

Employment and Financial Empowerment: A Toolkit for Youth with Disabilities

Transcript

2023 NAWDP Youth Symposium
November 6, 2023

>> So, I want to start by sharing that there often is a disconnect between employment and financial capability for youth with significant barriers to employment. Often while planning for jobs, topic, cost of, how much you need to earn and will your credit score at Berkeley affects the jobs you're applying for, they're not really taken into consideration. So through this session, my colleagues Nancy and Sarah are going to walk you through an online toolkit that's developed to help meet this need. Our workshop is being presented by the Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities that are known as the LEAD Center. The LEAD Center is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or WIOA Policy Development Center. It's led by National Disability Institute and is funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the US Department of Labor. I am Laura Gleneck, the Project Director for the LEAD WIOA Policy Development Center, and really excited to join my colleagues today to share with you some of the tools and resources the Department of Labor and the LEAD Center have created to provide employment and financial empowerment for youth with disabilities. So, I'm going to start by having you get to know a little bit more about Nancy and Sarah. Nancy Boutot is the subject matter expert on advancing economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities. She provides training and technical assistance for National Disability Institute on integrating social security administrative -- administration, benefits, guidance and financial counseling. She developed materials on financial capability measures and discovery in its role in both customized and integrated employment. And Nancy is a certified partner work incentives coordinator and a certified financial counselor. She's joined by Sarah Loizeaux who is a subject matter expert on creating inclusive career pathways. She leverages resources across systems that promote employment for people with disabilities. Sarah served as a Training and Technical Assistance Manager for National Disability Institute. She's developed innovative practices that increase programmatic access and workforce performance outcomes. And her expertise includes identifying diversity, equity and inclusions and accessibility policy and practices emphasizing universal design principles. So, following our session today, you're going to be able to understand how financial empowerment and financial literacy can promote employment outcomes, understand how you can support others to prepare financially for jobs and gain access to financial education-related resources and considerations. So Sarah, why don't we start with you talking a little bit more about financial literacy and WIOA?

>> Thanks, Laura. So, as I'm sure, most of you already know financial literacy education is one of the 14 program elements for the Workforce Innovations and

Opportunity Act, also known as WIOA Youth Program. It's so important for youth as they begin to embark in the world of working to receive good and accurate information related to financial literacy education. We can go to the next slide. So, how does WIOA defined financial literacy education? Well, like I just mentioned, we know it's one of the 14 program elements for the WIOA Youth Program. In WIOA, financial literacy education is defined as activities that provide you with the knowledge and skills that they need to achieve long-term financial stability. Financial literacy education encompasses information and activities on a wide range of topics, such as creating budgets, setting up checking and savings accounts, managing spending, credit and debt, understanding credit reports and credit scores, and protecting against identity theft. There's a lot to learn And youth with disabilities may have even more they need knowledge on, such as managing SSI or SSDI benefits and understanding the different work incentives available to them. With that said, I'm going to hand things off to Nancy who's going to introduce you to an invaluable resource and the reason we are here with you now.

>> Thank you so much, Sarah. I appreciate that. So, I want to let everybody know that this session supports equity and the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workforce. And that includes opportunities for advancement, which is really important for youth to start thinking about now. This toolkit is unique in that it brings together financial resources for each stage of an employment life cycle specifically selected and deemed useful by and for people with disabilities including people of color and others who have been traditionally unserved. What you see on your screen right now is the website landing page. And we will go over that in more detail shortly. Right now, a visual description is a woman in a wheelchair who is using an ATM machine. And we can go to the next slide. So, I want to -- so if you were to and we'll show this again when we show this to you live, but if you were to scroll down that webpage site, on the landing page, you would come to what we call these five buckets of the work lifecycle. So here, you see pictures of individuals with disabilities representing each of those five buckets which include preparing for a job, starting a job, maintaining a job, changing or losing a job, and retiring from a job. There we go, those five buckets right there. All right, so we are going to look at our first bucket. But before that, I just wanted to let you know that we've made the toolkits very user-friendly and easy to navigate. So, when we click on the Get Started button that you see right there, it automatically brings you down to the bottom of the page where you see the five buckets I just mentioned; preparing for a job, starting a job, maintaining a job, changing or losing a job, and retiring from a job. So, if we scroll back up to the center of the page, on the left-hand side, you'll also see those five buckets right there. So, you can get to them in various ways, either by clicking Start, or by just going down at the bottom, or just going to that navigation bar on your left. And what I also want you to see on the left is the last option that you see there is a Search the Toolkit button. So, let's go to the search tab and I'll show you how that works. And we're going to put the word credit into our search bar and click Search because we know credit is really important. And as you can see, we've got 34 results that pop up that all have to do with credit, everything from

what is a credit score to getting your credit report and a lot more. This is really important for youths as a lot of employers now look at credit scores as part of the hiring process. And then there's also research resources on managing credit which is really important because we know that youth sometimes get into credit card debt early in life by not knowing how to manage credit or manage their finances. So, those are -- so that's how you use the search tool. And now, we can go back to the homepage. And we're going to take a look at our first bucket which is preparing for a job. So, before we go into resources for preparing for a job, I want to show you a couple more ways that you can navigate each of the buckets. First, each bucket has a Frequently Asked Questions section which you're looking at right now. So, you'll see how can I prepare financially for a job? How can I work if I receive SSI or SSDI? And how do I connect with people who can help me find a job. And then if we click on those, it opens up and you'll see different resources in each of those buckets. So, each of them have three different resources that are frequently asked questions that you can look at to see if those answer your immediate question or not. And then I also want to show you that underneath the Frequently Asked Questions, we have four different resource boxes; publications, tools, websites, and videos. So that's another way that you can look at the various resources that are in each of these buckets. OK. So, we're going to look at our first bucket preparing for a job. So, let's go to tools. And I want to show you a couple tools that are great for youth. The first one I want to show you is calculating the numbers in my paycheck. And when we click on that, it actually takes you to a totally different website. So, there's no paywalls, there's no firewalls. This link on calculating the numbers and your paycheck actually takes you to a resource from the CFPB, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. This gives youths an opportunity to view a sample pay stub and the effect of things like taxes and deductions and the amount of money they receive in terms of gross versus net. So, it gives youths an opportunity to see what they're really going to get in their paycheck so that when they start working for the first time, they're not disappointed and that they understand that certain things come out of their paychecks. Another resource that is really great for youth is ABLE and the student-earned income exclusion for transition age youth. So that's what you're looking at now. So again, the site just took you to a different website. And if you click on the download link, you're on the ABLE National Resource Center site. And we get a three-page tool on how the Social Security Administration encourages youth to work. And on page two, the tool talks about how the student-earned income exclusion impacts a student's SSI cash benefit. So, what we've seen here is students can earn a lot more money than they realize while maintaining their SSI check. So, in this specific preparing for a job bucket, I think those are two of the really important resources amongst many, many more that you will see when you go through the webpage on your own. Right now, let's go back to our homepage and we'll go to our second bucket which is Starting a Job. So, we've seen some resources in preparing for a job. And now, we're in the starting a job bucket. And again, you can see three frequently asked questions. Where can I get information on setting goals? How can I save money I am earning from a new job? And I think I could benefit from accommodations. How do I disclose my disability? So, the resource that I want to take you to right now if we go to

-- if we open up the Frequently Asked Questions and we go to setting goals. And this actually takes you back to the CFPB's website again. So, if we click on Setting SMART goals, we get a tool on just that, setting up SMART goals. SMART goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound. It's a great user-friendly tool. And on page three, what you'll see is a chart that youth can use to help them make sure their goals are SMART goals. The CFPB has so many other resources. There's another one I want to mention but we're not going to go to, but you can check it out on your own. And it's a link in this bucket in the Starting a Job bucket in the website section. And it's called Money as You Grow. So, be sure to check that out when you look at the toolkit. Teenagers and young adults, it talks about how youth can earn money, how they can save, how they can start planning, budgeting for shopping, and borrowing, and also something really important about protecting your money. So, those are the first two buckets. And I would now like to pass the presentation on to Sarah who will talk about the next two buckets.

>> Thanks, Nancy. So now, we're going to get to the point of maintaining a job. Job retention matters. And we've got resources here for that stage in employment. Let's face it, things do come up once you've settled on the job. And there's a lot of resources found throughout to secure your financial future toolkit that youth may find beneficial when they want to maintain their employment. For instance, now that they're working and earning a steady income, they may want to think about their goals for the future such as saving for housing. So, we can go right to the key terms and look up housing. And there, you're going to find this handy resource to help with making good housing decisions which is also from the LEAD Center. And if we go back to maintaining a job, we know that many youth with disabilities rely on public benefits such as SSI or SSDI. A young person receiving benefits will likely have concerns about how their benefits will be affected because of work. And this is an issue that young people want to have a good handle on. What happens when their employer wants to give them a promotion or pay increase? How were benefits affected if their hours increase or decrease? Will the young person receiving benefits still have access to what they need such as health care, housing, etcetera? This toolkit gives answers to some of those frequently asked questions. Just like Nancy had mentioned earlier, the Frequently Asked Questions are located right there on the page. So, as you can see, there's a question about getting a raise or promotion. If you click on that question, you'll find a resource that helps provide an answer. Right from the Social Security website, they'll talk about employment supports. And if we go back, let's say the individual receiving SSI or SSDI has a question that isn't there. Well, fear not. If we go to the publication section, we're going to find the Social Security Red Book. And this is essentially the book of rules for SSI or SSDI recipients. The Red Book helps one learn how employment support provisions can assist Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries in their efforts to become self-sufficient through work. This is definitely a guide that young people will want to have bookmarked. And if we go back to maintaining a job, so once someone begins earning a paycheck, they might be thinking about how to reach financial goals by saving. So, let's go back to the key terms

and see if we can find resources for savings. And sure enough, we do. We'll find information to help the young person reach their savings goal through ABLER account. That's the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act which Nancy had mentioned earlier. Here, they have the resource of the ready and able to work and save. And this page takes you to the ABLER National Resource Center's page on able to work, information to help someone as they consider employment and how an ABLER account can support and enhance financial health and wellbeing. So let's then move on to the next cycle of employment here which is changing or losing a job. Now, when we're young, it's not unusual to leave a job, sometimes by choice and sometimes not. In any case, we know that changing or losing a job can be a stressful experience. It's at this stage, you'll find tools and resources to help the young person with making their next move. So, maybe the job wasn't a good fit. And the young person wants to explore new options that might better fit their skills and interests. And as we look over at those FAQs, there's a question right there asking about finding a new job and getting new skills. And when we click on the question, we can see the resource listed shows us how to find the closest American Job Center. It's the last question there. So, the CareerOneStop site, I'm sure as you know is a great resource to help someone find a better job. But mainly, what the young person was really thinking is they want to help find a better job that meets their specific skill set. Well, maybe we can go back to changing and losing a job and look over to the websites. Maybe there's a site that can help. And sure enough, there's a skills assessment right there. This website includes resources and tools on how to know what careers you can do with the skills you already have. And if we go back to the websites, you can also find mySkills myFuture, a website that includes a tool to build a bridge to a new career starting with your current and your past job. I'm sure many of you are already familiar with this resource. Plus, if you go back, you can find sites like America Service Locator to help the young person locate their closest American Job Center, employment and training programs and community services. As you can see, there are so many different ways in the toolkit to locate the information you need. Nancy, would you like to take us through the last stage of employment for us?

>> I would absolutely love to. Thank you, Sarah. So, our last bucket is Retiring from a Job. Many young individuals probably are not thinking about retirement. But to get the most out of retirement, really the sooner somebody starts saving, the better. So, with more time to invest, younger individuals can get more tax benefits and can take advantage of the power of compounding. Even if the youth is only working part time and they don't have an employer retirement account, they can open up their own IRA account and put up to \$6,000 of it into it annually. So, you'll see that we have frequently asked questions here. Where can I learn more about my pension 401k or an individual retirement account? What are 401k plan fees and who pays for them? And then this third one doesn't necessarily match up with youth but it's still in there and there's great resources and that's simply, am I close to retirement, you know, and I'm concerned that I haven't saved enough. You know, what can I do about that? So, those are your frequently asked questions. And what I want to do is go to a website in this

bucket. So, if we can go to websites and then click on Money Smart, Money Smart is one of my favorite tools. It's from the FDIC. And on the left-hand side, we'll see several tabs. And what I would like to do is click on Teach Money Smart. And if we open that, you see a whole section there on the left. Under I want to train youth, you'll see Money Smart for Young Adults under Youth, Money Smart for Young People, Teacher Online Resource Center, Youth Banking Resource Center, Youth Employment Resource Center, and then Organizing Resource Fairs. So, a lot of great information in there. A lot of tools, resources, free curriculums, skill-building opportunities that you can use with youth and it's all absolutely for free. And Money Smart for youth, sorry, for young adults targets aged 16 to 24. They can be downloaded again and used at no cost. So, don't not pay attention to the retirement bucket because there's some really good tools in there even if they don't relate directly to retirement. And with that, I will pass it back over to Laura. Thank you, Laura. Thank you, Sarah.

>> So thank you, Nancy and Sarah. As we can see, the financial toolkit is a wonderful one-stop shop of resources for the various work lifecycle. And as Nancy and Sarah are saying, some of them may be applicable to youths now and some may not seemed like they are. But I know as we all talk about retiring, I don't know about you but I think when I got my third salary, the first thing I thought about, when can I retire? Probably not the thing to do but I did it anyway. So, we have quality resources here. And this slide includes a brief description of the financial toolkit along with the link to the website. This is what Sarah and Nancy just talked through. And as you can see, it's very robust and we just wanted to touch on it very lightly. We really hope that you visit it often. And please use it or disseminate in panels and social media to help promote it. All slides or by pages include resources that can support you. And we have a few slides. I'm just going to go through them, not talk about them that highlight sort of what we consider are the youth-specific resources found throughout the toolkit. So, I'm just going to go through them quickly. In preparing for a job, starting a job, maintaining a job, changing or losing a job and retiring from a job and we really encourage you to go back and look at them. But Sarah, right now, I'm going to turn it back to you to see what to know what they can do around questions.

>> Thanks, Laura. So, if you've got questions, rest assured, Nancy and I have answers for you and we love to hear from you. So, Laura is going to put on the screen our contact information. Please feel free to email us out. We love answering your questions. Whether it's about the toolkit or anything else that's about financial education, we would love to hear from you. And with that said, there's another way that we would love to hear from you. So, NAWDP has partnered with the National Disability Institute to learn how the workforce system across all titles understands and provides financial capability programming to job seekers, both youth and adults. So if you see this QR code on your screen, if you can, you know, get your camera out and take a picture of that, it's going to take you to our feedback form. This is a quick feedback form. It will only take you a few minutes and the responses we receive from that form will assist us in understanding what the workforce needs in terms of financial education and services.

The information we collect will be used to develop responsive approaches to financial capability programming that support job seekers in achieving economic self-sufficiency. It's going to be beneficial. Whether you work with youth or adults or anywhere in between, we really want to know how is financial education programming being implemented or understood all throughout the workforce system. So please take a few minutes to fill out this feedback form. Your input is very valuable to us and just answer each question to the best of your knowledge. You do not have to share your contact information with us if you do I want to. But if you could just fill it out at any point before November 8, we would really appreciate it. I think I'm going to bring it back to Laura.

>> All right, thank you for that, Sarah. So, resource is up the LEAD Center's website where you can find a very robust library of resources. And if you're not a member of the LEAD Center, we encourage you to sign up for our newsletter. It will give you information about future and coming events and promising practice as part of the deal which we love to collab and really elevate the great things that are going on. You can also reach us through social media and here are our social media posts. So, on behalf of Nancy and Sarah, the LEAD Center and the Office of Disability Employment Policy, we want to thank you for joining our session. We hope that you're going to take away knowledge about employment and financial empowerment tools and resources that can help you as you work with youth with disabilities. Thank you.

>> Thank you.