

# Job-Driven Technical Assistance Center (JD-VRTAC):



*Nebraska VR*

## **Customized Employment: Exploring Opportunities with a Dual Customer Approach**

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Lindy Foley – Assistant Director

# Webinar Objectives

- Explain JD-VRTAC goals, partners, TA, and Learning Collaborative
- Describe Nebraska VR's background/services
- Explain JD-VRTAC project background
- Discuss JD-VRTAC project purpose & goals
- Describe JD-VRTAC project implementation
- Share JD-VRTAC project accomplishments
- Share challenges & lessons learned from JD-VRTAC project
- Describe current status of JD-VRTAC project
- Discuss what was most helpful from the TA and Learning Collaborative throughout this process
- Share next steps, future direction, & goals

# JD-VRTAC Goals

Improve skills of state VR agency staff, other rehab professionals & providers of VR services, who are trained to provide “job-driven” VR services & supports to PWD, employers & customized training providers.

## Four Topic Areas:



1. Business Engagement
2. Employer Supports
3. Labor Market Information (LMI)
4. Customized Training Providers

[www.explorevr.org](http://www.explorevr.org)

# JD-VRTAC Partners

Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI), Univ. of Massachusetts/Boston

***In Partnership with:***

- Jobs for the Future (JFF)
- Univ. of Arkansas/CURRENTS
- Univ. of Washington
- Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)
- United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN)
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)



***In Collaboration with:***

- National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB)
- Technical Assistance Center Collaborative

# JD-VRTAC Technical Assistance

The JD-VRTAC provides 3 types of TA:

- Intensive: 11 VR agencies participated in Cohort 1 of the center's Intensive TA and 9 agencies will participate in Cohort 2 of the center's Intensive TA. Agencies receiving Intensive TA become members of a Learning Collaborative to share strategies and solutions.
- Targeted: Several agencies have requested targeted TA related to one of the four job-driven topical areas. Additionally, the Center is hosting communities of practice and forums on relevant issues.
- Universal: The Center hosts and archives webinars on topics related to the four job-driven topical areas and presents project information at CSAVR and NCSAB.

# JD-VRTAC Learning Collaborative

- As part of receiving intensive TA, states attended 2-3 in-person Learning Collaborative meetings to provide project updates, collaborate across agencies, and participate in topical discussions
- Learning Collaborative states participate in conference calls with their cohort to discuss job-driven topics
- 18 state VR agencies are part of the JD-VRTAC Learning Collaborative

# Nebraska VR Background and Services

Nebraska VR is a general agency housed within the Department of Education.

## 12 Statewide Offices

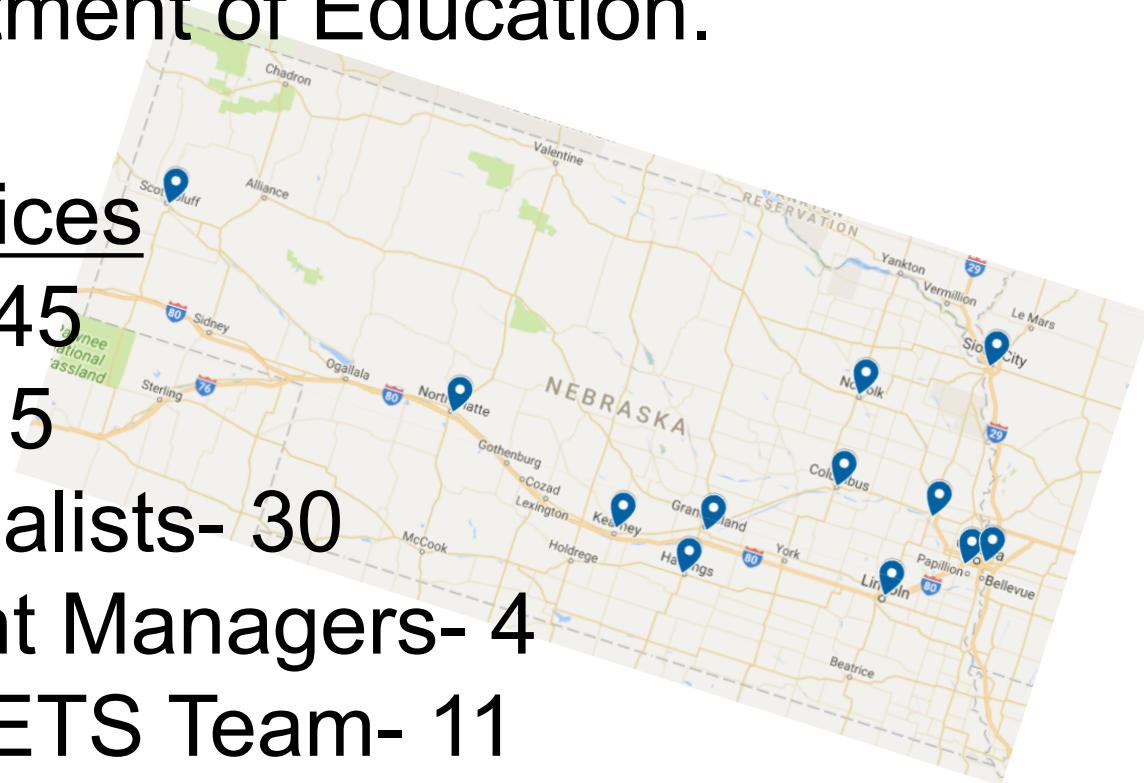
VR Counselors- 45

VR Evaluators- 15

Placement Specialists- 30

Business Account Managers- 4

Designated Pre-ETS Team- 11



# JD-VRTAC Project Background

- Applied for TA to develop and provide training to staff on the Customized Employment components and competencies with a focus on business networking, business and employer practices, job analysis, and development and negotiation.

# JD-VRTAC Project Purpose and Goals

1. Agency buy-in of Customized Employment
2. Development of Business Engagement competencies
3. Development of CE components and competencies for staff and providers
4. Increase Business Engagement in Customized Employment

# JD-VRTAC Project Implementation

## **Alignment with other priorities of the agency:**

- Job-driven approach
- Meet You Where You Are
- Section 511 of WIOA
- Person-Centered Philosophy
- Hiring of 4 BAM's
- Employer Contact Application & Talent Bank

# What is Customized Employment?

*A flexible process to personalize the employment relationship between a job candidate and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both.*

- Task reassignment
- Modified job description by negotiation (carving)
- Job sharing
- Self-employment

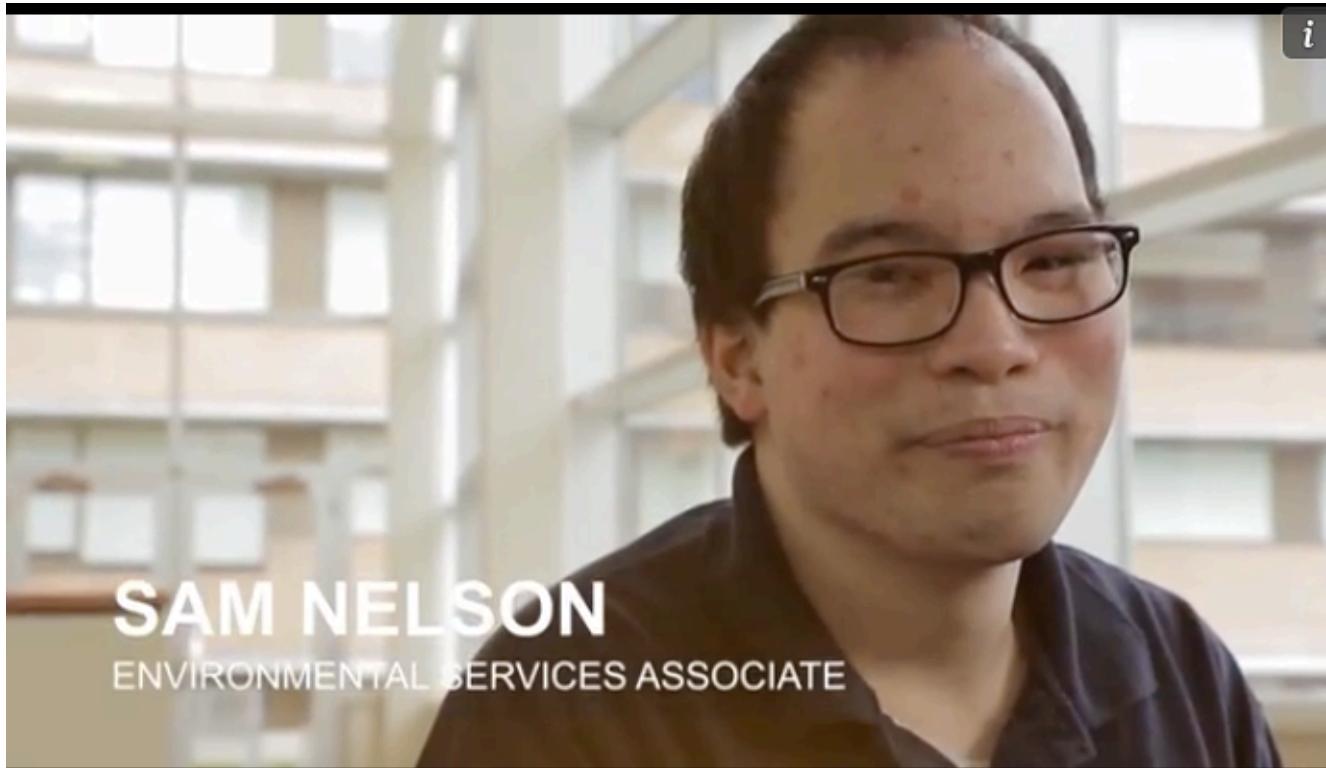
# JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

## Customized Employment

- Agreement with DD on funding transfer to serve more individuals with I/DD.
- VCU training for CE and Task Analysis Training
- Discovery- *VR Profile for SE or CE & Sample*
- Statewide rollout training- 9 locations
- Success videos released



# Success Video

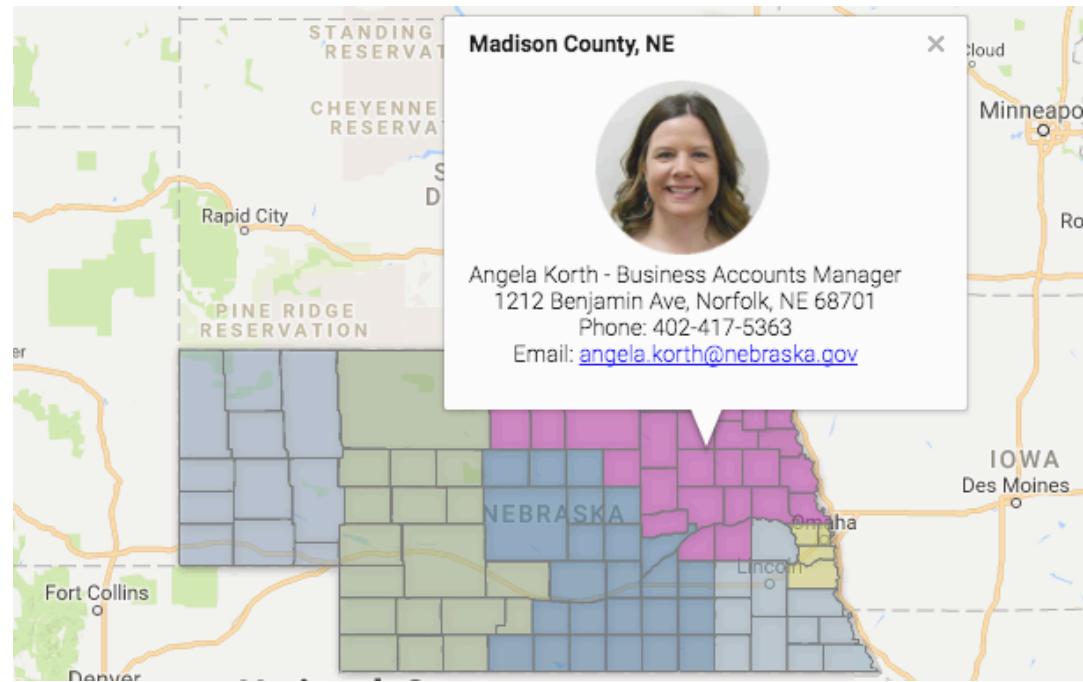


Watch the full video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6I2MtHS01Tk>

# JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

## Leading our Business Outreach

- Nebraska VR Placement Specialists
- Nebraska VR Business Account Managers (BAMs)



# JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

## Business Outreach Strategies

- Identify existing relationships to determine primary points of contact
- Be aware of VR candidate pool and areas of interest/career choice (discussion from WIN/Jobsville and Talent Bank)
- Develop rapid engagement sites
- Identify potential customized employment opportunities, position creation etc.

# JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

## Communicating Business Needs

- WIN Meeting
- QE2 Employer Contact Database

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Foley, Lindy - Outlook W" with the URL [https://qe2.nebraska.gov/employer-contact/employers?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=%Bname=search\\_start%5D=Walmart&q=%Bcity\\_cont%5D=&q=%Bstate\\_id\\_eq%5D=&q=%Bzip\\_co](https://qe2.nebraska.gov/employer-contact/employers?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=%Bname=search_start%5D=Walmart&q=%Bcity_cont%5D=&q=%Bstate_id_eq%5D=&q=%Bzip_co). The page has a header with links for "QE2 Main Menu", "General Search", "By VR Contact", "By Team", "By BAM", and "By Employment Opportunities". A green button labeled "New Employer" is visible. Below it is a search form titled "Search Employers" with fields for "Employer's full name" (containing "Walmart"), "City", "State" (dropdown), "Zip Code", "Status" (dropdown), and a "Search" button. The main content area is titled "Employers Found" and displays a table of results:

Name	Address	City	State	Zip	Business Contact	Primary VR Contact	Status	Show	Edit	Delete
Walmart	2727 Cornhusker Dr	South Sioux City	NE	68776-3913	Eric	Michaelson, Kara	Active	<button>Show</button>	<button>Edit</button>	<button>Delete</button>
Wal-Mart	818 E 23rd St	Columbus	NE	68601-3866	Steve Mgr - Tamela and Jackie in HR	Konsel, Marlene	Active	<button>Show</button>	<button>Edit</button>	<button>Delete</button>
Walmart	1606 S 72nd St.	Omaha	NE	68124	Arlena/Sherry	Arter, Zach	Active	<button>Show</button>	<button>Edit</button>	<button>Delete</button>
Walmart	10504 S 15th St	Bellevue	NE		Tracy or Jeanne	Arter, Zach	Active	<button>Show</button>	<button>Edit</button>	<button>Delete</button>
Walmart	2451 N 90th Street	Omaha	NF	68134	Manya (first name) or Ken	Reisinger, Dave	Active	<button>Show</button>	<button>Edit</button>	<button>Delete</button>

# JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

QE2 Main Menu

General Search

By VR Contact

By Team ▾

By BAM ▾

By Employment Opportunities

New Employer

## Search Employers

Employer's full name

Walmart

City

State

-Select-

Zip Code

Status

-Select-

Search

## Employers Found

Name ↑↓	Address ↑↓	City ↑↓	State ↑↓	Zip ↑↓	Business Contact ↑↓	Primary VR Contact ↑↓	Status ↑↓			
Walmart	2727 Cornhusker Dr	South Sioux City	NE	68776-3913	Eric	Michaelson, Kara	Active	Show	Edit	Delete
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# JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

## Business Outreach Tools

**VR NEBRASKA**

**Creative Hiring Opportunities**

Nebraska VR offers many innovative ways to introduce you to potential workers. Training programs can be designed to meet your specific needs and are "customized" according to the skill level of the trainee.

The Nebraska VR Business Account Manager or Employment Specialist will review your needs, offer qualified candidates, and develop a training plan with you before the new trainee/employee starts working or training. The Specialist will assist you with any questions you may have and provide technical assistance during training and any follow-up services you may need.

**Customized Training Options**

**Company Tours**

Company tours are a great way to introduce potential candidates to your business. For individuals interested in a career in your industry, a tour can provide a real-world understanding of your workplace, the skills needed to be successful and other important information.

**Mock Interviews**

A mock interview is an emulation of an actual interview used for training purposes. Your willingness to conduct a mock interview provides an opportunity for the candidate to gain experience while receiving constructive feedback from an actual employer.

**Informational Interviews**

An informational interview is a meeting held with a human resources director, management personnel, or seasoned employee in which an individual seeks advice on a career, industry, or profession. The experience is meant to provide the candidate with an opportunity to ask general questions about the company, compensation, education requirements, and to learn about the benefits available to potential new hires.

**Risk Free Trial/On-the-Job Evaluation (OJJE)**

For individuals who may meet some, but not all of your skill requirements, this option provides an opportunity to evaluate the

Search vr.nebraska.gov

**Explore**

Home  
Who We Are  
Our History  
Our Purpose, Mission, and Values  
From Our Director  
Nebraska VR Careers  
Voter Registration  
Nebraska VR State Plan 2014  
pathway to Employment Video Series  
Find an Office  
Connect With Us

**Translate**

**Pathway to Employment Video Series** Share: [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)

Watch videos to see how Nebraska VR services work for clients and business partners.

**Transitioning from School to Work**

**Job Immersion Training to Customized Employment**

The **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)** is a federal income tax credit incentive provided to private sector employers. An employer may be eligible for WOTC when they hire from certain target groups of job seekers who face employment barriers. The WOTC tax credit is a one-time tax credit for each new hire and there is no limit to the number of new hires who can qualify an employer for a tax credit.

Employers that hire Nebraska VR's qualified candidates may claim the **WOTC**. Nebraska VR's Employment Specialists will access our candidate pool to find individuals with skills for your specific job openings then assist with the process required to apply for up to \$2400 in federal tax credits.



ExploreVR



# JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

## Resources

### Nebraska VR Business Site

- <http://vr.nebraska.gov/business/>



# Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Systems change takes time
- Change is hard
- Referrals are up significantly; Teams have all been realigned to meet the needs
- Focus on staff strengths with new initiatives

# JD-VRTAC Project Today (current status)

- Updated Service Agreements with I/DD Providers
- Newly approved Supported AND Customized Employment Milestone fee schedules
- Increasing effective communication with all partners
- WIN meeting promotion
- Letter sent to all school districts
  - <http://vr.nebraska.gov/resources/pdfs/WIOAStudentsMemo.pdf>

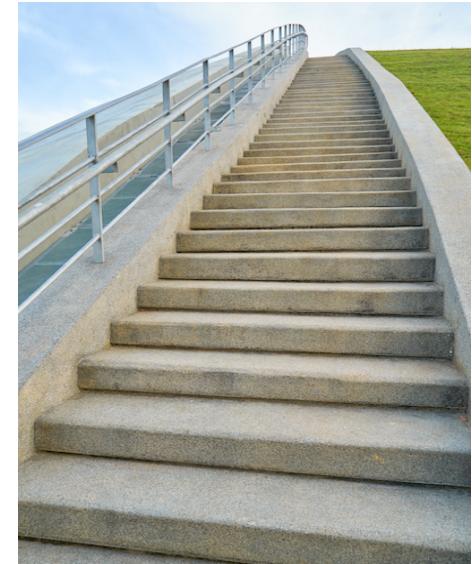


# What was most helpful about receiving TA?

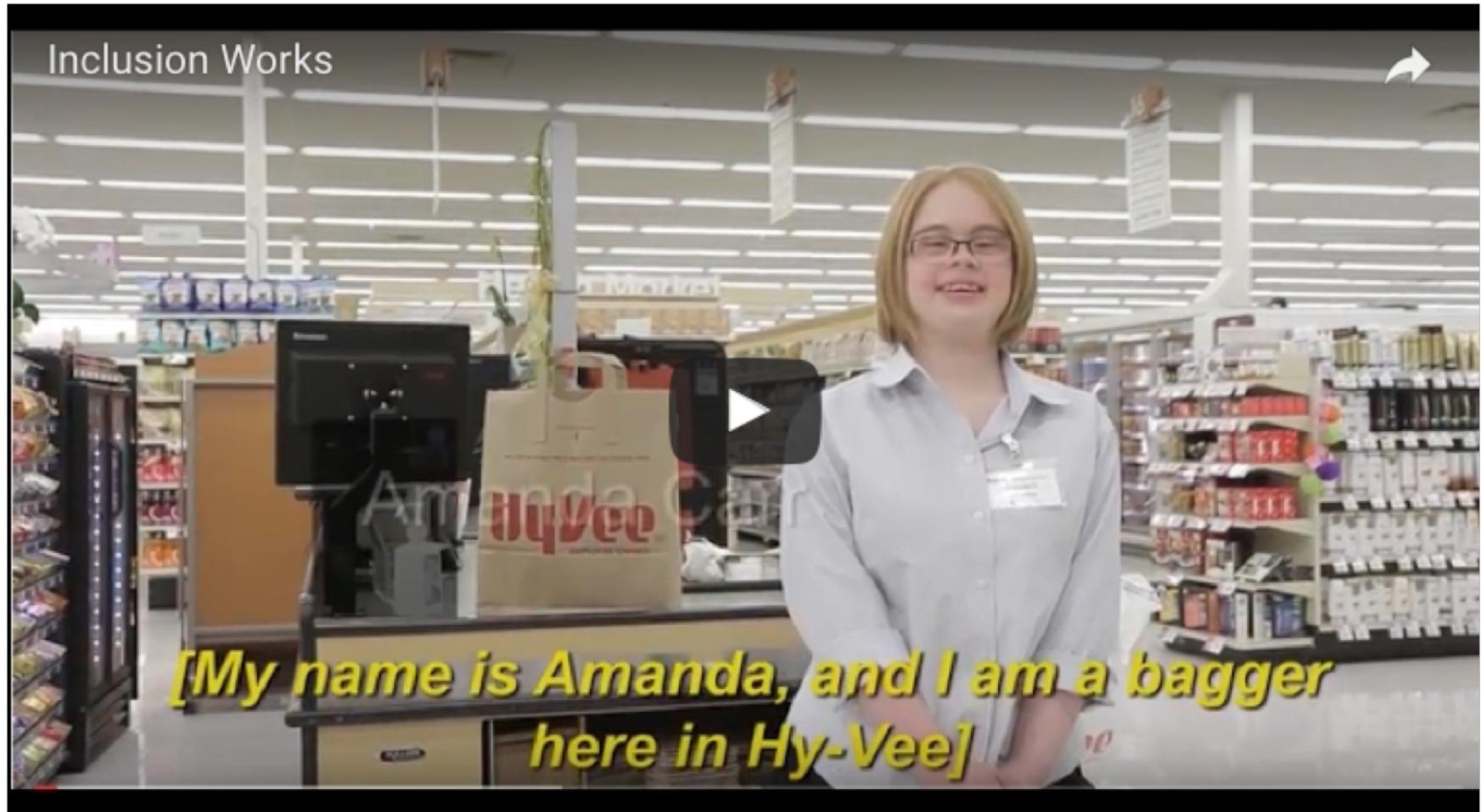
- Ability to connect and learn from other states
- Presenter contacts
- State contacts who were experienced in customized employment (policies and procedures)

# Next Steps, Future Directions, and Goals

- Further CE training planned
- Additional Job Restructuring Training
- Job Coach training
- Expansion of WIN Meetings
- WIOA impact Letter to Families



# Other Video Resources



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhngDjEMaJ0>



# Questions?

# Contact Information

## Nebraska VR Contact Information:

- Paige Rose: [paige.rose@nebraska.gov](mailto:paige.rose@nebraska.gov)
- Lindy Foley: [lindy.foley@nebraska.gov](mailto:lindy.foley@nebraska.gov)

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