



**LEAD CENTER**

**LEAD On! Quarterly Newsletter - June 2018**

## Newsletter

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Issue

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### **Update: Oregon Guided Group Discovery Youth Pilot**

In the previous LEAD On! newsletter, we told you about kicking off Oregon's statewide Guided Group Discovery (GGD) Youth Pilot. The six pilot sites included a mix of rural and urban locations throughout Oregon. Even before schools started their summer break and sites were finishing up the curriculum, one student used the tools he learned in GGD to secure a job in his local community! All sites were able to implement GGD in a way that met their students' needs, some breaking down the sessions into shorter periods of time to fit into various classroom schedules. All six sites were able to finish the curriculum which included the following:

- **Session One: Introduction to Guided Group Discovery.** In this session, students had the opportunity to get to know one another, discuss the different ways in which people tend to approach their search for employment, learn what GGD is all about, learn how the course would

help them develop their Blueprint for Employment, and start to think about their personal network and how that network could assist with employment.

- Session Two: Interests and Contributions. In this session, students began to identify their interests and how they could focus their job search based on those interests. They identified and began to list the contributions they could bring to a job site while also identifying tasks they like to do.
- Session Three: Conditions, Accommodations & Disclosures. In this session, students discussed and learned how to disclose sensitive information, what job accommodations are, and how to request one if needed. Students also learned their specific conditions for employment that they will need to ensure their success on the job.
- Session Four: The Art and Science of Networking. In this session, the students' Blueprint for Employment began to take shape. Through prior sessions, students had started to map personal contacts and understand the importance of 'word-of-mouth' when it comes to finding jobs. They also developed their networking pitch, a tool that helps them quickly describe who they are, the type of job they are seeking, and what they can offer an employer.
- Session Five: Putting it All Together—Taking Action! This session is meant to provide information on local resources and/or provide additional opportunity to practice some of the things learned in Guided Group Discovery. Some examples of how groups used this last session included bringing in employers to hear students' networking pitches, taking a trip to the local American Job Center (AJC) to enroll and learn more about what the workforce system can offer them, and having a representative from vocational rehabilitation visit to discuss the services they can offer to assist in employment.

Participant demographics varied amongst groups, with some sites made up of sophomores or juniors and others mostly of seniors. Additionally, participants in some groups had more significant impact of disability than others.

All facilitators at the pilot sites reported they received enthusiastic responses to GGD from the students. All agreed that the sophomore year might be the ideal time to begin, with the option of continuing or re-running the groups during the junior and senior years to revisit and update their Blueprint for Employment.

Most of the sites were impressed with the impact of the group dynamic and reported to have seen students grow into supporting each other and helping each other to identify their strengths. The facilitators found the lessons impactful in that they also saw the sessions as a great confidence booster for the students.

LEAD is currently collecting data regarding the students' increased level of knowledge regarding resources such as Vocational Rehabilitation, WorkSource, Community Programs/Brokerages, Supported Employment, WIPA, etc. Data is also being collected regarding the increased ability to identify students' interests, skills, abilities, and positive personality traits in order to help them with their job searches. LEAD will also look at students' increased knowledge about disclosure,

requesting accommodations for their specific disability, and their comfort level with their networking pitch. LEAD Center also will be collecting data from the Transition Network Facilitators once students return to school to see if students used the tools they learned to secure employment over summer break and the extent to which it reflected what they identified in their Blueprint for Employment.

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## **LEAD Center Releases Guided Group Discovery Online Participant Workbook**

The LEAD Center is pleased to announce the release of the *Guided Group Discovery Online Participant Workbook*.

The Online Participant Workbook can be completed using any browser. This user-friendly tool allows youth and adults to create a personalized Blueprint for Employment. Each participant receives a private link that allows them to add to, edit, or review their information at any time. The Workbook can also be printed out to review with counselors, teachers, and others.

The purpose of Guided Group Discovery is to lay the foundation for competitive integrated employment (CIE) as a Universal Design that can benefit all job seekers. For some people, Guided Group Discovery leads to Customized Employment. For everyone, the process assists job seekers in identifying employment that would be a good fit both for them and an employer.

With the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and ongoing systems change efforts like Employment First, formal adoption and implementation of CIE policies and practices are increasingly occurring in state and local agencies to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities and other significant barriers to employment. Discovery, which is a cornerstone of CE, is an effective strategy for any job seeker with barriers to employment.

The Online Workbook is a companion piece to a suite of resources for Guided Group Discovery. Other materials include a *Facilitator Manual*, an accompanying *PowerPoint slide deck (Introduction and Course)*, and a *Participant Workbook*.

A *Self-Guided Discovery Facilitator's Guide* is also available and can be downloaded from the LEAD Center website. We encourage you to visit the website, where you will find extensive additional resources on [Customized Employment](#). There also are [archived webinars](#) on Customized Employment, Guided Group Discovery, and Self-Guided Discovery.

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## **House Committee on Small Business Holds Hearing Highlighting People with Disabilities**

On May 9, the House Committee on Small Business held a hearing titled, "Ready, Willing, and Able to Work: How Small Businesses Empower People with Developmental Disabilities." The

hearing, chaired by Representative Steve Chabot (R-OH), sought to examine the role small businesses have played in employing individuals with disabilities and lessons learned. During the hearing testimony was provided by:

- Ms. Angela Timashenka Geiger, President and CEO, Autism Speaks
- Mr. Dave Friedman, Founder and CEO, AutonomyWorks
- Mr. John Cronin, Co-Founder and Chief Happiness Officer, John's Crazy Socks
- Ms. Lori Ireland, Vice Chair, Autism Society of America

In addition to the testimony provided by the individuals mentioned, the Committee released a [Hearing Memo](#) that provides context with respect to the current employment realities for working-age adults with developmental disabilities. It also offered recommendations to small businesses as to where they can find resources to help with the employment of people with disabilities. Included in these resources was information on several programs provided through the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), highlighting the Leadership for Employment and Economic Advancement for Individuals with Disabilities Center ([LEAD Center](#)), the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion ([EARN](#)), the Job Accommodation Network ([JAN](#)), the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth ([NCWD/Youth](#)), and the Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology ([PEAT](#)).

The LEAD Center would like to thank Chairman Chabot and the other members of the Committee on Small Business for bringing attention to how small businesses can make a difference in the hiring of people with disabilities, and for including information about the LEAD Center in the Committee's Hearing Memo.

Watch the hearing:

<https://smallbusiness.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=400842>.

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## **Louisville's Alliance for Development through Diversity, Empowerment, and Resources (LADDER), Emerges as Leader in Advancing Financial Empowerment and Economic Advancement for People with Disabilities**

The LEAD Center has supported the expanding work of *LADDER (Louisville Alliance for Development through Diversity Empowerment and Resources)* since its inception in 2014. LADDER, a collaborative of community-based organizations, workforce services, and financial institutions led by the Louisville Metro Government's Office of Resilience and Community Services, supports opportunities to integrate financial empowerment in workforce development systems to insure the inclusivity of persons with disabilities in accessing empowerment opportunities, and seeks to establish a community-wide culture of inclusiveness.

LADDER has embarked on a number of initiatives to universally design services and supports that advance financial capability related to employment goals and to improve positive financial

behavior for individuals with disabilities.

### *LADDER Asset Building Strategies (LABS) Program*

Over the past two years, LADDER alliance members from the Office of Resilience and Community Services, Center for Accessible Living, Goodwill Industries of Kentucky, and the KY Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) collaborated on a new matched savings and loan pilot program designed to assist Louisvillians with disabilities to improve their savings habits and make more informed decisions about their finances. Today, nine participants have completed their matched savings and/or loan programs, which included completing a financial health assessment used to set their own savings goals. Each participant also received guidance from a financial coach and a peer mentor. The remarkable achievements of these individuals resulted in \$4,280 saved by participants, of which \$3,965 was matched to their savings goals for an outstanding \$8,245 in assets gained. Many participants exceeded their own savings goals! Participants in the loan program saw their credit scores increase by an average of 280 points! As a result of this program, 100 percent of the participants are now banked, and have new knowledge about healthy savings habits; 89 percent are confident in achieving their financial goals. As the LABS pilot program comes to an end, LADDER is working to demonstrate the impact and results of the program through a public awareness campaign.

Read more about the LABS program, method, impact, and outcomes in the [April 2018 Financial Capability Month Blog published by the LEAD Center](#).

### *Expanding the Reach of the Financial Empowerment Curriculum and Tools*

LADDER has worked tirelessly to create a community-wide culture of financial inclusiveness and accessibility that serves the diverse Louisville metro population. LADDER continues to (a) train disability and other community provider staff across the metro area on their Financial Empowerment Curriculum developed by Bank On Louisville, (b) integrate a financial health assessment into programs and services, and (c) offer the online Financial Capability Toolkit for Workforce Development for use in the workforce system and through its partners. LADDER's initiatives helped spark the development of the [Financial Integration Team \(FIT\)](#), a broad-based community of practice that focuses specifically on integrated economic advancement services to support people with disabilities through partners across the country. Erin Waddell, Social Service Program Supervisor, Advocacy and Empowerment Division of Louisville Metro Community Services, presented in Milwaukee, Wisc. at the Urban Economic Development Association's Emerging Topic Series Summit on Financial Inclusion for People with Disabilities on June 27. She shared information about the innovative approaches the City of Louisville and LADDER Alliance have taken to address the needs of people with disabilities with low and moderate incomes. Her presentation sparked new conversations for key stakeholders in Milwaukee, including the disability community, financial institutions, the asset development community, and government agencies, to build on the achievements of Louisville as they work to build inclusive pathways to financial empowerment and stability for people with disabilities.

## LEAD Activities During Financial Capability Month in April

To commemorate Financial Capability Month, and learn more about the challenges and opportunities to address the needs of Americans with disabilities to become more financially capable, the LEAD Center, Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB), and National Disability Institute (NDI) partnered on a webinar event on *Advancing Financial Literacy for Individuals with Disabilities*.

Two panels, one of federal agency representatives and the other of disability community leaders, discussed the challenges and opportunities to improve financial capability and inclusion for individuals across the spectrum of disabilities.

Participants learned about the consumer protections provided by MSRB rules for ABLE tax-advantaged savings accounts; new materials from the FDIC to build financial capability for adults with disabilities; favorable tax benefits for people with disabilities from the IRS; and financial literacy requirements in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) from the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

Speakers from ODEP included Patrick Mannix, Senior Advisor and Andy Arias, Policy Advisor.

National Financial Capability Month, held during the month of April each year, is a time for public and private sector organizations to work together to improve the knowledge and skills of all Americans with and without disabilities to make more informed financial decisions, better manage their financial lives, set financial goals, build and preserve assets, reduce economic vulnerability, and improve economic security.

Captioned videos of the event can be viewed using the following links: [Video 1](#) and [Video 2](#).

In addition, to recognize Financial Capability Month, the Office of Financial Empowerment at Louisville Metro Government's Office of Resilience and Community Services in Louisville, KY, contributed the blog: [Building Credit and Community: A Look Inside Louisville's LABS Pilot Program](#). The blog discussed its LADDER (Louisville Alliance for Development through Diversity Empowerment and Resources) program. In 2016, LADDER implemented the LABS (LADDER Asset Building Strategies) pilot, which was designed to increase the overall financial well-being of individuals with disabilities through small dollar loan and matched savings opportunities.

LEAD Center also updated and released the paper: [Integrating Financial Capability and Asset Building Strategies into the Public Workforce Development System](#). The paper focuses on how the development of financial capability strategies related to personal savings, asset building, managing credit, and individual budgeting, which are critical for sustaining financial security. This security, in turn, helps individuals achieve employment outcomes. In addition, the paper describes some of the replicable models that American Job Centers (AJCs) have established to provide financial capability services.

Finally, LEAD Center conducted *The Money Matters Online Dialogue* from April 18th through May 4th. For this dialogue, the LEAD Center invited workforce professionals, financial services partners and the disability community to submit accomplishments, strategies, barriers, and potential partnerships that support the design and delivery of financial literacy education activities to youth and adults with disabilities served by American Job Centers and/or other employment services providers.

WIOA supports activities that build the financial literacy of job seekers, as defined in the final rule (Section 20CFR681.500). Financial literacy education activities are identified as one of 14 mandated services that must be available to youth participants and can be made available to adult job seekers. A central focus of the LEAD Center's mission, in addition to promoting employment outcomes, is to increase the financial literacy and financial capability of people with disabilities. Employment produces income; financial literacy empowers people to achieve their life goals with that income.

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## **LEAD Center's Knowledge Translation Activities at National Conferences**

LEAD Center staff had a significant presence at two national conferences this quarter: the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP) Conference and the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) Conference. The NAWDP conference was attended by about 1,100 workforce development professionals. LEAD Center staff presented a well-attended interactive four-hour Pre-Conference session on *Strategies for Successfully Serving People with Barriers to Employment*, as well as three breakout sessions on *Serving All Job Seekers: Strategies for Success*; *Resource Mapping and Guided Group Discovery: Cross-System Collaboration and Integrating Financial Literacy into Workforce Services for Diverse Populations*.

At the National APSE conference, LEAD Center staff presented two half-day Pre-Conference sessions and four breakout sessions. The two Pre-Conference sessions were on *Customized Employment and Discovery: New Approaches and Partnerships for Success* and *Let's Talk Money: Financial Independence for People with Disabilities Is Possible!* The four breakouts were *Financial Education to Financial Inclusion: Bridging the Gap for Persons with Disabilities (Innovative Practices Track)*; *The ABLE Act and Employment (Public Policy Track)*; *Partnerships for Success (Employer Engagement Track)*; and *Promising Practices that Promote Effective Collaboration between Workforce & Disability Partners (Innovative Practices Track)*. This conference drew more than 700 attendees.

In addition to the presentations at these two conferences, LEAD Center staffed exhibit booths that were busy throughout each conference. Information about the promising practices and approaches about which LEAD Center staff presented can be found on the LEAD Center website: [www.leadcenter.org](http://www.leadcenter.org).

## **Building a Roadmap that Supports the National WIOA System to Navigate Inclusive Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities**

Over the past several months, the LEAD Center has researched effective strategies nationwide in serving people with disabilities and reaching positive employment outcomes through Inclusive Career Pathways. The research has found that the six elements of Career Pathways are:

- Build Cross-Agency Partnerships & Clarify Roles;
- Identify Industry Sector and Engage Employers;
- Design Education and Training Programs;
- Identify Funding Needs and Sources;
- Align Policies and Programs; and
- Measure System Change and Performance.

Multiple states and local areas were identified by LEAD and the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) with promising practices in the areas of accessibility, disability employment, equal opportunity, and financial capability. These regions have developed strong working partnerships across systems and implemented successful strategies in serving customers with multiple challenges and barriers to employment. The information-gathering process involved interviewing key people in workforce regions who are involved in various aspects of Career Pathways implementation, from policy to practice, as well as those who served in a role that focused on the inclusion of people with disabilities. Interviews were held with State/local Workforce Development Board leadership, American Job Center (AJC) management and staff, core and required partners (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation), DEI staff, and other community-based partners. Discussions centered around the six elements of Career Pathways listed above, with emphasis on workforce customer flow, access points to Career Pathways, existing challenges, and success stories.

This collection of practices, experiences and partnerships will be included in an Inclusive Career Pathways roadmap that supports WIOA and career pathways system and partners, focusing on employment and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. The Inclusive Career Pathways Roadmap will highlight key partnerships, the roles of partners, and critical resource coordination that supports individuals toward successful outcomes. The Roadmap also will include specific approaches and strategies for building partnerships between workforce and VR, implementing Ticket to Work, accessing work incentives counseling, and integrating financial education. While the roadmap is in development stages, below are several of the overarching themes that are emerging across and within workforce systems around Inclusive Career Pathways:

- **Intentional Cross-Title & Partner Workgroups that Move from Collaboration to Action**



Workgroups allow for continuous information-sharing, decision-making, partnership strengthening, and action planning between systems to develop/implement policies effectively on the local level.

- **Systems Alignment & Co-Enrollment Requires Proactive Agreement & Active Coordination**

Cross-partner systems proactively address the myth that “everyone is the funder of last resort” and formalize active resource coordination processes at the leadership and service levels, allowing workforce staff to collaborate seamlessly with multiple partners without halting service flow for the customer.

- **AJCs Have Access to Trusted Resources & Staff to Consult on Employment for People with Disabilities**

Staff and/or partners with disability expertise, such as Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) or VR Counselors, are available to WIOA staff and partners in order to brainstorm solutions to employment challenges, identify supports and resources, and for case conferencing at any point along the customer flow.

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## **LEAD Partner: Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB)**

*What is the MSRB?*

The MSRB is a self-regulatory organization committed to protecting investors, state and local governments, other municipal entities, and the public interest. In support of its mission to promote a fair and efficient municipal securities market, the MSRB prevents fraud and manipulation and promotes fair dealing by establishing rules for municipal securities dealers and municipal advisors.

*How is the MSRB involved with ABLÉ Programs?*

Interests in ABLÉ programs may be considered “municipal fund securities” under MSRB rules, which means that dealers that offer interests in ABLÉ programs may be subject to the MSRB’s fair practice rules. Generally, these fair practice rules require that recommendations made by a dealer must be suitable and investors must receive certain disclosures. Read about these protections at [msrb.org](https://msrb.org).

*Where Can I Learn More?*

The MSRB supports equal access to information and market transparency through its [Electronic Municipal Market Access \(EMMA®\) website](#). Visit EMMA to [find available information on ABLÉ programs offered in different states](#). Or explore the MSRB’s online [Education Center](#) for free resources about ABLÉ programs and to learn about [MuniEdPro®](#) - a suite of interactive, online courses about municipal market activities and MSRB regulations.

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## LEAD People: Yvonne Wright



Yvonne Wright serves as the Director of Workforce Engagement and Innovation for the [Missouri Division of Workforce Development](#). In this position, she works with partners throughout the state to move beyond WIOA compliance toward true collaboration. Prior to accepting this position, Wright worked for 24 years at Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation where she oversaw the agency's business outreach services, as well as served as the lead WIOA coordinator when the law took effect in 2014. This afforded her the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of WIOA implementation and grow critical partnerships. One of Wright's proudest accomplishments was her collaboration with the Workforce System's Equal Opportunity team to develop processes

and policy around implementation of Section 188 of WIOA. Wright is a long-standing valued collaborator with the LEAD Center in its Equal Opportunity work in Missouri. She is the current President of the Missouri Association for Workforce Development and is the Chair of the state's Governor's Council on Disabilities.

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## Resources

### **Guided Group Discovery Resources: Introduction and Course, Participant Workbook, and Facilitator's Guide**

<http://leadcenter.org/resources/tool-manual/guided-group-discovery-resources-introduction-and-course-participant-workbook-and-facilitator-guide>

### **Video Released of Advancing Financial Literacy for Individuals with Disabilities Event**

<http://leadcenter.org/resources/webinar/video-released-advancing-financial-literacy-individuals-disabilities-event>

### **Integrating Financial Capability and Asset Building Strategies into the Public Workforce Development System**

<http://leadcenter.org/resources/report-brief/integrating-financial-capability-and-asset-building-strategies-public-workforce-development-system-0>

### **Financial Integration Team Fact Sheet**

<http://leadcenter.org/resources/tool-manual/financial-integration-team-fact-sheet>

### **Business Engagement Self-Assessment Tool**

<http://www.leadcenter.org/resources/tool-manual/business-engagement-self-assessment-tool>

## **The ADA, Section 504 & Postsecondary Education**

<http://www.leadcenter.org/resources/tool-manual/ada-section-504-postsecondary-education>

## **CareerOneStop Youth Program Finder**

<http://www.leadcenter.org/resources/website/careeronestop-youth-program-finder>

## **Training Module: Assistive Technology in the Workplace**

<http://www.leadcenter.org/resources/presentation/training-module-assistive-technology-workplace>

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