



DRC Spotlight Series



Ashley Clark

**Traveling Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC)
California (Adult) DEI Project
California Employment Development Department**

A little bit about me...

The three words to describe me are Ambitious, Determined and Passionate.

When I was little I wanted to be a Foreign Ambassador.

My favorite quote is "Being humble means recognizing that we are not on earth to see how important we can become, but to see how much difference we can make in the lives of others."-- Gordon B. Hinckley

My favorite hobby is reading. One year I managed to read 175 books!

The one thing my co-workers don't know about me is that I used to be an English teacher in China.

If I could visit anywhere in the world tomorrow, I would visit Singapore.

What this work means to me...

The best thing about being a DRC is that I am able to interact with staff and partners and hear about all of the great efforts they are making towards improving services for customers with barriers to employment.

I enjoy supporting the mission of the Disability Employment Initiative because local participating areas have been able to use DEI as a means of encouraging system improvement. This has led to many areas being active participants in disability based quarterly meetings and California's Disability Employment Accelerator grant.

Using an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach has enabled partnerships within the local areas to improve upon the capacity of staff to meet the needs of their customers.

One of the innovative ways we expanded programmatic and/or physical access within my AJC was by developing training modules and traveling throughout the state to encourage awareness of the current service delivery systems.

Making an Impact / Systems Change

My role as California's Traveling State-Level DRC was written into our DEI grant. This provided me an opportunity to make a significant impact on increasing access at American Job Centers (AJC) across our state. There are 46 Labor and Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) that span over 1000 miles. Only 21 percent have been part of a DEI project. My job provides support to not only the regions with DEI funding, but also regions who have not been supported by DEI. This ensures that lessons learned from California's past and current projects are passed onto every part of the state. I developed two-day staff training modules on how AJCs can best serve customers with disabilities. To date, I have conducted trainings with all but two LWDA's. These trainings have equipped workforce staff to learn what DEI has taught us in a current and relevant manner. The AJC staff report being more confident in working with customers who have a disability. My role has also allowed me to serve as a direct resource for staff who have questions or concerns after taking part in the trainings. I have returned to some areas multiple times by request in an effort to help staff build on what they previously learned as well as to make sure new staff members have the foundational tools and resources to make their AJC as universally accessible as possible.