

# Administration for Community Living

*Administration on Disabilities*

*December 9, 2021*

**Improving Economic Security,  
Economic Mobility & Employment  
for People with Intellectual and  
Developmental Disabilities**

**Advancing independence, integration, and inclusion throughout life**

# Agenda Flow

- Part I: ACL Inclusive Talent Pipeline for American Businesses Challenge Winner - Mentra
- Part II: My Transition, My Career: The Kansas Empowerment Project (UCEDD)
- Part III: Georgia Transition College Partnership (UCEDD)
- Part IV: AoD Disability Employment TA Center – RISE Challenge
- Part V: Q&A

Part I—

*ACL Inclusive Talent Pipeline for American  
Businesses Challenge Winner – Mentra*

Presenter: Syntyche Jennings, Employer Specialist, Mentra

# Mentra



**[Neuro]diversifying the Workforce of Tomorrow**



# The Mentra Platform

An accessible, anti-bias recruiting platform

The screenshot displays the Mentra platform interface. On the left is a sidebar with search filters: Search, Location, Industry, Skills, Education, Environmental Preferences, Employment type (Full time, Part time), and Years of experience (1, 5, 10+). The main content area shows a search for 'Junior Graphic Designer' with 43 matches. A 'Select all' button is visible. Below are candidate cards for Nora Davis (Boston, MA, 98% fit), Vir Shah (New York, NY, 96% fit), Jacob Pierre (San Jose, CA, 89% fit), Tara Johnson (Philadelphia, PA, 85% fit), and Mia Saeli (Milton, MA, 83% fit). A purple overlay on Vir Shah's card reads: 'Vir is a great fit! Here's why: Open to feedback, Flexible with tasks, Comfortable working remotely'.

# A Centralized Ecosystem

**We partner with universities, advocacy orgs, & VRs to create the world's most robust neurodiversity talent pipeline**



We provide **employers** with a competitive advantage in thought diversity



We provide the **neurodiverse** with economic opportunity

# The Product: An Efficient & Ethical Talent Pipeline

## Gamified Onboarding Assessment

The screenshot shows a user profile for Vivian Nguyen on the Mentra platform. The assessment is titled "I can do well in situations where I must...". It includes several interactive elements: checkboxes for "Work on multiple tasks at once", "Work on tight deadlines", "Work for periods without help", "Accept feedback", and "None of the above". Each option is accompanied by an illustration and a short description of the situation. A progress bar at the top indicates the user's current position in the assessment.

 Integrates with Vanderbilt Frist Center Autism and Innovation psychometric testing

## Holistic Candidate Profiles

The profile for Angelina Brooke, who is currently looking for Graphic Design roles, is displayed. It features a video resume, an "About Me" section with "My story" and "My values", and a "Skills & Strengths" section. The "Skills & Strengths" section includes a proficiency scale from Beginner to Advanced for various technologies like JavaScript, HTML, CSS, React/Redux, and Angular. It also lists soft skills such as "Cross-functional teams", "Prioritizing tasks", "Conflict resolution", and "Critical observation". A "Preferences" section lists tasks she is comfortable with, such as "Learning new technology", "Working with my hands", "Driving a vehicle", and "Heavy lifting".



Modelled off Eaton Academy manually created one-page profiles

## Anti-Bias Applicant Screening

The interface prompts the user to "Tell us about your priorities". It lists "Most Important" factors: Skills and Proficiency, Environmental Fit, Strengths, and Personality. A pie chart titled "How this effects your matches" shows the relative importance of these factors. The "Least Important" factor is also listed.

The profile for Nora Davis, located in Boston, MA, shows a 98% fit score. A callout box explains why she is a perfect fit: "Nora is a perfect fit! Here's why: Detail oriented, Collaborative, Comfortable working remotely". A "View profile" button is also visible.



Aptitude-based screening expands to those with non-traditional backgrounds

# Gamified, Research-Based Onboarding

Gamified interface and Digital mentorship to incentivize demoralized job seekers in their job search

Built upon research with the Eaton Academy about what characteristics can make or break a job fit

Robust skills assessments to evaluate sensory, cognitive and executive functioning differences



- 1 Start
- 2 Strength & Personality
- 3 Environmental Preferences
- 4 Career Background
- 5 Personal Information
- 6 Closing

## Strengths and Personality

Tell us about your strengths so we can match you with a job where you'll be your most successful. We want you to answer most accurately, but it's OK to select the answer that is true most of the time.



Go Back

Continue






Amanda Howard



- 1 Start
- 2 Strength & Personality
- 3 Environmental Preferences
- 4 Career Background
- 5 Personal Information
- 6 Closing

### I can do well in situations where I must... \*

This question is required. Select only the options that apply. If you cannot do well in any of these situations, select the last response.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work on many tasks at once  I am willing and able to work on many tasks at once.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work on tight deadlines  I am willing and able to take a job if it requires me to work quickly.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work without help  I am willing and able to take a job even if my manager or coworker can't answer my questions for long periods of time.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept feedback  I am willing and able to take a job where others make suggestions about my work.	<input type="checkbox"/> None of the above  I cannot do well in any of these situations	

Amanda Howard



# Profiles That Represent Potential

Our profiles don't mimic resumes.

Instead, they consider the strengths and non-traditional experiences of neurodivergents.

**30+**  
hours saved in  
Specialisterne pilot

**Instant**  
profile generation  
after onboarding

**Amanda Howard**

**Location**  
Currently living in Alexandria, KY, USA  
Willing to relocate to California, USA, Washington, USA, Oregon, USA

**Contact Info**  
Email Address: mmehoward@gmail.com  
Phone Number: 1-859-888-8888  
[Resume](#)

**Skills and Strengths**

**Technical Skills**  
Hover over each skill to understand this candidate's proficiency level.

- Blackboard software: 4/5 stars
- Adobe Systems Adobe Acrobat: 4/5 stars
- Adobe Systems Adobe Creative Cloud: 3/5 stars
- Microsoft Office: 4/5 stars
- Microsoft Excel: 4/5 stars

**Soft Skills**  
Adaptability, Creativity, Critical thinking, Innovation, Problem solving, Project management

**A Bit About Me**  
Check out my work

- Get to know me! (Video)
- Infographic Design
- GRAPHIC DESIGN
- Low-Fidelity Designs
- PROTOTYPE
- UX Portfolio
- PORTFOLIO

**Start with 'Why'**  
I love UX research, design, and strategy because it combines analytical thinking with creative thinking as well as utilizes my hyper-empathetic nature to focus on solving problems for people. I've always gravitated towards jobs where I help people, and in UX if we do the appropriate research and talk to users, we can literally change their experiences for the better.

**Experience applying my passion**  
Even as a newer UX designer, I've made positive impacts on my teams and begun to mentor brand new UXDs/UXRs who are looking for resources to deepen their learning.

# Testimonials

## CARD®

"In my 35 years of experience, **this is the best platform I've ever seen** to tackle the neurodiversity unemployment crisis."

**Executive Director,  
Center for Autism &  
Related Disorders**

## UConn Werth Institute

"I believe Mentra's technology will **measurably improve** employment outcomes for neurodivergent job candidates."

**Director, UConn Center  
for Neurodiversity  
Employment**

## Vanderbilt Frist Autism Center

"Mentra will incorporate Vanderbilt's novel metrics & assessments within the tool to become an additional input/output for the algorithm."  
**Director, Vanderbilt Frist  
Center for Autism and  
Innovation**



"The profile section is perfect, and can help the algorithm match students to jobs."

**Director of Cooperative  
Education, Beacon  
College**

# Small-Scale Feasibility Pilot

Fortune 100 Employer (NDA in place)



5

**Neurodiversity  
Hiring Job Positions**

Specialisterne



30

**Expected  
Applicants**

Mentra



152

**Candidates  
Sourced**

## Post-Hire Success

**Initial Headcount of 6,  
Increased by 50%**

Employer was so satisfied with matches that they increased headcount to 9

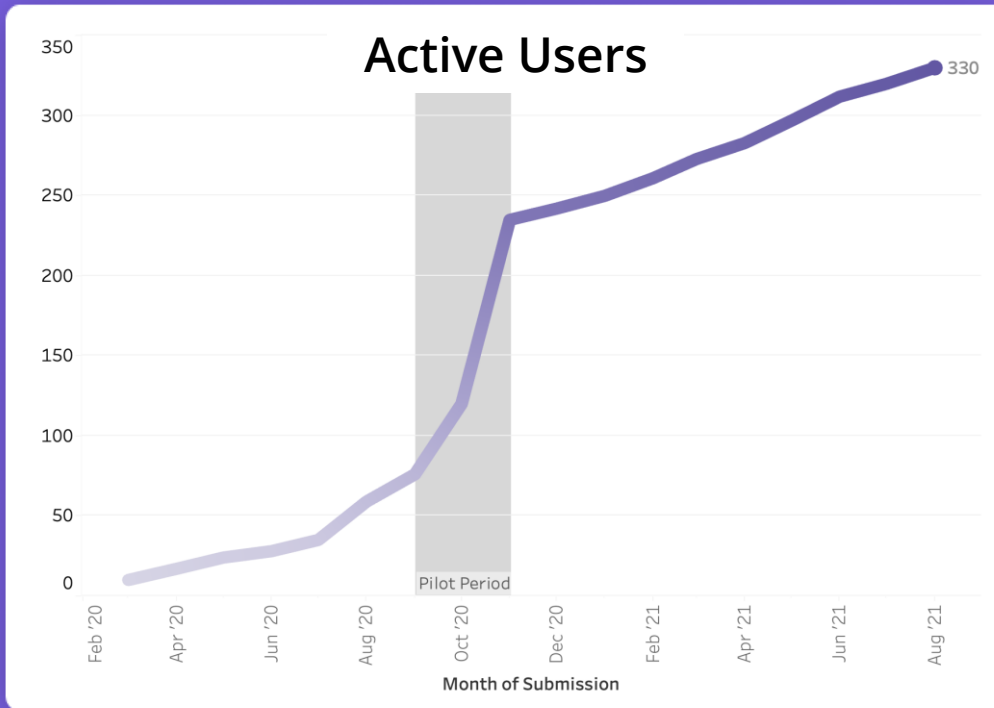
**9 Converted to  
Full-Time**

Each new hire began in an internship "trial" period, but all 9 converted to full-time

**100% Retention Rate,  
12 Months In**

This engagement had a record-setting 100% retention rate in Specialisterne's U.S. division

# Growth Metrics

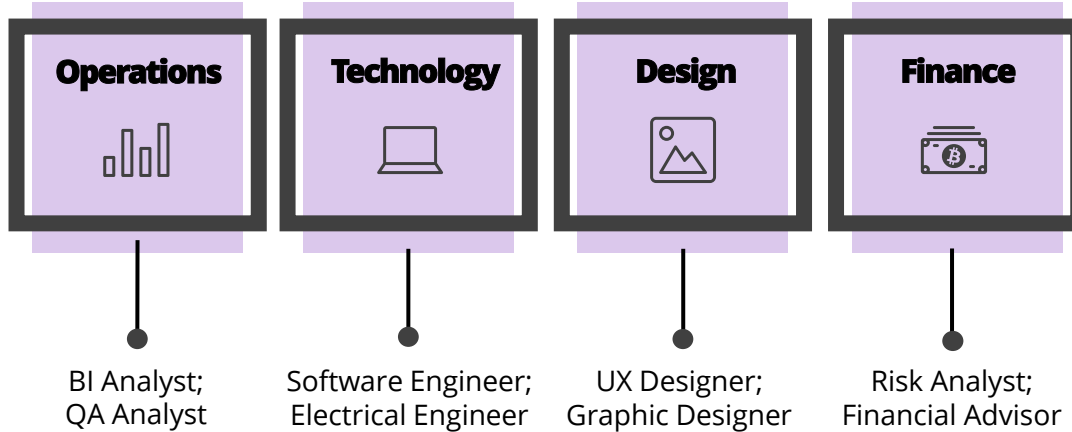


**4X** talent pool growth  
in just 8 weeks

**5X** more qualified candidates  
than our client expected


**30** states represented  
driven by 100% organic growth


# Industries We've Made an Impact In



## Expanding towards:

 Customer Service

 Legal & Notarization

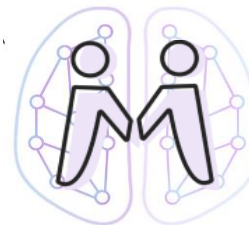
 Recreational  
Services

 Inventory Fulfillment

 Marketing



**Our Model mined data  
across 2600 Unique Skills  
and 260 Occupations from  
ONET.**



**Our AI Model was leveraged  
to make matches for  
Deloitte, Boeing, and Booz  
Allen through Specialisterne.**

# Early Adopters

## Live Partnerships



## Closing Negotiations



## Awaiting Buy-In

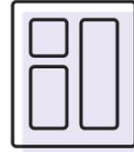


# Mentra is now **LIVE!**

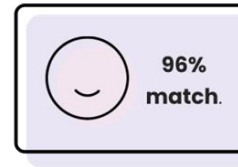
How does Mentra work for neurodiverse job seekers?



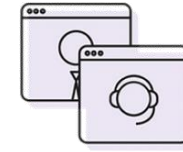
Candidates sign up and take a 30 minute Onboarding Form



A profile is instantly generated; highlighting natural talents & skills



Candidates are matched with jobs that meet individual needs



Mentra Provides digital mentorship & guidance to support job readiness

## Why should job-seekers use the Mentra Platform?

**FREE**

For neurodiverse job-seekers

**100% retention**

To date for all neurodivergent hires

**1 application**

To get in front of inclusive employers

[www.mentra.me](http://www.mentra.me)



# Product Demo



[Link to Video](#)



Part II –

*My Transition, My Career:  
The Kansas Empowerment Project*

Presenters: Brad Linnenkamp and Evan Dean,  
Kansas Center on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)



# My Transition, My Career: The Kansas Empowerment Project

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Brad Linnenkamp

Evan Dean

Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities

## Our Leadership Team



Sheida Raley



Sean Swindler



Evan Dean



Brad Linnenkamp



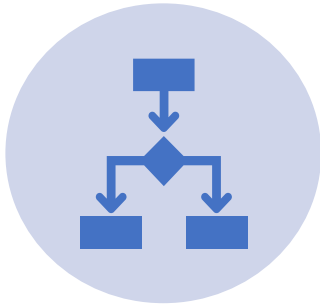
Jenn Bumble



Karrie Shogren

# WHAT WE FOUND IN PLANNING YEAR

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**Need a Coordinated  
System of Supports**



**Need to  
Explore and  
Focus on  
Student  
Transition  
Goals**



**Need to Raise Student  
Expectations for  
Transition Outcomes**

# PURPOSE

Conduct a landscape analysis to identify needs in unserved and/or underserved communities and ensure resources are responsive to community needs

Implement the pilot project in one underserved and rural community and develop a sustainable infrastructure for supporting other communities

Implement a sustainable community-based transition pilot for youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD)

Expand the pilot project to three additional unserved and/or underserved Kansas communities each year

Support sustainability by disseminating information and findings in plain language and multiple languages

# My Transition, My Career Pilot

## Engage Local Communities

- Mentor Self-Advocates and Family Members to Lead
- Engage Marginalized Communities
- Recruit Schools and Community Support

## Facilitate Problem Solving and Goal Setting

- Asset Mapping
- Policy and Process Mapping
- Network Mapping

## Educate Communities on Evidence Based Practices

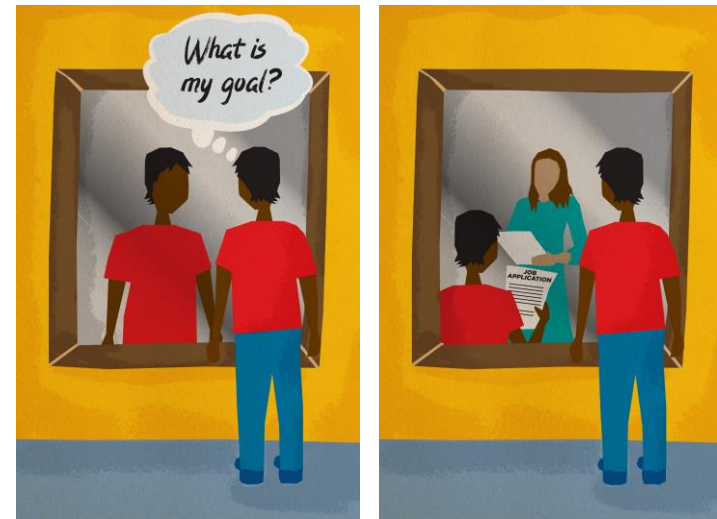
- Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction
- Deciding My Future
- Family Education and Awareness on Transition
- Coordination and Collaboration

## Support Implementation of Plan

- Focus groups and surveys to understand stakeholder experiences

# Conclusion

- **The focus of this project is to enhance economic community inclusion for people with disabilities through:**
  1. Enhancing the communication and collaboration of employment and transition focused services and supports
  2. Empowering youth and families to lead community teams through peer support and increasing opportunities and supports for self-determination
  3. Engaging and empowering families from marginalized communities



## Part III –

### *Georgia Transition College Partnership*

Presenter: Zolinda Stoneman, Institute on Human Development & Disability, University of Georgia (UCEDD)



# Georgia College Transition Partnership

- Community Based Transition Pilot and Implementation grants funded by the Administration on Community Living
- Funded to Georgia's two University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs)
  - Institute on Human Development & Disability, University of Georgia
  - Center for Leadership in Disability, Georgia State University
- Initial year-long planning grant to develop the model was just completed

# The Issue Being Addressed

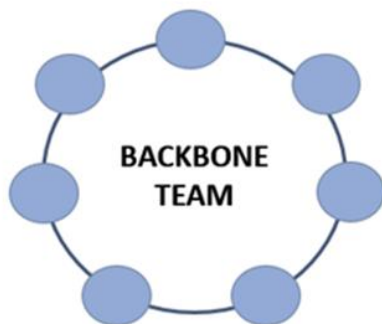
- Autistic college graduates are often unemployed, or underemployed, working in jobs not related to their college majors, or working fewer hours than desired.
- University career centers and disability resource centers have limited resources and training related to autistic students and are often not effective in supporting these students toward their career objectives.

# Georgia College Transition Partnership

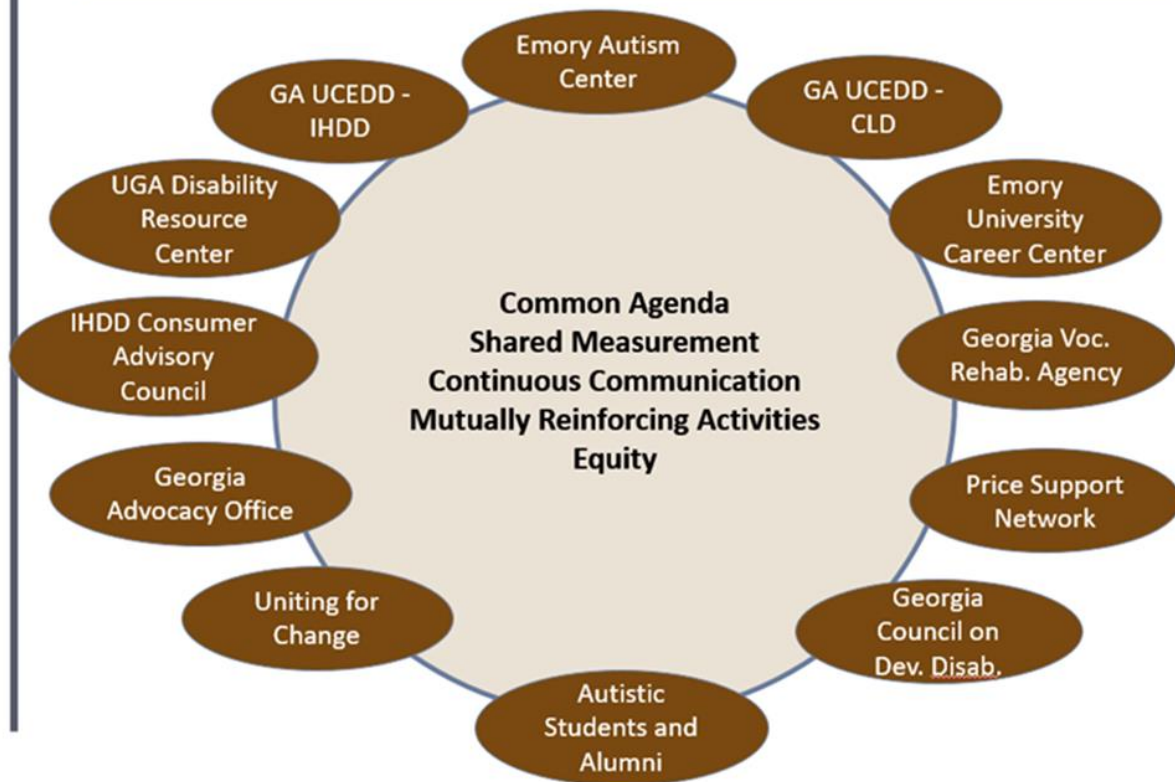
The goal of the Partnership is to use a collective impact process to develop and implement a model for a sustainable, culturally competent, innovative pilot project focused on providing supports for young autistic adults that result in their successfully transitioning from college to employment or graduate school.

**BACKBONE SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS**

GA UCEDD –IHDD  
GA UCEDD – CLD  
Emory Autism Center  
Ramirez



**GEORGIA COLLEGE TRANSITION PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS**



# Georgia College Transition Partnership

- The pilot was shaped in large part by the lived experience of the autistic members of the partnership.
- Self advocates will be involved in all aspects of implementing the pilot.
- The pilot will be implemented at Emory University, led by the Emory Autism Center
- In the third year of funding, components of the model will be implemented at UGA and GSU

## Part IV–

### *AoD Disability Employment TA Center RISE Challenge*

Presenter: Serena Lowe, Senior Advisor TASH

# Background

- In September 2020, the Administration on Disabilities (AoD) within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), awarded The Lewin Group and TASH (Lewin/TASH) a five-year contract to support the establishment of the Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center.
- The TA Center provides evidence-based technical assistance (TA) related to promoting systems change to improve the employment outcomes and economic advancement of individuals with disabilities.
- The TA Center provides support to the following AoD grantees:
  - Federally-funded Centers for Independent Living (CIL)
  - State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (Council)
  - University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities in Education, Research, and Services (UCEDD)
  - State Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&A)
  - Traumatic Brain Injury State Partnership Programs (TBI Grantee)
  - Projects of National Significance (PNS)

# The Disability Employment TA Center

## FOCUS

- **Systems Change:** Build the competencies of professionals at all levels within AoD grantee entities through applied learning techniques, e-learning communities, skills-development TA, peer-to-peer mentoring, and resource development.
- **Innovation:** Build the AoD grantee network capacity to focus on CIE and economic advancement strategies through identification, development, scalability, and sustainability of evidence-based practices.
- **Collaboration:** Leverage the unique talents and contributions of the AoD grantee network through strategic partnership development that leads to substantial improvements in CIE and economic advancement outcomes at an individual and systems level.

## PROPOSED OUTCOME

Demonstrable improvements in CIE and economic outcomes for individuals with an array of abilities directly in connection with efforts by the AoD grantees.



# Results and Innovation in Systems Excellence (RISE): *Structure*



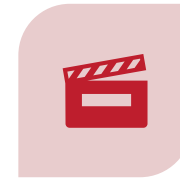
**TIME-LIMITED,  
OUTCOME  
ORIENTED  
VIRTUAL E-  
LEARNING  
COMMUNITIES**



**PARTICIPATING  
ENTITIES MUST  
COMMIT  
LEADERSHIP  
SUPPORT AND  
TIME**



**HYBRID TA  
MODEL: SMALL  
GROUP + 1:1 TA**



**ACTION-  
ORIENTED:  
*PLANNING,  
PREPARATION,  
PROCESSING***



**2 SUBJECT  
MATTER CO-  
FACILITATORS +  
PEER COACHES  
FROM THE AOD  
GRANTEE  
NETWORK**

# Results and Innovation in Systems Excellence (RISE): *Topics*

- 2021 Topics
  - Elevating Employment Systems-  
Change in DD Council 5-Year  
Strategic Plans
  - Building Back Better – Reinventing  
Our Approach to Competitive,  
Integrated Employment
  - Walking the Walk: Prioritizing  
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in  
Organizational Culture &  
Programming to Support People
- 2022 Topics
  - Assistive Technology &  
Employment
  - Employer Engagement
  - Financial Wellness

# Join Our Work!



HOME NEWSROOM GET INVOLVED ON-DEMAND TA REQUESTS

For accessibility options, click the icon in the right-hand corner:

ABOUT ▾ ADD GRANTEES ▾ COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ▾ TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ▾ RESOURCE CLEARINGHOUSE



## Welcome to the Disability Employment TA Center

Transforming AoD's Networks through Systems Change, Innovation and Collaboration

Search...



- Disability Employment TA Center Website
  - <https://aoddisabilityemploymenttacenter.com/>
- Learning Management System:
  - <https://aoddisabilityemploymenttacenter.com/lms-portal/>
- Email us at:  
[aodemploymentta@gmail.com](mailto:aodemploymentta@gmail.com)



Part V–

*Question and Answer –*

*Let's Have a Dialogue*