Please stand by for realtime captions.

If you can hear me, be sure to set your status to agree and if you're not sure how to do that, look at the top of Adobe Connect and select the drop-down arrow to the right of the person hand raised and select the agreed button and hopefully anyone who cannot hear me will see this and select disagree. I will do another scroll through. I do not see any red Xs. Happy Thursday. If you have any audio issues during the meeting, you can dial into VANTS and the number is in the top left-hand corner of your Adobe Connect screen, 1-800-767-1750 and the code is 86957. If you are frozen you can try leaving Adobe Connect and then coming back in. That typically fixes the issue but if it is an audio issue, do not hesitate to call into VANTS because by the time I reached out to you on Teams, you are going to tell me that your audio is back . Not always, but most of the time. If you have not already done so, please set your status to agree. I will keep hovering over this and I do see mostly green checkmark switch means most of you can hear. Most of you have already logged in this way but if you have not we ask that you log in as a transfer and enter your name as last name, first name, location. And it looks likes we are seven minutes from the start of the meeting. I think I will turn on the music for about two minutes, and then I will be back for another audio check.

Can you hear me, Leigh?

I can hear you, and your audio sounds good . Okay. I will be back in about two minutes for another audio check.

Okay, everyone. We are four minutes out from our meeting. I would like to introduce myself anyone who may have joined in the last few minutes that we have people continuing to join. My name is Leigh Roberts and I am a course advocate out of Central Florida for the last few days it was a little bit chilly by Florida standard and was in the 60s. Today it is back in the 80s. I read the forecast earlier and it is going to be chilly on Saturday, but the rest of the day between 70 and 80. I do not say that to brag but to keep my audio check going says something to talk about. Also today is national drink wine day. If you enjoy wine, feel free to have a glass after your shift ends. Today is Thursday. Some people refer to that as Friday Eve because most of us work Monday through Friday. I hope that everybody has exciting weekend plans. If you have not already done so, go ahead and set your status to agree. If you're not sure how to set your status, you will look at the top of Adobe Connect to the person with the hand raised and select the drop-down arrow and select agree and hopefully anyone who cannot hear me will see that I'm highlighting the line. Let me do a scroll through. I do not see any red Xs , so that is good. Let me look to see if we have any other presenters or instructors. We have Victoria. I just bumped her up. Let's see. It is about two minutes now until our meeting. Does anyone have any exciting weekend plans? I really have any plans yet. I will probably try to get out on my kayak just to get out in the fresh air. We are up to 27 participants, and we are down to less than two minutes. I am truly running out of things to say. For anyone who has recently joined, I am Leigh Roberts and I am a course advocate out of Central Florida . Another thing that I want to mention is if you have not already done so, please log into Adobe Connect as a guest using last name, first name, location. We do have a VANTS line set up for the meeting so if you have issues do not hesitate to log into VANTS and the phone number is 1-800-767-1750 and the code is 86957 pick that information is also the top left-hand corner of your screen . We have muted the lines and once the meeting begins, there will be files that you can download. They will be at the bottom of the screen unable type a message in the chat box remind you of that and there is also instructions on how to download the files. Let me see if there is any red Xs. Thank you to ever and has put a big green checkmark. It is appreciated. We assume you can hear us. In case you cannot, let me highlight this again. It looks like we are just about ready. Let me get the recording started.

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Leigh Roberts, a course advocate for today's session. If you can hear me, please set your status to agree by selecting the drop-down arrow and select agree. Again, one last reminder we do have a VANTS line set up and information to dial in is in the top corner of your screen. If your computer freezes, we recommend you logout of Adobe Connect and log back in which will typically fix your issue. If you have not already done so, log in as a guest with last name, first name, location . With that, I will turn over to a presenter.

I am glad to announce that we have Lauren and Frances with the office of disability employment with the Department of Labor . Actually worked with this program when I did staffing for VHA VISN 7. We got a lot of quality applicants through this program. I think this will be a benefit for VBA. Especially if you did not know that VA is actively recruiting to bring more qualified individuals on board in the agency. This is a tool that I think is going to benefit all of you as HR specialists and if there is any managers on the line because it gives you another avenue to recruit from. Without further delay, I will turn it over to Lauren and Frances.

Thank you so much, Kevin for the introduction. My name is Lauren Karas . I am here with my colleague Frances Vhay. We are very excited to spend some time with you this afternoon and hope you learn more about the workforce recruitment program. With that, I will hop into our agenda here. Before getting started, about WRP, we will provide an overview of our office as well as the importance of disability employment. We will then talk about WRP as a whole , and then we'll move into the Schedule A hiring authority for those who are not familiar with it and then Frances will conduct a WRP website demonstration so that you can see how the website works, followed by outreach strategy and ways that you can continue to get the word out about our program to federal employees after this presentation has concluded that we will finish with one of my favorite things to discuss, which is success stories.

The first topic of discussion is disability employment as a whole and why it is important to consider it not only during special observances like national disability employment awareness month in October or the Americans with disabilities act in July but rather considering it year-round as part of your hiring and recruitment strategies. First and foremost, disability is a dimension of diversity and inclusion. It crosses across other aspects of diversity. It is important to remember that people with disabilities bring a variety of skills and talents to the workplace, just like any other population. The population of disabled people is large and growing. Early about 61 million adults in the United States live with a disability. More than 80% of those disabilities are required at one time or another. This last point that I would like to make is that section 501 of the habilitation and asks about the federal government be a model employer of individuals with disabilities. It is important when we are thinking about recruitment and hiring and bringing individuals into the federal government that we are keeping in mind that people with disabilities are an excellent talent pool, and we should continue to use their skills and talents in the workforce.

For those of you who might not be familiar with our office and what we do, we are the office of disability employment policy and we are a sub cabinet level agency within the Department of Labor. We are the only nonregulatory federal agency that promotes policies and coordinates with employers at all levels of government. That would include federal level, state, and local government to increase workplace success for people with disabilities. Our agency does this in a variety of ways that we have different policy teams that focus on specific areas related to disability employment. For example, we have a youth policy team focusing on transition age youth and how they can obtain employment. We have an employer policy team that helps employers think about bringing on individuals with disabilities into the workplace and how best to implement those policies and practices. We have a research team, and we have a policy communication and outreach team that is responsible for kind of getting out the word about all of the initiatives that are policy teams working on that we have an alliance program as well, so we work with other businesses and organizations both in and outside of government to promote the idea of disability employment and the workforce recruitment program, which we are going to talk about today, falls under the policy communication and outreach division.

So in a nutshell, the workforce recruitment program is a free recruitment and referral program that connects federal employers with highly motivated college students, graduate students, and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to demonstrate their skills and potential in the workplace. It is a jointly managed program between us at the Department of Labor and the Department of Defense that the program has actually been around for quite some time. It began in 1974 at the Department of the Navy, but was expanded in the 90s to be a federal wide program and has been jointly managed ever since that time.

We wanted to provide you all a quick overview of how the program works on a given cycle year. School coordinators register their schools for participation in the program in the spring and market it to their students. We really rely on individuals and schools to help us connect to the current college students and recent graduates with disabilities. That is why we work directly with schools. Students and recent graduates with disabilities then register in the fall and are confirmed for participation by the coordinators. As part of the application process, students submit an application and in addition provide a resume and a transcript. All of these materials, the application, the resume and transcript and any document is viewable to you as employers. It is year-round on the site. Then we have volunteer federal recruiters who conduct remote informational interviews with the candidates each fall. As I just mentioned, the database is available year-round at WRP.gov to federal employers at any time who are looking for candidates to hire for both permanent and internship positions.

So who are these school coordinators and recruiters? We wanted to take time out of this presentation today to give you a brief overview of who these individuals are, because the program would not be a success without them. Our recruiters help to prepare WRP students and recent graduates for federal employment application process. Coordinators identify eligible candidates and help them apply. Our recruiters conduct informational interviews with the candidates. Through this into informational interview process, they are able to kind of sure their career journey and answer questions that the candidate might have about federal service and both school coordinators and recruiters help provide feedback on WRP candidate resumes and applications that that is really critical . We know that you as employers will utilize the resume to make a decision about who you might reach out to so both school coordinators and recruiters are involved in that process.

I kind of touched on this a little bit throughout the previous slides, but it is important to reiterate that our candidates are available for not only internships but also part-time or full-time employment nationwide. We have a variety of skills is in the database you will see on the next slide here a snapshot of some of the candidates that we have and we do have undergraduate, graduate students, and recent graduates with disabilities we do have folks looking for person permanent placements as well as internships from a variety of academic and professional backgrounds.

On this slide here it is a snapshot of some of our candidates in the current database that was published in December. Currently, we have more than 2500 candidates from 380 accredited colleges and universities nationwide. I will not read each individual statistics here, but some to note are that about 10% of our database have self identified as being a veteran with disabilities. More than 20% of our current database our graduate students, so they are either pursuing an advanced degree or have obtained one. So just thought that that was interesting to note. We do have a variety of skills so with STEM, healthcare, and business. You can probably find a candidate that has a skill set that you are looking for to build to any type of position that your agency or office may have. With that, I will turn over to Frances . she is going to talk about Schedule A and provide you all a demonstration of how to use the WRP website.

Thank you so much , Lauren. Just to stir things up, why the federal employers use WRP? What are the benefits to all of you ? There are many, but we set out a few here. First, the website provides direct access to candidate information that can be searched year-round and we do post a new candidate data annually. Our students and recent graduates must reapply to the WRP each year. All of the resumes in the database stay up-to-date, and students can update their resume throughout the year if they have additional new experiences have changed their major or something like that but they can include that in their application. We try to make sure everything in the database is up to date and this is a great time of year to update searches. We just published these student resumes and applications about one month or two ago. Everything is very recent, and the candidates are eager to find job opportunities. Next is it allows agencies to find candidates with the specific skills needed for a position. We have a robust search function which I will demonstrate in just a little bit here. We will walk through the different types of things that you can search for, but there is a lot of candidates with various skills and abilities that you can use to find someone who is a great fit for any type of position. All candidates are eligible for the Schedule A hiring authority for persons with disabilities make interesting one of the largest scheduling hiring resources and the federal government . It has been designated as a model hiring strategy by the United States office of personnel management. They really encourage all agencies to use WRP as a key tool for hiring students and recent graduates with disabilities into the federal government. And hopefully many of you are familiar with the Schedule A Hiring Authority , but if not, who wanted to be able to talk to you about that today that we are specifically focusing on the Schedule A Hiring Authority for persons with disabilities today. Schedule A is sometimes used for other hiring purposes like during COVID to bring some into the physician because of the COVID-19 pandemic that needed to be brought on more quickly but with guard to individuals with disabilities, Schedule A allows people were qualified for a position to be brought into the federal government and it does not require that federal employers post the position publicly or go through the certification process if the candidate is eligible for Schedule A and is a person with a disability.

You can identify a eligible candidate through the WRP or other resources , and then it is important to work closely with your human resources office in order to follow the Schedule A regulations. The main one is that candidates do need to provide human resources with a Schedule A letter to certify that they are eligible to be hired under that authority . that is a letter that needs to be signed by a medical professional, a vocational counselor or state or federal entity that issues disability benefits. In terms of the WRP, the majority of candidates are higher using Schedule A, but you can use the WRP with other hiring authorities if applicable. Things like veterans preference or pathways, you could reach out to students in the WRP and encourage them to apply for a pathways position on USAJobs. Most are higher using Schedule A.

How do you begin the search process working with the WRP website? The first thing that we suggest is that hiring managers who are looking to bring on either a permanent employee or intern should identify the key competencies and qualifications that they are looking for in a candidate and think about the essential functions of the position they are hiring for. Then there are several people who can conduct candidate searches on WRP.gov. Anyone who is a federal government employee can create an account on the website so it might be that the hiring manager themselves is conducting a search on WRP to look for a good candidate or another federal employee that is assisting the hiring manager in this process or it could be a human resources staff person or disability program manager or someone similar whose conducting a search on behalf of the hiring manager and provided them with resumes and potential candidates for interviewing.

Once a set of WRP candidates have been identified that would be a good fit for the position before the interview process begins, if you do not already work in HR you should just make sure you are following the agency hiring procedures in regards to the process. Agencies are responsible for funding the WRP position and hiring directly through the agency. Then the employer or another staff person or someone in HR can reach out to the WRP candidate by email or phone to schedule an interview . If the interview goes well or a candidate is successfully identified through the process, you should coordinate with your agency HR or coordinator to make sure the process is being implemented correctly and that the Schedule A letter is acquired and all of that. We strongly encourage you to please go back to the WRP website and report to us that you are able to successfully hire a candidate using the website. You can also email us if you have trouble with that but the big thing to advertise it is really important for us to have employers report back to us when they were able to bring on a WRP candidate because the hiring takes place at an individual agency level and we do rely on employers to let us know when a hire occurred successfully to demonstrate the success of the program and also so we have a sense of the type of candidates that are getting employment opportunities so that we can continue to seek out those types of candidates in future years for the WRP website to continue improving the program process.

In terms of how employers can access the WRP, as I mentioned before , and when with a federal government email address can register for an account and the website is searchable by a variety of criteria that we will go over in just a moment here. It is easy to go back and review candidate resumes later and report hires on the website. The way that you would create an account is just to go to WRP.gov and click the employer registration button practices the front page of the WRP website . We do recommend using Google Chrome or Firefox as your browser and steering away from Internet Explorer because it is not fully compatible with the WRP website. Without, I am now going to switch over to a website demonstration. I think, Leigh, if you could provide me with the option to share my screen. Awesome . Thank you so much. Give me just one moment while I get to this.

Can someone let me know if you can see the WRP homepage?

Yes we can see it .

Awesome. Thank you so much. So this is the front page of the WRP website and you get here by going to WRP.gov and then you click on the employer registration button right here . If you need to create an account, you click on employers register now and this form would be sent to me and Lauren and we will approve your account and you receive a login information over email in one or two business days . Today for the purposes of this demonstration I will use an account we already created. Just give me one moment to get on 10. This will come up and it is important to make sure that you are protecting the candidates as part of the process. It is made available for federal hiring purposes and it means you agree not to share this information for this and we always have the reminder up on the page here and then you will be taken to your home page you will see some basic directions about how to use the website that can answer questions for you also see a dashboard set up here with some different modules. Another one I would recommend looking at is the knowledge article section with a user guide for employers, more information on the Schedule A Hiring Authority, the one pager for federal employers that is also available for download on Adobe Connect on the document section at the bottom of the screen and job preference categories. In order to get started, it is very simple you will go over to the left-hand side of your screen you can expand the employer menu and click search student application. This will take you to the search page which will allow you to search for different information regarding the candidates. I'm going to run through a couple searches for you all today. First of all, I will run through some of the criteria you can see and search for things like academic major keywords and the degree program with bachelors, Masters, PhD, associate degree, etc.. If you needed someone who needed knowledge of a particular program or language come you can put the information in and it would do a search based on the attached documents . you can also see if someone has self identified as a veteran with a disability and information about location programs if those seeking permanent employment and it is a sense of the page here. There is also a number of locations searches that you can do. Two of the most common fields we recommend employers search as a starting point is the job preferences list. It is a few modifications that better fit the skill set of candidates. For example, if I was looking for someone with a social science or service background, I could put the job preference in there. Let's say I also want to select a location programs. It is based on state. Now that we have folks from all over the country who joined us today. I will go with where Kevin and Leigh are located, which is Florida. Let's say I am looking for somebody who's looking for a permanent opportunity. You can click on search and this will generate a set of 36 candidates. The information is listed here to see more details about a particular candidate. Which will allow me to view the application and I can tab through the different pages to see more information and I can also download attachments. Every candidate is to upload a resume and a transcript. Also this included a writing sample with the essay and cover letter so they can upload additional documents if they choose to do so. Let's say I look at Michael's resume. I think you might be a good fit for the position that I have available and if I want to save the information for later viewing, I just select the student button and it will add Michael to my student hiring management page, which I will show you right here. So with the student hiring management page, Michael is now listed as a selected student. I can continue adding people. If I log out of the account and log back in, his information and application will be saved here for later viewing. Let's say I go through an interview process and I decided that I would like to hire Michael. I can return to this page, click on his name, and change his hiring status from selected to either interviewed or offer accepted. If you sold the offer accepted, you will receive an additional form that allows you to fill out basic information about the position, including job title, supervisor name, and the location of employment and you would then click on update to send the hiring information to us so that we know that Michael was able to see a position successfully. We keep it pretty basic and straightforward so it is easy to use you can conduct additional searches for one other thing I wanted to show you is let's say I am doing a search for someone with an information technology background and my preferences Michigan. Maybe I am looking for an intern. You can do this initial search, but if I did want to make that list smaller and do a more specific search with smaller groups of students I could put in additional criteria appear like maybe I want someone with a specific major selected search for that. You can also sort the different fields. If I wanted to sort by their first job preference, I could put this in ascending or descending order. It makes it pretty easy to navigate the different students and find the information you are looking for. That is essentially our website demonstration and now I am going to return back to the presentation.

Okay. Is everybody back to the PowerPoint now?

Yes. It is back up.

Excellent. The next slides that we have just provide similar information to I just went over with screenshots of the website. We wanted to include this so if you decide to download it for later viewing, you can get a sense of that material which you will not be able to see at a later time. I will go through these slides here. They must think that I'm going to be covering before handing it back over to Lauren is thinking about strategies that you can use to make sure you incorporate WRP into your hiring strategies . The first one we recommend is making sure WRP is part of the conversation in the current hiring strategy. If you have recruiting checklist, make sure the WRP is a part of that and that it is concerted in every conversation. Especially if you're looking to hire candidates between a GS-3 and GS-12 level because most candidates are recent graduates. We do have nontraditional candidates with more experience, but not a large number of candidates that would be hired in the GS-13 and above positions. 12 and below we have a decent number of those different levels , depending on where you are in the country and what you are looking for. We would encourage you to consider WRP as a WRP as a resource . Next it is really important to engage with your agency management and leadership. By check in from your agency leadership and them having an understanding of the program. You can make a difference and having the WRP be successful . A lot of the time when people see leadership and management interested in the program, they are more interested as well to consider developing a centralized fund for WRP hire. It can be done at an agency level or in a particular location if you want to make sure there is a smaller office and you have at least one WRP hire or in turn brought on each year from the program, setting aside the funding can make a difference in the employment of qualified individuals with disabilities.

Next we really encourage you to seek out managers who will benefit from staff support that contribute to the agency mission. As you heard, have highly qualified candidates. A lot of students were received bachelors or Masters degrees and beyond they really prepared to do work for your agency and really contribute to the mission of the VBA. It is helpful to be able to look for hiring managers seeking someone with a particular skill set I really need help in a certain area to see if WRP might be a fit . And now I'm going to turn over to Lauren to cover the last of our employer strategies .

Great. Thank you, Frances. This next point we wanted to emphasize here is to establish a regular outreach strategy using resources that you may already have that would be newsletter, press release, if you have web pages, Internet, or things like that. We notice agencies that have a consistent outreach strategy can continue to engage federal employees at the agency with WRP year-round . If you have a quarterly newsletter or a monthly newsletter or something like that, putting a notice about WRP is a good way to go and things like that. And then this last point we wanted to make is to communicate success stories that the agency. Frances and I love to hear about various success stories we are always looking to hear more with various WRP success stories in their own marketing materials but we also find the agency is promoting success stories within their own agency and that is really helpful as well so that others can say this department brought on a candidate and it was great. You can be a really effective tool to get people to hear more about the program and consider using it. I'm going to go on to the next slide here to just kind of highlight a few success stories. The first success story we would like to highlight is Silvia Calderon who is a law school graduate and was messy. She started out as a policy intern at the department of labor where she was then able to transition to full-time employment. Most recently because of her skill set, she completed a detail with the wage and hour division assisting with the COVID-19 response. I think one of the reasons we wanted to highlight Sylvia to just kind of demonstrate the diverse candidates that we have in our database. She is a graduate student. The fact that she started her career as an intern with an agency but then was able to obtain a permanent position and then realized utilized her skills at a different agency helping with COVID is great and we really proud to know Sylvia and to work with her in to see her career develop . The next candidate we would like to highlight is Lauren Aggen. Lauren is a graduate of the Rochester Institute of technology . She actually had several internships with WRP . She was able to enter the Army headquarters sustainment command in Rock Island, Illinois and then transition to full-time employment in a variety of different agencies. Currently she serves as the disability program manager at the finance and accounting service. We are really excited to highlight Lauren and see her federal career grow. For those of you who may not know, I myself am a WRP alumni. I got my start to the WRP, they would not be where I am today without it. Actually obtained my first federal position at the Department of Veterans Affairs . That was with the national administration working in the HR offices. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity WRP gave me to contribute my skills and talents to the federal workplace and now to be managing the program alongside Frances and helping other students with disabilities to obtain employment . It is been a really gratifying experience with that, I think I concludes the formal part of our presentation. On this next slide here is our website, WRP.gov, and you can go there to create an employer account we can email us a wrp@dol.gov with any questions that you have the we're always trying to be very responsive to to email us. He would be happy to take any questions that folks have at this time and thank you so much for taking time out of your schedule to listen to us today.

This is wrp@dol.gov. Should we be seeing any questions or are they still coming in?

I see people typing in the chat. Everyone, this is Leigh. If you have questions, please submit them in the middle of your screen and this allows us to organize the questions. If you can see the Q&A pod in the middle of the screen, you can put your questions there and at the bottom there is a text box and you can hit enter once you submit your questions.

I'm assuming, Leigh , that your presentation answered any questions people had. It was very informative we will give it a couple more seconds to see if anyone has questions. I would like to thank you for giving us an outstanding presentation on the workforce recruitment program. Like I said earlier, I used it when I was with VHA and for those who been around for a will, you remember the old applicant supply files. This is a supply that you do not have to maintain . Lauren and Frances do it all for you and you just going to find the candidates. Charles you say you don't see it. Do not forget, everyone, the items in the download pod in the middle of your screen for you to download, the presentation, and is there for you.

Is justified to that, it can be helpful thing if you want to share it with others staff. It is a quick one page that will direct you to the website. That is a great thing to share with others who might not have been able to attend today.

Okay. I do not think that we are going to have any questions.

Thank you so much for having us.

Thank you .

Thank you , everyone.

[ Event concluded ] This message is intended only for the use of the Addressee and may contain information that is PRIVILEGED and CONFIDENTIAL. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please erase all copies of the message and its attachments and notify us immediately.