CHARLIE WATERS: So we have, surprise, surprise, we have another fairly dense afternoon.

We have a good bit to get through, but in this next hour, it's going to be a little bit more conversational.

We're going to be talking specifically about strategies and securing some of those relationships with people and finding innovative solutions to funding programs and making the change happen that you want to see happen in your local areas.

I think Seth and Joe are gonna kick us off.

Is that right?

JOE MICHNER: I think you and Kimberly are.

CHARLIE WATERS: I wiggled my train of thought away.

I will click for us.

So please continue to use your post-it notes if you don't feel comfortable asking questions out loud.

But if you feel comfortable just asking questions, of course we are not going to be able to stay solely on questions, but feel free to throw a hand up and we will get you a mic.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: We're going to go back and forth today during this topic, and we might all jump in.

So get ready for some excitement this afternoon.

Right now we are going to start talking about innovative funding and partnerships.

The most important thing is: You have to look for opportunities.

People are not going to come to you, and especially if you guys are not getting information out.

So we're going to go into detail today about how we can look for those opportunities and where to go.

Relationships.

I'm going to stress this the entire week.

We only have one more day, but the importance of relationships and collaboration.

You've got to let people know where, what you're doing and establish trust.

And that's a big part of our discussion this afternoon.

And make your success known.

We post a lot on Facebook and Snapchat.

Not Snapchat, but Instagram.

We send out e-mail blasts constantly letting people know what we have been doing.

And also sharing success stories of our consumers.

That is something that has been very common.

We're going to go into great detail about all of this.

I'm going to pass it on to Joe and Seth.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Hello.

We say it definitely relates to, you know, that innovative funding to our I&R and knowing everyone including other agencies and what really our job to know everything that's out there, you know?

That's who we are, providing that information and referral.

Knowing really what's out there, who we can work with, who we can collaborate with, who we can have relationships with for our consumers.

So we're going to move it to our how we look at that innovative funding and relationship with businesses.

JOE MICHNER: So what you're going to see in the next few slides are different conversations and different topics so to speak and how to reach out to businesses.

A lot of what we do at our center is talking to businesses about providing employment opportunities.

But there's also opportunities to gain funding through that, and not what you're thinking traditional funding.

This could be volunteering at your agency and different things like that, which is, in itself, a form of funding because you're getting help.

So we're going to talk about that.

We're going to talk about voc rehab in detail.

How our relationships have developed with voc rehab.

We are going to talk about schools, all those kinds of things.

So the first slide you are looking at there is businesses.

We are constantly looking for businesses that will provide opportunities for our consumers.

Those real opportunities where they can get work experience, where they can explore a job.

Where they could get a job.

So we're constantly, we have staff, vocational coaches they are going out every day, knocking on doors and trying to find those options.

Through those relationships, as you develop those relationships, those can turn into a lot of other things.

They can turn into volunteering staff from the business volunteering at your agency.

You could eventually start talking to them about sponsorships, right?

We're not going to run in the door and ask for money right away.

We're going to build that relationship first.

Get to a mutually agreeable and beneficial relationship before you say you know, we've got this gala coming up, you want to be a sponsor?

Those kinds of things can happen.

It's all, as Kimberly said, all through these relationships you develop.

Seeking donations, recruiting volunteers for events, providing education and sensitivity training.

We've had a lot of success with this in the past for years where going into big companies like Wells Fargo, things like that, to provide sensitivity training to their staff.

We offer that on a regular basis through outreach so wherever we are.

That sometimes is a foot in the door, again, for other opportunities.

We might do a sensitivity training and then all of a sudden we have a connection that could be a potential assessment site for young adults to go and explore jobs, things like that.

Many businesses also provide seminars and education to groups.

You know, there's potential to recognize those employers, too.

I personally am part of our local employment coalition in Lehigh Valley.

We have an event coming up in May where we are providing, we had the space donated for it, a hotel is providing the food for it.

We're providing a breakfast to do some employer recognition awards.

So all the agencies that are together on that employment coalition each pick two employers that they want to recognize as their best employers of the year to give back for a lot of the things that have been provided for our young adults.

SETH HODEREWSKI: We see some of that education, that businesses will come in.

Especially like banks will come in because they want to be able to teach people about checking and savings accounts and how to manage their money.

Basically they want them to come to their bank.

But they'll provide all that financial information that could be very, very beneficial as it relates to employment and that type of thing.

Even things like Mass Mutual has come in and talked to our parents about life planning and all that kind of thing too.

Again, they're looking for some business out of it, but in many cases it's really good information.

JOE MICHNER: Before we turn it over to Kimberly and Charlie to add on to this, I want to mention the last bullet point, getting business owners on your board has been really beneficial for us too.

One of the best connections we ever had is with the local rotary.

And that was because one of our board members was a business owner who was part of that rotary club.

They have sponsored events for us.

They have provided opportunities.

We've been able to go to rotary meetings and present about our transition services, and that's turned into a ton of different things.

And I think we have a question.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Not a question as much as a comment but with community food donations, we have recruited for a lot of our events.

I have actually extended invitations to the restaurants doing the food donation for their staff or managers to join us for the event.

So you can build those relationships to meet consumers to see first hand what we do and get the buy-in a little bit more.

SETH HODEREWSKI: We have seen that, too.

Local grocery stores will donate gift cards.

There's different organizations that will donate extra food or bagels or something like that.

A lot of different places like that will give gift cards and stuff like that.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: And making sure to do a follow-up too if you are getting in-kind donations from businesses.

Send them a thank you card.

Give them a shout-out on social media.

Put them on your website.

We get all of our food donated for our prep program and we take a picture of the youth so they are in charge of, you know, getting the thank you cards out to the businesses.

We also connect with our Chamber of Commerce.

We are a member of Chamber of Commerce.

We go to their outreach events and we network with a lot of the businesses.

In return, too, we have a program that a fee for service program that we provide assessments and disability sensitivity and that's a great deal of unrestricted funds that come into our organizations.

That is position later on.

So networking is very important with businesses.

CHARLIE WATERS: And the pay-off is not always immediate.

99% of these relationships are not resulting in golden 99% of these relationships are not resulting in golden paved trails to programs, it's just being available for those relationships and for that unexpected to come from some of that outreach.

JOE MICHNER: Before we move on to some other ideas, anymore comments about businesses or any concerns?

We're all pretty good at this, right?

We all, through information and referral, we know how to make those connections and get other people involved.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Or other positive businesses that you've come across.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: Building relationships with other nonprofits.

So this is a big responsibility of our I & R staff is to make relationships with other nonprofits that are providing services to our consumers.

So having meetings scheduled, having phone conversations to get an idea of what they're providing and then share information about your center as well.

Partner with events, conference transition fairs.

They're out there.

I know schools in our state are doing transition fairs constantly, statewide conferences.

Anything that you see that you can be at and have a table or an event table, get involved.

And also look outside of the disability community as well.

People with disabilities are associated with organizations that aren't disability related as well.

So definitely make connections.

Nonprofits, we write grants.

Other nonprofits write grants.

Building that collaboration.

We recently did a grant with a sexual trauma services organization that's non-traditional.

So non-traditional disability organization.

And we're going to share funding if awarded.

Get involved.

We do IL workshops.

How many of you do IL workshops in your center right now, where you might host a monthly training?

I saw a couple hands.

Okay.

What we do is we have monthly trainings on whatever topic is needed.

So we survey our consumers to see what kind of topic they want to talk about.

We do this with youth as well.

A common topic that is always on that list is sex.

They would like to know more information about sexuality so we have sexuality trainings.

So different topics every month, and that brings a lot of organizations involved.

It ties, when you build relationships with other nonprofits, they do a lot of your outreach for you as well.

Advocacy groups, protection and advocacy for people with disabilities are very important for you to build collaboration with.

They are organizations that fight for disability rights.

We should be right there with them.

So definitely form that relationship.

Also look outside of the disability advocacy groups as well.

There's really not that many within your state.

Establish relationships with like sexual violence organizations and everyone that you can think of.

We have a relationship with South Carolina Equality, which is actually for gay lesbian, bisexual and transgendered groups.

That relationship has done a lot because they also are fighting for a lot of the same things that we are in equality, so we've been able to partner on a number of projects together.

CHARLIE WATERS: Can I see a show of hands, who likes sitting on committees or councils.

We've got five or six hands, 7, 8, 9.

Wow.

Oh my gosh.

I can't stand them.

I appreciate people who like them.

I think I'm just on a bunch of them right now and it's great right?

Well it seems tedious and it seems like it's hard to fit within workloads those task forces and committees and councils where groups are coming to a table and talking about things even if it's not disability specific, coming to the table and being that voice to make sure that people with disabilities in your area are getting their needs met through initiatives like that.

We have a statewide transition alliance that aims to have inner agency collaborative teams working solely on improving outcomes of transition in every school district in the state of South Carolina.

This is really common in transition and it's coming out and recognized as best practice.

A lot of these transition councils and regional groups, inner agency groups are popping up and it's something that is really worthwhile to look at.

Through that group we've secured fee for service funding and having things figured out in areas like self advocacy and being able to support work that's being done within school districts through those teams.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: If you don't have a committee such as that, create one.

Get really creative and bring people to the table so that you all can tackle a barrier together.

And usually you start talking about funding opportunities and next thing you know you're applying for grants and looking at fee for services together.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Just two points to add on to some of that.

Along with that collaboration piece, I think organizations that are putting the funding out are looking for those collaborative pieces because they're looking for the most bang for their buck.

They are trying to get to as many people and get out as much as possible.

So those collaborations are so important.

And one of the other really fun things that we did, I love the transition fairs and those kind of things.

The outreach that goes along with that.

One of the fun and unique things we did was a transition cookie bake off.

We wanted it to be a transition chili cook-off, but the Department of Health was not too into that, but you can do baked goods in Pennsylvania, which was cool.

So we had all the different agencies, it was a really neat collaborative effort.

And all the different agencies came together.

They brought their best cookie and we had judges come around and judge.

We had young adult judges, we had the mayor of Allentown come and be a judge, we had the weather lady from our local 69 News was a judge.

It was pretty reasonable We didn't spend a lot of money on it.

We used all of our partners to get the information out and it was really a lot of fun.

We had a big giant cookie trophy that someone won.

It added a little bit of that element of competitiveness between the different agencies of I'm going to come with the best cookie and I am going to win and don't even bother coming.

It was a lot of fun.

It is those kind of unique things that maybe draw people in a little bit more.

And when you have cookies, that always helps.

JOE MICHNER: I know, in my history, I have been doing voc rehab stuff for like 15 years.

When I first started it was very competitive and nobody talked to each other.

Maybe it's like that for you.

The agencies and providers that do these services fought against each other for everything.

But through these kind of coalitions and these kinds of things, you can make some bonds and you can also get a lot out of them.

I mentioned we're doing this employer recognition through the local employment coalition.

That's not something I could do by myself and if I tried to do it by myself, it would be kind of meaningless.

It would be me and two employers sitting in a room.

To do it through all these other agencies on the coalition, we have a room full of employers that I can now, if I don't have a connection with them, I can network with them.

I can make stronger connections with them.

We as agencies can share information and work together more and realize that it is okay that we are working together.

It does not have to be a competition or a fight over funding or however you want to look at it.

I understand that not everybody is in that scenario, but try to find those right groups.

Where you can, you know you said sometimes they're tedious, and it's true.

Because some of them don't do anything.

That's the hard part, right.

So find the ones that are active.

Find the ones where there are people willing to collaborate and be partners with you and you can get a lot of stuff done through them that you cannot do by yourself or just your agency.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: There are a lot of nonprofits that are specifically focused on youth, and guess who they exclude a lot of times?

Youth with disabilities.

That's where you can really partner with them and teach them how to serve people with disabilities and also see about collaborating to expand their youth programs and maybe you can be a part of that youth program as well, your organization, and share some funding that way.

JOE MICHNER: Rec centers.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: Good example.

For nonprofits too, I think every state usually has a nonprofit association of some sorts.

I know the young man that was up here talked about going on to their website and seeing the jobs posted.

But connecting with a nonprofit association so that you could see all the nonprofits out there.

There usually have some kind of annual event, annual conference to attend and that's a great networking opportunity.

JOE MICHNER: K know in our area we have a volunteer center.

That a lot of the nonprofits work with to get volunteers.

It's a great place to see a list of other nonprofits in the area that you might not know about.

Anybody have comments or questions before we get into the hot topic of voc rehab?

I'm not sure I want to flip the slide.

So voc rehab.

Full disclosure here.

I am fully aware that across the country the relationship between CILs and voc rehab is not always a positive one.

I know that where we are we're very fortunate to have the relationship we have with voc rehab.

It's interesting how it can be just subtly different everywhere you go.

For us, for all the programs that we talked to you about earlier, like 90 percent of our funding comes through voc rehab.

For ABLE, not the case.

How does that all play out?

Our blind and visual services office doesn't contract anything out in our area.

So it's really just depends on where you are.

And who the counselors are.

For us, when we started our Career Path program, which is our first kind of big voc rehab program, wour executive director had a pretty good relationship with the local district administrator of voc rehab.

Then they brought me in to manage that program.

I had known all the VR counselors.

I could call them and have the honest conversations and say hey, here I am.

I'm at the CIL now.

I'm going to be doing stuff with you guys and we're going to do it differently.

Are you cool with that?

And have those kind of heart-to-heart conversations with those counselors.

I fully get that a lot of you don't have the same situation.

But, I think as we go through some of this stuff and we talk about a lot of the new stuff, what voc rehab is required to do, there's some real opportunities for you to get in the door if you haven't been able to before.

We have some lists there.

Partnering on programs, partnering on events.

Setting programs with set rates.

We can get into all of that.

Does anyone want to talk about the WIOA pre-employment and how that could potentially be an opportunity?

CHARLIE WATERS: It's a huge opportunity I don't want the training to be entirely about WIOA, but if you're in the place where you are looking for a spot to break into and have a more robust youth services out of your center, WIOA is right there.

People are still struggling with implementation.

People are still uncertain about what it means.

With Title I, it's requiring that vocational rehabilitation at the state level set aside 15% of their entire budget to youth, to serving youth.

This is something that most of them were not doing before.

And youth that are all potentially eligible.

That's one of the catches, too, right.

We know that typically VR doesn't really do a great job with youth with intellectual disabilities.

In South Carolina they don't deem ineligible.

Now through WIOA they are required to do due diligence and serving them through pre-employment transition services.

And so it's just this really, I think people might not be out on the surface when you do a little digging, you can see that people are struggling and happy for a place to collaborate.

Even if they're not willing Even if they're not willing to throw funding your way to do it, that piece to throw funding your way to do it, that piece that we're still waiting on voc rehab to come off of some dollars but in the meantime we're building those inroads.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: The keyword is waiting.

Although we don't get funding from vocational rehabilitation right now, we are working very, very hard to build that relationship with them and build that trust.

They do not contract services out to us, but we do provide their disability sensitivity to all of their new hires for their orientation process.

So we are slowly getting in and building that trust.

But we are also inviting them to our table.

We're inviting them to statewide meetings that we have.

We are inviting them to our advocacy events.

We are inviting the commissioner of vocational rehabilitation to read the proclamation that we wrote, that was signed by the governor just to make them feel like they are included as well.

So slowly but surely, we're not going to give up on the ultimate goal of working very closely with VR.

We've got to educate them and get them to see the work of our services.

CHARLIE WATERS: This is not business over IL in any stretch.

I don't want that to be the message that anyone walks away with.

The school district that I was telling you about where a voc rehab counselor was without assessment deeming students employable or not employable, immediately, the very next day, as soon as I saw someone at the state level from voc rehab at another meeting I was at, I let them know what was going on.

I talked to an attorney friend of ours at Protection and Advocacy that very day and let him know, hey this is happening in a large school district in the state.

Were you aware of it?

Let's keep an eye on it.

We don't let our advocacy efforts take a backseat to these relationships.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: And they need us to keep pushing them and holding them accountable, too they really do.

I think it ultimately helps their numbers later on.

SETH HODEREWSKI: That is because there's shared consumers, right?

It's meant to, I always think that it is meant to complement one another.

Work is not just work, work is everything else around work.

You got to be able to cash your paycheck, right?

You got to be able to know how to balance your checkbook.

You got to be able to wake up in the morning to get to work.

You got to get transportation to work.

There are so many things that tie in there I almost feel it's natural.

Questions?

Comments?

JOE MICHNER: I will just add while I am walking over here.

There is not a day that goes by that we're not having a serious conversation with a VR counselor about services for a young person or what they could be doing that is more consumer-control related and things like that.

That never stops.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: One of the things that I found in the three states that I actually worked in with CILs, VR, or as a, myself, is that all of our partnerships and agencies, there needs to be a component, because you've talked about it up here about collecting data and information and how effective in a partnership having that data on your side is.

They track their data of what the outcome is, but they're not tracking the data of why that outcome actually occurred.

Part of that might be the partnerships.

So I always say, you know, you need to encourage whether it's VR, it really wouldn't make any difference is that you always encourage your partnerships as you're building those to collect the data on the difference between before we showed up and now that we're working as a partnership.

Each person that contributes to that.

And that when you're going and looking for funding, that can make a huge difference.

JOE MICHNER: Well said.

Thank you.

You guys are awfully quiet for this slide.

I don't think we were expecting that.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Don't make Charlie do more wiggles.

JOE MICHNER: I was expecting fireworks on this one.

So one of the things that you want to be careful with, and going back to this idea of potentially now there might be some opportunity for you to establish a relationship with voc rehab, in Pennsylvania when the new pre-employment transition services came out, there were three of them, supporting young adults on paid work experiences, supporting them on job shadowing experiences and going into schools and doing group presentations.

Pennsylvania issued a standard agreement that anybody could sign up.

A provider could sign up to provide those services.

We were in a good position; we signed up to do them all.

But other states are doing something similar.

And if I understand correctly, Pennsylvania was a little ahead of some of the other states in implementing some of this stuff.

Does your state have that kind of standard agreement where maybe you could jump in on the level of providing group presentations in schools and getting your foot in the door with voc rehab that way?

There is just so many opportunities through the regulations that are coming out almost daily that you could look into that could open some doors for you.

Any other questions or comments?

SIERRA ROYSTER: Can you clarify when you're developing an MOU, which is a memorandum of understanding, what does that look like?

What does that include?

JOE MICHNER: That's a great question.

We do letters of understanding in Pennsylvania, and there's a ton that goes into them.

You are looking at every aspect of what you need to do to provide that service and what's really great, I think about letters of understanding through voc rehab, they're actually going away because they're unifying some of these policies and procedures.

But it gives you the chance to negotiate things.

For our Career Path Skills Training, we were able to negotiate how many hours of service we could provide for each consumer coming through the program.

We could negotiate what elements, like a person-centered plan, a person would get when they came through our programs.

We were able to customize it.

We didn't have to regulate it so much that every single young adult had to go through the exact same portions of the program.

If they didn't need the skills training and didn't want to do the skills training, they didn't have to.

They could jump in in another part of the program.

Those agreements which is what they essentially are, they give you a chance to negotiate what the program will look at.

It's during those negotiations where you can really put on your CIL hat and say, No.

If you want us to do it that way, the voc rehab way that we don't like so much, we're not going to do it.

So we need to figure out a way around this.

A lot of that negotiation happens up right front.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: And it really points out the roles and responsibilities of each agency in that agreement.

And it is something that you can measure your goals from, the memorandum of agreement as well.

It talks about funding and when payment is provided.

It's a pretty complex agreement typically, especially with VR.

JOE MICHNER: The documentation, what kind of reporting you are going to do.

I also want to put a plug in, this is where you have to establish the really solid rate for what you're going to provide.

ILRU has some good stuff on their website.

Cara Steidel is a name you can search for on the ILRU website.

She was our finance guru when we set up our Career Path program and she does a really cool break down of how to figure out what your rates should be to provide a program, and that's through ILRU.

Cara Steidel.

She does a really basic break down of how to develop a rate.

If you don't get the right rate, you're not going to get very far.

I will also say this, there are times when we have looked at programming and Charlie, Kimberly and Seth and I were talking about this before coming up here.

There have been opportunities that have come to the table where we looked at them and said, we can't afford to do that program.

Or that program doesn't fit with our vision and mission.

And we have said no to things.

I know it sounds like we take every opportunity.

Definitely not the case.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: We said no to a lot of funding opportunities because it's usually being a Medicaid provider and doing reimbursements and the rate is like 10.

50 an hour and that is something that we cannot afford to have a program that pays $10.

50 an hour.

JOE MICHNER: One example I can give.

There was a grant program that came to help veterans find employment, but it was like a staffing agency model.

Hi, veteran.

How you doing?

Here's a job.

Good luck.

We can't do that.

We're a CIL.

So we said no to that.

It's being careful and being selective with what you want to do for your community and what the needs and wants are.

And what the opportunities are that are available.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: And yesterday I talked about ABLE, South Carolina's values and it's really important to have your organization have set values so that is going to guide you in all of your decision-making process.

If it doesn't fit your mission and your values, then you're not going to do it.

Making sure that everyone on your staff is living those values.

CHARLIE WATERS: And people know you, too, through those values.

I had somebody come up to me from a statewide nonprofit the other day that I had never met and he said I want you to know that we have a 14c3 certificate sheltered workshop tax certificate, but we're not using it.

I just wanted to tell you that.

And he is shaking my hand.

Good, yeah, I'm happy to hear that.

And just being known through those values people know who you are.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: So they know the position that we stand.

We do not like sub minimum wage.

JOE MICHNER: I just want to add one more thing.

If you haven't had any luck getting through the doors of voc rehab or they are defiant in wanting to work with you, a lot of the new WIOA stuff has created new voc rehab positions.

In Pennsylvania we have early reach coordinators.

Those are great people to get in touch with.

Call them directly and don't talk to anybody else.

Because they're new and they don't know the history.

And you might be able to get somewhere with them.

CHARLIE WATERS: So this is a really fun one.

And this is, I think this is fun just because it's challenging like vocational rehabilitation when you're dealing with the top of the state, the state Department of Education trickling on down to districts or regions or however it breaks up into your state.

It's very insular.

Schools are insular, by nature they are very insular.

They are not set up for collaboration.

They're not set up for outsiders coming in.

It's kind of the way, and especially working with youth with disabilities.

So everyone understands the background, when you're going in to partner with schools to serve youth with disabilities, you are entering the most litigious area of education out there.

Right.

Special ed teachers, districts.

These are the people that get their pants suit off, on a weekly basis.

They're nervous.

They don't like collaboration.

They don't like unknown variables.

It's a really weird bunch, and understandably so in some ways.

And they don't like change necessarily.

So kind of understanding that and finding those cracks to get in and finding those champions.

I'm looking at some of the folks that we have in the state where we started with a small program.

That really, really small regionally funded program through United Way that was in a single school district that really wowed a single transition specialist in that district, who for the last five years has been singing our praises to every single person she encounters in the state and elsewhere.

And finding those people that will celebrate the work that you're doing and take stock and ownership in that.

There are a lot of teachers out there.

A lot of people at district levels that are hungry.

They're hungry for as many resources as they can possibly get students.

They have likely never heard of centers for independent living.

That's the fact.

Special ed professionals usually don't get anything on the ADA.

They don't usually get anything on the Rehab Act.

They don't usually get anything on IL philosophy.

This is news to them and it knocks their socks off when you start talking to them about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the IL movements role in making that happen.

And the ADA's role and both of them and that law being reauthorized in 1990 alongside the ADA coming.

And this robust history that is completely absent from most people's text books.

Being that expert and being willing to share that knowledge, it's the social capital piece.

Building those relationships and not in an arrogant way, or rock-throwing way.

Just letting people know what time it is, right?

Just letting them know real sweetly but assertively what you have to offer that they may have never considered before.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: Very sweetly.

We disagree with teachers a lot.

They are known to hold us to very low expectations.

So when we hear feedback, sometimes we're in the classroom and Charlie's heard this probably a zillion times, we'll be talking about employment and the teachers are off to the side saying, this class is not going to be employed.

We don't shut them down immediately, what we do is we feed them success stories.

We share the IL philosophy.

We share Ed Roberts' story about how VR told him that he was unemployable and how he ended up running VR later on.

We show them examples and educate through the success of individuals with disabilities.

We don't slam them on the floor unless we have to.

CHARLIE WATERS: Best practice is important here, it sounds silly because as a movement, IL is enough.

We don't need to link our philosophy and beliefs as people to science or anything else.

IL is enough.

We're standing on firm footing in that.

We can rest assured that's plenty.

When you're talking to other professionals, that language is important, though.

When you're talking to teachers and especially people that are working with youth with disabilities, knowing the language of best practices is important.

You all know how, picture an IEP meeting for a young person aged 14-21.

Can somebody give me a guess on what percentage of the time that average young person spends speaking in their own IEP meeting?

A hand in the back?

5 percent?

Exactly.

So around 3 percent, 4 percent of the time in their own IEP meeting talking about what they want for their own lives.

Dropping that science, that's science, dropping that knowledge on people and helping them understand, because that's IL, too.

Fighting for something different, fighting for things like student-led IEP meetings and providing resources to make that a reality in schools, that is best practice and also very, very much IL.

So linking those two and educating people every step of the way.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: And you see teachers and parents actually create the transition goals for the consumer.

The consumer is not going to transition unless they created their goal.

They need to be vested in their future.

That should be the role of the centers of independent living to be pushing that, that the consumer should have that voice.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm new at the school thing, but are we allowed to just go up and talk to a teacher, or do we have to go through the commission and all that stuff?

JOE MICHNER: We don't follow the rules, David.

We don't follow the rules.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: You don't just walk into a school though, either.

We have got to be careful.

I think they've got security and all that stuff that we have to go through.

But networking at these conferences where teachers attend, start forming relationships.

Making sure that you have a vendor table and providing information about your youth programming.

And then joining these statewide coalitions that they have that are talking about young adults with disabilities.

Setting up meetings with school counselors and transition specialists within their schools.

Providing examples of what services that you're providing.

But also, that is where you might want to bring youth and let them know their experience maybe in that school district.

We had a great example, we use this a lot in Greenville County, one of the EQUIP leaders did not graduate, but finished school with a certificate.

They never even thought about the idea of him getting a high school diploma.

He did not want a certificate.

He wanted a high school diploma and he could have gotten one.

Once he finished school he had a certificate.

He refused to do anything with it.

He hung an empty frame on his wall and said one day that will hold a high school diploma.

We had to go back and fight with Protection and Advocacy, fight for him to go back into the Greenville county schools, because they neglected the services that they provided him, by not even offering a high school diploma or even thinking he could get it.

He ended up getting that high school diploma in less time than he expected.

Luckily that frame is filled now with a diploma.

He's in college.

He's in college now.

We share that story a lot within that district where he was even in school and say listen let us help you with student engagement.

Let us help you with holding higher expectations for these students.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was just going to say that's an opportunity for positive media feedback, too.

I was always focused on creating a brand name for our center.

And ah, this is teaching me a lot, thanks.

JOE MICHNER: I'll just add real quick, one of the things that we struggle with working with school districts, and this is an honest struggle.

Is what is our role when we're walking in that building that day?

Are we going in for I&R?

Are we going in as advocates for an IEP meeting?

One of the things that we made an early decision on at LVCIL, is when we go into an IEP meeting we don't promote our own services.

We are going as an advocate and provide information and referral, but there's a clear ethical line that we don't want to cross.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have found success sometimes if you hit roadblocks with administration or teachers, sometimes reaching out to the school district's social worker is an easy back door because they're typically working with students who are already, the resources of the school are not sufficient for them.

They have their finger on those kids who are really struggling and if you can connect those students with success, then you can develop a reputation of getting referrals of other students in the school district kind of gets that light bulb moment of, oh, they can actually do things to help us.

JOE MICHNER: That's fantastic.

SETH HODEREWSKI: And guidance counselors, too.

We have even tried to hit on some of that as well.

CHARLIE WATERS: The great things about schools is no one talks to each other.

If someone says no, go ask their colleague, right.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I think sometimes non-traditional partnerships.

We struggled with a school district, our schools often.

And then via some other thing that I was working on, I made a contact with a high school and their allied club which is for LGBTQ youth in the high schools.

They asked me to come and speak and these are, the intersectionality of these two groups, youth with disabilities and LGBTQ, cannot, they got it.

And it was so empowering, because they said tell us something we can do now.

I said you, I explained about person first language.

I said you're a group that understands the power of words better than other groups and they got it.

It was trying to find a different way in.

And that was one of our, I was really happy about that.

JOE MICHNER: Seth, do you want to talk about HYTAL?

SETH HODEREWSKI: Yeah, sure, that is what I was going to say.

Getting into schools is hard.

We have been at it for 8 years and I think we are just starting to scratch the surface a little bit more now and that is with a big grant that looks at leadership in schools and having some heavy hitters from the Department of Ed helping us do that and trying to find those champions who get it.

And using that to the maximum extent.

We need schools and we need teachers and we need all of that for the program that we're working with, especially a number of the different programs.

One of the things that we started to do early on we're trying to find a recruitment technique for some of our group programming.

We developed what was called HYTAL.

Have You Thought About Life?

That ended up being a presentation that we took in and young adults would help me present to other young adults.

Usually we would go back to the young adults school and they would help promote to their friends and other students.

And we would give little tidbits about information about what to expect, you know, about transition while they are still in school and things they should be looking at and doing.

And things that they should be looking at it and doing after school as well.

It was really cool and it was all very interactive based on the game of Life.

It was fun and interactive.

That really took us.

We got in a lot of class rooms, we got the teachers.

And teachers liked it because it was hitting home the things that they were talking about, like the teachers would say students don't want to hear it from me.

They want to hear from someone in the community that is going to tell them in a real way.

So giving that presentation was something that was like I said, it was a recruitment for the CIL for our services, but it really helped hit home what the teachers were teaching as well.

And that actually turned into two conferences that we have, which is awesome.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah, I was going to say, a lot of times schools have other programs like communities in schools where they need volunteers in the afternoon.

And it's kind of a no-brainer to go an hour a week to send some of the CIL staff there to volunteer, and that just gets our foot in the door.

CHARLIE WATERS: Awesome thoughts coming out, thank you.

Time for one more.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: You just said that two conferences, so that might have answered my question.

I'm just wondering, so getting into schools, and past that front desk, seems to be an issue for everybody, you know, nationwide pretty much.

I'm just wondering if you guys have thought about doing a convention and inviting or maybe even inviting different school districts to something like this so that they can see we're not a threat.

We're here to help and to collaborate with them.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Absolutely.

So much of it depends on the teacher and the So much of it depends on the teacher and the administrator and who's interested in that.

But we would always, like I said that presentation led into two conferences for us where we invited all the school districts.

There were certain ones that came, certain ones that couldn't, transportation is always an issue, that type of thing.

That's a great idea.

For me, I was also very fortunate because my brother worked in special education and knew a lot of the players.

So I was an automatic 'in' because he already built relationships and I could use that to help out too.

I was using every angle I could get as well.

You know?

CHARLIE WATERS: Yeah, conferences are great.

It's a lot of work to throw your own, so that is probably not your first step, but going and presenting at teacher conferences in the state.

And meeting teachers, not just meeting teachers, I don't want to say on an even playing ground, but as someone with expertise to share.

As someone with something to share at a conference and someone where they look to as a professional or as someone that has a foot in the door to something that they need.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: And with our Empowering the Future Conference is specifically for teachers and transition specialists and VR folks.

They come to these conferences and that's when they really learn a lot about the IL philosophy and how to hold students to higher expectations.

But that is a huge networking tool.

But if you can get your other centers for independent living involved as well and doing a statewide event together, to invite all the teachers throughout the state, that may be a great way.

Also, be careful with advocacy at IEP meetings.

Because there are a way to be hostile in those meetings, and teachers do not like that.

School personnel do not like that.

And there is a way to be assertive in meetings and hold the school accountable by being professional.

And I think that is the key.

We can't be, we can't go to schools and IEP meetings and be aggressive and then expect them to work with us and give us funding.

CHARLIE WATERS: Under different leadership, we were known as the center where parents could call the night before and get an advocate to an IEP meeting.

How can you effectively advocate getting the call the day before?

So just cutting that off completely.

We will go to IEP meetings under specific circumstances, mainly, when youth are wanting to better advocate for themselves and better understand the IEP process.

JOE MICHNER: Just before we get into the next slide, I want to give one other quick example.

With one student, we got a person-centered plan into their IEP.

That teacher talked to other teachers and we ended up, the last couple of years, doing a training on person-centered planning for IU staff, which is a partner, a contractor for our school districts, they are teachers pretty much.

We did a person-centered plan meeting.

And I will never forget this, after the training, it was 40 staff, 40 teachers from the school district and one teacher walked up to me and said boy, that presentation was really great.

I'm going to add a section to our IEP that says student's goals, and I'm going to make sure I ask every student what their goals are.

And I was like wow.

Wow.

We still have a long way to go, don't we?

CHARLIE WATERS: What a novel concept.

And everyone in here is at a center that's person-centered, right, so you're already speaking this language that's aligned with whether the professionals themselves know it or not.

You're talking about setting goals with people and then setting intermediary goals to get to those long-term goals and the stuff that is already seeped in this education process that we are already doing at centers very naturally.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: Let's talk about establishing relationships with Department of Ed within your state.

How many of you have heard about the, your state's IDEA advisory council?

Okay.

This is critical.

Because this is actually how we formed our relationship with the Department of Ed and I am now the co-chair of the state's advisory council for the education of students with disabilities.

They are required to have the majority of their members be parents of children with disabilities as well as people with disabilities.

And that part is forgotten a lot.

We are those individuals with disabilities.

We should be serving on that committee.

And sometimes it takes a little bit of back and forth.

But make sure you put an application in.

Spell your case and hopefully you will get appointed by the state superintendent as well.

That is the in for Department of Ed.

What this advisory group does is they provide recommendations on how the Department of Ed can improve the services for education for students with disabilities.

We've been able to do really significant work in South Carolina.

But through this advisory council again, we established a really close relationship with the director of Special Education Services who has now obviously funded several of our programs and is a huge ally.

He sends out e-mails constantly to school districts letting them know about our services and our events.

He's speaking at our state's advocacy day.

So building that relationship as much as you can because they will definitely help you with some outreach.

SIERRA ROYSTER: So I had a question.

When you guys were talking about person-centered planning and I know there's been some discussion about person-centered planning versus the IL philosophy of consumer control and that process.

How do you guys navigate to make sure that you're still bringing the independent living philosophy to a person-centered plan which sometimes is not the same thing.

It depends on who facilitates it.

JOE MICHNER: That person-centered approach versus the formal models of person-centered planning.

What we did at our agency, we took those formal models of person-centered planning and made our own to make sure that we stick to that root consumer control, self-determination piece.

Because, depending on the model you use of person-centered planning, you can get far away from consumer control.

So it's all about making sure that you're doing it the right way.

And there is no proprietary thing where you can't take pieces of one model of person-centered planning and use it and piece from another and bring that into a way that you do it.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: Getting involved in your states education based groups, transition related groups.

This can look different.

Protection and advocacy, does a lot of education advocacy, so connecting with them.

Your Parent Training and Information Center, they advise parents how to go through the IEP process, but you can actually be at that table as well.

So really getting involved with all of the organizations that provide education services.

Link your services to research.

There are a lot of research articles out there and we are very fortunate to be included in two of them.

But there are research that shows how centers for independent living are so valuable to transition in the education world.

Definitely Google some research articles, but we have a list as well, and we'll definitely share that with you.

JOE MICHNER: I wanted to add before we go to the next slide, or are we ready to go?

We're throwing all this stuff at you and all these ideas and you're going to go home and do them all next week, right?

No, but you take your time, one at a time, right?

Knock on one door and see what happens and knock on the next.

You're working with a schedule of actual other things that you are doing.

We're going to jump into county and other funding.

For us in Pennsylvania there's a lot of potential funding that comes through our county offices as well.

A lot of the waiver funding, we had the Office of Developmental Programs in Pennsylvania.

The have the Bureau Autism Services.

We have the Office of Long Term Living.

All of their funding is funneled through the county.

Some of this funding works very well for us.

We can provide extended job coaching services beyond what voc rehab can provide.

If somebody wants or needs a job coach for a little longer than the 90 days we get through voc rehab, we can look to the county for potential funding.

There's options to provide habilitation services.

You know, a lot of those independent living skills and stuff like that.

We don't provide that particular service because we couldn't afford to do it.

The funding is not great.

But depending on the state you're in and depending on the county office, there could be a completely different rate and it could be something reasonable for you to do.

We're not going to spend a lot of time on county funding.

We want to talk a little bit about the United Way?

KIMBERLY TISSOT: We have several United Ways.

We serve half the state and they're all broken up and they are all different and we're a member of five of the United Ways in South Carolina.

So not only do we have a lot of our transition grants through United Way, but we also get donations through them by payroll.

People can sign up to give to United Way and a portion of it can go to ABLE South Carolina if they select our organization.

So we do get a good chunk of change from a United Way.

That ends up being unrestricted funds from that avenue.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My question isn't directly about United Way, but you know, we're a CIL.

And one of our partners that I'm not seeing in anything is the SILC, and I know that we have people here from the SILC.

So at some point in your presentation, could you speak to how you partner and utilize or are directed by or whatever the case may be in having SILC as part of all of this that's going on?

KIMBERLY TISSOT: Absolutely.

The SILC within our state has really been listening to a lot of the CILs.

So we have youth leadership development within the State Plan for Independent Living.

So CILs are able to get part B funding to implement services and then we report back to the SILC.

But they have been very engaged.

The SILC has a youth member and they're actively recruiting more.

So they're definitely heading into the right direction with youth involvement.

SETH HODEREWSKI: We see some of that too.

The SILC, in previous years, have worked with the VR to put funding out to do different types of activity.

The one grant we received was a strategic community building grant, where we went out and did a number of different things in northeast Pennsylvania.

There was also a youth programming one that was done in other CILs in Pennsylvania as well.

So they are looking at more youth transition types of work and activities and there was a certain amount of funds that was there that had, had started and then turned into other things.

So we actually got some funding for them to do some transition advocacy work as well, which was pretty cool.

Service clubs.

Every area seems to have these.

Joe started to talk about this already.

You know, there's things like Rotaries.

I'm sure, right, everyone knows the rotary and what that's all about.

You know, looking at those as options to get out.

Potential financial support.

For us, we were really fortunate to have a board member who was the president of one of our local Rotaries, so he really made a big deal about transition.

He would have us come in.

Every year at our award banquet we would give away two transition awards.

He would make a big deal about it.

He would have our young adult come in to the Rotary, talk about what great thing happened in their life and they would be given some money and that type of thing as well.

It was really powerful for the young adult, for the parent, for the business owners that were in that, at those meetings.

Our local Rotary also worked with us to do some funding.

We initially looked at maybe doing some sort of transition house or something like that.

They raised, I forget what it was, $10,000 or $14,000 for us.

It ended up becoming our LIFE program.

Our school based service program.

They saw the need.

They saw the importance of being able to help with that and like I said, it came from that relationship that our board president had with the rest of the Rotarians there.

And right down to other things, too.

You can go in there.

They're business owners in there right?

What a great place to go in and look at opportunities for job shadowing or work experiences.

That type of thing.

And the other thing that was really cool.

They would always donate Phillies tickets for us.

We always look at those fun things as well.

Our group loves going to baseball games and that type of thing, so we would certainly take advantage of that type of thing.

JOE MICHNER: We've, even through some of these connections, we got a local pro golfer who wanted to sponsor an event and did like a golf tournament thing.

So you know, you never know where you are going to find it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: That brought up a great question for me.

Being from Seattle and being a huge Seahawks fan myself, yeah, I'm trying to figure out how do I get in touch with, like, the Seahawks to do some type of fundraiser or something?

Do you have any idea?

JOE MICHNER: Our director of development does a lot of that for us.

And he reaches out, you'd be amazed with professional organizations what they'll do.

Sometimes they'll just send a little gift basket.

We have a local minor league baseball team and the Phillies about an hour away.

And we have done a bunch of stuff.

What was the other one?

The Curt Landis Foundation?

Was that the other one?

SETH HODEREWSKI: They used to set up a golf event which was really cool, I forget what we raised there, it was like 10 grand, that type of thing.

JOE MICHNER: Write a letter.

Make some phone calls.

You would be surprised.

PARTICIPANT: Who do I write the letter to?

JOE MICHNER: They have PR, public relations offices.

They often have folks specifically in positions to work in the community.

There are a lot of ways to get in that way.

Are we moving on to legislators?

Everybody's favorite topic.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: This is absolutely one of my favorite topics.

Legislators.

We all want funding from legislators and get a nice little state line item eventually, but that takes some work and takes relationship building.

We don't just go to our state house and say hey, we need money.

We need to do this.

We can't do that.

We can't lobby.

But we can educate them and position centers for independent living to be that organization that they should be consulting with on disability topics.

Knowing that our ultimate goal is to get some funding from our state.

We have several bills that have been introduced this year and today one of them passed hearing.

Yay.

So we're closer.

But that is really how we're starting to establish these relationships with our legislators.

Legislators are coming to us when they see a bill related to a person in South Carolina with a disability.

They're seeing us as the experts, which is exactly what we want them to see us as.

We go there and educate them constantly.

We have been there four times in the past month because we're getting ready to host our advocacy day for access and independence at our state house.

But we teach them about the IL philosophy.

We teach them about the importance of people with disabilities being involved in the decisions that they are making about us.

We teach them about the need for funding.

We teach them about ADA access issues that we are seeing in our state.

Employment issues that we are seeing in our state that they have the ability to fix.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Just being able to, talk about advocacy, to have a young adult go in and talk to a legislator about the importance of employment for young adults with disabilities.

That is huge on so many different types of levels.

Right down to, have people heard of the hash tag #Iwanttowork or #hiremeSC.

Those have been, in Pennsylvania, this was really huge, we were on the ground floor of that.

The #Iwanttowork.

We worked with a group out of United Way of Pittsburgh.

A whole bunch of other different groups.

This was a huge, huge collaborative effort where we got around the entire state talking to legislators about the importance of paid work for young adults.

And how important that is.

And it actually ended up passing unanimously in the house and in the Senate.

This was unbelievably huge.

In so many regards.

Right down to our young adults who were very shy and quiet in programming and that type of thing and years later are on the labor and industry board talking to some of the head honchos in the senate.

Are you nervous?

No, not at all.

She went in there and gave her talk about how important employment is.

That gave me chills and still gives me chills to think about.

Those kind of funds, state, where the feds matched funding and brought another $18 million into OVR, and to think that, I am sorry I keep saying OVR, voc rehab in Pennsylvania brought $18 million to help support young adults in and around employment and that type of thing.

I don't know if you guys want to go on about the, that end.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: And just establishing, you know, those relationships with the legislators that are in your areas.

Inviting them to your center for independent living, inviting them to the events that you're having, inviting them to speak to your youth.

We have, our Youth Leadership Forum delegates go to the State House to talk with legislators.

But we also have people, not only legislators, but local government, county council people, county council will come into our organization to talk to them about how do you communicate with your legislator?

How do you communicate with lawmakers in your area?

So they can actually come in and help you teach IL skills, which has been really neat to see.

SETH HODEREWSKI: We've invited some of our local legislators to do the fun events too.

Like the cookie bake-off that we did.

One of the legislators came in to do that.

I think the other Senator came in and spoke at our gala.

He was the introduction at our gala.

Even using the legislators in that type of way to bring awareness to transition to employment to young adults and has been very powerful.

CHARLIE WATERS: And steal programs.

Steal programs all over the place.

I went to a conference a year and a half ago.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: Model.

We model.

Not steal, we model.

CHARLIE WATERS: We steal ideas, yeah, we laugh about it because when you start doing really good youth programming, you'll see your stuff verbatim on other people's work.

I saw the program lead on #Iwanttowork.

The young adults social media campaign.

Saw her give her presentation.

I talked with her.

We talked over the next few months, and we wrote our own young adult driven social media campaign into our employment first grant, modelled after that.

It's fantastic.

There's no shame.

It worked really well in Pennsylvania.

Let's throw the dice and see how it goes in South Carolina, and so far it's been incredible.

We have a 3 or 4,000 person social media post reach within 36 hours of launching the campaign.

Happy to talk more about that stuff if you're interested.

JOE MICHNER: Any questions or comments?

We good to keep going?

We just want to throw in here thinking about those other funding sources that aren't necessarily dollars, but thinking about things like interns as a way to help alleviate some of the workload for your staff.

We've had great success with interns.

Natural peer support going on, but also they often make good staff.

There is nothing like molding an intern into a potential CIL staff person.

We've had a lot of success that way.

And getting folks from special education and post-secondary institutions on your board is also really helpful as far networking and getting that education piece and getting in the door there.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: We have 3 professors on our board of directors and it has been amazing.

They are all from the University of South Carolina, but they are all in different areas.

The special education professor that we have on our board has been fantastic for us.

We recruited Charlie from his program.

He has included us in two journal articles that he has done, research based.

He put us in the, after doing research throughout all the centers for independent living in the U.

S.

, he put us as one of the promising practices in his journal article.

That's also an article that you all could use going to schools, because it shows the value of centers for independent living working with young adults.

Getting these really smart people on your board really helps, significantly.

They have also included us in some grants as well.

SETH HODEREWSKI: And one of the other really neat things with the post-secondary piece, we talked about maybe teachers not getting it at certain points, but getting into a college class and training and talking to potential future teachers about the independent living philosophy and what that's all about and maybe things they should be thinking of that maybe they wouldn't have gotten otherwise has been really good for us as well.

JOE MICHNER: And we've done that with future voc rehab counselors.

There's a big voc rehab program about an hour and a half north of us and we get invited up there by the professor to talk about the IL philosophy to future voc rehab counselors.

We like to get 'em early.

CHARLIE WATERS: Tim, are we okay?

I know we're past time, you have a plan I assume.

We're going wrap it up here in a minute or two.

JOE MICHNER: This next slide is really talking about working with other CILs and agencies again.

But other CILs if they are close enough to you, to share information.

CHARLIE WATERS: No need for adversarial relationships.

We're not in competition.

We hate to hear when that's the case.

Different sometimes.

Like very different in South Carolina, we are very different from one another in our approaches, but there is still ample room for collaboration.

Quick question.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: What is the name of the editorial?

KIMBERLY TISSOT: Centers for Independent Living Involvement with Youth Transition.

If you Google centers for independent living and Tony Plautner, Anthony Plautner PhD, you will see his articles and he has done quite a few research projects on centers for independent living and transition process.

JOE MICHNER: The next slide we are just going to talk about real quick.

We talked about a bunch of these already.

Looking at DD Council, VR, Department of Education.

I just wanted to throw out there, too, we had a very, very successful grant received from a business, Highmark Insurance gave us $50,000 to go out and talk to employers to help young people get jobs.

That was like the best grant ever.

And I want one of those all the time.

They are few and far between.

But think about those companies.

I think we mentioned earlier, that like to give back to the community.

Typically, those grants, they're looking for something that they can use also for their own promotion.

That's one thing you have to consider.

But they're typically free of a lot of the restrictions that we have through other grants.

They literally said here's $50,000.

Use it and go talk to people.

Okay, thanks.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: I think it is really important to point out to that the DD council actually is under the same funding umbrella as centers for independent living under ACL.

Along with P&A and our USAID.

So they have, the USAID, P&A and the DD council usually has a DD network within your state.

I think CILs really need to jump on this DD network and start working with them a lot more.

But that's a great approach to the DD Council to say we're now buddies under the same funding umbrella so let's work together.

JOE MICHNER: We have thrown out some other ideas of things you can do for fund raising especially when young adults are involved and planning it and putting it all together.

We have done Flap Jack fundraisers.

SETH HODEREWSKI: Applebees, yeah, that is one of my favorite things to do is if you have an Applebee's around, in the mornings, usually Saturday or Sunday mornings, they will open their doors and people have to sell tickets to get flap Jacks and coffee and whatever.

And you get to do all the serving and waiting and greeting and we put Joe in the back of the kitchen.

JOE MICHNER: They don't let me out of the kitchen.

SETH HODEREWSKI: But it's such great skill building to go out and try these types of work experiences.

See what it is like.

You might learn that hey, I love doing this or I never want to wipe down another table in my life.

And that's all great knowledge and at the same time you raise a little bit of funds.

I think we have gotten employment out of that, too.

Our local Applebee's said that we were their favorite group coming in.

We come in there like we knew what we were doing, the whole nine yards.

And we have seen employment out of that as well for young adults.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: And getting involved in giving days in your local area.

We're getting ready to have something called Midlands Give, a day of online giving for the community and having your organization be one of the nonprofits involved.

We have zero minutes.

JOE MICHNER: The last slide is really reminders of a lot of the things you have already talked about.

Being aware and ready for these things.

Feel free to talk to us during breaks and after the session today.

Long after today, give us a phone call and let us know if you have questions.

KIMBERLY TISSOT: But the key really to building these relationships and funding is strong programing.

Your programs is really strong, having success stories and get them out.

Word of mouth does so much.