



**LEAD CENTER**

**LEAD On! Quarterly Newsletter - December**

## **2017 Newsletter**

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### **Tennessee American Job Center Hosts LEAD Center's First Guided Group Discovery Veterans Pilot**

On December 7th, LEAD Center staff launched a new Guided Group Discovery (GGD) pilot focused on veterans by providing a Facilitator Training at a comprehensive American Job Center (AJC) in Clarksville, Tenn. Guided Group Discovery is an innovative way to learn more about a job seeker's interests, skills, and employment needs/conditions in order to make a connection between the contributions/skills a job seeker offers and the needs of an employer who can benefit from those skills. It is an effective tool for job seekers with and without disabilities because it assesses the job seeker's abilities and conditions for success, rather than their deficits. It also results in a concrete action plan for reaching the person's employment goal.

Twenty-one individuals participated in the Facilitator Training at the AJC, representing workforce development, military occupational specialists, state government, Army Career Skills program, the Disability Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), and the Local Veterans Employment

Representative (LVER). Several individuals also participated from the Veterans Treatment Court mentorship program of Montgomery County, Tenn.

The one-day training included information on the LEAD Center Customized Employment Initiative, an overview of Customized Employment, and the use of Discovery/Guided Group Discovery within American Job Centers. Trainers reviewed the Facilitator's Manual, including activities on assisting people to identify broad vocational interests/themes, as well as what they can contribute to an employer. The session also discussed strategies for identifying specific individual conditions for employment, including accommodations that may need to be requested, and the sometimes complex and important topic of disclosure, and how to discuss (or frame) information that is personal and sensitive.

In a module on the Art and Science of Networking, participants learned how to introduce the concept of networking and to map personal contacts. The end of the day concluded with next steps for the facilitators in terms of developing co-facilitator partnerships, identifying veterans who can benefit from GGD, and planning for implementation of additional GGD pilot projects.

Through the Tennessee Guided Group Discovery Project, LEAD Center is training facilitators, many of whom are also veterans themselves, to co-facilitate Guided Group Discovery with small groups of veterans seeking their next career now that they are out of the military. GGD encourages interagency collaboration to meet veterans' needs. This might include vocational rehabilitation, behavior health supports, housing, continuing education programs, and more. Veterans who participate in GGD will be supported by the facilitators to develop a Blueprint for Employment to guide their job exploration and job search. The Blueprint helps job seekers identify their interests, skills and contributions, conditions for success, and support network. The Blueprint information is used to target specific job opportunities that "fit" the job seeker and also benefit the employer.

LEAD Center Guided Group Discovery materials include a [Facilitator Manual](#), an accompanying [PowerPoint slide deck](#) (Introduction and Course), and a [Participant Workbook](#). Please visit the [LEAD Center website](#) for additional information.

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## **ODEP and LEAD Center Promote Knowledge Translation**

On November 29th, the LEAD Center and U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) hosted a discussion with LEAD Center's Knowledge Translation (KT) Consortium. Featured speakers in this virtual meeting included leadership from the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP) and National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), who all focused on the opportunities created by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for the inclusion of youth and adults with disabilities into workforce services and activities. The KT Consortium convenes annually, bringing together select federally-funded

Training and Technical Assistance (TA) Centers. Each TA Center in the KT Consortium addresses different aspects of employment, career readiness and development, transition, and accessibility for youth and adults with disabilities, each with its own unique mission. There are currently more than 20 federally-funded research, training and technical assistance centers in the KT Consortium, each profiled on the [LEAD Center website](#).

Diane Drew, Executive Director of NAWDP; Ron Painter, Chief Executive Officer of NAWB; and Julie Squire, Policy Director and General Counsel at NASWA, all profiled their organization's history, mission, and priorities. This was followed by a general discussion of the supports, resources, and technical assistance available from KT Consortium members, as well as opportunities for collaboration related to WIOA implementation. These national organization leaders also highlighted the most significant changes they have seen since the implementation of WIOA. KT Consortium members then shared ways in which their WIOA-related activities could support members of NASWA, NAWDP, and NAWB.

The interactive discussions enabled all who participated to learn more about each other's work and opened doors to future collaborations.

TA Centers and federal partners that participated in the meeting represented the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy and Employment and Training Administration (ETA); the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (HHS); the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living (ACL) and National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR); the Social Security Administration (SSA); and the Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE).

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## **The FDIC Promotes the Economic Inclusion of People with Disabilities**

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) seeks to improve the financial inclusion of underserved populations, particularly those that are not using mainstream financial services, through the Alliance for Economic Inclusion (AEI). The AEI moves forward this national initiative through the establishment of broad-based coalitions of financial institutions, community-based organizations, and other partners in several markets.

Over the past few months, the LEAD Center has supported events, led by AEIs, in Wisconsin, Michigan, and New Mexico. These events brought together members of the local financial services community and the disability community to discuss opportunities and strategies to improve the financial inclusion of people with disabilities.

The LEAD Center shared information about financial education, integrated financial capability strategies, and ABLE accounts to demonstrate the range of opportunities available to support people with disabilities seeking to join the financial mainstream.

The FDIC made available a new resource, a supplement to its [Money Smart for Adults Financial Education](#) program, which provides scenarios about people with a range of disabilities as they take steps to open bank accounts, obtain a mortgage, modify their home, and/or open an ABLÉ account. The [Supplement for Instructors/Trainers: Scenarios for Financial Inclusion](#) provides scenarios along with questions for discussion aligned with a Money Smart module. These can be used with one or more modules or as a stand-alone exercise. Possible answers are provided as well. FDIC materials are not copyrighted and can be modified or adapted to meet the specific needs of the intended audience.

Money Smart for Adults provides 11 modules of financial education that focus on different aspects of banking and money matters. Modules are provided as both an online training for adults and a downloadable curriculum. The instructor-led version of Money Smart is available in Braille and large print for the visually impaired. In addition, the curriculum is also available in the following languages: English, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Hmong, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

The FDIC provides the Money Smart curriculum to interested parties free of charge. The materials are easily reproduced and have no copyright restrictions, which allows users to modify the content to meet the needs of diverse populations. If needed, [FDIC staff](#) are available to provide technical assistance and to help facilitate partnerships among interested parties.

The FDIC also provides [Money Smart for Young Adults](#), [Money Smart for Older Adults](#), and [Money Smart for Small Business](#), free of charge for the public's use.

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## **Financial Integration Team - Pioneering Pathways to Economic Advancement**

The LEAD Center continues to support National Disability Institute's Financial Integration Team (FIT) Community of Practice. FIT is a peer-to-peer support network, which focuses on integrated financial capability strategies to support persons with disabilities in building their financial well-being. FIT members come from diverse organizations (see list below) from across the country that share a common interest in the integration of financial capability strategies within their organization, system, and/or city. Since FIT's inception in spring of 2016, members have had the opportunity to connect each month for peer support, technical assistance, knowledge building, and for sharing successful practices and problem solving strategies.

One of the major achievements of the FIT Community of Practice was piloting programs that integrate a Financial Well-Being Assessment into their service delivery in innovative ways. For example, FIT member CareerSource Broward, an American Job Center in Florida, has found such success in offering financial education workshops, financial coaching, and benefits counseling for customers with disabilities that includes the use of an online financial well-being assessment education tool called LifeCents. These offerings have been expanded to TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) recipients, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

recipients, individuals in re-entry programs, and participants in youth programs. Based on the input of FIT members, the LEAD Center is also poised to release a series of tools, resources, and guides for integrating financial capability strategies so others may share in the success of FIT. Stay tuned for the release of these resources coming soon!

The LEAD Center would like to commend the achievements of the FIT Community of Practice from the following organizations, systems, and cities:

- CareerSource Broward – Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
- The Arc of Broward – Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
- Capital Area Asset Builders – Washington, D.C.
- Northwest Access Fund – Seattle, Washington
- Cares of Washington – Seattle, Washington
- United Way of Tompkins County – Ithaca, New York
- ServiceSource – Wilmington, Delaware
- Connecticut Association of Human Services – Hartford, Connecticut
- Department of Rehabilitation Services – Hartford, Connecticut
- Louisville Alliance for Development through Diversity, Empowerment, and Resources (LADDER) – Louisville, Kentucky

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## **NAWDP Youth Symposium 2017**

LEAD Center staff and partners presented at a plenary session at the [2017 Youth Development Symposium](#), held annually by the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP). Elizabeth Jennings, Assistant Project Director and Training and Technical Assistance Team Lead for LEAD Center; Nancy Boutot, Manager of Cross System Integration for LEAD Center; Rose Sloan, Policy Advisor, Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy; and Tiffany Allen, Security Officer, Allied Universal, spoke on Partnering to Support Successful Outcomes for Youth with Barriers to Employment.

Presenters discussed areas within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act’s (WIOA) Title I and IV that focus on services for youth who face barriers to employment and collaboration opportunities. Most youth benefit from receiving support from multiple sources to achieve and maintain employment. In this plenary, participants learned about partnerships, innovative practices, and resources that can assist service providers in supporting youth who face multiple barriers to employment, including youth with disabilities. Presenters highlighted activities and partnerships that promote/provide alternative assessments, financial literacy support, and just-in-time moments to meet youth where they are and encourage them to enter a career pathway.

LEAD Center had the privilege of co-presenting with Tiffany Allen, who is a security officer at Allied Universal. Tiffany shared her experiences related to job training and the pathway she took

in securing employment. Tiffany received support to get her job from her school in partnership with vocational rehabilitation and the workforce system. As a security officer, Tiffany builds, improves, and maintains effective relationships with both employees and guests. She is responsible for answering phones, greeting guests and employees in a professional manner, reporting safety concerns, and providing high quality security services. She enjoys her job and loves connecting with other people. Tiffany has received training in customer service, job training, and resume building at Youth Connection Charter School in Chicago, Ill.

NAWDP's 2017 Youth Symposium had nearly 600 attendees, all of whom were youth-focused workforce professionals. This year's Symposium offered 30 workshop sessions, 16 exhibitors, and three general sessions focused on networking, improving employer engagement, leadership, professional development, and strengthening career pathways.

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## **TASH 2017 Conference**

In December, the LEAD Center participated in the national [TASH Conference](#) in Atlanta, Georgia. The LEAD Center added to this diverse community of stakeholders by providing five presentations on strategies to improve the employment and economic advancement of individuals across the spectrum of disability. The sessions were designed to provide information and strategies to assist participants in understanding inclusive career pathways, resource mapping, ABLE accounts and employment, and financial capability. LEAD presentations included:

- **Guided Group Discovery: Successful Employment through Partnerships** - This session focused on strategies that can benefit any job seeker who faces barriers to employment. Guided Group Discovery (GGD) is a universal design approach that is very effective for people with and without disabilities. It is used in partnership with a number of systems, so that people can receive support through multiple agencies at the same time, as needed. GGD assists people in securing and maintaining employment by supporting them in small groups to create their own individual blueprint to guide their job search process.
- **Resource Mapping: A Tool for Achieving Employment Outcomes and Financial Goals** - In this session, participants explored Resource Mapping and the impact it has to enhance employment outcomes for individuals and the community providers that support them. Resource mapping offers a strategy that can help organizations view the larger picture of supports and resources that are available to help individuals improve their employment and financial outcomes.
- **The ABLE Act and Employment** - In this session, participants learned about how the ABLE Act now allows certain individuals with disabilities the opportunity to save money without jeopardizing their federally-funded means-tested benefits (such as Medicaid and SSI). These funds can be used to pay for qualified disability-related expenses that help the

person with a disability increase and/or maintain their health, independence, and quality of life (including employment-related expenses).

- **Let's Talk Money! Why Discussing Finance Is Important to Employment Services** – In this session, participants, including self-advocates, learned about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Final Rule, and the ABLE Act. Participants gained knowledge about the importance of improving financial capability of all Americans, including people with disabilities. As a part of employment services, talking about money can play a critical role in identifying barriers to employment, setting financial and employment goals, making decisions about public benefits, and effectively managing earnings.
- **Creating a Vision for Your Life** – This session discussed why everyone needs financial education. Participants learned about opportunities to better understand how to manage money and save towards individual goals. During the session, participants identified a goal that they have for themselves and explored how to earn, manage, and save money to meet their goal. Participants also heard from a self-advocate on his success in building his money skills.

The TASH Annual Conference brought together over 700 attendees from every aspect of the disability community to share their passion for disability rights, civil rights, human rights, and inclusive communities. This year's conference theme was "Still We Rise for Equity, Opportunity, and Inclusion."

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## **LEAD Center Blog Round-up**

During October and November, the LEAD Center's guest bloggers offered valuable information about employment for job seekers with disabilities, job coaches, community organizations, and hiring managers. All the posts highlighted how disability employment benefits both individuals with disabilities and the organizations that hire them.

In her blog post, Nancy Boutot, Manager of Cross System Integration for LEAD Center, discussed how employment specialists and job coaches evaluate the workplace readiness of individuals with disabilities. Boutot explained that many people without disabilities try several jobs before finding a successful career path. People with disabilities, by contrast, run the risk of being deemed "unemployable" if they do not do well in a skills test or in their first job. To learn more about why people with disabilities should have the chance to explore different job opportunities, read: [Your First Job Should Not Be Your Last](#).

Blog posts by the Campaign for Disability Employment (CDE) team and by Lou Orslene, Co-director of the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), focused on this October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) theme: "Inclusion Drives Innovation."

CDE's blog post maintained that organizations that hire people with disabilities have a more innovative workforce. Moreover, CDE works to promote disability employment all year-round. The blog contains resources for other organizations that wish to do the same. Find out more about CDE's work by reading the blog post: [Showing the World That "Inclusion Drives Innovation."](#)

Orslene writes, "A formula I always keep in mind is 'Accommodations = Inclusion = Innovation.'" JAN offers free, expert, and confidential advice about workplace accommodations. Orslene noted that those working at JAN observed that many organizations use less than optimal processes to provide workplace accommodations. JAN has created an innovative way to address this issue by developing an app to help organizations implement accommodations processes better. Get more information about workplace accommodations and JAN's app by reading Orslene's blog post: [Inclusion Drives Innovation: The Mobile Accommodation Solution App.](#)

In November, LEAD Center published a guest blog from Marlene Ulisky, Manager of Financial Empowerment at National Disability Institute, which focused on the ways organizations can benefit from employing veterans with disabilities. Ulisky explained that many valuable skills learned in the military can make veterans with disabilities assets in the civilian workforce. She also mentioned the tax benefits employers may receive for hiring these veterans. To learn more about hiring this skilled workforce, their transferable skills and tax benefits, read: [Double Duty: Hire a Veteran with a Disability.](#)

Be sure to return to LEAD Center's blog in the coming months for additional useful posts about disability employment.

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## **LEAD Partner: Clarksville Montgomery County American Job Center**

LEAD Center has been working in partnership with the Clarksville Montgomery County American Job Center (AJC) in Tennessee for the past two years. This comprehensive, accessible AJC has supported LEAD Center's first Guided Group Discovery pilots for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Recently, the Clarksville AJC agreed to be LEAD Center's first pilot for "Guided Group Discovery for Veterans."

The Clarksville AJC offers a virtual AJC portal for electronic/remote access, along with individualized career services, training services, and business services. They also have services from many key partners, including Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF, Veterans Employment Services, Ticket to Work and Self Sufficiency, internships and work experiences, Job Clubs, Financial Literacy, SNAP Employment & Training, and more. The Clarksville AJC works in partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to in-school youth with disabilities. They also provide special services for veterans through the Fort Campbell Soldier Transition Program and the Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow (LIFT) Operation Next Program, which helps soldiers who are soon to be discharged or recently



discharged from the military. To learn more, please visit the [Clarksville / Montgomery County American Job Center Facebook page](#).

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## **LEAD People: Sharyn Hancock**



LEAD Center is pleased to highlight the work of Sharyn Hancock, Disability Resource Coordinator at Workforce Essentials in Clarksville, Tennessee. She coordinates resources for individuals with disabilities, supports her workforce system colleagues, and provides services and employment supports. She also supports the Social Security Administration (SSA) Work Incentive benefits planning and career coaching, both of which provides people with disabilities and others with the confidence to return to work or get their first job.

With 20 plus years of hands-on expertise in workforce development, program management, supervising, recruiting, career development, and career coaching, Hancock ensures strong support of job seekers, veterans, employees, employers, and youth. She is customer-focused, recognized for strategic alignment of organizational objectives with programs and for supporting team-building skills.

In addition, Hancock has:

- served as a Member of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Federal Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities;
- was the Market Lead for Pepsi Achieving Change Together (ACT), a cutting-edge initiative on the creation of systems for successful recruiting, hiring, training and supporting employees with disabilities;
- was awarded a 2015 Community Conversation grant to support community meetings aimed at expanding local employment opportunities for people with disabilities;
- acted as a Subject Matter Expert on the “Ticket to Work” Program for Office of Disability Employment Policy’s (ODEP’s) Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP);
- piloted Guided Group Discovery on behalf of the Office of Disability Employment Policy and LEAD Center;
- contracted with Vocational Rehabilitation as an American Job Center to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services for youth with disabilities; and
- initiated the Guided Group Discovery pilot for Military Veterans, which is being piloted for the first time in Tennessee through the Clarksville American Job Center System.

It is apparent to anyone who meets Sharyn Hancock that she is passionate about the world of

work and completely immerses herself within it.

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## **Important New Resources**

### **Business 30-Second Training Series and Resource Guide**

<http://leadcenter.org/resources/tool-manual/business-30-second-training-series-and-resource-guide>

### **Recruitment and Hiring Strategies: Disabled Veterans**

<http://www.leadcenter.org/resources/website/recruitment-and-hiring-strategies-disabled-veterans>

### **Guide to Presenting Money Smart for Adults**

<http://www.leadcenter.org/resources/tool-manual/guide-presenting-money-smart-adults>

### **CareerOneStop Local Help Tools**

<http://www.leadcenter.org/resources/website/careeronestop-local-help-tools>

### **Veterans' Priority: WorkforceGPS Collection Site**

<http://www.leadcenter.org/resources/website/veterans-priority-workforcegps-collection-site>

### **StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes: 2016**

<http://www.leadcenter.org/resources/report-brief/statedata-national-report-employment-services-and-outcomes-2016>

### **Disability and Employment: Connect the Pieces**

<http://www.leadcenter.org/resources/website/disability-and-employment-connect-pieces>

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