Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities to Meet July 13-14, 2015 in Washington, D.C.

The Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities (the Committee) will hold its fourth meeting of the year on July 13-14, 2015 in Washington, D.C. The meeting is open to the public on July 13 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EDT, and on July 14 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. EDT, and will take place at the U.S. Access Board, 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20004.

During the meeting, the four subcommittees (The Transition to Careers Subcommittee, the Complexity and Needs in Delivering Competitive Integrated Employment Subcommittee, the Marketplace Dynamics Subcommittee, and the Building State and Local Capacity Subcommittee) will report out on their work on draft chapters for the interim report. The Committee will also hear expert testimony that will address issues with provider transformation to Competitive
Integrated Employment, as well as an overview of State policy reform through the Employment First initiative. In addition, the Committee will acknowledge the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its connection to competitive integrated employment. The Committee will also hear from a panel of providers about their experiences with sheltered workshops under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

There will be a public comment period on July 13 from 2:15 to 3:00 p.m. EDT. Organizations or members of the public that wish to submit a written statement must do so by July 2, 2015. For instructions on submitting comments, visit the Federal Register Notice website.

LEAD Center staff regularly attends the meetings to monitor progress and work with members of the Advisory Committee. Ari Ne'eman, LEAD Center's Policy Co-chair, and President and Co-founder of Autistic Self Advocacy Network, was recently appointed to the Advisory Committee; former LEAD Project Director, Karen McCulloh, is also a member of the Committee.

We encourage you to visit the Committee's webpage often for the latest information and updates regarding its ongoing work, including agendas and how to submit information to the Advisory Committee.

LEAD Center Presentations Support the 2015 National APSE Annual Conference

For the first time, the LEAD Center participated in the National Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 23-25, by providing two presentations on strategies to improve the employment and economic advancement of individuals across the spectrum of disability. In addition, the LEAD Center sponsored an exhibit booth at the conference to provide information and resources for enhancing integrated employment and expanding economic advancement. The conference drew more than 1,000 attendees from around the United States and globally, including employers, vocational rehabilitation counselors, developmental disabilities and mental health state agency employees, community employment providers, university faculty and students, researchers, school transition staff, and people with disabilities and their families. Attendees who participated in the sessions reported the information they received from LEAD staff about WIOA from a disability perspective was compelling and timely. LEAD presentations included:

**Successful Employment via WIOA & Local American Job Centers** - In this session, participants learned about the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) from a disability perspective and the doors it can open for people with disabilities. LEAD presenters, Rebecca Salon and Elizabeth Jennings, discussed how best to partner with and access American Job Centers' (AJCs) supports and services that are available to people with disabilities. They also shared action steps and the role that participants can play in WIOA implementation and the creation of their State's Unified State Plan.

**APSE TALK: My American Dream: Each Individual's Right to Earn Money and Save**
Money - Many people with disabilities and the people who support them believe that they should not work full-time and that their dreams should be limited by the constraints of current systems. In this session, attendees learned about the possibilities for people with disabilities to become economically self-sufficient and the importance of identifying and pursuing their individual American Dream. They also explored the importance of enabling one's dream to become a catalyst to setting financial goals, engaging in benefits planning and pursuing employment, all critical to living full and self-determined lives.

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LEAD Presents at 2015 NAWDP Conference

LEAD Center Assistant Project Director, Elizabeth Jennings, presented at the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals' (NAWDP) 2015 Annual Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, May 4th through the 6th. LEAD Center was invited to conduct two workshops on improving employment opportunities and services for people with disabilities.

The first session, Successfully Serving Job Seekers with Disabilities: the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) from a Disability Perspective, covered WIOA provisions related to serving youth and adults with disabilities within the workforce development and vocational rehabilitation (VR) systems. This interactive session reviewed the provisions in WIOA that are applicable to serving youth and adults with disabilities within workforce development and vocational rehabilitation systems. The session included information about programmatic and physical accessibility strategies, support for complying with Section 188 Equal Opportunity requirements, suggestions for partnerships and uses of assistive technology to support the attainment of employment outcomes for job seekers with disabilities. Participants were provided with resources from the LEAD Center and its partners to support them in better serving youth and adults with disabilities and in supporting employers in meeting their hiring needs, diversity goals and Section 503 Requirements.

The second session, Opening Doors: Creating an Accessible Welcoming Environment for Jobs Seekers with Disabilities, equipped participants with best practices and strategies to better serve and accommodate the needs of job seekers with disabilities. This session provided answers to questions on how to best support a job seeker with a disability, how to design intake, assessment and other programmatic approaches that will be accessible to people with a range of disabilities, and how best to offer assistance to a person with a disability. An overview of practices was also provided that help to create a welcoming environment for job seekers with disabilities, including the resources available to assist in serving them, a review of disability etiquette, an overview of universal design, uses for assistive technology, and practical information to use and share with colleagues.

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LEAD Center Focuses on Youth in its "WIOA from a Disability Perspective" Webinar Series

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) places expanded emphasis on funding activities for youth, including in-school youth, out-of-school youth and youth with disabilities. WIOA also amends the Rehabilitation Act requiring vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies have formal agreements with a variety of state agency partners, including a requirement regarding collaboration with local education agencies to improve coordination of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities.

To better understand the reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and subsequent regulations, the LEAD Center created a four-part webinar series titled "WIOA from a Disability Perspective." The third webinar in the series, Understanding Changes Regarding Youth Services, took place on Wednesday, June 24th. The webinar discussed cross-system collaboration and WIOA opportunities to support career counseling, skills training, job exploration, leadership development, and financial literacy education for youth with and without disabilities. This webinar is archived and available at the LEAD Center website.

The final webinar in the series, Section 188, the Nondiscrimination Provisions of WIOA - Part 4 of 4, will be held on Thursday, September 24th from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. EDT. This webinar will review the Equal Opportunity (EO) provisions of WIOA and provide examples of how AJCs are complying with these requirements, and how state EO officers are supporting compliance at the local level.

Please register for this webinar to learn more about the responsibility of these programs to be accessible to job seekers with disabilities and how you can hold them accountable. Space is limited.

To access the archives of the previous webinars in this series, please use the following links:

- Part One: WIOA from a Disability Perspective: An Overview
- Part Two: WIOA and the Unified State Planning Process
- Part Three: Understanding Changes Regarding Youth Services

Promoting Employment Outcomes through Partnerships and Self-Guided Discovery

The LEAD Center has been promoting the use of Discovery and Customized Employment (CE) through partnerships with American Job Centers (AJCs) for the past two years. As part of this CE Initiative, LEAD Center will be offering training and on-site technical assistance on Self-Guided Discovery (SGD) to teams at three or four sites, to support AJC staff and their partners as they learn and utilize SGD as an alternative assessment, to be used with any job seekers who have significant barriers to employment.
Self-Guided Discovery allows a job seeker with a disability and their support network (e.g., staff, family members, etc.) to identify their own ideal conditions for employment and develop a career plan of their own, with the help of a facilitator or coach at key points in the process. This Discovery process includes Discovering Personal Genius, an employment planning tool and model for individual employment evaluation that results in a comprehensive vocational profile, which can be used to develop a customized employment plan.

CE strategies, including Discovery, have been used by job seekers, family members, service providers, AJCs and other partners to promote a strength-based approach to employment for job seekers with barriers to employment. CE has been particularly effective in supporting people with more significant disabilities or complex barriers to employment in achieving competitive integrated employment outcomes.

Training for the site teams will begin early in August. Following the training, each team will receive technical assistance from LEAD Center staff and CE Subject Matter Experts as they work to implement Self-Guided Discovery with job seekers with disabilities in the Workforce System; people with previous careers who recently acquired a disability; Veterans with service-related disabilities; transition age youth with strong family and community ties; and others who are motivated to work. The application deadline has past. For information about this initiative, view the webinar archive at the LEAD Center website.

### Guided Group Discovery Pilots in Maryland and Kansas

This spring, LEAD Center staff and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) piloted Guided Group Discovery (GGD) sessions with job seekers in Topeka, KS and Rockville, MD, and collaboratively with area American Job Centers (AJC) and vocational rehabilitation (VR) staff. This project introduced Group Discovery, one of several formats for Discovery, as an aspect of Customized Employment implementation within the public workforce centers, by jointly training facilitators from AJCs and VR in Guided Group Discovery. For this initiative, job seekers with disabilities engaged in a series of four Guided Group Discovery sessions, resulting in a Job Search Blueprint to assist them in identifying and connecting with jobs that are a good match for their skills and interests, and that contribute to an employer's bottom line and successful operation. Based on feedback from job seekers and facilitators, LEAD staff are finalizing (i) a Group Discovery Participant Workbook that provides clear guidance for job seekers and the people who support them, and that focuses the person and their team on job development and career exploration from the beginning; (ii) a comprehensive Guided Group Discovery PowerPoint and training guidance, designed to streamline the Group Discovery process and introduce job development discussions throughout; (iii) a Blueprint for Employment Worksheet that focuses job seekers, their staff and support network on creating a job search plan; and (iv) a Curriculum Overview for the Guided Group Discovery Pilot to highlight the objectives, exercises and flow of the
streamlined curriculum, and the Job Search Blueprint.

Once finalized, the workbook and Guided Group Discovery training materials will be posted in the Employment section on LEAD Center's website.

LEAD Center Presentation on Knowledge Translation

LEAD Center Project Director, Rebecca Salon, presented a session on Knowledge Translation to staff from more than 20 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) at the 2015 UCEDD Leadership Institute at the University of Delaware. The Leadership Institute, co-sponsored by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) and the National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities, brought together UCEDD staff to focus on improving their outcomes and collaborations as they translate research to practice and work to create models and demonstrations with community partners.

LEAD Center coordinates a Knowledge Translation (KT) Consortium. The KT Consortium brings together federally-funded Training and Technical Assistance Centers that address different aspects of employment, career readiness and development, transition and accessibility for youth and adults with disabilities. Salon's presentation focused not only on the work of the KT Consortium, but also on strategies to improve translation of research to practice through the use of proven adult learning approaches, with implications for stakeholder engagement, partnership development and approaches to broaden the adoption and replication of promising practices.

Information about the KT Consortium can be found on the LEAD Center's KT Consortium page.

Frequently Asked Questions: Using Customized Employment's Discovery and Group Discovery Models to Promote Job Seeker Success in American Job Centers

The LEAD Center recently published a new resource, "Frequently Asked Questions: Using Customized Employment's Discovery and Group Discovery Models to Promote Job Seeker Success in American Job Centers." Customized Employment offers an approach to job development and placement that benefits both the job seeker and employer. Its signature strategy, Discovery, offers an approach for job seekers with barriers to employment that is consistent with some of the most widely accepted human resource strategies for successful career development. Customized Employment and Discovery are not necessarily appropriate or desirable for all American Job Center (AJC) job seekers with disabilities or other barriers to employment. However, these strategies provide additional flexible options and choices - both for job seekers and AJC staff - as an alternative or supplement to more traditional approaches for vocational assessment and job development. To learn more about how AJCs and their partners can effectively implement Customized Employment and Discovery, take a moment
Marie Parker wears many hats. Ms. Parker, a Subject Matter Expert working with LEAD Center through TransCen, Inc., is the Program Manager and County Liaison for the Montgomery County Customized Employment Public Intern Project (MCPIP), in partnership with the Montgomery County (MD) Government and MontgomeryWorks, Montgomery County's American Job Center. As the County Liaison for MCPIP, Ms. Parker identifies and creates part-time positions in County government based on a department's need. She then recruits qualified individuals with significant disabilities for the position, based on their interests, skills and competencies, ensuring that any necessary supports are in place. Ms. Parker also oversees the efforts for a local Workforce Investment Act (WIA) In-School Youth with Disabilities Project (YWD), assisting youth in their last year of school to find employment opportunities based on their interests, skills and abilities. In the same vein, Ms. Parker also manages a Summer Youth Employment Project (SYE) in partnership with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), the Maryland's vocational rehabilitation agency. Through this project, referred youth with significant disabilities participate in a six week paid internship at a local business with workforce needs that match the skills, interests and abilities of the youth. Youth receive on-site job coaching and follow up services. Her collaboration with DORS continued through her work as a co-facilitator for a Guided Group Discovery pilot project at MontgomeryWorks. Participants of the project were guided through a curriculum focused on Discovery, with the goal of assisting and teaching job seekers a different way to generate an individualized career plan as they seek employment.

"It's important to know yourself before you get the job you want," Ms. Parker said. "The Guided Group Discovery pilot project was valuable for individuals with disabilities because it connected them to a support network, gave them more confidence to not only find a job, but the right job for them -- and to be able to find it on their own."

Ms. Parker was a key staff member in the implementation of the Maryland Customized Employment Partnership, a project recognized nationally for its leading edge approach to creating customized employment opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities through collaboration with employment service entities. Her expertise includes working with people who have a wide variety of disabilities, as well as other significant barriers to employment. Ms. Parker also facilitates workshops and training sessions locally, nationally and internationally, for disability employment service practitioners who assist job seekers with disabilities. She is a graduate of Hampton University and the Arizona School of Professional
Psychology, with Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Master's degree in Sport-Exercise Psychology, with an emphasis on counseling and career transition.

**LEAD PARTNERS TransCen, Inc.**

TransCen, Inc. is a national nonprofit organization, founded in 1986, that develops creative and innovative projects for school to work transition, education systems change and employment for people with disabilities. TransCen is dedicated to improving career development and community participation of all people with disabilities, and operates in partnership with local employment service programs, schools, universities, and government systems. Since its inception, TransCen's staff has created more than 90 local, state, and national programs; helped over 20,000 youth, adults and veterans become employed; trained over 126,450 individuals on employment-related topics; received 22 awards; authored more than 100 publications; and conducted business in 50 states and 10 countries. TransCen's work represents the intersection of grassroots implementation with national policy and legislative initiatives.

In addition, through its principals, TransCen offers training and technical assistance, and conducts research on special education, disability employment, career and workforce development, customized employment and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The organization is affiliated with a broad range of national career development and employment initiatives, including the design and coordination of career preparation programs for youth and adults with disabilities which can be implemented on a local and national level. TransCen's chief areas of emphasis are: Transition Initiatives, Career & Employment Partnerships, Training and Evaluation & Research.

**Important New Resources**

- Summary Description of Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (State Vocational Rehabilitation Program) Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
- The Journey to Life After High School: A Road Map for Parents of Children with Special Needs
- Building Financial Capability: A Planning Guide for Integrated Services
Supporting Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Their Communities

FAQs: Using Customized Employment's Discovery and Group Discovery Models to Promote Job Seeker Success in American Job Centers

Emerging Practices in the High Performing States Transition Model

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