INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSORTIUM FOR EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS (CES) MODEL DESIGNED TO INCREASE COLLABORATION BETWEEN PLACEMENT PROVIDERS

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Overview

Lucy Wong Hernandez: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the 2009 Southeast TACE webinar series. I am Lucy Hernandez, and I am the Project Director for the TACE Center in Region IV. The Southeast Region TACE Center's mission is to improve the quality and effectiveness of services and enhance employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in eight southeastern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

TACE Center is in collaboration with the DBTAC Southeast ADA Center and both the TACE Center and Southeast ADA Center and are managed by the Burton Blatt Institute of Syracuse University, in New York. As part of the TACE Center's regional activities, we are hosting quite a few webinar this is year. If you already signed up for future training webinars, that is great. If not, please visit our website at TACEsoutheast.org or our new TACE webinar room at the URL that will be posted in the chat area, to see the many training webinars that we are offering this year. Registration will open one month before the session is scheduled, so mark your calendars to sign up for those topics you are interested in when the registration opens. All instructions and materials for each webinar are posted on our TACE website. Familiarity with this information will greatly enhance your participation and learning experience with us.

The online conferencing system we use is fully accessible, integrated data and voice medium that enables us to conduct workshops over the internet from just about any computer with an internet connection and web browser. Please note that long distance charges apply. There are many computer issues that are beyond our control, but there are a few steps you must take to enhance your participation experience. First, it is really important that you check your system prior to the session. We are unable to trouble shoot technical issues right before the webinar is scheduled to begin. You can only ask questions by typing in the chat area. I will follow these questions and direct them to our featured speakers at the appropriate time. I will voice the questions for the benefit of all participants, the captioner, and the transcript. Another thing to remember is that you should close all other applications and automatic system checks on your computer during the webinar presentation to eliminate potential interference and finally if your computer is connected to a network, and has a firewall, it is important to press the space bar once in awhile during the webinar to let the system know you are still present. Sometimes network computers shut down if the computer is idle for too long.

Today's format will be as follows. Our featured speakers will speak for approximately an hour and 40 minutes with 20 minutes at the end of their presentation to answer any final questions. There will be three times during the presentation when our presenters will stop and answer any questions that you may have posted on the chat area. As indicated, all questions will be read aloud for the benefit of the participants and also the captioner.

Today's training webinar session is titled Introduction to the Consortium for Employment Success, otherwise known as CES model, designed to increase collaboration between placement providers, and we are privileged to be joined by our three featured speakers. First we have Dr. Dennis Gilbride, who is a professor at Syracuse University, New York, also with us is Jennifer Coughlin who is also from Syracuse University and also we have Dr. Jamie Mitus who is also a professor at Hofstra University in New York. Their impressive bios are posted on our website, TACEsoutheast.org, along with our webinar material and I hope you had an opportunity to read them. Now, I will give you Dr. Dennis Gilbride to begin the presentation.

Slide 1: Overview

Dennis Gilbride: Hello, everyone. This is Dennis Gilbride. If you can hear me please someone indicate that on the public chat area. Or someone go a public chat and say "yes, we can hear you," so I do not feel alone in my office here. We are very excited about doing this presentation today, we think that this instrument and protocol and these questions are something that you will find of value in your work pretty much immediately. We are very much looking forward to this presentation. I am

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going to start the presentation now. I will talk about the background and how we came to use this strategy in our understanding and work with employers. Then we will switch it over to Jennifer Coughlin who will talk about some of her specific experiences with employers and walk us through each of the individual questions. And the Dr. Jamie Mitus will talk about her experience with employers. We will all answer questions and do kind of a summary at the end.

To give you a few notes on how the presentation is going to go forward, for the purpose of the captioners and for those of you who are wanting to look out your window instead of the slides at all times. Each of us will describe first, as we switch each slide, we will describe exactly what is on each slide and then we will discuss the issues raised by the slides. As Nicole said, there will be an extended question and answer period at the end, but we will stop a few times during the presentation to catch up with some questions. Do post your questions as we go along. We will try to keep track of them. If you see what I see, you cannot see a lot of the public chat at once so we might lose some of those, we will do the best we can. We are going to try to keep track of those and we want to answer as many questions as possible. We want this to be a really valuable, useful experience for you. At the end of the presentation our hope is not only do you understand the background and why we created this instrument, but also some of you might be able to use it tomorrow. Or if you are in central time if you have another meeting this afternoon you might be able to use it right away today. We are hoping this will be very, very practical.

I want to start with a little background to let you know where this started. Many years ago I was working with a colleague of mine at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa on a project on Demand Side Job development and in fact one of our partners was the Georgia VR department. I spent a number of wonderful times in Warm Springs, Georgia with many of the vocational rehabilitation professionals there. I cannot remember what you called yourselves, but there were employment consultants or placement people of some kind. In fact, I know we have a lot of people from Georgia here, if any of you were part of those meetings please let me know at some point. It would be wonderful if after all these yeas I am connecting back with some of the people that I knew back in Georgia. Along with people from Georgia we have – called a rehabilitation employment specialist, yeah that sounds right, or vocational coordinators, thank you for that. We also have people as we said from most of the southeast states. My understanding is we have people from across the country, too. We have somebody from Texas, Michigan and many other states. We are quite pleased that we are talking to people that we have worked with before in some of the states down there, and reaching out to new people.

My original work with RWSIR in Georgia was on demand side placement. Basically, everything that we have done in the last 15 or 20 years on demand side job development starts from the sort of obvious idea, which is employers have the jobs. And if they have the jobs and we know that everybody -- not everybody, but many, many of our consumers will have their life enhanced by being employed then somehow we need to make that transition from being on our case load to being successfully employed in the work area. My work has been on the demand side, which is to really understand employers and find a way to connect with employers better to make that transition to work more effective. Most of vocational rehabilitation works on the supply side, which is obviously of deep importance, to understand our consumers, to work with our consumers, to provide all the services we do with our consumers, to help them in a variety of ways to enhance their lives. We do not see demand side as competing with supply side, but adding to it.

Someone just asked why we are still on slide 1. We will get to slide 2. I just wanted to give a sense that the deeper role of what we are doing here comes from the notion of how do we better understand and partner with employers.

Slide 2: What is the CES?

A group of placement employment professionals who have voluntarily agreed to enter into a structured, operational consortium to collectively develop and manage employer relationships. On the right side of the slide we have a group of people in different colors but all holding hands sky diving. This is entitled "teamwork."

I will explain more later how we came to this, but one of the factors that we found in trying to do employment is that it is a very demanding and challenging aspect of our jobs, and if we work together, if we find away to work together with other people in our local communities, we can be more successful. So we developed this model in order to figure out a way for local service providers to be more effective and efficient in the way they connect. As we all know, the world, both the world of work, the world of our agencies, the world of our social organizations have become increasingly complex, and we also know that to address all of the challenges of life, it is really better to work together. I think we all understand the value and importance of collaboration and finding ways to more effectively connect to other people doing similar work and other people in the community.

We have been working on this project for about four and-a-half years, and we do lots of presentations around the country, and we have never gone to a group where people have not agreed that collaboration is not a good thing. Everybody agrees that collaboration is a good thing, and one of the wonderful parts of being in the rehabilitation profession is that almost everybody in the rehab profession are really very kind and interesting and caring people, so it is not that we do not have people who want to connect to each other, that you would not want to connect with them, and it is not that people do not recognize the importance of collaboration, it is that it turns out it is very, very difficult across our agencies to actually do collaboration effectively over time, so what we did is we put together a model that will help local groups more effectively collaborate.

When we are talking about a group of placement employment professionals, and we will talk more below exactly who are involved in our projects, but we are talking about collaborating with CRPs. We have the VA hospital. We have other hospital programs also and we have schools. We have projects with industries, and of course we have the state agencies. And any variety of other groups that are involved in the employment of people with disabilities. So as I am sure most of you know people and you have probably worked in different agencies in the area of rehab and in the placement, you know that these agencies are all quite different, and they have different cultures and different styles, and so finding a way -- and while everybody wants to work together, finding a way to make that happen is quite a challenge. Let us go to the next slide number 3.

Slide 3: Goal of the CES?

Increase employment opportunities and job retention for individuals with disabilities. We have a picture of a man using a wheelchair sitting at a computer workstation. We never want to forget that our goal, at least the goal for this project, is employment. Now, there could be other reasons to collaborate, people can collaborate to support more effective housing for people with disabilities, more effective access to public services, those are all good and important goals. What we are focused on in this project and in this presentation today is developing the collaboration whose sole purpose is increasing employment opportunities and job retention for individuals with disabilities, so as we speak today and as we go through the steps, you will see that they are designed specifically around the employment issues for people with disabilities. Next slide number 4.

Slide 4: Where did the CES start?

We have bullet point 1. The CES model is a research project funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation research from the U.S. Department of Education also known as NIDRR. Point 2, we have three pilot projects in New York, one in Syracuse, one on Long Island, and the other in the Bronx. Bullet point 3. The CES is part of the Employment, actually it says support, but it is Employment Services System Research and Training Center, ESSRTC.com. What we are talking about today is part of that research and training center. We are going to be talking today about our initial three pilot projects that we have been working at, that the Syracuse project here in upstate New York includes providers from all different types of disabilities and all different types of providers. The Long Island consortium which you will be hearing more from Jamie a little later deals exclusively with people with psychiatric disabilities, and the Bronx project is a transition project working with kids transitioning from school into employment, so we have three major pilot projects, and some variety of other projects that we have done of late as we are disseminating, so we will talk in depth how each of these steps played out in the three very different environments, upstate New York which is a moderate sized city, but it is surrounded by a rural area, Long Island which is Long Island, New York, and the Bronx which is the big city.

You all should have a copy of the manual, so when we get to the specific steps, I recommend you could use that manual, available on the TACE website, and that would be available for you. I also recommend that if you are interested after this presentation and learning more about our projects, you can go to the Employment Services System Research and Training Center, and I am going to mention this later, but we are also going to be doing a three-week

Blackboard supported class where we are going to work very interactively with up to 25 people in different communities who are interested in trying to develop some deeper level of collaboration, and that information will be on the TACE website, and the Blackboard supported class will be occurring July 6th through the 24th. We will talk more about that a little later. Go to the next slide number 5.

Slide 5: Dual Benefits of a CES

Prior to this project we had another research project from NIDRR where we went and did focus groups with employers who successfully hired people with disabilities, with placement providers who were very effective at hiring people, placing people with disabilities, and with consumers. If some of you were on the webinar last week, we talked a lot about that project when we did the webinar on the -- on our Employer Openness Survey. While we were doing that project we kept hearing two different issues one from employers and one form placement providers. Employers kept saying to us over and over again that they wanted one point of contact. I think I might not have read this slide. I will go back and read the slide and then I will go into this. I apologize if I did not read the slide. The first bullet point is employers' who want one point of contact are. The second bullet point placement providers do not have the time or resources to develop and maintain multiple employer relationships. We have a picture on this slide which is a hand holding an old-fashioned telephone. So what we heard when we did those focus groups for employers was they do not understand the alphabet soup of all the different agencies that approach them in the community, that they do not know the difference between the ARC and voc rehab, between a particular not-for-profit agency or a hospital-based agency. None of that makes any sense to them. They just see there is a group of people who have people with disabilities who want jobs, and it all is a blur to them. They even have trouble separating out what is a federal or state program from what is a private program from none of that from a county program, none of those kinds of differences make any sense to them, and they also said to us that it seems like that they will hear from rehab professionals when the person wants to place somebody but if they have a question or something comes up or they have a current employee, they do not know who to call. Do they call this person or that person, they can never figure out what they should do, so what they want as an employer is one point of contact. We actually were out talking to a school district earlier this week, and they said they actually have the same problems with employers because in Syracuse we have a number of high schools, and employers get confused when different high schools are calling them to try to get internships for their high school students. They just want one person to call. They do not want to keep track of who the people are at the different places, and in fact we are working with the high schools in the local area for the five of them to become a consortium, so they have one point of contact, so employers want things simple, easy, clear, and want to have that one point of contact.

Placement providers can consistently tell us every time we talk to them that they understand the importance of developing relationships with employers, they realize that that is if we really want high quality jobs if we want successful jobs with employers what, we need to do is we need to maintain those relationships, and generally most providers are able to do that with a handful of providers or handful of employers, so they will have three or four employer that is they have a good relationship with and pretty successful at placing people with. If their consumer wants a job that is not available within one of those jobs, they can kind of get lost or if one of those employers is not hiring or is right now perhaps even downsizing, then they do not have a whole set of other employers and other opportunities for people with disabilities. So what we realize is that we are not going to get more hours in the day, and our experiences is that placement providers are working as hard as they can, so we do not want people to work harder or longer. We want them to be more efficient, so the CES is designed to solve those two problems. In a local service delivery area, it gives employers one point of contact, so they can all the CES and get access to all the providers, and then all the potential employees that any of those providers have, so they call us, they send us an email, and then we from all the providers within our system may be able to fill that slot. Providers, then, each can divide up which employers that they want to develop relationships with and by sharing that information a consumer of one provider then has access to the employers and stronger employer relationships from the whole provider network, so it gives consumers access to a much broader range of jobs which will result in them being able to find something that better matches their interest and hopefully find that better match, find and be more satisfied and have a higher quality placement outcome. That is our dual benefits of working together. Slide 6 please.

Slide 6: How is the CES different from other placement groups

Bullet point 1. Operational level of cooperation, planning and resource sharing. Bullet point 2. A paid coordinator in charge of facilitating the collaboration. Bullet point 3. Focused on systematic employer outreach. Bullet point 4. Partner agencies systematically share information about employers and job leads.

It is quite true, it has been our experience that many communities have some type of collaborative relationships going on between agencies, between vocational rehabilitation, and the CRPs, that there are luncheon meetings once a month or they have a placement network that meets from time to time, or that meets regularly, so that was also true in the places where we have done our pilot studies that they had a history of working together at some level.

What we realized was that while these connections and these local consortiums are very, very good, and I in no way want to discount what people are doing, and I highly recommend that if any of you are involved in that that you continue to do that because those are important valuable experiences on a number of levels. This is a very strong and deepening way to enhance the effectiveness of those placement groups.

If you do not have one of those collaborations going in your community already, this can then be the beginning of how you can develop that placement group. What we see is that looking at the bullet point 1 that there is really an operational level of cooperation planning and resource sharing. What that means is that rather than the consortium be something that members from the different agencies show up to, maybe have lunch together, talk about their experiences, or maybe have events here in Syracuse, they would do employer tours together, and have social events together and employer activities together. This really is a deeper level of operation where they are really working together and changing the way their agencies work together, and as we go through the steps, you will see what we are meaning. This is a deeper level of commitment to that collaboration than is traditional in the sort of lunch and learn style, and again I am in no way opposed to those. I think that those are very wonderful useful valuable activities. We are just talking about a way to deepen that.

The second bullet point is having a paid coordinator in charge of facilitating the collaboration. This is a key issue. When we first started the project four or five years ago, we thought that it could transition away from a paid coordinator because we had a grant we were able to use grant moneys and pay a coordinator. What we discovered is that it cannot just -- that the CES to be effective cannot just be a voluntary organization that is done and the coordinator, the person who puts it together, where that is just one more thing they have to do on top of all the rest of what they have to do. What we realized in our grant projects is we wanted somebody waking up every morning and thinking about how can I make the collaboration in this community more effective, and the person we have in Syracuse is Jennifer Coughlin, and in one more slide she will be talking about what she actually does as that coordinator.

It is very vital that there be somebody who not as an extra part of their life but as part of their actual paid job that they have coordinate the collaboration, that the collaboration itself is worthy of the time because it leads to these positive outcomes. The third bullet point is also very important, and I mentioned it before, that embedded within this notion is not just the collaboration, but of being that one point of contact for employers. The purpose of this group, when this group gets together, their purpose, and their function, what they care about is connecting to employers, and systematically and structurally finding ways to effectively connect to employers, and we are going to talk about how to do that systematic employer outreach. The last point is the partner agencies systematically share information about employers and job leads.

We are going to talk about how to do this, and it is one of our steps, and how to organize that information, and this is the spot where whenever we do a presentation, everybody says we think this is a wonderful idea. We think we should collaborate, everybody in this community is very nice, and that no one is going to share information about job leads or about their employers. We have heard that from communities all across the country. Our experience is that many people are reluctant to share their information, but we have strategies and techniques that we will talk about in just a moment that gets past that reluctance, but we also think and we found, we do not just think, we found that over time if the collaboration is developed effectively, people move from the position, this is my employer to seeing the benefit of, oh, look at how much more effective we can be if we all work together and there is many times when I cannot serve a particular employer's placement needs, and it makes me look better with my employers if I do have more consumers to help get jobs, so while we have heard continuously right from the beginning of this project that rehab people will not share information about employers and job leads, our experience in three different places and in other dissemination areas that in fact people can move away from that position and our experience is that as the group develops they are willing to do that. That is the background information.

What we are going to do now is go to the next slide number 7. I am going to be turning the microphone over to Jennifer, and she is going to talk about step 1 and how what the components of step 1 were and what we did in Syracuse and then Jamie will talk about what they did on Long Island and the Bronx, and if you have any questions while we are talking through either what I have already said in terms of the background information or step 1, please write those questions to us now and then at the end of step 1 before we go to step 2, we will start answering any questions you have, so I am now going to turn the microphone over to Jennifer Coughlin.

Slide 7: Building your CES Step 1: Identify Key Players

Jennifer Coughlin: Hello, everyone. This is Jennifer. It is great to be with you here today. I am going to, as Dennis said, start off with our steps of building the CES, and we are on slide number 7 which is step 1, building your CES. Identify key players. Identify community agencies, both those interested in collaborating and those essential for success. Those are both nonprofit and public vocational rehabilitation agencies. The methodologies used are bullet point 1, stakeholder development, 2, introduce/discuss the model, 3, facilitation to identify features, benefits, and vested interests and, 4, agreement to continue. Now, this step is a very crucial one because we want everyone in the community to be invited to be involved in the CES. It is a community wide effort. We want full inclusion. We do not want anyone to be left out but also we have a lot of different agencies in our community, and they all bring good things to the collaboration. They all have different ideas that can really benefit the collaboration, so it is important to include everyone, and in addition what Dennis mentioned earlier, this is what employers want. They want one point of contact. They would rather have collaboration where all the agencies are involved together so that that collaboration can be their one point of contact. It is important to get everyone involved. In Syracuse how we did it here was in the beginning we contacted 20 or so agencies, and these agencies provided a wide range of services and served individuals with autism, with vision and hearing loss, mental illness, learning disabilities, alcohol and substance abuse, and some were based in hospitals, some were private, nonprofits, we also had the high school involved, so it was a wide ranging collaboration.

We also looked to the state agencies here in New York. VESID is our state voc rehab agency, so we invited them to participate. Also the state agency that oversees services for people with hearing and vision loss, and we also wanted the local one-stop to be involved, and that was great because the disability program Navigator from our local One stop here became a crucial element and added a lot of good things to our collaboration.

In this beginning stage it is important to remember to be persistent because some people are not going to respond right away. You might need to follow up here and there with some of the agencies, and go out and meet with them and their offices to start describing the CES and what it is, not everyone is going to respond to you right away, so it does take time to get everyone involved, but it definitely happened.

The first bullet point here under methodologies, the stakeholder development, was of course very important, and here I think what I want to point out is that when we were beginning this and wanting the stakeholders to come into the CES, it was important to access both the administrative staff within the agencies but also the direct line staff. They both need to be involved in the beginning because the administrative staff often makes decisions about where the resources are going, so we want to make sure that we have their buy-in from the beginning. Also, the direct line staffs are those individuals in the future when the CES is up and running. They are the ones that are going to be participating in the CES, so we want to understand what their needs are, and we want their buy-in from the beginning, too, and introducing and discussing the model, what I did here in Syracuse is I would contact an agency and I would ask to attend their staff meeting. Usually most voc rehab departments within an agency have a weekly staff meeting, so I would ask the supervisor if I could come in for ten or fifteen minutes either at the beginning or end of the meeting and just talk a little bit about the CES, and it was a great way to answer questions and provide information about the model, and that worked out really well for us here.

The facilitation component. This is very important. There are a lot of nuts and bolts to work out when you are starting a CES. And there is a lot of concern that come up from agencies, and my role as a CES coordinator, I am going to talk about this more in a couple of slides because Jamie, this is partially too what Jamie is going to talk about in the next step, so I will go into more detail about what I did as a CES coordinator, but the bottom line here is facilitation is very important so we can keep everyone moving, make sure to address everyone's questions and concerns and decide as a group how we want to move the project forward.

The last point was agreement to continue. Jamie will also talk about this a little bit in the next step because we have some tools like memorandum of understanding to use to help people figure out how are we going to continue, how is this going to work, and, too, it is important to point out that for some agencies maybe what you decide to do that they will agree not to continue. It might not fit in with what they are trying to do within their agency at that time, but the bottom line is it is important to ask everyone to participate and then they can make their decision based on the information they learn and know once they begin to know more about what the CES is, so I am going to now turn it over to Jamie so she can add anything about what happened in Long Island in terms of this step.

Jamie Mitus: Good afternoon, everybody. Just to add in to what both Jennifer and Dennis have been talking about, overall important factors to keep in mind as you are building a CES is to be flexible, and to present flexibility to the potential partners that may be joining the CES because you are dealing with several different organizations that while in many ways operate similarly, they also operate differently and have very different and unique types of concerns that you want to be amenable and flexible to as you are trying to develop the CES. One thing in terms of here on Long Island that we were a little bit different and likewise in the Bronx because of being in a more metropolitan area, it is absolutely ideal to account for every agency in your community as being invited to participate. However, on Long Island and in the Bronx that is a little bit more difficult because of the size of the communities that we are working in.

So one of the things that became very important for us was to be clear in defining criteria as to what it means to be a member of the CES, who that partner should look like as a member of the CES and so forth, so this way when you are outreaching to various agencies in the community, in a way it makes it stronger because you are basically saying that we are really not trying to exclude anyone, but for the purposes of this CES, this is the criteria, this is the purpose, initial purpose for the group, and so we are trying to identify agencies that fit within that, and so for Long Island being that we were targeting mental health agencies, obviously we would want to tap into every mental health voc rehab organization on the island which we did, but we are not necessarily -- we were not necessarily going to be targeting agencies that were serving developmental disabilities, and we did get questions about that. Why is it geared towards mental health as opposed to serving developmental disability, so you want to make sure you have an explanation that that is rational and you are sensitive to those individuals and then also indicating that while this is the set up now, that certainly could change in the future, and certainly keep in touch with us as things develop and we move and grow, so I just really wanted to emphasize that, and with the Bronx similarly because they are serving youth with disabilities, so not every agency would be a partner up there as well because there would not necessarily be serving youth with disabilities.

The other thing that we did is we had affiliate partners, so aside from just the partners of the agencies, we included the one-stop center and mental health associations as well as a representative from Social Security Disability as an affiliated partners who had certain roles and responsibilities as well, so with that I am going to go ahead and -- sorry about that. I am going to go ahead and turn it over to Dennis.

Questions and Answers

Dennis Gilbride: Hi. This is Dennis Gilbride again. I see we have one question. How do you handle confidentiality between agencies or is this an issue at all? It really is not an issue because we really do not talk about consumers. What we talk about is employers, so when the CES meets, they are talking about employers and our relationships between employers. It is possible that someone might say I have somebody with this particular interest who has these particular skills, or needs this particular kind of accommodation, but we never trade names of consumers, so confidentiality works quite well. I will take the next question and then we will move onto step 2. How is this different from career one-stop system or from our state the job link system? It is different than the One stop because it is focused entirely on the providers in the community who have chosen to be part of it, and as we said, our One Stop Navigator is part of this group, and it is just a much more focused on the needs of people with disabilities that I know that V R and other agencies might participate at the One Stop, but this is much more focused, and the shared information is just with these particular agencies. Our Navigator did -- was the way in for us with the One Stop, but this is sort of like a unique one-stop for just our placement providers. I am now going to hand it over for step 2, back to Jamie.

Jamie Mitus: I also would like to answer the question about confidentiality because another aspect to this project that we are not really going to be talking too much about today but has been a part of it is aside from focusing on employment in terms of job placement, we also have been addressing workplace socialization and what happens for the client after he or she gets into the job and how to better serve as a consultant to the employer in that capacity, so aside from simply helping the person find the job, trying to train the partners in terms of being more effective as consultants with employers as well as their clients, and in dealing with workplace socialization issues, so for Long Island, we actually part of the CES what we did is we did have case studies that were presented, but we have all hypothetical in terms of names, you know, where they might work and things like that, and we are able to share with respect to issues that were going on, so that the partners could learn from one another some effective ways of being able to consult with employers of their clients with respect to workplace socialization, so partly how we handled it is that part of this project is a study, so we accounted for that within the consent form of the study. In your case it may be that you would create some type of a document that the client might sign saying I recognize that you participate in the CES and that while you will not be talking about me personally, you may be referring to me more generally in terms of gaining information that will be helpful for my success on a job, so that is one-way that we have been trying to handle confidentiality. Slide Number 8.

Slide 8: Step 2: Establish Structured Collaboration and Leadership

Okay. Onto step 2. Now we are talking about you made that initial contact, you identified some partners for the CES. How do you go about moving forward in terms of establishing structures? What slide 2 says, step 2, this is slide 8, establish structured collaboration and leadership. Underneath that it says develop collaboration and identify project leader methodologies. Then there are bullet points, four bullet points with the first thing train partners on tools and techniques of collaboration. Bullet 2, develop consensus driven mission. Bullet 3, create written MOUs which are memorandum of understanding, that outline goals of the CES and member responsibilities, and the fourth bullet being develop job description, identify finances to implement the project and hire a CES coordinator.

So essentially for this particular slide, what we are talking about is how are you going to set this up? Who is going to be in charge of running the particular group, and what are the rules and regulations that the group is going to follow? In terms of tools and techniques, one of the things we found important to do was to talk about rules and regulations. As Dennis and Jennifer were saying earlier, probably one of the biggest concerns the partners had was being able to share employer information, and worrying about if I share employer information with you, what is that going to mean in relation to in a sense are you going to steal my employer but also, too, if you refer a client from your agency to an employer that I have a relationship, how do I know that it is going to be successful and that it is not going to be a flop and then therefore reflect badly on our agency? So one of the things that we did on Long Island is we set up some boundaries and rules about how to deal with that situation as far as a group, what kind of a client would we as a group determine would be ready for employment that we all would agree upon and know that we would be comfortable with? When we have an employer who has an opening, what are the steps going to be in terms of announcing that particular job lead to the group, and so we are going to talk about the employer database which addresses a lot of that, but prior to having the database, we had put in place some rules around length of time the initial agency who had the relationship with the employer would try and fill that position for the employer, but then if the employer could not-- or the position could not be filled by the agency who had the initial relationship, what that employer then opening it up to the other partners to see if they might have anyone who could fill that position, so we came up with some rules around that. The other thing you want to do is obviously develop a mission. What the purpose of the group? What is going to be the driving force in their setting up some goals that they want to focus on and achieve? I think what is important here is that while you may have a project leader; it really needs to be driven by the partners in terms of what that mission is going to be. You want them to be able to take ownership for it and what we found is that as a partners were really participating in developing the mission and talking about what it is they want to do over the five years, they began to open up with one another as opposed to feeling like they were being told what to do.

Another critical piece to this is developing an MOU, memorandum of understanding, and this is something that all three sites have done and essentially you are working with the partner to as a group again in terms of the content of the MOU, what should go into that? Now, in the handout that was provided to you in step 2 actually it lays out some of the type of content you would likely want to include in the MOU, so, for example, you would want to include the agency name and the contact information, what is the length of the partnership, what is the purpose mission, and so forth. What are the roles and responsibilities of the partners that are involved in this, and so on and so forth?

Again, it is important to get that input from the group so that they will be more likely to buy into the process, and then what happens from there is that the partners will often times at least on Long Island they did have to take that back to their upper level management to get approval and so forth, but the idea again is to get approval on all levels with partners having full participation in that process and so forth.

With respect to the final bullet, develop job description, identify finances, implement the project and hire a CES coordinator, here what we are talking about, and it is also discussed within the manual, is identifying who is going to be sort of the project coordinator, and Jennifer is going to speak to her role that she served with Syracuse. We had someone here on Long Island who served in that capacity and the Bronx as well. Again, we would suggest it is important that the project coordinator serve as a coordinator as opposed to the decision maker, and the overall leader, so the coordinator may help facilitate communication, may help facilitate discussion about what are our goals going to be for this given year, but it is really going to be the leadership of the group that is going to make the decisions and what direction that they are going to want to go. In doing that, in terms of identifying a coordinator, you obviously are going to want to have a pretty detailed job description in terms of the roles and the functions of the coordinator, and we actually in the manual layout some of what those responsibilities might be, so, for example, a couple of the responsibilities were to organize and facilitate the meetings and special events, and another particular function was to facilitate the communication between agencies, so we utilized email a lot, I know in the Bronx they actually established a Yahoo account, and utilized that had as a method for the coordinator to communicate with the partners, but also for the partners to be able to communicate with one another as well.

So it is important to have some sort of job description. Then identifying finances, I am going to talk about when we get to step 3, so I will hold off on that. One other thing I want to point out before I move it over to Jennifer is when you are establishing structure aside from the roles and the responsibilities of each of the partners, which that may also involve things like if you develop subcommittees, so, for example, on Long Island, we decided that we were going to develop marketing materials that the partners would be able to utilize going out and marketing to employers whether it be meeting with an employer one-on-one or going to a job fair event, and so we had a couple of the partners who pretty much were that committee who put ideas together and so forth and then brought that back to the group for the group to decide as a whole.

Likewise, we had another committee who was in charge of dealing with identifying job fairs and outreach into the community, which part of that was joining SHRM, which is the Society for HR human resource management, so they were responsible for identifying various community events that we might be able to participate in, but aside from that it is how you are going to go about having your meetings, where are they going to be held, how often are you going to have them? Who again is going to be running those meetings? From Long Island we chose to have meetings twice a month on Fridays at 2:00. This is decided by the partners in terms of a timing that would work best for them, and we elected to hold it as an agency in the community that was sort of in the middle where other around all the other agencies, so it would be sort of centrally located, but I know I believe in the Bronx that they actually rotated meetings, so that is another way that you might do it.

These are all things that you want to be discussing with the partners so that they can decide collectively how to do it. On that note I will turn it over to Jennifer.

Jennifer Coughlin: Thanks, Jamie. I will just add a couple things about the CES coordinator because that is really the role that I serve here in Syracuse, and it is a very important role in what Dennis mentioned before is one of the things that sets apart other collaborative efforts because I am a paid coordinator, so this is solely what I focus on, and although the CES could work without a paid coordinator, it would be more difficult. It is optimal to have the coordinator. I keep things moving along. I am taking the meeting minutes, I am making sure everyone gets those, I am making sure we know where the meetings are going to be held, I am measuring outcome so report back to the group, all of those sort of things that people in the employment field you have other responsibilities, so it is a little bit more difficult to take care of all of those things when you have other job responsibilities and things going on. I think Jamie mentioned there is a sample job description in the manual. For me this is a perfect job because I was interacting with all the different Social Service agencies, but I along with the other partners in the CES we were out working with the businesses, too, and interacting with them, but I think what my most critical role was really facilitating the meetings and guiding our process along, making sure is kept moving forward. We mentioned that the collaboration, this is very different for most agencies.

A collaboration at this level has never happened before, so ideas would come up, obstacles, and there needs to be someone there to help facilitate and guide the process. Jamie mentioned things here in Syracuse, one of the things that kept coming up in the beginning of our partnership was that people were concerned about sharing employers that they had developed strong relationship with. What we decided, if a certain agency had strong relationships with a certain employer, fine, they did not have to share that with the group, but what we focused on was new employers. There is hundreds of other employers out there that the agencies and the staff of the agencies had never contacted and had always wanted to, so that is where we -- that is the decision we came to, we were going to focus on the new employers, one that is the group hadn't contacted in the past.

Also, I will say like Jamie mentioned I was never a decision maker. If I would never make a decision solely by myself. It was my job to just facilitate the group making a decision, and making sure that everyone was heard in the group. I will also add that MOU was very important for us because it allowed to us outline the goal in a collaborative way, but also we reviewed it every year, so we would look back at the goals from the previous year and say did we meet those goals? If for some reason there was a goal we were not so great about meeting, we would say why did that not work? How can we change it for this year, so it really give us an opportunity to sit down and look at how we could make things better in the future.

Question: I noticed, too, there was a question on the public chat that I wanted to address, and the question was who should take the lead in building CES, the counselor or the employment consultant? Really the answer is whoever wants to take the lead. There is no right or wrong answer here. If you already have some sort of group in your community, you might to want decide as a group who would be best to take the lead. You might not have a group in your community yet, so if you are out there, and you are interested in doing this, you can be that person, so there is no right or wrong person to take the lead, just someone who is invested and interested in getting this up and running. I am just going to give up the microphone now and Dennis, if you have anything to add, you will have an opportunity to do that. If not, Jamie, looks like you will be starting with step 3.

Dennis Gilbride: Why don't we move to step 3. The one other thing I would add to the answer to the question was just that if the group can decide that they might want to hire somebody completely new for that coordinator, and I see that there is a new question up, who pays the CES coordinator, and that is the exact right question because now we are going to move to step 3 where we talk about identifying resources.

Jamie Mitus: Okay. That is me, Jamie. I will proceed. In reading the slide, and also obviously answer the question who pays the CES coordinator, but I also just wanted to add one little bit into the question regarding whether the counselor or the employment consultant who should lead and organize the CES. I think whoever you choose, it also in general terms needs to be somebody who is very motivated, and enthusiastic about putting a group together like this, and who has the time to be able to invest the initial set up and so forth. In the beginning you are going to be doing more work because you are trying to get it initially established, but as time goes on, obviously the group can begin to take a life of its own, so that it is a little less work on your shoulders, so you just to want make sure whoever is going to be leading this initiative is someone who has the time to be able to invest into it.

There was one other point I wanted to make, too, just real quick about step 2. That is to; you want to be able to account for changes over time as well. One thing on Long Island we did have change in terms of the makeup of our group, and I know that the Bronx had this a lot, too, and I am assuming Syracuse as well where you might have a group of people in the very beginning who consist of for us on Long Island we had ten partners, and in the end we had eight. The makeup of the a little bit different. Also, too, within the agency who is attending the meeting, is it one particular person or are there maybe two representatives from a given agency? I would suggest having a couple of different representatives because if one of the representatives leaves the organization, have you someone there who is familiar with what has been going on and can get the other person up to speed. The other thing you want to account for and address with the partners is how do we want to handle when a member leaves and how do we want to handle when if there is another organization that pops up that maybe you or whatnot who would be good to have as part of this group, so you want to be able to discuss that with the group and develop some rules around that. Let's move to slide number 9.

Slide 9: Step 3: Identifying Resources

Under the title it says a budget will need to be determined and funding secured to support the CES. Underneath that it says possible funding sources include grants, whether private or public, second bullet says pooling financial and in kind resources from member agencies, and the last bullet being stake voc rehab. We as far as being funded through federal grant, we were in the fortunate position of having granted funding to utilize to support the coordinator role here on Long Island, Syracuse, and in the Bronx. This obviously would be the best method to go in terms of getting the financial means you need to be able to support an initiative like this. I can tell you although we did not receive it, the long island CES did about three years ago apply for a project with industry's grant, and it was a collective effort in terms of the writing of that grant, getting input from the different partners, and putting it together, and so we did submit for that and although we did not get it, I think the group saw that, hey, maybe this is something we could try again if once the five-year grant that we have now does not get renewed. We can start to look into other Avenues, so certainly I would encourage you to look in that direction. It may be that it is easier to start with a private type of a grant because they are a little easier to apply for as opposed to a federal grant, and at least you get some seed money to get started, so you might want to look into organizations, even organizations such as Motorola, large companies, places like that who have a grant funding department where they provide grants an annual basis to various causes and utilizing that as seed money to get started, maybe to support the position of the coordinator who would then be able to begin organizing and so forth.

Another idea that we have talked about with the partners is in terms of pooling financial resources and in kind resources from the agencies, and you may be listening to me thinking I do not know how in the world we would ever do that, especially given this economic state, and certainly right now it may be very difficult, but a lot of organizations do have capital versus operating expenses, so operating expenses obviously that is your day in and day out expenses that you utilize to run the organization, and capital expenses are often times utilized for purchasing one-time items and things of that nature. Is there potential that there would be capital expense money you might be able to utilize in conjunction with other partners that you could pull together to help establish the finances that you need to run the group? And then the third thought that we had as far as funding would be to try and work with the vocational rehab services state VR to see if they in any way might be able to support their local community-based agencies in starting an initiative like this. I know I can tell you, for example, just recently with the economic stimulus package CBVH recently contacted Hofstra on a very different level in terms of supporting an intern, but it may be something like that that if you hear of, oh, I heard about this additional money, source of funding, maybe we could talk with CBVH about would there be a way we could utilize the moneys in that way? I am sorry. I should mention CBVH standing for the Commission for the Blind in New York. Those are three possible ways that you might potentially proceed in tapping into funding to help get started. The other part of that are the in-kind resources, and

I know for long island as well as the Bronx and irrelevant Syracuse, for example space that was donated by agencies who are partners in each of the CESs, so it may be things like space. It may be again staff, being able to donate some of their time, and in a way to serve the partnership, so it is looking at how we can donate resources. It may be things like if you are going to be printing materials, can one of the agencies or partners provide the paper to be able to print the materials that are needed, so it is looking creatively across the partners in terms of what kinds of in-kind resources each can contribute, and it is important to note that every partner will be able to contribute differently, so you want to make sure that they are being recognized and acknowledged for what they can contribute to the partnership.

The other thing I want to point out in the slide before I turn it over to Jennifer is back in the manual again we keep referring to, this but there is a sample budget that you might want to look at if you do choose to move forward in this, and it just gives you a sense of the kinds of dollars and cents that you might need to be able to develop something like this, and if I had to estimate that, the amount if you include the coordinator role, computer and supplies, meeting space, special events that you might hold, any kind of employer development activities and such, and the having the database which we will be talking about in a minute, the employer database might come in around 75, 80,000, maybe 85,000 dollars that you would need on an annual basis, so the important thing is to sit with the group and come up with a budget up front so you have a sense of what you are going to need so that then from that point you can determine your strategy forgetting the funds needed to support that. All right. I am going to turn it over to Jennifer now.

Jennifer Coughlin: Thanks, Jamie. As you were talking and mentioning CBVH, it reminded we have been interacting with a group in Albany, the state capital here in New York state that, even before the CES started and even before they contacted us, they actually had written a grant to VESID which is the state voc rehab agency here in New York and they have been funded for several years. It is a community collaboration very similar to the CES. They were interested in what we were doing because we had a little more structure in terms of using some of the tools, implementing the use of some of the tools and the database we will be talking about in the future or in a couple of slides, but it is possible it does happen. Another idea is the project with industries grants that a lot of the communities have around the country, that is another way that the CES could happen, it could be possibly be folded into what is going on with the project with the PWI grant, and here in Syracuse as Dennis mentioned before we are collaborating with the Syracuse city school district, and they are going to use a lot of their financial resources to support the CES and make it happen, so it is definitely possible, it just takes a little bit of creativity and initiative, and that is all I wanted to add here. If Dennis, you wanted to add anything, and then looks like you are taking over step 4, so I will pass it over to you.

Dennis Gilbride: Yes. I see there are no further questions. Please go to step 4. I will say that the budget is a serious issue, and while I want us to take it seriously in realize for the kind of collaboration we are talking about to be successful it does need a budget, but do not let that overwhelm the group at the beginning, that while we have a sample budget, it may be that there are ways to do it with less money, certainly better to do it with more money, so while we do need to be realistic that these activities need resources, we could also not let that be a barrier to our creativity about how to do what we want to do. Slide number 10 please.

Slide 10: Step 4: Enhance Employer Development Skills

First point, demand side employer development. Underneath that is increasing employment opportunities for consumers by training providers to work directly with employers to increase the demand for consumers. The second section, methodologies. First bullet point under that, develop, implement training program that builds job development and employer consulting skills. Second bullet point, CES groups have access to ten online training modules to learn more about the demand side module.

As I indicated earlier, the central focus of the CES is in employment, and it is that while we are very committed to developing effective collaboration, it is collaboration for employment, and the model for employment that we use is really a demand side employer model. Now, the TACE is going to be having a training on the demand side model, and it may be in future years if there is interest we can do much more on an employer development and the demand side model. Basically the demand side model mean that is we start by really trying to understand our employers by providing services to employers that makes them sort of preaccessible, helping employers to become accessible and then developing these relationships so employers start calling us, so they see us as a way of solving their personnel needs. We are in a slowdown now, and there is more people leaving the doors of employers than entering, unfortunately, but that is not going to last forever. That hopefully within a year or so employers will be hiring again and employers will be wanting to find people who can do the work who are responsible and effective and good employees, and we have those people, so we can be a resource to employers. We need to develop the relationships with employers so that they see us and they pick up that phone that we had in one of our earlier slides, and they call us and they say I have an opening here, do you have somebody who you can send me because I have been really happy with the support and the consumers you have sent, so while you could have the CES model and not use the demand side employer development model, we do think it is a useful, valuable way of thinking about how the group should organize itself to partner and work with employers.

We mention here we have training and how to do demand side job placement and we mentioned here 10 online training modules. Through our RTC, the Research and Training center, we are developing these modules, and those modules are rolling out online for anybody who is interested in doing that. We also suspect that over time we will be providing much of this content to through the TACE system, through webinars in the future, through the Blackboard classes, or other training methodologies, so if there is interest in the southeast region, and learning more about demand side job development and learning more about the strategies to partner with employers, certainly through the TACE, and through the RTC, we are very interested in providing that additional training to you. I am going to turn it over to Jamie to add something.

Jamie Mitus: One thing I wanted to mention in terms of the training that was provided to the

CES partners, we were collecting data in terms of looking at the effectiveness of those trainings in terms of the outcomes it would have on the clients that the partners were serving, so how it worked was that during CES meetings partners would receive a training, the ten trainings at different times, one training per meeting, and basically they were expected to take the training and apply it into their daily work with the clients that they worked with in the community.

As part of that what we did is we collected data with the clients that they worked with. We asked them to refer clients over and we looked at clients that they worked with while getting the training and after getting the training, and we looked at clients that they worked with prior to getting the training, and we did find a couple of interesting findings. One was that the clients served by the partners after they got the training actually had less job tension as they went into their new jobs, and they also had slightly higher income. I do not have the exact number in front of me at the moment, and it was not a huge difference, but it was slightly higher. So we did find some outcome, and we are still in the middle of cleaning up that data that we are looking at right now, so we hope to have more results to share with you on that as well. So I will turn it over to Jennifer now with slide number 11.

Slide 11: Step 5: Conduct Employer Development

Jennifer Coughlin: Okay. Thank you. Step 5, reads conduct employer development. Develop employer partnerships, methodologies used are identify employer's workforce needs using the employment opportunity survey or the EOS, document information learned during meetings in the EIES database, number three share information at meetings to use in job development, and the fourth bullet is introduce employers to the model, features and benefits of the CES.

This is really for me where a lot of the fun began, where we were out actively engaging employers and meeting with them and learning about them, and in Syracuse we use the EOS to structure our meetings with employers. I am not going to go into great depth about the EOS because we actually did a webinar last week on the EOS that some of you may have participated in and for those of you who did not, if you want more information, you can access that through an audio file that is located on the TACE website. Just a brief description is the EOS is an 18 question survey developed and tested in another research project that Dennis was involved in several years ago, and it is designed to determine an employer's level of openness to hiring individuals with disabilities. In Syracuse we really used it as a way to begin developing relationships with employers. We did over 100 interviews here with employers using the EOS, and it is a great method because it provides a structure when you are interacting with the employers, and all of the -- all of the employers that I met with really enjoyed going through the questions. Again, you can access the TACE website to learn more about it and the questions are also in the manual.

We will be holding another training on using the EOS. It is a Blackboard supported class, and that will start on June 8th, and it is a three-week class that will facilitate using Blackboard and you can find more information about that on the TACE website, too. I also just wanted to talk a little about the process of how we use the EOS, and what we did here in Syracuse is as a group in our CES meetings we would decide which employers to contact as a group, and there really was not any strategy behind it. It really was more or less what businesses are different partners had been wanting to go out and talk to, so when would either use the internet or we would have the chamber of commerce contact book with us, and we would just come up with lists of employers and list on their contact information and contact name. Then what we would do is we do contact each individual business by phone or email to set up an appointment, and then once we set up the appointment we would go out and do the EOS, but another thing that we did a little bit different is that we came up or actually one of the CES partners came up with an idea of doing a phone a thon because what we discovered is that the CES partners actually enjoyed doing this outreach to employers together rather than individually back at their offices, so we would have phone a thons twice a year where we would do the same thing, come up with a list of employers that was usually well over 100 employers, and we would schedule an afternoon, one day, and we would get together in an office that had several phones. We used cell phones, and we would for an hour or two just list or contact by phone all of the people that were on our list, but prior to that we had sent a letter to them to let them know we would be calling.

We typically got between 15 and 20 interviews scheduled doing it that way, and we found the partners really enjoyed it. It was a very effective way of doing it, and in the manual there is more information about the phone a thon, and there is a sample letter we sent, so it was very effective. Also, one of the bullet points here is using the database. I am actually going to talk about that in the next slide, and in much more depth, so I will not touch on that here. We also shared a lot of information at the meeting.

This was very important. The meetings were very interactive. We were always talking about new employers we had met with and also what follow-up steps. After we had met with an employer, we wanted to continue that relationship, continue developing it, so we would as a group decides what was best for each employer. It was always different, no employer had the same follow up step because some might tell us, hey, I am not really -- I do not have any job openings now but in the fall we will, so we would make note of that so we knew this was an employer we wanted to reach out to in the upcoming fall. I think that is about it. I will turn it over to Jamie so she can add anything to this about her experience on Long Island.

Jamie Mitus: Just quickly I know we need to move forward, but one thing that we on Long Island slightly different from Syracuse and the Bronx is that we also attended job fairs. The way that we did is we had the partners' team up. If you remember, I mentioned we had a committee that was responsible for identifying community events that employers would attend, and then notifying the group what we would then do is identify -- have teams of again two partners and they would go out to those events together, and they would bring along the marketing materials used for the Long Island CES, and present that to employers. We did actually get leads with employers who then were able to connect back with the group, so that worked out quite nicely. I will turn it over to Dennis now.

Dennis Gilbride: Let me just mention an answer to one question we have had, and I am scrolling back to try to find it. I actually want to read it correctly. Are employers generally open to completing an EOS? Our experience for that is absolutely. The key is our whole employer development approach, and that is that we approach employers by listening to them and our contact with employers we have sample letters, and we have which are on the TACE website. And our approach when we call up is not to push in our consumers but rather to call employers and say we are really interested in what your employment needs are and how you -- what your personnel system is, and seeing if there is a way we can be of assistance in helping solve some of your personnel needs. Because of time I do not want to talk much more about that, but if you were not on our webinar last week, I believe that it is up or it will be up soon, and you can go and you can listen to that or you can read and we talked a lot about how we used Employment Opportunities Survey protocol to connect to employers, and our experience has been very, very positive. Employers really like and respond well to these questions, and it really is effective at developing

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these relationships. Now we will go to step 6 and back to Jennifer.

Jennifer Coughlin: Before we move on Dennis, I was reminded hearing you talk that when we were here in Syracuse when we are actively outreaching the employers, there was several times when we would get together as a group and decide which employers to outreach and partners would say I have been trying to get into this business for years, and I have not been able to access them, and one in particular, one example, there is a large international company that had a distribution center here, and several of our partners have made -- they would go to the door of the distribution center and never would be able to get access. Using our process with sending a letter, and then a follow-up phone call, it was pretty easy getting a meeting there. I mean, it was really just a matter of calling that person after we had sent the letter, and they booked a time for us to come in, and we ended up staying for a couple of hours and got a lot of great information and made a wonderful connection, so the process we used I felt was very helpful in interacting with the employers. Now I will move onto slide 12, step 6.

Slide 12: Step 6: Using Technology to Support Collaboration

Slide 12, it is step 6, using technology to support collaboration. The EIES, the employment information exchange system database.

Slide 13. Elements of a CES database

I am also going to read the next slide as well which is slide 13. Elements of a CES database. Bullet point 1, employer information demographics and hiring tips, point 2, hiring trends and opportunities, and point 3, job postings with qualification requirements. There is also down there it says link to database but unfortunately you will not be able to link to the database that is not an option here.

So just a little bit of background. When they are strategizing in building of this model, one of the things that Dennis, if I can speak for you and colleagues knew was that technology was definitely needed to help run this model more efficiently. Personally speaking from my experience I have always worked in nonprofits, and I found that we are not always trailblazers when it comes to implementing technology and using it just to make our lives easier, so this database was envisioned that CES partners could use to input information on employers so after going out and meeting with employers we would track all the information using this database, so we would not lose it, so we would always have it. We would have a history and record of what we learned from all the different employers, and it was a central tracking mechanism that all of the partners had input into and could access, and they can access it from their office, so if I personally had went and met with an employer, I would put the information into the database, and one of the other partners could go and access that from their desks, so if he they wanted to know more about the employer that I had talked to, they could look it up and see that record.

The CES partners on both the Syracuse and Long Island projects, they actually helped build this database. It was over the course of probably five months where we would have meetings, and this was from the beginning when we started the CES, and we devised what we wanted the database to look like and hired a consultant to implement all of these ideas and to actually get the database up and running, and what we came up with basically, it is not overly complicated. There are for the most part four different options. You can enter new information on an employer, so after you go out and interview an employer and meet with them, you log all the information in, and you can also search for an employer, so after those employers are in put into the database you can go back and search. You can enter a new job, so if you learn about a new job that you want to share with the rest of the CES partners, you can input it there, and you can search for jobs that have been input, and a couple of things, one of the things if there is several things we really love about the database. One of the things, we are not only tracking just demographic information on employers like their address and who the HR contact is or whatever. We are also tracking insider tips that we learn when we are meeting with the employers, so if you are conducting an EOS, and you might learn that the person that collects all of the applications really prefers to have them sent by fax. I mean, it could be anything. This is just an example. This was something we note in the database because we know, hey, our consumers might have a better opportunity to get a job there because we will fax this, so it is these little insider tips that are really helpful.

Also, too, I remember when we were starting out and some of the CES partners would say we share -- we sometimes share information amongst ourselves about jobs already, but the beauty of the database is that if you have a job and say you are working with the consumers and you decide this is not going to fit anyone I am working with, when you post it on the database it goes out to everyone immediately. If you wait a week or two to share it with someone else when you run into them, that job is likely going to be gone already, especially in this job market. The database really promotes an immediacy of the information sharing among the partners.

Also, it is a great tool to use when you are sitting with someone that you are working with, you can get on the database, look at the different employers, look at the different jobs, and so it is a great tool to use. Now we have slide 14.

Slide 14: Other Features of the Database

Bullet point 1 is any new information that is added to the database is automatically sent to all partners via email. Bullet point 2, success and satisfaction measurements. Bullet point 3, meeting minutes, and bullet point 4, links and resources. Basically the first bullet point just with have been adding tools to the data base as we go forward. We decided it would be very helpful that if a new employer or new job was added that as soon as someone pushed the save button everyone in the CES partnership would get an email saying that something new was added to the database. It would alert them to that.

We also have ways of measuring success and satisfaction through the database, so we can take a look at are we meeting our goals and how many employers have we met with? Little also a place to centrally store things like meeting minutes, and it is a place where we input links to different labor market websites and things of that nature to just for so it is a resource for the CES partners. All right. I am going to turn it over to Dennis now.

Dennis Gilbride: I just to want add a couple of other issues about the database. The first is Jennifer said that this was created by our partners. This is not a database that is out of a box and that we just fiddled with to put in the headings or something we want. It was actually created completely from the ground up based on what providers who do placement wanted it to look like, so all of the different items, the formatting, everything was designed by people doing placement, and we could modify it in the ways they want, so the ways that jobs are talked about, the ways that the searches are done, it is all designed by the providers, so it is really fundamentally different than using Excel or some other Microsoft database and then trying to work in what you want from that, so it is a completely different way of thinking about how to use this technology.

In terms of access to the technology, I wanted to say a couple of things. One we have said a couple of times we are doing a three-week Blackboard class in July, and there is -- we will have 25 members of that class, and those numbers will all have access to the database and they can look at it and see if it would be something that they would want in their communities. If for some reason you do not want to or cannot participate in that class, you can send Jennifer an email after this webinar, and over time we cannot do it all at once. The reason we did not pop it up was we were afraid that if people all hit it at the same time it might cause us some problems because we are looking at a number of different people here and did not want to take that chance. We will let you look at it and see if it is something that would be useful for your communities. If it is something you wanted in your communities, we could look at different ways we might be able to work out some sort of leasing arrangement or something to cover our costs. It was developed as a federal grant, so we are not a for-profit agency, but we need to -- so we are happy to share it with people if we can find a way, but certainly we are going to share it with everybody who participates in the Blackboard class so they could at least look and see if that is something they want in their communities. I do not see any other questions, so we are going to move now to slide 15 and step 7, and I am going to send it back to Jamie.

Slide 15: Step 7: Measure Success

Jamie Mitus: Okay. Basically at this point you have your CES running, it is operational, sometimes has gone by, you implemented activities, focusing on your goals. The question then becomes how successful has the group actually been, and why this is even important to address is because to continue on it is important for the partners to be able to see that the work they are doing collectively is making a different and that it warrants their time to in-jest because they are getting the output that they need from it. So there is a few different ways we have gone about trying to measure the success of the group on a few different levels. One of the ways we have been measuring success is through the extensive collaboration. Very early on in the project we wanted to look at how close is this group, how close are the partners within the group? Do they have a collective mindset? Is that something that will grow and develop over time? One of the measures we have been losing to examine that is Wilder Collaboration Factor Inventory, a tool you might be interested in utilizing. I think it has about 40 items, but it really takes no more than 5 or 10 minutes to complete. Every site is a little different in terms of how we administer it. On Long Island we have been administering it on a quarterly basis roughly. I am pleased to say for all three sites, we have had an improvement and more collaboration has been found across the years of the project. A lot of the effort that has gone in is leading to higher levels of collaboration among the partners. Which is something we wanted to see.

That is something we have been able to go back and share with the partners who feel pretty good about that in terms of knowing their ability to open up and share more has come back and in terms of showing all the partners connectively are collaborating. Another tool we have been using is the Rehabilitation Success

Survey, and this is an instrument that Dennis Gilbride along with, I believe with Bob Stanford, but you can clarify on the public chat in terms of the authors of the instrument. There is a really good tool. There are two versions, short versus long version. Obviously the long version would be better. I think it is about 90 items. Dennis can clarify that, maybe 86 items, that essentially is given to the client after a client secures a job, and asking about job satisfaction, asking about salary, just overall aspects of the job and from that you can engage whether or not you are having more success with respect to your client's finding a job and a job that they get if it is satisfactory to when they need, so that is another helpful tool.

Other things that we have been doing is for the Long Island CES and the Bronx also I know has been doing this, and I think also Syracuse, is putting together annual reports that for each of the agencies, and so especially what those annual reports provide is all of the information about what the partner has contributed to the group for that given year, so seeing it again on paper in a year's time what that tells the partner is, wow, we really exhibited a great deal to the partnership more than I realized. I forgot that and did that early on in the year. It is a nice way for them to get feedback as far as what they have actually done. Some of the things we reported in that as an example is the number of employers they inputted into the database, the number of meetings they attended, for Long Island again, the number of job fairs they participated in, or resources that they contributed to the group, so it provides an Avenue to see what they have actually contributed and the success from that.

We also, I know this goes in Syracuse as well as the Bronx, try to have an annual celebration as a way to acknowledge success as a group and the contribution of the partners, so every year we have a luncheon on Long Island that we provide that we do that the grant pays for to recognize them in that way. It is really important you want to be able to track -- I should say one other thing that we have been doing, this one is a little trickier, and it was more part of the research, but having the partners fill out on a biweekly basis a form that just indicates the extent to which they are utilizing the consortium as they are out there conducting job placement services, you know, how many job leads of the work they are doing they actually got from the partnership and things like that. It was a really good tool as far as really getting at more detail in terms of their placement activities, how many placements they are getting, how many employers they are connecting with, but then also connecting it back to the consortium. The difficulty was the frequency of how often we were trying to have them fill that out, so while it is a good tool, I think you want to examine how often to actually have the partners share that information because of time factors. I will turn it over to Dennis, then, to elaborate further in terms of measuring your success.

Dennis Gilbride: Hi. Let me say one thing about measuring success and I will answer a couple of questions that have shown up. More subtle measure of success and we started keeping track of this during our meetings was the use of us language instead of I language. What we found is at the beginning of the process for the first few months and depending on the agency sometimes for many months they would talk about my agency or this is what my agency does or this is what I do, and what we found quite to our pleasure was that as the group developed and became more of an effective group, people started talking about "we", so we as the CES need to approach this employer. "We have" done this, "we" can provide this to the employer. What we found is there was a change in the way the placement providers were conceptualizing themselves coming from an individual agency perspective to an "us" perspective. I want to answer a couple of the questions. One of the questions was how long after placement is the client followed? That is entirely the function of each agency. The CES model is merely the infrastructure for the agencies to get together to organize their placement and employer development and to be one point of contact for employers. All the rest of what agencies do is just what they do. The database will provide reports that agencies can use for the reports back to their funders or to keep their internal tracking. The CES model itself doesn't have -- say anything about how long you follow up or how long you do not follow up. That is all based on the providers. That is also true for an earlier question which was how were people referred to the CES? People -- consumers are not referred to the CES. Consumers are just part of their agencies, and the consumers do not really even know what the CES is. All the consumers know is that suddenly their placement provider has access to a lot more jobs and a lot more information about jobs and has access to this database they can look through and find where they might be a good match, but the consumer is not part of the CES. The CES is the placement providers, not the consumers, so they really -- they really do not even need to know that you are doing that. All, the only people that need to know are the employers, and the placement providers. I see that we are getting -- we are running low on time, so I am going to pass it over to Jennifer to take us any last comments on this and to take us to the last slide. Slide 16.

Slide 16: CES Accomplishments

Jennifer Coughlin: Okay. I just moved on to the next slide which is slide 16, and the title is CES accomplishments, bullet point 1, 7 to 15 providers participating in each location. Number 2, over 150 employers listed in the database. Bullet point 3, job leads added continually, bullet point 4, interactive database developed and continually improved based upon provider needs and feedback, and bullet point 5, ongoing training to providers and employers.

Just a couple of things I want to say here is that we have like it says we have over 150 employers in the database. When I started out I guess I never would have thought we would have that many, but I think with our structure and because our collaboration with working so well, we were able to achieve a lot. It has been very successful, and also the ongoing training to providers and employers, that was another important component because as Jamie mentioned, sometimes staff changes, people leave jobs, new people come, so we always made a point to be present with all of the agencies, so if someone new came on, we could bring them into the CES and show them how it works, so we always wanted to make a point of doing that. I am going to turn it over to Jamie, and if she has anything to add about this.

Jamie Mitus: Okay. Just as I was saying earlier in terms of some actual outcomes, utilizing this model and utilizing the job placement trainings that were delivered to the partners, as I was saying earlier we did have some small positive results in that where job tension of the clients that were placed seemed to be lower and as well as higher income for those clients as well, and I will say that collecting the data for this has

-- it has been quite involved, so I think that as we investigate the data a bit more closely, hopefully we are going to see some other results we can report back to you to show the effectiveness of this particular group. I think probably one of the biggest successes at least for the Long Island group as well as probably Syracuse and Bronx as well is like Dennis was saying the change from I language to we language, and seeing the partners in the beginning not communicating very formally with one another. On Long Island the mental health agencies have not traditionally worked interactively together, so for Long Island these individuals were really just meeting each other for the first time, and so in the beginning it was extremely formal, and you could see the reservation as far as what is it that I really want to share, do I really want to even share anything, but as time has gone on, that has changed. The other thing is that typically the coordinator in the beginning would do a lot of the facilitation of the meeting where now what you tend to see is a lot more dialog among the partners, less of the coordinator doing the facilitation, and more with respect to the partners contributing and so forth. In Long Island they want to continue on after the grant ends, so that is something now that they are exploring in terms of how they are going to continue to support it and move forward with it. Having some additional idea that they may want to do with it once the grant is over, so I think that also demonstrates some success, too. Dennis, I will turn it over to you.

Dennis Gilbride: Let me just answer a question that came up on the public chat. What is the average number of employees for these employers? My answer was that they range in size from the largest we have all the largest employers in town so very small employers that have just a few. The employers were all identified by the placement providers. What we do is that we have everybody's dream list of what employers they would like to have connection to, and as a group then we problem solved how to get access to those, like Jennifer gave an example of that one major employer that nobody for two years had been able to get into, but it was a major employer with good jobs in the community, and we had not had one placement in the whole community in years, and so we targeted them and figured out a strategy as a group to approach them, so that the employer, so the employers were from every single industry and every single size. It was really based on the interest of the providers, the goal was entirely on the providers got together and wrote on the board that do we want to go after in this quarter, and that is how we identified the employers. Let's move to the last slide because I see we are almost at the end of our time. Slide 17 please.

Slide 17: Related Upcoming Events

The last slide is the Blackboard class that we have talked about before. This is limited to 25 people. People can be from the same community and so if any of you out there are really interested in trying this, I recommend that you sign up for the Black board because it is going to be really interactive and problem solving and strategies to get it going, so we are going to have some activities to try to spend three weeks to really help each other using our expertise to get those going, so I recommend that you sign up for that. I want to turn it over to Jamie because she has been talking about the workplace socialization work that she has also done and she is going to be doing more events on that, and I would like her to get a chance to mention those.

Jamie Mitus: Thanks, Dennis. Yeah. Another part of the project which we really have not spent as much time on today was providing training to the partners specific to workplace socialization, and we delivered approximately twelve different trainings all around this subject matter with the goal being to really address what happens once the client is hired, not so much everything before in terms of placement or after they are in a job and how can we help them in terms of their adjustment into the job, and so this particular training, how it might be different from other trainings that you have been to is that it really brings in a more business oriented model to workplace culture, or understanding organizations from a culture perspective, and what that means in relation to clients being able to adapt and blend into the culture, and so we are going to do a two trainings in the month of July. I believe one is the 8th, the other around July 22nd, and the TACE center can provide specific details that get into it as far as the workplace culture and what that means in terms of helping your clients succeed in the workplace adapting to the culture, understanding co-workers, understanding supervisor styles, things of that nature, so look for those to happen in July, and I guess at this point I will turn it over to Jennifer if you want to say anything.

Jennifer Coughlin: I am all set. I really do not have anything to add. I will give Dennis one last chance to add anything he needs to do.

Dennis Gilbride: I see we have question is there a strategy to connect with employers the boards participating providers? That certainly has happened with us, particularly with our PWI that is part of our CES here in Syracuse. That is a discussion led by that provider, how do they want us to approach any employers on their boards, and all of these decisions are group decisions and we always defer to whichever provider has the strongest relationship with an employer because we only want to make things better, so we make sure that if one of our provider partners has any relationship, be it that they are on the board, or even we have had providers who had the group go to their own employer, so we did as a group like I can remember going to a hospital and another employer where that was a member of our CES, but they wanted the group to approach HR for their own reasons, so the key is respect amongst the providers, deferral, to whichever provider seems to have the relationship or connection, and then strategizing as a group and then living with that agreement on how we are going to approach employers so that we come to that employer with one voice. It is now 2:56 by my reckoning. I think we have a few TACE final slides that we need to go through, and if we go to the next slide which gives our contact information, and then we are going to turn it over to one of the TACE staff I think to go through the closing information, and then on the slide after this I want to add another reference, and I am going to be posting that into the public chat, so we have another article related specifically to the CES that I will be pasting in so take it away TACE.

Closing Remarks

Lucy Wong Hernandez: Thank you, Dennis. This is Lucy again. I guess we have no more questions. This has been a very educational session, lots of questions and very good answers. I would like to thank Dennis, Jennifer, and Jamie on behalf of the TACE Center for their presentation on this interesting topic that has provided the participants with an introduction to their Consideration for Employment Success Model and how it can be used effectively for job placement providers and employers.

I would like to provide a very quick overview of our discussion today on Building a Consortium for Employment Success in your community, enhancing employers' development through implementation of the Consortium of Employment Success model. Today we have learned what the CES is, and what are the goals of the CES. The dual benefits of a CES for the employer and the job placement providers. The important step that involves such as building and establishing structure and collaboration, identifying resources and enhancing employer's development skills, conducting employer's development and measures of success and accomplishments. All points are very important to vocational rehabilitation professionals in their efforts to accomplish successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in achieving their goal of employment, participation and enhancing their quality of life.

I also want to thank all the participants today for their valued at participation. A transcript of this session along with all the handout materials will be posted and available at the TACE website within two weeks of the session. Make sure you check TACEsoutheast.org.

Please remember to complete your evaluation of today's session. Your feedback is important to you are continued planning so that we may address your specific needs and concerns. The link to the evaluation form is posted at the chat area so you can go ahead and click on that straight from the chat area and fill out the evaluation form when you are done with the session. This session has been proved for CEU and CRC credits, for participants from within the southeast region that the TACE Center covers. Please refer to the site coordinator instructions for additional information, and remember if your questions were not answered today or if you need more information on the subject matter, please contact the TACE Center at 866-518-7750 or by sending an email to TACEsoutheast@law.syr.edu.

The TACE Center's next webinars are Improving Case Management Skills for Effective Vocational Rehabilitation which would be held on May 6th from 11:00 to 12:30. The Principle of Demand Side Employment for Persons with Disabilities which will be held May 13 also from 11 a.m. to 12:30, and Ethical Issues of Rehabilitation and Counselors Related to Self Management and Adherence to Treatment which will be held May 27th also at 11 a.m. through 12:30.

This concludes today's session and I hope to see you all back at the next TACE webinar.

Thank you for your participation. Goodbye for now.

[Event concluded April 30th 2009]