

Webcast 1 – How Can Our American Job Center Maximize a Welcoming Environment for People with Disabilities?

First Slide:

Laura: Good Morning David.

David: Good Morning Laura.

Laura: David, we understand that we want all customers to be able to use the services of the American Job Center but some may not know how to maximize that goal. So, I thought we could begin our coffee chat with the following question: “How Can Our American Job Center Maximize a Welcoming Environment for People with Disabilities?”

Second Slide:

David: Laura, that’s a very relevant and thoughtful question as there are nearly 2,400 American Job Centers across the country. The premise of your question supports the vision of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – also simply referenced as WIOA. One of the principal hallmarks of WIOA is that it promotes physical and programmatic access in the American Job Center to improve service delivery to individuals with disabilities.

It does that in three key areas. First, as it relates to the certification process, physical and programmatic accessibility is included with effectiveness in continuous improvement as one of three criteria in which Local Boards will certify American Job Centers every three years.

Second, as it relates to the criteria standards, these are established by the State Workforce Development Boards. Overall, states have flexibility in how they write their American Job Center Certification criteria. At a minimum, accessibility requirements must comply with equal opportunity provisions of WIOA section 188 and its regulations.

Finally, WIOA authorizes Local Boards to establish a standing committee to provide information and to assist with operational issues on the provision of serving people with disabilities, such as WIOA section 188 and applicable provision of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Third Slide: [Evaluating the Accessibility of American Job Centers for People with Disabilities](#)

Laura: To better gauge where we need to go, perhaps we need to assess on where we have been. There is a 2017 DOL report titled “[Evaluating the Accessibility of American Job Centers for People with Disabilities](#)” – it gives a good snapshot of our current strengths and challenges in this area. The report measured the accessibility of the American Job Center network in three key areas: 1) communication; 2) physical, and 3) programmatic. This evaluation highlights both the progress and, equally important, the challenges American Job Centers have faced in making its services more accessible to persons with disabilities. It even includes some

recommendations for American Job Centers to improve accessibility. You can click on this slide to access the report.

David: That's great Laura. It is good to know that we have a baseline to measure against moving forward and some recommendations for making improvements. This is a good starting point.

Fourth Slide: [WorkforceGPS Disability and Employment – The Benefits of Universal Design](#)

David: In an effort to support American Job Centers, WorkforceGPS has developed some strategies to support them in this area. One of the principles we actively promote to the American Job Centers is knowing the value of Universal Design.

So what do I mean by Universal Design, Laura. It is basically a strategy for making products, environments, operational systems, and services welcoming and usable to the most diverse range of people possible. Its key principles are simplicity, flexibility, and efficiency. By implementing these simple principles, we can provide world class service.

On our WorkforceGPS page, which you can access by clicking on this slide, we highlight some webcasts, webchats, and webinars that address strategies for American Job Centers to employ design thinking to help maximize inclusion for all.

Laura: I need to check that out. When you really capture the essence of Universal Design, you realize that it is truly not rocket science and it does make life much easier for a wide range of individuals with all types of abilities.

Fifth Slide: [Effective Communication: Disability Awareness & Etiquette Guide](#)

Laura: Another resource, I wanted to point out David is from the LEAD Center titled "Effective Communication: Disability Awareness & Etiquette Guide". This guide was designed with American Job Centers in mind to highlight effective communication strategies to serve people with disabilities. The guide is really easy to follow utilizing a common sense approach to providing information about disability and communication in a format that is easy to read and understand. Again, you can click on this slide to access the report.

David: Interesting. That sounds like another good resource that can help maximize inclusion for all.

Sixth Slide:

David: This slide lists the resource referenced earlier. Please check them out when you have a moment today.

Seventh Slide:

Laura: And for those listening in, thanks for joining our coffee chat. On behalf of the Employment and Training Administration, we hope these resources help people with disabilities rise and shine in the labor market.