

Center for Studying Disability Policy

Discovering Opportunities for Vocational Rehabilitation During the COVID-19 Pandemic

December 8, 2020

Welcome



Paul Shattuck
Mathematica

Panelists and Discussant



Panelist
Shannon Austin
Pennsylvania Office of
Vocational Rehabilitation



Panelist
Kathryn Hayfield
Virginia Department for Aging
and Rehabilitative Services



Panelist
Dacia Johnson
Oregon Commission
for the Blind



Discussant
Stephen Wooderson
Council of State Administrators of
Vocational Rehabilitation

Agenda



Overview of Vocational Rehabilitation



Panel discussion



Discussant remarks



Questions

Overview of Vocational Rehabilitation



Purvi Sevak
Mathematica

Critical part of the workforce system

- **Vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies help people with disabilities maximize their employment and independence**
 - This year marks the 100th anniversary of the VR program
- **Federal-state (and territories) partnership**
 - Overseen nationally by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), in the U.S. Department of Education
 - Administered by states and territory level by 78 agencies
 - In 2018, served nearly 900,000 consumers and 137,000 students with disabilities
- **VR can be especially helpful to people with disabilities this year**

Each agency operates in its unique landscape

- **Education and skills of consumers**
- **Mix of industries, occupations, and employers**
- **Environment**
 - State Medicaid policies
 - State and local education
 - Other community-based organizations
 - Political and fiscal contexts
- **Attitudes, expectations, and culture related to disability, employment, and integration**

Facing common challenges

- **Mandates in the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act**
 - Emphasis on competitive, integrated, employment
 - Expand services to students including those that have not yet applied for VR services
 - New reporting requirements
- **Pandemic-induced challenges**

What can we learn from one another?

- **What works in addressing pandemic challenges including**
 - Outreach and completing applications
 - Providing pre-employment transition services
 - Health and safety of staff and consumers
 - Connecting with employers
 - Coordinating across local agencies
- **How do you know it works?**
 - Increasing emphasis on adopting evidence-based practices
 - What can you do to expand the evidence-base?

Panel Discussion



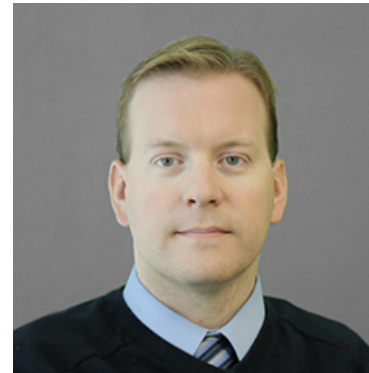
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Moderator
David Mann
Mathematica

Discussant



Stephen Wooderson
Council of State Administrators of
Vocational Rehabilitation

Questions

Mathematica...

provides evidence
for

the public and
private



Thank you