



## DRC Spotlight Series



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VA Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services**

### A little bit about me...

**The three words to describe me are** Dedicated, Passionate and Innovative.

**My favorite hobby is** gardening and cooking.

**If I could visit anywhere in the world tomorrow, I would visit** Italy, again!

**My favorite food is** not Sushi!

**My favorite quote is** "It's the action, not the fruit of the action that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result." - Mahatma Gandhi

### What this work means to me...

**Being a workforce Employment Network to support the Ticket to Work program has allowed my American Job Center to** enhance and expand Ticket to Work services for Social Security beneficiaries in multiple DEI Workforce Regions, facilitate staff certifications as Work Incentives Specialists and grow the one-stop system by promoting co-enrollment with WIOA Title I programs.

**Using an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach has enabled** Virginia to incorporate this service delivery strategy in DEI Workforce Regions, the Combined State Plan and as a service code in the shared system of record for WIOA Titles I and III.

**My frequent go-to resources to support my work as a DRC are** forward thinking Project Managers/Partners, who supported innovative activities/services; along with Technical Assistance and Guidance from the National Disability Institute/Lead Center, ETA and ODEP.

### Making an Impact / Systems Change

When I interviewed for the Disability Program Navigator Initiative (precursor to the DEI), I was asked if I had any comments. Yes! I had been waiting my whole career for such a project to promote access for job seekers with disabilities into the Workforce System! Back then...I had no idea how involved I would become with systems change. I am most proud to have been actively involved with the state level Accessibility Taskforce since its formation. We established a cross agency team with representatives from all four WIOA titles, VR, Blind and Vision Impaired, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, state EO Officers, Social Services, Workforce Executive Director's, local Workforce Area and Centers for Independent Living. This team also leads our American Job Center One-Stop Certification process, provides input on the Combined State Plan, and policy development for individuals with disabilities and on accessibility. Last year, our DEI project collaborated with the ODEP-funded LEAD Center to provide Workforce Cross-Agency Partners Trainings titled "WIOA Section 188 From a Disability Perspective." I believe these trainings were very successful due to my efforts to have leadership and program staff included across all WIOA titles and workforce partners. This taskforce later approved the LEAD Center to expand its outreach through statewide training on WIOA Section 188. I feel so fortunate to plant seeds of inclusion for our future in Virginia and then watch the fruits of our labor grow over time to help make a difference!