This summit is committed to elevating employment outcomes for Tennesseans with disabilities.

www.tennesseeworks.org/summit

Track #1
Transforming the Employment Landscape

TennesseeWorks is a collaboration supported in part by the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (Grant # 90DN0294, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, ACL, HHS).

The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of AIDD or collaborative agencies.
These employers have volunteered their time to share information about their organization, to network with the community, and to work with self-advocates, preparing them for future job fairs and employment interviews. We truly appreciate their time and commitment to young adults with disabilities in Tennessee. Please visit their tables in our vendor area to learn more about their organizations!
Welcome to the 5th Annual TennesseeWorks Think Employment! Summit.

The Think Employment! Summit is your opportunity to learn with families, employers, service providers, partners in government, and people with disabilities about best practices and to build community partnerships. We’re excited to have a day of innovative speakers and breakout sessions focused on improving employment outcomes for Tennesseans with disabilities. Additionally, Tennessee has been fortunate to receive federal funding from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. This year we are extremely grateful to have been part of an extended partnership comprised of the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities to bring you the 2017 Summit.

This Summit would not be possible without the collaboration of the many partners that make up TennesseeWorks. Special thanks, not only to the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities but also to the Department of Education, Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services, TennCare, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

We’re especially pleased to not only welcome local high school transition programs and Tennessee postsecondary programs, but also adult self-advocates looking to learn more about entering the workforce. These self-advocates are attending Think Employment! to work on interview skills, résumé development, networking, career awareness, and self-advocacy.

Please find your track for the day below.

1. **Transforming the Employment Landscape**  
   8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
   Learn about the latest in employment services and policies on both a national and state level.

2. **Stepping into Employment (School Groups and Self-Advocates)**  
   8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
   An interactive and practical guide to navigating the transition into employment and independence.

Please take time to visit our Career Exploration Tables where employers have joined us to share information about their organizations, to network with the community, and to work with self-advocates to better prepare them for job fairs and interviews. We’re so glad these businesses have taken the time to help us reach our goal—improving employment outcomes for young people with disabilities in Tennessee.

We hope you enjoy the Summit. Please email tennesseeworks@vanderbilt.edu if you have any questions or suggestions.

- The TennesseeWorks Team
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

ANNE THURSTON
Anne Thurston has been active in the self-advocacy movement in Illinois since Illinois Voices! She appeared in several of the videos produced during the Illinois Voices project and is an accomplished speaker. Anne’s passion is for people with disabilities, their staff, and employers to understand that all people are equal and that people with disabilities are conquering and are here to stay.

LEANNE M. ROTH
Leanne Roth has been supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to achieve their dreams since 1999 when, after her work as a corporate trainer, she hired someone with a job coach to work in a store she managed. She spent the next 15 years at a traditional agency in a variety of roles including employment services, a Qualified Intellectual Disabilities Professional (QIDP), and self-advocacy. Leanne believes that the key to meaningful lives for people who receive services is to encourage, empower, and enlighten the staff who work for them. Currently Leanne fulfills that purpose as a partner in Blue Tower Solutions where, in addition to other projects, Leanne provides support to the board of directors and member groups of the Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance and the Council on Quality and Leadership where she works as a Quality Enhancement Specialist.

SPECIAL GUEST:

AMY M. GONZALEZ
Amy Gonzalez is the Senior Policy Advisor for the Workforce Systems Policy Team at the United States Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). Over the past year, she has worked extensively on implementing the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program and the Disability Employment Initiative. Furthermore, she acts as a liaison between ODEP and various federal partners including the Employment and Training Administration, the Administration for Community Living, and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Amy has over 15 years of experience supporting the advancement of people with disabilities. She has served as a Case Manager under the Workforce Investment Act and as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in Texas. She was also a Program Coordinator, Job Developer, and Job Coach with Next Steps at Vanderbilt postsecondary educational program. Prior to starting her work at ODEP, Amy was the State Director of Employment and Day Services with the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Amy graduated from University of Texas-Pan American with a Master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.
### Transforming the Employment Landscape

Learn about the latest in employment services and policies on both a national and state level.

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<th>Time</th>
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<td>8:00-8:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Registration and Breakfast</td>
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<td>8:45-9:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Welcome and Kick-Off - Erik Carter</td>
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<td>9:30-10:10 a.m.</td>
<td>Special Guest - Amy Gonzalez How to Achieve Competitive and Integrated Employment by Engaging Stakeholders and Employers</td>
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<td>10:20-11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Promoting Self-Advocacy Skills in the Workplace and in Life (209A)</td>
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<td>Project SEARCH in Tennessee: Expanding on Success (209B)</td>
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<td>Project Opportunity: How the Department of Economic and Community Development Is Supporting Employment (209C)</td>
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<td>11:10-11:50 a.m.</td>
<td>Sisters Share Employment Challenges and Successes (209A)</td>
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<td>Supporting Families: Using LifeCourse Tools for Planning Employment Goals and Supports (209B)</td>
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<td>Supported Decision Making and Employment (209C)</td>
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<td>12:00-1:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch and Keynote Address - Leanne Roth and Anne Thurston WORK!</td>
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<td>1:30-2:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Promoting Employment for People with Disabilities by Using Natural Supports (209A)</td>
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<td>Employment and Community First CHOICES: How It’s Working (209B)</td>
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<td>Exploring College Opportunities (209C)</td>
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<td>2:30-3:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Transition Tennessee: A Blueprint for Student Success (209A)</td>
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<td>It’s OK to Talk About Mental Health (209B)</td>
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<td>Reasonable Accommodations in the Workplace 101: What Families Need to Know (209C)</td>
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<td>3:30-4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Closing - Elise McMillan</td>
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SESSIONS

- **9:30-10:10 A.M.**
  - Special Guest Address: How to Achieve Competitive Integrated Employment by Engaging Stakeholders and Employers
  
  This session will highlight the various initiatives that the United States Department of Labor manages to increase Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) outcomes for individuals with disabilities specifically through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program, and the Disability Employment Initiative. A goal of all three of these programs is to engage persons supported in meaningful activities that lead to improved employment outcomes. Most importantly these programs also emphasize the importance of effectively engaging with businesses.

  Presenter:
  - Amy Gonzalez, United States Department of Labor

- **10:20-11:00 A.M.**
  - Promoting Self-Advocacy Skills in the Workplace and in Life

  Families share strategies for how they support their family members with disabilities in developing and practicing self-advocacy skills. These skills help them succeed in adulthood and encourage speaking up for themselves, especially as related to finding and maintaining employment.

  Presenters:
  - Ned Andrew Solomon, Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities
  - Niya Moon, Sibling, Tennessee Adult Brothers and Sisters
  - Deleno Howard, Sibling, Next Steps at Vanderbilt
  - Caitlin Bernstein, Next Steps at Vanderbilt
  - Vanessa Herrmann, Project Search East Tennessee Children’s Hospital
  - Holly Johnson, Project Search East Tennessee Children’s Hospital

- **10:20-11:00 A.M.**
  - Project SEARCH in Tennessee: Expanding on Success

  Project SEARCH is recognized worldwide as a successful, employer-driven model for employing people with significant disabilities. Four Project SEARCH partners will discuss the strategies and outcomes of Tennessee’s eleven Project SEARCH sites and plans to expand the network.

  Presenters:
  - Robert B. Nicholas, TennesseeWorks
  - Pam Hollingsworth, Progress Incorporated
  - Susan Johnson, East Tennessee Children’s Hospital
  - Gayle Feltner, Tennessee Department of Human Services

- **10:20-11:00 A.M.**
  - Project Opportunity: How the Department of Economic and Community Development Is Supporting Employment

  This session will discuss the current state of workforce in Tennessee, the opportunities available for individuals with disabilities, and the steps a business takes to create employment opportunities for this target population.

  Presenter: Ann Thompson, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development

- **11:10-11:50 A.M.**
  - Sisters Share Employment Challenges and Successes

  Vanessa Herrmann coordinates the internship program Project Search that teaches job skills to individuals with disabilities in various job sites across East Tennessee Children’s Hospital, with the goal of helping interns find a job after completing the program. Her sister, Holly Johnson, graduated from Project SEARCH and has been working at the Heart Unit at University of Tennessee Hospital for the past 2 years. The two sisters will share their experiences with Project SEARCH and offer information about how families can support their family members with disabilities on their employment journey.
SESSIONS

Presenters:
• Vanessa Herrmann, Project Search East Tennessee Children’s Hospital
• Holly Johnson, Project Search East Tennessee Children’s Hospital

☐ 11:10–11:50 A.M.
Supporting Families: Using LifeCourse Tools for Planning Employment Goals and Supports

The LifeCourse toolkit can help families develop a vision for a good life, think about what they need to know and do to achieve that vision, and identify strategies for finding or developing supports. These tools can provide a way for individuals with disabilities, families, and professionals in a person’s life (teachers, support staff, job coaches, employers, etc.) to discuss and brainstorm about goals, current needs, life transitions and needed supports for the future.

Presenters:
• Ned Andrew Solomon, Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities
• Emma Shouse, Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities

☐ 12:00–1:15 P.M.
Keynote Address: WORK!

Give me a W! Give me an O! Give me an R! Give me a K! Learn why work is important and can be fun. Learn about the options for job hunts and getting the right support for you! Get motivated and get going!!

Presenters:
• Leanna Roth, Quality Enhancement Specialist
• Anne Thurston, Self-Advocate

☐ 1:30–2:15 P.M.
Promoting Employment for People with Disabilities by Using Natural Supports

Menchie’s, a frozen yogurt chain, has stores in East Tennessee that are committed to hiring and helping train jobseekers with disabilities. Taziki’s, a Mediterranean restaurant chain, has restaurants in Middle Tennessee devoted to the same goal. Several individuals involved in these efforts will share their stories about how they support individuals with disabilities to thrive and advance in the workplace, how families can help their family members succeed in their job, and offer some lessons learned from the first few years of these innovative employment initiatives.

Presenters:
• Sade Anderson, Sibling
• Patrick Rice, Sibling
• McKenzie Rice, Sibling
• Dale Wasem, Employer
• Dan Wood, Parent

Continued on next page
1:30–2:15 P.M.
Employment and Community First
CHOICES: How It’s Working

Get an overview of the Employment and Community First (ECF) CHOICES program. Also, hear from a panel of ECF recipients and their providers about how the program is helping individuals get the jobs they want.

Presenters:
• Janet Shouse, TennesseeWorks
• Ronald Bynum II, Shelby Residential and Vocational Services
• David Kitchens, Shelby Residential and Vocational Services
• Pam Hollingsworth, Progress Incorporated
• Jonathan Pritchard, Progress Incorporated
• Lisa Mills, TennCare
• Will Macon, Best Buddies Tennessee
• Walter Mabone, Best Buddies Tennessee

1:30–2:15 P.M.
Exploring College Opportunities

This session will describe the inclusive college program opportunities that are growing across Tennessee and beyond. Participants will learn how students with intellectual and developmental disabilities are supported as they continue their learning as adult students.

Presenters:
• Tammy Day, Next Steps at Vanderbilt University
• Misty Parsley, IDEAL at Lipscomb University
• Elise McMillan, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center

2:30–3:15 P.M.
Transition Tennessee:
A Blueprint for Student Success

This session will share key features of Transition Tennessee, a free resource for transition stakeholders to utilize as a means of comprehensive professional development in creating high-quality transition plans and improving postsecondary outcomes.

Presenters:
• Erik Carter, Vanderbilt University
• Blake Shearer, Tennessee Department of Education

2:30–3:15 P.M.
It’s OK to Talk About Mental Health

An overview of Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS)’s initiatives focused on youth and young adults who are at-risk of mental illness, experiencing symptoms of mental illness, or experiencing first episodes of psychosis. The session will include practical take-aways around warning signs to look for, benefits of early intervention, and supports available for youth and young adults experiencing mental health challenges.

Presenters:
• Kisha Ledlow, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
• Will Voss, Tennessee Voices for Children

2:30–3:15 P.M.
Reasonable Accommodations in the Workplace 101: What Families Need to Know

This session will provide information about reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities and help attendees understand basic legal protections related to disability and employment. Family members will learn how they can help their family member with a disability advocate for reasonable accommodations in the workplace. Attendees will also learn about Disability Rights Tennessee’s Client Assistance Program, which assists people with disabilities who need help in accessing appropriate services from Vocational Rehabilitation.

Presenter:
• Tricia Griggs, Disability Rights Tennessee