

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

Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

## **Integrating Labor Market Information and Engaging Employers to Hire Minors: An Overview PA OVR's Completed JD-VRTAC Project**

Sara Gales, Training Director  
Vondol Hammond, Business Services Specialist  
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# JD-VRTAC Goals

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

## The JD-VRTAC aims to...

- Identify, adapt, embed, and sustain job-driven practices into VR agencies, **leading to improved employment outcomes** for people with disabilities.
- Focus on “**job-driven**” **VR services & supports** to persons with disabilities, employers & customized training providers.
- **Improve skills** of state VR agency staff, other rehabilitation professionals and providers of VR services.

## Four Topic Areas:



# 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 (TA)

- Each state is assigned to a TA Team
- TA activities vary based on project needs, as outlined in mutually agreed upon TA Plan
- TA can be delivered via regular contact via email, TA Conference Calls, and/or site visits



# JD-VRTAC Learning Collaborative

- 19 state VR agencies
- Learning Collaborative states benefit from:
  - 2 in-person meetings to provide project updates, collaborate across agencies, and participate in topical discussions
  - Conference calls with cohort to discuss job-driven topics



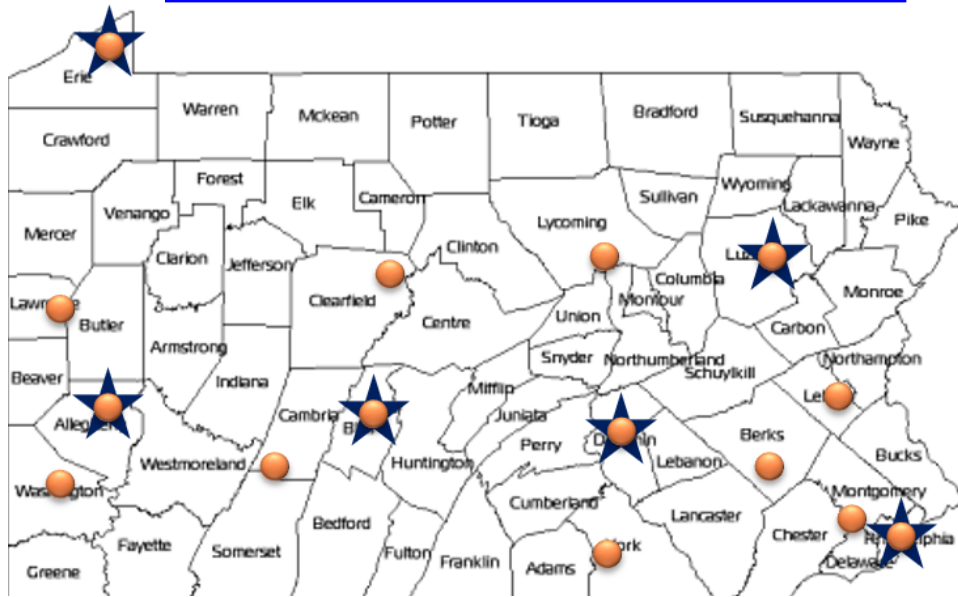
# Webinar Objectives

- PA OVR Background: Structure and Services
- PA JD-VRTAC Two-Part Project: Background and Goals
- *Implementation, Accomplishments, and the Future – Part 1*
- *Implementation, Accomplishments, and the Future – Part 2*
- Overview of TA and Learning Collaborative Experience
- Overall Challenges and Lessons Learned
- Moderated Q&A, as submitted through Chat Box



# PA OVR Background: Structure

[Link to PA OVR District Office Directory](#)



- Housed in the [Department of Labor and Industry](#)
- 15 [Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services \(BVRs\)](#)
- 6 [Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services \(BBVS\)](#)
- [Hiram G. Andrews Center \(HGAC\) in Johnstown, PA](#)
- Bureau of Central Operations
- [Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing \(ODHH\)](#)



# PA OVR Background: Services

[Link to Vocational Rehabilitation Services](#)

[Link to Blindness and Visual Services](#)

## Vocational Rehabilitation

- Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Diagnostic Services
- Vocational Evaluation
- Counseling and Guidance
- Transition Services
- Restoration Services
- Training Services:
- Vehicle Modifications
- Home Modifications
- Placement Services

## Additional via BBVS

- Blindness skills training
- Mobility instruction
- Instruction on performing daily living activities
- Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program (BEP)
- Independent Living Skills
- Specialized Children's Services





# PA OVR JD-VRTAC: Two-Part Project Goals

- **PART 1: Integrating Labor Market Information (LMI) into the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Process**
  - Overall Goal: To equip field staff with the knowledge to blend existing information about labor market trends with customer abilities, limitations and interests to develop appropriate job goals, with the hope of increasing successful long-term placements.
- **PART 2: Engaging Employers to Hire Minors**
  - Overall Goal: To develop an effective method to target employers/businesses to increase Work-Based Learning Experiences for Students with Disabilities, particularly minors, in order to meet this enhanced priority under WIOA.



# PA OVR JD-VRTAC:

Two-Part Project Aligned with JD-VRTAC and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

## WIOA

1. **Students with disabilities**
2. **Employer Engagement**
3. Cross-Agency Collaboration
4. Assistive Technology
5. **Competitive Integrated Employment**

## JD-VRTAC

1. **Business Engagement**
2. Employer Supports
3. **Labor Market Information**
4. Customized Training Providers



Implementation, Accomplishments, and the Future – Part 1

## **Integrating LMI into the VR Process**

Sara Gales, Training Director



# PA OVR JD-VRTAC Project: Implementation – Part 1

- Develop detailed Project Plan, revising as needed
- Connect with staff from the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) re: available LMI Tools
- Assess CWIA website and recommend improvements
- Develop LMI Awareness/Use Survey
- Feb 2016: Survey staff (pre-test)
- Develop training curriculum, revising as needed
- **May 17, 2016: Curriculum delivered via videoconference**
- Aug 2016: Survey staff (post-test)
- Analyze pre- and post- survey results



# Part 1: Training Development

\*PowerPoint available as downloadable file

## Integrating LMI into the VR Process

- 39 Available CWIA Products
- Narrowed to 10 Targeted CWIA Products
- 2-hour videoconference
- Statewide professional staff
- 3 Panel Presenters

## 80 PowerPoint Slides\* Covering:

- Background: JD-VRTAC, WIOA, Definitions, Survey Results
- Information
- Application
- Brainstorming
- Questions



# Part 1: Training Content

## Targeted CWIA Products

1. PAWorkStats Publications
2. County Profiles
3. Monthly Press Releases
4. Top 50 Employers
5. Top 50 Industries
6. Occupational Projections
7. Occupational Wages
8. High Priority Occupations
9. Career Guides
10. Occupational Videos

## Flow of Information

- How to Access
- Sample (Sample Packet)
- Description
- Conceptualization
- Application
  - Offer Suggestions for VR Integration
  - **Brainstorm** additional



# Part 1: Training Feedback

## *(126 Staff Evaluations)*

PROS	CONS
“...valuable for counseling, program development, and business services”	“...the first part of the presentation could have been cut out.”
“...will use this info in training VRCs to use in C&G!”	“...went through slides and content a little too quickly”
“...WorkStats printout was fantastic! “	“...have the info included in the slides and not a sample packet.”
“...Appreciate the opportunity to be included as a provider.”	Should have “...first-hand experience during training to use CWIA website.”



# Part 1: Analyzing Pre-/Post-Surveys

- Survey response data point to the effectiveness of the LMI training in several areas, however...
- OVR did encounter a number of challenges in the administration of the pre- and post-training survey instruments.
  - Survey Target Audience Too Broad
  - Significant Differences in Survey Respondent Groups
- Inconsistent data across the survey response sets and impacted the agency's ability to compare and analyze the two sets effectively.





# Part 1: Pre-/Post-Survey Challenges

- **“Describe your opinion on the following statement: ‘Labor market information (LMI) should be included in vocational planning with OVR customers.’”**
  - Post-training, the proportion of respondents who indicated they agree or strongly agree with the above statement actually decreased (not expected), while the proportion of respondents who indicated they disagree or strongly disagree also decreased (expected).
- **“Do you currently use LMI as part of your vocational planning with OVR customers?”**
  - Post-training, the proportion of “Yes” responses decreased and the proportion of “No” responses increased (not expected).



# Part 1: Comparison of Pre-/Post-Survey

- **Nearly 50% decrease** occurred in the proportion of respondents who indicated they “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” with the statement, “Labor market information should be included in vocational planning with OVR customers.”
- **Nearly 4% increase** occurred in the proportion of respondents who indicated they are familiar with the PA Workstats website from the Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA).
- **More than 6% increase** in the proportion of respondents who indicated they use the Commonwealth Workforce Information & Analysis’ PA Workstats website as a resource for vocational planning with OVR customers.



# PA OVR JD-VRTAC Project: Current Status – Part 1

- ✓ Pre-training survey administered
- ✓ Training designed and delivered, as planned
  - x *Provided one simple pathway for website access and Sample Packet, rather than adding a hands-on “computer lab” component as initially planned*
- ✓ Post-training survey administered

**PA JD-VRTAC Project: Part 1 = COMPLETE!**



# Part 1: Possible Future Directions



- Encourage new/additional staff to view recorded webinar sessions
- Include the use of Labor Market Information in Back to Basics Training Modules
- Attempt longer term outcome measures



Implementation, Accomplishments, and the Future – Part 2

## **ENGAGING EMPLOYERS TO HIRE MINORS**

Vondol Hammond, Business Services and Outreach Specialist



# PA OVR JD-VRTAC Project: Implementation – Part 2

- Develop detailed Project Plan, revising as needed
- Connect with Business Roundtable via Governor's Advisory Committee
- Draft Business Roundtable Discussion Questions
- Dec 15, 2015: Facilitate Business Roundtable Discussion
- Research unique considerations when hiring minors
- Develop Employer Engagement strategies
- Develop training curriculum, revising as needed
- Hire new BSRs, focused on students
- **June 15, 2016: Curriculum delivered via videoconference**



# Part 2: Training Development

\*PowerPoint available as downloadable file

## Engaging Employers to Increase Paid WBLE for Students

- 11 Concerns from Business Roundtable
- Narrowed to 8 Unique Considerations
- 2-hour videoconference
- All statewide professional staff
- 3 Rotating Presenters

### **61 PowerPoint Slides\* Covering:**

- Background: JD-VRTAC, WIOA, Definitions, Roundtable
- Information
- Application
- Brainstorming
- Questions



# Part 2: Training Content

## Hiring Minors: Considerations

1. Work Hours and Breaks
2. Prohibited Occupations
3. Confidentiality
4. Clearances
5. State Licensing Requirements
6. Civil Service Restrictions
7. Unions Environments
8. Other General Concerns

## Flow of Information

- Information/Facts
- Refer to additional resources
- Offer pre-planned suggestions for application
- Application
  - Offer Suggestions for addressing unique considerations
  - **Brainstorm** additional





# Part 2: Training Feedback

## *(139 Staff Evaluations)*

PROS	CONS
“...Better able to prepare customers for work-based learning opportunities.”	“Knowledge base seemed inconsistent.”
“...brainstorming gave insight...”	“Brainstorming not effective.”
“Good opportunities for feedback/discussion/questions.”	“Switched presenters too often; distracting for staff.”
“Links to resources were very useful.”	Need “more focus on BSRs and their role.”



# Part 2: Newly Specialized Staff

- Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) Business Services Representative (BSR)
  - Job description for a specialized position
  - Posted through Civil Service
- Originally targeted two district offices
  - **Pittsburgh:** PETS BSR hired
  - **Philadelphia:** PETS BSR hired (has not started)
  - *Expanding:* Wilkes-Barre...



# Part 2: Current Status

- ✓ Business Roundtable Discussion held
- ✓ Training designed and delivered, largely as planned
  - x *Expanded equal and immediate access for all staff, rather than limiting to targeted staff in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh as initially planned*
- ✓ VR Team has newly specialized staff

**PA JD-VRTAC Project: Part 2 = COMPLETE!**



# Part 2: Possible Future Directions



- Encourage new/additional staff to view recorded webinar sessions
- Incorporate Hiring Minors into onboarding for new Business Service Representatives
- Consider additional PETS BSRs
- Attempt longer term outcome measures



# PA OVR JD-VRTAC Project:

Technical Assistance | Learning Collaborative Experience

- Technical Assistance: Calls, Site Visits, Email
  - Assistance with assessing CWIA website
  - Feedback on Survey/Roundtable Questions and Results
  - Practice run through of training content during site visit
- Learning Collaborative: Calls, Meetings
  - Feedback on project plan
  - Sharing ideas and resources
  - Asked to serve as a positive model for other projects



# PA OVR JD-VRTAC Project: Challenges

- Aggressive Timeline
- Delays Beyond Control
  - Examples: CWIA website changes; Civil Service posting/hiring process
- Training Logistics
  - Examples: Distance learning; Voluntary participation
- Attempt to Follow a Research Model
  - Challenges with pre-/post- test survey, as discussed
  - May not perfectly align with day to day practice
  - Difficult to track immediate impact (3 months vs. 2 years in VR)
  - Unable to identify an exact agent of change (WIOA, PETS, etc.)



# PA OVR JD-VRTAC Project:

## Lessons Learned – General

- ❑ Set **achievable** goals within timeframe.
- ❑ Consider **other commitments** when planning.
- ❑ **Plan** for delays and **adjust** as needed.
- ❑ **Share responsibility** whenever possible.
- ❑ **Include appropriate personnel** in all aspects.



# PA OVR JD-VRTAC Project:

## Lessons Learned – Training Development

- ❑ Determine what staff should be **able to do** after this training.
- ❑ Figure out what would **motivate staff** to learn about the topic.
- ❑ Research topic thoroughly. Assess, prioritize, and **simplify**.
- ❑ Always **keep desired application in mind**.
- ❑ **Anticipate** possible comments, questions, or concerns.
- ❑ **Be prepared** to respond to anticipated questions.
- ❑ **Follow-up** with supplemental information as needed.





# Questions?

In the time remaining...

**Webinar Facilitator will read questions submitted through the chat box aloud.**

Presenters will respond as time allows.



# PA OVR JD-VRTAC:

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