

WELCOME TO OUR

Quarterly Newsletter

A NOTE FROM NITA

Chief Executive Officer

This past quarter has been a season of learning, building, and deepening our commitment to the State Use Program and those we serve.

I'm pleased to share that we recently met with the Governor's Committee for the Purchase of Commodities and Services from the Handicapped. A special thank you goes to Committee Chair Kim Nuckles, whose leadership helped secure a standing commitment for the Committee to meet three times a year moving forward—a significant step toward strengthening our collective momentum. Even better, all of the price modification requests submitted during this cycle were approved.

This meeting also marked a meaningful shift in the relationship between WV ARF and the West Virginia Purchasing Division. We're encouraged by a new spirit of openness and collaboration. Most notably, the Purchasing Division has extended an invitation to our CRPs to participate as exhibitors at their annual Purchasing Conference. This is a tremendous opportunity to spotlight the capabilities and quality services of our CRP network—and a powerful endorsement of the State Use Program's value in our state.

This quarter was also rich in professional development. I attended both the X force and APSE conferences, which provided valuable insight and connections. At home, our team has been hard at work developing our first-ever WV ARF Conference: Reignite, Reinvest, Reconnect, set to take place at Fairmont State University, October 28th - 30th. This event will bring together CRPs, agency partners, and thought leaders for a day of learning and inspiration.

Inspired by the last legislative session, we've deepened our focus on giving back both to our CRP partners and the state agencies we proudly serve. One highlight has been the growth of our janitorial apprenticeship program, where CRPs are now leveraging real WIOA funds to support on-the-job and classroom training. It's a win for our clients and a step forward in aligning with the Employment First Task Force strategy presented to lawmakers earlier this year. Plans are already underway to expand apprenticeship offerings into new vocational pathways.

Finally, I'm thrilled to report that WV ARF has fully awarded all \$50,000 from this year's CRP Mini-Grant Program. Our CRPs used these funds to drive innovation and meet essential needs. As we look toward the next fiscal year, we're exploring sponsorship and fundraising options to grow this program's reach and impact.

Thank you for your continued partnership, purpose, and passion for our mission. Together, we're making a difference—one milestone at a time.

Nita Hobbs

Chief Executive Officer

Youth Transition Fair Highlights Regional Collaboration and Future Opportunities

On May 21, WV ARF joined a remarkable group of partners for the WVSLC Regional Youth Transition Fair at Blackwater Falls State Park, where over 75 students from Tucker, Preston, and Pendleton Counties, as well as the Rubenstein Center, had the opportunity to explore real-world resources designed to support their transition from high school into adulthood.

The event was a showcase of collaboration—bringing together organizations from across the state to provide information on adaptive equipment, apprenticeship opportunities, savings programs like WABLE, DMV services, and much more. WV ARF was proud to represent and promote the services, products, and employment opportunities available through three of our CRPs serving the region:

- Seneca Designs (Elkins)
- Preston County Workshop (Readsville)
- Buckhannon-Upshur Work Adjustment Center (Buckhannon)

This idea for a regional youth event grew from a conversation at a recent WV Statewide Independent Living Council (WVSLC) meeting, where WV ARF Executive Director Nita Hobbs shared the success of our partnership with the WV State Parks commerce initiative. The discussion sparked a broader look at how better coordination between disability-serving organizations can lead to greater impact—not only for youth, but for the entire network of service providers across the state.

We were also honored to welcome Mayor Joe Denning of Davis, WV, who stopped by to recognize the students' recent graduates, and the important work being done by all participating organizations.

Looking ahead: The team at Jobs & Hope WV is already planning the next Youth Transition Fair, with Chief Logan State Park being considered as the next host location.

Stay tuned—we'll share updates as details come together. These events are powerful reminders of what we can accomplish when we work together to support the next generation.



WV ARF Joins CRPs to Celebrate Success Across West Virginia

WV ARF staff has been on the road this spring, attending special events hosted by our CRP partners and celebrating the incredible achievements of West Virginians with disabilities who are reaching their employment goals.

June 5 - The Goodies at Goodwill Industries of KYOWVA

We were proud to attend Goodwill KYOWVA's Annual Awards Event, "The Goodies" and hear moving stories of growth and perseverance. One honoree, Hamilton Murphy, completed facilities, computer, and life skills training through Goodwill's programs. His journey is a shining example of how employment readiness programs can empower individuals to transform their lives. [Watch Hamilton's Story](#).

May 3 - Derby Day with Gateway Industries, Inc.

WV ARF also had the pleasure of celebrating Derby Day with Gateway Industries in Lewisburg. This festive event, featuring live blue grass music, a huge silent auction, and a spectacular hot contest, raised funds to expand training and employment services for people with disabilities. Each year, over 500 attendees and local businesses show up in force to support Gateway's vital mission and community impact.

As we continue our travels across the state, you may spot WV ARF staff at more CRP-hosted celebrations, sharing in your successes and showing our support for the State Use Program.

Hosting an upcoming event? Send us your invitation—we'll do our best to be there and cheer you on!

CRP Employee Spotlight: Debbie Baler Shines as Presort Employee of the Quarter!

We're thrilled to celebrate Debbie Baler as the Employee of the Quarter for Presort at Job Squad Inc. Since joining the team just over ten months ago, Debbie has become an essential part of the operation, serving as a Job Coach and playing a key role in the success of JST's presort mailing services.

Debbie's impact extends beyond her technical contributions. Her leadership, dedication, and uplifting team spirit have resonated throughout the organization. Through our growing partnership with JST, we've had the pleasure at WV ARF of getting to know Debbie, particularly during the exciting expansion into commerce support for West Virginia State Parks.

Outside of work, Debbie brings that same energy and heart to her personal life. She loves camping (or as she says, *camping*), cherishes time with her grandchildren, and dreams of a peaceful week by the beach. When it's time to relax, you might catch her enjoying Chicago Med, laughing over old episodes of Fear Factor, or indulging in her favorite treat—chocolate ice cream.

Thank you, Debbie, for your incredible contributions. Your positivity, passion, and commitment inspire everyone around you.



WV ARF and CRP Leaders Represent West Virginia at 2025SourceAmerica Conference

WV ARF Executive Director Nita Hobbs recently attended the 2025 SourceAmerica National Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, along side management representatives from Job Squad Inc., PACE Enterprises, Goodwill Industries of KYOWVA, and SW Resources. The conference brought together nonprofit agencies from across the country who support employment for individuals with disabilities through the AbilityOne Program, offering valuable learning and networking opportunities.

While not all West Virginia CRPs hold federal contracts, the conference's insights had broad relevance. Sessions covered best practices in areas like program compliance, career planning, digital accessibility, and IT service growth all of which can inform and enhance direct services provided right here in West Virginia.

The WV ARF team and CRP leaders used the opportunity to engage with national subject matter experts, hear from SourceAmerica staff, and connect with other state-level organizations. These discussions offered strategies on how to grow employment opportunities, modernize service delivery, and prepare our workforce for future needs—especially in areas like data management, automation, and inclusive digital practices.

Importantly, the conference also gave West Virginia attendees a chance to bring back tools and fresh ideas tailored for our state. Whether it's strengthening internal compliance systems, exploring new service lines, or improving accessibility in training materials, each participant returned home with actionable steps to help strengthen their individual CRPs and improve the state use program as a whole.

As always, WV ARF remains committed to providing leadership, resources, and advocacy that help West Virginia CRPs expand opportunity for individuals with disabilities. Participation in national events like the SourceAmerica Conference is one way we bring those tools home to you.



CRP Employee Success Spotlight: Dylan Cox's Journey to Independence

At Clay County Services, we take great pride in celebrating the accomplishments of the individuals we serve. Today, we're honored to share the inspiring success story of one of our longtime clients, Dylan Cox.

Dylan has been a part of our community for the past four years. During that time, we've witnessed remarkable growth—not only in the skills he has developed but also in the self-confidence he has gained. His dedication and drive have opened doors that may have once seemed out of reach.

Among his many accomplishments, Dylan obtained his driver's license and proudly purchased his first car—two major milestones on the path to independence. Even more impressively, Dylan took the initiative to apply, interview, and secure a full-time job at a national retail company—entirely on his own.

While we will miss seeing Dylan each day, our mission has always been to support our clients as they move toward greater independence and fulfillment. Dylan's journey is a powerful reminder of what's possible when individuals are given the tools, encouragement, and space to grow.

We are incredibly proud of Dylan and feel privileged to have played a small part in the beginning of what we know will be a bright and successful future.

CRP Engagement Opportunities: More Than Just Exhibits- Be Seen, Be Heard, Be Connected!

As members of the State Use Program, Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) have a powerful platform not only to market their goods and services—but also to educate, advocate, and grow their impact across West Virginia. This fall, a dynamic lineup of events provides the perfect stage to do just that. These aren't just vendor tables—they're opportunities to raise visibility, build relationships, and amplify your mission.

We urge all CRPs to go beyond the exhibit booth and fully engage in these valuable statewide opportunities:

August 14 - Disability Resource Expo

- Location:
- The Op Shop, Fairmont, WV
 - Job Squad Inc, Charleston, WV

Last year's CRP Open House was a tremendous success—and this year, we're scaling up. The Disability Resource Expo will showcase a comprehensive array of support services for individuals with disabilities across the state. That means more foot traffic, more diverse visitors, and more visibility for YOUR organization.

This is your chance to not only display your offerings, but to network with service providers, advocacy groups, and families—and to demonstrate how your organization contributes to a stronger, more inclusive West Virginia.

- Reserve your space:
- The Op Shop: thopshop217@gmail.com
 - Job Squad Inc: lmarrist@jobsquadinc.org

August 26-27 - WV State Purchasing Conference, The Glade Springs Resort

Statewide contract status is just the beginning—on going visibility is key. With high turnover in state agencies, procurement staff need continual reminders of what you offer. This two-day event connects CRPs with procurement professionals at both entry and executive levels.

By exhibiting, you reinforce the value of your goods and services and develop relationships that translate to purchasing decisions down the line. Stay tuned for registration details—this is a critical event for long-term state contracting success.

We encourage you to use this link to register today.

October 4 - WVSLC Freedom Car Show

A unique opportunity to showcase your community, your culture, and your creativity. Participate as a vendor and connect with attendees in an atmosphere that celebrates accessibility and independence. Encourage your clients to show off their adaptive or recreational vehicles—because inclusion should be seen and celebrated!

Vendor and vehicle registration is open at: freedomcarshow.org/registration

This is more than a car show—it's a community celebration of innovation and empowerment.



October 28-30 - WV ARF Conference & Awards Banquet

Theme: Reignite. Reinvest. Reconnect.

This is the must-attend event of the year for CRPs. It's not just about awards—it's about meaningful development that directly enhances your organizational strength. Through hands-on workshops, peer sessions, and expert-led discussions, the conference will help you:

- Reignite your passion and leadership vision
- Reinvest in growth through strategy and innovation
- Reconnect with CRPs statewide to build collective momentum

Come ready to grow, share, and strengthen your voice in West Virginia's State Use Program. Every CRP's presence matters—and your engagement can shape the future of disability employment in our state.

Make the Most of Every Moment

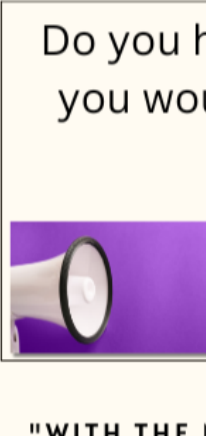
Whether it's a resource expo, a purchasing summit, a public festival, or a leadership conference—your presence matters. Each event is a touchpoint to advance your mission, expand your reach, and support the people who rely on your services.

We encourage you to attend ALL of these opportunities. Don't just show up—stand out. We'll see you there!

Banquet tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available [here](#). Registering for the conference can be done [here](#).

Do You Have News You want to Share?

Do you have news that you feel is exciting and that you would like to share? Send it to us so it can be featured in our next newsletter.



"WITH THE NEW DAY COMES NEW STRENGTH AND NEW THOUGHTS." ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

