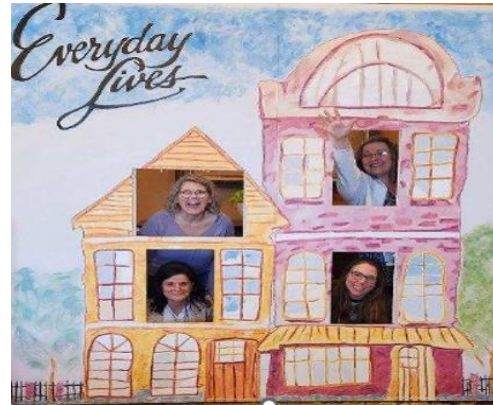


InVEST Overview: Expanding Competitive Integrated Employment in PA



Day of Learning about Disability Employment for National Disability
Employment Awareness Month
October 1, 2024

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Kathleen Lcomelis InVEST Manager, OVR

PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation InVEST Project (Integrated Vocational Engagement Support Team)

Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE)
Model Demonstration Grant



Learners will :

- Learn about systems commitments and grant goals to expand access to learning, working, and wellness in the community for people with disabilities
- Review importance of holistic approach to planning employment services
- Gain information about the InVEST model
- Understand how to register for InVEST

- Promotes “Employment First”, economic development, and disability rights
- Addresses identified gaps in providing choice, career advancement guidance, and appropriate supports for Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) to job seekers with disabilities
- We have a greater understanding of disability and people are telling us what they need
- Collective responsibility to respond to the rights and needs of people who want to work
- Contributes to increased systems efforts to meet ethical and regulatory obligations to expand community access to employment and other daily living activities.
- Leverages redistribution of jobs, changes to “way of work”, increased availability of technology and increased employer commitment to inclusive workforces to expand employment options for people with disabilities.
- Health disparities for people with disabilities glaring, wellness must be addressed to maintain employment and other success in community!
- Increased use of technology can increase inclusivity, independence, and employability
- Focus on people in -or considering- segregated settings and 14cs.
- Builds on successes of systems, stakeholders, and individuals with disabilities!

[OVR Sheltered Workshop Success John's Story – YouTube](#)



OVR Sheltered Workshsop Success Story- Maggy's Story



- Needs identified by Section 511 Specialists
- Data from surveys
- Input from Office of Developmental Programs
- Identification of existing and promising practices
- State Data review
- Literature review
- Occupational outlook



- Family Engagement (Section 511 Experiences, Literature Review)
 - Disconnect between individuals expressing interest in CIE and their follow-through with OVR Referral/Application/Services.
 - Families' fears and concerns regarding loss of benefits, social interaction, and safety.
- Resource Coordination (ID/A Coordinators' Calls, Literature Review)
 - Despite changes in federal regulations, PA efforts to align policies, and local training on a statewide basis, resource coordination continues to be an issue for a multitude of reasons.
 - There are gaps in service delivery.
- Long-term, embedded supports (OVR Programs, Literature Review)
 - Build upon evidence-based models such as Project SEARCH and Giant Eagle
 - Change workplace culture and create more inclusive work settings



- InVEST model focuses on systems training to gather info and plan and deliver services in a more holistic and person-centered way
- Looks at the entire person-not just diagnosis/disability
- Movement away from deficits based medical model
- Foundational understanding that employment has potential to enhance an individual's life
- Explore all wellness dimensions when considering employment (financial, emotional, spiritual, physical, etc.) recognizes interconnectedness
- Consider individuals exist within the contexts of their:
 - Communities
 - Families
 - Social and cultural identities
- These roles and spaces impact their preferences, interests, and priorities and inform each other
- Helps understand richness of a person's strengths and gifts to better plan to set and meet goals

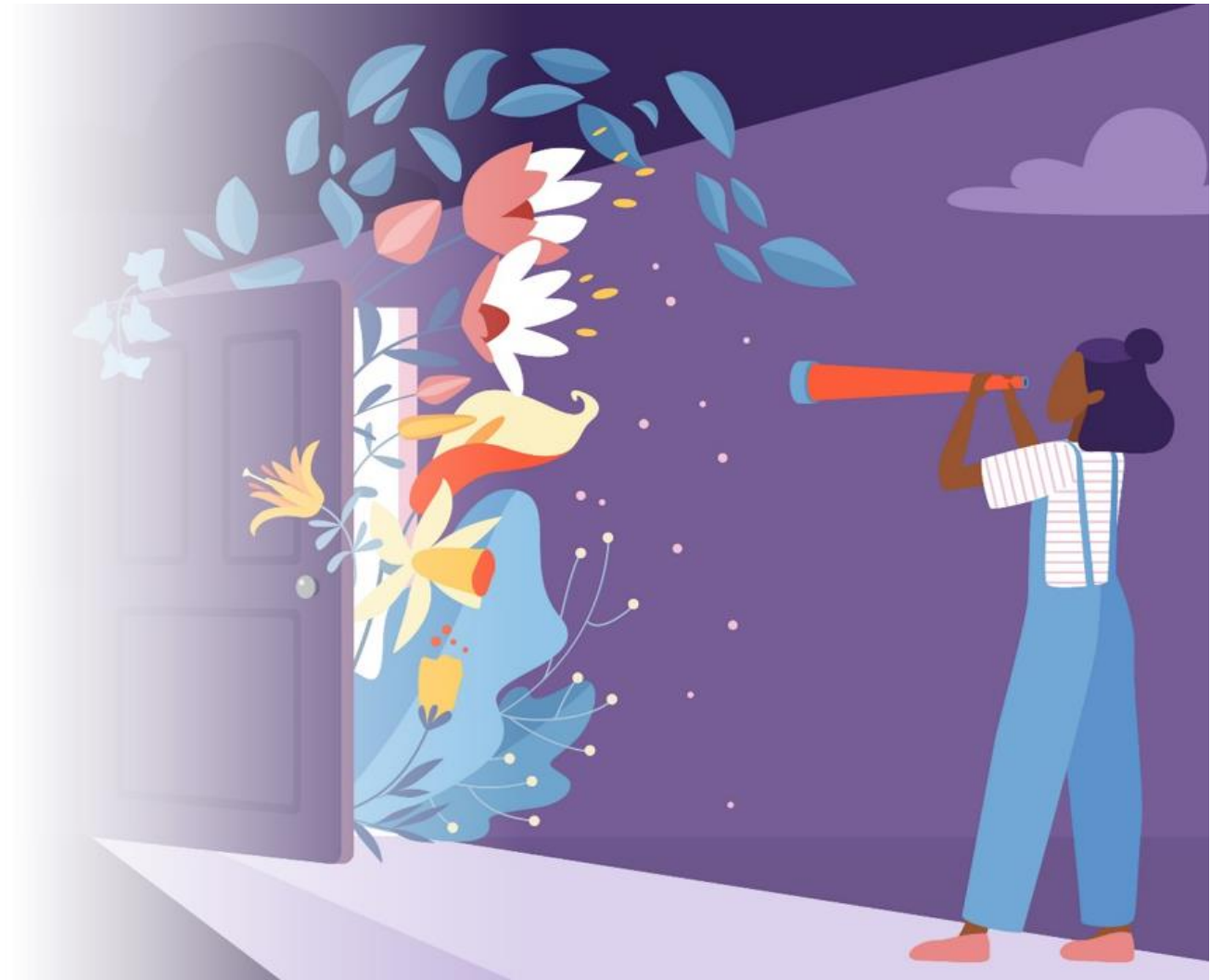


\$13.9 Million Federal Grant



Who is eligible for the InVEST Project?

- Any individual with a disability who:
 - Currently participates in subminimum wage employment;
 - Has participated in subminimum wage employment in the past; or
 - Expresses interest or need /or is at risk to enter subminimum wage employment.
- Including Students!



- 1 of 14 States awarded grants
 - **CA**, CT, **FL**, GA, IA, IL, IN, MN, **NY**, NC, OH, **PA**, **TX**, VA
 - The RSA "Big 5" all received awards.
- Senator Casey (D-PA) is sponsor of bill that allocated funding.
- Total amount of PA OVR's grant award - \$13,943,300.47
- Time frame of grant - 10/1/22 to 9/30/27 (5 Years)
- **Goal:** increase the opportunity for participants (who are employed or contemplating employment at subminimum wage)-to obtain CIÉ

Create innovative models, for ****dissemination**** and ****replication****, to:



Green Industries:

goods/services benefitting the environment or conserving resources. Includes research or duties of jobs involved in making processes more environmentally friendly or using fewer natural resources.

Transportation/Warehousing:

includes industries providing transportation of passengers and cargo, warehousing and storage for goods, scenic and sightseeing transportation, and support activities related to modes of transportation.

Always Individualized: Employment support is based on individual needs, we look for opportunities across all departments within our Designated Employers, are able to customize opportunities, and can support grant participants who are not interested in jobs with our partnered businesses

Pennsylvania Wages

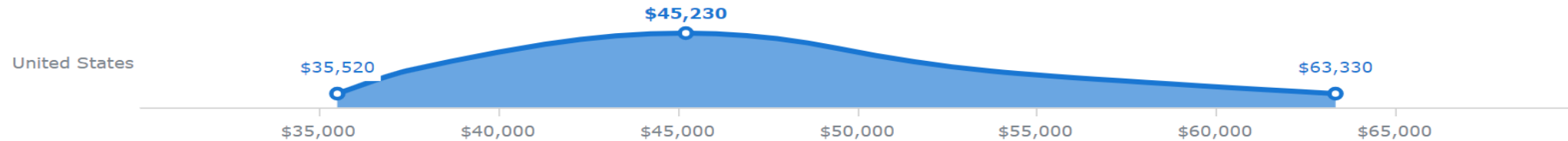
47-2231.00 - Solar Photovoltaic Installers ☀️ **Bright Outlook**

Projected growth
(2022-2032)

■ ■ ■ ■ Much faster than average (9% or higher)

Annual Wages

Hourly Wages



19-4012.00 - Agricultural Technicians ☀️ **Bright Outlook**

Sample of reported job titles: Agronomist, Arboriculture Researcher, Crop Nutrition Scientist, Forage Physiologist, Horticulture Specialist, Plant Physiologist, Plant Research Geneticist, Research Scientist, Research Soil Scientist, Scientist

Pennsylvania Wages

53-7065.00 - [Stockers and Order Fillers](#) ☀ **Bright Outlook**

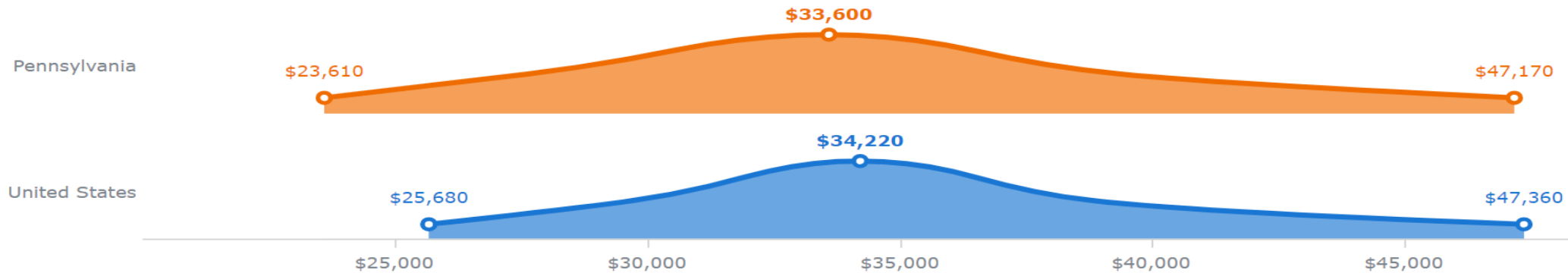
Projected growth
(2022-2032)

■ ■ ■ ■ Faster than average (5% to 8%)

Wages for state:

Wages near ZIP Code:

Annual Wages Hourly Wages



53-7062.00 - [Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand](#) ☀ **Bright Outlook**

What does InVEST offer?



- Family Advisors/Peer Mentoring
- Career Counseling and Guidance
- Connect to Technology and Training
- Benefits Planning
- Transportation planning
- Community training and informational events
- Integrated Resource Teams
- Individualized skills training
- Increased confidence and planning for safety
- Customized Wrap around supports and employment opportunities
- Embedded Supports at community employers to serve individuals and “the all”
- Embedded Supports to meet business needs
- Transformative support to 14cs and across systems
- Skills and training to try work in the community and prepare for career advancement.

InVEST Model Graphical Abstract

INVEST MODEL



- 300 SWTCIE participants will be referred to OVR for services to pursue CIE
- 240 SWTCIE participants will be found eligible for OVR services
- 80% of businesses engaged will report high quality and value in project services
- 80% of SWTCIE participants found eligible for OVR services will receive Job Shadowing, Community Based Work Assessments, or other experience-related service
- 75% of SWTCIE participants referred to OVR will receive job placement services
- 90% of SWTCIE participants referred to OVR will elect to pursue CIE
- 75% of SWTCIE participants will exit in CIE

InVEST Tiers of Intervention

Tier #1- Statewide

InVEST Family Advisors-

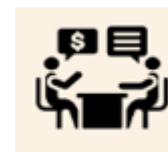
Enhanced Section 511 Outreach; Peer to Peer Supports/ Mentoring



Tier #2- Regional (near DE)

Integrated Resource Teams-

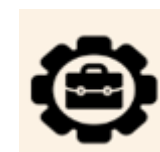
Benefits Planning, Wrap Around Supports, CBWAs



Tier #3- Designated Employer

Embedded Supports-

Employer Liaison
Expert and Employment Support Specialist



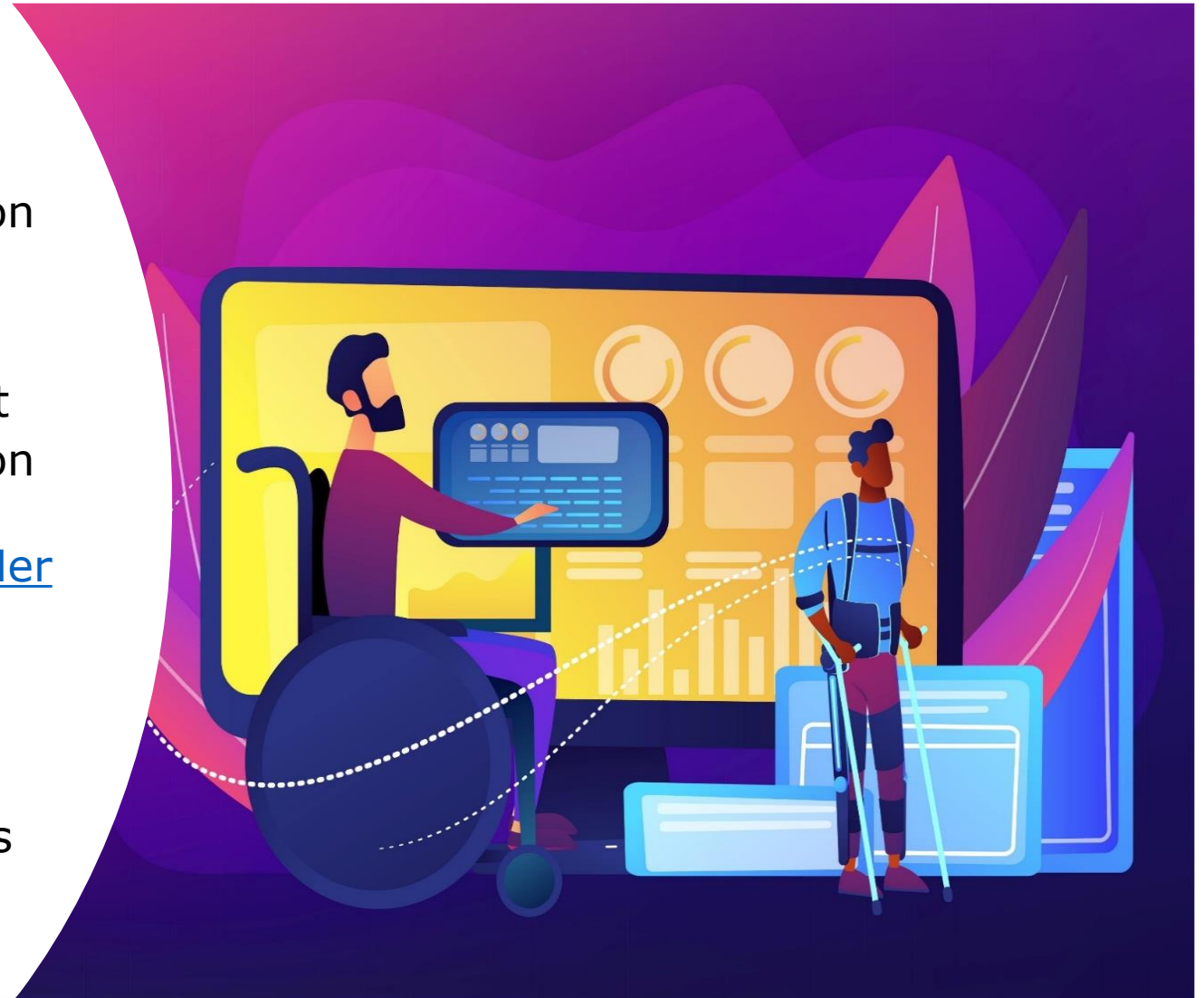
- Individuals (with or without disabilities) live within the context of and are influenced by their families-including “chosen family”
- Understanding the needs of the individual extends to understanding the needs of the family.
- We see better outcomes when we consider a person within the context of their family –and when a person when a person advocates for what they want and need!
- Meet families where they are and help them build a “trajectory” toward CIE in the future.
- Promote self-efficacy through increased information sharing, self advocacy training, and application of rights

- Contract through ODP using SWTCIE Grant Funds with PA Family Network
- Individuals with lived experience as family members supporting loved ones with a disability
- Every individual currently engaged in SMW employment and their families in PA will have the opportunity to attend info sessions and engage with an InVEST Family Advisor.
 - Resources on topics such as: Safety in the Community, Independent Travel, Enabling Technology, Benefits Planning.
 - Assists in navigating systems and informs OVR and ODPs efforts to improve services to individuals with ID/DD/Autism and their families.
- Every youth with a disability who expresses a desire to enter into SMW employment will be offered the opportunity to meet with an InVEST Family Advisor before entering into SMW employment

Self Advocates United as 1 partnering with InVEST participants to:

- Offer free interactive events about jobs and other parts of daily life
- Connect with trained Power Partners: people with disabilities with lived experience to mentor others on speaking up to get what they want and need for their lives
- Prepares peer mentors to share expertise on outreach, engagement, recruitment, community access and retention of employees with disabilities with stakeholders

- Funding
 - OVR
 - MA Waivers
 - PA Assistive Technology Foundation
 - SWTCIE Grant
- Resources
 - Smart Home Technology-KenCrest
 - PA Assistive Technology Foundation
 - [Alexa Shares How She Integrates Smart Devices in Her Home](#)
 - Safe In Home/Hearo
 - University of Pittsburgh- CAT Lab
 - Commonwealth Technological Institute at The Hiram G. Andrews Center

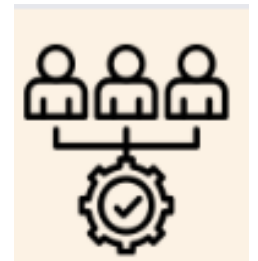


- EVERY participant who receives SSI/SSDI benefits WILL receive Benefits Planning Services!!!
- Each participant will receive the following as deemed necessary by the participant and their IRT:
 - Benefits Consultation
 - Work Incentives Benefits Analysis/Update
 - PASS Plan Development
 - SSA Overpayment Assistance
 - Assistance in understanding and completing application for MAWD, PA Able or other often underutilized services to maintain needed benefits while earning an fair and sustaining wage



- Two grant partners, Achieva and Kencrest , lead the InVEST IRTs. They provided employment services, skills training, and community participation opportunities to InVEST participants
- Services includes career exploration and assistance in;
 - vocational assessment and discovery
 - job search
 - application, interviewing
 - on the job support
 - retention services
 - identifying and meeting wellness needs
 - connections to supportive colleagues and other networks
 - building resilience and socioemotional skills to support work success
- Develop good fit work experiences
- Builds on past activities and transferable skills
- Assist individuals to explore career advancement opportunities
- Provides two onsite specialists on each designated employer

- Promising practice model to arrange and deliver services to assist in meeting employment goal
- Promotes streamlined services through a cross-agency team approach; Training provided by National Disability Institute
- Consumer focused, Outcome Driven, Informal! Avoids duplication and improves collaboration
- The OVR Counselor will participate on every participant's IRT and should include Services and Supports Coordinator. Work Incentives Planners/Certified Work Incentives Counselors
- Additional team members may be invited to participate on the IRT based upon expressed interest/need of the participant. For example:
 - Center for Independent Living
 - Residential Provider
 - Transportation Provider
 - Friend
 - Teacher/Transition Specialist
 - * Peer Support
 - * Assistive Technology Provider
 - * Mobility Specialist
 - * 14c Provider
 - * Staff



- The Integrated Resource Team will use the Charting the LifeCourse Framework & Tools to develop a comprehensive person-driven plan that will:
 - Develop a trajectory towards Competitive Integrated Employment that considers the individual holistically.
 - Consider the participant within the context of their “family” and community.
 - Identify existing resources and supports that are presently successful for the participant as a “foundation” on which to build.
 - Illicit expressed needs/concerns of the participant and his/her/their family.
 - Explore alternatives to traditional agency funded services for long-term solutions to barriers to employment.
 - Align formal services plans such as the Individual Support Plan (ISP) and the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Can assist to build and connect to IEPs, IRTs, Other Employment and Career Plans.

- Person Driven Planning
- Increasing CtLC ambassadors throughout OVR and ODP
- Building CtLC capacity across state
- Helps individuals and families capture strengths and reduce barriers
- Create plans to create and meet-
- Goals across the lifespan
- Planning connects to all systems



A photograph of a smiling Black male employee wearing a grey button-down shirt and a dark grey baseball cap. He is standing in front of a Sheetz store, which has red and white striped awnings and a brick facade. The background is slightly blurred.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

First Designated Employer: Sheetz Distribution Center
Claysburg, PA

Jobs at Sheetz – Warehouse Team Member



- Embedded Supports work with employer and job coaches individual
- Liaison with HR and departments
- Explore and connect to low and high tech accommodation as needed
- Identify unmet needs of the business to create opportunities for customized employment
- Ensure accessibility of job descriptions, application, and hiring process
- Supports employer's IDEA efforts

For employers:

- InVEST supports your inclusive workplace goals
- Guidance on accessibility needs
- Access to funding for assistive technology.
- Connect to a motivated and skilled talent pool.
- Receive On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts for 100% wage reimbursement for the first year for each individual hired
- Trained specialists on the job site to support employees

Interested in InVEST Services?



Contact your [local OVR District Office](#)



[Register Online](#)

The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant number H421D220003 from the Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. §§ 1221e-3 and 3474)

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Labor & Industry Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

PA Family Network

[PA Family Network - Vision For Equality](#)

SAU1

[Self Advocates United as 1 \(sau1.org\)](#)

InVEST Services

[Register for InVEST Services \(office.com\)](#)

Various Employment Resources for job seekers, families, employers, professionals with a focus on expanding CIE

[CIE Transformation Hub | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)

Charting the Life Course: Person Centered Planning

[LifeCourse Framework – LifeCourse Nexus \(lifecoursetools.com\)](#)

Success Stories



Andrew:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCh-26AFC2U>

Maggy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sx31IABWa0E>

John:

https://youtu.be/1_Jzq77Sd7A

Pat:

<https://youtu.be/u85uF7Uu6Pg/>

Questions

