



# Project E3: Educate, Empower, and Employ

Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center:  
Targeted Communities (VR-TAC-TC)

VA DARS E3 Influencers  
Session 2: August 4, 2020





# VA DARS Project E3-Targeted Communities Rollout

## Unit 3: Part 1: Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Model Overview

VA DARS E3 Influencers  
Session 4: September 1, 2020



# Learning Objectives

- ▶ At the end of this training, participants will know/understand the following:
  - ▶ The historical background of the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) model and its relevance to the Targeted Communities Project, the work of Vocational Rehabilitation and the work of VA DARS
  - ▶ How leveraging and braiding resources create enhanced opportunities for success and how the IRT helps Counselors to engage in braiding and leveraging resources
  - ▶ How to define, coordinate and facilitate an Integrated Resource Team

# Agenda

## Historical Context

- ▶ Origin of the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Model

## Braiding versus Blending

- ▶ Keys to Collaboration
- ▶ **Defining an IRT**
  - ▶ What is an IRT
  - ▶ Goals of Introducing the IRT Model
  - ▶ Who Participates in an IRT
  - ▶ What an IRT Is/What an IRT is Not
  - ▶ IRT versus Interagency Committee/Disability Action Committee
  - ▶ IRT versus Person Centered Planning

# Agenda (Continued)

## Coordination of an IRT

- ▶ Career Exploration
- ▶ Active Resource Coordination
  - ▶ Active Resource Coordination versus Simple Referral

## Approaching the Partners

- ▶ Pre-Eligibility
- ▶ Post Eligibility

## IRT Meeting

- ▶ Facilitation and Negotiation of an IRT
- ▶ IRT - Examples
- ▶ IRT - Hands on Exercises

# Historical Background

- ▶ Born from the Disability Program Navigator (DPN) Initiative and its successor, the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) model was developed in response to the need for a coordinated approach to service delivery across multiple services systems based on the needs of an individual consumer.
- ▶ Both the DPN and DEI projects offered an opportunity to better understand the big picture of service delivery and uncovered that consumers often were not accessing all of the resources that they were potentially eligible for and/or were in receipt of duplicative services as a result of uncoordinated and only cursory collaboration.

# Historical Background (Part 2)

- ▶ The need to address resource gaps based on an individual consumer's needs, to ensure the consumer could achieve their employment goal, the basis for a grass-roots, bottom-up approach to improving systemic collaboration.
- ▶ How does the use of a model that is based on individual need create systemic change?
  - ▶ Improves communication and collaboration resulting in enhanced coordination of services and supports for an individual by creating an environment where multiple service providers come together (face to face or virtually) in support of an individual and learn, through the process of service delivery, what other agencies provide and how they deliver services - in other words, it creates an opportunity for organic knowledge translation and tangible braiding and leveraging of resources.
- ▶ How you ask? Let's find out together...

# A Quick Note: Braiding versus Blending

As we discuss the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) in the coming slides, understanding braiding and how it differs from blending is important.

- ▶ Blending and Braiding are often used interchangeably, but are very different
- ▶ Blending: funds or resources combined and are not discernable.
- ▶ Braiding: funds and resources are coordinated from multiple agencies to benefit a single consumer, but remain attached to that agency.
  - ▶ Example: one agency may pay for training while another pays for transportation. individual plans reflect who is covering what need.
- ▶ Braiding is a tangible way to leverage resources from a bottom-up approach as each agency offers or commits only what is directly in their control. Braiding does not require an agency to do anything differently or asked to cover disallowed costs.



# Defining an IRT

- ▶ What is an Integrated Resource Team (IRT)?
- ▶ What are the goals of introducing the IRT?
- ▶ Who participates in an IRT?
- ▶ What the IRT Is/Is Not
- ▶ IRT versus Interagency Committee/Disability Action Committee
- ▶ IRT versus Person Centered Planning

# What is an IRT?

- ▶ An IRT is initiated on behalf of an individual consumer who is experiencing multiple challenges to employment in order to address that one individual's specific needs.
- ▶ It brings together a team of diversified service providers, including community and partner agencies and other core partners, who work together with the individual consumer to strategize on how services can be coordinated to reach and maintain an employment goal.
- ▶ The consumer along with the team of service providers come together to establish three main components:
  - ▶ Consumer-identified, mutually agreed upon, employment goal
  - ▶ Lines of Communication
  - ▶ Sequence of Services

# What is an IRT? (Continued)

- ▶ The Integrated Resource Team is an informal agreement between a consumer and the systems providing services to that consumer, allowing the members to coordinate services at the individual consumer level around a shared employment goal.
- ▶ This “team” approach promotes greater systems collaboration and increases cross-agency education and accountability of all parties involved in the IRT, including the consumer.
- ▶ Additionally, all IRT members may collectively gain credit for the consumer’s employment outcome.

# Goals of the IRT

- ▶ Enhance cross-agency, cross-system, collaboration and communication to better leverage available resources in a seamless way for an individual consumer.
- ▶ Help Office for the Blind/Vocational Rehabilitation systems and partner agencies see the benefit of collaboration which makes everyone's job easier!
- ▶ It promotes informal collaboration and relationship building by bringing together public and private sector representatives from the community to work together to assist an individual in meeting their employment goal.
- ▶ Allows the members to coordinate resources, both financial and non financial, at a customer level around a shared employment goal

# Goals of the IRT (Continued)

- ▶ Promotes core rehabilitation values. The IRT is a consumer driven approach, where the consumer participates in the IRT as an integral member of the team, as the consumer determines their personal work goal and members of the team are based on the consumer's unique needs, thus it aligns with and promotes Self Determination and Informed Choice.
- ▶ The IRT, through its collaborative and coordinated approach to service delivery with its shared customers, shared resources and shared outcomes, creates a mechanism for shared accountability.
- ▶ Additionally, by sharing consumers, agencies can share resources and ultimately are able to address the needs of more consumers.

# Who Participates in an IRT?

An IRT may consist of members from a wide array of core partners and other community programs and service providers including but not limited to:

- ▶ Workforce Partners (Titles 1 and 3 WIOA)
- ▶ Mental Health
- ▶ Independent Living Center
- ▶ Programs for Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- ▶ Commission for the Blind
- ▶ Vocational Rehabilitation
- ▶ TANF
- ▶ Supported Employment Specialists
- ▶ Housing Providers
- ▶ Community Work Incentives Coordinators
- ▶ Developmental Disability Providers
- ▶ Veterans administration
- ▶ Natural Supports/Volunteers

# What an IRT Is/Is Not...

An IRT is an approach used for an INDIVIDUAL consumer.

- ▶ An IRT is *NOT* an interagency committee consisting of various disability/community agencies that focus on systems collaboration.

The main purpose of an IRT is EMPLOYMENT

- ▶ The main purpose of an IRT is *NOT* resource mapping or to assist an individual to learn about various agency resources.

# IRT Versus Interagency/Disability Action Committee

- ▶ An IRT is different from an Interagency Committee or Disability Action Committee in that an IRT is focused on an individual consumer and their unique needs, as such, members of an IRT will change with each IRT that is formed. Additionally, the goal of an IRT is Employment, whereas the Interagency Committees tend to focus on an array of systemic issues that may be related to employment but is not employment itself as a goal.
- ▶ In an Interagency Committee or a Disability Action Committee, the focus is typically on systemic or community level issues (i.e. transportation, food insecurity, community homelessness) with the members of the Committee typically being static.



## Discussion Question:

How might an Advisory Council or Interagency Committee be useful or relevant in implementing this approach?

# IRT versus Person Centered Planning (PCP)

- ▶ The Integrated Resource Team Approach definitely shares common traits with PCP including a team approach that can incorporate multiple service providers and the identification of both resources and resource gaps, however, there are some marked differences.
- ▶ The main goal of an IRT is employment, this differs from Person Centered Planning in that Person Centered Planning is a more generic approach to service delivery that can be applied across multiple systems and can include goals that are not specific to Employment.
- ▶ The IRT does take a holistic approach to working with an individual, as does PCP, but with the IRT, barriers are all addressed relative to helping the consumer achieve a specific and mutually agreed upon employment goal.

# Coordinating an IRT

- ▶ Career Exploration
- ▶ Active Resource Coordination (ARC)
- ▶ Active Resource Coordination versus Simple Referral
- ▶ IRT Meeting
- ▶ Planning the Meeting
- ▶ Approaching the Partners

# Step 1: Career Exploration and Need

As was noted in the previous section, the purpose of an IRT is to help the consumer attain their specific employment goal.

- ▶ Career Exploration serves as the first step in developing an IRT. The career exploration should result in”
  - ▶ an employment goal that is self-determined
  - ▶ strength-based
  - ▶ concrete enough to build a plan around
  - ▶ meets the required outcomes of the systems accessed.

# Step 1: Career Exploration and Need - (Cont.)

Once the employment goal has been identified consider the following things:

- ▶ Employment Goal
  - ▶ Are there resources beyond what is available from your own system that are critical to your consumer's success in attaining that employment goal?
- ▶ The Consumer
  - ▶ What other systems is your customer currently accessing? What other systems' might your consumer be potentially eligible for that can help them attain and retain their employment goal?

## Step 2: Active Resource Coordination

- ▶ Active Resource Coordination (ARC) is the process of identifying needed resources and appropriate and prioritized action steps to address specific, targeted barriers to employment experienced by an individual consumer. ARC is likely something you are already doing during the process of intake and plan development, this may just be an enhanced and more intentional step under the IRT approach compared with the current service delivery model.
- ▶ ARC is more than just a referral to multiple service providers.
- ▶ ARC is the process of helping the consumer create a goal-specific (hint hint: employment goal) resource plan.

## Step 2: ARC (continued)

- ▶ ARC is directly assisting a consumer to convene, and negotiate with, multiple service providers to create an employment plan that accesses needed resources from multiple systems so the things to consider when determining if your agency does active resource coordination include:
  - ▶ Are referrals given before or after the development of an employment goal?
  - ▶ Is communication between service providers solely the responsibility of the consumer?
- ▶ Active Resource Coordination always takes place PRIOR to an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) being put in place. Although active resource coordination may take place without resulting in an IRT.

*So you can have ARC without an IRT, but you CANNOT have an IRT without first having done some Active Resource Coordination!*

## Step 2: Note: ARC versus Simple Referral

- ▶ Active Resource Coordination is more than simple referral. As noted on the previous slide, it includes helping the consumer to engage and approach partners around the potential for partnering with your agency.
- ▶ Many agencies will provide information and referral for consumers but often times the consumer may not understand the relevance of a referral or the steps that need to be taken to actually engage with the referral, active resource coordination helps the consumer to identify, engage and coordinate resources around their needs relevant to achieving their employment goal.



## Discussion Question:

Based on what we just discussed related to Active Resource Coordination, how is your agency doing Active Resource Coordination? Are there additional ways that your agency may be able to improve active resource coordination?

# Step 3: How It Works

## The Individual

- ▶ multiple needs/barriers
- ▶ lack of coordination
- ▶ “stuck”

## The Team

- ▶ led by the job seeker
- ▶ professional support is only a facilitator
- ▶ expertise and partnering is the key

## The Plan

- ▶ not about the solution; about the puzzle
- ▶ Evolves
- ▶ not tied to funding

# Step 3: Who Should Be At The Table

## The Employment Goal

- ▶ What resources beyond those available in your system are critical to your customer's success in attaining their employment goal?

## The Customer

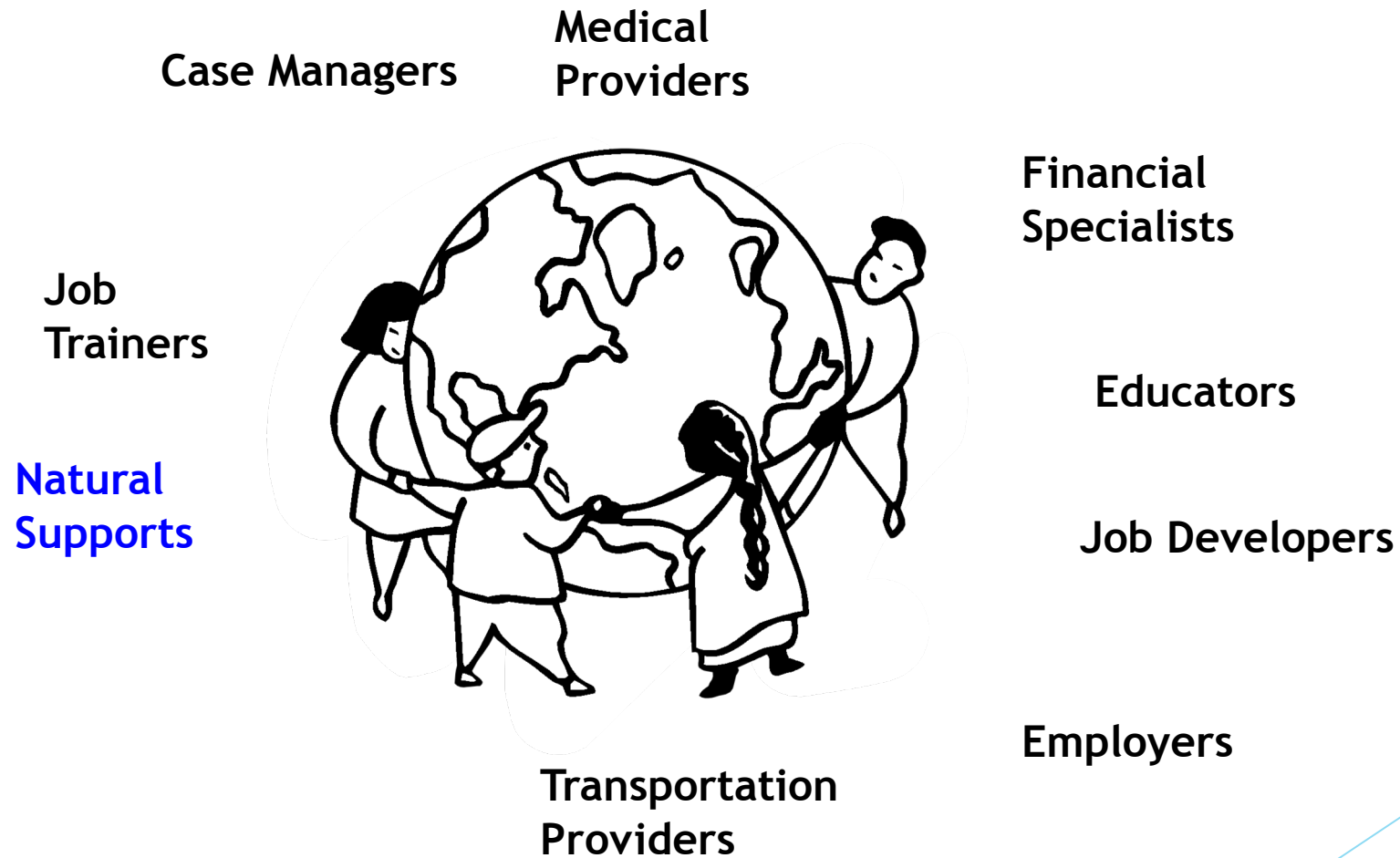
- ▶ What system is your customer currently accessing
- ▶ What services might your customer be eligible for that are relevant in the context of attaining their stated employment goal?

# Step 3: Approaching the Partners

Before approaching partners a customer should be engaged by your system and positioned to access your system's resources. For example:

- ▶ Customer should be determined eligible and be enrolled in your system's services.
- ▶ Customer should have determined an employment goal that allows for the application of your system's resources.
- ▶ Customer should be consulted and agree to all contacts and have a clear understanding of the IRT approach and its benefits.

# Building the Team



## Step 3: Approaching the Partners Pre-Eligibility

**When approaching a partner about your consumer who has not yet been made eligible for the potential partner's program:**

- ▶ **Introduction** - Explain that the Consumer is currently engaged with your program
- ▶ **Eligibility** - Ask if there is anything you can do to help your consumer to complete the partner's eligibility process.
- ▶ **Establish partnership approach** - Let the decision-maker know that you are interested in discussing the possibility of partnering with them if the consumer is determined eligible for their services.
- ▶ **Tracking progress** - Be willing to assist in communicating any issues or barriers your consumer might be experiencing during this process to the providers themselves.

## Step 3: Approaching the Partners Post Eligibility

When approaching partners when your consumer has already been determined eligible and is involved in the partner agency's program:

- ▶ Ask questions concerning the specific services that are being delivered.
- ▶ Emphasize the benefits of partnering with your program that might be of great value to the consumer.
- ▶ Try to uncover areas where you or the partner have some flexibility within the established plans.

# Step 3: Approaching the Partners

## Planning a Meeting

- ▶ Once the customer is determined eligible by another service provider and these service providers are agreeable to partnering, discuss with your consumer their role as the driving member of the Integrated Resource Team.
- ▶ After establishing the consumer's role, whenever possible, a face to face meeting should be convened with the partners and the consumer. If a face to face meeting is not possible virtual meetings are adequate.
- ▶ The purpose of the meeting is to reach consensus around three key parameters:
  - ▶ A common employment goal
  - ▶ Lines of Communication
  - ▶ A Sequence of Services



## Discussion Question:

What is your agency's current process for partnering and/or engaging additional partners around consumer's needs? Are there typical partners that your agency engages?

# Facilitating and Negotiating an IRT

- ▶ Introductions, Purpose and Concerns
- ▶ Reaching Consensus
- ▶ Employment Goal
- ▶ Lines of Communication
- ▶ Sequence of Services
- ▶ Negotiation of Plan

# Step 1: Introductions, Purpose, Concerns

- ▶ Introductions of programs and connections with the consumer to get all members of the IRT up to speed on programs and services involved with the consumer (whenever possible this portion should be facilitated by the Consumer).
- ▶ Present information gathered about consumer's goal choices, needs, and YOUR program's resource commitments.
- ▶ Listen to the concerns of partners in relation to identified needs concerning their field of expertise.

# Step 2: Reaching Consensus

After Introductions, the purpose and concerns have been discussed the group should set out to reach consensus around three key elements:

- ▶ A Common Employment Goal (as identified by the consumer)
- ▶ Lines of Communication
- ▶ A Sequence of Services

# Step 2: Reaching Consensus Employment Goal

## A Common Employment Goal

- ▶ Most service providers will have some sort of employment goal as an outcome to services.
- ▶ Each provider will have specific parameters as to HOW an employment outcome is defined.
- ▶ Discuss what outcomes are linked to resources accessed.

# Step 2: Reaching Consensus

## Lines of Communication

### Lines of Communication

- ▶ The consumer agrees to communication between partners.
- ▶ Identify what information will be communicated.
- ▶ Identify how partners will be informed of progress or needs  
(*Who is the point of contact?*).

# Step 2: Reaching Consensus Sequence of Services



## Sequence of Services

- ▶ Determination of which services are necessary at each point in a plan
- ▶ Linking services to milestones within a plan
- ▶ When do services stop for each provider?

## Step 3: A Multi-Partner Plan

- ▶ After reaching consensus around the employment goal and the lines of communication, using what was learned about the different service providers during the discussion around sequence of services, agencies agree to provide specific supports and resources based on what is available through their programs in support of the consumer obtaining their employment goal.
- ▶ Each agency completes their own specific plan/required documentation and either indicates support provided by other agencies in their MIS system (if the MIS has that functionality) or case notes partner involvement.
- ▶ Agreement around a timeline or need for further IRT Meetings should also be discussed.



Attending	Title/Role



Agenda Items

Agenda Item #1: Employment Goal

Agenda Item #2: Lines of Communication

Agenda Item #3: Sequence of Services

Action Items		
Action	Responsible	Due Date

Attending	Title/Role
Newt Scamander	Customer
Minerva McGonagall	DARS
Severus Snape	Case Manager CSB
Septima Vector	WISA
Rubeus Hagrid	Natural Support
Remus Lupin	WIOA Adult
Poppy Pomfrey	Disability Student Services – Community College

Agenda Items

**Agenda Item #1: Employment Goal**  
Veterinary Technician /Wage Goal - \$11-\$13/Hour - 30+ Hours a Week

**Agenda Item #2: Lines of Communication**  
Customer will approach service provider with any challenges based on what customer's need is and the service provider agrees to provide an update to larger group.

**Agenda Item #3: Sequence of Services**  
Current Employment: Madam Malkin's Robes for All Occasions 10-20 Hrs/Week - \$7.25/Hour  
Enroll in Vet Tech Program Winter 2019 at Community College  
For/During Training

- WIOA Adult will pay Tuition and Fees
- DARS will provide Gas Voucher
- CSB – Med Management and Group/Individual Support
- Disability Student Services – Support Customer in Discussing Accommodation Needs with Professors
- Talk to current employer about schedule to accommodate classes

Post Training

- WISA – Support in Continuation of wage reporting, Understanding SGA and EPE
- DARS – Job Development
- WIOA Adult – Interviewing Skills and Resume Development

Action Items		
Action	Responsible	Due Date
Complete App for Vet Tech Program	Newt & Poppy	08/30/2018
Talk to Current Employer abt. Schedule	Newt & Minerva	09/01/2018
Submit Tuition and Fees for Program	Remus	09/15/2018
Discuss Accommodations w/Profs	Newt, Poppy & Minerva	9/30/2018
Continue to Report Current Wages	Newt & Septima	ongoing

## Negotiating the Plan

### Multi Partner Planning Tool

# IRT Videos

South Dakota - Integrated Resource Team

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

Integrated Resource Team Portland Oregon

<https://vimeo.com/260033830>

# Review

- ▶ The Integrated Resource Team Model was derived from the Disability Program Navigator Initiative and the Disability Employment Initiative as a means to address resource gaps that precluded consumers from attaining their employment goal
- ▶ The IRT approach is a grass-roots, bottom-up approach to braiding resources and funds around the needs of a specific customer. This is NOT the same as blending. All funds and resources are distinctively visible, they are just coordinated.
- ▶ The IRT, because it is consumer driven, is predicated on a strength-based employment goal and consists of resources and partners identified and agreed to by the consumer, it embodies the principals of self-determination and informed choice.
- ▶ The IRT process begins with career exploration and is followed by Active Resource Coordination.

# Review

- ▶ Active Resource Coordination is the process in which you help consumers identify resources, that are beyond what your own program can provide, and helping to engage those resources around a mutually agreed upon employment goal
- ▶ Following Active Resource Coordination an IRT meeting is convened with the consumer and partner agencies in which, led by the consumer, the consumer and agencies come to consensus around 3 key parameters:
  - ▶ Employment Goal
  - ▶ Lines of Communication
  - ▶ Sequence of Services
- ▶ Consumers and Partners agree to roles and services consistent with their own agencies allowances and plans are documented and moved forward.

# Resources

- ▶ Ingram, B., & Kennedy, M. (May 2012). *Introduction to the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Model*. Archived Webinar. Retrieved October, 2015.
- ▶ Ingram, B., & Ralston D. (April 2014). *Comprehensive Breakdown of the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Model*. Archived Webinar. Retrieved October, 2015.
- ▶ Ingram, B., & Ralston D. (October 2015). *Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Lessons Learned for WIOA: The Integrated Resource Team Approach for Populations with Multiple Challenges to Employment*. Archived Webinar. Retrieved August, 2018.
- ▶ Powis, N. (2017). *CT Integrated Resource Team Presentation*. Live Training PowerPoint. Retrieved July 2018.
- ▶ Under “**Related Content**”, the link below contains links to information and resources to assist with the understanding and implementation of the Integrated Resource Team approach. The IRT approach involves diversified service systems coordinating services and leveraging funding in order to meet the needs of an individual job seeker with a disability.

[https://dei.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/10/25/13/18/Integrated\\_Resource\\_Team\\_Information\\_and\\_Resources](https://dei.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/10/25/13/18/Integrated_Resource_Team_Information_and_Resources)

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