opportunity to be put on the list, we ended up on the Disability and Veterans Community Resource Directory because we filled out an inquiry.
- And since that's happened we've had some great results. We've been - received outreach from several contractors since March, and we've started to develop a relationship with them.
- And what I've done to help myself manage these relationships is create a few folders; one in my email, folders where I created an email box just for those emails that come in from those organizations.
- And the other thing that I've done is created an Internet favorites file for the Web sites for all of these different organizations. So I have then all in one place and I can refer back to that when a client is looking for a job in a specific industry.
- So as I go along and I have a qualified applicant, I refer them to those employers. A lot of the employers have given me specific instructions about how they want people to apply. Some ask that I contact them. Some don't ask that.
- So that's been, you know, just following their directions. And the nice thing about this is there's a greatly varied amount of jobs out there, across all skillsets and educational levels for our clients.
- So what I suggest people do is to go out and of course network with these organizations who might be contacting you. But then also to create your own network of people in your EN world.
- One of the ways that I do that is by working with my friends that are involved in NENA. If I have something I can't fill or it might be a national opportunity, I do some sharing with my peers. So that's that for now.
- Pam Walker: Okay. Are you doing any differently - anything differently to prepare your Ticket holders to apply for the positions when you find out about them?
- Ann Austin: When I'm particularly sending an applicant to those, I am explaining to them that they will be seeing the disclosure forms and what those mean. So I'm giving them some education about disclosure and explaining to them that disclosure is voluntary.
- And just making sure that they know, you know, what they're signing, why they're signing it, and let them know that they have the option because disclosure is always voluntary.
- Pam Walker: Ann I'm just curious, when you make the referrals, I know you said that everybody does it a little bit differently. Are you finding that more of the federal contractors have a contact person where they want you to make the referral directly to them?
- Or I guess you're encouraging your Ticket holders, if they choose not to disclose, to apply directly with the company, not through you. But are you seeing that it's mostly referrals that you're making directly to the employer or

just referring people, you know, to those open positions and letting them apply themselves?

Ann Austin: For the most part it is people applying directly to the companies. It's a rare occasion that they actually ask that I am involved and notify them. But it is for the most part that they're asking people directly to apply to their Web site.

Pam Walker: Okay. Yes, what we have experienced when we initially became involved in Section 503, we did a survey to federal contractors within a certain radius. And I was pretty amazed at how many of them were not aware of Ticket to Work and had no idea what an employment network is.

So because our organization is a for-profit organization and you have a little bit of an advantage because your organization is a non-profit, so you're able to get on those all-important lists that allow the federal contractors to contact you versus us having to, you know, make cold calls and try to get our foot in the door.

But we sent out that survey and like I said, we were amazed at the number that were not aware of Ticket to Work of Employment Networks. So we spent a lot of time educating employers and we're just now seeing a little wiggle room where we've gotten our foot in the door and we're making those contacts.

And we too were experiencing pretty much what you have in that many of our Ticket holders choose not to disclose a disability. But they have the option of again, you know, if they apply for the job and get the job, then after they have the job they're given an opportunity to disclose at that point.

And I think they're feeling a little more comfortable about disclosing once they have the job versus, you know, applying for the job. So just a little something that we've run in to.

So I appreciate you sharing with us and I'm sure that there will be some questions. As a matter of fact (Frank), right now do we have any comments or questions in queue?

Operator: there are no questions at this time. But I would like to remind participants, to register a question to please press the 1 followed by the 4 on your telephone.

Pam Walker: Okay, and (Sally), is there anything Chat yet?

(Sally): No, not right now.

Pam Walker: Okay. Well we're going to spend some more time talking about these topics. And Barbara, thank you for joining us and we'd love to hear about the things that you're doing. I know there's some existing things on your plate. Can you share some information with us about that?

Barbara Rodriguez: Sure, no problem. First of all we are a for-profit nationwide employment network and we're located in Florence, South Carolina. And, you know, before 503 we had been long been doing outreach to employers and trying to build relationships with them.

We did - we found out that it was easy to kind of find the relationship-building part of it was very, you know, easy for us. Of course it doesn't the employer anything to work with us and us sending them candidates. And they were willing to send us job openings, and that part of it was going smooth.

Our biggest challenge was really trying to get feedback. And if we're dealing with kind of a high level recruiter or vice president in recruiting, it was very hard for our candidates or for us to get feedback for our candidates down from, you know, the store level or branch level, depending on what type of companies we were dealing with.

So that was really our biggest challenge had been dealing with such large employers and also them sending us large amounts of job openings that we did not have enough Ticket holders to definitely fill those positions.

Then we began trying to work with the job Web sites like on the list that's been provided today. The biggest success has come through GettingHired. We have created a partnership with GettingHired and they - we are in constant communication with them on a weekly basis.

We talk about applicants, Ticket holders that have applied to jobs through GettingHired. And it seems to be a very successful partnership mainly because they already have a lot of the relationships with these employers that we've been trying so hard for the past, you know, year and a half; two years to try to establish.

And that's probably been the biggest success is getting our Ticket holders to upload their - create a profile on GettingHired, and upload their resumes on to GettingHired. And so far it seems to be working really well.

Pam Walker: Good, good. Like our organization I'm sure that there have been things that you tried with regard to 503 that worked and some things that didn't.

Can you share some examples of issues that you had or some examples of things that didn't work? Maybe you can save us from going through the same thing.

Barbara Rodriguez: I don't have any specific examples of things that haven't worked. I have changed some of my verbiage when I'm talking to companies, providing them - being able to provide them with a report of people that we have sent them to apply for jobs is something that they're going to need on the other end for them to prove their you know, 7% or at least that they've been doing outreach.

That's something that we've added into offering employers. I give them like an Excel spreadsheet of people that have applied from us to jobs at their companies. And that seems to be - they're having an interest in that, obviously because they are trying to keep track of all of this.

So that's been somewhat helpful in that sense. And they - I've noticed too that in the past six months they have definitely been asking more questions. And the recruiters are more savvy about 503c.

Pam Walker: Well that's great news. When you make referrals -- and I'm going to ask you the same thing I asked Ann -- are you finding that what's requested by each company is a little bit different?

Are you making the referrals directly to a contact within that company or are you just notifying your Ticket holders and having them make application through the Web site?

Barbara Rodriguez: All of those things. All of those things.

Pam Walker: Okay.

Barbara Rodriguez: Our Ticket holders do applications through the Web site. If they're unable to do it by themselves, we help them forward. Once we have a confirmation number I have a contact person at the company that I send that confirmation number to. And then then company is supposed to follow up and give us some feedback on why that person is qualified; not qualified. You know hopefully after an interview then we get feedback in that sense too.

And that's where I think the biggest challenge has been because like I said, some of these recruiters are very high level people. And for them to trickle it down to a store or a branch or, you know, just on, you know, on the bottom level, that has been the biggest challenge, getting feedback.

And we've had more success getting feedback when working with getting hired because they already have an account manager that handles that employer. And they are able to talk to that employer and get us feedback for a candidate.

Pam Walker: Oh, that's wonder. That sounds very, very interesting. And that information is hard to get.

Barbara Rodriguez: Yes. And one other thing I'd like to say about these job boards, they're all very different.

GettingHired has a large amount of professional type jobs. Some of the others are better at having entry level jobs. So it really - you really need to take a look at your Ticket holder base and think about where you have more people.

If you're looking for more entry level positions, GettingHired may not be the best - exact best fit. But some of the other Web sites will have more entry level positions.

So that's something too that we kind of encountered by trying to make relationships with these different job boards.

Pam Walker: Right. And I know one of the other challenges that we face and you mentioned it as well, is that sometimes you get a lot of jobs - notification that a lot of jobs are open and you don't have candidates to fill those positions.

And I'm - you know my thinking is, what a waste. I need to find somebody to fill those jobs. And we try to do things like check with other employment networks that we know through NENA or, you know, by projects that we work on in our area to see if they have qualified applicants they'd like to refer to us.

Or we will send, you know, the jobs and say here they are if you've got somebody, you know, send it on.

So what steps does your organization take to try to locate qualified Ticket holders to fill the jobs, or are you using any type of marketing strategies or anything to find qualified applicants?

Barbara Rodriguez: Well we do have an outbound call center and so we have about 15 call center folks and we call them career coaches. And they do all the outreach to the Ticket holders.

There have been situations where companies have come to use and let's say they're opening up a call center or need a large amount of jobs in one concentrated - like in one city, then at that point we sometimes have looked at maybe targeting Ticket holders in that city, let's say Atlanta, Georgia.

And we first obviously go through our database and look at the ones that are already assigned to us. But then other times we have just pulled off the CD, people in the Atlanta area and then made - for several days have the call center make phone calls and try to reach people in that area.

And that seemed to be pretty successful because calling someone and telling them about Ticket to Work, sometimes as you all have probably encountered, you get hung up on, they're not interested or whatever.

But when you call someone and say hey, we have a job opportunity in your area, are you interested in going back to work, that seems to kind of catch their interest a little bit more.

And so when we do that reverse type of calling instead of just calling out a shot in the dark, but calling a specific - in a specific city for jobs that we know a company is looking for, you know, more than eight to ten positions, we've had a lot of success there too.

I know not everyone has the capacity to do that, but just kind of doing that reverse type of search has been successful.

Pam Walker: Okay, thank you. I know that one thing that we encourage is, based on our Ticket holder's experience and expertise and the types of jobs that they're looking for, we will look at those jobs boards, determine maybe a top five that we think is the best fit for them, and then encourage them to go on and get their resume out at that site. And we've had a little bit of, you know, success with that.

But finding jobs or finding people to fill the number of jobs that we have had available has really been a challenge. So obviously it would be great if we had a centralized location where we could put all those jobs or employers could put all those jobs, and we could put all of our Ticket holder's resumes, I think we'd feel a lot more. But hopefully that will be coming somewhere down the road.

Well thank you both. I'm sure we're going to have some questions, and hopefully some other people that would like to join us and tell us about their experiences in 503.

(Frank), do we have any comments or questions at this time?

Operator: We have no questions at this time.

Judy Sanderson: Pam this is Judy. I happen to be on the line; they just unmuted me.

Pam Walker: Oh good.

Judy Sanderson: I was wondering, we have just joined our regional industry liaison group up in the New England area. We haven't had any involvement yet because we're still brand spanking new.

I didn't know if any of you have done that in your areas and if you found it to be of any value.

Pam Walker: I have not done that yet. I know that Susan has had some contact. Maybe she can share a little bit about her experience. And I think if (Paul Luttrell) is on the line...

((Crosstalk))

Susan Webb: Am I on here?

Pam Walker: You are.

Susan Webb: Oh okay, I didn't know if they had muted us. Yes Pam, when you talked about wouldn't it be great to have that centralized location, you know what Barbara talked about in terms of even the biggest ENs like her simply don't have the candidates to meet all the demand.

And there are so many employers out there that, I know a few years ago in the downturn of the economy, I actually hired someone to do nothing but outreach to employers and establish relationships because when the economy came back up -- who would have known that it would take so long -- but I thought, you know, we would be ready to hit the ground running. We'd have all these relationships and we did.

But the minute you have the relationship with one and you go on to the next, the person you had the relationship at the first one is gone.

So the idea of the individual ENs having to try to contact all these employers is just simply not feasible. But if we can partner with VR and their business liaison folks; if we can partner with the One-Stops and their business liaison folks and then use the Job Exchanges which is what I suggested, and we are doing that here.

And I really wanted to put that out there, so thanks for that opportunity Pam, that everybody has that in their state. And it's a matter of contacting the business liaison person at your One-Stop, and there might be more than one. That's okay.

There has been a Community of Practice workshop that (Kevin) did. I believe it was the June one, on the relationships with the One-Stops. And that's one of the things that he emphasized was that we should get in touch with those folks and get a relationship going and I wholeheartedly agree with that.

Many of us have not been able to utilize the AJCs or the One-Stops effectively in the past, but we don't really need to. We don't need to have all of these individual agreements. We just need to, as you said Pam, we need to all converge.

It doesn't matter whether the candidate comes from me, or from VR, or the One-Stop. An employer doesn't care about that. But if they've got one place they can go and we all post the same place, it doesn't matter. They want a good person and we've got them.

So I agree with you that to me that's really the way to go. And we as ENs in our various states should be really working in partnership with, especially the One-Stops. And then the VRs by default are part of that process; part of the Workforce Investment Act process.

So I think that to me that's the way to go with this and get the most bang for our buck and use our resources. And that's also a way for our Ticket users to have the most varied opportunity to all the types of jobs that are out there, not just pigeon hole them into the jobs that we have a relationship with the employer.

So that's my two cents on it. Thank you. That's three cents I think.

Pam Walker: And it (Paul Luttrell) is on the line, I know that he has had some experience. He may not be on today. Okay, do we have anything in Chat?

(Sally): Yes, we do. I think this goes back to Barbara. She mentioned that she provided the contractor with an Excel spreadsheet with information on people who had been referred by the EN, and the question from Chat was, what information goes into that spreadsheet?

Pam Walker: Barbara, can you?

Barbara Rodriguez: Yes, just their - the person that applied, their confirmation number from their application.

(Sally): So you have some back and forth with them to get the confirmation number and application and all that?

Barbara Rodriguez: Yes, yes. But even if they applied themselves, then they - our Career Coach or the call center person that handles that Ticket holder, they know that they have to get the confirmation back to me and then I keep a record of all of that for the employers.

(Sally): Okay, thank you.

Barbara Rodriguez: You're welcome.

Pam Walker: And Barbara I have a follow-up question to that. Obviously you're discussing the disclosure issues and all of that with the beneficiaries. Do you have them sign specifically giving you permission, you know, to submit that information or is it something that you include in your IWP?

Barbara Rodriguez: We include it in our IWP but we also talk about it with them verbally. We have a pretty sophisticated database where we keep records of every time we speak to them, what we talk to them about, and everything that gets discussed. So we have a record of all of that in the system.

So whenever we pull up that Ticket holder then we have all of that information, you know, especially if we're helping them create a profile and uploading their resume and all of that.

Pam Walker: Good, good.

(Sally): This is (Sally) again. I'm going to combine a couple of Chat questions kind of into one because they're both related to the 7% utilization or aspirational goal.

One of was, are there any consequences if a contractor doesn't meet that 7% goal? And the other was are there any incentives for an employer to meet that 7% goal?

Pam Walker: Susan would you like to tackle that one?

Susan Webb: Hello I'm sorry I was in the Chat room. I'm sorry, would you - (Sally) would you say that again?

(Sally): Yes. It's about the 7% utilization goal, one question was are there any consequences if an employer or contractor does not meet that goal. And the second was, are there any incentives for an employer to meet that 7% goal?

Susan Webb: Now (Sally) I answered both of those on the Chat room which is why I didn't her you ask the question.

(Sally): Oh, okay. But I thought maybe everybody would want to hear it because...

Susan Webb: Yes - no that's true. No, there aren't any consequences for the individual not disclosing that they have a disability, but I did follow up by saying that one of

the things that they do have a concern about it is that they cannot disclose pre-offer but then decide they do disclose post-offer.

Because if they do it that way then they do have the ADA protections. So if post-offer they disclose and the job is withdrawn then they have a claim that maybe the reason for the withdrawal was because they found out they had a disability.

And then the fact that they don't have to indicate what the disability is, also and the fact that it's kept separate also is a reason why disclosure should not be a problem.

And I did actually pose a question to that questioner as to whether or not they think that that's a problem - that process is a problem. I don't think they answered back, but I would - they could call in here, dial the 1, 4, and we could have some more discussion about that, that would be good.

And then as far as the incentive, I got kind of smart-alecky on that and I said that the incentive is that they don't have the OFCCP pounding on their door if they comply.

And then the second thing was that they have access to all the great candidates that they need to do the job. And I happen to think that we as ENS have some of those to offer. So that was the incentive that posted.

Pam Walker: And the Work Opportunity Tax Credit when it's available.

Susan Webb: Yes, they (unintelligible) for that one.

((Crosstalk))

Pam Walker: Yes.

Susan Webb: Yes.

Pam Walker: Okay, anything else on Chat?

(Sally): I don't think so.

Pam Walker: Okay, what about (Frank), do we have any comments or questions in queue?

Operator: We have no questions at this time.

Pam Walker: Okay, is there anything that we haven't covered that anybody would like to speak to? Ann or Barbara?

Ann Austin: I don't have anything.

Operator: We do have a question on the phone actually.

Pam Walker: Okay.

Operator: From the line of (Mark Marsh).

Pam Walker: Okay.

(Mark Marsh): Good afternoon everybody.

Pam Walker: Hi (Mark).

(Mark Marsh): Hi. I'm calling to find out a little bit more about using 503 as a reason for a government contractor to hire. And it's more like a chicken and egg. If we are disclosing to a government contractor that we have an individual who has a disability and is qualified, and because of Section 503, and that would presume that they have knowledge of Section 503, that we would like the

government contractor to give this individual preference over someone say, who doesn't have a disability.

And the other part of this question is who within the government contractor organization would we trying to establish a relationship with? Would it be like the Diversity and Compliance Manager? Would it be the HR person, rather than dealing with recruiters. This is assuming we're dealing directly with government contractors.

Pam Walker: Right, right exactly.

(Mark Marsh): Is that clear?

Pam Walker: And that question is kind of difficult to answer because it really depends on the size of the company and the layers of management. But our successes have primarily been with the Human Resource Director and above.

(Mark Marsh): Okay.

Pam Walker: so a lot of times you can just call the company and find out who the VP of Human Resources of the Director of Human Resources is and then contact them and have that conversation you know, to find out who would be the contact person for you to make referrals and, you know, kind of open that door.

Barbara you've had some experience getting your foot in the door. Can you add anything to that; what your experience has been?

Barbara Rodriguez: It's almost always a Diversity HR person...

(Mark Marsh): Diversity HR person?

Barbara Rodriguez: ...that we...

(Mark Marsh): Just ask for who that person would be and then develop the relationship?

Barbara Rodriguez: Yes. And sometimes at really big companies...

((Crosstalk))

Barbara Rodriguez: ...they'll have it broken up into what type of diversity.

(Mark Marsh): Okay.

Barbara Rodriguez: You know they'll have people - they have some people that are working specifically trying to recruit people, you know, that are disabled versus you know, someone...

(Mark Marsh): That's not a disabled individual.

Barbara Rodriguez: ...that's not; yes.

(Mark Marsh): And that presumes disclosure up front. Would you say that in your experiences that the recruiters are a better source to develop a relationship with who represent big companies and dealing with the recruiters as opposed to dealing directly with the government contractors themselves?

Barbara Rodriguez: Well when I mean recruiter I mean someone that's working for the company. A recruiter that...

(Mark Marsh): Oh, okay.

Barbara Rodriguez: A recruiter for the company. Yes, not like an outside - yes.

(Mark Marsh): Yes, I understand now.

Barbara Rodriguez: Like a Human Resource Recruiter in that company.

Pam Walker: Right. And my experience has been that if you start at the top and people get the marching orders beneath - within that org then it's more successful.

Like if I approach somebody who just fills jobs with an employer, they're not as inclined to talk to us or share information. But if I go a level or two above them and have that same conversation, then that filters down. And so then they're sometimes eager to visit with me because they've gotten permission from, you know, someone at the top that it's okay.

(Mark Marsh): Very, very good point. That's a really good point. I would just share one story very quickly with - dealing with a government contractor, and the end result of that was they really weren't aware of the Section 503, but they were open enough to say that well we'd like to network with your organization, and actually had identified a Diversity and Compliance Manager who we could start a relationship with.

And that started at a higher level. It did filter down so, I can identify with that very well. Thank you.

Pam Walker: And it can be time consuming trying to get to the right person, but sometimes it's time well spent.

(Mark Marsh): Okay, well thank you.

Pam Walker: You're welcome. Anyone else? Last call. Anything in queue or in Chat?

Operator: There are no further questions at this time.

Susan Webb: You know can I, since we have a few minutes, if I can, there is something here that (Carol Lee) is asking about the relationships and formalizing relationships between the VRs and the One-Stops, and I responded to that.

That's an important point. I don't want ENs to get mixed up between 503 and Partnership Plus. They're really kind of different. They can work together but they're actually not the same thing.

If you want to do P-Plus then you have to have a formal agreement with your VR agency. And many ENs of course already do.

But the 503 stuff, I think is more through the One-Stops. And you can have formal agreements there, but some do. As you mentioned, (Paul Luttrell) does. But really it's a matter of getting into those job exchanges. And you don't need any kind of formal agreements to do that. Those are public access.

And when it comes to the VR agency, I'm having a lot more luck working with our Business Services liaison with VR than with our Partnership Plus folks. It's a completely differently track.

And even though we have a great - you know we have a really good agreement with ER for P-Plus; it's really good, but it's not the same thing.

And so 503 is all about employers and getting to them. And Partnership Plus isn't like that at all. It's about the candidate, right.

So I would just caution you, especially because (Carol Lee) asked this, and I think that that's a really, really good point that needs to be made.

If you're going to go out and on 503 and look to work with your VR agency, I would suggest that you talk to - you can certainly work with your P-Plus folks. I don't mean that that's not a good way to go.

But I definitely would encourage you to go to the business liaison because those are the people whose job is to actually reach out to employers.

And I was talking to ours yesterday; we've got one here in the State or Arizona, and he was telling me that Georgia has 90 of them and New Mexico doesn't have any. So it's all over the board in terms of what kind of resources and commitments each State's VR makes to this.

But it is certainly where I would say on 503, you need to go. Not to the P-Plus folks.

And (Charlene) might even - (Charlene) and Kate might even have something to add to that since they are more experts on the workings with P-Plus and VR than I am.

Pam Walker: Kate did you want to add anything?

(Charlene): This is (Charlene).

Susan Webb: She might be on mute.

(Charlene): What I would say is I think you're right Susan. They're not the same thing. They're two different purposes.

Partnership Plus handoffs are generally to help assure that the VR customer who graduates with a job from the VR system has some ongoing support - appropriate support that are provided by the Employment Network.

And as Kate pointed out, you know, dealing with the reasonable accommodation issues after hire, sometimes that's a support that an employment network is in a (unintelligible) position to be able to offer.

Following 90 days or 120 days the disability can change. Maybe the job changes and that whole reasonable accommodation discussion could come up over, and over, and over again as the person kind of perceives in their career.

And the finding a job for a job-ready candidate is different than helping a permanent place maintain and advance in their careers. So both VR - I think you pointed it out and I believe Pam did also, that when you don't have candidates, you know, calling your local VR office to see who they might have, Susan as you pointed out very eloquently, the employer doesn't care where they get the candidate from. They just want some qualified candidates.

Pam Walker: And it's important to fill those jobs because if you are working directly with an employer and they send you 200 jobs you know, in over a two week period, and you send them two applicants, they're going to question whether it's worth their time to continue sending you that list.

So the more jobs that you can help them fill with qualified people, the better off that relationship is going to be. So for me, that's why I don't mind sharing job leads that come directly to me if I don't have someone to fill them.

I would rather get it out there to 50 ENs and say, you know, here is this job. You know if you've got somebody qualified, go for it. Because it benefits us

all to fill as many jobs as we can, regardless of, you know, who gets credit for filling the job. You know let's just get a Ticket holder in there.

Susan Webb: I would go even one step further. I think it's fair -- this is Susan again -- I think it's fair to say that most ENs are local, even though we've, you know, got Barbara who's national and you're national, and I think Ann is maybe too.

But the - most of us are local and you're right Pam, I've found that I can't fill the jobs. And even as locally Ann, if I've got 200 Tickets that's great, but I know that there are 800 Tickets in the State of Arizona that are assigned to ENs. So they are clearly out there somewhere else.

And for me, if I can't fill a job then I'm going to go out to you and I'm going to go out to my friends at Employee Reward and all of the nationals that I know through my NENA relationship and say look, I'm willing to do a split Ticket on this.

And what's really good about that - and Pam you and I have done this, is that you're national which you've got some folks in your Ticket bailiwick that I'm the local EN. I'm going to know this job market. I can actually go out to the employer location or whatever. And so for us to work together is to everybody's advantage.

Woman: Absolutely.

Susan Webb: And you know we can work it out as far as the payments. So I'm glad you brought that up. I had forgotten about that. That's an important consideration for us to do split Tickets. So thanks for bringing it up.

Pam Walker: Sure. And one more thing that we touched on but, you know, I want to make sure everybody gives it some thought is that if you are trying to reach out to a federal contractor and get your foot in the door to try to develop a relationship with them, working with an employment network is much more cost effective than them posting at Monster and Career Builders or one of those sites.

Because generally we don't charge them anything to post their job at our Web site, or recruit to help them fill that job. So, you know, that is definitely part of the sales pitch, you know, that you can use to get your foot in the door.

You know, give us a try. It doesn't cost anything.

Susan Webb: There's incentive from our...

Sabra Gardner: Pam, there's a time check. Time check.

Pam Walker: Okay. All right, one last call for comments or questions from (Frank).

Operator: We do have a question from the line of (Paula Vvette). Please proceed.

Pam Walker: Okay. Hey (Paula).

(Paula Vvette): Hi there. Excellent workshop. I mean these have just been some great tips. And I wanted to add one more little thing about why - and I think Pam just touched on it, that why employers should reach out to us and, you know, what's in it for them to hire somebody with a disability.

We pre-screen out applicants, you know. We don't refer people that we don't think are appropriate for the job. We have the ability to ask those difficult questions that employers can't - you know can't ask.

But the things is that we don't discriminate. Everybody we help is disabled. But some people are more able to fill a particular position. And so when they get lists from us, because we also do send lists and get feedback; and I agree it's difficult sometimes to get feedback from employers, but we add so much value to their HR Department because we really are very qualified as ENs to screen applicants with disabilities.

We're much more qualified than the - you know the average HR generalist who doesn't understand the implications of a lot of the disabilities and knows what kind of questions to ask as to, you know, why - you know, at the level of the vocational counselor.

You know not that we share all of this with the employer, but we really are able to screen employees or potential employees very well for our employers. And that's a service that usually employers pay for.

Pam Walker: Mm-hmm. That in...

(Paula Vvette): So that's my pitch.

Pam Walker: That in...

(Paula Vvette): You know it's usually something they have to pay for. Here we're doing this screening and a better screening and more effective and fair and loving screening. Because we don't try to disqualify people because of their disability. I mean we try to find the best fit for people with their disability and where they're going to be successful.

And I think it's really important, you know, to always keep that in our forefront as ENs working with employers is that we provide value to them.

Pam Walker: And even though most of us are not accommodation specialists, we do have resources that we can provide to employers to help them, you know, when there are accommodation issues, you know, to help give them guidance and options.

And you know that's another value add that even though we don't claim to be experts, we can - you know we can assist them in finding the experts. So that's - you know that's something else that you might be - a person might be comfortable using, you know, if you get your foot in the door.

(Paula Vvette): But when you figure that when we screen employees, and employer will screen for one position. You know they may screen 100 people for one position.

And if we've already screened 30 positions - you know, people for the position then we're providing a service.

Pam Walker: Absolutely. And that can be expensive.

(Paula Vvette): It is expensive for employers. But not only do they - do we do this expert screening for them, but they might even actually get that WOTC tax credit.

Pam Walker: That's right; that's right. Well thank you...

(Paula Vvette): I'm a big believer that what we do is an essential portion of encouraging people with disabilities to get back to work because we understand a little bit more than the average bear, how disabilities affect you in the workplace. And I think we've got to remember that.

Pam Walker: Yes, thank you so much (Paula). We appreciate you chiming in with those comments is very, very important.

And it looks like we're getting real close to our end time so I'm going to turn everything back over to Sabra.

Sabra Gardner: Thank you so much Pam, also Ann and Barbara for facilitating this portion of today's Community of Practice conversation, especially for sharing your experiences including some of the wrong path frustrations to led to your success in placing beneficiaries with federal contractors.

Today's PowerPoint presentation -- just a reminder -- and the handout materials will be posted to the Events archive section of the Information Center on Your Ticket to Work in the next few days, so that you know.

Also I thank everyone who did call in and for the lively conversation in the Chat today as well. We will have the Chat posted on our Web site.

And then one last thing before we sign off. Please mark your calendars for the August Community of Practice which is actually set for Wednesday, August 20 at 3:00 pm Eastern.

Usually we have been running on the first Wednesday, and then the Fourth of July threw us off, so this is the second Wednesday in July. We're going even a week further in August and it has to do with scheduling, so that we could accommodate our presenter, Michael Murray from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

And he's going to talk about the application avenue to successful employment within the federal government. Among other things he'll cover Schedule A hiring, and also the competitive employment process. And we certainly hope that you can all join us then. We're very much looking forward to that.

Thanks so much everyone and have a lovely afternoon.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen that does conclude the conference call for today. Have a great day everyone.

END