

Paving Pathways to Careers and Advancement:
Leveraging Registered Apprenticeships to Meet the Demand

November 13, 2024

Webinar Transcript

>> SARAH LOIZEAUX: I would like to welcome you. We are so glad you joined us here today to hear about our presentation paving pathways to careers and advancement, Leveraging Registered Apprenticeships to Meet the Demand. Today's webinar is hosted by the Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities, or LEAD Center. We are a workforce innovation and opportunity act policy development center. The LEAD Center is led by National Disability Institute and is funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the U.S. Department of Labor. Together, we facilitate the adoption and integration of inclusive WIOA programs, policies, and practices through research, technical assistance and demonstration projects. I am your moderator for today. I am really excited to be here. My name is Sarah Loizeaux. My pronouns are she, her, hers. I am a white woman with brown hair and today I am wearing a tan sweater. I am so happy you are here today, and I welcome you. I am going to go over a few housekeeping notes before we get started. To ensure that everyone today can participate fully in the webinar, we would like to take a moment to share a few captioning and housekeeping tips. This webinar today will be live captioned, and captions will appear below the slide deck. You also have the option to open the captioning we You also have the option to open the captioning web page in a new browser and the links we posted in the chat. in a new browser and the link, we posted in the chat. Once the captioning window opens on your own system, you can adjust the background color, text color and the fonts using the drop-down menus at the top of the browser window. Please note this webinar is being recorded in the archives and supporting materials will be placed on the LEAD center website under recent and upcoming events within 10 business days. We love questions and we really encourage you to ask any questions throughout today's event that you might have about the content you are hearing. At any point, you can click the Q&A button that is located on the webinar's menu bar, and this will bring up a question-and-answer window in which you can type questions for our presenters. We will do our best to save time at the end for a question-and-answer period. Use the chat box if you are experiencing any technical issues or if you have questions or the technical support team. Please go ahead and type those into the chat box. Today, we have a lot to cover. At the end of this webinar, you will hopefully have learned how registered apprenticeships can be designed to open doors to in-demand professions in which there are label shortages such as Direct Support Professionals. We will discuss how register apprenticeships can provide critical on ramps to work for individuals facing employment barriers including people with disabilities. We will be assessing strategies to improve job quality for Direct Support Professionals including programs designed to increase wages, benefits, and provide tuition support. We will discuss how Direct Support Professionals or

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DSP roles can serve as an entry point to broader community service or healthcare career pathways. I would know this personally because I started my career as a Direct Support Professional and spent 10 years as a DSP. Lastly, we will discuss how to find resources to start a registered apprenticeship program. This webinar today has a fantastic lineup of speakers who are going to be sharing with us their individual experiences and expertise related to supporting Direct Support Professionals achieving a career path and through registered apprenticeship. This will include Social Policy Research, the New York State Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship, the State University of New York and Schenectady, Liberty Art which is an employer of Direct Support Professional. We'll also hear from the Administration for Community Living and the Federal Apprenticeship Office, Apprenticeship USA. Before we get to that, I would like to provide an introduction to Assistant Secretary Taryn Mackenzie Williams, the Assistant Secretary of Labor for the Office of Disability Employment Policy. In her position Taryn advises the Secretary of labor on how the departments policies and programs impact the employment of people with disabilities and leads the Office of Disability Employment Policy which works with employers and all levels of government to promote evidence-based policy that improves employment opportunities and outcomes for people with disabilities. Previously, Assistant Secretary Williams was the Managing Director for the Poverty to Prosperity Program at the Center for American Progress. Before joining the Center for American Progress, she worked at the Office of Disability Employment Policy on a variety of issues related to education and workforce policy. Thank you so much for joining us today, Assistant Secretary Williams. I will now turn it over to you for opening remarks.

>> TARYN WILLIAMS: Thank you so much for the introduction, Sarah. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Taryn Williams. My pronouns are she and her. Today, I am wearing a black sweater and a red and orange scarf. I have the privilege of serving as Assistant Secretary of Labor for disability employment policy here at the Department of Labor and in that role, I leader Office of Disability Employment Policy or ODEP and Congress established ODEP a little more than 20 years to create a federal agency dedicated to working across programs, policies and agencies to promote disability employment. It is our mission to develop and influence policies and practices that increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities. In celebration of National Apprenticeship Week, ODEP, through our grantee, the LEAD Center, is hosting this webinar to talk about a unique apprenticeship program in the state of New York for Direct Support Professionals or DSPs. DSPS are an important subset of the larger direct care workforce, all of whom play a critical role in supporting people with disabilities and living independently, pursuing and achieving personal and professional goals, maintaining good health, and engaging in education, employment and community events. In 2020 3.6 million direct care workers provided long-term services and support to people in need. The Bureau of Labor statistics projects that almost 4.8 million direct care workers will be needed by 2033 which doesn't include coverage for the estimated 53 million or more unpaid family caregivers currently providing the support for their loved ones. Workers in the direct care field include personal care aids, home health aides, and nursing assistants. Direct support professionals also provide more targeted services to people with disabilities to obtain and maintain

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competitive integrated employment and independent living. Back in February 2022, ODEP's LEAD Center convened a think tank of national experts to identify strategies to address the challenges faced specifically by the DSP workforce. Their insights help to inform future efforts including The LEAD Centers recent memorandum attracting direct support professionals, advancing career pathways with job quality in mind. Which will be discussed in today's webinar. The memo outlines strategies to improve job quality for DSPs including through credential attainment programs like today's features registered apprenticeship program in New York. At the Department of labor, we are committed to ensuring that DSPs and other care workers are paid family sustained wages with good benefits. Because these critical jobs must be good jobs. Thank you so much for your interest and participation in today's webinar and The LEAD Center for your work on this critical issue. I'll turn it back to you, Sarah, thank you.

>> SARAH LOIZEAUX: Thank you so much, Assistant Secretary Williams, for your remarks. As Assistant Secretary Williams mentioned in the recently published LEAD Center memo about direct support professional with job quality in mind. If you haven't had a chance to take a look at it don't worry because we have our first two speakers who worked very hard on it and we are going to talk about it today. Leah Cadena-Igdalsky, who is the Associate at Social Policy Research Associates along with her colleague Kris Palmer, the Senior Associate at Social Policy Research Associates, are going to talk about through the work that's been done through the memo, what Direct Support Professionals do? The growing workforce need for them? The different types of possibilities that can come from beginning a career path as a DSP and ideas and practices we discovered that talk about ways to meet the demand including registered apprenticeship. With that said, I will hand this over to Leah and Kris.

>> LEAH CADENA-IGDALSKY: Thank you so much Sarah and Assistant Secretary Williams for setting the stage for what we know is going to be an exciting and engaging webinar. I am Leah Cadena- Igdalsky. I have curly hair and glasses and today I am wearing a black shirt with white polka dots. I am thrilled to be on today along with my colleague Kris Palmer to share some of the recommendations that came from this recent memo. Before we jump into those recommendations, we first want to set the shared understanding for all of us about who we are speaking about when we speak about direct support professionals or DSPs for short. As Assistant Secretary Williams mentioned DSPs play a critical role in supporting people with disabilities to live independently, be active participants in their communities and to engage in competitive integrated employment. DSPs wear many hats and support the individuals that they work with to achieve their independent living goals. As we know DSP is just one job title under the broader umbrella of direct care workers. As many of the folks on today's webinar likely already know, we have been facing a crisis for years now related to the demand for DSPs and the supply of workers who are recruited to and retained in the profession. For some additional context, PHI projects that 9.3 million direct care jobs will need to be filled this decade. The shortage of DSPs in particular has real consequences. ANCOR, which is a member organization of community-based providers that support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities recently surveyed their membership and found that the shortage of DSPs led 92% of respondents to struggle to

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achieve quality standards and 83% of them to turn away new referrals due to a lack of DSPs staff. Some of the reasons for the shortage of DSPs to meet consumer demand include low wages, lack of quality benefits and limited upward mobility. Today, Kris and I will be sharing some of the recommendations to address those challenges that are featured in the new memo published by The LEAD Center attracting Direct Support Professionals advancing career pathways with job quality in mind. As was mentioned, this memo built on a broader portfolio of work from The LEAD Center that has been focused on addressing the shortage of DSPs. Back in 2022 ODEP and The LEAD Center convened a think tank bringing together national experts to identify and make recommendations regarding challenges faced by the DSP workforce and to identify possible federal actions to mitigate those challenges. Also, in 2022 we hosted a webinar on direct support professional careers for people with disabilities. Building on those previous efforts the latest memo highlights three particular areas of recommendation to attract DSPs. Kris and I will discuss each of those in turn, which are reframing and honoring DSP work as a service tied directly to our national interests. Supporting policies and practices that enable DSPs to build on their skills, earned postsecondary education credentials, advancing their careers and earn higher wages. Encouraging people with disabilities and others who want to work to become DSPs. Our first area of recommendation focuses on opportunities to reframe and honor the important work of DSPs by connecting it to national interest through service programs. Essential but undervalued DSPs conduct critical work. They deserve respect and should earn wages that allow them to support and sustain themselves. Prioritization of direct support work national service programs could help highlight the need and the value of DSPs. One such national service program is AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism. AmeriCorps have opportunities for Americans to serve their country, address pressing challenges and improve lives and communities. AmeriCorps members receive an annual living allowance and money for college or trade schools. AmeriCorps is focused on six key areas of impact: Disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, and healthy futures. Given the urgent need to expand and sustain the workforce of DSPs, AmeriCorps can integrate the DSP profession into its healthy futures area to attract, train, and provide a career pathway for people to enter the DSP field. Another entry point to encourage more young adults to enter the profession could be job corps. Since 1964 job corps has helped youth ages 16 – 24 finish high school while providing training for careers in a variety of industries. DSP training can be incorporated into Job Corps existing health care pathway. Job corps could create a new program that leads to a nationally recognized DSP credential recertification program like the one offered to the national alliance for direct support professionals. This could be modeled on Job Corps existing training program which is focused on residential advisors. The country has a history of creating programs to recruit workers in times of need. Like the National Health Service Corps and the Climate Corps. Given the current and growing need for DSPs to support people with disabilities who thrive in their communities the DSP field can benefit from connecting this work to national interest. With that, I will turn it over to my colleague Kris Palmer to discuss our two remaining recommendations.

>> KRIS PALMER: Thank you Leah. Hello everyone, I am Kris Palmer from the Social Policy Research Center and the LEAD Center. I'm going to provide just a little more framing before we get into more specifics around apprenticeship. I will say that I am a woman. I'm in my 50s and I have a lot of well-earned lines on my face. I will tell you a little bit more about how we address job quality. I'm going to talk about job quality as Assistant Secretary Williams emphasized, we are really interested in family sustaining wages. There is a lot of different strategies that we have research with DSPs that can get us there. We know that the wages are not sustaining in any state. There are 16 – \$17 per hour, on average, nationally. It came a long way, but it is still not a living wage. The good news is there are strategies that increase job quality. One of them is DSPs can move up to become a manager or supervisor. One in ten DSPs move up to become a supervisor or manager. So, you have a 10% chance to move up that way. It is another path to get to living wages. Secondly, there has been a lot of effort in raising the wage floor for DSPs with minimum wage campaigns in cities and states and legislative advocacy to increase federal Medicaid reimbursements. Such advocacy has helped to create higher wages in many states, especially in the state of Washington, New York, and California. That is one area to work on. Another one is employees can own their own DSP business. We know of a worker's co-op and there is also the avenue for employee-owned companies to increase assets and autonomy. It hasn't shown much in terms of wages in the end, but you can imagine having your own business and building that asset over time is something that increases your quality of your work. Another way to look at the job quality for workers, for DSP workers is using the DSP occupation as a launching pad to gain skills and experience. And this is something that Leah and I have been researching and it's thrilling to see just how many, how applicable the skills are that DSPS get on the job that would apply to many different occupational segments in the economy. For example, the community or social service work. It's like a social worker or vocational rehabilitation counselor or career counselor.

The education sector being a special education teacher or teacher's aide or principal or any, any type of teaching. And then a third segment that of course, the healthcare provision is another area. And as we know it is a growing sector of our economy. So occupational therapy, speech language pathologist, registered nurse and all of the different areas around nursing, those are all examples of where if DSPS were to get more skills and credentials, especially the back to the baccalaureate, they're going to have a much better chance of reaching living wages or family sustaining wages. One example of what is being done in this area is the New Jersey Association of community providers. They offer a DSP career development program. The partner with the community college for training DSPs. And through this program, they provide tuition reimbursement and a stipend for students while they're pursuing an associate's degree. The associate's degree can be a foundation for gaining some other jobs, but also as a way to the biggest leap will be if they could apply that associate's degree to, to then get a bachelor's degree. Those are many different support policies and practices for advancement. We have another area that we explored. We have seen an example of an organization called RCM of Washington. I think Liz is going to give you the link. We will provide a link to you. We did a webinar on this several months ago where RCM of Washington trains people with disabilities to become ADSP. People with

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disabilities bring lived experience and that is a real asset to them being able to serve other people with disabilities. RCM is able to work not only with people that are trying to become ADSP, but also with employers to incorporate technological advances and remote support offerings that add flexibility to the job. You can imagine with DSPs being quite flexible that need care so there are hours available to be flexible. There is increasing remote services. That is something that is even more accessible for DSPs that have disabilities. The other idea is that there are many populations out there in our country that have barriers to enter the workforce. And for those you'll hear in a minute, I mean apprenticeship is a great launching point, great way to enter the workforce. And we're thinking that the populations that have barriers to entry, like immigrants that may have language barriers or veterans or people living on public assistance or reentry populations, all of these could be candidates for DSP work, especially with the kinds of supports that may be needed to ease that transition. Just like RCM exemplifies but you will hear apprenticeship has the on-ramp that many people need. Let's move onto the next speaker.

>> SARAH LOIZEAUX: Thank you Leah and Kris for talking about the great information and seeing what can be done with professional workforce need. It is demand and it is everywhere but there is some really great ways we can elevate his career and show the real skills and job quality that can come from working as a direct support professional. That is why I am so thrilled to introduce our next group of speakers. Because when it comes to registered apprenticeship for direct support professionals, New York is a real model. They show through the work they are doing how to effectively collaborate across systems between education and workforce and the employers. They recognize direct support professionals as a job that has real skilled labor that is needed. Also, as an entry point to a career path providing those apprentices with college credit, national certifications etc. while getting paid. I can't tell you enough good things around what New York is doing around registered apprenticeship. But I am sure you would rather hear from them. So, I will start by introducing Dan Paris, who is the supervising apprenticeship training representative from the New York State Department of Labor's Division of Employment and Workforce Solutions. After he speaks, you'll hear from representatives from the State University of New York in Schenectady and an employer and a newly graduated apprentice from Liberty Arc and Schenectady. Dan, we will start with you. Welcome.

>> DAN PARIS: Thank you Sarah so much. I appreciate the opportunity to talk about apprenticeship. As Sarah was saying, I am Dan Parris, I am a white male wearing a blue shirt and grey vest. I am a field supervisor for the New York State Department of Labor apprenticeship unit in New York State. In New York State. We have field offices across the state where we oversee registered apprenticeship programs. We call those programs our sponsors. Always really interested in talking about the DSP trade in general. Just to give you background, I came into this unit over 15 years ago. At the time one of the programs that I was given as apprenticeship training representative it is the support staff that work with our sponsors to get guidance and instruction. Help them utilize it as a workforce development tool. One of the programs I was given was a DSP program. It was highly unusual at the time and most of our trades that we dealt with through registered apprenticeship in New York,

we're really centered around the construction trade. For me it was a unique opportunity to see a different type of trade. Even on a personal note for me, I am a father currently of a 24 year old autistic son. I know the support that is given to people with disabilities and the families and how important they are. Leah and Kris really described what we are trying to do in New York for registered apprenticeship. I am going to hopefully give you a brief overview of what apprenticeship looks like and just if you have a general idea of some of the stuff that we have built in New York. I'm going to start with the next slide. Registered apprenticeship in case you are not familiar with the models it is two parts. It is the on-the-job training and that is the training that is provided by the sponsor that is the organization that runs the apprenticeship program. It is the training that the apprentice learns the skill sets on the job under the supervision of a mentor/journey worker. That is where the main components of the learning takes place. It is supplemented with related instruction. That is the coursework that fortifies what the apprentice is learning on the job. The great thing about the DSP trade is that, it opens up the pathway that was being discussed earlier. To additional course work in the college environment that maybe a normal DSP coming into the trade might not have been open to thinking they didn't have the ability to go to college or the interest in going to college at the time. This gives the ability for that individual to be exposed to some higher education. Those classes support the on-the-job training and also helping the sponsor organization, the employer to know that the apprentice is going to complete a specific training outline that has been developed by the New York State Department of Labor. Each individual going through program is receiving roughly the same type of skills and test that they are being exposed to. There is more consistency in that exposure. One of the things that I know from DSPs in my interaction is they are a lot of things. I always say a DSP is someone who is giving support services in terms of helping monitor an individual (behaviorist, teacher). They might be a social worker and there are so many different skills that they touch on. The registered apprentice or program really helps an individual sponsor and really have the structure program and support individuals to know that they are in a structured program that is a career path. It is not just a job. We are trying to make them realize that the registered apprenticeship that there might be other opportunities. I am touching on some of the things that Leah and Kris were talking about. The great thing about the registered apprenticeship program is that the individual when they complete they are given a national credential through the New York Department of State. They can add that to their personal portfolio. We have a fantastic relationship with SUNY that helps provide the related instruction. Some of our current sponsors have utilized the college of direct support. In New York we give the sponsored ability to lose some of the training and health through their own HR departments. It is a structured program and we have a training outline that's been developed with public input voted on by the partnership Council and approved by our Commissioner of labor. The program, like I said, really gives individual apprentice a pathway. One of the roles that I had prior to my current position of the supervisor I was the ATR monitoring programs. Part of our monitoring is discussions with the apprentices, so we're giving some even support services in terms of listening to how they're doing. We don't go in as adversaries where we're trying to ever say someone's doing something wrong or if we do notice some kind of deficiency, we work with the agency to try to improve. The goal is giving a structured program and legitimacy to the trade of DSP itself. The experiences that I have

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had with apprentices that are in the program or completed program it was always something valued. If you go to our website one of the videos we actually have talking about apprenticeship is from one of our graduates from the DSP program. One of your speakers today was one of the apprentices I oversaw. It is a unique program but I think so much touches on what Leah and Kris were talking about. Registered apprenticeship will set a baseline pay that the sponsor will pay. It gives incremental raises, it leads to the pathway of completion in terms of the credential. It exposes them to the related instruction. The partnership we have and you will hear little bit more about it that SUNY is amazing. They developed certificate programs that are in addition to the registered apprentice or program. Some of the different programs that I spoke to over the years and program development are utilizing apprenticeship even as a means to give a ladder to that apprentice to obtain other positions within the organization. So that it gives them in terms of there might have been other positions that the agency might've had that a DSP that didn't go to college or take any college credits didn't qualify for. Even though they were at an amazing worker with the organization as a whole some of the sponsors we work with are utilizing the program. If you complete a program that might be the minimum qualification for the next step within our organization. When I started in 2006, we had one DSP program. It was that way for a long time until around 2018 when by having a registered apprenticeship program, you as a sponsor were open to other federal and state funding streams. When that happened just to my own personal experience, we were able to start reaching out to other organizations. Not just talking about the benefits of utilizing the DSP apprenticeship program as the workforce development tool. But also letting them know that this gave them access to other funding streams that can actually support their organization as a whole but also their staff. I would say around 2018 is when we really started to have a good push. Even during the Covid years, we are now in New York up to 16 registered sponsors. We have 16 different organizations that are utilizing the apprenticeship model for DSP to help train that workforce. Another thing that I note Kris and Leah had talked about was targeting other groups that you might have not necessarily thought about being DSPs. Even in the past month one of our newer sponsors that I helped develop in the Long Island area that was one of their objectives was targeting people that are classified with disabilities themselves to try to get into the DSP trade. I am really proud of what we have been able to accomplish. We currently have over 50 active registered apprentices. That is a great number. We want to see it grow and we hope in that it grows. It is a number we are proud of and we have had 76 people complete the program. That means they as DSP have the additional credential that they can say I have completed a registered apprenticeship program in New York State. I have the ability as a worker to add that to my own personal resume and something to be proud of. Real great growth and I know we are not talking about this but it does tie in to the DSP trade. One of the other trades that we have developed in New York is a DSP supervisor. It gives you the ability to look at the supervisor of a DSP. The house managers or something along those lines where they can actually complete a registered apprenticeship program as well. I will go into about the partnerships that we do have in place. I cannot say enough great things and you're going to hear from some of those people and our State University of New York and the ability for them to utilize funding streams to help support the DSP. This is an amazing relationship and they are able to provide the related instruction component.

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They are there to utilize Registered Apprenticeship as a workforce development tool where they can help design what the classes look like around what are our expectations are through our training outlines. Local ARC's have been amazing in New York. They have been a large group of what our sponsors are. I really look at registered pressure sponsors that we have as like a family. One of our speakers you're going to hear from today, Jane, who is a big advocate of registered apprenticeship helps make contacts that we may not be aware of. She makes us aware of the other organizations so that we can get in and talk to them about the advantages of registered apprenticeship. In just our sponsors the fact that heirloom utilizing registered apprenticeships that on job component. Utilizing apprenticeship so that DSP can be looked at in terms of the professional aspects. That is one of the key things that I think that really comes from the registered apprenticeship programs as well. Every individual that goes to this program that they feel more like they are a part of a professional trade. They are not just there in terms of, and no disrespect to babysitters, they are not just babysitters, a DSP is a profession. I think the trade through the pressure program really helps build a structured program to prove that. Again, I always thank all of our partners. Not just as an individual that works for the Department of Labor in New York State but as a parent, I cannot go and say enough about how important these roles are and how we must invest in these roles. We must utilize different methods to help increase retention and just make them understand that they are valued. We are willing to invest in them as a community and I think registered apprenticeship does this as well. I will kick it to Sarah.

>> SARAH WILSON-SPARROW: Hi am Sarah Wilson-Sparrow. I'm the Vice President of Workforce Development and Community Education at SUNY Schenectady. I am a white female with blonde hair and wearing a blue sweater. What we want to talk about a lot is about the partnerships that make this work happen. We love Dan and we are big fans of Dan. I also did not say that my colleague Lauren Lankau is here, and she will be talking right after. So, the partnerships are with the Department of Labor and the US Department of Labor. So, this is a collaborative effort. It has a lot of different components involved. A lot of what we do is explain the expansion efforts that we are working on across the state to really get more people in these earn and learn models because it works for them, the sponsors and keeps people retained in their professions. We also focus on the employers to make sure that these are paid apprenticeships. You do not want to set somebody up to be involved in something that is not a viable job at the end. It is important that there is demand that backs up the work for these occupations. The funding that we have through the SUNY grant is for employers with registered apprenticeship programs and future and current registered apprenticeships. Applications are submitted to SUNY on behalf of employers. We meet once a week with the Department of Labor and other supporting institutions to approve or tweak an application for approval. The funding is important to understand. If it is a two-year trade it will be a funding cap of \$6000 for the related instruction. It is the part they take at the college and there's also funding for curriculum development. If someone wants to update a course or they need to create a new course, there is funding to assist with that. It is pretty generous funding, and you can use subject matter experts internally or you contract to help you with that work. There are a couple of different ways that you can do an apprenticeship. There is a hybrid competency-based assessment tool. That is another

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funding stream that you can use. You would be paid to create an assessment tool for that. There's also money for pre apprenticeship that is going to lead to an apprenticeship. The goal of those funds is to determine if they have the chops necessary to become an apprentice. That is \$1000 and that is pretty generous funding and pretty flexible funding. There's a lot of different ways you can use the funding and it really gives the employer sponsor to see if they want the person to be an apprentice for them. There is also industry roundtables where you bring in a bunch of different companies and providers that do similar work so you can explain how they can utilize apprenticeship and if it is a good fit for them and the model of their working environment.

>> LAUREN LANKAU: Hi everyone, I am Lauren Lankau. I'm the Assistant Vice President of Workforce Development and Community Ed SUNY Schenectady. I am a white female with brown hair and I am wearing a white shirt. The DSP program SUNY first dive into registered apprenticeship. We knew we wanted to get this right and really spend a lot of time developing curriculum that not only met the needs of the title that New York State had put forth but also met the needs of the employees and ultimately the individual's receiving services at our partner organization. This was not a situation where a bunch of academics were telling individuals what program was right for them. This was a collaborative process where the workforce development side, our faculty, our partners in industry were coming together to figure out how to provide programming that got employees apprentices as far to the education as possible. We ended up settling on developing a certificate program. This is a 25-hour credit program. It is pretty significant and gets them pretty far to an Associate's degree. We do have a Human Services Associates. We were able to use a lot of existing courses within that degree program. There were minor tweaks using feedback from the employer to make those tweaks. We did end up having to create a brand-new course called Psychology of Disabilities. It really met topics within the appendix that we had no curriculum. Sarah mentioned some of the funding resources. SUNY has been very generous in their support of registered apprenticeship. It is a model, and they really believe in it and they backed it up with the finances. We were able to support our faculty in developing new curriculum and added the psychology disability class. Dan mentioned before that the profession is very versatile role and can lead in many directions. We were very committed to providing a pathway for students. They are not just leaving with a certificate program; they are set on a pathway to continuing education if that is what they desire. The 25 hour certificate program does transfer into codependency counseling degree or human services degree, psychology and sociology and liberal arts. There are also several local four year institutions in our area. We have articulation agreements so the idea is we are setting them on a pathway to a bachelors and hopefully a Masters if that is their desire. Dan mentioned under the upper mission model that our apprentices are receiving their journey worker card. In addition to that, they are also receiving a certificate with the SUNY seal of approval on it. They have credits to take with them so they are getting a tremendous amount from this program without having to invest any of their personal money. Without having to use financial aid, without having to use any tuition assistance. We are getting them pretty far through the pathway. Through this work, we have also developed two micro credentials. I don't know if folks in the audience are familiar with micro credentials. It is sampling a

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smaller bite-size piece of a degree or certificate program. They are recognized by SUNY and have to go through a process internally and externally. We designed these two micro credentials to allow for multiple stepping in and stepping out points for students. It can be a challenge to walk in and try to finish an entire certificate program especially when you're trying to balance the needs that you have at home. Your work schedule is not always set so it is really trying to meet students where they are at. And allowing them to walk away with at least something they can do in a smaller amount of time. Then come back to us later when the time is right. None of this is done without a tremendous amount of support for our apprentices. Our average student is about 35-year-old female who is working and has children. That is our typical student. They are not necessarily leaving educational reexperience ready to start college and then in the working world for a while. It can be an intimidating process. We really try to provide the one to one support that they need from start to finish. That is assisting with the application and registering. We do an on-site orientation just for DSP students. We are introducing them to the campus, it is small and intimate. We are having faculty come in, we are doing a tour, we are often taking them to the bookstore to get their IDs and parking passes and maybe purchase their books for the semester. It is a model where they know they have someone if something comes up. They have someone there they can call with questions. We do not distinguish our registered apprenticeship students any differently than any other student on campus. They are registered students and received student IDs and ID numbers. This means they have access to all of the services that we have on campus. Things like tutoring, ADA services, we have a wonderful food pantry, mental health services. They are not different from any other student sitting in the classroom. They are able to use all of those resources to hopefully allow them to be successful in completing the program. SUNY has also recognized that often apprentices need a little additional support to complete. They have included funds to assist with additional barrier removal. It is a small allotment but let's say a student has an issue with the car or they have a laptop that needs to be repaired. These are things that are directly connected to them successfully completing the program. So, if we can step in and assist financially with removing some of those barriers, then in all likelihood they'll stay engaged and they'll be able to complete the program. Here are a few takeaways. This model is really designed to professionalize the DSP title, to recognize just how much these individuals bring our faculty comments all the time that the DSP students enrich her class so much because they have that lived experience and they can take the theory that they are learning in class and apply it to what happened to them that day on the work site. Add value and we're enhancing career and skill development and we're improving employee retention. employee retention students are not necessarily known where this funding is coming from. They see that their employer is investing in them and their sense of loyalty is increasing and they are going to stay to the completion through their education. We tried to make this a model that is replicable and any community college across the state and the nation can adapt this model to their own needs. Partnership is essential to the program's success. and this is just a quote from one of our DSP's "As a DSP I am no stranger to hard work and dedication. With that said, it is a wonderful feeling to know that the company I work for sees potential in my career development, is working hard to support me in return. It's the least we

can do for these wonderful individuals who've dedicated their life to such a difficult and noble profession. With that I will turn it over to the next presenter.

>> JANE CANALE: Good afternoon, everybody. I'm Jane Canale and I am the Director of Human Resources at Liberty ARC. I am a white woman with glasses. I am wearing purple today and I see from my picture that my hair is getting much lighter every time I get it done. A little history on myself, over 40 years I was in charge of the human resources department for Schenectady ARC which provided supports and services to individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in Schenectady County in New York. We are west of Albany the capitol. This past May Schenectady Arc and Montgomery county ARC, known as liberty ARC emerged. I'm the human resources director for liberty ARC. What I'm going to speak about today relates to the experience we have at Schenectady and we are bridging the two teams together as we have merged together. I am thrilled to be on this webinar with Dan and Sarah and Lauren who have truly been our partners and champions through this process. In 2017-2018 ARC, like many other agencies in our field, we were feeling the real pinch of a workforce shortage, looking for ways that we can offer new and exciting opportunities for our employees that would really focus on recruitment and retention. When we boiled it down, we were looking for something that would be a program that was attractive to the emerging workforce. Something that was a program that would strengthen the employees, their skills and their competency in a program that was affordable. As luck would have it, we bonded with our friends at SUNY Schenectady and we were working closely with them to develop a curriculum that Lauren described to professionalize the title and develop a true pathway and credential. We were introduced to Dan Parris who said, why don't you add in an apprenticeship? I was nervous about adding in an apprenticeship because I knew about the trades where once you become a journey worker you get huge raises and all kinds of tools that you're given by companies and those kind of things. We are a private nonprofit and we don't have that ability. We had to think it through differently. By partnering with SUNY Schenectady and the Department of Labor, we were able to build this curriculum to help people take the college courses for free. And to learn more of what would help them in their career. Whether they are going to be a DSP and grow into other opportunities or is a steppingstone to take them somewhere else. They would be with us while they are working on this program. We develop a curriculum that is really exciting because it is more than just that they took a class. They are getting the actual college credit. The actual college credits and the skills and knowledge they are learning or bringing them back to what they can apply in their job. It is a win win of professionalizing the title and also giving the employees a priceless benefit because free tuition is huge. You heard from Dan and you heard from Lauren, you heard from Sarah that partnership is absolutely true. You can't do this alone. All these communities coming together supporting the employees, supporting the cause, supporting the mission of professionalizing our DSPs is the key to the success of that. As of this point, we have merged our agencies together. We are looking to expand it beyond the current participants. We currently have four people who have received their journey worker card. They received the credential and it is very exciting as an employer to watch your employees grow and to watch them achieve those credentials. And watch them grow professionally and to watch the results of their work and how they are supporting

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the individuals that participate in our programs. That to me as a human resources person is just another win-win all the way around. The employees are receiving a wonderful benefit. The education that they are receiving is spectacular. The support that they're receiving from Department of Labor and from the SUNY Schenectady and from the employer is wonderful. The quality of services that they are providing to the individuals that are in our programs is just priceless. It is absolutely a win-win. The other things from an employee perspective that I think are important to remember is that this can be self-paced. Lauren mentioned opportunity for people to jump in and out. People can work through it at their own pace. It is a lot of work to work full-time and to go to school and take those college courses, it is a lot of work. We have had people who felt they can jump right in and take multiple courses at a time and work. They really need to think about that because it is a lot on the individual. Everybody has a life outside of work. We really try to coach people through it to take their time and pace it so they can be successful. The pride in the individuals and the renewed excitement in the employees as they accomplish each step of the way is wonderful to see. We are able to offer raises, and salary increases when they achieve those. It is at different milestones and equally exciting. Setting them up for their future many of the participants had not been to school before had gone to college before and I completed a degree. Because they were not quite sure what they wanted to do. It is scary to go back onto a college campus, but we help them with the partnership of the home team being there to support them. It is very achievable and a great way and another step to professionalize the title of the DSP. On that note, I am going to introduce you to our most recent graduate of the program, a DSP journey worker, James. He is going to tell you his story of participating in the program.

>> JAMES PAPALIOSAS: My name is James identified as he / him. I am white with black hair. This is my journey with the DSP certificate program. Growing up.[AUDIO LOST] Full of starts and stops and many dead ends.The day I enrolled in the DSP Certificate program, my mother cried. She knew how difficult it had been for me, and she was so proud of me for trying again. She also knew what a great opportunity this program was and also how special it was for me to be considered for it. Let me start from the beginning, I first began ARC as a bus monitor 11 years ago and really enjoyed that. After three years, became a direct support professional at the discovery Academy. I assisted young adults to make the next step, college, job moving out or being more independent. I was able to make my own big step and enrolled in a certificate program. This also happened to take place during Covid. More challenges, bumps and dead ends crush my spirit and willpower. I will not tell you I did not get overwhelmed or that I wanted to quit multiple times but the unending support from Arc SUNY Schenectady was vital as my books and computer. For that I am extremely grateful. Recently, I finished the program in my classes. I earned my new title of journeyman and my certificate. With it, I also gained confidence and a newfound appreciation. The studies taught me how to rethink and approach every situation and challenge in my daily experiences. I was able to practice what I preached to my discovery Academy following through with difficult challenges and never giving up. Most importantly, I was able to make my mom and dad proud. Today, I am in employment support specialists working in the high school. I assist graduating students with earning a work readiness credential, readying them

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with job skills for their future and beyond. Not different from the certificate I earned myself. In closing, I would like to encourage anyone interested in nothing but good things that can come from this program. It will absolutely help you guide your career path. 11 years ago, I was sitting on the bus thinking about what the future could bring me. Now if you look around and talking to you from my classroom as an employment specialist take the journey and enjoy the ride and earn your certificate. You can do it. Thank you everybody.

>> SARAH LOIZEAUX: Thank you so much, James. Congratulations on becoming a journey worker. I'm excited that you are related to supporting employment. That is my area of expertise as a DSP. I wish you well and I think you have a long future ahead of you. Thank you to all of the presenters from New York and sharing such a great model for DSP and a great model in general showing how really good things can happen when partners can collaborate and work together. With that said, I am going to introduce you to our next set of presenters. We are going to start with Caroline Ryan, who is the Deputy Director for the Center for Innovation and Partnership at the Administration for Community Living, who's going to talk about the work that they're doing to promote the direct care workforce and apprenticeship. And after she speaks, we're going to hear from Lauren Smith, who is with the Office of Apprenticeship. So Caroline, I will hand it over to you.

>>CAROLINE RYAN: Good afternoon, everyone. As Sarah mentioned, my name is Caroline Ryan. My pronouns are she, her, and I am a middle-aged white woman with blond shoulder length hair. I'm wearing a black top and olive-green suit jacket. I'm not sure that is coming through on the screen. I am very pleased to be here with you all this afternoon after some incredible presentations. And I just really want to thank ODEP and the LEAD Center for including the Administration for Community Living or ACL for short in this presentation today. We can go to the next slide. As we close out this webinar, I have been asked to briefly share some information about the direct care workforce as a strategy center as a potential resource for participants after the call ends. For those of you who may not be familiar with ACL, we are a federal agency in the US Department of Health and Human Services that funds, and supports research, education, and innovation with a mission to ensure that all people, regardless of age, disability, or level of support need, can live and fully participate in their communities. So, a little over two years ago, ACL in collaboration with sister agencies at the Department of Health and Human Services and with our colleagues in the Employment and Training Administration and ODEP at the Department of Labor, we launched the Direct Care Workforce Strategy Center initiative. The strategy center is supporting system change efforts to strengthen the workforce that makes home and community-based services possible, which includes DSPs. The focus of the strategy center is cross system collaboration to address recruitment and retention, training, mentoring and supervision. It aligns perfectly with the partnership and collaboration that we have heard throughout this call. On the next slide, we included the organizations that are a part of this initiative. ACL awarded a five-year grant to the national Council on aging who is collaborating with 11 partner organizations that represent aging, disability, Medicaid, and workforce organizations. The logos of the organizations are on this slide. On the next slide, we have highlights from the past year. Over the past year the strategy center has launched technical

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assistance programs that are supporting 20 state teams. Aging disability Medicaid and workforce agencies together to collectively address the workforce crisis. As we think about DSP specific activities there are 14 states participating in a peer learning collaborative that has been exposed to several strategies to grow and strengthen the DSP workforce. Areas of focus include efforts in D.C. to bring workforce development and vocational rehabilitation funds to launch inclusive DSP apprenticeships. Tailoring recruitment efforts in Ohio and Kansas to identify candidates who are committed to DSP work as a career. Launching DSP surveys in Oregon and Utah for better tailor training credentialing, onboarding and professional development support. And in Maryland, there are tier DSP qualifications and incentivizing enhanced training and professional development through train the trainer and peer mentoring programs. I've included some of the milestones that states receiving technical assistance from the Strategy Center are working on to help advance DSP career development pathways. For the sake of time, I'm only going to highlight two of these examples, but the slides will be available for reference after the webinar is over. Kansas developed a draft business case for investing in DSP career ladder training and managed care paper performance options to support greater investment in DSP credentialing and advancement. New Hampshire is building a business case to expand successful ARPA funded pilots, which include peer mentoring, expanding in person DSP Academy work, incentivizing expanded collaborations between providers and local community colleges, as well as vocational high school programs to provide ADSP certification with wrap around supports. I want to highlight the strategy center that runs a national technical assistance webinar series that is open to the public on a wide variety of topics related to the direct care workforce. Links to webinars are on the slide and the recent topic includes webinar featuring Wisconsin successful marketing campaign to direct care professionals. The next slide includes some information about the Resource Hub on the Direct Care Workforce Strategy Center website. It is intended to be a one stop shop with links to resources from across the government on this topic, as well as a curated library of resources on topics ranging from self-direction to recruitment and retention. With that, I am now going to complete this brief overview of some additional resources that may be helpful to you after this webinar. And I'll turn it over to my colleague Lauren Smith.

>> LAUREN SMITH: Lauren Smith I am joining you today I am a woman with short dirty blonde hair and blue eyes black jacket and a gray shirt. Today, what I would like to do is give you a quick overview of our apprenticeship website. It is a one-stop center for folks trying to get all of their pieces and parts together for a registered apprenticeship program. Give me a moment as I share my screen. I want to bring your attention to National Apprenticeship Week. That is the screen I want to show you. Coming up there will be a lot of different events going on for national apprenticeship week. If you go to our main page and look at this moving dialogue, you will see national apprenticeship week has a section that says, learn more. Feel free to go there to find other events that you learn more about registered apprenticeship. Today, what I really want to share with you is our website. This is a pretty expensive website and you can go down rabbit holes. I'm going to show you the parts that it is going to give – be the most valuable to you. So, I'm going to start over here on the right hand side where it says about us. I'm not going to do this in any particular order. At the top

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of the screen, you will see different portals you can go through. Let's start with, About Us. The reason I started here is because we do have what is known as a bifurcated system. The system is a system that has federal employees as well as state employees. If you look at the map, you are going to see states that are dark blue. For example, Wisconsin is dark blue. Those states are run by state employees. They fall under the same guidelines, same federal regulations that we do in the office of apprenticeship. Anything you do across the country is going to fall into the same regulations. However, states have the right to separate themselves from the federal government to run their own programs and registered apprenticeships happen to be one of those things. If you look at my home state and New Hampshire, it is a light blue. That means when you contact the main office, you're going to be contacting federal employees. With that said, you can imagine that each of the states are going to have different regulations that are state regulations that are going to affect what the federal regulation is. If something is more restrictive in the state, it is going to become the norm. You will find variations among states but we all follow the same pattern. That includes all of the islands in the Pacific, Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico as part of region one. If you're looking to find your stay, you something go down below and click on Illinois for example. What you're going to find is when you click on a particular state, you're going to find the direct contact for your state as well as a phone number and a quick send email. This is the most important person you're going to be working with when you develop your registered apprenticeship programs. It is really important as you start exploring apprenticeship programs to reach out to them first. I want to take you to career seekers, educators and various other portal. Explore apprenticeship is the most valuable link that you can have. You will notice that you can go in and learn to build a program and has different things like create a program. If you want to create something brand-new especially for your program, you can do that. If you want to join an existing program that would do the administrative portions of apprenticeship. If you want to request a new occupation, direct service have been approved. If you want to do something entirely different, you can request a new occupation and send that through our national office. There is launching when you recruit and hire there is guidance about that. And to increase your reach for diverse populations, we have a universal outreach tool. I am going through this very quickly because I want to leave time for questions. They're going to be other things under each of the portals and I am showing you the most important ones. Let me jump over here to resources. You see there is information which is just going to provide information about various things. Fact sheets if you want to use a video to learn more, if you want to learn more about equal opportunity, you can go to information. The initiatives is important to the work that we do in the Office of Apprenticeship. The first thing is the ambassador initiative. The ambassador initiative is where we have selected various programs throughout the country who wish to share their experience. They are going to be able to be available to you to talk to you about what the program is like, what they have done, best practice and challenges they have experienced and how they overcame them. They are the people who tend to speak for us if we are doing some kind of a presentation for example. They have made a commitment to say, yes if you call us we will make an effort to be there to talk to you or the people who are interested in an apprenticeship about registered apprenticeship. That is from a business perspective. What if you want to hear from apprentices? We do have people who have been

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selected who have been through an apprenticeship program. They can share their experiences with you. We call those the trailblazers and we do encourage you to reach out to the person who are running trailblazers in our national office. If you would like to have somebody speak or you would like to contact somebody or have them reach out to you to explain their perspective on what an apprenticeship has done for them and their families and education for example. What things have happened in their employment as a result. There are other things here called tools. These are all things you would learn as you're going through the process of developing your program. I am not going to show you any of the tools for now because that will be very overwhelming for you today. There is one tool that we have that is really valuable. It is called the registered apprenticeship Academy. My friend Greer Sisson worked in Iowa for many, many years as a state director and she's a federal employee, but they decided to become an SAA state, meaning that their state decided to run their own program, which left Greer sort of free and in the wind to do some other job within our organization. This is the job that she has been selected to do. If you want to learn more about registered apprenticeship and a tutorial method, you can go to registered apprenticeship sponsors. Let's go to the sponsors. You can choose a topic that is provided here. Here's one providing reasonable accommodations. There's going to be a video and there's going to be subject matter expert that is going to help you learn more about that particular topic. A lot of people who really like to see and have an auditory understanding of something can be really helpful to you. I encourage you to go to apprenticeship.gov and start at the top menu. Choose the places you would like to go and learn what you would like to learn. We did hear from SUNY today. If SUNY wanted to become involved in registered apprenticeship, they would go to educators. Somebody in the chat or question and answer was asking about, how do we engage the apprentices? It would go through the career seekers section. We do have an opportunity for them to reach out to find a job. We have a job board and we also have the opportunity to find partners. If they were trying to find out who is offering an apprenticeship as a medical assistant, they would type in medical assistance and they would find all the places in their location that are offering that particular program. They can reach out directly to that particular sponsor. One of the biggest misconceptions about the role of the federal government and registered apprenticeship program is that we develop these things. We are not the developers of programs. It is the employer's and sponsors who choose to develop programs for their own purposes and own businesses. Our rule is to facilitate that and support that and to provide resources. We call it technical assistance but we are here to support you with whatever you need. I would like to turn it back to Sarah who is going to lead us through some of the things that we are going to do to close out. I do appreciate your time and I am going to leave my email in the chat room for you so you can reach out to me directly. Thank you all for your attention.

>> SARAH LOIZEAUX: Thank you so much Lauren. That is great information, and it is a comprehensive website. I can hear you talk about it for hours but that would just be me. I want to thank everyone who shared today. Thank you, Caroline. We have so many questions and so many excellent questions by the way in the Q&A. I wish we can answer all of them but we only have a few minutes so I would like to hopefully get to a couple of them if possible. I am trying to find a good one. Somebody was asking about competitive wages. What are the

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wages as a DSP for non-apprentice jobs? Can a DSP apprentice earn a living wage? Does it lead to a living wage?

>> LAUREN SMITH: It is important to hear from some of the other guests. The wage is not something we established that the federal government, so we recommend them that they establish their competitive wage based on the location and based on what they are able to do. Clearly if you're going to be competitive with other people in your area there is ways to look up what the competitive wage is. When we are talking about progressive wages, the apprentice will actually make the final wage when they are fully qualified. That will equal approximately somebody walking off of the street who has been trained elsewhere and has the same amount of experience their way should be competitive with other apprentices. I noticed that Brian was asking a little bit of a different question about competitiveness. I'm not quite sure that I called that because I was trying to stay up with the show as well and some of the others. I'm going to turn it over to somebody from New York who can answer that question about how they decided their wages.

>> JANE CANALE: As we built the program, we built in steps of when they would get increases. It was a total of an additional dollar per hour to complete the whole thing. Remember that not only were the employees giving the wage increase but they also are getting up to \$6000 of money to pay for the college credits. Which is a huge contribution towards their overall input. They wouldn't have paid for that tuition otherwise. I hope that answers your question. When you develop the program there are steps that you will build into it.

>> SARAH LOIZEAUX: We are right at 3:30 p.m. I would like to thank all of our presenters here today and everyone who joined us. I hope you guys got as much out of this that I did. If you have more questions or are interested in this, feel free to contact us again. The recording and PowerPoint will be available within 10 business days on the LEAD Center website. Please visit our website. You can explore initiatives and data, and I highly encourage you to check that out. We are on social media. Tomorrow if you can't get enough of the direct care workforce there will be another webinar happening tomorrow at 1:00 PM Eastern time. I think somebody is going to put the link in the chat. So, the organization SEEK is going to present on building DSP career pathways and retention strategies. If you can't get enough and you want to learn more, I highly encourage you to go there as well. Sign up for updates at LEAD Center. We are on social media once again and want to thank all of you truly for joining us today. I wish you all a great wonderful rest of your day. Thank you.