2018 TASH – ANCOR Employment Webinar Series
Emerging Landscape in Integrated Day Services
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>> Hello and good afternoon. My name is Marie Campos and I am ANCOR Education and Foundation Director. Thank you joining for the first webinar in the 2018 TASH-ANCOR Employment Webinar Series. We're happy to have you joining us today and hopefully through the rest of the six-part webinar series. Our topic for today's presentation is Emerging Landscape in Integrated Day Services. Before we dive in the presentation I would like to cover some quick housekeeping reminders and introductions, especially for our new webinar participants.

The webinar today is broadcast -- the audio is broadcast through the computer speakers. If you have trouble, double check the connection and volume. Sometimes that's the easiest way to address the problem. The other thing you can try to do is refresh your Internet browser connection. And worst case you can listen by phone. I'll provide a phone number in the chat box you can use. If you continue to run into issues in the session, you can call in and listen by phone.

We are holding a Q&A at the end of the presentation and we'll ask you some questions using the chat function. And after the webinar, we will send instructions to all the event registrants on how to download the webinar slides. So keep an eye out for those -- that email from us.

The sponsor for the webinar series are ANCOR and TASH. Just to show a little about my organization, ANCOR is a national nonprofit trade association and we advocate for over 1400 private providers of services for about 1 million people with disabilities. On their behalf we provide a robust government relations presentation at the federal level, access to sessions, such as this webinar series, and various I/DD products and services.

So about TASH, we have Ruthie-Marie Beckwith, the Executive Director of TASH. Would you like to say a couple words?

>> Thank you, Marie. I'm delighted that we are partners with ANCOR in this

series. It's very timely as we move into proposed changes to integrated services that we continue to help people understand that employment means can be available for everyone. TASH has been promoting full inclusion of people with significant disabilities since 1975. We have chapters in 16 states and really want to emphasize, you know, that we really focus on making sure inclusion, equity and opportunity are available for all people with significant disabilities across the lifespan, and so we encourage you to find us on our website and to learn more about us and thank you for participating in this session, and thank you, Cesilee, Esmé and Laura and Donna for being our speakers today.

>> Marie Campos: Thank you. That's really a great introduction to our presenters today. We have four presenters today. Esmé Grant Grewal is going to kick off the webinar with a federal overview. For those that don't know, she is Vice President of Government Relations and leads work on legislative priorities. Following Esmé will be Cesilee Coulson. Cesilee is the Executive Director of Go Wise and she brings 25 years of experience and training, technical assistance and leadership development in the field of competitive integrative assignments. Cesilee is also the current chair of the National TASH Employment Community.

And from Washington state, we cross over to the other coast with a joint presentation by Laura Howell and Donna Retzlaff. Laura Howell is the Executive Director of the Maryland Association of Community Services. MACS is a statewide provider association of over 100 agencies that provide supports to people I/DD and as the Executive Director she led MACS to support agency transformation and effort to strengthen the direct support professional workforce. And joining her is Donna Retzlaff who is the Executive Director of Spring Dell Center, a nonprofit agency that provide residential day habilitation and supported employment services in Charles County, Maryland. In the last several years, Donna has spoken on transforming supports to be more person-directed and integrated in the community. And so, again, our four presenters, thank you again for joining us today.

With that, Esmé, I'll turn it over to you to talk about the federal overview.

>> Esmé Grant Grewal: Thanks, Marie. TASH, an organization that has done so much for people with disabilities for many decades. I'm joining from ANCOR, the VP of government relations and we have some terrific speakers on this webinar, so I don't want to take up too much of the time, but I wanted to give a federal overlay of this topic for not only this specific webinar but also for the series. And hopefully you'll be joining us for the series and not just this individual webinar.

So let me start with, you know, it's funny, ANCOR represents disability service providers and mostly in the adult populations. We mostly do adult services. But I really think that the topic that we're dialing into starts while folks are in their youth and, in fact, while they're in primary and secondary education. And I was talking to one of our interns this summer who is actually getting her doctorate in special education and was sharing this perspective, so a shout-out to Gabby from ANCOR, and

really about how much things have changed over the course of the past years and you see this reflected in the other federal policy we'll be getting to in just a moment. So what you're looking at are statistics from the national center for education and it's basically laying out how many students with disabilities are served within the general classroom, how many in a separate classroom and how many are in places like private schools or in a separate school, for example, for students with disabilities.

And what is fascinating, you know, this is probably the most recent data set that we have. 61.8%. So 80% or more of folks in a regular school are within the general class. It's pretty fantastic to see that number. So we're really moving away from, you know, what maybe some of you on the phone -- I know I certainly grew up with special education and moving into inclusive education, where the person with the disability is actually within the classroom with other students without disabilities.

That's really set the expectations for not only parents but also for the individuals with disabilities themselves, who have a real expectation of being integrated in all situations, social, work, etc. And we are seeing that feed into the federal policy now as these individuals that have gone through the system within the general classroom are now emerging adults going into work and into other day settings.

So, I also wanted to share with you at the front end a couple other resources. The one that you're looking at right here is called the National Core Indicators, and that's a partnership that is done by the national association for DB directors and a group called HSRI, and the National Core Indicators you might hear referred to is NCI data. It really looks at a set of outcomes for individuals with disabilities receiving services, and, you know, are they getting outside of, for example, service in a group home, are they getting outside the group home or the residence they're living in? Are they able to do what they want? Are they able to have people over? Just a general facets of everyday life that make outcomes more positive or negative if we're not receiving them.

There's actually a pretty thorough report, so I'm giving you the more fun infographic at the front end to take a look. This is the recent 2016-2017 adult consumer survey data, but I wanted to lay out for you some of the reflections that we have coming from the community right now.

So, if you look in that upper right portion about choice decision making and control, we're looking at, you know, 64% felt they had some input in choosing staff. 92% chose or had some input in choosing what to do in free time. That's a positive number. 87% chose or had some input in choosing what to buy with spending money. 83% chose or had input in choosing daily schedule. And then in lower right, you can see the 86% of respondents felt they were able to go out and do the things they like to do. 70% get to do what they like to do as much as they want, and 80% at home have enough things they like to do. And when talking about these items they really speak to, you know, the integration of the services. You know, are folks getting out in the community? Are they able to go and do the things that they like to do? Are they able to have people

and visitors over? Are they just able to be active participants within the greater integrated society?

So these are all positive numbers. I think that, you know, NCI -- that is not always the case with NCI data, so it's really worthwhile looking more into and they're always improving upon their data and looking at different pieces to involve. But this is something that ANCOR looks at a lot in terms of outcomes in our space. There are not a lot of data sets looking at outcomes. And so we commonly reference back to it. And I think that it's one of the key data sets when you do look at integration on a federal level.

And then the third resource I wanted to share with you all is from the Institute for Community Inclusion, which runs out of University of Massachusetts Boston, and we call that ICI for short. And ICI looks at a couple of things. They not only look at employment but they also look at day services. So they're looking at a full service spectrum, you know, how many folks are doing supported employment or other types of employment, maybe facility-based, and then maybe how many folks are in the day setting and what does that look like? And I found this to be really interesting, as you look at this part in front of you. You can see that integrated employment has grown over the course of time, probably not as much as we would like to see, but we do see a slight increase there. Facility-based work, a little bit of a decrease, but definitely still stagnant, so that's a really interesting component. And then the non-work piece is really fascinating. We're actually seeing more folks served in general under these services, under home and community services, but a larger portion of doing non-work. So that means that they are essentially in a day setting or receiving some sort of day service not related to work. So the big question is, how much of this is integrated? And how much does it comport to, you know, new federal rules around the expectations of integration?

So, I find it fascinating. There's actually a lot more to this work that ICI did under this national survey, but this, to me, really starts that conversation.

And it shows the importance for us to focus on the solutions.

So what kind of federal rules are folks following in accordance with, you know, regulation and other around integration? Well, one is definitely the HCBS settings final rule. This is the rule that came out of CMS in 2014. It had been developed over the course of several years. Folks that were really important to the development of it included the DD partners and, you know, other national partners like TASH and ANCOR who were really paying attention to the changes in how services are being provided.

Essentially, you know, a lot of folks, if you want to think about -- if you haven't heard about the rule and you want to think about what it means, a lot of people look at it like a regulation out of Olmstead. So if you think about Olmstead, really clarifying the role of the ADA to, you know, require community options. You know, this is the regulation that is saying these have to be meaningful community options, that when we're

putting federal funding into home and community based services they should be truly community based.

This question that you see before you was in some of the initial guidance questions that came out from CMS, and currently, you know, this is really an in-progress rule. I noted it came out in 2014. States are still working on finalizing -- many of them are still working on finalizing transition plans to get to compliance, and it really hasn't come down the pike yet through providers and people receiving services in many, many states. But it's something that we pay a lot of attention to. I know Ruthie spoke earlier on the line. She's very involved with this as is ANCOR.

So this is a question that really showed the application of the rule to the type of services we're talking about today. They asked: How is CMS applying the home and community-based settings requirements to day programs including settings offering prevocational and training and employment services? And the response CMS provided was clarified this final rule that requirements for home and community based settings apply to all settings where individuals receive HCBS including employment and training settings and that CMS will provide additional guidance to address implications of the regulation for non-residential settings.

The interesting piece about that last sentence is this was issued back in 2014, and states are still pretty hungry and I would say that the disability community is still pretty hungry for additional guidance on non-residential settings that they're speaking of here, and I think there's still a long way to go in receiving a deeper analysis so that states have what they need to guide them to compliance with the rule.

But, again, it's a very -- you know, to CMS's credit, it "s a well-thought-out plan. They have extended the time period through 2022 for compliance or at least good faith compliance. So this is a long-set plan as we transition what these settings look like.

And I just wanted to share with you all -- some of you on the line might be very, very familiar with this, but just the general gist of what the settings rule requires. It is integrated and supports full access to the greater community. It's selected from the individual. So informed choice from among setting options. Insures individual rights of privacy dignity and respect and freedom from coercion and restraint. It optimizes an individual's autonomy and independence in making life choices and facilitates their choice regarding services and who provides them. There's much more to it, but that's truly a key theme of it in understanding the rule.

So, you know, I just wanted to share with you all, again, the compliance rules push to 2022, which allows states to be really thoughtful about this, is what we hope. And there is some guidance being reshaped around what is called the heightened scrutiny requirements. So for settings that don't -- that aren't integrated, including non-residential settings that aren't integrated, they can actually potentially have their funding removed or at least they have to make changes in order to continue to get

that community funding. And that guidance is expected out in the next month before a large conference here in the D.C. area.

So we'll actually continue to see this rule develop, but I will say that when you talk about integration of services, the HCBS settings rule is a regulation top of mind for folks.

And then just kind of the federal overlay -- the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act is so relevant. I think it speaks back to what I was mentioning about folks coming out of, you know, their education system now with these greater expectations of, you know, what is being offered. And even though it's employment focused, I think it really just in general speaks to the greater expectations.

So you may have seen, you know, years ago where an individual coming out of special education was sort of going directly into a sheltered workshop program, and that was essentially where they might end up spending the duration of, you know, their adult life. WIOA really is a game changer and it's a very large bill talk about a lot of workforce initiatives, not just disability specific, but it absorbed the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which was one of the key disability civil rights acts. So I won't spend a lot of time on that now, but it's worth going to Google to look that up and you can always reach out to me for more on that as well.

So WIOA in 2014 absorbed that Rehabilitation Act, and took on, you know, the disability work training pieces and requirements and a lot of the disability civil rights portions within it.

So what it did was it looked at the sheltered workshop program -- or I should say the 14 (c), the 14 (c) certificate program which allows payment of sub-minimum wage to individuals with disabilities under the Fair Labor Standards Act, and it really switched to that. But it said, you know, you can no longer have this population between 14 to 24 with disabilities, you know, coming out of education systems and going directly into a 14 (c) program where they're compensated sub-minimum wage for the duration of their life. Instead, you know, they need to meet with vocational rehabilitation and career counselors, they need to be informed about the several options that they have. There needs to be documentation they've been counseled about several integrated employment options or other integrated day options, and then if that person does decide to go into a 14 (c) program, that the career counselor is checking in with them first every six months within the first year and then an annual basis if they still want to be there.

A slew of regulations have come out from the Department of Labor and Department of Education. ANCOR and TASH have been really active on that front, and we continue to support those regulations as we know that there will be upcoming challenges to them. But, you know, bottom line is that WIOA was a very significant game changer in terms of integrated services, whether you're talking about employment or just day services in general. It set a new tone legislatively for what individuals are expecting, and I think even though it took a very long time -- and I was, you know, part of those

discussions and difficult conversations. I'll frame it "difficult." It was very, very difficult. It was just really fabulous to see the end result.

So I am now a couple minutes overdue, I apologize because we do have such great speakers. So let me pass it off to our next presenter.

I think it's you, Cesilee.
>> Cesilee Coulson: Yeah, I didn't realize I had myself on mute while you were speaking. Good morning from the west coast. Good afternoon to those of you that are on the east coast. My name is Cesilee, and I'm excited and really honored to be part of this conversation today. I want to thank TASH and ANCOR for including me in the panel today. Great stuff that you all are just hearing about, kind of what I like to say is the rules and regulations and policy framework of what we're all up to around employment nationwide right now. And I think my role in this is to shift you a little bit from the rules and regs and the container from which we operate and just start to think about community a little bit, especially out here for us in the Pacific Northwest. I'll try to let you visualize some denim and fleece sort of image while we're talking here for the next 20 or 30 minutes.

So it is sunny in Seattle today, and I think they write songs about that that are country, in case anybody wants to Google "sunny in Seattle."

Anyway, let's start in a little bit here. I was thinking about the impact of the settings rules and of WIOA and how that has kind of rolled out here for us especially in Washington State over the last several years, and one of the things that I think -- that I heard from a lot of people in different parts of the country is just the construct that legislation or rule shift policy directions, we all experience some sort of ripple of the feeling of change. And that's been the same for us out here in Washington. Even with a history in our state of working on competitive integrative employment really specifically for the last 30 years, there's still a lot of uncertainty and a lot of challenge to trying to truly maximize employment for everybody with an intellectual or developmental disability in our state.

We're also doing some work in Oregon. I'm not going to focus on Oregon as much this morning, but primarily talk to you about a little bit of the history and foundation that has been built in Washington and spreading across the Pacific Northwest from an implementation standpoint. But I did want to start out with just saying the simple thing and acknowledging how we're all working on a cause that hasn't been totally figured out in terms of implementation. I've been doing supported employment, customized employment for about 25 years now, and it's just as interesting to me now as it was when I was an employment consultant and a job coach when I first started my career in terms of trying to unlock all of the mysteries sometimes to get from unemployed to employed for a large group of people.

So one thing that we use to keep ourselves sane out west is that -- well, all of these things may be changing around us, policies, rules, all of those sorts of things.

We really, really work together and we work very diligently to try and submit our work and our values and what we truly believe in, so that while everything is orbiting and maybe mysterious to us, that we actually have some common connection and common direction around our values.

And I put on a little bit of the classroom trainer hat when we're talking about employment services, and in our state in particular, these are the foundational values that we center everything on, whether it's your first day of work in the employment field or whether it's your work on the first day of the 30th year in our industry, we rely on our CHIRPS, so to speak out here. So when I speak about some of our strategies and some of the framework going forward, I want y'all to think about these things, because for us, when we're talking about employment, what is so important is that we have some way to encompass all of these values for an individual that is receiving Medicaid service in our community, and we feel really, really strongly that jobs is the one service that will get at the heart of all of these values being a part of our lives as service providers as well as the lives of the people that we serve and the lives of people in our community, and you all can see them in front of you, but I think it's really important when we think about objections and reasons why people don't end up employed in our system and our structures. There's always an argument about competence and capability for people, and I think as we center our thinking and our souls in particular around competence, we presume competence of everyone in a place and community, and health and safety isn't far from that. There's arguments about is someone going to be safe and is this a healthy route for them, and I think if you want to dive deep into employment services and labor, you'll see that health and safety is a big deal in the employment community. The generic employment community. So we feel really strongly with a job someone is healthier and safer going to work every day versus not.

We've had a little bit of a path here where we've went from integration being our key word in our values to now with this new era in this decade of moving back to the word "inclusion." Integration to us for a long time was effort or the path in which we went that we were trying to integrate people. And really what we're trying to do now is we're trying to have communities that includes and values all of us. It's a slight shift, but I think an important one for us in the way that we're thinking about our fawn addition and the place we come from -- our foundation and the place we come from.

Relationships, you all know, if you've been serving folks, that relationships matter, both for service outcomes as well as they do for being able to do our jobs. So relationships, relationships, relationships... Those things actually make the rules work in large governmental system. Without those things, we all can't be effective in our jobs if we don't know each other really well. And certainly on behalf of the people we serve, if they're in the community building relationships, we know the contribution is going to be super important and our communities will be more inclusive.

Thinking about power and choice, there's a lot of talk about choice. In our regs there's a lot of talk about choice in terms of what is right and what is wrong for

folks. But when you think about employment as we go forward in this conversation today, I want you to think about choice being something that happens with paycheck. So if we're helping people get jobs and they're making money and they have discretionary income, those are when we all have choices in our country. And so we really talk about power and choice a lot in our work as we focus on what is comfortable instead of what -- on what is possible instead of what is not possible for people.

And the status and respect button, which is we're all seeking status and respect in the work that we do. And moving from unemployed to employed is a great vehicle for people to achieve status in their community and the respect for their contributions. So just remember the CHIRPS. If you remember nothing else from today from me. These sorts of things will help guide your work. They'll help guide us all in terms of how we're trying to expand what we do on behalf of the people that we serve and truly trying to actualize the intent of WIOA and create settings that are meaningful for people.

Next layer under this, if you are CHIRPing and you understand how to apply those things, I won't spend a lot of time on knowing why we do what we do, but I do want to make one point that has been really kind of prevalent in the world that I've been walking in lately, and that's what is the utility and why do we have WIOA? Why do we have employment services? And why is employment important to us?

I put a few things down for you to chew on, but I want you to think about all of us is working on employment. The purpose is to help people move out of poverty. So if we have a alcohol system, billions of dollars on that effort, let's move the needle. Let's start thinking about how are we moving people in that direction. We have lines in our data when we look at just access to employment, let alone outcomes from employment services. And I think sometimes we might make it a little too complex for ourselves and we have to think about what the bullet says here. We're looking for a job place in the community and friends. And we're working in the Pacific Northwest for that purpose and that reason and we're getting paid to do that so the people have economic status and economic self-sufficiency.

So whatever angle that you come to, knowing your "why" and what you're doing every day, this is an important piece of not just providing the service but being part of a movement around true inclusion with employment.

Big question that we're all tackling right now is not only maintaining what we have, but how are we going to grow the service industry that needs to be the army of the vessel or the vehicle, how we want to describe it to truly meet the needs of constituency. We have hundreds of thousands of people that want jobs in the community. WIOA is gearing up to educate and inform people coming out of school on those paths and we are all struggling to some degree with resources and capacity around growing the kind of community services for the next generation.

And so I want to spend a little time talking to you about things to consider around that if you're able to impact things where you live. It's really, really important that

the work that we do be deemed as a cool thing to do. And this is something I've been spending a lot of time talking about as a cool factor around communities. And this is a group of folks from Iowa, just so you know, and probably a lot of corn behind them, I just didn't get a picture of the corn. These are program managers across the state of Iowa getting together for a couple of days to really talk about building cultures in their organizations that we all want to belong to. And not just viewing our work as a job or just merely a service, but something that we feel like is a lifelong journey in terms of building inclusive communities.

And so think about ways that you can impact the cool factor. I guess that's what I would like to say. And what you do every day and having fun with what you do and starting to really inspire people to want to belong to something we're all working on. I think this is an emotional piece of the work we do and sometimes during change processes or large systems change efforts in our country, we can get really bogged down in the details and we can forget to have fun and we can forget to spread joy in what we're doing and enroll people in what we're doing.

So this is, for me, part of the essence and the energy that I think we all need to be creating so that we can build the services and the system that will help people thrive.

Another piece that I think is really important for our framework for everyone to consider is that we have relationships and values and I spoke a little bit about it. Folks helping people with disabilities build relationships, but I want to challenge you to consider how you're building relationships in your work and what you do. You know, there's one thing to say that you want to do something. I put this statement in here. It's a great public statement that has been happening out here in some of the school projects in Washington State in our School to Work, people getting together to say, what is it we're up to? And why is it we're doing the work that we do? But it's one thing to put it on paper and another thing to make it work, as I said earlier, like with WIOA, and so one of the things I think we all need to do is to really get to know what each other do and we need to build more than just a fundamental knowledge of the services that are out there. We need to build really strong relationships so that we can partner together and make the rules work in a way that has enough flexibility and individuality to meet the unique needs of the people we're going to serve. So consider about, you know, knowing why you do what you do and also thinking about impacting the amount of trust that you have in your sphere of influence with people that are of value and of power and of possibility in the community.

Let's see here. Let me switch my slide.

Another thing for you all to think about around implementing or building employment system is that there is some -- I think these are features and elements that we have to have in place in state. For those of you that have capacity or the responsibility in

your states to -- from the governmental side of the aisle or from the leadership side of the aisle in organizations, I think that we have to invest in our workforce in a predictable fashion with at least at the bare minimum core training on the services that need to be provided. No thriving industry survives unless they understand the fundamentals of what they're trying to deliver and they practice them over time all the time so that everybody knows what the basics are. And I think that we're lacking in that in many, many areas across the country, and we're lacking in resources to pull that off, and we need not just money but we need people to be delivering this kind of training. So we have to get out of our own silos and start working together to make sure that new people coming in to provide services feel really well-equipped to do this work that is so important out in the community.

I also think that our state leaders on all levels need to have goals that are very clear for everyone to be working on. Sometimes we get caught up in just the mere magic of trying to get services to people versus really looking at, okay, let's assume that they're there and let's start to talk about ways that we can really watch our outcomes and our progress and fine-tune what we're doing and grow over time. That takes us to the next bullet which is really about states having resources set aside on the VR side, mental health and public health programs where we invest in growth and development all the time.

One of the things Washington State has done for the last 30 years is always have training in technical assistance available to our agencies and families and people with disabilities. And I think that that investment, even if it's a small amount of money every year pays off in just dividends over time with the outcomes that a state can accomplish.

So I think resources are not a luxury about training technical assistance. I think they're an absolute necessity and they should be part of the healthy budget for a high performing system.

The last thing I'll say about goals and any of the work you're doing is that I would encourage y'all to be bold. We live in a society where compliance is something that we talk about a lot and we spend a lot of time recording what we do. And we spend less time being bold and making strong commitments about what we want to accomplish, and I think we need to at least give those things equal weight. So challenge yourself on that front too.

And during my time so far, I did want to hit on this really quickly about commitment. All of you are committed or else you wouldn't be on a phone call today talking about this topic or learning or thinking or being together. But I want you to think about influence and impact about training more folks that are committed. And this is more of a leadership sort of push for everyone to consider. A lot of times we spend thinking and scrutinizing our actions to the nth degree and we're also required to write

down every minute we breathe and move we make on behalf of somebody in our funding structures. And we don't spend typically enough time saying "yes" to things that come our way. It's about what it is, how we got it down or why we're even doing it.

So trying saying "yes" to as much as you can in the next couple months, especially those in leadership positions. If someone comes with an idea, if you're like me, sometimes I default to the "oh, that's been done before and it didn't work" mode, or "I don't see how that will work" or "we don't have money for it" or whatever barrier I throw up around something. And I'm challenging myself to just say "yes" to things. I encourage you to try that to and see what happens and to see what problems that causes you versus the problems that maybe we're all familiar with.

I think it will make people more committed. I also think that it will start to build a culture that goes back to what I was talking about, about things being cool, because more people will be contributing to our effort going forward.

Certainly something we're trying in Washington. We're trying to be -- trying to pull out as much innovation as we can right now with limited budgets and limited resources. But there's still a lot you can do by just saying "yes" and trying to be creative together.

Just a little bit into some strategies that we use out here that may be useful in your neck of the woods. There's -- I kind of put together from an employment agency standpoint, there's many more strategies, but I want to talk about these six things a little bit. I think that -- I already talked about annual predictable core training. I think that if you are somebody that is able to influence this and impact this at an agency level, that needs to be happening inside organizations and also needs to be happening across our states and our communities. And I'll give you an example in our own organization. I budget every year for a training budget for every staff, and I let them direct what it is that they're going to learn that is going to move our mission forward. And I think that money is symbolic. Some years it's not as much and some years it's more. But I think organizational leaders of community programs, I think we've really got to lead the way in saying "yes" to training. So part of the way we can do that is allocating things in our own budget. So let's start to consider that as association members and folks that are parts of larger groups, we should be having a theme about creating learning environments and cultures that will help people grow and thrive and bring other ideas into our organizations other than just those related to the things that we know around service delivery. There's a lot out there in the business community that we can learn from and bring into our own work.

There's also a need -- many of you have specializations for people in your organizations that specialize in certain things. That's an opportunity to get both in-depth training inside your organization but also an offer to the community at large, and I think there needs to be ways that we all start to think about specialization in

our industry as if we were any other industry where you have specialists that are available, education, medical field, the crafts and trades, there's always specialists there, so we need to start thinking about how to use each other to train in specialty areas and think about more than just core training. We have some things in Washington and Oregon going on around folks that have been great job developers over a long period of time, getting those folks to run cohorts or job developers and doing wintering and walking and talking and walking and talking on projects together, is a great way to collaborate and share expertise as an example.

Another thing that I want to encourage for everyone, gatherings don't have to be something that is large events or conferences. They could simply be campfire chats like the Iowans were having there that I was showing earlier. I think there needs to be a piece where we all as states start to look at how we gather people together and how we build relationships through co-learning and co-experience. A couple other things really quick. We have in Washington State, in our waiver, it's called a secondary service called individual technical assistance. This allows agencies to help each other on certain cases all under the Medicaid waiver. So for instance, the staff here at Go Wise, we are a training organization and able to partner with a job developer or a job coach on a certain case and receive waiver funded reimbursement for our time in addition to the agency receiving funding to try and help save jobs, find jobs, work on discovery, work on person centered planning or provide assistive technology, information technology, resources, benefits, expertise. So the great service in the Washington waiver that I would love to see scaled nationwide because I think it maximizes that concept of us having really good specialized people in our industry that can support growth in all organizations. I think it's really important to getting to the "everyone working" goal that we all have.

The last two things really quick. Program managers need training too. So if you are really, really great employment service delivery person out in the field, chances are you're going to get promoted to be a program manager in our industry. And when you do there's no core training for you. And I think we, organizational leaders and associations really need to look at building our management systems in our organizations. We do a thing out here in Washington every year called Recruit, Train and Retain, and it's an annual event for managers and consultants to come together to learn how to grow programs and how to share ideas and to look at quality measures inside of employment programs, and it's a really fun event. It's two days' worth of investment for our state and it really, really helps build the cool factor in our programs and also helps build the technical skills of our programs. So I think that's been a big part of success we've had out here in Washington.

And lastly, we all are hearing things that have been part of communities of practice. I would just say "yes" to those. If there's some way you have influence on building those, we should do that.

Very powerful.

A couple last things before I close today. I keep hammering on training, because that's the world I live in and work in. This is just an outcome of counts on the core training series in the state of Oregon in the last five years. You can see the four topics are across the top. Those are the four topical areas in the ANCOR accredited training series in Oregon, and you can see just how many people have attended those over the different years that we've been providing those services. And we're really proud to say that we're almost at the 2500 total of getting people that have been through core training in the state of Oregon, so an average of about 500 people a year receiving that service. And I think it's a big part of -- we're starting to see Oregon members change the number of people that have been receiving sheltered workshop services that are now receiving some sort of a community employment service and for young people, the numbers are really starting to come and a strong way of employment coming out of school.

So core training, I'm going to keep saying it. I'm a firm believer in it and I think it's a great investment for states to do as a strategy.

Last couple of things here, just to give you the juxtaposition between individual technical assistance that I said is a strategy. It's an important one. I think there needs to be training and technical assistance money in general. I said that once already. I'll say it again. We have to look at we're serving a broad array of individuals and we need technical assistance to be available for all of us to be able to do our jobs and to meet the unique needs, and certainly employment world, the business community ever-evolving and changing and they change quicker than ever now, and having technical assistance available to all of us is a really important thing. I have a couple more minutes and I did want to say a few things here as I come close to close. I think that we have to continue to understand what our policies and rules are from the federal down to the state level, but while we're doing that, I want us to make sure that we're really putting our focus on implementing whatever we know for sure. Because I think we're always going to be uncertain about what some of the rules mean. I think we can stop ourselves from making progress if we spend too much time seeking clarification and not enough time begging for forgiveness.

So I want you to think about that and I want you to think about the fact is I'm not sure anybody is going to get in trouble if we find people jobs. So let's start thinking about how we push the envelope that way. I think we also need to push and advocate for money for innovation. We just don't have enough of an advocacy effort right now on resources to evolve and innovate in our industry, and I really, really would like to see us from the national association perspective start to think about, it's not just about surviving, but it's about thriving, and we should get really strong on asking what it is that we need, and we shouldn't be ashamed of that. I think sometimes we have to fight so hard to stay viable and valuable that we don't get to that point of looking for how do we grow and thrive.

So it's just a little bit of a challenge for myself right now, and I would love for us to all start to wrap our heads around that nationwide.

I think we need to do a much better job of including families and self-advocates in that effort and that push on advocacy. I think there are leadership opportunities all over the place and we need to start opening doors for people to be a strong part of the conversation, stronger than ever right now.

And really it's inherent in the Residential v. Employment bullet here. I think everybody is learning together, it's not we're learning in silos what service we provide. Our services are all very similar and discovery has elements in all of the services. Job development skills are useful in every part of our service delivery system, and certainly we know systematic instruction is a great thing for people to know whether serving somebody at home or whether they're serving somebody in the community or employment or inclusion services.

So I think I put in one theme, one goal. Let's think how to bring in our gatherings the next group of people and how we bring in training our next group of people.

And last, just Seattle, I'm sure you're following the minimum wage, in Seattle it's now $15 an hour and will be going up. As part of our legislation in the city, we're actually in offices this morning. The other thing is that Studio Seattle just ended the ability for any employer that is in the city limits to pay below minimum wage and that was a result of advocacy with the Seattle Disability Commission and self-advocates leading the charge on that. So it goes back to my last point of how do we get people more opportunity to have a voice? How can we give people leadership opportunities that we have control over? Because the advocacy needs to be rallied at that level.

So this is just an example of one way that has been some measurement of success in our neck of the woods.

So I'm going to leave it there and turn it over to the next presenter.

>> Laura Howell: Great. Thank you, Cesilee. This is Laura Howell and Donna Retzlaff in Maryland, and we too want to thank ANCOR and TASH for having us on this webinar. We're going to talk a little bit about how things have changed in Maryland over the last two years, what has changed, what the challenges have been, and then Donna is going to talk specifically about Spring Dell Center and how they have made change there.

Just to give you a sense, in Maryland we have about 200 community-based providers. They are mostly non-profit organizations. We do not have any private ICFs. We do have two remaining small state institutions. And we have about 14,000 people receiving daytime supports, typically either day habilitation or supported employment. And I just want to note that historically in Maryland, people have been able to work in the community while in -- while funded under a day hab program. So when I talk about our employment data, it crosses over between people in day habilitation and in supported employment.

In terms of systems change and what has really driven the change in Maryland, in 2008 Maryland became an Employment First state and we did begin to work on becoming and Employment First state in 2008, but we had a tremendous amount of leadership change in our Developmental Disabilities Administration, and so we didn't make quite as much progress as we might have. In 2014, CMS issued the Final Settings Rule, and that really helped fuel a lot of change in Maryland. And then in 2015 our current DD director really re-energized stakeholders to create a new plan for implementation of Employment First.

In 2016 Maryland was the second state in the country to pass legislation phasing out sub-minimum wages for people with disabilities and that legislation included a four-year timeline to discontinue sub-minimum wages. And it's really the combination of the final rule and the phase-out of sub-minimum wage, I think that has pushed a lot of change specifically in day programs to become much more community-based, integrated and included in the community for people receiving supports as opposed to based in a building.

I do want to note that Maryland does have a new capped waiver, and because that capped waiver was approved after 2014, it does have to meet -- the services have to meet compliance now, and that is creating a lot of pressure on day habilitation providers who otherwise would have until 2022. But for anyone new, a lot of our transitioning youth coming in through the capped waiver, those supports have to be compliant now.

So how did we make change? As Cesilee referenced, a lot of technical assistance came into Maryland through a lot of different avenues. Our Developmental Disabilities Administration brought the Delaware Leadership Institute to Maryland in a way that was a little different from the curriculum that takes place in Delaware and allows agency to bring a small team of leaders to a week-long curriculum. Those agency leaders had to choose a project to move forward internally in their organization and they were given an opportunity during that week-long institute to work on that in addition to a lot of other opportunities they had to learn from speakers who came in from each other.

We also, the Developmental Disabilities Administration have done a lot of partnering with other organizations to bring in funding to strengthen employment supports in particular.

Our Developmental Disabilities Council has done a lot of grant-making to providers to support their transformation. And then MACS, which is my organization, a statewide provider association, has sponsored two agency transformation retreats that were pretty intensive opportunities for providers in Maryland to bring a larger team between 10 and 20 people from throughout their organization, it was required that they bring a board member, their CEO, a direct support professional, someone who receives support, and throughout their team to really have an opportunity to spend three days away from their

organization talking about how they would make change. They had personal facilitators and then we brought in state and local -- state and national speakers to give them intensive very personalized support as they went through that process.

We also provide ongoing education and support to providers through typical things like conferences and training.

To give you a sense of where we are in Maryland, you can see our data. I'm not going to read it to you. We have about 20% that spent some time volunteering. And this cuts across, again, all of our daytime supports, about 40% spent some time in the community in a non-work activity, and while it's not -- we do know, because these numbers are duplicated, we do know that about 40% work in an unduplicated count. About 40% are working regardless of which type of support they're receiving.

Now, I am going to turn it over to Donna Retzlaff to talk about her experience with her organization.

>> Donna Retzlaff: Good afternoon, everyone. Or for some of you good morning. I'm very happy to be here to present what our agency has done. My role is to tell you a little bit about our agency's story and the "how" of how we got started to this change. We were very excited to see how we could change the landscape of our day services to that of community support. But I have to tell you, it was definitely a very scary process, a very scary thought. Especially for me as the Executive Director, knowing I needed to lead this team.

We are located in a rural area. That is outside of Washington, D.C. We are very country. We've been a part of our community for over 50 years now. So we have watched services evolve over the last 50 years and we have also watched our community change and evolve over the last, you know, 50 years. We provide residential day habilitation and supported employment and supports to approximately over 200 people. Traditionally in our county, our agency is known as the agency that supports people with high-level support needs. People who use wheelchairs. People who do not communicate with words. People who need one-to-one staff supports. Many of them have complex medical needs and could actually be relying on staff for total care, all care. I think this is what was initially our thought, how could we possibly do what we currently do in a building in the community?

But we decided, it was about 2015, that we were going to become very aggressive in working towards this transformation, and to be more person-directed. One of the things we really did realize, it really wasn't the person making the choices, it was that team, it was the parents sitting there or the program coordinator, especially if the person could not use words to communicate.

And then MACS came forth with their wonderful opportunity for us to participate in a transformation retreat. And we had to actually apply for that retreat and be selected. So we were very excited to do that and to actually be selected, because at

this point, the Final Settings Rule was very overwhelming for us. But we knew we had to start the change somewhere. And so I would recommend to each one of you listening, if you haven't started the change or you're not very far advanced with the change, to seek out a resource that will help promote a retreat or team building with other organizations that have been moving forward.

What I could tell you is that I truly did believe, as did a lot of the staff, you know, that people could and should be supported in the community, and we wanted whatever they wanted. We just didn't know how to make that happen. And so we kind of hung our hat that this retreat was going to be the way to get us started. We knew it was going to be a great start when we had to have a board member, a parent, a person we supported and direct support staff all as part of this team. So we chose this team, we developed this team from all facets of our organization, and this team became the team that led this progress that led this change. In addition to that we continued to look for grant funding, so that we could bring in subject matter experts to help support all the aspects that were going to be needed with the change.

We knew we did not have the expertise to do this alone and I think admitting that right upfront is what helped us start to process.

But the other thing we identified was communication. Because whenever you ask, what is going right or what is going wrong, everyone always says it's communication. Nobody, oftentimes, knows what the definition of communication is, but it's the go-to.

So what we decided right up front, we decide, how we communicate this entire process and the progress of the process to the entire agency, not just the employment department, not just the day department, not just the director, but to all departments, right down to the custodian who cleans our building.

So we put things in place as to how we would share that on a regular basis, and included in that was we were definitely going to share success stories, how people were getting out in the community, how people were making steps.

We also worked with other providers who had secured grants themselves and we became a part of their team for that grant, or we worked with other providers when we would see they were doing something particular in the community. We weren't shy to pick up the phone and call them. They were not our competitors. We were all here for the same reason, and that was to make this change.

So from that retreat we came up with this vision that we wanted to bring back to the organization, and everybody, the 12 people who went were so committed to this vision, and what was really cool about the vision was because they were from all aspects of our agency, all different departments. They were now going to bring this and filter it through the entire agency. It was not going to rely on myself or other directors to do that.

But the most important key part of the vision that we decided on is that we were absolutely committed to being a Community First organization. We wanted people to have meaningful days and we wanted that to include employment options, regardless of someone's disability.

So Maryland had moved forward with calling it an Employment First state, we had kind of taken a little different approach and going to call it Community First within our organization as we presented to families and people that we supported. Sometimes the word "employment" is very scary to families that may have a daughter who needs total care. They really want to know, what in the world are you thinking that my daughter could possibly old hold a job? So we decided to take the approach of Community First. We want to do the supports and services for your daughter in the community. What sometimes they didn't really realize is that employment is included in that community. And we would eventually get there.

We wanted people that we support to actually love the full life they are living. Not just do what other people ask them to do but to love what they're doing.

We wanted to make sure their plans were driven by them and we were very honest in saying, we have not done a good job of that over the last 50 years. We do what we think is best or what we think professionals think the person needs, especially if they don't have a voice.

We wanted people to create empowering experiences and that they have a person driven support. Not only just the paid staff at the agency. It's going to take a little work but we're going to reach out to find them other support.

And that the people have a personal and collective ownership of their lives. It is their life and they should live it the way they want it, even though it may not be something we would exactly agree with. And that there are community partners who are engaged and supportive of the mission. This goes back to what one of the earlier presenters said. We knew we were going to have to educate them and we were going to have to include them in the transformation. And what we decided at this retreat was, it was actually kind of simple and we never really thought about it. We just needed to start inviting them.

And once we started doing that, things really started to open up for us in terms of churches, civic groups, neighborhoods, businesses, clubs, but we had never really reached out to them, and once we did that, opportunities started coming.

Then we had a lot of thoughts that came out of it, and I kind of just put three of the most important thoughts here.

It needed to be a strong tangible culture and policies that led to quality

community supports. What this meant was we were all committed to the community. We needed an agency that knew what we do in the building now needs to take place in the community to start, and then that would open up all the doors of everything else that could take place in the community.

And that we were all committed to doing that. We also knew very strongly that communication needed to lead to understanding and collaboration with people who receive supports and their families. We needed to really instill in them the whole concept about person-centered planning and that we truly wanted to do what the person we supported and their families wanted. And then we wanted to ask the question: Why here in our building? Why not in the community? If we're doing movement and wellness in our building, why can't Joe just go join the gym? It's something we hadn't really thought about before.

We wanted to make sure that employees truly believed in what we were doing. And employees that seem to have hesitation or just couldn't get the -- past the part someone was in a wheelchair or needed a lift, we would have group think tank sessions where people would come in and we hold a morning and afternoon where they could come in and ask any question they wanted to ask with this transition team that had been put together from the conference.

We found that to be very, very helpful.

Also, when those teams came back from the conference and would meet, they would do team minutes, and those minutes would be distributed to the entire organization. There were no secrets.

One of the other things we knew was lurking all over, was challenges, challenges, challenges. And so we started talking about those. And the biggest challenge that seemed to come about was we were always thinking about somebody's disability and what came about was personal care. We support over 50 people that are in wheelchairs and who need to be changed to have most of them use lifts. Some people are two-person. And so that was always the easiest thing for anybody to throw on the table as a reason why community might not work.

But then we started saying, okay, the doors will be closed tomorrow. Not literally, but that was the thought process everyone had to have.

So now where will you have a place of dignity that Joe could be changed? Ideas started coming out. Could we take Joe back to his house? Could he volunteer at a hospital or nursing home or a community center where we already know they change people or they may have separate private rooms that we could use?

We started developing a list of rest rooms in the community that were handicap accessible. The staff would already know that before they left. We started developing a list of places in the community that had family rest rooms. So when it is the female

staff who is taking Joe out, she doesn't have to take Joe in the ladies room. They can go in the family restroom.

So as they started seeing some of these things, now all of a sudden they can talk about the places now that they think they could go to in the community.

We talked about community adjustment interacting with the people with disabilities. So now you're talking about people in your county that have been isolated, for lack of a better word, in a facility building or perhaps you are going out in the community but everybody in your day program is not all out at one time. You're in a smaller county like we are, now you start to look at the community is going to start to see all the people we support, how are they going to react to that?

I can give you a really quick example where our QA person got a call from someone who was at our local park. He indicated he was at the park having lunch and he saw a group of people with disabilities sitting at the picnic table and they had been there for over 20 minutes and he knew it was our agency because he saw our vehicle, and he wanted to make sure we knew they were in the park because he didn't know what they were doing.

And so the QA person, being very creative said, oh, that's great, so you saw our folks? He said, actually, they're having lunch. If you ear having lunch, do you think maybe you would like to join them? I'm sure they would love to have you join them for lunch.

So those are the kinds of things that we have to start developing and evolving to, and the key is who is taking the comments and the feedback that is coming in from the community and the type of responses that they're being given.

We also knew by developing the relationships with the people in the community we would start then having opportunities for more customized employment and people being able to volunteer once the relationship started. That would just start coming naturally. And we are actually seeing that now, which is really, really nice.

You know, and the big elephant in the room for everyone is the workforce. We are not looking past that by any means. It is huge for us at our organization. We're currently right now depending on the department anywhere between a 38 and a 42% vacancy. We know it is priority, but we also know there's no quick fix, but we also know we can't let it totally stop us from moving forward.

We also know that with the workforce we need this transition from a congregate care giving model to independent community support. Right now a lot of us have caregivers we've hired but now we're asking potentially big business people, go out and represent the people you're supporting in the community. It's a different caliber of training for that. So we know we have to go through that.

Staff are used to having staff around them in a day program. In the community they don't. They have the people they're supporting and themselves. So it is a change for them.

We also know now we really need to start matching staff with people based on a person's interest. We now discovered through the discovery process that Joe truly likes animals and wants to really work with animals but his current staff is allergic to dogs, we have to make some sort of change with that. Perhaps when we advertise for the position to work with Joe, we're going to include that you must like animals.

We really knew that we wanted an individualized meaningful day for everyone. That was going to be a big change, from everyone being in a room in the day program to now individualized supports and services in the community.

And we knew that would mean we now really have to be challenged with this discovery process and knowing what it is that people really want.

We knew resources. We knew resources would potentially try to slow us down, but we weren't going to let it slow us down. We were going to need higher staffing levels. Ratios in your building are different than your ratios out in the community. Transportation, we all can talk about that. There's not enough public transportation or lift transportation. The cost of community opportunities and activities, who pays for that? We're still working through all of that.

Staff training. We feel there needs to be a core shift in staff training. You need to develop staff training models now that focus on decision making, emergency responses, creativity, working more independently without coworkers, difficult situations and how do you react to the public?

The next slide, I'm going to just kind of go through a couple of these kind of quickly because you'll get a copy of them. That just happens to be the path that we designed. Some parts of it look a little elementary to me now but that's what we did when we first came out of the retreat, but we moved so far forward, but that was our start and I thought it was an excellent start to walk away from that three-day retreat with.

Out of that retreat we did come up with six very specific goals, and each -- two people out of the retreat each signed on to each one of these goals and they came back to the organization and they put a team together to work on the goal. They had to have a person we supported and they had to have a direct support staff person on their goal. And then they would meet two times a month and then we would meet every other month to talk about the progress on the goals. And that's how we're still keeping up with that.

So the first one was our most, most, most important goal and we discovered that through the retreat by the person that we brought that we supported. Everything we did now has to be 100% person-driven. And you have to think about that. So we divided it

into internally and externally. Internally meant every policy we developed, every committee we put together, every interview we held, every decision we made, we wanted to make sure a person we supported was a part of that team, a part of that committee, on that interview panel, whatever we did. And will I have to tell you, if you don't remember anything else I say from the webinar today, you need to take a really close look at that, because that is what has driven our transformation, and even though we have been doing this a very long time, we have learned so much by bringing the people we support into the activity of what we do every day administratively.

Externally, it was every membership, every meeting, every job fair, every business partnership, somebody goes with us.

Quick story. I speak at a civic -- I speak at many civic groups but one particular one caused me to come back to their group. This retreat was over. I had been scheduled to go to civic group. The day before the presentation my light bulb goes off. I didn't ask anybody I supported to go with me. I worked very hard for a presentation. She did half the presentation and I did half the presentation. Two weeks later we got a call. They wanted us to be one of their largest supporters and they sponsored a $50,000 lift vehicle to us. That happened to be in the right place at the right time, but if I hadn't brought that person we support with us, I don't think that would have ever happened. And it also meant they were learning more about what we did.

The next couple goals I'm just going to hit real quick. We need to make sure we were One Unified Organization, so we merged the day and Supported Employment Programs. Without question that was a challenge. Most job descriptions, we even changed offices, staff has been separated employment we're sharing offices. We definitely wanted to make sure it was one program.

We definitely really implemented the Person Centered Plan Process and how we communicate this. I have a lot more information on that if you want to reach out after this webinar I'll be more than happy to share it with you.

We developed a Comprehensive Workforce Development Plan, because we wanted to make sure we really focused on recruitment and retention and the interview process.

Goal 4 was a plan for technology. We knew we needed to track data and didn't have the means to it. We knew the people we supported needed a lot more adaptive technology, that was a commitment of ours. Goal 5 was to define the data we were going to measure. Again, I can talk about this another time if you want to give me a call about this, but we really took a lot of time in looking at how often do people currently get out in the community and what are they doing and does it tie back to the person-centered plan? We started data two years ago and now we're looking at it now and we can see the progress is tremendous.

And also provide a person-centered Community and Employment Plan for everyone regardless of their disability. It shouldn't be that anyone cannot go out and access

the community, everyone should, and that's what these notes are telling about.

So I want to tell you a really, really quick story. This is Donna, one of many success stories. It's not me "Donna" but a person we support Donna. Look in the picture and you'll see Dana, a headset on. A 54-year-old woman cerebral palsy supported in our day program. I'm embarrassed to tell you 25 plus years. Labored speech, speech impediment, limited to no use of arms or legs. Legs don't even bend. She has to be changed and fed. Medications have to be given to her. And someone has to move her wheelchair for her at this point.

However, she's very sweet, she's very kind, and over the years, I guarantee you she has told us things that she has wanted to do, but I also guarantee you her disabilities have gotten in our way because we've never thought about doing it in the community.

When we talk to all the people we support about this transformation and moving forward and that we wanted to do it one person at a time, after that meeting with all the people we supported she came up to me and said "why not me?"

It's time for me.

We decided it was definitely time for Donna. Fast forward a bit. We did the discovery process with her. We knew she loved painting and loved kids and knew she loved speaking and we always knew she loved people. And we finally figured out how to put that together. She uses her head stick for painting and does painting for preschoolers. They all have hard hats on and there was a paint stick attached to the hard hat and they had the option to paint with a paint stick or paint with a regular paint brush. They all elected to use the hat. They never saw her wheelchair or noticed her disability. They just wanted to paint. She also is now companion care for elderly people in a rehab center. Initially we had no idea how to change at the rehab center because they wouldn't allow us to use the lift or bring ours. Three months later I'm happy to say she has her own lift located at the center so she does not need to leave that site, go home and get changed and come back.

I know I'm out of time and you probably have questions, so thank you for letting me share the story and feel free to contact if you have more questions.

>> Okay. We're going to skip over the last couple of slides to leave time for questions.

>> Yes, we do. Thank you so much. If you have questions, we have a few minutes to tackle a couple of them here. So send them by chat. Our first question for you folks, MCOs in Washington and Maryland...

[overlapping comments]

>> Maryland or Washington, yeah, I don't think either one of us do on the mental health side but not the DD side for us.

>> And states, just to clarify.

>> I'm sorry, Maryland does not have MCOs for home and community-based services either. We have them, but not for HCBS.

>> Any other questions from the group? If you do, send them to the chat box.

In the meantime I just put up the slide with the email addresses for all our presenters. So if you want to reach out to them directly, Donna referenced that she has additional resources she would be happy to share. You can reach to her directly, and I think we mentioned earlier on the call that we would send out the slides and the recording to everybody after today's event.

We have another question. This one is for Cesilee. You talked a lot about employment as a goal. What do you see as an appropriate role for non-work activity?

>> Cesilee Coulson: You know, I always try to think of things in a typical way as possible. I think we all have non-work activities in our lives and if I had my employment hat on, I would say, you know, more employment means more non-work activities for me personally. So the more I advanced in my career, the greater access I have to those things. In a formal sense, inside our system, I think the approach needs to be the same, highly individualized, tailored to support someone's need in the community, and in places that the person wants to be. But I think what we're trying to do is train the workforce to deliver those outcomes regardless of whether they're working on non-work outcomes or work outcomes. I think they go hand in hand.

>> Marie Campos: Thanks, Cesilee. Another question here, these -- two questions actually for Donna. The first one is: Did you have anyone in your agency absolutely refuse to go in the community?

>> Donna Retzlaff: I wouldn't say that we had a participant absolutely refuse to go in a community but we may have had a parent who did not want their son or daughter in the community. And I think it's because initially they kept thinking about employment. And so then when we took the softer approach, just about the community, one particular parent we asked what their daughter liked to do at home, and, you know, they didn't come up with a whole lot. Said, do they have pets? She said, yes, she has a dog she loves. Would you be okay if we went to the Humane Society and look at the pets? Absolutely, not a problem. So the person is actually volunteering three days a week. And that particular person is now out of our building five days a week doing, you know, other things in the community. But it just took a softer approach. Mom just couldn't get the word "employment" out of her head at that point. Do I think her daughter is eventually going to get a job? I do. Do I think mom will come around? I do. We just had to take a softer approach.

>> Marie Campos: Thanks, Donna. Another question for you is: Can you talk a little bit about the kinds of reports that were available to you when you first started your job and if there's been any evolution since then?
    Supports.

>> Donna Retzlaff: So Donna was supported in the day program in a room that was a 1:8 ratio and worked with her head pointer on doing data entry on the computer, but we knew it would never be at a speed that she could secure employment. That's when she started painting. So when the State came forward with the Employment First and once we went through the retreat and decided one person at a time, we did a modified request service change for her identifying what we would need for her to be in the community, which would be additional transportation and it would need to be her own personal support staff to go with her. And the state did approve that for us for six months and then we had to go back after six months to show all the work that we were able to do with her with that staff and I'm happy to say they just approved it for an additional six months. And so we're pretty confident after the six months that will be an ongoing support that she will get because it is truly the level support she needs to be successful with her individualized person-centered plan. And that's how we're approaching other people as well. Will the state continue to be able to pay that? You know, it's not known at this point but we're going to continue to ask.

>> Marie Campos: Thanks. Another question for you. Can you talk -- given that you are in a rural setting, can you talk a little about how transportation has played a role in terms of kind of helping with integration, for example, someone is looking for opportunities in a more urban setting, can you talk about the transportation aspect of that, like how you guys address that challenge?

>> Donna Retzlaff: Right. So I will have to say the first thing we said was, we don't have transportation, it's not available, our folks can't ride it, they can't go independently. And after we came from the retreat we said, okay, have we done a good job of coming to our county and seeing what is available. So that's what we started with. We went and actually met with the people who run our public transportation system, which is called Van Go in our area and we told them about the needs of our people. It's then we learned more about their door-to-door service and demand response service. I'm happy to say in the last six months we've been able to get 15 people registered through that service. It still takes a lot of work, but we know that there are options that some are going to be able to take advantage of.

We also happen to just out of the blue read in the paper about another non-profit who got funding for transportation, and when we contacted that non-profit they needed certain numbers for ridership. They're now transporting 12 of our people and they needed ridership mainly during the day. So they're helping us with some of our employment people.

We're changing some staff hours and times so that they can actually be the one who

pick up the people who need work -- needed transported for work. Uber is not a big thing in our area right now nor is it really affordable for our folks nor can they ride independently, so we're looking at that. What I would say is keep digging and that's what we're doing. There are things out there, you just have to find them.

>> Marie Campos: Thank you. I think we have a question for one last question for you guys, time for one last question. Do you set up benefits -- do you set up a benefits summary and analysis report before the person goes in the community to get a job? I think this is for Cesilee in Washington and Donna in Maryland.

>> Cesilee Coulson: Go ahead, Donna, I'll follow.

>> Donna Retzlaff: We will take a look at that with them and if they have families involved, we will discuss it. Because a lot of times that's a barrier that will come from a family first, is them losing benefits. We don't do a summary report yet. We're not quite there, though we know that's exactly where we're headed. There are provider agencies in Maryland that are currently doing that.

>> Cesilee Coulson: Primarily in Washington there's a cursory look at the agency level, and that varies on the capacity of the agency. Some have more capacity internally to do this than others, as well as a little bit of a possibility with our VR systems, so this is a huge area of need in Washington State for this year, July through June, we're looking at -- no, rebuilding our benefits support network that has gone away in the last five years. I don't know how to say it. We just don't have it anymore. So we're going to be working hard to rebuild and get that service more available both internal to agencies as well as external to agencies.

>> Marie Campos: Thank you. And with that, unfortunately, I think we've run out of time. There are a handful of questions in the chat that we'll try to address offline and then send back the answers to that by email at a later point. But I just wanted to take the time to thank everybody, thank our presenters. And thank all of you, our participants for joining us on today's webinar.

We are going to send out the webinar recording and the presentation slides and also the transcript from the realtime captioning to everybody. It will take a couple days to pull all the materials together, but keep an eye out for an email from ANCOR on how to download. With that, again, thank you again, Esmé, Cesilee, Laura and Donna for sharing your experiences with our group.

Have a great day, everybody!

>> Thank you!

>> Thanks!

>> Thanks!