Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: Hello and welcome! This is Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, president of RespectAbility, a nonprofit organization that fights stigmas and advances opportunities for people with disabilities. I'm so delighted that you joined us today and I apologize that we're not in a live event, but obviously given the virus situation we had no choice but to move online. I also want to let you know that at noon today Seattle time we will be doing a webinar specifically about the virus and how it impacts people with disabilities and mental health. Information about that is on our website under the events section. We can turn the page.

I am joined today by Philip Kahn-Pauli, our policy and practices director. Philip is a tremendous talent in the disability community in terms of his knowledge around disability employment policy and other issues. He is the co-chair of the CCD skills and education task force which is the coalition of 120 national groups on disability issues - around these key issues. Next slide.

When we think about how we can support inclusion and progress in America we have to think about equity for other people. There was a time when it was considered normal and to some people acceptable to have this racist policy of segregation and even slavery. Obviously this was completely immoral. Additionally, it undermined the success of our country because when you deny rights to people who are talented and who want to contribute to making the world a better place, you are denying everyone access to a better future. If you're a philanthropist listening to this call or you're an employer, you would never want to today support a segregated system that supports any sort of racism or any sort of prejudice against any group of people. So let's go to the next slide.

However it's still happening in so many ways. This is a picture of a boardroom where all the people are white men. Also if you're a company, a nonprofit organization or philanthropy, I assume that today you would never want to support an organization that is just white men leadership. You would want to see people of color, you would want to see women, you'd want to see members of the LGBTQ community and I hope people with disabilities as well. This is especially true if you're serving people of color, or women, etcetera, but historically people of privilege have done work to help people who are more marginalized, without recognizing that people who are marginalized need to be at the table, need to have decision-making. Let's go to the next slide.

What you see here on this slide is the way that it is today in terms of people with disabilities. There are so many organizations, institutions that are completely excluding people with disabilities. So you see here a picture of my colleague Tatiana Lee. She's a member of the RespectAbility staff. She cannot get into this building because she is a wheelchair user. Now she also happens to be African-American, part Native American, she also happens to be a woman. There are many organizations to support equity for Native Americans, for people of color and for women where she literally cannot get in the door. So if these organizations or all organizations want to be successful - let's go to the next slide - we want to be sure that all people can participate.

That is because organizations are at their best when they welcome respect and include people of all backgrounds and this includes people with disabilities. Next slide.

People with disabilities are some of the most talented people on earth. Whether it was Stephen Hawking who unlocked the secrets of the universe from a wheelchair, or whether it's Whoopi Goldberg or Richard Branson who are each dyslexic, didn't start to read until much later. Indeed Richard Branson didn't even graduate high school. Where you look at Marlee Matlin who is an actress who's deaf but you really see the future in Greta Thunberg who is a climate change activist leading the climate change movement at the age of 17 who is a proud member of the disability community because she is autistic. What organization would want to deny themselves access to the kind of talent that is within the disability community? Next slide.

Fully one in five people has a disability. It's actually one in four adults. And the reason that it's one in four adults is that people can join the disability community at any time due to accident, aging or illness. Let's go to the next slide.

Disabilities can be temporary, they can be permanent, they can be visible, they can be non visible. For example I myself am a member of the disability community because I'm Dyslexic and I have ADHD. I actually didn't start to really learn how to read until I was 12 years old. I was already 5 foot 10 at 12 years old making me a very large illiterate person so these sorts of issues are not always seen on the surface. It can be a disability from birth, or it can be acquired as I said earlier by accident aging or illness and indeed we're very concerned about what this new virus could mean in terms of expanding the disability community or its impacts on us. Next slide please.

Disability impacts everyone. If you go later to these slides you'll see that these are links to African Americans with disabilities, people from the Hispanic/Latinx community, women with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ community with disabilities. If you go to those links, it'll show you role models - superstars - who have disabilities from those demographics. The fact is that disability impacts all demographics. Next slide.

Anybody can join our community and there's a lot of innovations and it's a very diverse community. Next slide.

There are seven million students with disabilities in public schools today. Over 52% of them are people of color and that is very important to recognize because to be quite honest most disability organizations are white led and have the majority -- are people with relative privilege. However the majority of young people with disabilities are people of color so it's very important for all disability organizations to also invest in other kinds of equity to make sure that members of their leadership, on their board and their staff, and their volunteers are people of color, members of the LGBTQ community, etcetera. For example, RespectAbility, which has an equity initiative -- we're still learning, we're certainly not perfect on the issues. I myself am on a learning journey but a third of our team are people of color - both on our staff and our board and in terms of our young leadership fellowship. We're always trying to recruit and make sure that we represent the people we serve. There are major problems with this in this -- only 65 percent of people with disabilities finish even high school. Only 7 percent complete college and the ones who complete college tend to be people who are white from a two-parent family of relative privilege. So when we want to have leaders who are people of color from the disability community they tend to be people who have an acquired disability, because they acquired their disability after they got their education. Because of structural racism and so many barriers it's been incredibly hard for people of color - students of color with disabilities to get the education and skills they need to get into employment. And in fact they've been victimized in so many ways that they are frequently in the school to prison pipeline. We have 750,000 people with disabilities living behind bars in America today, people with disabilities who are incarcerated including those with mental health conditions. Next slide please.

One in three people with a disability has a job. My colleague Philip Pauli is going to talk about employment more, because the majority of people with disabilities want to work - 70%. So there's a big gap, and for Seattle and Washington State and other places around the country, there are huge opportunities for improvement so that more people with disabilities can have jobs. Thankfully, as you'll hear from Phillip, Governor Inslee and other people in the Washington State are very forward-leaning and there's some very exciting things happening in companies like Amazon, and Boeing, and Starbucks, etcetera. Next slide.

This means that there are 8 million people with disabilities in America who could help your organization or any organization move forward, whether they want to get in employment or others -- These are underutilized talents who are ready to help you. By the way, that's a photo of some of our national leadership fellowship program participants. We have a program to train young leaders with disabilities for leadership whether to run for public office work on public policy or serve in social justice and other nonprofit organizations. Next slide.

How can you get even more data? If you go back to the slide right before, you'll see a link that goes to all the local data so you can find out a lot more about King County and what the demographics are for disability. Very very excellent data is all through those links. Next slide please.

And what you're seeing here is how problems can be solved by people with disabilities. For example, here's a faith service where a wheelchair user is giving a talk and you can see there's stairs behind him. He could not access the place where they ordinarily would lead the service and so they brought the podium down so that he could lead the service. So he has a disability, he knows how to make the workaround, and so he suggested that workaround. People with disabilities know the problems firsthand. They know the solutions. It's very important for them to be at the table making those solutions. Next slide please.

There is a major study done by Accenture and it shows that including people with disabilities actually helps the organizations they join. And, in fact, in for-profit companies, when they are hiring people with disabilities and have a disability inclusion initiative those companies are actually making more money. So there's a link there so you can read the study. Next slide please.

We are looking at all the candidates and we're asking them to fill out candidate questionnaires on what their different policy plans are on disability. You can find all of those policy plans at VoteAbility.com. I encourage you to do so. We're gonna be reaching out later in the year to the candidates for Governor and Senator but already many of the presidential views are on that website. Next slide please.

Now let's talk about philanthropy and nonprofits because philanthropy and nonprofits are by definition in the do-good business. And what we found in this major report - go to the next slide please - a very significant report that we did. We did five focus groups of people who work in philanthropy. We did 14 one-on-one interviews with leaders of foundations and philanthropy serving organizations. We evaluated the 25 largest foundations and 25 largest nonprofits. And we did an online survey of 969 people in partnership with the Nonprofit Times, Chronicle of Philanthropy, and many others. So what did we find? Next slide please.

We found, first of all, that people in the philanthropy and the nonprofit space want to include people with disabilities. They really really want to but unfortunately they don't know what they don't know. So they say - 75 percent of them say they have a policy not to include exclude people with disabilities, but in fact they're doing it every day. So here's some of those numbers. So only 14 percent - [cough] excuse me - say we ensure that people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can participate by ensuring that all video content has captions. Only 14% are saying that they are doing this. This is a major problem! Actually, it's free to put captions on videos and so why are they not doing this? They don't know what they don't know. And indeed you see this huge problem that this large number of nonprofit organizations are not even putting their major public facing events in accessible facilities. 40 percent not even attempting to put their public facing events in these facilities. And this is really a problem because it's exactly when we showed the slide of the picture of my colleague Tatiana Lee that she can't get up the stairs. 40 percent are not even attempting to put their events into a facility. So if you're a foundation and you're listening to this call and I know we have some major foundations listening to this webinar. Look - he, she or they who have the gold, they make the rules. Right? The golden rule? So here's a rule I'd like to suggest. Let nonprofit organizations know you're not going to fund prejudice anymore and that all their public facing events should be held in places that are physically accessible. Let them know that they should have all their videos have captions. As you can see we have closed captioning through this. We're using a service that's very simple to use for online live captions and we suggest that others do it for live events but for tape-recorded videos it's very simple. You put your video on YouTube and it actually has an algorithm that populates videos with captions for free instantly. You'll have to go in and clean up some of the words, it'll be spelled incorrectly but it's a fantastic technology that is available. And it's my favorite price - it's free! Next slide please.

We also see that many organizations are not serving people with disabilities and don't have them on their staff, don't have them on their board. So you can see the tiny numbers of staff and board members with disabilities in the nonprofit community. Next slide please.

We also are hoping that you'll be asking about inclusion in terms of the people that organizations serve. So this is just some of the stats around whether funders are asking their grantees if they're inclusive or not inclusive, and if they are - next slide please - are they serving people with disabilities or not? And for those who are asking about demographics, some of them are asking about disability but we've also seen a lot that say do you have people of color in your organization? Do you have people who are women? Do you have people from the LGBTQ community, and then they leave disability out. Disability is frequently left out of the diversity conversation. Next slide please.

It doesn't happen by accident. This is asking whether people are asking people to be intentional about their disability inclusion. Only 20% are even attempting to do that, so that is a lot of opportunity for improvement there. Next slide please.

And we also see that when people are doing their marketing, that very few organizations show people with disabilities on their website or in their annual report or on the invitations to their public facing events. And this is something that they really need to do because a picture is worth a thousand words. If you show an event that has 50 people and there's a photo of 50 people and they've all posed and there's no one with a wheelchair, no one who has a white cane showing that they're blind, no one who has Down syndrome, no one with a visible disability out of 50 people when 1 out of every 4 adults has a disability - it says something is wrong. I encourage everybody who's listening to go back to your own website and go back to your own annual reports and take a look at the pictures - the group pictures. Are there people with disabilities in your group pictures and if not, why not? What's going on that there's no one with a visible disability shown in that photo. What is it saying about the exclusion that your organization might be practicing. Next slide please.

Now how do you do this? What are the nuts and bolts of how you can achieve this? Number one - next slide please. We're going to go through these pretty quickly. Number one is that the top thing needs to be a commitment from the top. So the CEO of an organization, the chairman of the organization, chairwoman of the organization needs to make sure that everybody knows that they want to include all kinds of people from all kinds of backgrounds, all kinds of diversity - including disability - in their organization and that needs to be very clear from the top. It should be in your policies, it should be on your website, it should be in your marketing.

Number two, next slide please. You need to understand that when people with disabilities aren't at the table they're on the menu. So if you do a disability inclusion initiative make sure that people with disabilities are some of the leaders, if not all the leaders, of that effort. Make sure that they're deeply involved in this entire process. Next one. Number three - foster an inclusive environment. So you have to have an accommodation policy, for example, every public facing event when the invitation goes out, you should ask people what accommodations they might need in order to participate. So for example, if somebody is deaf and they want to ask for sign language interpreter, they can ask for a sign language interpreter. Some people who are deaf may prefer captions but if nobody asks for an accommodation - you don't need to pay for a sign language interpreter for a small event if nobody needs it, but if they need it you should have it available. So what you do is you just put it on the form. By the way the most common accommodation will be food allergies - that people will tell you that they're gluten-free or that they have whatever allergy and so that when you have food that you can have food available for them that they can eat just like everybody else at the event. Next one please. This includes learning about the different lexicon and -- you can learn, for example, not to say wheelchair-bound. I mean - a person who uses a wheelchair, that's really a tool of liberation. It enables them to get around. They're not bound to the wheelchair, the wheelchair helps them. So take the time to learn the lexicon. All of it is on our website and there were some links in the previous slide. Next slide.

Again, you want to be working with people with disabilities, so where do you find those people and what are the best practices? So TAPAbility is for example a resource website for resumes of people with disabilities. AskJAN.org is a free government resource that can help you solve issues and questions around disability employment. It's my favorite price - it's free. So let's say you decide to recruit a volunteer or hire a staff person with disability X, and you want to know how do you best go about making sure that their issues are accommodated appropriately and privately? You can contact AskJan.org and they will personally answer your question. Again, it's free. So you can also see our webinar on how to do this and I encourage you to go to that webinar. Next slide.

The case for hiring people with disabilities is really clear. It's that organizations that embrace people with disabilities are more successful and that they're a source of high quality talent and then, actually, your turnover of your staff will reduce when you hire more people with disabilities, because people with disabilities tend not to job hop. Once they find an employer that understands their needs and respects them as a human being, they tend to be, on average, incredibly loyal employees. Next slide please.

You want to have an inclusion point person on your team. So let's say somebody is going to be hired for your organization or they're coming to your event and they put in a request. The request might be, for example, they're a wheelchair user and it's going to be a buffet, they want to be sure that the buffet table is going to be low enough that a wheelchair user can reach the table. Who is going to implement that? You can't just have people request and have nobody have responsibility for making sure their request is met. You need to have a point person or committee who's working on that. Next slide please.

Additionally you want to have the people with disabilities in your marketing. So there's a link to some webinars that we've done on this and I really encourage you to take the time, if you're in a communications role for your organization, to watch those two webinars and exactly how to do this. Next slide please.

Additionally your website should be accessible for people who are blind and you want to have captions on your videos. Again, we have some webinars specifically on how you can do that that your communications team members can watch. Next. Most of these are all free by the way. You want to be sure when you're doing a public facing event that it's always in an accessible place. This is an interesting photograph because what you see is this is actually a faith-based organization that did not used to be accessible to people who are wheelchair users, so they could not get into the building, they could not use the bathroom. So anybody who lived there locally who is a wheelchair user knew don't go to this place because you can't get in. So they decided to make a change. So they put up a sign to let people know, hey, they're making a change. And in fact they're putting out the word that people with wheelchairs should be able to come, and when they finished the construction they were really really pushing to get people with wheelchairs to come. But it's not just a matter of getting in the door. You also have to be able to use the bathroom. This is very important. You have to get to the meeting room area. So there's a number of things and so there are event checklists here and there's also a really good webinar on how to make sure your events are accessible, and you can see the link to it there. Next slide please.

There is a wonderful kit put out by the Chicago Community Trust for nonprofit organizations, and I just want to recommend it to you. That link is also there. Next slide please.

You can use vendors that are doing this kind of work to ensure that there are people with disabilities that are helping your effort. And in fact, in Seattle, there are some fantastic nonprofit organizations that are social enterprises for people with disabilities where they are working. There's some fantastic models in Washington State. Next slide please.

And of course you want to really promote to your grantees if you're a funder that they should be inclusive of people with disabilities. You need to put it in your grant agreement so that people are signing off on it just like they would not exclude people who are black, or who are gay, or who are whatever other minority for participation in their organization. It should also be in your grant agreements that you should not exclude people with disabilities from their work especially with your money. You don't want to be advancing prejudice and bigotry and exclusion with your grant giving dollars. Next slide please?

There are some wonderful examples of organizations that have made a change. So the Ford foundation used to have policies and they were all about equity, but people with disabilities were always excluded in everything that they did. For example, they had a billion dollar equity initiative that they announced in a tweet that was not screen reader accessible, meaning people who were blind could not read the tweet. It then went to a video - it's a wonderful video, beautiful video - no captions. But that anyone who is deaf, hard of hearing, could not get the content. They had a huge building with 400 people on staff. Not a single one of those staff members had a visible disability and the building itself was not physically accessible. In a very short period of time the Ford Foundation has learned a tremendous amount about disability and about inclusion, and without changing the missions of their organization they were able to pivot and fix all these different issues. There's a number of different documents that are linked to here that explains how they did it and what they're doing. Next slide please.

Really, the takeaway is that organizations are at their best when they are inclusive and the best way to do that is to work with people with disabilities. Next slide please.

We're getting ready for the specific slides that are around Washington State and Philip Pauli is going to present those shortly. But I want to point out that we have a lot more information about how you can do all this in some free online videos that you can watch at the link at the bottom of this, including disability history, the accessible events, the welcoming lexicon, the storytelling and everything. All of that is available for free on our website. Next slide please.

Now I'm turning it over to Philip Pauli who's going to walk us through some very important data before we take questions.

Philip Kahn-Pauli: Hello everyone my name is Philip Kahn-Pauli and I am the policy and practices director at RespectAbility. I'm the boring data guy so I want to --

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: Not boring, not boring!

Philip Kahn-Pauli: So I want to walk you through some key statistics because really if we want to affect change when it comes to getting more people with disabilities into the workforce, we need to understand the scope of the challenge, the specific challenges that people with disabilities are facing. And that in turn will help us to find where there are intervention points to get the American Dream working for everyone. So in total Washington state is home to nearly 1 million Washingtonians with disabilities. The specific number is 934,000 Washingtonians. And that actually represents 12.6 percent of the state's population. Now that's an important distinction - one of the first important distinctions I want to draw. You will almost always see RespectAbility talk about working age people with disabilities versus the total disability community in a given state or in the United States. And that's important because as Jennifer already said, as people age, people often age into disability and if we're all working together to advance opportunities for Americans with disabilities, we need to be very hyper-focused on the working age population between ages 18 and 64. So narrowing in on that number, there are 478,000 Washington State residents with disabilities. Sadly only 195,000 have jobs. That puts Washington State's disability employment rate at 40.8 percent. To give you the context the national average is 37.6 percent so Washington State is slightly above the national average when it comes to getting people with disabilities into the workforce. However, some states are much much further ahead. So for example, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska all have around 50 percent of their people with disabilities in the workforce. And some people say that's just a function of North Dakota and South Dakota being small states that are desperate for people but those small states are doing a lot of the right things. They have public relations campaigns, they have leaders that very publicly talk about setting goals for people with disabilities. Likewise, other states that have major disability populations such as Florida, Georgia, Ohio, have been very forward-leaning and increasing their opportunities for people with disabilities through policy, through practices and really creating clear cradle to career, employment first outcomes.

So if you're familiar with RespectAbility at all, you'll know that one of our annual reports is a best and worst states report, where we go into detail about the 50 states. We rank the state's according to how they're doing on jobs and the metric that we use for that ranking is very specific because we measure the gap in workforce and the gap in labor force participation between people with and without disabilities. And now oftentimes you'll hear people talk about the unemployment rate or focus just on the employment rate but we think that that's not necessarily the best metric to use to hold public leaders accountable. By definition, the unemployment rate only tracks people who are actively seeking work. It doesn't actually track the total population and so that's why we like using employment rates and labor force participation rates instead. And by looking at the gap we're really trying to assess whether the economy is becoming more inclusive for everyone or just people without disabilities. So according to our rankings, Washington state is actually 20th in the country, so not so bad, better than 30 other states but there's still a lot of opportunities to really increase those opportunities. Now, I will say that Governor Inslee has been working on these issues over the course of his time as Governor of your state and he's done a good job of laying a foundation but there's some really significant challenges because, for example, in 2018 there was only a net gain of around 303 jobs for people with disabilities so more work is needed.

So I'm gonna go to the next slide and it's important just as we draw the distinction between the total disability population and the population of people with disabilities who are working age, it's also important to really reflect on the racial diversity within the disability community. There's been a lot of hashtags about these issues of making sure that people with disabilities are counted along with people of color or people from First Nations and so I want to dig in a little. So when you actually look at the working age population there are actually 231,000 working age women with disabilities in Washington State and that's followed by about 48,000 working-age Latinx people with disabilities and rounding out other distinctly identified racial groups according to the Census Bureau, there's around 20,000 African Americans with disabilities in Washington State and around 20,000 working-age Asian Americans with disabilities in Washington State. And when you look at their employment rates we really see very major differences. Just among working age women with disabilities about 38.2 percent have jobs. Among LatinX people with disabilities your employment rate is actually 45.7 percent. Among African Americans it's at 41 percent and among Asian Americans it's actually 45.9 percent. And I will tell you that when you look at these racial numbers and you look at the breakdown of what percentage of this sub-population has jobs Washington State is doing better than the national average just as they are with the overall state.

Now if you've been working, if you've been tracking any of these issues or you really care about workforce and the future of growth of our country, then you know that educational attainment is deeply linked to employment success. I mean it's why our mothers all browbeat us to get good report cards, because you do well in school, you're supposed to get a good job and you're set up for success in life. And in that case, people with disabilities face some significant barriers. So I want to dig in on some education statistics with you, so in total, there's about 130,000 students with disabilities in Washington's K-12 system. Of that number, 47,000 have learning disabilities, 14,000 are on the autism spectrum. You've got 8,000 with the developmental delay, about 5,000 with an emotional disturbance, a thousand with hearing issues, five thousand who have specifically diagnosed intellectual developmental disabilities, around 27,000 students that have some kind of health impairment, 17,000 students have speech issues and there's a scattering of other issues such as deaf-blindness, traumatic brain injury or visual issues. These statistics have been drawn directly from the United States Department of Education. On the Department of Education's website they have to - they legally have to track the number of students who are in the Special Ed system across the country and give very detailed breakdowns of what specific disabilities students have. Now to take a step back it really shows that there's a lot of students with disabilities in Washington state systems and they have a pretty significant gap when it comes to graduation rates and high school. Only about 62 percent of Washington's students with disabilities graduate with a high school degree compared to a national -- and that actually is below the national average. Nationally speaking 66 percent of students with disabilities graduate high school with a high school diploma. So it may be a 4% gap but that is a life-changing outcome for thousands of students with disabilities every year. And actually, a lot of these students are really concentrated in the Seattle - King County school system. Actually fully 14.8 percent of PK-12 students in Seattle are actually students with disabilities and as you can see, we break down further the racial demographics of those students with disabilities. 18 percent of the African-American students in the King County school system are students with disabilities, 27 percent of the Native American students, 20 percent of Hispanic students, 10 percent of Asian American students and 14 percent of white students with disabilities. Now I want to take a step back. We had a slide about it earlier, luckily our main source for our data is something called the disability statistics compendium, and it's a great website. I want you all to go google that at some point if you're interested in this - disability statistics compendium. They've got all the different data tables you could ever possibly want about disability, but very specifically if you're looking for regional specific information, they actually have information broken down by the county level, in terms of prevalence, employment rates and poverty among people with disabilities. So looking in that it actually shows that out of that nearly 1 million people with disabilities living in Washington state, 205,000 of them live in Seattle alone and that's just in King County. That puts them at 9.5 percent of the city's population. And actually, more than half of that number are actually working aged people with disabilities at 105,000. And out of that number only 47,000 have jobs. Now that puts the disability employment rate just for Seattle at 45 percent so that's closer to that fifty percent goal that you see at North Dakota and South Dakota but if you increase that percent -- even if you increase that disability employment rate by 5000 percent it still means adding thousands of workers with disabilities to the workforce which could be a amazing business opportunity for Seattle's business community. Now you do have a significant barrier here, though, because 24.6 percent of Seattle's residents with disabilities actually live in poverty. So you've got a lot of people with a lot of barriers to work but we're here together and there are solutions to be found. So -- though that's the data piece of my presentation I am happy to answer any questions. I know Jennifer would be happy to answer any questions that come up. I know we've got some interesting people on the call who are all doing interesting work, and we would certainly invite you to share your insights, your comments, your reactions to what we've shared with you today and what you think we can do together. So, Jennifer.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: Great so thank you very much Philip. Again we're very sorry not to be with you in person because we were really looking forward very much to meeting you and learning about your individual work but I'd be really delighted if people want to jump in with anything they want to comment on or to ask questions. "What are the public policy priorities of RespectAbility in Washington State?" So that comes from Benson Porter. So, Philip, I'll leave it to you.

Philip Kahn-Pauli: Benson, thank you for the great question. So when it comes to Washington State, specifically, one of the top priorities I have and I brought this up when I met with Governor Inslee last month was, well, he's term-limited so he's leaving the Governor's office soon, but one of the things that we're really pushing is to learn from states like Florida or Maryland or Ohio. I mentioned them specifically because they have written agreements in place between different state agencies to really prioritize employment outcomes for people with disabilities. If you read any of our materials you hear us mention Florida a lot and we mention it because they've been adding a lot of people with disabilities to their state workforce by making sure that people can go and get the skill training they need. But in order to make that happen the Governor had to convene all of the relevant state agencies that have dollars to spend on workforce development and actually get them together in a room, physically, and then hammer out a mutually agreeable memorandum of understanding that delineated goals, had articulated specific metrics around closing the gap in labor force participation and making sure that everyone can actually work together. So that's one of our top priorities in Washington state is getting state agencies to cooperate and collaborate and I will also say that expanding school to work transition programs is a key priority. There's thousands of youth with disabilities who leave the school system every year and they may -- what happens when the bus stops coming? Well, if they have a chance to go into apprenticeship or some kind of skill training program that would be wonderful.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: So, the next question is actually to Eric, and it is: "what is the name of the company that we're using for our live captions?"

Eric Ascher: We use CaptionStar, they've been really helpful with us lately. I don't know I think it's caption Star.com or transcriptionstar.com, I'm not positive which it is. But in the follow-up email that I'm gonna send to everyone after this webinar ends, which will have a link to download this PowerPoint as well, I will include that link as well.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: So this is really important because as Seattle events are being shut down and more and more is online we highly advise that you make sure that your webinars and your meetings are accessible so if you have somebody who is hard of hearing or deaf that you do have live captioning. This particular service is really helpful because they only charge you by the amount of time that you use. If you use sign language interpreters, for a live event, there's typically a four hour minimum and you need to have two sign language interpreters because it's actually pretty tiring to do sign language interpretation and they have to sort of switch off. So it's very very cost effective to do live captioning for webinars and then when you record it and it's online, you really want to have that because what we find is that people who are not deaf, when they watch videos, they frequently are doing it in public places. They don't want to disturb other people so they're using captions. So lots of people who are not hard of hearing, who are not deaf, use these captions. So when you hire a service like this it's very inexpensive and enables you to have captions for anyone who wants that, whether they have a hearing issue or not.

The next question is for Phillip, "Do you have a cross-section breakdown of the type of disability as opposed to by race? I ask because understanding that part better helps us to better prepare for the work".

Philip Kahn-Pauli: That is a really great question, thank you for asking it. And the answer is yes, the data is available. Now I will say, I mentioned before that our information all comes from the Census Bureau and it's specifically their annual American Community Survey and when they put out the American Community Survey, they ask a series of questions. And they identify several categories of disability. They identify ambulatory impairments, they identify cognitive disabilities, they identify self-care disabilities, they identify independent living disabilities and those categories are useful, however, they're a little squishier then I'd really like. For example, the cognitive disability category can capture everything from the autism spectrum to other invisible mental health conditions and may not give you, necessarily, the clearest picture of the scope of need. But it can guide you to look at the information. So if you -- you should have our emails and if you would like a more detailed breakdown, by cognitive, ambulatory, independent living, disabilities specific to Washington State, I'd be more than happy to provide that information. It's all there on the compendium, it's just a matter of copying and pasting it from the data tables, which I didn't have a chance to do when we switched from a live event to a online event. So that information is available and I'd be happy to get it to you. I will also say that I like the part where you're talking about categories of disability and accommodations and that's really important and -- this is the last thing I'll say on it is -- because the accommodation process can be really tricky for employers. The employers hear the term accommodation, oftentimes they tense up and assume it's a matter of costs and that you're gonna have to put in a standing desk or put in an elevator and they don't necessarily realize that there can be very simple solutions to satisfy both legal compliance with the ADA but also help your worker with a disability succeed and actually Jennifer mentioned it with AskJAN.org, you can actually search by category of disability and not only when you search, say, ADD in the workplace, PTSD in the workplace, autism, whatever. When you search for that type of disability it'll then give you a list of different types of accommodations that others have used. Whether it's flexible time, whether it's telework which is now gonna be our lives in many respects, or links to different assistive technology options so great question, thank you very much. Follow up with me and I'll get you that information specifically.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: So I just want to jump on top of what Phillip said and I agree with absolutely everything he said that -- you want to have a process that if somebody is an employee that there is a formal process where they work, where they identify that they have a disability. They don't have to tell you personal information that's not needed. For example, if somebody has a mental health condition, they don't need to say, "I am bipolar", they just need to say, "I have a disability and in order to function well, sometimes I would like to be able to have flex schedule". For example, I have an appointment, a standing appointment, every Wednesday at four o'clock. So, every Wednesday I'd like to leave at two o'clock and so I'd like to organize for flex time so that I can start earlier in the mornings on other days so that I can make up my hours, for example. What we have seen and there's substantial evidence that the vast majority of accommodations cost an organization - for an employee - less than $500 for that employee. I mean there's so many simple solutions that in most cases are actually free. It's unbelievable how many options there are to help people succeed. But the key is what's called ATP, ask the person: "what do you need so that you can thrive in your role, what can we do to make sure that you are as successful an employee or a member of this team as possible and to make sure those things are done. Now having said that, the Americans with Disabilities Act doesn't ask a tiny organization, or one that's fragile financially, to do things that are going to undermine the organization or change the nature of the organization. So, a small organization with a small budget and they don't have an elevator and somebody wants to work there, they don't have to put in an elevator into their building. They're a small organization under ADA. They're too small to have to do that, but if they're a large organization they should have things that are really in place. And I will also say that as organizations look towards new leases that there's always an opportunity, I mean yesterday -- I'm in Los Angeles -- yesterday I went with a CEO of a large nonprofit organization that is about to move to a new location and we walked through the building to look at, well, you know what, when you come into the building there's no automatic doors for a wheelchair user to be able to push your button and have the door open. When you try and go to the bathroom there's no way for a wheelchair user to get under the sink so that they can wash their hands. It's a very easy fix. You can put into your lease that your landlord will fix all those things before you go into a new space, for example. We'd love to see some more questions from people. If you just put them in the chat room we would love to see more questions and I also want to remind, as people are putting in questions, which we hope you will do, that at noon today Seattle time we have a webinar, actually, Philip do you want to talk about the webinar we have coming up at noon today?

Philip Kahn-Pauli: As you know we are, ourselves, trying to grapple with the prospect of the wide-ranging impacts of COVID-19 and the coronavirus, we really got the idea together of "why not have a quick webinar where we can pull together some experts to really reiterate the important message of keep calm - but practically speaking, what, as advocates, as people with disabilities, can we do to take care of ourselves, prepare for the situation as it evolves" and so we actually have on the CEO of the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, a thought leader from the mental health and the work space, as well as the co-executive directors of the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies, joining us to talk about where are we now with Coronavirus? What are some things that we can do as advocates to take care of ourselves, to deal with workplace stress, to deal with the anxieties that are coming with every news headline that you read on social media? And then bringing in some subject matter expertise from people who are really at the forefront of making sure that disability is part and parcel of the planning process for dealing with eminent disasters, and emergency preparedness. And so, it's gonna be an interesting conversation. It's gonna draw together a lot of these different threads. It's going to be happening at three o'clock if you go to our website look at the events page on RespectAbility, you can sign up for it and I think it would be a very valuable chance for you to join us. Thank you.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: So I think, from Tom Lang, that we have a question about whether this recording will be online? It absolutely will be online. It'll take a little while for it to get up, but it absolutely will be available to everyone. Anika is asking all of us, "I'm thinking about your comments about group photos on websites that include people with disabilities. We have some of these photos and our participants often do not have visible disabilities. What suggestions do you have to better communicate the breadth of our community in terms of disability?"

Philip Kahn-Pauli: Especially when it comes to invisible disabilities, there's a lot of stigma that's attached to it and people may self disclose, "I have depression", or "I have ADD". Their disability identity may not be operationalized. So there's no hard or fast rule. I would say, if you have wheelchair users in your group photos that's wonderful. Make sure that you -- so here in our office we oftentimes have experts come in to share with our young leadership fellows and so one of the ways we handle that is we have two rows of people, we have people standing in the back if they're able and we have a row of chairs in the middle of both wheelchair users and non-visibly disabled people sitting down so that everything is equal and equitable. So, do the best that you can with what you have and who you have, so, thank you.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: Yeah and but I think there is an important message here about if you've got a group of, a large group of adults, and nobody has a visible disability, you really need take a step back and say: "why is that?". You know, "why is it that there's no wheelchair user on our team?", "nobody who has a walker?", "nobody who's blind?", "nobody who has Down syndrome?" What does that say about our organization's outreach effort to include them in the work that we are doing. But I will also say that you can really put on your website, you know for example, you probably should have an EOC, an Equal Opportunity Commission, type thing. Every single job that you list probably says that you don't discriminate on the basis of gender and race. Well, the word disability should be in there, too. Now, mind you, there's no obligation to ever hire somebody who's not qualified to do a job. If somebody has a kind of disability or a lack of skills that means they can't do a job - you should not hire that person to do that job. On the flip side, there are a lot of jobs that are listed that say you must have a driver's license. Well, if you're blind or if you have epilepsy, by definition you do not have a driver's license. Does that person really need a driver's license to do the job that you're offering or can that person be a spectacular star performer while being blind or having epilepsy? You need to take a look at your job descriptions because there's all kinds of jobs where it says it requires a driver's license when you're not a driver in terms of the job, so it's really important to do that. And, yes to Brennan, we will have all the slides on the website later, absolutely.

Eric Ascher: I'd say within the hour.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: Within the hour. So there you go.

So Elizabeth Ralston asks: "I will be giving a presentation to fundraisers at the association of Fundraising Professionals annual gathering in Seattle in June about accessibility for people with disabilities. What are some of the main things you think the fundraisers, Development professionals, grant writers, etcetera, should know about their fundraising strategies as they reach out to people with disabilities?" So that's a very specific question. First of all you should feel free to steal any of these slides. These slides that we are using in this presentation, please feel free to repurpose them. So you can use any of them but I will say that one of my pet peeves is that many of the grants are using platforms to apply that are not accessible to people who are blind. So for example, Flux, the last time that I checked, which is one of the main main portals for applying for grants, it is not accessible to people who are blind. So that is a really really big problem. I will also say that people with disabilities, particularly those of color, may not be as educated, formally, as other people. So you saw only 65 percent are completing high school. There is a significant increase in those who are going to college and are graduating college because there's been a lot of work in that space that is starting to work. But you have this very small number of people with disabilities who are born with disabilities who graduated college and this is particularly true for people of color. So if you're looking to help people of color with disabilities, then they should really look at alternative ways to apply. Can they create a video, can they meet with you in person, because writing a really complicated grant form may be above their educational level? And yet, they best know what's going to help advance their community, so you need to be flexible. For example, we used to, at RespectAbility, say that graduating college was a requirement for certain positions that we have. We realize that meant - "hmm, very few people of color with disabilities will be able to even apply for that job", so we took that out as a requirement for people to do certain jobs of - actually for all of our jobs. We no longer require that. We have it as a preference but not as a requirement and we've been able to help diversify our team with people who bring this quality lived experience that is more diverse. So I hope that that answers your question.

Lisa Wheeler asks: "Hi there. I'm assistant director of VR and workforce for the Washington State Department of services for the blind, a state vocational rehabilitation agency who serves people with visual disabilities obtain and retain employment in Washington State. Thank you for your presentation, I don't necessarily have a question but a comment. VR is a free resource for businesses to gain job ready candidates seeking employment. We are ready to provide adaptive training technology recommendations and retention services so that businesses can gain a qualified pool of people with visible visual disabilities and support the accommodation process," and then she gives their website, which is fantastic. By the way, such an important comment, Lisa, thank you so much for making it. www.dsb.wa.gov. Thank you. Philip, I'd like you to jump on top of that to talk about that. Philip Kahn-Pauli: Yeah. So, Lisa, thank you so much for your comment and thank you very much for putting a wonderful plug for the services you provide. I will say that voc rehab is a critically important resource. It's just one of the problems, is that companies don't necessarily know about voc rehab. They may not necessarily have a good work--or they may not have a working relationship with their state VR program. Another kind of global challenge that happens with voc rehab is that, there's a lot of people with disabilities who want to work and may qualify for voc rehab services but end up on waiting lists. And I can unfortunately tell you that the federal government, which is responsible for funding voc rehab nationwide, does not have a good sense about whether people are waiting three weeks, six months or 18 months, like they are in Maryland where our office is, to actually get voc rehab services. And, actually, I will say that where we've seen the most effective programs are places where voc rehab builds deep connections with the business community. For example, New York City has a pretty extensive program called New York City At Work, where they've recruited a bunch of different businesses with a bunch of different needs and then voc rehab basically sources job ready candidates to be filtered out to those different positions. One way that I've seen other state VR programs collaborate with the business community is creating basically a job bank, both where employers can upload job information and then find talented candidates, but also a place where you can basically have a resume bank where you have all of your different clients who have different skills and interests can post their resume and then have it matched up to opportunities in their communities. So my hat is always off to the folks in VR. The thing though is, that is a relatively small part of the scope of need of the disability community that wants to work.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: So I just want to say we're out of time but I really want to thank everyone who joined us today. We're so grateful, we're sorry we're not together with you in person. I want to thank my sisters Sara and Rebecca who were going to host us in person that they - that we weren't able to do it this time. I hope to be out and do it in person another time, we look forward to learning from you so if you all can email me at JenniferM@respectability.org if you want to send more information or comments. I want to encourage you to look at our website which has a lot of tools for you and a lot of webinars. This PowerPoint, which will be up on the website shortly, does have a large number of links that are really good useful free information and resources. I really want to thank my colleague Philip Kahn-Pauli and my colleague Eric Ascher for facilitating this experience and also for their ongoing expertise and guidance on these important issues. I want to say that there's some extraordinary work being done in Washington state, that the 45 percent employment rate for people with disabilities in Seattle for an urban area is quite positive, quite significant, and we really want to encourage you to continue the positive work that you're doing there. But I do want to also encourage you to look at the models of Florida or Pennsylvania or Maryland which have used a more comprehensive employment-first set of policies that has written memorandums of organizations from the different stakeholders of the government. Whether it's through the dollars through SNAP or TANF or WIOA and all the different agencies to work together with a very specific goal of reducing the gap in the labor force participation rate so there is that cradle to career pipeline where people are getting the early intervention, the early identification, the educational tools, the training, the success, the jobs, the ability to get promotions, the ongoing support that they need to thrive. I also want to encourage all funders on the call to be sure that their money is not being used to spread prejudice or to discriminate against people with disabilities. The golden rule is he, she, or they who have the gold make the rules. Ask your grantees to be sure that the work that they are doing with your dollars are not being used in a way that is discriminating against people with disabilities. We're an ongoing resource to you. Please don't hesitate to contact us, we really thank you for your participation in this session and for the extraordinary work that you do every day and year-round. I also want to wish to you good health during this time. We send best wishes to you, your co-workers, your family in what is going to be a moment of stress. I want to invite you again to our webinar later today at noon your time on dealing with the COVID virus, the disability community and mental health. Thank you again --

Philip Kahn-Pauli: Wash your hands and call your mom.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: That too, have a great day everyone. Thank you very much.