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>> Hello everyone. And welcome to the Strategic Partnerships to Create Inclusive Career Pathways webinar. My name is Dina Klimkina from The Council of State Governments. This webinar is presented in partnership with the Office of Disability Employment Policy, the LEAD Center, Cornell University Institute on Employment and Disability, Social Policy Research Associates, the National Disability Institute, and the University of Massachusetts Medical School. We are thrilled you are here.

As we get started, I'd like to draw your attention to a few housekeeping items. To follow along with captioning, open the captioning Web page in the new browser. You can click the link posted in the chat box and the link is also displayed on the screen. Make sure to click back to the webinar browser and position the window to sit directly above the captioning. If you have questions, submit them through the questions panel and we will save time at the end for Q and A. These slides are also available in an accessible PDF format. It is available on the handouts section of the webinar window. Now let's get started.

So, to kick off our day today we would like to welcome the Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the U.S. Department of Labor, Jennifer Sheehy. Jennifer spent ten years the U.S. Department of Education in a variety of incredibly impressive leadership roles. She came to the Department of Education from the presidential task force on employment of adults with disabilities where she was a senior policy advisor and served as associate director in the White House Domestic Policy Council. Before then, she was a vice president of national organization on disability and director of CEO

Council. Welcome Deputy Assistant Secretary Sheehy.

>> JENNIFER SHEEHY: Hello. Thank you so much Dina and I'm super excited to be joining you all today. I want to thank all of the partners of both of our recently launched Policy Development Centers who worked together to put this webinar on for our customers of the workforce systems. And we are a government agency that has many customers that the workforce system partners and all of the service providers and agencies that make our American job centers work well. They are so important to us and to employment for people with disabilities. Thank you for participating in this webinar today. If you don't know, ODEP is the only nonregulatory federal agency that develops policy strategies and works with government of all levels and the private sector and federal sector on employment success for people with disabilities.

It is exciting to know that these two new Policy Development Centers that were just launched will build on our previous work and today you will hear about some of that work and the next steps for taking that to a goal that will help other people with disabilities find employment in the most streamlined effective and efficient way but it has to work for you. And one of the reasons that we are always looking for input from you is because we only take on initiatives that our customers tell us are relevant. So I think it is important if you like what you hear today or if you have a comment, questions or ideas for us, please reach out and we will use that information to tailor our technical assistance and our policy research in order to meet your needs. So, without further ado, I'm going to turn it over to one of our long term friends and partners Rebecca Salon. Rebecca.

>> REBECCA SALON: Thank you so much, Jennifer. This is Rebecca Salon with the LEAD Center. We wanted to tell you a little bit about the objectives for our session today. So today we are going to talk about the two ODEP funded Policy Development Centers that Jennifer referred to. One is the LEAD WIOA Policy Development Center, and the other is the Youth Policy Development Center. We are going to explore possibilities for strategic partnerships and systems coordination that can lead to improved employment and career outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities. We are going to provide you with links to resources related to strategic partnerships, including an updated Guideposts for Success framework, an Inclusive Career Pathways Roadmap, and more. Next.

The LEAD Center's work focuses on promoting innovation in policy, employment and economic advancement to support individual and systems level change for all people with disabilities. The LEAD Center provides policy research and recommendations, training and technical assistance, as well as demonstration projects designed to break down silos in existing systems, processes, and practices, and to foster a wider understanding, adoption, and integration of next generation employment practices in both the public and private sectors.

Next. So with funding from ODEP, the LEAD Center, which is also called the National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities, is continuing its work to promote equal opportunity within the broader workforce system for youth and adults with disabilities, to advance the development of inclusive career pathways using an interactive roadmap on the LEAD Center website; to support economic advancement and financial literacy for youth and adults with

disabilities and provide up-to-date data to the field on employment and related outcomes for people with disabilities.

Next.

>> The other program hosting this webinar is ODEP Youth Policy Development Center. It is a collaboration ODEP and The Council of State Governments and Cornell University and the University of Massachusetts medical school. The Center works to improve employment outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities by helping states build capacity in their youth service delivery and workforce system. In that vein we conduct research on new and existing innovative policy and practice approaches to improving transition and employment related outcomes and to develop strategic partnerships between national state and local workforce systems and share best practices among key stakeholders. We also help state identify new opportunities to expand career pathways, work-based learning, strategic partnerships, systems coordination, and professional development for youth and young adults.

>> LAURA ARON: Hi. I'm Laura Aron with Social Policy Research Associates and the LEAD Center. The LEAD and Youth Policy Development Centers partnered to bring you this webinar today as our missions overlap. We both work to help the field build better systems coordination by forging strategic partnership that can lead to improved employment and career outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities. And what better way to focus on this goal than to discuss career pathways!

Career pathways is a formalized system among key partners in education and workforce in partnership with employers. It maps a sequence of industry recognized credentials that can be accumulated over time that move an individual along a career pathway or up a career ladder. This is an evidence-based strategy and it is key to implementing WIOA, Perkins 5 and the Higher Education Act in a way that works for everyone, especially those with less formal education and/or challenges to employment.

This approach improves educational and skills attainment, increases employment outcomes with family sustaining wages and prepares people for in-demand careers.

Next. Career pathways usually begin in middle school as career exploration, although it can start earlier. Adult basic education and English as a second language also provide opportunities for career exploration and are best integrated within certificate or diploma programs and not as stand-alone programs. Post-secondary certificates should stack to enable advancement within a field.

Key attributes of career pathways for career readiness and advancement include industry aligned credentials, secondary and post-secondary credential attainment, multiple entry and exit points to employment and education, and accelerated path to achieving credentials.

Next. Let's look at a couple of examples. Here is a snapshot of what a nursing career pathway can look like. This is a pathway example from the non-profit Cook Inlet Tribal Council. The first short-term credential is a personal care assistant. After receiving this credential, a participant can become gainfully employed. If they choose to upgrade their skills, they can complete a certified nursing assistant certificate, which builds off the previous credential. Next is licensed practical nurse and after that a registered nurse associate's degree. Completion of each step along the pathway will allow the student to seek gainful employment after each

credential. How do you make these more inclusive? Next.

>> We wanted to provide you with an example of a strategy that local areas can use to build a team of partners to develop inclusive career pathways. The example we are giving is of an integrated resource team. This is a proven practice to provide an increased level of support to a job seeker with multiple challenges to employment. Integrated Resource Teams were created to address the resource challenges in programs by increasing service collaboration, and the alignment of resources for these individuals. So an IRT is made up of representatives from various community organizations and partner agencies that meet specific employment needs for a job seeker. Just as each job seeker has a unique set of goals, each IRT is comprised of different service systems. A team may consist of members from a wide variety of community programs and service providers and those might include the workforce system, American Job Centers, independent living centers, programs for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, programs for people who are blind, work incentive coordinators, supported employment service providers, re-entry programs, veterans programs, people in a person's support network. It could be very specific to the person in their situation.

Participating in an IRT has been identified as beneficial for the customer as it provides the opportunity to address multiple challenges to employment simultaneously and build a richly resourced plan that can lead to the attainment of a living wage employment. For the participating system, an IRT offers the opportunity to jointly achieve more substantial employment outcomes for shared customers with shared expertise and resources leading to outcomes that all systems can count while reducing the amount of staff time needed to effectively implement service plans.

Next. So let's take a look at an example of how strategic partnerships help create inclusive career pathways for program participants and the systems that support them. This is an example of how an integrated resource team was able to leverage resources and funds to enable a job seeker to reach her career goals. Nancy is an SSDI beneficiary with a mental health diagnosis. She regulates her disability with medication and monthly counseling sessions through services from the community mental health provider agency. She was referred to the American Job Center's disability resource coordinator by a behavioral health staff member for assistance in figuring out funding and advising them on her public benefits. Nancy had some work history in retail and customer service but was looking to pursue a career in the health care field. Her long-term goal was to become an LPN. So the disability resource coordinator coordinated an integrated resource team with the behavioral health agency, vocational rehabilitation counselor and Nancy. They created an individual employment plan to enroll her into the CNA program at the community college, for which there were classes held at a health care center. Once completed, Nancy would work for a year as a CNA and enroll in the licensed practical nurse program at a career pathways partner organization. The partners played the following roles in helping Nancy overcome her barriers. The AJC assisted with training dollars, uniform vouchers and benefits advisement; the vocational counselor assisted with case management and job readiness skills. The behavioral health program assisted with registering with a career center and completing the scholarship application and the community college coordinator assisted

with registering for classes and placement testing.

Nancy was accepted in to the CNA training class and completed the program with an 85 grade point average and perfect attendance and did such a great job during her training that her nursing instructor referred her to the director of nursing for a possible job interview at the health care center where she started. She was able to secure an interview and was offered a full-time job as a CNA at a more than living wage. Next.

>> Career pathways can be built in many fields and one of the keys to building career pathways for people with less formal education and challenges to securing employment are *short-term* stackable credentials. Shorter term credentials are still aligned with industry's needs, but they break down traditional associate's and bachelor's degrees into multiple certificates. I wanted to give you one more example of this kind of stackable credential pathway. Here is an example from Central Oregon Community College in the health information technology field. Five certificates stack, each offering college credit. Medical insurance certificate, medical office specialist certificate, medical billing certificate, medical coding, ultimately leading to registered health information technician. With the completion of these short-term credentials new professional options can be unlocked.

Next. Career pathways systems comprise six key elements. They seek to: build cross agency partnerships with clarified roles; identify sector or industry and engage employers; design education and training programs; identify funding needs and sources; align policies and programs; and measure system change and performance. And, as you know, today our focus is on that first element, building cross agency and other strategic partnerships.

Next. So Rebecca has already mentioned many of the key partners that helped Nancy earn her certified nursing assistant certificate and go on to get a licensed practical nurse degree. But when we look at these service providers a little more generally, we can see that we know the employer is really a key partner. We not only need to know what types of jobs are and will be available, we also need to better understand the specific technical skills they desire for their workforce. And, of course, community colleges and adult basic education schools provide key career and technical education and social service and community service providers provide wraparound services needed to help retain participants in education and employment.

All the program partners provide key training and expertise and general workforce entities, including your American job center, are key partners in developing these cross-agency partnerships for a career pathways system.

Next. Many partners can leverage their funding sources to build these career pathways systems. And we have mentioned so many programs but, you know, again think about these as more like funding streams. So you have the WIOA funding streams: Title I, II, II and IV programs, programs through WIOA. Anything from adult dislocated worker programs. There is the Indian and Native American Program and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program. Adult Education and Family Leave Act grant recipients, which often include school districts, community and technical colleges, libraries, and community-based organizations that provide adult basic education. Certainly Wagner Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, and TANF.

So the list goes on and on. And so when you are thinking about building a career pathway or expanding a career pathway at your local level, you want to think about who can we bring to the table to build a career pathway that is truly inclusive. Next.

>> We would like to discuss two additional yet critical partners that are seldom considered- policy makers and families
Policy makers are members of a government organization who are responsible for making new rules and laws, whether legislative or executive branch. Policy makers are critical stakeholders for several reasons. First, they have the ability to bring issues to the public forefront. For example, Representative Dan Miller of Pennsylvania supports his legislative efforts by hosting an annual free disability and mental health summit, a billboard for the event is located on the right side of the screen. Attended by hundreds of individuals, the event highlights critical issues facing individuals with disabilities including in career pathways. The event also bridges gaps between practitioners, legislators, and those who use services- allowing for all partners to interact with one another. The event on March 3rd hosted nearly 400 students and young adults with disabilities, who were able to speak with their local legislators, and express their goals and needs. These policymakers were then inspired to take action and change policy.

Policymakers also have the ability to appropriate funding to career participation programs. And the ability and opportunity to mandate programming. For example, Pennsylvania House Bill 400 provided for Work Experience for High School Students with Disabilities Act. Which required the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to provides pre-employment transportation services for students with disabilities and facilitates the process of job and career development between local education agencies and public and private employers to ensure the successful transition of high school students with disabilities into competitive integrated employment. The bill also authorizes arrangement for work-based learning experiences. Other programs have provided for similar supports in the creation and development of new initiatives. And finally, policymakers also have the ability to ensure that policies are inclusive of people with disabilities and developed with universal design principles. For example, California Assembly Bill 1684 requires the Department of Education develop and implement statewide professional learning infrastructure to provide evidence-based support to educators in teaching, reading and literacy across grades. The bill also provides support for tiered interventions, universal design for learning, and early intervention and inclusion for pupils with disabilities. As you can see while policymakers are not traditionally included in cross agency partnerships, they are vital stakeholders with the ability to make a fundamental difference whether through financial support or development of new career pathways as mandated by law.

Another critical stakeholder when developing career pathways family members can play key role to an individual success in the workforce through their support guidance and advocacy. Family here is defined broadly as adults and children related biologically emotional or legally including single parents, blended families, unrelated individuals living cooperatively, and partnered couples who live with biological, adopted, and foster children. For youth in particular, parents can play an

important role in career development. According to research commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy students whose parents are involved in their career exploration and planning are more actively engaged in school, more open to change, and resilient when facing challenges. When working with families, policymakers and practitioners should embrace multi-layered approach to service delivery that supports family members to set high expectations to be involved in their child's education to build strong advocacy skills and to create a vision for a positive future for the child. Families who learn and begin the career development process with their youth early will be better prepared to support them in choosing and building a bright future. For example, in the case of transition age youth looking to engage in career pathway systems families can work with the school and vocational rehabilitation agencies, so that students are not only developing plans during school, but also receiving the supports they need at home. Parents can also make requests to IEP team leads that vocational recreational counselor takes part in the IEP meeting. Parent and individuals can work with the VR agencies community rehab providers, community employment programs among other organizations to coordinate services. Parents can also lead in developing advocacy system for their youth and teaching children to voice their needs to their legislators.

There are also a number of great tools that can help ensure family engagement. For example, many states have developed guides for working with families and youth. So, for example, Minnesota has developed a guide to preparing your child with a disability for life beyond high school. This resource is created to make transition planning easier for families and help them understand how to best work with other stakeholders to ensure their child's success.

>> Career pathways programs are available in every state and community and should work for everyone. However, to effectively serve people with disabilities, additional considerations and resources may need to be brought to bear. So the LEAD Center created the online tool that you see on the screen that contains the questions that you can ask yourself in a number of different areas, actions you can take, and it provides links to resources and examples of best practices to help systems leaders establish and support the development of inclusive career pathways. If you go to the LEAD Center website, which is leadcenter.org, there is a link that says road to inclusive career pathways and you will be taken to this page. You will see the destination to the far right is employment and economic self-sufficiency, which is the goal of career pathways programs. And we clustered information in five general areas. One is capacity building. One is accessibility. Partnerships, which is the focus of our webinar today. Youth, and employer connections. So if you go to any of those destinations, that is traffic circles on the roadmap, you will again be able to see questions you could ask yourself or your team, actions you can take, and so on. We wanted to give you an example of what you will see.

Next. So if you click on partnerships and then look under cross system activities from the dropdown menu, it gives you possible action steps that you can take. Things like learn about the diverse partners that convene regional work groups in your area, find what without roles those people play on cross partnership committees. Consider joining one of those

groups or forming a work group of your own. Learn if and how AJCs proactively address the funder of last resort.

Next. Some additional activities are to research how AJCs practice active resource and funding coordination so that you know what the opportunities are. Learn about the key elements of Integrated Resource Teams, which we discussed earlier, as a critical strategy for serving people with disabilities. Learn if the American Job Center leadership and partners support co-enrollment of individuals with multiple resource needs so you can leverage resources from each other's systems, and you can conduct resource mapping from your state or local workforce regions. If you are on the site below these activities will be listed opportunities for learning more about best practices that different places in the country are doing and resources that support those best practices.

Next.

>> A great example of strategic partnerships is Kentucky's public sector apprenticeship program. In order to develop successful apprenticeship programs, numerous state agencies and employee has to work together. One example is the education and workforce cabinet had to coordinate with the personnel cabinet to develop the positions within the state system. Leaders across the state from apprenticeship coordinators to local technical education teachers advocated for numerous offices to participate. Officials from the personnel, labor and education workforce cabinets led discussions with state and local government staff to make the case for apprenticeships in their offices. Over four apprenticeship programs with numerous apprentices were developed and successfully launched to meet the unique needs of each entity. You learn more about Kentucky's public sector apprenticeship program in a report published by the Urban Institute at the [link](#) on the slide.

>> Next we are going to share some resources from the two Centers

>> So some additional resources that are available through links in the slide deck and these also are in the inclusive career pathways roadmap, are resources about doing [outreach and recruitment](#) that is more effective in interacting and serving people with disabilities, [partnerships to support education training and employment](#), [legislation relative to individuals](#), [relevant to individuals with disabilities](#), so that you would be able to find information within the resources in those areas.

There also are resources on [guided group discovery and self-guided discovery](#). The LEAD center developed these resources as part of its customized employment initiative. So that there are [guided group discovery guides](#) for general audiences as well as ones that are specific to youth and to veterans. There are [self-guided discovery toolkits and manuals](#) that people would be able to access. So, you have links to those there that are downloadable. Inclusive career pathways desktop guide that provides information and resources to support inclusive programs and services and it includes some of our favorite resources, the ones that we think are very useful for people to use. And there are links to the career pathways toolkit which is on workforce GPS an enhanced guide workbook for systems development that provides wonderful guidance and resources for how systems can better collaborate.

And also, on workforce GPS. In their disability and employment section on the disability employment landing page there are links to

information and resources to assist with the understanding and implementation of Integrated Resource Teams involving strategies for coordinating services and leveraging funding in order to meet the needs of an individual job seeker with a disability. We provide you here with a [link](#) directly to more information on Integrated Resource Teams but there is which resources in the disability and employment space on workforce GPS that we encourage you to check out.

>> The Youth Policy Development Center is in process of developing new resources expanding from the Guideposts for Success. The Guideposts for Success was created by the National Collaborative on Workforce Development Youth to target three groups. It targeted youth and families, state level policy makers, and administrators and local policymakers with focus on five key areas. Those areas included school preparation, career preparation, connecting activities, youth development and leadership, and family involvement.

The Youth Policy Development Centers expanded resources will include several new tools. One is roadmap for youth and families setting the benchmark, another is a short brief for legislators and policymakers that will highlight the key elements to consider for youth transitions policy as well as expanded version for legislators and policymakers highlighting key elements to consider while providing a more in-depth look in to each guidepost and there will be the framework for the future for provider organizations and local level systems to provide a consistent structure to design and implement youth serving programs.

Finally, I wanted to share information on how to connect with the centers. So, you can find all of that information on this slide. We would love to speak with you and address any needs or concerns. Beyond that I want to hand it off to Chris Button and Kirk Lew from ODEP to close us out. We will be taking some questions.

>> Thank you so much. Thank you to everyone who has been a speaker today from our two centers, our two partners and thank you to everyone who has been on the webinar listening in to hear what these two great groups of professionals and leaders are doing as they partner with ODEP through their centers to try to open up the world of employment of integrated employment for youth and adults with disabilities. I am more energized than ever to be working on these areas. I know that for the WIOA Policy Development Center that lead development center is leading SPRA and NDI and with the Youth Policy Development Center and their partners that the work scopes are rich and deep and that we will be updating all of our partners across the country through a range of different ways including webinars and including various resources and materials that will be developed and released as the research is implemented and pilots are implemented and analyzed and we identify information that will be of use to both of you across the country in whatever role you have. If you also tried to assist in expanding employment for youth and adults with disability. Thank you very much to everyone. Kirk I'm going to throw it over to you for a minute to say a few words.

>> Thank you, Chris. And thank you for those words. As you guys can see how important it is to ODEP that we think about young people, young people in general, young people with disabilities and a comprehensive and wholistic manner and we expect that within ODEP, within our partners throughout our federal agencies, nothing that we have done has been done

in a vacuum. So, we understand that if we are going to think about the successful transition of young people we need to think about how they're transitioning in to these adult systems. Important for us to work collaboratively not only with our partner but with our colleagues within ODEP. So, this presents an incredible opportunity for us to think about young people and how we can improve their employment outcome just by thinking comprehensively and holistically about some of the ways that we transition them into adult systems. So, we are excited. We thank you for participating in this webinar. We thank our partners and we look forward for the next couple of years implementing both of these centers and helping the systems grow and improve the employment outcomes for young people and adults with disabilities. So, thank you everyone.

>> LAURA ARON: We would love to take your questions now. So please just type them in to the questions box and you don't have to say a particular panelist but one of the panelists will answer your questions. So, we will be able to see your chat questions as you chat them in. I think we had one question come in. Let me see here.

>> Yeah. There is one question about can you provide additional resources for resource mapping.

>> LAURA ARON: Yeah.

>> REBECCA SALON: On the LEAD center website, LEADcenter.org in the career pathways roadmap you will be able to find especially under the partnership's area links to resources for resource mapping. And we actually have some in other places on website. If we could go back to the connect with us slide, perhaps we can, you know -- you can shoot one of us an e-mail as well and we can give you additional resources. There are resources on resource mapping on the LEAD center website. If you click on the link to road to inclusive career pathways.

>> LAURA ARON: Great. Thank you. So, for that question from the field. If anyone has any other particular questions about career pathways, specifically even strategic partnerships we would love to hear them.

>> I think that we do not have any more questions. However, if anybody can think of any more questions our contact for information is available and we will also like Sydney provide additional information and resources for with our e-mail. We will provide a cleaned-up audio file following this webinar as well as any updates. We are grateful that you were able to join us, and we are excited to connect with you all moving forward on behalf of both centers. Thanks for signing up and have a great afternoon.

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