NWX DOL ESA OFCCP
Moderator: Brenda Stewart
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Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time all lines are in listen-only mode for the duration of today's call. Today's call is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. Now I would like to turn the call over to our leader today, Ms. Brenda Stewart. Ma'am, you may begin.

Brenda Stewart: Thank you (Jeremy) and good afternoon to everyone. Again I am Brenda Stewart and I'm your moderator for today's Webinar. We're looking forward to sharing with you information on a set of practices on retaining individuals with disabilities.

OFCCP recognizes the importance of a diversified workforce and we encourage you to take advantage of the wonderful resources our speakers can provide to federal contractors. We understand you may have questions for our presenters so we will open the chat feature of your WebEx box where we will take questions.

And you can submit those questions at any time during the Webinar. We will go over the questions after the conclusion of the presentation. You can find the chat feature on the lower right-hand corner of your screen. Also note that closed captioning is available to anyone that would like to view it. Just maximize the media viewer. Next slide.

Right now I'd like to introduce your speakers. You see the pictures of Colet Mitchell and Shaun McGill on your screen. Colet Mitchell is the Lead Policy

Analyst on the employer team in the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy or better known as ODEP.

Colette is an educator and has worked for the veterans' employment and training service and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban and Development and Education, the U.S. House of Representatives, the Pentagon Education Center and the Rochester New York school district. She holds a B.S. and M.S. degree from the State University of New York. Welcome, Colet.

We also have Shaun McGill and he's a Senior Policy Advisor for the Office of Disability Employment Policy again ODEP. He's a member of the employer policy team where he works to examine and effect policy solutions for the issues and barriers facing employers as they seek to hire, accommodate and advance employees with disabilities.

Prior to joining ODEP Shaun served five years as the Executive Director for an NGO located in the suburbs of Maryland where he provided employment services to individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

He has over 18 years of on-the-ground experience providing employment support to individuals with disabilities in varying capacities from direct support, location rehabilitation counselor to senior-level management. Welcome Shaun.

Shaun McGill: Thank you.

Brenda Stewart: I will now turn the presentation over to Colet and she has a few introductory remarks before the slides will advance.

Colet Mitchell: Thank you Brenda for that great introduction and thanks so much to OFCCP for hosting this Webinar and inviting us to share our resources today. As my great boss Assistant Secretary Kathy Martinez likes to say, welcome to an exciting era in disability inclusion.

I also wanted to recognize again my colleague Shaun who is himself a veteran. Go Army and go Shaun, no, stay. We are a part of the Office of Disability Employment Policy or for short ODEP employer policy team.

ODEP is not a regulatory or compliance agency and thus we work with employers to refine and advance best practices in disability inclusion by among other things providing forums for employers to exchange information, sponsoring research and funding an employer center.

We'll talk at the end of the presentation about our employer center under the resources but just let me say right now it's the employer assistance and resource network or EARN.

The focus of this Webinar will be on the strategies and the framework for disability inclusion. There are seven key strategy areas full of best practices gleaned from the great employers we have been fortunate to work with and know.

I would like to say it's the seven highly effective habits of disability inclusion. You as employers are the idea incubators and we are happy to share your great ideas. We will start off introducing the why, and then focus on five of the seven strategies and then share our resources.

I will host the first part of this Webinar and focus on three of the strategies and Shaun will host the second part and he will focus on two of the strategies and Shaun please chime-in if I miss something.

Shaun McGill: You know I will.

Colet Mitchell: I know you will, all right, let's get started with the why. Next slide, please. Take advantage of the opportunities. Why? Why now? Well, I always like to say, why not? This is an opportunity to update policies, procedures to look at your system and find and focus on what works and get results.

The Section 503 regulations are historic rules for the disability community and for businesses alike. Remember that affirmative action has never meant hiring someone who is not qualified for the job. You always hire the most qualified person.

These rules were designed to help employers realize and harness the skills, talents and ingenuity of all qualified workers including workers with disabilities and wounded warriors. A person who is deaf can work a jackhammer.

A veteran returning from battle with PTSD or missing limbs can help secure and build our infrastructure at home just as he or she once did in service to our country and a person in a wheelchair can be a doctor or a nurse.

Simply put disability doesn't mean unable and achieving this goal does not need to be hard or daunting. In fact we challenge you to show others you are the leaders in disability employment.

Disability is diversity and diversity does drive innovation. We want all our businesses to reflect the diversity of our communities and disability should absolutely be part of that diversity fabric. Not only that, people with disabilities often represent other diverse communities.

Many veterans are also people with disabilities. We know that diversity drives innovation. People with disabilities have a unique perspective and experiences that can contribute to that innovation.

In fact Dr. Scott Page a University of Michigan professor developed a mathematical model and this mathematical model shows diversity trumps ability every time. His book The Difference, How the Power of Diversity Creates Groups, Firms, Schools and Society enumerates this point.

There are other business considerations as well. For example a 2009 study by University of Illinois professor Dr. Cedric Herring analyzed over 1000 American businesses and confirmed something that we do know intuitively: employers who embrace diversity see the benefits in their bottom line.

In Dr. Herring's quantitative study, companies with greater diversity were associated with increased sales revenue, more customers, greater market share and greater relative profits.

In fact people with disabilities represent the third-largest market segment so representation in your workforce enables you to tap into the disability market so make sure they're represented in your workforce and finally research indicates that consumers favor businesses that employ people with disabilities. Next slide, please.

Now we have a polling question. Get out your clicker. How many households have a family member with a disability living with them? A, 6%; B, 8%; C, 15%; or D, 24%. I'm going to turn this over to Brenda who will expertly guide us through the polling question.

Brenda Stewart: Well, I see people are already answering and we see a lot of responses that are coming in for C, 15% but we also have quite a few for B Colet. No one has selected anything I think from A, well, 1% have selected A.

Colet Mitchell: Okay.

Brenda Stewart: But the largest portion has been C but I'll let you go over the answer.

Colet Mitchell: Well thank you Brenda. In fact 24% of households - yes 24% - that would be D have a family member with a disability living with them and our point here is many qualified individuals with disabilities are interested in bringing their experience and skill to your workforce.

In fact there are 22.3 million family members living with a working age individual with a disability. Chances are you either have someone in your family with a disability or have a friend who does. This affects all of us. Next slide, please.

Who are we and what do we do the eternal question? We are the Office of Disability Employment Policy and as I said earlier, we are not a regulatory or a compliance agency. In fact we are I believe the newest office in the Department of Labor.

We are two administrations old and there are 52 employees. In a nutshell we are the leader on disability employment at the U.S. Department of Labor. We ensure disability inclusion in the Department of Labor's program.

We work on issues as far-ranging as accessible technology, accessible social media, youth transition, state engagement at integrated employment, state policies and practices, service delivery and of course employer policies and practices inclusive of people with disabilities and wounded warriors.

We have and continue to work closely with OFCCP our sister agency at DOL. Here we are in the heart of OFCCP right now and ODEP is here to support you as you implement the 503 regulations. There is a wealth of information about us at dol.gov\odep.

I encourage you to check out our Website. Under topics you can click on the employer page and the employer page has all the latest resources for employers that we have developed over the course of the last several years.

It also contains the framework for disability inclusion which we're talking about and walking you through in this Webinar and on the home page if you go to the top left portion of the page you can sign-up for the Friday roll-out of all the latest resources and tools in disability employment. Again it's dol.gov\odep.

We'll also let you know about some employer-specific resources we provide at the end of this presentation. Next slide, please. Now on to the first strategy in our framework. Well, let me first review the five strategies we're talking about and then we'll go to the first one.

An inclusive corporate culture, personnel processes, accommodations and other universal strategies, outreach and recruitment which Shaun will cover and accessible information and communication technology. These are the five strategies that we will focus on and again these are all effective practices within these strategies that we gleaned working from employers such as you. Next slide, please.

Inclusive corporate culture - lead the way. Why is this important? Research shows that people who feel like they are working in an environment that encourages them to bring their whole self to work are more likely to be happy and productive employees especially if employers are following the 503 rule.

We hear from a lot of employers and they're all asking about strategies to encourage voluntary disclosure. The best strategy to encourage voluntary self-disclosure is to build an environment that says yes, we are welcoming and inclusive of current and prospective employees with disabilities so how can you do this? Next slide, please.

Here are some strategies that demonstrate an inclusive corporate culture. Language and visible statements that the company is welcoming and inclusive of people with disabilities. How can you do this?

By communicating via your outreach materials, through verbal communication and in posted policies like your diversity statement that the company actively supports the employment of people with disabilities.

Employee resource groups. Establish an enterprise-wide team consisting of executives, managers and employees with disabilities to support and advance the employment of qualified individuals with disability.

This group can also function as a disability focused employee resource group or they're sometimes referred to as affinity groups and lately business groups. ERGs can be a great way to promote peer-to-peer support and get ideas for improving the business culture.

Shaun McGill: Colet if I may, I think it's also important to mention some other great benefits ERGs can offer such as assisting in recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities, boosting productivity, helping to promote and explain disability-related issues, helping implement needed supports and policies, helping improve products and services for people with disabilities and serving as special functions to improve overall employee engagement in corporate culture.

I know these are all pretty broad ideas but ODEP is striving to provide more information on these ERG benefits in the near future so be sure to check the ODEP Website frequently for updates.

Colet Mitchell: Thank you Shaun.

Shaun McGill: You're welcome.

Colet Mitchell: I want to add one more thing about employee resources.

Shaun McGill: Please do.

Colet Mitchell: Thank you. If you go to the Website - the ODEP Website dol.gov\odep which I'm shamelessly promoting in this Webinar, you can find an employee resource group paper on the employer page so just click on the top at government employers and it will take you to the employer page and the employee resource toolkit exists there.

And I also want to mention one more thing that I recently learned. I was at a diversity and inclusion seminar put on by our Office of Personnel Management for Federal Employees, a very prominent federal agency.

They have a member of the senior leadership team as a mentor to each employee research group and this really brings the employee resource group into the main line of the business of the agency and they found this to be very effective for them so keep that in mind.

Include disability as a component of the company's diversity initiatives, activities and statements and establish model policies and practices around things like accessible technology which Shaun will be talking about later on in the Webinar.

A good first step here is to ensure that your company Website is accessible. Create universal policies around reasonable accommodations and workplace flexibility for all applicants and employees with and without disabilities.

For those who did not know, the concept of workplace flexibility it's about flexibility of time and place - when you work and where you work - but it can also be about the flexibility of task, to align jobs with the particular strengths that the worker brings to the job.

Studies show that workplace flexibility can increase productivity, retention, diversity and employee and customer satisfaction and I also want to note here that many employers are embracing workplace flexibility as a tool to attract and retain the best talent.

Now one more plug for the ODEP Website, dol.gov\odep. There is a workplace flexibility toolkit on our Website and it's under flexible work arrangements. Next slide, please.

More about an inclusive corporate culture. Leadership and commitment at the highest levels including the top executives such as the agency I told you about, the federal agency that has a top executive as a mentor to all of the employee resource groups.

Include their leadership teams and even the board of directors. Understanding by mid-level managers and supervisors of their roles and responsibilities in facilitating an inclusive environment and communication of the company's goal of an inclusive and diverse workforce to employees at all levels of the agency or the business. Next slide, please.

Now we're moving on to the second strategy that we'll be talking about today which is personnel processes. Inclusive personnel processes are also critical to the employment, retention and advancement of people with disabilities within your business. Next slide, please.

Personnel processes must facilitate not impede hiring and advancement. Now here are some strategies in that area. An important strategy for companies, review your personnel processes. As I noted in the beginning, 503 regulations provide a perfect opportunity to look at your systems and policies and promote and implement those that are working and getting results for you.

Look at your qualification standards. Look at your job descriptions, including essential functions of each position to determine whether they facilitate or impede the hiring and advancement of qualified persons with disabilities inclusive of wounded warriors.

Also look at adopting a policy that includes disability among the positive selection factors or that provides priority consideration to qualified individuals with disabilities. I know in the federal government we have a streamlined hiring authority called the Schedule A Hiring Authority. I just want to point that out.

And then indicate in job announcements that the company is encouraging applications by qualified individuals with disability. The announcement could even include a universal access symbol to emphasize your point that you will consider applicants with disclosed disabilities for all available positions for which they may be qualified. Next slide, please.

Continuing with personnel processes, again personnel processes should facilitate, not impede hiring and advancement. More strategies here include providing training opportunities to employees including apprenticeship programs, on-the-job training, job shadowing and tuition reimbursement for existing employees with disabilities.

And again as I said before, looking at the systems, see if there are any bottlenecks. I know I recently completed a training forum at the Department of Labor and there were at least 80 digit codes that I needed to input and what we did in our office was we put all those codes in and we created a training form that facilitated myself and our staff inputting for the training forums.

I know it was very hard for me because I was thinking is it worth it but it is. Providing training opportunities to executives, managers about new strategies such as I said before workplace flexibility and customized employment around job tasks. This could include job restructuring, job sharing and job

creation and by the way, this workplace flexibility is a fabulous return-to-work tool.

Finally developing emergency management plans that specifically address the needs of employees with disabilities include practical guidelines for managers and employees and address such issues as communication and dissemination of the plan, employer and first-responder responsibilities, employee self-determination and notification.

In fact we're in the process - my office is looking again at our emergency management plans and updating them. Next slide, please. Now on to another strategy that is sure to ensure productivity, reasonable accommodations.

Reasonable accommodations we like to say in our office, they're really productivity tools. We all have productivity tools to help us succeed in our job. As my great boss Assistant Secretary Kathy Martinez likes to say, Kathy Martinez - this is the Secretary Martinez - has a visual impairment and so she will say well I really don't need the lights. You all need the lights.

We come to work and we expect to find a computer and a chair and a desk in order to help us be productive in our jobs and simply put accommodations are just another tool in an employee's tools to be productive.

According to the job accommodation network and I haven't mentioned JAN before but JAN is a fabulous again ODEP-sponsored resource, the job accommodation network has a Website and a call center. They have been in business for 25 years and they're the foremost experts on accommodation.

According to JAN more than half of all accommodations cost nothing and there are often financial benefits from providing accommodations. Efficiency benefits. Next slide, please.

Reasonable accommodations. Now here are some strategies. As I said before this is a great time to look at your processes and systems and ensure there are no bottlenecks. An HR manager recently told me she herself walked through the accommodation process and found several bottlenecks and was able to very simply modify those and streamline the process.

So I urge you to look at the processes and systems in place, check out and see if there are bottlenecks. In addition to understanding the nature of the obligation to make available reasonable accommodations, it's important to consider the procedures and administrative mechanisms used by employees to ensure effective and efficient implementation.

Effective strategies around reasonable accommodation include develop, implement and communicate written procedures for processing these requests. Establish an administrative mechanism for minimizing the cost of accommodations being assigned to the line manager's budget.

You could do this through a centralized payment for the cost of making the accommodations. This is sometimes referred to as a centralized accommodation fund. Establish a centralized source of expertise for assessing, evaluating and providing reasonable accommodations.

And again use JAN the job accommodation network and provide training opportunities for executives, manager and line staff to learn about new strategies and devices including telework and assistive technology devices. Next slide, please.

Finally, a few more strategies for reasonable accommodations. Ensure that both managers and employees are aware of the job accommodation network. Create an online system for tracking accommodations in order to document their successful use.

Allow line managers authorization for reasonable accommodations but require a team to review denials and require that all denials be signed by upper-level management and finally assign a full-time director of disability services.

Now at this point we are going to move on to outreach and recruitment and the other strategy accessible information technology by my colleague Shaun. Go Shaun.

Shaun McGill: Thank you Colet. That's a lot of great information and thanks to OFCCP again for giving us this opportunity to share some helpful resources with employers. Let me start off by saying the adoption of effective outreach and recruitment strategies is obviously one of the most critical components to ensuring that a company's workforce includes qualified individuals with disabilities. Next slide, please.

Three keys to building a talent pipeline. A great way to ensure consistent access to qualified applicants with disabilities is to build a pipeline and to effectively build that pipeline, employers need to establish and foster relationships. What's more it is most helpful to build these relationships with a variety of recruitment sources.

Developing solid relationships often involves at least phone conversations but best of all a face-to-face interaction where the company can discuss its

recruitment needs and the recruitment source can discuss its offerings and resources and a plan can be developed that makes sense for both parties.

Other effective practices include designating a coordinator for targeted disability outreach, developing and delivering training to recruitment staff on effective ways to recruit, interview and hire job candidates with disabilities and include individuals with disabilities on recruitment teams. Next slide, please.

Here are some of the agencies you can build those relationships with. The American Job Center Network. DOL funds approximately 3000 American job centers across the country to give job-seekers both with and without disabilities training referrals, career counseling, job listings and employment-related services.

You likely already have a relationship with your local AJC but perhaps have not yet considered AJCs as a recruitment source for candidates with disabilities.

We know that job seekers with disabilities are actively using the services of the workforce system so the workforce system is a good partner to consider. One way employers can make this connection happen is through the posting of jobs on the national labor exchange.

We also recommend you setup meetings with the business service representatives or disability program coordinators at your local AJCs to learn about the services of the workforce system and how you can best establish an ongoing recruitment connection for people with disabilities.

You can find your local American Job Center by visiting the Website servicelocator.org. You should also note that there is a program called the disabilities employment initiative operating in the AJC network in 22 states which you can find out more about on ODEP and ETA's Website. To find your AJC go to www.servicelocator.org.

Another great relationship can be had with state vocational rehabilitation agencies. The Department of Education funds VR agencies in every state to provide employment-related supports for people with disabilities. This includes job training and other individualized services.

The VR system is a ready resource for job candidates with disabilities. To find your state VR agencies, you can go to the Website on the screen or contact the employer assistance and resource network better known as EARN, a resource I'll mention at the end.

One of ODEP's alliance partners the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation National Employment Team or CSAVR-NET is a national team of vocational rehabilitation business consultants who provide support to businesses at the national, state and local level.

The team offers on-the-ground support to businesses nationwide. CSAVR-NET has recently developed a talent acquisition portal which is a centralized national talent pool of candidates with disability.

Businesses will be able to access qualified candidates with disability based on their skillsets, education, experience, geographic availability and other key factors identified by employer partners. It hasn't launched yet but you can visit tapability.org to learn more.

Ticket-to-work employment networks is another great partner to form relationships with. Through the Social Security Administration ticket-to-work program, employment networks or ENs are organizations that contract with SSA to accept tickets from beneficiaries of SSI and SSDI and provide training and employment services.

ENs take a variety of forms and are also a valuable resource to consider. To find employment networks in your area, go to www.chooseworktetw.net and finally there's the workforce recruitment program or WRP. WRP is an employment program for college students and recent graduates with disabilities.

It is co-sponsored by ODEP and DOL and the U.S. Department of Defense and can be used both by federal government agencies and private employers. We currently have about 1400 candidates in the database, about 100 of whom are veterans. They have been recruited from 275 colleges and universities around the nation.

To find out more about WRP, go to ERN's Website at www.askearn.org. Also ERN and direct employers just launched a WRP portal to increase targeted outreach to the WRP database. Employers can post jobs targeted to the WRP by going to www.wrp.jobs\employers.

Colet Mitchell: Shaun, can I just chime-in for a minute about the workforce recruitment program?

Shaun McGill: Sure, I need to take a drink anyhow.

Colet Mitchell: Oh, okay, perfect timing. I just want to say the employer team as well as ODEP we have had great success with the workforce recruitment program and

entrants that have worked for us. In fact the employer team's intern transitioned after her internship in our office into the private sector.

She's been working in the private sector for two years. She's the President of Toastmaster at her business where she works and she just got accepted into a master's program. Very impressive.

Shaun McGill: Wow Colet. That is tremendous news. Like Assistant Secretary Martinez used to say, we're not just talking the talk, we're walking the walk.

Colet Mitchell: Thanks Shaun.

Shaun McGill: Thanks for sharing that.

Colet Mitchell: Okay.

Shaun McGill: Education - next slide, I'm sorry - educational institutions can also be an important recruitment resource. When thinking about educational institutions, you should consider community and technical colleges and public and private colleges and universities.

Often colleges offer job training programs. Many also have disability groups and services. A good place to start is with the college's office of disability services. Most colleges have them and they are often connected to the career center.

Non-profit organizations in your recruitment area can also help you meet recruitment goals. These include independent living centers some of which receive funding from the Department of Education. To find independent living centers or ILCs go to www.ilru.org. That's www.ilru.org.

Non-profit organizations also include disability, mental health, advocacy and other community-based organizations. These organizations are interacting with people with disabilities on a regular basis if not a daily basis and can become an ongoing referral source for your business.

Finally there are a number of for-profit companies at public/private partnership organizations that you may want to consider partnering with - many that have job candidate databases and outreach and recruitment resources.

If you don't know about it already, OFCCP recently launched a recruitment tool called the disability and veteran's community resources directory that centralizes information about national, state and local organizations that can help businesses source qualified workers with disabilities and veterans based on employers' identified needs.

It was developed specifically to help federal contractors fulfill their requirements under the new regulatory updates so I really hope you'll take advantage of it. You can find it on the OFCCP Website which is dol.gov\ofccp. Next slide.

Outreach, some effective practices. Where to start. It's important to know what to do so here are some effective practices around outreach and recruitment to help you implement an operational outreach and recruitment program. As mentioned earlier explore opportunities to establish formal or informal partnership relationships with recruitment sources.

Designate a coordinator for targeted disability outreach. Develop and deliver training to our recruitment staff on effective ways to recruit, interview and

hire job candidates with disabilities. Include individuals with disabilities on company recruitment teams. Next slide, please.

Create and use accessible online job applications, job boards, social network tools to promote hiring initiatives and job openings. Participate in job career fairs targeting veterans and other job seekers with disabilities. Explore online job fairs targeting people with disabilities and participate actively in internship and mentoring programs. Next slide, please.

Here's a quick review of some effective practices you can implement immediately to improve your outreach and recruitment. Establish a disability diversity ERG, BRG or affinity group. Incorporate company assignments that indicate you are an inclusive company welcoming people with disabilities.

Include disability in all of your company diversity policies and activities. Make it evident through policies and practices that you are inclusive of people with disabilities and finally commit to assessment and continuous improvement and I can't stress this enough, be inclusive. An inclusive workplace is key. Next slide, please.

Now I'd like to talk a little bit about being tech-savvy. Accessible technology is a key policy because when workplace technology is not accessible, it excludes. When certain individuals are unable to perform basic job duties because they can't access basic workplace tools like HR systems or travel systems for example, it limits their productivity.

And equally if not more discouraging is when people are unable to fairly compete for a position in the first place due to an accessible online job application. These inequalities are simply not fair. On the flip side when

technologies are accessible to all users, they become powerful productivity enhancements enabling everyone to perform on the job and fully contribute.

Everyone should have equal access to and use of information and data. Success in this area requires the specific commitment by the company in all of its departments. Remember ensuring accessible ICT is essential to facilitating meaningful and effective employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Next slide, please.

Just as important be sure to conduct a needs assessment and establish priorities. Consider all of the ICT used or offered and make a list of those platforms, devices and applications. Evaluate accessibility by testing ICT applications with automated accessibility testing tools and by considering the user experience of applicants, employees and customers.

Establish a process and adopt criteria that can be used for setting priorities. One of the most critical components you should consider is ensuring that your corporate Website and your online talent management systems are accessible. This will not only ensure that job seekers with disabilities can apply for jobs but it can also assist with tracking the diversity efforts.

Now not all online talent management systems on the market are accessible and ODEP is committed to changing that. Need proof? Just ask PEAT. PEAT or the partnership on employment and accessible technology is an ODEP-funded, multi-faceted initiative working to advance the employment, retention and career advancement of people with disability through accessible technology.

And as part of this initiative we will soon launch a Web portal called peatworks.org which will highlight free resources and opportunities for

employers to learn and engage in the issues so stay tuned and check back frequently for updates for PEAT's sake. Sorry. I couldn't resist.

Colet Mitchell: Well, PEAT, JAN, ERN.

Shaun McGill: Who else we have in the room? Next slide, please.

Colet Mitchell: Thank you Shaun. Lots of great ideas. Again these ideas were gleaned from employers that we are privileged to know and work with. I would like to talk now about the additional ODEP resources that we've mentioned throughout this presentation but before I talk about these resources, I want to again shamelessly promote the ODEP Website dol.gov\odep.

Now if you look at the first resource here we've mentioned this several times, job accommodation network, askjan.org. It's a free service of ODEP and JAN provides free expert and confidential consultation to employers and employees on job accommodations as well as other resources for people with disabilities.

The employer assistance and resource network and I referred to that earlier as the employer center, another fabulous resource the Website at earn E-A-R-N dot org. This is a free resource and provides resources to help employers recruit, retain and advance individuals with disabilities.

And as I've noted the business strategies that work, this is the framework within which we built this Webinar. We focused on five of those strategies. We provided effective practices under each one of those five buckets. This resource again is divided into seven action areas, two of which we did not have time to cover.

We hope that you will go on the ODEP Website and while this link looks very long, you can go on the Website - the ODEP Website dol.gov\odep - and simply put in employers and this is the second resource on the employer page.

Again I want to remind you that on the ODEP Website homepage you can sign-up for a Friday roll-out of all the latest resources and tools and research in disability employment so Shaun?

Shaun McGill: Yes, Colet, you know, quick victories are always good when you have a goal in mind and what I want to do is recap real quick some things that employers can do immediately, things such as create or enhance a plan and be sure to include disability, including wounded warriors in the plan.

Include students with disabilities in your internships, promote universal design and information and communications technology and promote inclusion in your subcontracting opportunities.

Finally I'd like to talk about our disability employment - our being ODEP, ODEP's disability employment theme for the year. That's Expect, Employ, Empower. Thank you very much now I'll turn it back to OFCCP so we can open it up for questions.

Brenda Stewart: Okay, thank you Colet, thank you Shaun. That was a lot of information and we've gotten in a lot of questions too but the primary question that the majority of people have been asking is about the slides and whether they will be available and the answer to that question is yes.

They will be posted on OFCCP's Website so check that Website in about a week and that's www.dol.gov\ofccp. Now for the questions.

Colet Mitchell: Well Brenda before you get onto the questions, will this recorded presentation also be available at a future date?

Brenda Stewart: Yes, it will.

Colet Mitchell: I need to share this with my family. Shaun with his voice, you're saying this.

Brenda Stewart: So the recording of this Webinar will also be on OFCCP's Website so you can pull up the recording and listen and watch. You can pull up this demo to slides and print them and have them as a reference tool so we have lots of material that we'll be able to provide you the information you need.

Okay, okay, questions. You know, and really it's really not a whole, whole lot. Let's see. Do any of the ODEP tools provide free accessibility software to employers to use on their company pages?

Colet Mitchell: We do not develop software. We really are a policy office and we're in the business of looking at policies and practices. What I think is as Shaun mentioned earlier he mentioned PEAT.

It's a partnership for employment and accessible technology and we will be starting up a Website called peatwork.org. Also JAN the job accommodation network has a snap tool and you can go on the askjan Website and you can use that snap tool and that really does not say my Website is 508 compliant. We're not in the business of, you know, providing that.

But we are in the business of providing the resources that will help you look at that Website and determine where you can - what areas you need to work on - and where you can go to find assistance with doing that.

And again sign-up for our roll-out of releases on the ODEP Website, the news release because when the partnership for accessible employment and accessible technology for PEAT's sake, when PEAT opens up we will have more information on that for you and thank you for that question, excellent question.

Brenda Stewart: Thank you Colet. One of the questions asked about the resources askjan provides, does it provide information on the applicants with phone numbers, resumes or e-mail addresses?

Colet Mitchell: It sounds more like a job board or a career service to me and really what JAN is, JAN again is a free confidential resource and JAN is all about accommodation. I feel like that is more of a job board question and we really don't provide personal information about people neither JAN nor ERN.

Shaun McGill: Right, I think we talked about the national labor exchange and we also talked about CSAVR-NET and those are resources where you can find qualified applicants.

Colet Mitchell: And the workforce recruitment program...

Shaun McGill: Workforce recruitment program, how could I forget that?

Colet Mitchell: ...and well that's just one more. That's why we're both here Shaun.

Shaun McGill: Absolutely.

Colet Mitchell: The workforce recruitment program, you can access the database. Again there are 1400 qualified students with disabilities seeking internships or full-time

positions inclusive of 100 veteran students and you can tap into that database through our employer assistance and resource network askearn.org.

And again we've had great workforce recruitment programs through this working for us in ODEP.

Brenda Stewart: Okay, now here's an easy one, easy for you but I don't have an answer. What does ERG or BRG stand for?

((Crosstalk))

Shaun McGill: Employer resource group or business resource group and I also said an affinity group and they're all the same thing. It's just a matter of semantics really how businesses want to identify them but its employer resource group, business resource group or affinity group.

Brenda Stewart: Okay, thank you Shaun.

Shaun McGill: You're welcome.

Brenda Stewart: At some point in the slides there was mention of a Website or an e-mail address where possible candidates are.

Colet Mitchell: I think that was the workforce recruitment program that you can access through askearn, A-S-K-E-A-R-N dot org and again that's a database of 1400 students with disabilities looking for full-time positions.

And there also is the wrp.jobs portal and that was just launched. That is a collaboration with direct employers and our employer assistance resource network and employers can post jobs on the WRP jobs portal and then target

the WRP students in that database from this year and we included last year's students in the database because as you know, students, sometimes it takes a while to land a job.

I have two daughters who've been in college last year so you know how that goes.

Brenda Stewart: Okay Colet, we have a question for Shaun. This was someone asking for you to repeat the benefits you listed of having ERG data.

Shaun McGill: Okay, benefits, assisting in recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities, boosting productivity, helping to promote and explain disability-related issues, helping implement needed supports and policies, helping improve products and services for people with disabilities, serving special functions to improve overall employee engagement in corporate culture and let me repeat it one more time.

Brenda Stewart: Shaun do you have a slide number we can go to that slide?

Shaun McGill: Actually I don't but I can include it in a slide so that we can have it once it's posted. I'm sorry.

Brenda Stewart: That's okay, that's okay. The recording will be posted. They'll be able to pick it up from that.

Colet Mitchell: And then I also want to point out that we do have an employee resource group toolkit on the ODEP Website and so if you go to dol.gov\odep - shameless promotion of our Website - click on employers and you will find that.

And then also I want to recall you're looking at candidates - we've had a couple of questions about candidates - and I also want to point out to everyone's attention. Shaun went over some of the wonderful partners that you can work with and develop partnerships with and he mentioned the America's Job Centers.

And you go to the servicelocator.org and find the America's Job Center in your area and you also can find candidates there as well as through the vocational rehabilitation system which Shaun mentioned too in addition to the WRP program and the wrp.jobs portal so just wanted to point that out as well.

Brenda Stewart: Okay, now we're getting a lot of questions about the Section 503 and VEVRAA update. That's not the focus of today's presentation. We are scheduling presentations and have done multiples of focusing on just that topic. The next session is scheduled for June 17th and I believe that's next Tuesday.

Where we will be discussing the new VEVRAA and Section 503 regulations and particularly addressing an audience of new and small federal contractors, but you're welcome to join us. Even if you're not one of those kinds of contractors, you're welcome to join us for that Webinar.

However, I think and I may be wrong but I really do think that Webinar is full right now but don't panic because we're regularly holding these Webinars and the Webinars we've held previously on these same topics are posted on our Website, the recordings from those Webinars as well as the presentation.

And the Website also includes a wealth of resources, FAQs, fact sheets, anything you could possibly want to know about the changes, you can find it on OFCCP's Website. Okay, let's see if we've gotten any newer - the national

labor exchange - that was mentioned. Is there a cost to use that or any of the other Websites you've mentioned?

Colet Mitchell: There is not a cost. I meant the wrp.jobs. There is no cost to use that and you can post your jobs.

Brenda Stewart: Okay, okay, where do civilian companies sign-up to gain access to the WRP database?

Colet Mitchell: What you would do is go to our Website, the employer assistance and resource network Website. It's askearn.org and you can work with the employment specialist there. Her name is Kathleen Lee. She has excellent experience in sourcing candidates and she will search the database for you.

We can search the database by majors, by geographic region. These candidates have all been pre-interviewed and she will work with you to find several candidates that match the skills and qualifications that you are looking for and we encourage you to do this.

Brenda Stewart: Okay, one person indicates that they have 149 vocations and each staffed with just a very small number of HR people. Do you have any suggestions on how such a small staff of maybe one or two HR people who manages all of the HR responsibilities can direct their recruitments for individuals with disabilities?

And they're also indicating that attending job fairs isn't the best use of their time because they only have a handful of hires each year so it sounds like this contractor wants to do all that they can to reach out and solicit and attract individuals with disabilities. They just need some guidance on where they can do that where it doesn't require them to do a lot of travel I would imagine.

Colet Mitchell: Well, I think that wrp.jobs portal targeting the workforce recruitment
program, using that would be a great way to go because the students are all
over this country and secondly CSAVR Shaun you mentioned the net.

Now the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation has a
national employment network throughout the country and they work with the
vocational rehabilitation program. They have clients all over the country so
again that would facilitate one contact where you could get the information
about individuals who could fill those positions that would be all over the
country.

And Kathy West-Evans is the individual who runs the net and she's excellent
to work with. I highly recommend it so those are two things I can think of
right initially.

Shaun McGill: Right, and I think some passive things that an employer can do and we talked
about this is to create and communicate an inclusive work culture and so make
sure that marketing materials and communication materials are inclusive of
people with disability and make sure that, you know, your customers and your
employees know about that.

And we talked about the ERGs and the BRGs and if there's an opportunity,
facilitate those. Nurture those types of activities in the business and they can
also be a really great resource in recruiting. If they know and are comfortable
in a diverse culture, then the word gets out through them as well.

Brenda Stewart: Okay, well I'll tell you what. This information that you shared today was
extremely helpful as a companion to the updates to our new implementing
regulations. There's so many things that have changed where particular
attention is paid to recruiting and I think the information that you provided

will help contractors particularly both with their efforts and be more effective in soliciting individuals with disability.

It looks like oh, one last question. What is the source for that poll question, the 24% household data.

Colet Mitchell: Yes, I can find it, let me go back and check that out. It's based on analysis by Cornell University. William Erickson of the 2012 American Community Survey public use microdata sample.

Brenda Stewart: Okay, I hope you got that and we've had a couple of people send in a chat saying that one of the resources, they checked the Website I think VR's Website for tapability, it states that there is a cost associated.

((Crosstalk))

Brenda Stewart: Okay, that must be tapability.org, their Website must indicate that there's a cost and I think there's also the WRP jobs Website. That link appears not to be working or it's either not saying...

((Crosstalk))

Colet Mitchell: It's wrp.jobs.

Brenda Stewart: Okay.

Colet Mitchell: So maybe I neglected to say the wrp.jobs on that one and then for the tapability, that has not actually been actualized yet. It's in the process so I will check into that and we will get back to you.

Brenda Stewart: Okay, now one final thing. We wanted to make sure that our audience of participants has a contact number or Website or e-mail in the ODEP office if they have some questions that OFCCP can't answer that they could contact. Do you have a help desk there like we do here?

Colet Mitchell: Well, what you can do is you can call our main office number, 202-693-7880.

Brenda Stewart: Okay, and I am putting that phone number in the chat box so I'm sending it to everyone, 202-693-7880 and I just sent that to everyone. It's on your chat box right now. Okay, I think we've covered primarily all of the questions that are relevant to ODEP and again I want to stress that today's Website was not about OFCCP's changes to the implementing regulations.

We will be continuing to have Webinars that focus strictly on that and again you can go to our Website to pull up materials for Webinars that have previously discussed that. The next one is June 17th but we will have more coming up in July. Okay, thank you, thank you everyone. Thank you Colet, thank you Shaun.

Colet Mitchell: Thank you Brenda.

Brenda Stewart: This has been a huge work in the process of getting this launched and getting it out to people but it was worth it because we had a huge response. People want the information and I think that this has been helpful as well as hopefully more Webinars we'll have that they'll get and we're happy...

Shaun McGill: It's an organic process and we bring more resources as we develop them so we really appreciate the opportunity and hope to bring more.

Brenda Stewart: Great, and thank you to our audience, thank you so much for everyone dialing-in, logging-in. Again check our Website in about a week and the recording from the Webinar as well as the presentation materials should be posted there. Thank you and have a great day.

Coordinator: Thank you. This concludes today's conference. All parties may disconnect.

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