



**NTAR LEADERSHIP CENTER**  
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# **Revisiting Braided Funding: Learning from Employer Response Models for Recruiting and Hiring People with Disabilities**

March 16, 2011

**Audio Dial-In Information**

866.740.1260

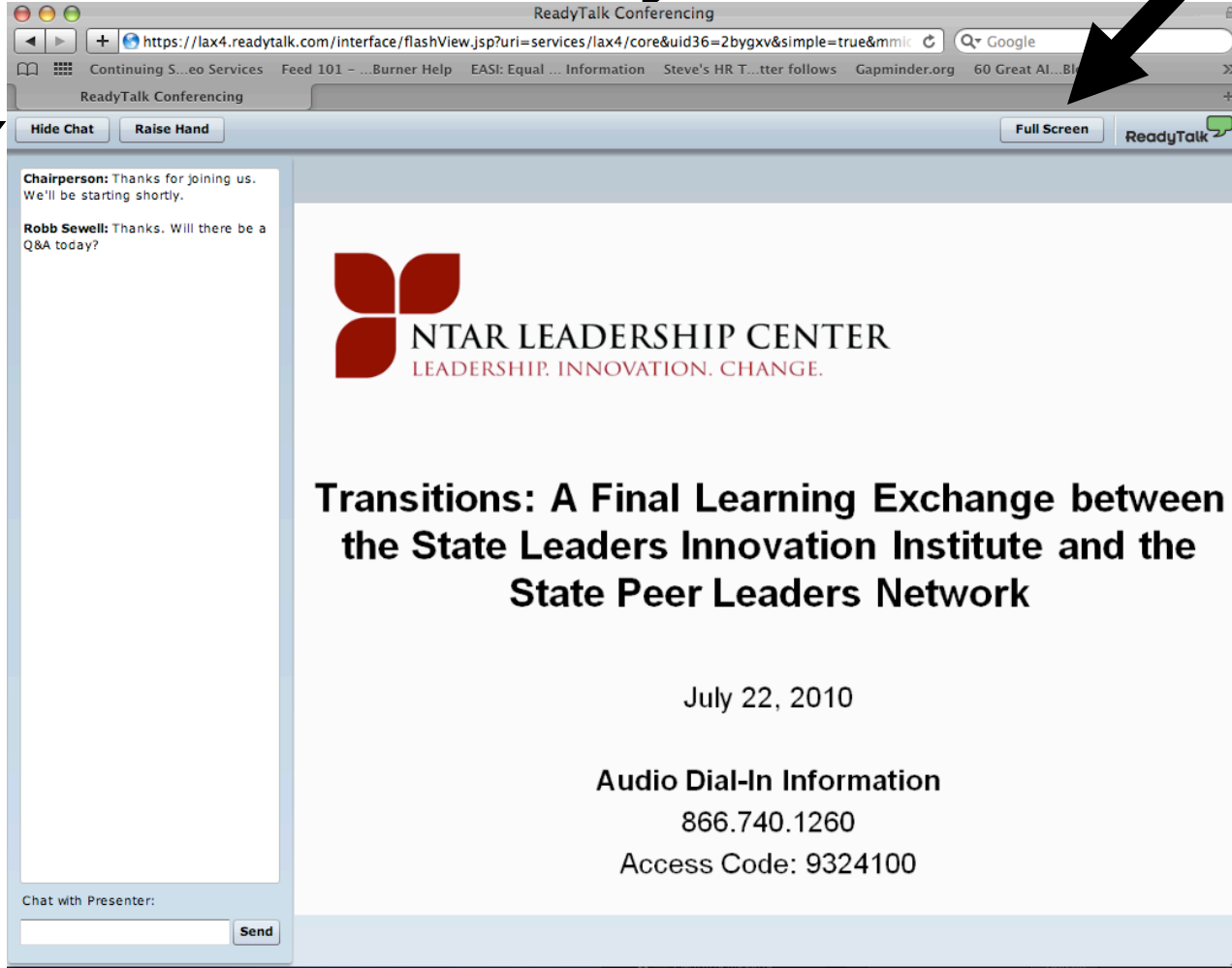
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Presentation Slide Area

# Access to Webinar Materials

- A direct link to the webinar materials, including web and audio content, will be posted on the NTAR Leadership Center Web site by noon Eastern Time, Thursday, March 17, 2011.

[www.ntarcenter.org](http://www.ntarcenter.org)

# The NTAR Leadership Center

- Established in September 2007 through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).
- A collaboration of partners with expertise in workforce and economic development, disability employment, financial education and asset building, and leadership development.
- Created for the purpose of building capacity and leadership at the federal, state, and local levels to enable change across workforce development and disability-specific systems that will increase employment for adults with disabilities.

# Guiding Principles

- Increasing partnerships and collaboration among and across generic and disability-specific systems.
- Increasing the use of self-direction in services, and integration of funding across and among systems.
- Increasing economic self-sufficiency through leveraging work incentives, financial education, or other strategies that promote profitable employment and asset building.
- Increasing the use of universal design in employment services and as a framework for employment policy.
- Increasing the use of customized and other forms of flexible work options for individuals with disabilities and others with barriers to employment.

# Presenters

- **Robert Nicholas**, Senior Visiting Fellow for Disability Research, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers University
- **Ronnie Kauder**, Senior Practitioner in Residence, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers University

*Moderator:*

**Nanette Relave**, Director, Center for Workers with Disabilities



# Agenda/Objectives

- Background
- Why Braided Funding?
- Employer-Responsive Models
  - Lowe's
  - Project SEARCH
  - Baltimore SOS
- One-Stop System Braided Funding
  - Eastern Connecticut WIB
- Implications for the Future



# NTAR Leadership Center National Research

- Focused on employer-initiated and market-driven approaches to recruiting, hiring, accommodating, and retaining employees with disabilities.
- Performed literature review and developed in-depth case study profiles of market-driven initiatives across the nation.
- Prepared national study, soon to be released, entitled, *Ready and Able: Addressing Labor Market Needs and Building Productive Careers for People with Disabilities through Collaborative Approaches*.

# Employer Initiatives

- Numerous innovative approaches for employer-driven initiatives to recruit, hire, and retain employees with disabilities.
- Recognition by employers of the “business case” = people with disabilities add value to the employer’s workforce and positively affect the “bottom line”.
- Partnerships with workforce intermediaries are key in successful employer-driven initiatives. Innovative collaborations with and between workforce-supplying organizations enable employers to recruit, hire, train, and support employees with disabilities.



# Innovative Collaborations Facilitate Hiring

- Employers do not want to have to maintain relationships with many varied workforce-supplying organizations to support employees with disabilities.
- Employers want a single point of contact to coordinate assistance and support they need to recruit and hire.
- Partner organizations provide supports and technical assistance on workforce and disability-specific issues.
- Assistance and supports are provided based on employers' needs and standards.

# Why Braided Funding?

- There is a complex array of programs, services, and public categorical funding streams that support individuals to become and remain employed.
- Frequently, individuals with disabilities need services and supports from multiple programs or systems to achieve their employment goals.
- A significant challenge for community partnerships, and specifically the single point of contact, is their ability to braid resources from multiple sources to respond to the employer's workforce needs, HR processes, and training requirements.



# Braided Funding

Braided funding, for the purposes of this research, means the access to and coordination of multiple sources of funding to provide services and supports needed by people with disabilities to obtain and retain a job.

In braided funding strategies, funding streams remain visible and are used in common to produce greater strength, efficiency, and/or effectiveness.

# Profiles of Success

This study profiles four employer-responsive models that have in common the following factors:

- The presence of an employer (or group of employers) that wants to recruit and hire employees with disabilities.
- A partnership between the employer(s) and one or more community organizations that provide valuable supports and services to hire and retain employees with disabilities.
- The use of braided funding strategies that are essential to making the partnership and the model work.

## Lowe's

- Lowe's is the second largest home improvement retailer worldwide. It has 1,700 stores and 238,000 employees.
- In 2008, inspired by the success of Walgreens, Lowe's made a decision to recruit employees with disabilities throughout its distribution center system. This began with the company's effort to fill positions at its new distribution Center in Pittston, PA.
- "It's not charity, we are looking for great employees."
- Lowe's established a partnership with the Arc of Luzerne County. The Arc assisted Lowe's in recruiting two local service provider agency partners and serves as the single point of contact.

## Lowe's

- The Lowe's initiative focuses on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities but includes job seekers with a range of disabilities.
- In 2010, an internship program for students with disabilities was added in partnership with the regional education services agency.
- As of October 2010, Lowe's had hired 48 people with disabilities at the Pittston distribution center and an additional 110 people with disabilities at other distribution centers nationwide.



# Lowé's Braiding Strategy

## Services

Service Coordination and  
Technical Assistance

Outreach and Screening

Job Training

Supports for Job Retention

## Funding Stream

Arc Operating Funds

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)  
Special Education

VR  
Special Education

County Mental Health (MH)/  
Developmental Disabilities  
Agency Funds

# Project SEARCH

- Project SEARCH was developed at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC) in 1995 in response to a business need for reliable employees. The program prepares students and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities for entry-level hospital jobs.
- The program at CCHMC is supported by a partnership with the Board of Developmental Disabilities, the local Technology Institute, Cincinnati Public Schools, and the Ohio Rehabilitative Services Commission.
- Students with disabilities in Project SEARCH high school transition spend their final year of school at the hospital in coursework and “rotations” through various jobs.



# Project SEARCH

- Once the student has successfully completed the rotations, a job placement process is initiated. After the student is placed in a job, job retention supports are provided.
- As of October 2010, CCHMC had 62 employees hired through Project SEARCH.
- Based on the success of the program, Project SEARCH has been replicated at 150 sites in 42 states, the United Kingdom, and Australia, predominantly in hospitals but other sectors as well.
- The study compared braiding funding strategies utilized by CCHMC with replications at sites in New Hampshire, Washington, and Georgia.



# Project SEARCH and Replications Braided Funding Strategies

## Services

Program Development and  
Start-Up

Internships

Job Training and Placement

Supports for Job Retention

## Funding Streams

DD Agency

Medicaid Infrastructure Grant

Council on DD

VR Agency

Local School Systems

Employer

VR Agency

DD Agency

Ticket to Work Milestone

Social Security Work Incentives

## Baltimore Start on Success (SOS)

- School-to-work transition model for students with disabilities that was developed by the National Organization on Disability in 1994. The Baltimore SOS program began operating in 1997 and serves 50 graduating seniors each year.
- The core of the program is vocational class work and paid internships at a range of local employers during the student's final year(s) of school. At the conclusion of the internship, the program works with students to place them into employment.
- Participating employers view the program as a “pipeline” of qualified employees. For example, one employer partner reports that it has hired 35% of the interns placed there.

# Baltimore Start on Success (SOS)

- Start on Success (SOS) programs are now operating at 30 schools nationwide.
- This study compared the braided funding strategy used by the Baltimore SOS program with the one used in Pittsburgh, which was profiled in the NTAR Leadership Center's *Ready & Able* study.



# Baltimore and Pittsburgh SOS Braided Funding Strategies

## Services

Program Development  
and Start-up

Program Coordination

Internships

Job Placement and Training

## Funding Streams

National Organization on Disability (NOD)

VR (grant)

Local Education Agency (LEA)

LEA

WIA

Carl Perkins Act

VR (Grant)

VR (grant and performance)

# The Role of the Public Workforce System

- Provide services to **all** job seekers and employers to facilitate skill development and job placement.
- Broker and coordinate relationships with employers for the benefit of all job seekers and partner organizations.
- Bring staff and resources from all One-Stop Career system partner agencies to the table to better help local residents access local jobs in the community.
- Educate all One-Stop partner staff about available services and resources to help people with disabilities become and remain employed.



## Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board (EWIB)

- Four *CTWorks* (One-Stop) Centers: New London, Norwich, Willimantic, Danielson
- EWIB has worked hard to integrate and streamline employer services to make it easier for employers to use the *CTWorks* system and to take advantage of incentives available from various funding streams.
- Their goal is to provide access by employers to the full range of job seekers and to provide all job seekers, regardless of which workforce program funds their services, access to job openings and training.

# Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board

## Business Services Team:

Core members:

- Eastern CT Chamber of Commerce
- Northeastern CT Chamber of Commerce
- CT Department of Labor

Additional members

- Bureau of Rehabilitative Services
- Department of Social Services
- 20 additional service provider organizations

**Role: Single point of contact between employers and public workforce system**

# Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board

Coordination: Thames Valley Community Action Agency (TVCCA)

Key One-Stop Partners:

- CT Department of Labor
- TVCCA as a provider of services to the WIB
- Bureau of Rehabilitative Services
- EASTCONN (Regional Educational Services Center)
- Social Security Administration
- Eastern CT Transportation Consortium
- Board of Education and Services for the Blind

**Role: Coordinates day-to-day activities of CTWorks partner agencies, in partnership with EWIB.**

# Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board

## Braided Funding

- Workforce Investment Act Title I - core services (employer and job seeker), classroom training, on-the-job training, e-learning, services for youth, adults, and dislocated workers
- Wagner-Peyser - core services, workshops, e-learning
- Bureau of Rehabilitative Services and Board of Education and Services for the Blind - full range of services for people with disabilities for adults and youth, additional funding for Work Incentives Coordinator through MIG funding
- Social Security Administration - Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Coordinator
- Transportation Consortium services
- Education funding through EASTCONN for summer youth

# Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board

## Keys to Success

- All job leads fed to Business Services Team
- Close communication between Business Services Team and frontline staff in *CTWorks* Centers.
- Joint funding of Business Services Team and commitment to reach out to all job seekers
- EWIB is an Employment Network (EN) under the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work; revenue partially offsets cost of continuing Disability Program Navigator (DPN)
- DPN active in staff development and maximizing resources available to people with disabilities.
- Co-location of BRS in three of four *CTWorks* centers
- **Strong leadership of EWIB**

# Summary of Findings

- Braiding funding strategies from multiple programs allow the provision of better service to people with disabilities to meet employer needs.
- Different braiding strategies can be used, even with the same program models.
- A key element in success is to have a **single point of contact** who will coordinate all services for employers.

# Summary of Findings

- Local workforce systems can effectively coordinate resources to support employer efforts to include people with disabilities in their recruitment strategies.
- Funding for follow-along supports for job retention is an issue beyond an initial period on the job. This particularly affects people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



# Implications for the Future

- Employer-driven initiatives represent new and rich opportunities for increased community employment for people with disabilities. There are successful models that can be replicated in many communities, with many different braided funding strategies.
  
- Disability service and workforce development organizations should:
  - Foster collaborative relationships among workforce-supplying organizations that make it easier for employers or employer organizations to work with publicly funded programs.
  - Adopt a single point of contact approach to dealing with employers
  - Be creative in braiding funds from various sources

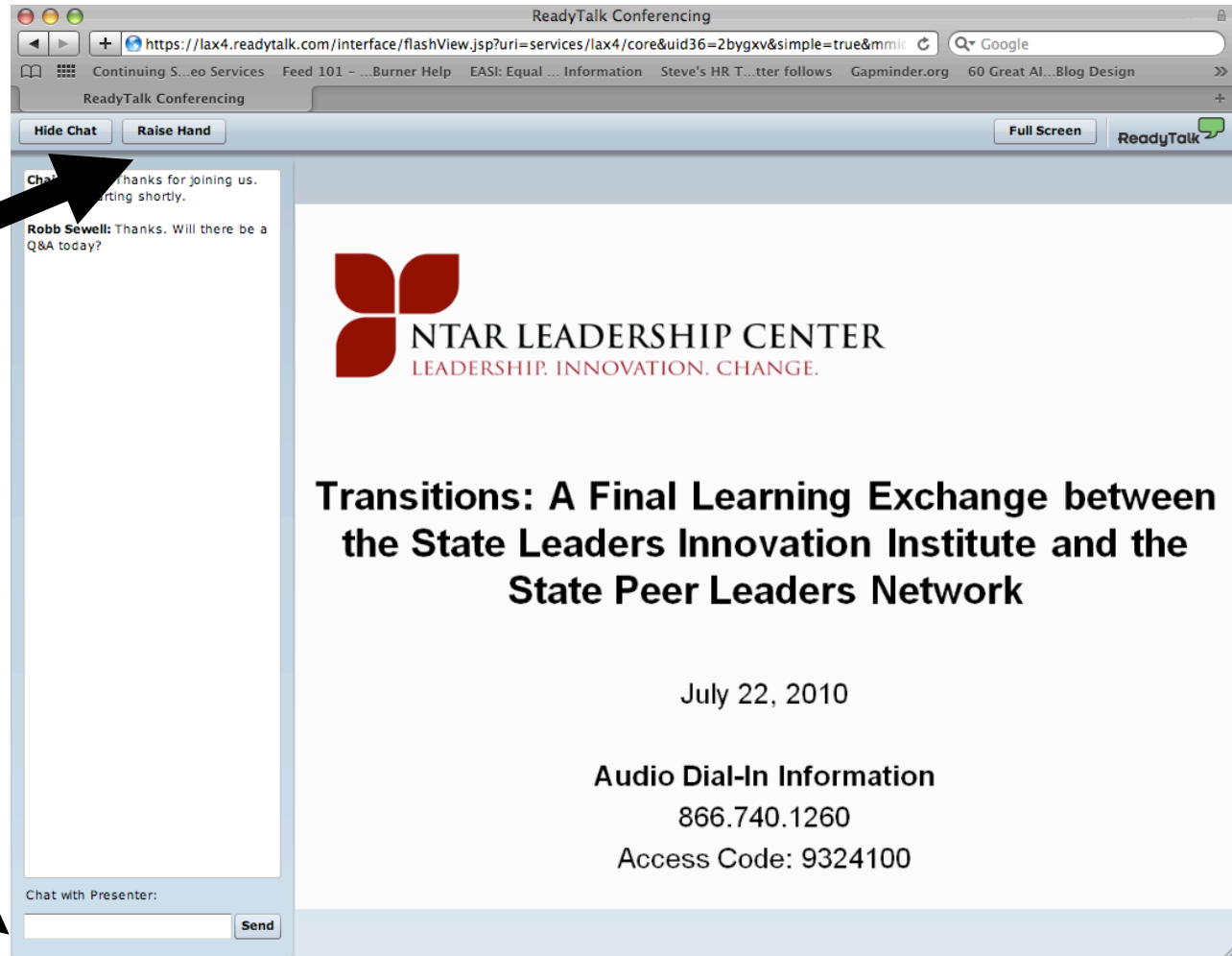




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# Submitting Questions for Q&A



The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "ReadyTalk Conferencing". The address bar contains the URL: <https://lax4.readytalk.com/interface/flashView.jsp?uri=services/lax4/core&uid36=2bygxv&simple=true&mmic>. The browser tabs include "Continuing S...eo Services", "Feed 101 - ...Burner Help", "EASI: Equal ... Information", "Steve's HR T...tter follows", "Gapminder.org", and "60 Great AI...Blog Design". The interface features a "ReadyTalk Conferencing" header with "Hide Chat" and "Raise Hand" buttons, and a "Full Screen" button. A chat window is open on the left, displaying a message from "Robb Sewell": "Thanks. Will there be a Q&A today?". The main content area shows a presentation slide with the NTAR Leadership Center logo and the text: "Transitions: A Final Learning Exchange between the State Leaders Innovation Institute and the State Peer Leaders Network", "July 22, 2010", "Audio Dial-In Information", "866.740.1260", and "Access Code: 9324100". At the bottom of the chat window, there is a "Chat with Presenter:" input field and a "Send" button.

Click **Raise Hand** to ask a question; the chairperson will then call on participants in the order that questions were received

Use **Chat box** to send your question(s) to the chairperson

# Question-and-Answer Period



# NTAR Leadership Center Web site

[www.ntarcenter.org](http://www.ntarcenter.org)