

Transcript

Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID) Webinar: Variables Leading to Success

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ROBERT FROEHLICH: We welcome viewers to our Career Pathways in-depth webinar entitled Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities, Variables Leading to Success.

I'm Dr. Rob Froehlich, Project Director and an Associate Professor of Counseling at the Center for Rehabilitation, Counseling, Research, and Education at George Washington University, and a member of the Virginia Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities Team. I will be your host and one of your presenters during this webinar.

Because this is a recorded webinar, and there will not be an opportunity to ask questions live or through a chat box, we want to encourage viewers to reach out to any of the presenters with questions or comments after viewing the webinar. Contact information is available on slide 29, and at the conclusion of this webinar, an on the webinar web page under Presenters.

We have also included PowerPoint slides and a text-only version of this webinar on our website, gwcrcrc.org. We encourage you to please complete the evaluation survey for this webinar, which can be accessed by clicking the evaluation link on the website. If you would like to obtain CRC credits, you will need to complete the evaluation after viewing the webinar.

Finally, this webinar is closed captioned and a transcript will be available upon request.

Today's webinar takes a look at some of the major themes that emerged from the work done over five years across four states, including Kentucky, Virginia, Nebraska, and Georgia, through the CPID grants. What all four of these CPID projects had in common was that they were striving to understand what Career Pathways are relative to how our workforce and education partners have been using the model, and then to translate and put into action what that could look like, or what that could mean, for state VR agencies and individuals with disabilities.

Today we will hear from all four states as they attempt to consolidate what they've learned into four broad categories that capture how the Career Pathways approach enhanced their workforce partner relationships and employer engagement, and how using a sector approach helped promote this type of engagement.

Incorporating the Career Pathways model into VR agency practice didn't necessarily mean reinventing the wheel, but actually just re-examining and modernizing some best practices from the VR fields around career counseling, transition, and employer engagement.

The presenters will also share Career Pathways exploration tools that are particularly helpful for students and adults with disabilities. And they'll share materials and toolkits created by the grants themselves.

It is important to realize, or to remember, that these four projects were not happening in a vacuum, but rather with a backdrop of the new workforce law, WIOA, or the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, with its emphasis on providing pre-employment transition services, and mandates to promote advancing within a career, recording measurable skills gains, increasing industry recognized credentials, and supporting only competitive integrated employment.

Many states, including some of the CPID states, also faced challenges during this time around orders of selection, potentially limiting provision of services to individuals with the most barriers to employment.

The Career Pathways approach gave us a new, strong model that could incorporate a bigger systems approach into the state VR model, and also one that reflected the changes brought about by WIOA.

The definition of a Career Pathway and WIOA means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that align with the skills needs of industries and the economy of the state or regional economy involved, prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or post-secondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the act of August 16, 1937, includes counseling to support an individual and achieving the individual's education and career goals.

Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable, enables an individual to obtain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and at least one recognized post-secondary credential, and finally helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Relative to the Model Demonstration Projects, CPID supports WIOA's vision for Career Pathways as a key component of economic opportunity and job growth. CPID aims to narrow the skills and the labor participation gaps by enabling individuals with disabilities to acquire marketable skills and industry-recognized post-secondary credentials. CPID is administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, the US Department of Education, and CPID is funded through the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

So today, for this webinar, our objectives, what we hope you all will gain by participating in this webinar, is to learn about four states' CPID projects experiences, particularly as they pertain to sector approaches, workforce partners, business partners, and career pathway exploration tools.

My colleagues joining me today to present on this webinar include Dr. Lee Bryan of Career Pathways for Georgia, Helga Gilbert of Kentucky's Project CASE, Janet Drudik of Nebraska's VR Career Pathway Advancement Project or CPAP, Kate Kaegi of Virginia's Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities Project, and again I'm Dr. Rob Froehlich with George Washington University.

At this point, I'm going to turn this over to my colleague Helga Gilbert from Kentucky's Project CASE to discuss how the use of sector strategies has informed the CPID approach.

HELGA GILBERT: Thank you, Rob. We can go to the next slide, please.

It's hard to think that there would be anything new to realize about labor market information, or job classifications, or using tools like the O*NET to assist someone on their path to employment. All of these things help us understand the specifics of a job and what the outlook for earning and hiring is in a geographic region. But I think what we four states learned through the Career Pathways Grant is that there's a new kind of power in using sector strategies, for a couple of reasons.

Number one is that it's the language of our workforce partners, and it was the way they were already organizing themselves and doing business a few years before this grant started. And number two, using a sector strategy can be translated into how we approach employer engagement activities, and it can actually advance how we perform individualized career counseling.

So let's understand sector strategies in the context of VR agency career counseling and job placement. And let's unravel the language around sectors so that we, the rehab folks, are all on the same page as our workforce partners.

To define a little bit, sector partners includes businesses related to a particular industry, workforce development boards, workforce and community organizations, training providers, and other stakeholders. And sector strategies means sector partners who are working together to develop plans that meet persistent training and staffing needs of employers and create talent pipelines for long term solutions.

The typical VR counselor, or VR center instructor, or rehab tech, or other agency staff, would be very comfortable talking in terms of individualized career plans and job placement. But using the Career Pathway model, we're now also very focused on a bigger picture of what the employers are asking for, how the workforce boards and training providers are responding, and

then how the individual consumer is going to benefit from us working with the knowledge that all of this exists and that we can access it with them.

Sector strategies pair well with the Career Pathway model, which focuses on obtaining training and skills and moving forward into higher paying positions within a field. And using a sector approach offers consumers better opportunities and options for advancement within a field.

An early step that all four grants took was to look at what was already occurring in their regions around sector initiatives. In Kentucky, the grant staff were hired through contractual agreements with two of Kentucky's workforce areas. And this actually created the first partner staff positions that were intentionally tasked with serving only VR consumers. In the Louisville area we stepped right into sector focused one-stop centers around manufacturing and health care, as well as a computer coding initiative through the Workforce Board.

In Virginia and Nebraska, they initiated system alignment meetings within specific areas of the state that incorporated a tool called the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways Metrics. Nebraska assisted WIOA partners and business champions in implementing four sector strategy partnerships across Nebraska. And Georgia narrowed its focus for summer Pre-ETS activities on manufacturing and robotics sectors.

In Kentucky, as I mentioned, some of our grant staff, called Career Pathway Coordinators, were working out of partner career center locations, and some of these were sector specific locations. We like to say the grant staff were embedded there, which sounds a bit like a spy novel, but really it did allow us to understand sector work from the inside out, and for our grant coordinators to gain expertise about the sectors and to leverage employer relationships and contacts.

Grant staff who were involved in employer advisory groups like the Kentucky Health Care Collaborative and the Kentucky Manufacturing Career Center Advisory Group, and to be involved in business service teams and other targeted employer engagement initiatives.

Another benefit of working with career centers that were specific to a sector was that it informed our career counseling abilities. We learned about a sector from local employers who were in the roundtable meetings with us talking about their hiring needs, to local training options, to industry-specific job readiness preparation, which is not your typical interview and resume prep. We were able to understand and hone in on what the employer was looking for like never before, and who those employers actually were. VR had a place at the table, and we were in the room where it was happening.

Taking things a step further, in Kentucky we began to look at our caseload data through a sector lens. It was a revelation to be able to announce to our workforce partner at KentuckianaWorks that we had X number of individuals, this quarter, who had completed training and were ready for employment with a certification or a diploma in the healthcare sector. We suddenly began to look like a very valuable source or pool of potential employees to their business service

teams. And we were able to give our partners a way to explain to employers what it is that VR offers, trained individuals.

And so with some filtering of our case management data, we are able to develop searches that might answer some questions, or just give us a look at things in a new light and open us up to new ideas about serving our VR consumers.

Let's look at how the other grant states used a sector approach.

In Nebraska, they assisted WIOA partners and business champions in implementing four sector strategy partnerships across Nebraska. The Nebraska CPAP Grant worked closely with the Central Nebraska Manufacturing Partnership in developing a document to give to schools, students, parents, and adults, promoting careers in the manufacturing sector, to help understand the career pathways within manufacturing. This document provides tours, scholarships, tuition reimbursement, internships, and contact information for the various businesses.

Career Pathways Grant staff were instrumental in working with business to promote National Manufacturing Day tours, and to record the information on the National Manufacturing Day website, which brought additional individuals to the schedule tours.

CPID staff also scheduled the quarterly meetings with the Business Champions, and they developed relationships with these champions to help advance individuals with disabilities within their companies.

In Virginia, the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways Metrics provided a self-assessment guide helping regions to gauge their readiness to apply the Career Pathway model. These system alignment meetings built a shared vision and a strategy for industry sector-based career pathways.

To engage employers and integrate sector strategy approaches, the CPID did grant partnered with the Virginia Manufacturing Association and Northern Virginia Technology Council. These partnerships helped regions create demand-driven career pathways.

Collaborating with sector partners, CPID initiated and participated in business demand side meetings to discuss credential needs, and they held credential fairs for individuals with disabilities and Career Pathways meetings.

And finally, in Georgia, their sector approach was through manufacturing academies, which offered participants the opportunity to receive exposure to manufacturing occupations and credentials. During the manufacturing academies, the participants completed requirements for OSHA 10 and Lean Six Sigma white belt certifications. Industry tours and targeted career exploration provided participants increased awareness of career opportunities.

Rob, I'll turn it back over to you.

Thanks, Helga. Helga, thanks for giving our webinar participants such great information to consider relative to applying or implementing a CPID sector approach.

At this point, I'm going to turn our discussion over to Kate Kaegi of the Virginia Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities Project to speak about both the importance of, as well as the benefits that are associated with, collaborating with workforce partners.

KATE KAEGI: Thank you, Rob. For this presentation, we are defining workforce partners as those agencies that are working toward the same goal of training, helping with employment, providing supports, and working with employers. Partners such as workforce development, adult education, and VR agencies.

CPID here in Virginia worked hard to strengthen the alignment of Virginia's VR programs with the other core programs authorized by the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, and other federally funded Career Pathways initiatives. As discussed earlier, we established alignment meetings to cultivate and define shared goals. We also developed a common language with cohorts trained in motivational interviewing techniques and hidden disability training within their VR agencies and inviting partners to attend.

Similar to Kentucky, we embedded two employees in different workforce systems. They work to enroll individuals into the Virginia Career Work Sites for Training and Services. They were an advocate for individuals with disabilities within the system and helped to ensure individuals understood the referral process and steps necessary for enrollment.

Additionally, CPID noted a cost savings of \$63,725 for VR training services for just 24 individuals that were enrolled in training. VR, in turn, provided support such as job coaching services, assistive technology, and help with job placement, demonstrating cost savings for both agencies.

These employees also worked on 11 Career Academies for both adults and youth to explore careers, and several boot camps for Hershey, both of which will be discussed further in this webinar. Working in two regions CPID also partner with a Disability Employment Initiative Grant to share resources for training and opportunities for participants. Shared resources included opportunities for participants to enter credential fairs, attend tours, participate in job fairs, and refer youth for services.

Kentucky had shared projects as well, including a reverse job fair, conferences in Eastern Kentucky, and apprenticeship, and a STEM camp. They also referred youth to their Workforce for Career Readiness and Internships.

A strong workforce partner for CPID has been adult education in the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center. We began this partnership by working together to develop a six-week online

training called Hidden Disabilities in the Adult Learner. This training was open to adult educators, other workforce partners, and VR counselors. This, again, enhanced the training and motivational interviewing techniques and helped develop a common language for disability services.

The Bridge Program was first demonstrated with a Disability Employment Initiative Grant and CPID provided two additional cohorts. This six-week program works to improve student's academic skills that are necessary for post-secondary training. They also emphasize academics within job-seeking activities such as resume writing and cover letters.

These two cohorts were changed to a virtual format due to COVID, and this added digital literacy skills and training on Canvas, which is a learning platform the community college and universities use here in Virginia, further readying students for post-secondary training.

The Plugged In Model with adult education incorporates trade-related academics with credential training, which is especially helpful for many of our students. These trainings tend to be a bit longer than you'd see at a community college level. However, the added time provides training that is segmented easier for adult learners and incorporates additional training with digital literacy tours and informational interviews with businesses as well.

We have also worked together to agree on the same achievement assessments, CASAS and TABE, and sharing these results. This non-duplicated assessment ensures that students are not needlessly retested.

Both Kentucky and Virginia started out five years ago with separate agencies for both the blind and vision impaired and VR services. Kentucky is a combined agency now, but at the start of the grant they were two separate agencies, with the blind agency initially managing the grant. The grant always served consumers from both agencies, but was perhaps particularly aware of career pathway issues related to serving individuals with visual impairments, and provided employer and educator events focusing on this population, as well as multiple Pre-ETS STEM events for high school students with visual impairments.

In Virginia, both the Department for Aging and Rehab Services and the Department for Blind and Vision Impaired are separate agencies. Similar to Kentucky, both agencies worked together on this grant. CPID found that leveraging talent increased participation. Evaluators and OTs with DARS would assist with DBVI participants who needed vocational evaluation and occupational therapy services. Both rehab centers hosted academies where individuals from both agencies participated together.

Training on autism was provided by DARS for DBVI counselors, and DBVI offered training on visual disabilities for DARS counselors. What we saw was an increase in co-enrolled candidates with counselors working together to share resources.

The partnership Nebraska CPAP had prior to grant inception with the American Job Centers and Department of Labor assisted in jump starting the CPID Grant. Department of Labor had grants promoting the career pathways of transportation, distribution, and logistics, manufacturing, and information technology that we're discontinuing near the time the CPID Grant started.

Department of Labor staff introduced CPID staff to the businesses and training institutions they had developed relationships with to help initiate CPID services and continue promoting the relationships, as well as the particular industry and career pathway. The CPID staff worked with WIOA partners through employee meetings. Through regular scheduled employee meetings such as Employee OMA, Employed Link, workforce partners discuss employment opportunities with business and community partners as guest speakers.

The employee groups schedule in-person and drive-through career fairs, and provide ongoing business information and job leads to their community partners to share with their customers. Through this process, WIOA partners provides seamless services to business and individuals needing services.

Kentucky CPID also found very willing collaborators in their workforce partners from the start. The partners had a shared goal of ensuring their training programs and services were accessible to everyone. And so they invited the grant staff to see and sit through classes, consult on accessibility, be members in the business services teams, and they allowed flexibility for their own staff to participate in CPID Grant events.

But these partners also showed the Kentucky VR teams that they could work effectively one on one with VR consumers, and they made a big impact for individuals who are able to access their different sector-based trainings and internships, and job search programs.

Georgia is a collaborative partner within the Georgia Workforce Development System that align key stakeholders to support the industry needs within Georgia, but also ensuring that Georgians are prepared to enter high-demand occupations. Training is a crucial factor for individuals with disabilities to realize the skills and credentials they need for career development, and opportunities for increased wages and benefits.

The Georgia VR program is also undergoing a reorganization to strengthen VR field services. The reorganization includes a new organizational structure for employment services, and the new structure will support workforce collaborations with business, industry, and our provider partners.

At this point, I will turn it back to Rob.

ROBERT FROEHLICH: OK. Let's go to the next slide.

Kate, you've given us a lot to consider relative to the essential role workforce partners have played in the CPID projects. Next up, we will hear from my colleague Janet Drudik with

Nebraska's VR Career Pathway Advancement Project or CPAP. Janet, would you mind sharing some of the knowledge you have developed during the CPID project as it pertains to working with business partners?

JANET DRUDIK: I most certainly would, Rob. Thank you so much.

Each state knew the importance of the dual customer approach and promoting career pathways, not just with the client, but also with businesses. States chose different avenues to engage businesses. However, the success of promoting career pathways through business was crucial to the demand side of the equation for each grantee.

Businesses assist job seekers in understanding entrance and exit points as it relates to their industry. Some states use business service teams or business account managers to assist in working with businesses, developing relationships, and customized training programs. Each state tracked their business engagement activities through an electronic data system.

Nebraska developed partnerships with businesses to advance incumbent workers through their Upscale/Backfill model. This was chosen as the CPAP's vision to promote autonomy, stability, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. The goal is to achieve assistance for individuals to obtain a single, stable, well-paying job with benefits, to replace the one, or many, entry-level jobs currently held to make ends meet for many individuals with disabilities.

The goal is to upscale incumbent workers with the business they are currently working, and backfilling with individuals with disabilities from the VR110 program who want to enter the same career pathway. Nebraska has worked with 172 businesses to upscale their incumbent workers. Sixty-two incumbent workers were referred by businesses to the CPAP program.

Incumbent workers can be a past successfully closed VR client, or can be an incumbent worker with a disability who hasn't worked with VR in the past. This helps businesses retain their key talent, and helps fill the vacant positions with a qualified candidate with a disability.

Nebraska chose to provide training such as Section 503, ADA, disability awareness, and disability etiquette trainings. These trainings were provided to HR staff, department supervisors, management, and whoever the business wanted to attend. It is important for businesses to understand disabilities and who VR serves.

There appears to be a misconception regarding individuals with disabilities that they feel they can't perform the job duties of some of the high-demand, high-wage career pathways such as manufacturing or construction. It is important to help businesses make the link between individuals with disabilities and meeting their business workforce needs.

Nebraska contracts with the Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership to complete ergonomic assessments for clients. Also, through the grant, Nebraska contracted with ATP to complete

ergonomic assessments of businesses. This was an assessment to help the business to meet the ergonomic needs of their companies.

CPI staff had biweekly phone calls with Mutual of Omaha talent acquisition staff to discuss encouraging individuals with disabilities to complete tours, informational interviews, and job shadows at Mutual, as well as advancing Mutual incumbent workers, or hiring individuals with disabilities at Mutual.

CPI staff works with businesses to advance their incumbent workers with disabilities. This allows incumbent workers to gain additional skills through training. It also allows businesses to understand individuals with disabilities can perform many of the jobs in their company. This allows for businesses to better understand who VR serves, and more willing to hire individuals with disabilities.

Nebraska worked with educational institution and business partners with their VR certificate programs. The programs are business-driven, short-term, real-life trainings, teaching both technical hard skills and career readiness skills. Certificate programs provide workers the opportunity to acquire the skills they need to pursue in-demand jobs and careers. After training, the individuals are hired by the business partners who assisted in developing the program.

Virginia did extensive work with the business partners. Virginia CPID developed a strong relationship between Hershey, CPID, Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center, and the Workforce Development Board that led to the Hershey Boot Camp.

This two-week paid option includes pre-apprenticeship hours with the first week of class work on manufacturing principles, followed up with a one-week work experience on site at Hershey. At the end of the two weeks, potential candidates are offered full employment, and potentially the apprenticeship option for the Production Technician Apprenticeship Program.

Pre-apprenticeship opportunities are also offered at the training program at Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center for the Manufacturing Technician Training Program. At WWRC, students can earn pre-apprenticeship hours and stackable credentials including manufacturing technician, manufacturing associate, OSHA 10, forklift, and career readiness certificates. Business relationships have also been strengthened in Virginia with demand side meetings, loaning items to businesses from the AT Loaner Library, and has increased employer volunteering as Academy guest speakers.

Virginia has paid internships to jump start students into their career fields. The process of these internships includes a partnership with a staffing agency, the intern's site, CPID, and DARS, and the candidate. CPID has found that business understand working with staffing agencies and internships, providing opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their skills they've learned in the classroom.

Since March, 15 CPID paid internships have been conducted statewide, and have included occupations such as entry level IT, materials handling, general administrative assistant, mechanical assembler, graphic design, machine operator, business systems analyst, and project management. As more time has passed, this program has continued to grow in popularity, and is leading to employment opportunities for internship participants.

VA partnered with business associations to ensure individuals with disabilities were being provided with credentials and training that were in alignment with industry needs. VA Manufacturing Association was an early partnership with CPID Kate Kaegi, who just presented on the workforce partners, was the VMA liaison and her office was embedded within the VMA.

Working with VMA, Kate helped to develop their Lean Accessibility Program, referred to as LAP, that combines assistive technology and lean business principles for business. Lean Accessibility Program helps businesses with AT and lean principles. CPID OT looks at business needs with hiring candidates.

In partnership with VMA, CPID helped in the development of the LAP. The Lean Accessibility Program combines lean principles and assistive technology to businesses. This provides an opportunity to showcase AT to businesses to help all employees. This assessment would include the plant manager, HR, lead supervisor, VMA, and CPID staff. This three-hour assessment ends in a report, which included opportunities for improvement. And if available, job opportunities with candidates were discussed.

Their Academy model to explore manufacturing careers was replicated for individuals with disabilities and provided CPID with 27 academies. They worked closely with the development of the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Centers Manufacturing Technician Training Program. They also partnered with CPID to host the Manufacturing Roundtable in Virginia, where CPID programs and business partners from Georgia, Kentucky, Nebraska, and Tennessee participated.

Networking opportunities included quarterly workforce meetings, yearly townhall meetings, and webinars on disability awareness. The Workforce Symposium Conference enabled a platform for students from WWRC to highlight their skills by presenting at conferences and encouraging networking with vendor tables.

CPID also partnered with the Northern Virginia Technology Council, which is the largest technology council in the nation. This partnership provided a platform for three webinars for industry, including recruiting, hiring, and training individuals with disabilities, office ergonomics, universal design, and assistive technology, and diversity at work, and disability etiquette. Additionally, this partnership provided the opportunity to attend employer breakfast events and presenting CPID board of directors.

Next slide. Kentucky Business Relations includes using the employer connections they had made to the Sector Career Center, industry collaborative, and the Employer Advisory Group to

make some direct asks of businesses. The grant team asked for in-depth tours of their companies or facilities that would benefit our VR consumers and staff.

The Project Case Toolkit provides strategy guides and short videos about providing these types of employer tours and about conducting reverse job fairs. These are two engagement opportunities that employers were very receptive to, and that were very helpful to consumers and staff, and that even resulted in internships and employment in some cases.

CPIP was a demonstration grant, which gave all four states some ongoing flexibility to discover what activities produced the best outcomes. For Kentucky, offering tours became a high priority of staff expectations in 2018 and 2019, with each grant staff in the Louisville area averaging between one and three tours a week, with emphasis on continually bringing in new companies.

What better way to know that you've achieved good employer engagement than your being invited to come, bring consumers and other human service professionals, and see the office or production floors, and talk to a variety of their employees.

In Georgia, Roosevelt Warm Springs offers VR clients opportunity to prepare for credentials in high-demand occupations with Georgia. Examples include robotics, computerized numerical control, CNC, low-voltage wiring, and 3D printing. The CARF-accredited Residential Vocational Program also offers work-based learning experiences with community partners in a variety of businesses and industries. A business network was established across the state to network employment opportunities and provide assistance to employers to realize WIOA expectations.

Now I will turn back over to Rob. Thank you.

ROBERT FROEHLICH: Thanks, Janet. You've provided a lot of useful information relative to the experiences you and your colleagues have had when working with business partners using a CPIP approach.

Next, my colleague Dr. Lee Bryan with Career Pathways for Georgia will share her experiences with a variety of career pathways exploration tools.

LEE BRYAN: Thank you, Rob. It's a pleasure to be with you all today.

Career exploration is a critical activity to ensure students have awareness of career pathway opportunities. Georgia recognized the importance of the relationship between the Georgia VR staff and the career and technical instructors supporting students with disabilities in career, technical, and agricultural education in career planning.

While school districts depend upon student information systems, and VR relies on a case management system, these electronic platforms are often separate and dedicated to agency needs. We saw in Georgia the need for a way to better work collaboratively.

Georgia is implementing an electronic platform to provide additional career exploration and information regarding career pathways. The platform will provide an opportunity for the VR staff and the career and technical instructors to share the platform and work collaboratively with students.

While there are a number of platforms that provide career exploration, Virtual Job Shadow was selected by Georgia for the variety of delivery options for career exploration and learning activities, as well as the inclusive employment philosophies reflected in the platform.

Virtual Job Shadow provides a cost-effective method to reach students throughout the state and work together with career and technical instructors to support students and career exploration, as well as other activities. Use of virtual job shadowing will also expand opportunities for pre-employment transition services to be provided throughout our state as well.

In Georgia, we also recognized the need for shifting culture within VR. For vocational rehabilitation agencies to fully realize the expectations of WIOA, we have to set a new philosophical course in place that supports a culture shift from job placement to career development. Culture can only be changed with putting new processes and procedures in place that support the shift in culture.

A part of this culture shift, there has to be a strong collaboration between students, local education agency staff, and VR staff. The features available through Virtual Job Shadow provide a platform of opportunity to support the shift from agency focus on job placement to career development. Statewide implementation of Virtual Job Shadow will ensure this legacy of the grant will be a critical factor in agency culture over the years ahead.

This slide reflects the features of Virtual Job Shadow as well as the collaboration potential for students, classrooms, local education agency staff, including our career and technical instructors, and VR staff to support career exploration and career pathway participation for students with disabilities.

These activities include career exploration, videos, life skills videos, flexible lessons, interest inventories, the ability to provide students surveys, and online access for virtual activities, as well as reporting features that can capture usage, as well as student completion of assignments.

Other states have also found Virtual Job Shadow an excellent resource in assisting students and adults. In Nebraska, they incorporated the job shadows into the work-based learning activities and career exploration with clients. Staff found the tool extremely helpful when working with clients.

In Kentucky, over the last three years the CPID Grant has had a hand in helping with the yearly Summer Transition camp hosted by the MacDowell Center for the Blind. This year it had to go

virtual due to the pandemic, and it provided an opportunity to test drive the virtual job shadow program to see if it would be a platform that could be useful. It was found to be accessible for users, and just because there is so much there it prevented the instructors from having to create a curriculum from the ground up, or on short notice.

Kentucky also has a large comprehensive rehabilitation center, known as the Carl Perkins VR Training Center, that is similar to Virginia's Wilson Center and Georgia's Roosevelt Warm Springs. The Carl Perkins Center has started using Virtual Job Shadow in the curriculum for their job readiness classes at the Perkins Center.

Additionally, the McDowell Center for the Blind will be incorporating some of the features of Virtual Job Shadow in their new job readiness programs.

Partnering with the Virginia Manufacturing Association and their Dream It. Do It. Academies, the Virginia CPID team have held academies since its first year. Cohorts of both adults and transitioning youth have been created. They have included the concepts of creating from raw materials to a finished product. Providing candidates the opportunity to explore the career pathway with hands on activities has been a very positive experience.

Academies have been created that last from one to five days, including careers such as computer numerical control, welding, robotics, 3D printing, cybersecurity, programming, health careers, and manufacturing. Virginia has been using Virtual Job Shadow primarily for pre-employment transition services and young adult participants. With the pandemic, it has been helpful with engagement, especially with flex lessons, interest assessments, and life skills videos.

As noted previously, there are other career pathway exploration tools, and we have listed a number of these tools for your further exploration. And so we hope that between the information provided regarding Virtual Job Shadow and these other career pathway exploration tools that you will have good information if this is an area in your state that you would like to expand over the months ahead.

It's also important to note another approach to consider implementing as part of career exploration, and this involves progressive employment activities. These activities are very useful in career planning and can include informational interviews, job shadowing, tours, mock interviews with employers, as well as on-the-job evaluations.

All four states have had students and adults complete various types of progressive employment activities throughout the duration of the grant. This has allowed clients to understand a particular occupation and career pathway while actually, on many cases, on the job site. Progressive employment activities also assist businesses by allowing them to begin recruiting individuals to their industry, and helps make the link of individuals being served by VR as an untapped resource to fill their workplace needs.

Back to you, Rob.

ROBERT FROEHLICH: Lee. Thanks for providing a comprehensive discussion pertaining to a variety of excellent tools that can be used for exploring career pathways.

LEE BRYAN: My pleasure.

ROBERT FROEHLICH: At this point, we're going to switch gears a bit. Since each of these important projects are just about to the point of conclusion, we thought it would be helpful for each of my colleagues to talk about how the findings and contributions from their CPID projects will be sustained within their respective vocational rehabilitation programs. First up is Janet Drudik.

JANET DRUDIK: Thank you, Rob.

During this fiscal year, Nebraska VR staff will be trained on the Career Pathways model so Career Pathways will be an integral part of Nebraska's VR employment services and planning with job seekers. Training will begin at the Nebraska VR Staff Conference in May 2021. Nebraska VR will sustain training through the program director's continual work with VR staff once the CPID grant is completed.

Nebraska VR has the option of hiring CPAP staff to help integrate the Career Pathways model into VR. The expertise that Career Pathways recruiters gain through working with the CPID grant will help infuse their knowledge of career pathways within the Nebraska VR agency. A shared Career Pathway toolkit between Virginia and Nebraska CPID was developed and posted on the Explorer.vr.org website.

Nebraska CPID Project Director, myself Janet Drudik, and ICI Lead Investigator Kelly Haynes will be presenting the results of the Nebraska CPID Grant at the Annual Summit on Performance Management Excellence to report that substantial increase in wages and benefits individuals with disabilities have been provided as a result of up-skilling individuals within a career pathway.

VR has the statutory authority to work with individuals with disabilities in advancing their careers. Therefore, presenting at the conference will provide details on how clients have benefited as a result of advancement through the CPID Grant.

Kate will now present on the Virginia Sustainability Plan.

Thank you, Janet.

For sustainability, Virginia has leadership support for the continuation of the Career Pathway model. We have learned that partnerships take work and require ongoing training. Individuals within regional DARS and DBVI offices have continued with sector strategy training. The CPID

website is being retitled to Career Pathways. Resources that have been developed for CPID will continue to be available for counselors, including best practices and guidelines.

Additional dissemination will include webinars, podcasts, and presentations as well. While CPID will see several individuals retiring, three of the remaining employees will continue to work within DARS and DBVI, ensuring Career Pathways concepts continue to be shared.

I'd like to introduce Georgia for their sustainability project.

LEE BRYAN: Thank you very much.

To ensure sustainability of the project, Georgia has identified three legacy foundations. The first includes implementing processes and procedures to strengthen the relationship and collaboration of the VR field staff, the Georgia Department of Education career and technical instructors, and students and planning that begins with an introduction to career exploration, self-determination, and the importance of setting self-determined goals related to career development. These new processes and procedures will support a culture of career development versus job placement.

The second area of foundation to ensure sustainability includes statewide use of the Virtual Job Shadow platform to support career exploration related to careers and career pathways.

Lastly, virtual training for staff and a statewide Career Pathways conference will integrate best practice gleaned from the CPID Grant into agency transition case management practices that support Career Pathway participation, and also maximize the resources that are available through the VR continuum of services.

And I'd like to now turn over to Helga, who will share the sustainability strategy in Kentucky.

HELGA GILBERT: Thank you, Lee.

In Kentucky, we plan to sustain what we've learned through ongoing staff training as well, and we'll be using the materials developed here at the end of the grant with our partner AIR, American Institutes of Research. We have agency leadership support to continue some of the promising practices of the Career Pathway Coordinator role. We'll add elements of this role to the VR employment specialist role, or the job placement role.

And so there's a greater emphasis now on connecting consumers into the bigger system of workforce partners, and a greater emphasis on providing skill development before job placement.

Another part of the sustainability of this project will be that we'll communicate with our workforce partners differently by using our own descriptive data to show them individuals with disabilities who are trained and job ready in a variety of sectors. And we'll sustain quality pre-

employment transition services initiatives by providing Pre-ETS through a Career Pathway lens with an emphasis on hands-on, out-of-the-classroom, work-based learning.

Now I'd like to turn it back to Rob to talk about the toolkits and resources.

ROBERT FROEHLICH: I'd like to make you all aware of the availability of some toolkits developed by the CPID projects. The link for the Nebraska and Virginia toolkit is available on slide 52, and is also below this webinar on the webinar web page.

Kentucky's Project CASE Toolkit is available on the National Clearinghouse on Rehabilitation Training Materials web page, as well as the American Institutes for Research Career Pathways web page. And again, both are listed on the webinar web page.

The final topic we'd like to share with you pertains to the legacy pertaining to the CPID projects, or in short, what the projects have left behind to contribute to vocational rehabilitation. I'm going to turn this over to each project to share their perspectives on this topic. Let's begin with Helga from Kentucky.

HELGA GILBERT: In Kentucky, the greatest legacy of the grant is definitely the relationship developed with our workforce partners in the two grant regions, and the doors that opened and will continue to open for VR consumers. Those newfound relationships gave the staff an updated understanding of the local training initiatives in manufacturing, computer-related careers, and health care.

Our agency gained additional knowledge about how to refer young adults with disabilities into the WIOA Youth Services programs for work experiences and internships. We know the model works. Just comparing case management data from fiscal year 2020 across two similar workforce areas as the grant had, one rural and one urban, we see much higher median and average earnings with \$100 difference in weekly wages on average.

And 74% of successful closures in competitive integrative employment resulted in employer-provided health care within the grant areas, versus a 44% health care provided by the employer in the non-grant areas.

My colleague Dr. Bryan will now share her thoughts about the legacy of CPID in Georgia.

LEE BRYAN: Thank you, Helga

There are several factors that certainly will support the impact of the CPID Grant and the legacy within Georgia. Obviously, the relationship between the VR staff, the Georgia Department of Education career and technical instructor. We've recognized the value of greater collaboration and working together to support students in not only exploring but accessing career pathways.

Working in silos within our own agency or with our education partners just limits the potential benefits that can be realized when we work as a team and collaborate together to support students that we share. The use of technology to maximize not only the collaboration but opportunities for students, will change how VR approaches transition case management over the years ahead.

By far the greatest legacy of the grant will be the training opportunities in case management related to Career Pathways that will result in that culture shift that I've mentioned before, to student career development versus a traditional job placement culture within our agency.

And now I'm going to pass to Janet in Nebraska to share the legacy perspectives of her state.

JANET DRUDIK: Thank you, Lee.

The Nebraska legacy of the grant is economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. The goal of the grant was to determine if past successfully closed clients were contacted to up-skill within their career a career pathway, could they have more autonomy, stability, and be economically self-sufficient.

Nebraska knew VR has a statutory authority to work with individuals with disabilities in advancing their careers, but found VR agencies may not consistently spend their funding on advancing individuals who are already working. Results of the grant have found clients were able to increase their average weekly wage by \$387, and median weekly wage by \$311, and benefits increased by an average of 2.12 and a mean of 2.

The average annual wage, therefore, increased by approximately \$20,124 when individuals were offered career counseling, emotional support, training, and advancement through the grant. The Nebraska CPID demonstrated individuals with disabilities can earn a livable wage and benefits if the necessary supports and training are provided through advancement opportunities.

Kate, what does the legacy for the Virginia CPID look like?

KATE KAEGI: Thanks, Janet.

The Virginia legacy is taking the Career Pathways concepts and integrating them within the VR process. With leadership support, Career Pathways concepts have been incorporated within the system, project, and individual levels. The concepts of working with strategic partnerships that enhance the employment and training opportunities of candidates, listening to the demand-side needs of businesses, and providing hands-on non-duplicative assessments in assistive technology, and vocational valuation, has increased employment opportunities, credential training options, and labor market information knowledge for both counselors and candidates.

Like to turn it back to you, Rob.

ROBERT FROEHLICH: In collaboration with all of my co-presenters today, I want to thank you for carving out some time to hear about the lessons learned secondary to the Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities Demonstration Projects. We hope we provided some information that will be useful to you as you carry out your work targeted toward meeting the employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities.

As we noted, please feel free to contact any of the presenters if you have questions.