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>> SYDNEY GEIGER: Hello everyone, welcome to The Council of State Government’s third webinar in our series in recognition of the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, “Getting Ready for Work ‑ Youth Transition and Guideposts for Success.” I am Sydney Geiger, a policy analyst at The Council of State Governments and a team member of the CAPE youth team. This past July 26 marked the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Over the past 30 years the ADA has resulted in significant improvements to educational public accommodations, and independent and community living and employment to individuals with disabilities. To celebrate this legislation the Council of State Governments in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Employment Policy is hosting a six‑part webinar series. Is receiving high quality support services and opportunities that they need to successfully transfer from secondary education in to employment or higher education. CAPE youth will premiere our newest publication.

I would like to thank The Council of State Governments national chair Joan Ballweg, Deputy Assistant Secretary Jennifer Sheehy and our incredible panel of speakers and our fantastic partners at ODEP as well as the state exchange on employment and disability, and the Cornell Yang Tang Institute on employment and disability who have made this webinar possible. I want to draw your attention to a few housekeeping items. If we can go on to the next slide. After the webinar it will be available to view on our website with a transcript and the slides. They will be accessible in a PDF transcript under the ADA30 tab. And throughout the presentation if you have any questions for our panelists or in general you can submit them through the chat feature. We do have closed captioning available. We will send the link in the chat as well. And to reduce noise during the conversation we ask that you silence anything ‑‑ we have all participants muted during the webinar. And we ask that you turn off your camera to help our technology work smoothly.

Looks like we have a powerpoint backup and there is that closed captioning link that. Will be in the chat as the link there which is where the recording will be after the webinar.

All right. Without further delay let's go ahead and get started. We will start with some opening remarks. We are honored this morning to have a couple of special guests providing opening remarks. We have the U.S. Department of Labor Deputy Assistant Secretary Jennifer Sheehy. The mission of ODEP is to develop policy that increases job opportunities for youth and young adults with disabilities. In 2016 Deputy Assistant Secretary Jennifer Sheehy was appointed by the President to the AbilityOne Commission. Prior to her current position she spent ten years at the U.S. Department of Education in various roles, including acting as the director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, acting deputy and special assistant to the assistant secretary of office of special education and rehabilitative services. Jennifer came to the Department of Education from the Presidential Task Force on employment of adults with disabilities where she was a senior policy advisor and served a detail as associate director in the White House Domestic Policy Council. So we are so honored to have Deputy Assistant Secretary Jennifer Sheehy here with us today. Thank you so much for joining us. And I'm going to pass it over to you to say a few words.

>> JENNIFER SHEEHY: Thank you so much. This is terrific. I have been looking forward to this release and this webinar for a long time. Our Office of Disability Employment Policy was created in 2001 because there was a need to coordinate the multiple programs and services and policies that help ensure success for people with disabilities. We believe it is super important especially to help young people with disabilities launch a meaningful and successful career. The Guidepost was a policy framework that our office, ODEP, introduced with its grantee, back then the National Collaborative for Workforce Development for youth in 2005. It is a little overdue that we needed to update this given everything that has transpired in the policy arena since then. And now we are really, really excited that CSG and your state members are leading this workforce because ‑‑ (audio cut out)

>> SYDNEY GEIGER: Deputy Assistant Secretary Jennifer Sheehy, it sounds like you are frozen for us. Maybe try disabling your camera and muting and unmuting. That may help. We will give her just a second to see if she can reconnect to audio. And if not we will move on.

All right. Looks like we will have her join back in here in just a second once we get her audio going. But we will go ahead and move on. Next I would like to introduce CSG's incredible national chair representative Joan Ballweg to provide some opening remarks. First elected to the Wisconsin assembly in 2004 Representative Joan Ballweg is the current chair of the joint committee for review of administrative rules, chair of the task force on suicide prevention and cochair of the joint committee for review of administrative rules. Her legislative service comes after being a business and civic leader in South Central Wisconsin. She has been a passionate advocate for children and young adults and dedicated much of her career on policy around youth and suicide prevention among other issues. So please join me in welcoming CSG National Chair Representative Joan Ballweg.

>> JOAN BALLWEG: Thank you. Can you hear me all right?

>> SYDNEY GEIGER: Yes, you sound great.

>> JOAN BALLWEG: Okay. Thanks. First of all, I want to extend my appreciation to you, Sydney, and the CSG team for working on this particular project to move it forward. Really do appreciate the partnership that you have with the U.S. Department of Labor and looking forward to hearing the rest of Assistant Secretary Jennifer Sheehy's remarks on what the importance is of making this happen. I think we are going to have to rethink a little bit of this and reflect how as our economy comes back that we don't leave these folks behind. I think we had been doing a wonderful job in trying to move forward in bringing everyone in to our economy. And I'm afraid that this segment of our population might be ‑‑ might be left behind as we try to get in to our post‑ COVID economy.   
 So thank you for bringing this entire idea forward and keeping it alive. I do know that transitioning from high school to employment in our post‑secondary education is a stressful and challenging time for all youth, especially those youth with disabilities. And I appreciate that we are going to learn today from today's webinar what youth with disabilities on average have lower educational attainment levels and are less likely to be employed than peers without disabilities. So youth with disabilities benefit from high quality transition services that better educate, give them better education and employment opportunities, thus successful and happy lives throughout ‑‑ throughout their lives.   
 Now this webinar today will explain five evidence‑based interventions that will ensure the comprehensive delivery of programs and services for youth with disabilities. And by supporting youth transition states can strengthen their economies, increase opportunities of employment and create a more inclusive workforce which in the end makes all our society a better, more welcoming place for all citizens no matter what ‑‑ no matter who they are and what their physical capabilities may be in life.   
 So thank you again for this opportunity. Please encourage for anyone who is on the webinar to share this once they are on recordings and promoted throughout your connections so that even more people are available to see this program. I know that the Council of State Governments has worked very hard to make sure we are moving forward with programming for all our constituents in legislatures and states throughout the United States and make sure that these opportunities are vibrant and flexible for all of us to participate in.

So with that we will go back to Sydney and hopefully we can hear from Deputy Assistant Jennifer Sheehy. And thank you all for participating, and thank you very much for our experts that are going to be providing this information on the webinar today.

>> SYDNEY GEIGER: Thank you so much, Representative Ballweg. Really appreciate that and appreciate you taking the time to join us. I know how busy you must be right now, but that you are not continuing to prioritize this issue. It is very appreciated and we will be hearing from ODEP later on in the webinar. So we will be hearing from Kirk Lew who will wrap up what Assistant Deputy Jennifer Sheehy was saying. I would like to introduce our moderator for this afternoon is Andrew Karhan. Andrew and his team are one of the critical partners in the Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth, also known as CAPE youth. Andrew has over 20 years of experience in the field of vocational rehabilitation and administrated programs for individuals with disabilities and providing technical assistance on the implementation of best practices and employment services across the country.

Most recently Andrew has centered his work on the implementation of cross systems initiatives including the development of the New York employment services system. Andrew provided leadership to the New York State PROMISE initiative and fostered the vision and leadership for a statewide administrative employment network under the Social Security Administration's ticket to work program. His resume is very impressive. And we are excited to work closely with him and have him as our moderator this morning. Thank you so much for joining us, Andrew. I will pass it over to you.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Great. Thank you, Sydney, for that nice overview. It is always humbling to hear somebody introduce you like that. And I'm like is that really me. So I'm glad to be here and glad to be partnering with CSG and ODEP on this initiative. This is really a critical time and a critical juncture in our nation's history. And I think it is particularly a critical time for youth and young adults with disabilities.

I wanted to spend time before we get in to our overall group discussion is to highlight the Guideposts for success and new iteration and new sort of lens on that particular topic. The Guideposts, next slide, actually goes back to 2005. It was originally published under the national collaborative of workforce and disability for youth, NCWD youth in partnership with the National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition. The overall focus that the time was really one that was very global. And it looked to provide a framework and a design for quality programming for youth and young adults with disability across a broad spectrum of systems. It aimed to really target a broad variety of audiences, whether individuals and youth with disabilities, parents, families, caregivers as well as policymakers and state level administrators. It is out there to set a true framework and Guidepost for everyone in those categories to be collectively looking at a shared vision of these are the components, things that we need to be thinking about as we are designing supports and services for youth and young adults with disabilities. These are the necessary components. Next slide.   
 As I had indicated it really does have broad implications. It crosses over secondary and post‑secondary education. It looks at career technical education. And it brings in and has implication for our vocational rehabilitation system, for our mental health systems and other health and social services across our country. The reality is that within each state there are a variety of configurations on how these particular entities are designed and set up. There is some similarity across our country and how those things are designed. But depending upon where certain agencies may sit those connections and policies that connect some of these components may be different. They may not be as strong as the neighboring state next to them and vice versa. There may be something that's stronger in the neighboring state, that isn't quite as strong in your own personal state in particularly related to some of the cross‑coordination that we know is necessary.

Next slide. What we recognized and what we really focused on with the Guideposts in this iteration was saying that we recognize that there is this broad implication and there is this broad use for what is contained in the Guideposts and its current rendition of, but what we recognize we wanted to speak in to what policymakers could do at the state level, at the local level as well as the national level to ensure that the Guideposts truly become a reality. And so, you know, the idea with the Guideposts is that a strong public policy should include a variety of things. One, it should always look to increased opportunities for youth and young adults with disabilities that are transitioning in to adulthood.

At the forefront as you are thinking about it should be how can we create better and more streamlined opportunities. There are opportunities out there, but some of the opportunities are not as easily accessed as we might want to create the kind of outcomes that we all hope to have for youth and young adults. We want to ensure that youth have access to post‑secondary education and training programs that lead to competitive integrated employment. This competitive integrated employment is a critical notion and one that was highlighted in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. It has been for a while now that this has been the lens that we have been focused on. WIOA in 2014 truly said all right, the spotlight now comes on. We are moving away from segregated employment options. We are looking at competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals in our community.

And all post‑secondary education and training programs really needed to be focused and pushing towards that, helping individuals move in to that competitive workplace environment and to meeting the standards of what employers need. We also know that public policy should require systems to support, coordinate all youth transition related programs and services. We know that WIOA went a long way in creating a catalyst for that to happen. We also know that there are a lot of things that need to still happen at the state level, at the local level to ensure that the vision of that legislation truly is captured, agreed upon at the local level and then implemented in the way that it was intended.

The vision can be there as we all know, a vision can often be there, but if it is not completely embodied in the hearts and minds of the people that are implementing it and they don't fully understand what that vision looks like or needs to look like there is going to be barriers, roadblocks towards that. Nevertheless that is our goal. We want to ensure that we are moving in that direction and that there is the cross‑coordination of those services as we move forward.

Next slide. Public policy should also establish state and local priorities relating to transition age youth. You will see pockets of where particularly transition age youth and youth with disabilities is definitely a priority. And other locales you may not see that happen. They may be a little bit behind in terms of their ability to implement WIOA or other local initiatives are. They may not be there yet and we understand that. That's okay. But the idea is that we ‑‑ we establish local and state priorities that match up with what the federal expectations are and what this overall vision is. We know that the Guidepost is based upon many, many years of strong evidence‑based research that backs up what the Guideposts put forth. So we know that there is a lot of reasoning behind it and truth in the fact that this is the direction in which we should be moving, but we know that again that implementation stage at the state and local level is often difficult. State policy should also look at providing leadership with data that will help inform the decision‑making process.

One thing that I can truly appreciate is that the need for data at the federal level, at the state level to truly make decisions around the impact of the funding but to truly say all right, well, we know that this funding is leading to good outcomes. But you need good data to prove that. And there are a number of federal initiatives, some that are funded through other federal agencies like RSA, to help VR programs with technical assistance in their tracking of data. There is other technical assistance centers like our K youth center but helping states utilize that data to make decisions around how to direct their funding, particularly in these times where fiscal resources are ever so tight and tightening because of the impact of COVID‑19 on our economy and coming out of this recession. We know that state dollars are going to be of the premium, and we are going to need to inform how to use those state dollars. You want to make sure that the data that's there is what is driving that lead us towards the best expenditure. We need policy that is going to have an evaluation framework. That anything that we put in to place that ‑‑ that we are evaluating it. That we are evaluating the impact with evidence‑based practice. That everything is based upon. Not that we can't try new things. We should be trying new things if people have creative ideas. We should be trying those creative ideas but also recognize that there is a lot of strength in both the success and failures that we have had along the way in our public policy, in the delivery of those programs where we have recognized, you know, we thought we had it right and maybe we didn't have these components right. We need to go back to the drawing board. There is a lot of knowledge and wisdom in that. And we need to learn on that and try new things while still ensuring that we maintain the components of the evidence‑based practices as we move forward.   
 So what are these Guideposts? Next slide. There are five key domains of Guideposts for the framework for the future. One is that we need to have strong school‑based preparatory experiences. I'm going to go in to all of these in detail. No. 2 is career preparation and work‑based learning experiences for youth. 3 is youth development and leadership. 4 is connecting activities. And 5 is family involvement and supports.   
 So let's go dive in a little bit and talk a little bit about the school‑based preparatory experiences. We know that schools are certainly under a unique challenge right now as students are coming back in to school buildings some partly, some not at all, depending on what state and locale you live in the approach may be different. That doesn't take away from the need for the school‑based experiences to be rigorous and relevant and inclusive.

One thing we want to see right now in this environment is to ensure that youth with disabilities are not lost, that they still have a rigorous and inclusive academic and programmatic experience within their local school district. And, you know, does not come without its challenges. We recognize that this is ‑‑ this time has caused a significant amount of challenges within a variety of our systems and the school systems are not alone in those challenges. We think that it is important to align this in the learning with the local industry needs. For example, are the career technical education programs that are available to youth, are they aligning with the local labor market information that is available in that region? Are, for example, students even in this time, are they able to access those career technical education environments in this way and do the same kind of way that they would have done if those career technical education experiences are hands‑on. Are they able to do that in a virtual environment and still get the value. The answer to that is no.

So finding creative ways to still build skills in some of those really hands‑on career paths for youth is something we still need to figure out and we need to do that like this slide says in a safe and supportive environment. Safety obviously of all of our students and all of our youth is ‑‑ comes first. And so thinking about how do you do that in this environment is very critical, even post‑COVID when we come out of this, these principles still apply. How do we provide the most effective educational environment with effective educators that's going to lead to good outcomes that move in to that post‑secondary world for youth. Next slide.   
 The next component is one that is near and dear to my heart. It is critical that students and young adults with disabilities have the opportunity to have diverse and exploratory experiences in real work environments as early as possible in the transition age to get them in and engaged in working experiences, to learn what they like, what they don't like, all of the things that are critical but to build those critical skills. We also know that there should be an emphasis here that those experiences should be based upon the student's strengths. One significant challenge that still exists in many pockets of our system is a fallback to the deficit‑based thinking of eligibility for particular services. And we recognize that some of the components are associated with making individual eligible for whether it is our VR services or for our special education services or for our developmental disability services for mental health services, they are all based upon some level of deficit or a need that an individual is coming to the table with. We recognize that that's there. But once that determination has been made, we need to quickly switch that and say all right, we have got that procedural component off the table.

Let's move towards talking about strengths. What are the strengths that the student, young adult with a disability bring to the table that are going to be able to be capitalized upon not only now in their work‑based learning experiences but also leading to a productive career or post‑secondary education environment. It is critical that we all collectively maintain that as we are designing programs. We also know that these need to intersect as I said with particular skill building and trade specific opportunities that are local in the local labor market. And that they need to work around some of those school and academic schedules to make those things happen, to be creative and create opportunities for youth. Next slide.   
 I think you skipped one. No, I'm sorry. Go ahead. I'm off. So youth development and leadership, youth clearly are our future and that's one of the mantras that we led with in redesign of our Guideposts. And it is in the new title of Guideposts for Success Framework for the Future as youth are truly our future. This is the foundational principle that should be guiding the thinking of all of us as leaders now to create a pathway for the next group of leaders as we come forward. We recognize that leadership can be defined in a variety of ways. And, you know, I have spent time certainly researching and looking at this topic of leadership throughout my career. And there are probably more definitions to what good leadership is than there are people on this webinar now.   
 We reach ‑‑ it would be likely if you asked what leadership was we would define it in a slightly different way. But I think one thing that many people can agree upon that there is a level of influence that comes with leadership. And sometimes that influence is really, really positive and sometimes that influence can be bad. We know that, you know, leadership can influence in negative ways as well. One can argue is that really leadership. But it is a matter of influence. And what we want to create is opportunities for youth to lead and youth with disabilities to lead. We know that many of our systems have hidden biases within them that automatically preclude opportunities for youth and young adults with disabilities to have the opportunity to lead. And we need to identify ways to create those opportunities, to bring those biases to the forefront and eliminate those barriers so that youth truly see that they have an option and an ability to lead and can develop those leadership skilling. Next slide.   
 In the final component or second to final is the connecting activities. We know connecting activities are critically important. One national project that I worked on and I have seen some of my colleagues logging on here. They have also worked on the initiative, the PROMISE initiative. What we learned in that initiative was there truly is a need for these connecting activities. We often refer back to Maslow's hierarchy of needs and we know there are some faulty logic in Maslow's complete thinking, but there is some basis to truth to what he proposed in his model. Basic needs to be met before people are ready to move in to opportunities or have the opportunity to engage and be thinking about a different future of employment and post‑secondary environments. We recognize that there is a lot of complexities. There is intersectionality of a variety of things that may be happening in youth and young adult's life. There may be trauma and other family issues. There may be crises that are happening on a daily basis. When you walk in to a youth's home and say you want to help, you find a job, they may be dealing with issues around needing to help the family get food on the table. Needing to get the power turned back on. Needing to deal with a family illness that suddenly came on or an unfortunate death that happened in the family. We all have those social pressures, but we know that individuals that are living in marginalized populations have a variety of other barriers that some of us that are going through our daily lives. We do not have those barriers. We don't have the ability to conceptualize what it may be like to live a life with those barriers and understanding the intersectionality of those. And connecting activities to the right mental health, financial literacy. All of those components are so critical to this discussion. And we need to ensure our policies have that.   
 Finally, last slide, it is family engagement. Families are a critical component. And I think now more than ever we need to be looking at how do we create environments where our services and our service delivery system are looking at family. And I define family in a very broad broad sense. This isn't just a biological thing here. This is about all of the supports that we know come in to youth and young adults' lives. It may be an individual, a foster care family. It may be their biological parents. It may be an aunt, uncle. It may be a neighbor, whoever that youth defines as their family. We know that there needs to be a family systems approach to understand what all dynamics that I referred to in the connecting activities. And what happens in that family, hands in the life of the student. And that environment is impacting them every single day. And we really need to ensure that whatever programs and policies that we put forward are multi‑level layered in their service delivery approaches and that we include mentoring, not just for the youth but for the families to ensure there is a high level of involvement in school, high level of supporting self‑determination of engagement with that family of creating a culture of change and belief that there could be a different future for the youth and young adult that might have been for the family members that are supporting them and that's a powerful measure that we need to drive home as the final component of the framework.   
 So now we are going to shift gears and have a little bit of a discussion with our panelists. I'm really excited to be joined by a group of esteemed colleagues. I will introduce first Representative Josh Cutler. He is serving in his fourth term in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. He graduated from Skidmore College with a BA in political science and a juris doctorate from Suffolk law school.   
 Also joining me is Director Keith Ozols. And he is the director of vocational rehabilitation in the state of Oregon. He has been with DHS for eight years. Keith previously served as the workforce and youth manager for vocational rehabilitation, overseeing expanding programs related to workforce engagement, benefits planning and the Oregon ticket to work program. Before he joined DHS he was the executive director of a Portland non‑profit that provides educational and employment service for people with disabilities.

Finally joining me today is Brandi Boyer Rutherford. She completed her bachelor's degree at Florida State University and went on to complete her master's degree from Troy State University. Brandi's path to transition includes work experience in the classroom as a guidance counselor and as a youth minister. Brandi has been with the Florida division of vocational rehabilitation for more than 11 years.

I just want to welcome all of you. Thank you for joining us today. And we will be starting off today's discussion by having a series of questions initially for each of you. And we will be starting with Representative Cutler here in a moment and then move on to some group discussion.

So I will jump right in to the discussion with Representative Cutler. You have served as the Vice Chair on the Joint Committee on children, families and persons with disabilities. Could you just tell us a little bit about what the committee has done and why you feel it is so important to the state of Massachusetts?

>> JOSH CUTLER: Sure. Thank you, Andrew. Welcome, everyone. It is great to be here. And I'm glad you emphasized a little bit because I could probably talk for a long time what our committee does. It has a wide swath area on public welfare and disabilities rights for children and adults with physical and developmental and intellectual disabilities. We have a great chair and a lot of bills. And it is a ‑‑ for me it has been fantastic. This is my first term serving on this committee. And so pleased to have been given this honor of this role to allow me to take a deep dive on the issue before us today, about employment of with persons with disabilities. We have formed a particular subcommittee called the Workforce Development for Persons with Disabilities, called Work Ability for short. And so we have taken a deep dive this term on this issue of the intersection of employment and persons with disabilities and look forward to talking kind of more in‑depth about that. But I learned a lot and hopefully can share some of that with our folks today. Thank you for having me on. And I think you are muted.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Yeah.

>> JOSH CUTLER: I have done that, too, myself.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Having two mutes doesn't help. If you would like, how about if you can dive a little bit in to the initiatives in the legislation that you have been engaged in with your committee, and to follow that up with what do you think are some of the good ways and best ways to ensure that policymakers are aware of the needs of individuals with disabilities, in particular youth and young adults with disabilities.

>> JOSH CUTLER: Absolutely. There is a lot of folks listening in. One of the folks is the commissioner for the blind is joining us. And he is someone we have worked with along with a lot of other stakeholders across the Commonwealth. We have people from all over the country. But we are not blessed in my state with the best weather or oil or other natural resources. Our strength is our people, our skilled workforce and that's what powers the Massachusetts economy. We can't ‑‑ COVID aside we can't afford to let anybody to put ‑‑ leave anyone on the sidelines. Before COVID happened the biggest concern I heard from employers it was so hard to find train and retain qualified employees. And so when we have this pool of employees that aren't being utilized to their full extent we need to do everything we can as policymakers to close that gap and take away those hurdles to ensure that people with disabilities of all sorts can have opportunities and succeed and flourish in a variety of employment scenarios. So that's our focus here.

The Work Ability committee has been meeting throughout the last two years. I think we have had 40 different stakeholder meetings with other government agencies and non‑profit space and a lot of businesses. And I think that's one lesson I would share, I would come back to again and again is that, you know, it is great to hire folks with different disabilities, but what I hear from employers is the business case for hiring people with disabilities is a strong one. It is not just for charity. It makes smart business sense. And I think that's the key thing that we need to get across to other employers who maybe haven't come to that realization yet. It makes smart business sense and you can talk to, you know, a big Fortune 500 company or talk to the local gas station who hires lots of folks with different disabilities.

He tells me it is a money maker for him. He is hiring employees who are happy and enjoy the work they are doing. He is saving money on employee retention costs. He has higher customer loyalty than some of his competitors. So really has helped his bottom line and it is not just the only reason he is doing it, but it is important that we look at that. And when we are talking to business people that we do spread that gospel, the message that the business case for hiring people with disabilities so strong. And I think more people need to hear that message. And that will help translate to youth, especially transitioning in employment from school and doing more with pipeline from school to employment in terms of internships and other things. That's probably the biggest thing I would say and obviously a lot more. But answer some other questions. But I think that's really important to stress to everyone.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Sure. I can appreciate that sentiment. There is a certain amount of, you know, spreading that gospel, so to speak, of getting the word out, having key leaders like yourself that are leading that, that are sharing the message that businesses are also sharing that message. One of the things that I think has been strong across our country and in many of our states is the Disability:IN, formerly called the Business Leadership Network, where it is a business, peer to peer discussion around inclusivity and hiring people with disabilities. There is a lot of strength in that with a lot of business leaders standing up and saying this is what we need. So we can have the qualified and strong workforce that we want.

>> JOSH CUTLER: Awareness is such an important factor here. Myself I will give you a quick example. We had an intern in my state office and she was in a wheelchair. She had difficulty getting through the part of the office the way the desks were set up and shame on me, I never thought of it. It made me realize and be aware that I need to do a better job of accommodation and make sure we are being as inclusive as we can. Just a level of awareness on some of these issues is not as universal as we want it to be. Whatever we can do to make folks more aware and to break down those barriers and try to bring more people with different disabilities to literally intern and work at the state house, in state houses across the nation I think will help influence poll makers to make sure being more aware of their decisions and how it can help.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Final question. What kind of resources do you feel policymakers need to assist you all in identifying and working on improving employment outcomes for youth with disabilities?

>> JOSH CUTLER: You hit the nail on the head, data is important. Having robust data and we know ‑‑ just from experience that sometimes not everyone wants to disclose that they have a disability and self‑disclosure trying to find ways to measure that. So we can get an accurate count. In Massachusetts we have passed model employer legislation and we are trying to expand on that. We are also trying to do more with contracting and use our procurement power to give out contracts to the private sector companies that have a certain number of folks with disabilities and in all different diverse employment, diverse employee pool. But trying to create those kinds of incentives and obviously that only works if we have some measure of data in terms of, you know, the numbers of folks with different disabilities in the workplace both in the government and in the private sector.

So I think that's a really big important thing. And coming back to what I said which is awareness, trying to make sure we have a broader acceptance and awareness throughout government and I think I would just finally I think we can learn a lot from the private sector. That's one thing I have noticed the private sector in many cases is doing this better than us and that's a lesson that I have taken from the two years that we have been looking in to this in Massachusetts.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Sure, sure. Yes. One other thing I wanted to touch on with you is aware of sponsored a House Bill 2990 around the authorization of people with intellectual disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorders related to getting their driver's license. We know that transportation is a critical issue. I think it is going to be even more of a critical issue particularly as some of the public transportation systems have been affected by COVID and using public transportation in this kind of time. Can you talk a little bit about your thought process behind that? What led up to it? And are there other things that you have got sort of in the pipeline that you are maybe thinking around that might be just food for thought for other policymakers to be thinking about.

>> JOSH CUTLER: Transportation, when you ask what are the hurdles, the cliff effect is something that benefits management. And then transportation is the issue that comes up the most often.

My own district in Massachusetts is more of a suburban area down south of Boston. We don't have a great robust public transportation system. It is an even bigger challenge around here and with COVID public transportation is a challenge everywhere. Is a pilot program that's been done with the ride‑sharing service, with Lyft and other ones with Uber, ride sharing programs with a consortium of disability advocates in the region and have a concierge system. That's been great. We are trying to work now to expand that kind of program and encourage that in other areas of the state because it is only really our urban areas that have significant public transportation options. So these kind of pilot programs through Uber and Lyft are important. And that's a big thing that I hear frequently is transportation. And to your question in terms of driver's licenses, one of the things that we are trying to do and this is again something ‑‑ this was a constituent of mine who came to me with this idea, concern, she had a son with a autism. He is pulled over while driving and they are not aware of his communication issues. Having a way to identify that he is someone who has autism and there may be some communication issues. She had suggested a voluntary designation on a driver's license, if a parent or an individual wanted to do that voluntarily they could do that, there is a recognition whether someone in law enforcement or any kind of interaction with a public official that this person may have some communication challenges and please factor that in so no misunderstanding. That's a piece of legislation that we are working on.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Great. I am aware of the Uber/Lyft connection around Boston and creating the last mile connection and how to get people in to public transportation and how that public/private partnership can work when built well. The critical component and phase when it is built well, I think there is a lot of components. And there has been some pros and cons that have happened in a variety of different communities across the country in relation to these types of arrangements, but it is definitely for me it is one of the those things hmmm, there is food for thought. There might be some really good pros. Let's build on those, and then look at where it may have fallen through the cracks and figure out how to fix those and create a real good option for people. So it is great to hear about those creative things happening in Massachusetts. So thank you for sharing and thank you for your leadership.   
 So I will change gears. We will move over and spend a little bit of time with Director Ozols and give Representative Cutler a break. Oregon has some innovative summer work programs. Can you share a little bit about the SWIFT program, the summer internship program? What types of careers do they move in to? And is there a dorm living option to this program? And what does that look like? If you could just jump in to what the SWIFT program is about, that would be great.

>> KEITH OZOLS: Thank you. Thank you for having me here today. I am glad to be part of this conversation. SWIFT program is a program that works with students who experience disabilities while they are in high sdool. Usually in their junior to senior year and they are working with our VR program in our programs that are partnering with the school districts. And we have an application process where they will be applying to be part of this program which is a seven to eight‑week residential program that's based in Portland, Oregon. And that residential program is where students from all over the state and very urban settings and other rural settings throughout the state can come to Portland. And they live at a dorm setting at the Portland university and they are engaged in work activities so that work we do with them leading up to the residential setting is we are doing a lot of that sort of ‑‑ that school‑based preparatory experience that you had talked about earlier in the Guidepost to success and being able to identify career interest in areas of that labor market, research, getting them prepared with some of the other activities they are going to engage in when they come and live at Portland State University.

One of those things that they do is they develop a bank account. So sometimes they have to actually get a bank account so they can work on that financial literacy because they are going to be paid in their work experience. We want them to get the experience of making deposits, how to manage their funds and their accounts. And we get them ready for this experience. Then when they do leave the school setting this is a great opportunity in the summer for them to engage in those work‑based learning experiences and that's really coordinating with school staff, parents and families and utilizing that free time that individuals have in the summer so they can experience that work‑based learning experience. And when they come to Portland what we do is we have interviewed them. And we have done a lot of their own kind of career interest surveys and were able to place them in a multiple array of different job sites. And we have had individuals work with county positions in other cities in the Portland metro area. And we have had them be able to work in a natural food store and somebody worked in a photo gallery where they were actually taking portrait photos. And then we ‑‑ we also had individuals in dog grooming because they were really interested in animals. So we really try to have a placement with the individual's identified interests. So they are able to experience that and be able to have that real life experience in that job.

And in addition to that work we have all of the sort of other activities, those connecting activities that you talked about and being able to make sure they are successful in this setting. They will get from the dorm to their work site. We work with them in the weeks beforehand to help them in orientation and travel training in preparing them for that work experience. So they can do that independently.

We also ‑‑ we do some nutritional training because they are actually managing their budget and going out and purchasing food at a grocery store, coming back to the dorms and preparing that food. So we actually have something that's like Iron Chef where the students are learning to prepare their food and eat healthy and independently live and how to take care of themselves. So those are some of the services in the ways that we get them prepared for this.   
 Now you had the question about what type of jobs do they usually go in to. And the amazing thing is that more times than not the host job site actually wants to offer them a job at the end of the summer. They see that, that return on investment, that Representative Cutler said there is that business case that people who are, you know, people who come to the job and experience disabilities there is such a benefit. And when our employers, when they see it sort of breaks down that myth. That it is humanitarian or a good thing to do. They see that sometimes our students that we are working with are the most punctual and show up and eager to work and most curious about the jobs.

We have had job offers come right out of the end of summer in their internship and they will go back to their home community because they have got one more year of their high school career to finish. And after that they will go on to a similar job after that. That's general information about this program and we are excited about being able to roll it out. We had to take a pause this summer because of COVID‑19. We did something kind of like there is that blue apron where they send a box of goods. We did that with all students that were in the program. And we helped them in their community situation, in their own home communities. We were able to work with them. So we even did it in this virtual setting, but we are hoping in the summer of 2021 we will be able to start our program up again in earnest.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: That's great. And I appreciate the fact that you have really built it upon the principles of the Guidepost. I think that team really shows threw and it is always encouraging to see that as you see somebody implementing and using those, that truly the best practices do lead to better outcomes for people. You see this engagement on the ‑‑ by the business community success, by the better engaged in the program. I love Oregon. You know that. I want to be on this SWIFT program next summer. I could spend seven weeks there in a heartbeat. I will come out and do a site visit maybe because it is ‑‑ it sounds like a tremendous program and a tremendous opportunity for the youth and young adults. It is great work.

>> KEITH OZOLS: Yes. Let me tie one more piece of that family engagement. This is the first time their child has left their home. And we have some participants where their hometown does not even have an escalator and now they are going to be living on the 7th floor of a dormitory taking public transportation. We engage families in that. We have families come to the orientation and walk them through the process. And they are more in a position to support their child in this experience. So that's another point that I miss. It is really important though.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Yeah, and that's a critical one. That's almost the most encouraging thing. And I'm sure that's a challenge when you are pulling students from all over your state, to bring them in and do that kind of engagement. It really is critical though to making sure that some of those things that you are working on will be brought back to their home community, it will work for their family unit, turn in to a longer term outcome for them. So that's encouraging. Building upon that you want to talk about the Camp LEAD and how these benefit the state of Oregon.

>> KEITH OZOLS: With SWIFT we talked a lot about a very urban setting, individuals coming from all over the state. Individuals have a wide interest in different types of work. How can we create a program for students who experience a disability, who want to work more in the forestry or the natural resources realm. We created a partnership with a couple of state parks in the state of Oregon. They are living in tents and working with the parks and park rangers to develop experiences around interpretive skills, other individuals around the state who experience disabilities can come in to parks. So that includes we created some universal design and accessibility. We have also touched on these pre‑employment transition services that are a requirement of VR agencies around the country now. And there are five of those services that we provide to those students.

So that's career exploration, counseling and post‑secondary education. It is some of those soft skills and being able to function in a work setting and self‑advocacy. And then there is that actual on‑the‑job training. So they are working alongside park rangers and others who don't experience disabilities to be able to have that different type of work. If they want to work in the woods, if they want to work outdoors, Oregon is a very large state. We have got many, many forests out here. And so that is another industry.

So going back to that labor market research, we wanted to make sure we had opportunities for students in an urban setting, but also students in this more sort of forestry or natural resources. So that's another way that we have been able to create some exposure and diversity for experiences for the students in our state.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Right. Yeah, and I think there is a lot of lessons there in your approach, particularly thinking around the diversity aspect. Oregon is not unlike a lot of other states, have a variety of regions. We have the huge Metropolitan center of New York City and there are components that are very remote. How do you create the different opportunities in those areas in comparison to something you do in New York City is something to be thinking about. A lot of other states there have creative things we can do that are going to meet the needs in multiple types of environments and geographies.

One final thing, YTP, youth to transition program. Can you talk about that? What provisions to youth in your state and what's comprised of it and how does that work?

>> KEITH OZOLS: Yeah, I would be glad to. In the spirit of this webinar highlighting 30 years of the ADA our youth transition program is turning 30 years old this year as well. And it has grown over those 30 years. It started with about seven school districts and now we are working with 120 school districts around the state in partnership with our VR program and local school districts. And we actually have our state education agency on our advisory board to that. So it is a very close‑knit community and inner working community where we have our State Department of Education, our local school districts and our VR program coordinating on those services and being able to deliver these VR and work‑related services.   
 I touched a little bit on those pre‑employment transition services. And those are some of the core services that we are providing through this program. We are just doing it year‑round. So we do it during the school year while we are engaged with students in their normal school year, but we take advantage of that summertime to create work experiences in their communities so they don't have to participate in one of these residential programs. They can do day programs where they can work in their communities and get that hands‑on experience. And so this program, some of the really good outcomes from this is that 75% of the students that are participating in YTP they are exiting the program and going on to employment and post‑secondary education.   
 And so those students they are really thinking about that and it is this upstream theory and really being able to prepare them and to build up the expectations and showing them that this is a reality for them. They can go on to higher education, go on to a training program. They can work. And we have seen that there is a lot of evidence that shows if students have experience in work before they leave the high school setting they are going to be more successful after that in that post‑secondary outcome. So this program is something that it has been around for a long time. We have been able to adapt it to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act that you mentioned before. And really to utilize a lot of those key domains from the ‑‑ from the Guidepost for success because that really is the North Star to be able to help students with disabilities think about their future and embrace the fact that they are a part of our communities. They can be successful with the appropriate supports. And VR school districts and other community partners when we come together we can facilitate that success for them. So it is a program we are very proud of and we ‑‑ yeah, we are looking forward to hopefully expanding even more to all school districts in Oregon in the very near future.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Great. That sounds wonderful. Thank you. It is an array of good options for youth that the Guidepost gets behind. It is not a one‑size fits all thing at all. Having multiple options for youth is a critical component. We will give you a rest. And we will now move over and chat a little bit with Brandi Boyer Rutherford from the Florida VR. Brandi, I am going to dive right in. We understand that Florida VR has a unique program that aligns well with the Guidepost model. VR peer youth mentoring and a time‑limited self‑advocacy training service where the mentor works closely with an age appropriate mentor and teaches them through one‑on‑one relationships. Can you talk a little bit more about this for the audience? Talk about what that mentorship entails. What's it look like, and how does it tie in to employment opportunities?

>> BRANDI BOYER RUTHERFORD: As we all know when looking at employment opportunities we are ‑‑ it comes down to who you know and how you get there. Through our peer mentoring process we are working with having students with disabilities peered with like age, like you were saying within about six years a mentor who can help that individual, that student navigate the next steps and identifying the areas that they should ‑‑ not interested in. But going in to pursuing and looking at different options for community resources and networking and making those connections that are vital to any individual but specifically for our students with disabilities. We do it on multiple age ranges. So we have them ‑‑ we have our students that are younger in high school. Maybe 9th or 10th graders but we also have our students who are college aged, working on making sure that those networked relationships are being established. That these individuals are accessing all of the roots that they need to set forth their pathway. And it is a fantastic program.

We have 43 providers that coordinate these services across the state. And, of course, those providers have multiple mentors and they are constantly making good matches with the students that we refer to them. And they are helping these students be involved in the community, helping them to access all of the like I said resources but also having their voice heard. And making sure that they are ‑‑ they have the ability to get where they want to go. And letting them see where they want to go. So it is really a fantastic program and I'm really excited about it.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Yeah. And there is a significant piece of the self‑advocacy training that's built in to that. Yeah. How does that work? What does that look like? What are the components of that?

>> BRANDI BOYER RUTHERFORD: One of the biggest parts of transitioning to an adult to the real world as they say, is understanding who you are, what your needs are, what your goals are and how to get there. And when you do a one‑on‑one relationship with someone who has been where you are or similar, it helps you to see where that mentor maybe ran in to some road bumps and how they resolve them and helping the student smooth the pathway to get where they are looking to go. It truly is about building up the individual's self‑confidence and making ‑‑ giving them a guided experience as to how to make the next step.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Right. And that's so critical. I mean it plays in to the leadership development components that we talk about and, you know, not everyone is necessarily going to be a leader of 12,000, 15,000 people leading even in your own life and leading with strengths and understanding your strengths and empowering youth to be able to do that is such a critical component and self‑advocacy. And that type of training is really critical in helping youth find that voice that sometimes gets hidden. Whether it is you are a youth with a disability or not, that youth voice can get hidden and finding ways to encourage that and build so they can lead from a point of strength in their own life is a critical component. It is great to hear that. From those components of mentoring and self‑advocacy training, what kind of employment outcomes have you seen through this and these types of programs?

>> BRANDI BOYER RUTHERFORD: Well, with all things we are looking ‑‑ transition, all things transition we are looking more on the longitudinal range. We work with students from 14 to 22 and beyond, depending on their needs and abilities. So we have a lot of things that stretch out over a long period of time. But I will say that most of our individuals who participate in these services are ‑‑ they go on to be successfully employed. They go on to doing those post‑secondary trainings. They go on to make their place in the world and be heard. And the ‑‑ I would imagine, not imagine, but I know that a lot of these students go on to become mentors themselves. Bringing the next ‑‑ those behind them just a little bit forward. The employment outcome obviously is going to be our end goal. It is always our end goal. And these students as was pointed out before any time that they have the opportunity to engage in these employment related services, they are increasing their odds of becoming employed and I know that these students are all successful because our goal is both literally employment, but it is also that independence and that self‑sufficiency outcome that we are really moving towards and that is our mission. We are ‑‑ we are there. We are doing it. We are improving every day on how to help students be the best versions of themselves. We are fostering those independent skills, those soft skills that every employer wants. And not only are we looking at immediate short‑term employment but we are looking at long‑term career employment. And that is ‑‑ it is priceless. It is priceless for anybody. But for our students with disabilities reaching that step that they didn't realize they knew they could get.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I think it gives us all that same feeling, recognizing that you have helped a youth around meet that goal and recognize something that they may not have seen in themselves just a few years prior, you know. It is a powerful testimony.   
 So thank you. Thank you. It is a good segway in to our next phase. We are going to have some open questions to all of you, but before we do that, I will give you guys all a little bit of a break while we poll our audience on a question, what type of youth and employment program policy are you most interested in implementing in your state? So we will give our speakers a moment to pause. They can all grab a drink of water. And we will then dive in to a few more questions here while the poll goes. See that number going up. Lots of people voting. It looks like we have shared the results with all of you. No drum roll needed.

The career preparation work‑based learning is the winner in terms of what this audience is most interested in in terms of learning more about which is certainly good food for thought for all of us as we think about tools that we will develop and under the CAPE youth initiative with our partners at ODEP. And certainly other federal partners and those that are working at the state level. It is good to know that the career‑based, work‑based learning is what's on a lot of people's minds right now. And there is that tie to youth development and family engagement. So developing strong leaders and then engaging families on how to do that. It is great to see that.

So given our Guideposts of the school‑based preparatory experiences career path and work‑based learning and youth development leadership, connecting activities and family engagement I want to put this question out to our speakers again. You seem to be the most successful in your state in improving outcomes. And do you have things planned as you are moving forward? So I'll throw it out to the group to see what might be there. Other things planned that are coming down the pike?

>> KEITH OZOLS: I will take a stab at this one. So the ‑‑ what we have found in Oregon one of the most beneficial things is that coordination with our local communities. Because right now more so than ever we are all in financial strained environments where we are probably going to have some budget cuts around the country. And so we need to do more and we can do more when we are working together and in coordination. So we are not duplicating our services, but we are actually supporting each other to the same shared goals. So I think that we benefit, VR, we benefit so much when we can work at the local community and local school districts and other community‑based organizations, but you have to have the layers supporting that going up to the State Department of Education. And I wanted to point out that earlier ‑‑ not earlier this month but actually at the very end of last month on August 31st the director of special education programs, our VR rehabilitation services, they coauthored a letter that went out that really encouraged that coordinated efforts together that, schools and VR we need to be working together. And we need to be starting earlier with these interventions with youth to build up those expectations and that to have that high level of support for them.   
 So I think that we can even put maybe a link to that letter in this chat so people can go back to your communities, and really this is coming from the top federal level. And it needs to go down to the teachers and the VR counselors working in the field coordinating together. We need to have that structure of support across all levels of the work that we are doing together. And it really does make it so we are not duplicating services, that we are supporting each other and we know we are both doing so we are not going to be working against each other. We are actually going to be collaborating with each other.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Yeah. That's so true. And thank you for bringing up that resource. I did see that they put it in the chat, the transition guide, which also does reference the Guideposts in there as well. So I mean you see this interconnection of themes. I really do feel there is a great inertia in our country around this topic. And I'm beginning to see that synergy happening at the federal level in a way I haven't seen before in my career and seeing it happening in all these state levels. I think Representative Cutler, you might have something you want to add?

>> JOSH CUTLER: Yeah, a couple of things. One is that I think you mentioned earlier Disability:IN and the recognition. Smaller employers that are not part of that or meet the metrics involved there, that we want to find a way to recognize them because it is obviously a vast number of small and mid‑size businesses. We are working with a local organization to do something sort of similar on a smaller scale which I think is important. That was one thing I wanted to mention. Also in Massachusetts we have partnered with Mass rehab which is the Mass Rehab Commission to do an internship program at the state house to bring in their clients to serve as interns at the state house where we make policy and that's ‑‑ take a little bit of a hit because of COVID, but we are very much crossing our fingers we can make that work once things have passed this. Creating the internship program and as a policymaker having that in our literal building. Those are a couple of things we are doing.

And one last thing, legislation that we are trying to pass here in Massachusetts to create a permanent commission to address that issue. We talked about coordination between different agencies. We have a lot of different stakeholders and a lot of different groups doing good work in this space. We are trying to get a permanent mission set up. And we have a great working relationship with Governor Baker and his team and include the leaders in the non‑profit space as well.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: That's great. That's a wonderful best practice. So last question and I will ask you guys if you have a comment to keep it to the 60 second elevator speech because we are running low on time. But if you had one tidbit and you are in the elevator with somebody who said hey, how can I improve transition outcomes or programming in my state, what would you tell them? You have that 60 second piece of advice that you might tell somebody quickly?

>> JOSH CUTLER: I will say as a legislator get to know your legislator. They are not scarey and they are nice people. Go to their office hours and give them a call. Because when it comes to time to being ‑‑ to crafting policy on this issue you want them to have that personal connection.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Great. Thank you. That's invaluable advice. I think we too often don't take that to heart and engage in conversation when we all could be doing that. So thank you for that. Keith, Brandi, any final comments before we pass it back over to Sydney for the closing remarks?

>> BRANDI BOYER RUTHERFORD: I would say that the best way to make sure that all of our students with disabilities and individuals with disabilities themselves to make sure that these individuals are in contact with the VR and that collaboration between our school systems and our ‑‑ and VR we are working really hard in Florida to develop that and to keep developing it. But I believe that it is vital to the success of our students to make sure that we have a platform, a bridge for them to cross over with.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Great. Yeah. Very, very true. Keith, any final words?

>> KEITH OZOLS: Sure. I would just say the question we have to ask ourselves is how do we create these opportunities. Not if these students can benefit from them. It is how we create the students. This is work we have to do. We just have to figure out how to do it. Is it collaborating with schools, employers, centers for independent living? We have to have everyone engaged in it. They will. They can do it and we have to figure out how.

>> ANDREW KARHAN: Great. Thank you. Thank you to all of you. I really appreciate the dialogue. It has been rich. I feel like I could keep talking to all of you for much longer than we have allocated here today, which I'm sure our conversations will continue beyond this space. I appreciate you guys taking your time to come and speak with all of us today and have this dialogue. I will turn it over to Sydney Geiger to close it out for today and give us the final sendoff.

>> SYDNEY GEIGER: I wanted to thank again so much to our speakers and moderator Andrew. Such great content and remind everyone that this will be up on our website as well. And as a part of this ADA series we do have a couple more webinars coming up. And they are on this screen now. You can also find them at where you can learn more about each webinar and you can receive a certificate of completion.

Our next event will be available for CRC credits. If we go on to the next slide, a couple more things and then I will pass it over to our partners at ODEP to close us out for today. I just want to go ahead and provide our contact information here. As always we would love to hear from you, happy to assist you in any way as you move forward on implementing any of the Guideposts in your state and would love to hear from you and you can reach any of us here.   
 And then a quick announcement, if go we on ‑‑ I wanted to take this time to remind you that October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This year's theme is Increasing Access and Opportunity. We would love for you to celebrate with you. For more information you can visit dol.gov/ndeam.

One more thing before I close this out for today and pass it over to our colleagues at ODEP, I want to bring your attention to the Workforce Recruitment Program. WRP connects federal agencies with students and recent graduates with disabilities seeking internships and post‑graduate employment. It focuses on Federal Government as a model employer and state and local government can utilize it. Learn more at wrp.gov.

And on the next slide I will go ahead and give one last thank you to everyone who attended today and all of our speakers and our partners at the state exchange on employment and disability as well as the CAPE youth center. We are so glad to have everyone today. I hope you have all learned something. And really appreciate everyone who has made this possible. I am going to kick it over to Kirk Lew who is a senior policy advisor from the Office of Disability Employment Policy. So he will be wrapping up Assistant Secretary Jennifer Sheehy's comments from earlier. Kirk, I will pass it over to you.

>> Kirk: Thank you, Sydney. And I just wanted to thank everyone for participating and having a chance to hear about this exciting work and how the Guidepost has evolved over the past 17 years. As Deputy Assistant Secretary Jennifer Sheehy mentioned this has been a labor of love for ODEP. ODEP recognizes as well as the Department of Labor recognizes the importance of being involved in youth transition, especially the transition of youth with disabilities. But we understand that the Guidepost is always evolving and always changing, always being able to be considered to grow as a framework. And that is some of the things that we have been able to do over the past few years, since 2016 and looking at revising the Guideposts. We are embarking on a new initiative to look at the Guideposts as a framework as you have heard, as a framework that really brings policy and practice together.   
 I wanted to just mention that some of what our speakers said, from UMass, they are looking to put together stakeholders from all different systems to really look at youth transition in a comprehensive and wholistic way, which the Guideposts allows us to do that.   
 Oregon and their family engagement piece, understanding the importance of family engagement, understanding how important it is for families to understand benefits counseling, financial literacy, understanding how they can help their young people manage that transition from post ‑‑ to post‑secondary or employment setting. It is always going to be important. And our speaker from Florida did a great job of explaining the importance of mentors, of how important it is we make these transition for young people who are doing this on their own with very little support but the importance of a mentor to help you along the way is going to be important. Always, always considering within a framework all of these things are being considered. It is helping our partners all of the different Guideposts work together. So we appreciate the work that the center is doing. And we appreciate where we are moving the Guideposts to. And we appreciate this webinar because it gives us an opportunity to see where policy and practice actually meet so that we can continue to provide state and local areas with the information to help them better, help young people make better employment outcomes and better transition outcomes.

So with that I just wanted to thank all our speakers, thank CAPE youth, our partners, grantee partners for all their hard work and we look forward to presenting to you guys in the future. So thank you.

>> SYDNEY GEIGER: Thank you so much, Kirk. And thank you so much again to our speakers and everyone who attended. If you have any questions or like any further information, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are happy to share the Guidepost document with you and talk more in depth with you one‑on‑one. So hopefully we will talk with you soon. I hope you have a great afternoon and hopefully a good weekend coming up. So thank you all so much. And have a good day.   
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