Foundation: Employment for Persons with Disabilities topic area

The passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is reforming our nation’s workforce system and transforms federally-funded job training programs to meet the needs of job seekers with disabilities and employers in the 21st century economy. WIOA encourages greater alignment and coordination across federal, state and local programs. With more employment support, persons with disabilities will have access to high quality workforce, education, and rehabilitation services.

Proposals for consideration will include best and promising practices, training programs, strategies and supports that assist persons with disabilities to access and participate in employment and educational programs that lead to competitive employment. We will consider proposals that address one or more of the following:

- **Customized Employment**
  Customized employment involves individualizing the relationship between job seekers and employers in ways that meet the needs of both. It is based on an individualized determination and discovery of the strengths, requirements, and interests of a person with multiple challenges, and is also designed to meet
the specific needs of the employer. It may include employment developed through job carving, self-employment or entrepreneurial initiatives, or other job development or restructuring strategies that result in job responsibilities being customized and individually negotiated to fit the needs of individuals with a disability. Customized employment assumes the provision of reasonable accommodations and supports necessary for the individual to perform the functions of a job that is individually negotiated and developed.

• **Career Pathways**
Preparing for careers and competing in the 21st century means individuals and industry must have inclusive pathways for building a highly skilled workforce. Creating career pathways that lead to sustainable careers through combinations of apprenticeship preparation, participation in a Registered Apprenticeship program, and earning college credit or a degree is one of the best ways to prepare a worker for a successful long-term career and ensures industry as a highly skilled workforce.

• **Supported Self-Employment**
Self-employment has long been an employment
alternative for individuals seeking a new or better career. Today, many job seekers with disabilities are turning to the flexibility of supported self-employment to meet both their career aspirations and financial goals. Self-employed persons with disabilities have increased latitude in determining the hours they work, the type of work they do, and how much money they make.

- **Asset Development Strategies**
  Asset development strategies include various approaches to enhance long-term economic self-sufficiency, including use of individual development accounts (IDAs), implementation of financial literacy training for youth and adults, incorporation of SSA PASS plans and other work incentives, utilization of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and other tax provisions, and self-directed benefit and resource accounts, tax filing assistance, housing, nutrition, health care, and/or child care assistance.

- **Disability Benefits & Employment: A Pathway Forward**
  Since the advent of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA), Disability Benefits Planning has become a unique specialized
service that is becoming a vital part to successful employment outcomes. Research has shown that clients who receive benefits counseling have higher earnings and better VR closure status when compared to clients who do not receive benefits counseling. Disability benefits planning allows persons with disabilities a path to move forward.

**Business Leadership Networks**
The US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®) is a national non-profit that helps business drive performance by leveraging disability inclusion in the workplace, supply chain, and marketplace. The USBLN® serves as the collective voice of nearly 50 Business Leadership Network affiliates across the United States, representing over 5,000 businesses. These many strategies have employed a variety of strategies to improve the employment, retention and promotion of persons with disabilities.

**Section 503 & Workplace Accommodations**
Section 503 prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating in employment against individuals with disabilities (IWDs), and requires these employers to take affirmative action to recruit, hire, promote, and retain these individuals.
The new rule strengthens the affirmative action provisions of the regulations to aid contractors in their efforts to recruit and hire IWDs, and improve job opportunities for IWDs. The new rule also makes changes to the nondiscrimination provisions of the regulations to bring them into compliance with the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

• **Vocational Rehabilitation**
  Successful Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) employment plans and meaningful partnerships can increase the employment outcome of persons with disabilities. We are seeking best and promising practices with state VR agencies that lead to improved employment outcomes.

The breakout sessions in this strand are designed for persons with disabilities and their family members, disability advocates, VR counselors, employment specialists, high-school teachers and staff, postsecondary education faculty, disability service providers, federal and state agencies.

We welcome all proposals. Please see presentation formats on our webpage at: [http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu/presenters/formats/](http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu/presenters/formats/).
Please read criteria for each format and ensure that you have the appropriate number of presenters for your chosen format.

You may submit proposals online at: http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu/submissions or send your proposals via email to prcall@hawaii.edu.

For more information please contact the Employment topic co-chairs, William Mihalke at mihalke@hawaii.edu, or Chin Lee at chinlee@hawaii.edu

For general information on the conference, please contact Charmaine Crockett at cccrocke@hawaii.edu, (808) 956-7539.

For registration questions please contact the Registration Desk at prreg@hawaii.edu, Phone: (808) 956-8816, Fax: (808) 956-4437.