

Fletcher Group RCOE September Webinar Meaningful Employment Transcript September 1, 2022

Michelle Day: [00:00:00] [00:01:00] Good afternoon, everyone and welcome to The Fletcher Group Rural Center of Excellence's webinar series. Today's session is scheduled to run from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM Eastern Standard Time. My name is Michelle Day, and I am your moderator for the session, along with Janice Fulkerson and Erica Walker. A couple of brief housekeeping items and then we'll begin.

You enter today's session on mute and your video was off and will remain so for the entirety of the webinar. Your chat feature is located at the bottom, right of your screen. Use the dropdown feature to communicate with either the panelists only, or panelists and attendees. Please direct all questions regarding the webinar content to the Q and A section.

Be advised that this meeting is being recorded and will be available to you on our website once it has been transcribed. You can access our website at [00:02:00] www.FletcherGroup.org. Also at the conclusion of today's session, there will be a short survey regarding the webinar content. Your participation in that survey is greatly appreciated and will only take a few moments to complete. Today's

presenters are Fletcher Group Co-founder and Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Ernie Fletcher, and Lori Baier, Director of Employment Services. Fighter pilot, board certified physician, statesman, and healthcare visionary. Ernie Fletcher was elected in 1998 to the first of three consecutive terms in the United States House of Representatives.

In 2003, he was elected the 60th governor of Kentucky. As founder of The Fletcher Group. Ernie continues a legacy of innovative public service that promises to extend the company's unique model of recovery ecosystems to the states across the country. 25 years as a registered nurse have given Lori a keen understanding of healthcare's diverse population base. In the five years before joining The Fletcher Group, [00:03:00] Lori devoted herself to creating second chance career opportunities for the most vulnerable, by developing and teaching AO Kentucky Gen Ed programs at Ashland Community and Technical College in Kentucky. Her ability to reduce barriers and bridge gaps in education plays a key role in the Fletcher Group's promotion of recovery through the kind of meaningful employment that rebuilds lives, restores families and revitalizes local communities.

Dr. Fletcher, Lori, the floor is yours.

Dr. Ernie Fletcher: Well, Michelle, thank you very much. And we want to say thanks to all the participants that, uh, joined us today. When we look at, uh, recovery, one of the things that we find out and we'll talk about that is meaningful employment and opportunities. Uh, to find more purpose in life and meaning, and connections is extremely important, uh, for individuals with substance use disorder along the recovery [00:04:00] pathway.

The next slide. I, I get a lot about The Fletcher Group. Most of you have tuned in, you know, several times for these webinars, but our focus really has been to expand the full continuum of care. And part of it's with obviously a focus on recovery housing and with HRSA grant,

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we're focusing in the rural areas and how do you help rural communities build a recovery ecosystem?

An important part of that is, is meaningful employment. And that is part of what we see as the full continuum of care. Next slide.

When you look at how much substance use disorder really cost , there's about 81 billion dollars estimated spent each year, as it directly related to substance use disorder in the workplace. So it has a significant financial impact. Next slide. We also see that there's a lot of absenteeism [00:05:00] and presenteeism that can be associated with substance use disorder.

And so not only do you have those direct costs of what it costs because of the sequelae of SUD, but you have, uh, the indirect cost as well. Next slide. Now there's about 20 million individuals that have the diagnosis of SUD in the country. And I personally think that's probably a little bit of an underestimate.

70% of those, uh, work at some point, but what you find out of that group, that they have a lot of turnover. 58% of those with, uh, OUD really keep their job over a year and you can find out there's a substantial turnover with these individuals. So the bottom line is that we've got 30% of individuals with SUD that are not employed either because they're not capable of, of employment.

Uh, their [00:06:00] SUD is in the consequences of that and just kept them out of the workplace. Or they don't have the adequate training and preparation for the jobs that are available. Next slide. And again, meaningful employment is a critical part of what we call Recovery Capital. Those individuals that find employment that are meaningful to them, that are really helping them build their meaning and purpose in life, really makes them a lot more resilient.

And so what we find is part of this full continuum of care is transitioning them into an employment position that is significant, that provides a living wage, provides an opportunity for them to continue to expand their career. And again, we're looking out nationally and there's about 11.1 million job openings in the nation at this [00:07:00] point.

And we've got again, 20 million individuals with SUD a good portion of those are, are not capable of keeping a job for very long because of probably the consequences with SUD and another 30% of those are just not employed at all. So the bottom line is we've got a significant need in this nation, uh, for employ, employees. And well trained employees and very capable employees.

We also have a source of, of employees that can be extremely, uh, efficient and, and actually I think be very productive workers and probably more than those walking off the street. You know, so as we begin to talk, uh, meaningful employment is a significant part of building an individual's resiliency and reducing their reuse.

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Next slide. Um, I want to introduce Lori [00:08:00] and Lori, let you take over at this time. Lori's our Director of, of Workforce Initiatives. And she's been involved in this for over three years now, doing an excellent job of really being able to transition folks in recovery, into meaningful employment. It's been primarily a part of our Appalachian Regional Commission grant, but we're also supporting this now in our extended year with the Rural Center of Excellence, uh, through HRSA funding.

So Lori, I'm going to turn it over to you.

Lori Baier: Thank you Ernie and welcome everybody. Um, I'm really happy to be here and kind of share some of the good and the bad that we've learned um, working over the past three years. Um, I will say that a lot of, um, my presentation is going to be focused on work in Kentucky.

However, it's very replicable. Um, the things that we've been able to do and the lessons that we've learned, um, I think apply in every rural community. Um, so just keep in mind that, you know, the things that I talk about today are things that we could help you do no matter where you're located. [00:09:00] Um, so when we first started with this ARC Power Grant, um, we realized, um, you know, Kentucky, we were going through, um, COVID began shortly after, um, this grant started.

Um, and then obviously that impacted the workforce in a very major way. Um, so Kentucky's unfilled job opening rate is actually the second highest in the nation. However, um, we also ranked third in the nation for the highest number of overdose deaths. So we saw a real opportunity to connect, you know, with the recovery centers and employers, and try to build these relationships, um, that will not only fill these employment gaps, but will also help sustain a path of recovery for the clients that were being served.

Next slide, please. So, how do we create a launchpad to meaningful employment? And that's kind of what we've termed it over the past three years. We feel like individuals, um, coming through the recovery centers, you know, initially our focus is to get them, um, you know, safe and healthy and in a, in [00:10:00] a good place in their mentally.

Um, so, you know, we work with long term recovery centers and some outpatient facilities and even some detention centers. But, you know, we, we want them to land on this launchpad when they're ready. Um, and then we create that, um, that whole environment of training and support, um, so that we can transition them or help them to transition into meaningful employment.

And so how, how do we do that? So that's kind of what we're going to talk about today. Um, some things that we've learned, um, that have been very valuable and you know, addressing individuals on that launchpad and helping them transition out. Next slide. So the road to meaningful employment, like I said, it starts with treatment. You know, when an individual commences to that, um, life of sobriety, um, you know, we, we help them get through those steps. Workforce training and employment.

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Um, but you have to have those recovery support services available throughout that entire process. Um, we know that, you know, just, just the treatment portion, isn't enough, just [00:11:00] the workforce training isn't enough and just the employment isn't enough. It's gonna have to have, um, the full ecosystem in place, um, for it to really be successful.

Um, next slide please. So our unique approach, um, through Fletcher Group, so we are a recovery model. Um, so we it's a complete continuum of care. Um, you know, they, they get the MAT, the peer support, workforce development, social enterprise. We're going to talk a little bit about that today, but it's within a housing model that is, um, funded through different partnerships, um, that we've been able to help communities create, uh, in order to create that housing model that, that helps with the entire program being a success.

Um, next slide please. So when we think about employment, or workforce development, or when those clients are ready, um, for, to, to look at their future in a, in a career pathway, what things are important, um, to know from your facility, um, you know, what are some things that your facility can do to kind of help, [00:12:00] um, kickstart those relationships that you're going to need out in the community?

Um, so when we first began this ARC Power Grant in Kentucky, there were specific, um, centers that we identified that we were going to work with. Um, so, you know, initially, um, we did an environmental scan of those regions. We wanted to know what resources were available, you know, who were the stakeholders in those communities?

Um, you know, what relationships did they have within those communities? Um, and one thing that I quickly realized was, you know, sometimes not all of the recovery centers knew of the resources available. And again, not all of the resources that were out there knew of all the recovery centers. So it was just a little more of, okay, how do we connect everyone a little better?

So we just established work groups. Um, you know, the initial, um, idea was to invite people in to the community you want the community to come in to your recovery community. Um, I think a lot of employers, a lot of businesses, um, a lot of support services may [00:13:00] not even be aware, um, that they can come in and visit and kind of see what's going on.

Um, so the first thing we did was invite all of those people, um, to a meeting at the actual recovery center that we were working with. And, you know, surprisingly, we had, um, a really large turnout at, at most of our places. I, I don't know if in the beginning it was just, people were curious as to what goes on inside a recovery center.

Um, or, you know, if maybe they had been wanting to engage with the recovery center for a long time and just hadn't taken that step. Um, but either way, um, we got people there. So you want to make sure that you make, let everyone know your doors are open. You come see us, we're going to show you this program and how it's working, because that gets rid of a lot of the stigma.

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A lot of the questions they may have, or a lot of the hesitance about what's really going on inside there, just be an open door and let them come in, set in, in your community groups. Um, and that really goes a long way. Um, also know what your regional employment gaps are. You know, we can look at data from a high [00:14:00] level and know, overall, we know healthcare is struggling.

We know manufacturing is struggling. But what is specific to your rural area and you really want to capitalize on that. What's unique to your region or your state? You know, we're going to talk a little later about how we were able to establish a program in Kentucky. This really unique to what Kentucky's known for.

You can do that from a state perspective, but everyone's community is known for something. And, you know, I think you get a lot of buy-in, um, you know, from your local leaders and, you know, um, any, any of your community members, if you're focusing on kind of what their claim to fame is. And, and there's a lot of work to be done around that.

And you know, another part of economic development right now is so geared toward, um, these little community niches, you know, um, it's revitalizing downtowns and things like that. So you want to make sure from a recovery, uh, space perspective that we're not forgetting that we don't always need these high-level industry careers that sometimes, um, there's [00:15:00] something really cool in your community that needs the help of the population that you're serving.

Um, also know your clients. You know, it's really important to meet with them individually. Um, do some personality assessments, do some aptitudes and abilities assessments. We created a very, just generic onward document type questionnaire that we give to every client with the last question being, what is your dream job?

And if we can get them on the first stepping stone to that dream job, then I think we have set them up well on that launchpad to go right on out and, and have a meaningful career. Um, you know, a cookie cutter program does not work with this population, or any population. You know, everyone has unique, um, ideas and talents and skills.

And I think our goal is to really tap into that. Um, we need those skills out here. We need that uniqueness. And the way you do that is ask the questions. Um, you know, you want to create an, um, an individualized, obtainable, and meaningful pathway. [00:16:00] So by assessing them, but then also, you know, um, you know, checking, you know, do the personality profiles, um, you know, just because you have a skill set for something doesn't mean you may necessarily be the best for that, that particular job.

Um, you know, so you really have to look at, at the personality in addition to the skill set. So we've been able to create a tool, um, where we can assess all of those things. Um, obtainable. It has to be obtainable. You know, we can't start them on, on a very long pathway. They transition out in two months and they're expected to continue that long pathway without any support.

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Like I said, think of what the first step is. Maybe it's a certification. Um, just, you know, in general, maybe they want to be, um, I don't know, a registered nurse. Um, and then maybe we help them get, um, you know, maybe a State Registered Nurse Aid, or maybe we get them, help them, um, do a, a job in environmental services at a hospital. You know, some, some [00:17:00] way to get their foot in the door to that career pathway.

Um, and, and that really seems to motivate folks. Of course, we always have to think about the barriers. You know, their background is going to play an important part, but don't let that be a stopping point. Um, we're seeing a lot of movement in Kentucky where employers are no longer just flagging that background check and kicking an application out.

Um, even in our healthcare settings, we're, we're working with hospitals that are truly looking at those cases, um, on an individualized basis. Um, we just recently, um, helped a, a large healthcare system in Kentucky with a program, filling some environmental services jobs that ran background checks on eight individuals, all eight of those would've been flagged and kicked out.

Um, but when they sat down and looked at those individuals and, and really went through some of the barriers that they thought were there, five of those individuals actually qualified for employment, and they're still employed there and doing fantastic. So maybe it's just having that conversation with the employers, you know, can we, [00:18:00] can we look at this, you know, with a, with a microscope, because we all know sometimes the things on that background check, most often, the things on that background check does not reflect where they are today.

Um, You know, successful employment. Isn't about job skills alone. You know, we can give, give them a certification or a training that has a unique skill set, but we really have to help them develop those soft skills. And I know all of you are probably very familiar with that. Um, but that kind of has to be a precursor and, and having a good, solid, soft skills type training program in place, um, is going to help set them up for success when you put them into the skills training, um, for their job.

So, you know, you have to have that complete package. Um, and even just things like financial management, you know, those were all, um, critical pieces for them to be successful as they transition out. So you kind of have to think of that whole, um, continuum of care, everything that they need to, to manage themselves when they, when they get out and to be a good team player, um, in that employment setting.

And I think we [00:19:00] all need those skills. It's not just this population. Everyone can benefit from that. Um, and like I said, provide the first step to the dream. That's, that's truly what my goal has been. Um, and like I said, I think that that's so far, we've had, you know, really positive feedback in three years, um, with looking at it from that, uh, perspective.

Next slide please. So, you know, if, if you're new kind of to this space or, or you're not sure where do we even start with creating a workforce program within a facility or, or an

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outpatient program? Um, I'm going to give you some examples of programs that we've tapped into here in Kentucky, but a lot of these are available

like I said, nationwide, it's not just specific to Kentucky. Um, so. You know, some of the, the programs that we have leaned on. Well, first of all, GED and state adult education is available nationwide. You know, everyone is assessed. If they don't have a GED, then we start them in that program early on. Um, you know, you have in a long-term recovery program, you have about six months, um, with that [00:20:00] client, um, give, or take four to six months, um, to kind of prep them for that workforce.

So start your GED and, and that type of training early on. Um, it also gives them something to work toward it, it gives them, um, you know, a, a boost to their self esteem, and those are all things that are just really important just as they grow as an individual, um, even outside of the workforce. Um, your local community and technical colleges of course are a great resource.

Um, your local career center, you know, sometimes they will have, um, you know, specialized trainings or some funding that your client may need, um, that they may qualify for. Um, something that we've used in Kentucky, um, is a program called Future Plans. Um, it's, it's a really cool, um, assessment coaching, a soft skills top course, um, that, you know, as long as the individual wants to stay enrolled in that program, they can stay in for life.

Um, no matter where they move, if they were to move to California from Kentucky, they could log in, um, and it would show them training, [00:21:00] education, uh, employment, all those things in the area where they are. So it's a really, uh, neat tool that we have come across. Um, another program that we're using, um, is called Fair Chance Works. This one as, as well would be available anywhere.

Um, it's a virtual interview prep. So one thing that we're seeing in Kentucky is some employers are really kind of moving to that virtual interview format. Um, and we know that, you know, interviewing is a, it's a, I don't even want to say it's a barrier to these clients, but it's something that they're a little uneasy about.

Um, they, aren't sure how to explain maybe some of the situations that they may need to explain. Um, so we actually consulted with App Harvest, who's a, a large, uh, fair chance, um, employer here in Kentucky and kind of help them, help us understand, um, what these clients may struggle with, you know, where, where they might need some help, um, speaking about their past or, you know, what questions do they typically struggle with?

So they, [00:22:00] they were a consultant for us and, and help us develop this. So now we're offering this in detention centers and recovery centers, um, geared toward those questions that we feel that they may most likely struggle with. So the way that it works, the client practices the questions and they get a lot of other soft skills training, you know, to kind of prep them for that interview.

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Um, and they record the themselves answering those and they get feedback. Um, you know, they, we have people on site as well as when they submit assignments. Someone's reviewing those and kind of coaching them through that until they're satisfied with the way that they answered that question. Um, at the end, we compile all of those into a really professional looking interview.

Um, and then we can share that with employers. Um, so eventually our goal would be to maybe, maybe, um, have different sectors. Maybe these are people that are interested in, um, construction. Maybe others are, you know, interested in, um, you know, some type of office skills, but we could actually categorize those individuals in that region.

And then [00:23:00] employers can log in and watch those interviews on their own time and then choose who they'd like to call in for, for a face to face. So it's a time saver for the company. They love it. Um, the clients feel very comfortable and very proud of what they've been able to produce. Um, and it's just a really great tool to connect with employers without having to bombard them with emails and visits and appointments.

Um, Uh, another training option, um, that we've helped to develop is called made, um, a company called Made 180. Um, so with this company, they offer very short-term, stackable, um, certifications and credentials like through Autodesk. So we know that remote jobs, um, there's definitely a demand for that. This is absolutely something that these clients could do remotely.

Um, we are working to set up remote work hubs within recovery centers, as well as detention centers. So here in Kentucky, um, we have some detention centers who are doing an early work program. So inmates, um, that are identified for this program, um, [00:24:00] can work six months prior to release, um, and they're able to save money and, um, to pay off some, some debts that they may owe.

Um, and it just puts them in a better place financially. And they're engaged to employment way before they're ever, um, out, you know, out, back out into the social. Or the back out into their living their life. So, you know, if we were to establish remote work hubs in a say, for example, a county detention center.

Yeah. That's an employment they just take with them when they leave. So they're already engaged six months in a job when they exit out, you know, all they need is a computer and reliable internet and transportation barriers are reduced. And, um, it's just been a very, um, very neat, um, kind of out of the box way to address some of those barriers that we were having a hard time to overcome.

Um, but you know, Made 180 offers multiple, multiple types of trainings, um, and they can be obtained, you know, anywhere from two to three weeks. Um, which was also very important I felt like, you know, we don't have a lot of time, once these clients are kind of ready to hit that [00:25:00] launchpad, you know, we don't have a tremendous amount of time to prep them as they transition out.

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So, you know, a two to three weeks training to give them a credential to get them into work is fantastic. And then they can continue to build on that skill, um, as they move through, through the path, um, through their lives. So, um, it works out really, really well. Um, local economic development groups are a great, um, resource. You know, reach out, make sure you're completely connected to them.

Um, you know, like I said, you're just building that safety net and that ecosystem. The more people you can pull in and make a part of your team at your facility, you know, the, the better your clients are going to do when they transition out. For sure. Okay. Next slide please. So the employers that you connect with, so, you know, we kind of talked about the things you could do on the recovery side.

Let's talk about on the employer side, you know, what things are they looking for? Um, you know, visit their site. We invite them into yours and that's [00:26:00] extremely important. But make sure you go to them as well. Look at the environment, make sure it's something that you feel like your clients are going to thrive in. You know, have an understanding of the role that, that your clients are going to be doing there.

Um, and I think that just kind of, you know, gives everyone, um, just a complete view of what that relationship is going to look like. Um, have a dev, um, a dedicated point of contact, um, is probably one of the most critical things. Um, you know, have someone at your facility or at your organization who is

responsible for that daily or weekly or whatever, contact with that employer. That way, if an issue does arise, they know exactly who to call and you can address that before it ever snowballs into a much larger problem. Um, you know, having that regular contact, checking in, how, you know, how are they doing on the job?

Is there anything that you need from the facility? Anything, you know, we can help you with about any barriers? Um, when you have those conversations regularly and frequently, um, there's hardly any problem that can't be worked out. [00:27:00] Um, you know, what are unique, um, needs that they may have? Is there some specialized training that you could offer or find someone to help you offer to your clients?

Um, for example, um, we were working with a, a laborers union, a construction union, and they said, you know what, we would love for, to have people come in here that have some construction math skills, you know, that's a class that you can't really find just kind of as a standalone, but you can develop that.

You know, that's absolutely something that you could, if you have clients interested in like a construction line of work. You know, you could find a construction math class basically anywhere, or you could contact me and I'll help you find one. Um, but you know, just doing those little extra things, um, the employers just love that. You know, they, they, they know that they're getting the highest quality if you take the time and really listen to what their needs are.

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And you try to address those before that client, that shows up for an interview. Um, they're going to keep coming back to you, um, for workers. [00:28:00] Um, and like I said, create a training plan for that client on the launchpad and involve the employer. Maybe you have, um, some dedicated relationships to employers and set down with them and let them help develop what that training should look like prior to that client applying for that job.

Um, and, and like I said, that's, that's a great way, um, to really, um, connect with those employers and let them know that, you know, they're going to have clients who have exactly what they need by the time they, they show up for work. Um, also apprenticeship opportunities are fantastic. Um, those work really great for individuals in recovery because they kind of have a mentor working with them.

And I think that, that, um, you know, just adds to that ecosystem. That's very healthy, um, for, for them, um, OJTs, you know, um, those are fantastic. Um, job shadowing opportunities. If, if your client isn't sure what they like to do, schedule sometimes for them to go in and, and work a day, you know, observe a day, um, [00:29:00] in, in two or three different career pathways. You know, um, most employers really welcome that.

Um, so, you know, we've, we've done some of that with clients who were just unsure really of what they would like to do. Um, also don't forget to mention the employer incentives. You could reach out to your, uh, local career centers and they can tell you the process of getting your employers, uh, you know, uh, there's work opportunity tax credits, there's federal bonding, available, um, certain sectors, um, have some funding to do some, some paid work experience.

Um, so, you know, if you're working with a high demand sector and, um, you know, you could potentially get some paid like 480 hours paid work experience through some, some, uh, employers. Um, you know, the work opportunity tax credits typically apply to your, for profit businesses, but those are also available

um, to some nonprofits like a, like a hospital. Um, I think if you're hiring from certain [00:30:00] populations like veterans, um, and so we do see, um, you know, um, veterans coming through some of the recovery programs. So it's still possible for even a nonprofit to receive some tax credits. You would just have to talk to your local career centers or, you know, whatever they may be called in your particular state, but, but they can help you, help that employer, um, take advantage of those incentives that are out there.

Um, and then, like I said, stay in touch with that employer. Um, have that ongoing relationship that once a week meeting, just to check in, um, or pop in and see how that client's doing, um, on the job. Um, you know, that's just worth so much to that employer. If you kind of help them stay on top of things and, um, not let those barriers get in the way, um, of employment.

Okay. Next slide please. So, um, just a little bit, um, about this particular grant that I was telling you about in Kentucky, the ARC Grant, um, which is term the RHOAR grant, which is

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[00:31:00] Recovery, Hope, Opportunity and Resiliency. Um, so in the past three years, even with COVID, um, we have been able to get now I think this number is closer to 400 individuals employed since August of 2019.

We have multiple employer partnerships with large companies, small companies, uh, mom and pop companies. You know, they're all eligible. Look at all of the options, you know, um, you know, I think sometimes we try to. Tend to think big and that's great, you know, companies like, um, App Harvest or Toyota or some of the large, large companies.

Um, but we have just as much success in these small, just, you know, family owned companies as well. And everyone is eligible, um, for all, you know, the incentives and help and things like that. So look at all types of employment, not just your large companies. And actually you sometimes can get things done a little more quickly with those small companies, because the larger ones tend to have more layers, um, of HR to go through.

Not that it's impossible and you should still seek those out, but [00:32:00] just keep in mind um, the small companies can be very, very helpful, um, in hiring your folks. And they also provide that, um, kind of more of a personal one-on-one relationship of, I think is obviously a plus too, for this population. Um, Since we started, um, we've had over probably close to 500 certifications earned.

Um, and this is six recovery centers that we've been working with. Um, you know, just since, since we started in 2019. So, um, it's been very, very successful and, and we're always looking for ways to improve it. Next slide please. Um, so back to the concept of finding what your region or your state or your county or your, um, your city is, is good at.

Um, and look for those niches. I just wanted to share a project that I've, um, had the opportunity to be a part of. So in Kentucky, of course, I think. You know, one thing that we're known for is our horses, right? So we think of the Kentucky [00:33:00] Derby, we think of the thoroughbreds, um, as kind of something that Kentucky has made its mark, um, with.

So we reached out to, um, one of the horse farms, um, one of the thoroughbred farms called Taylor Made Farms, um, in Nicholasville and talked to them about a program. If we were to partner with a recovery center, um, we know that horses are extremely therapeutic. You know, there's a lot of employment opportunity in the thoroughbred industry in Kentucky.

And what if we were able to, to help transition individuals out of recovery, into employment, um, in the thoroughbred industry. So of course they, they were very excited to partner with us and we developed, what's now called the Taylor Made School of Horsemanship. So now individuals in recovery who have a desire, um, to work in this industry, um, can apply and interview and be ultimately accepted into the Taylor Made School of Horsemanship.

Um, they go through, you know, 12 to 16 weeks of training. They start as an entry level groom, knowing that there is a career [00:34:00] pathway if they're successful. Um, and then

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at the end of that, 12 to 16 week training period, um, as long as they've been successful, then Taylor Made offers them full-time employment. So it has been a fantastic program.

And I wanted to share a video just to show you a little more about how a relationship like that works. Um, so Erica, I will let you, um, show us that.

Taylor Made: *Hey team it's, uh, January 26th, uh, I'm out here looking at the ready, made horses and watching the guys train the horses. Everything's going really good going to plan the team's really operating well and the horses are all training well, so we're on to target to, uh, uh, get these horses, the races, hopefully all as two year olds.*

Um, but we move from classic mile, uh, training center to a winding Oaks. It's a much better track. Uh, we got a turf track here. We got [00:35:00] a mile dirt track and we got a five eights, dirt track. It's a little heavier. So it's lots of options on training these horses. Uh, so it's, it's just a great facility. And like I say, all the horses are doing well.

We're really appreciative that you've, um, uh, put money up to help us support these guys and give 'em an opportunity will keep you post. We along and hopefully we'll have something running a, this spring. Uh, these guys are doing amazing, staying sober, working hard and really into their work. They're so helping.

Hey guys, uh, just wanted to thank you guys, uh, all of you for the opportunity and, uh, and having us down here and, and, and doing what we're doing. We're, uh, we're out here right now and [00:36:00] just trying a couple sets. Um, all the horses are going out. They train on this small track here, uh, moved to Frank, said we moved to Becky Thomas's about, I had two or three weeks ago.

Um, horses are doing well everybody's training. Well, um, every single one of them's in training, so that's a plus, uh, we've got narrowed it down to four that we're gonna try and. Keeneland right now, and then the rest kind of towards the later of the year. Um, but knock on wood. Everything's going great. Uh, Mike and Tyler, the two guys working with me, um, we've been together for about a year and a half now.

And, and our relationship, as you can imagine, working in a barn with these horses has definitely grown and, uh, you know, we're all just extremely grateful for the opportunity. Thanks,

you know, a year ago, this is, this is not where I thought I would be. You its like a dream every day I wake up, uh, these horses are [00:37:00] this whole opportunity. Ready, man. Just a beautiful thing. These relationships that you build with these horses, you know, being with them, you know, seven days a week, uh, me as a rider, like I get really close to these horses.

Uh, this is uh, Mo deal award out of running morning, blue, theirs. That became my best friend. It took me a while to build this trust and train strong, all these horses, train strong.

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Uh, and I feel like it, it strains from what, what we already made put into this, starting from the ground up love and tolerance, patience, and our energy, you know, as a unit, as a team that we are, it flows into these horses and how they train, um, you know, they want to do more and more and more, um, you know, all it really is, is just you a horse out there doing a job, trying to like, hell you not letting one another down.

Um, and it's like that every day with me and these [00:38:00] horses, um, cause I want, I won't express for them. Um, and uh, just appreciate the opportunity. Good everybody. I'm Juan rebels and we are working here with this, uh, beautiful horse. Just this kind of holds. To come by one of my favorite horses of the group.

We have some nice horses here. Thank Frank. And thank, uh, the family for giving us the opportunity to work with this horses. We got a group group of guys here working with us, and we really enjoy what we're doing here. This horse that come around beautifully, I would love to say hi to you guys in person.

You're going to see some world of this guy in the future.

Hey guys, this is Michael. Just checking in with you, uh, letting you know how everything's going. Everything's going great. I'd [00:39:00] first and foremost, like say thank you for this opportunity that you've blessed. Me and my brothers with we're enjoying ourselves out here at Becky Thomas's. Um, the horses are doing great.

Uh, this opportunity has given me a chance to further my horsemanship skills and to be able to, uh, it's changed my life. Totally. Uh, I never, in a million years thought that I'd be working with horses, let alone from race horses. Here at ready made. We take a lot of pride, especially, you know, me, uh, I tell will all the time, you know, here at ready, made every horse is treated like a million.

So, uh, I just want you guys to know that everybody's doing wonderful. The horses are doing great. They're growing. And once again, man, we just can't. Thank you enough for this opportunity to be able to do something positive with our lives. From the bottom of my heart, it means the world to me. Uh, I can't thank you enough.

You guys have a great day.[00:40:00]

Lori Baier: So, you know, Taylor Made, like I said, was just a project that we just kind of dreamed about. And, um, you know, just kind of sat down with the owners there of that farm and explained that we, you know, felt like we had some great employees to send to them. Um, and we were able to continue conversations and, and were able to develop it.

And actually those guys, that's a little bit of an older video, but they did run horses in Keeneland, um, this spring. And so they moved up from a groom to a horse trainer to rider. So they're just continuing on that career pathway at, at Taylor Made and they're doing great. And they're, they're staying in a healthy, um, productive life.

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And that's the most important thing. Um, another, um, piece that's important, you know, not everyone is going to want to have training. Um, not everyone's gonna wanna have a certification of some sort, um, in just a work skillset. You've got a lot of entrepreneurs in the recovery population. Um, so in Kentucky we have partnered with Southeast Kentucky Economic Development to create a program called REEL [00:41:00] Kentucky.

Um, it's Recovery, Entrepreneurship, Elevating Lives. This could be REEL any state, REEL Texas, REEL USA. We could, we could do it anywhere. Um, but it's a, um, a SMARTS and a Be Boss Online training program that, um, teaches individuals how to start a business, how to market a business, um, you know, anything that they would need, um, to bring their idea or their dream to life.

Um, so we've been able to offer this in the six recovery centers. Um, we allow the individuals to participate in teams of five. Or four, or whatever we have. Um, and they all develop a business idea and a plan and a PowerPoint and the proforma, you know, everything related, um, to building that business. And then we do a pitch competition at the end with the goal of either these individuals starting these businesses, once they transition out, or the center itself starting the business, um, to kind of, you know, help, uh, maintain, um, you know, some financial funding is another revenue stream.

Plus it's a work opportunity for clients as they come through the program. Um, [00:42:00] and so to date, we have had four businesses start up in the, you know, out of the six recovery centers with, with more, um, on the way. Um, so each of those centers have been able to kind of create this opportunity, um, within itself, um, as a training program for clients, which is extremely, extremely valuable.

Um, next slide, please.

Janice Fulkerson: Lori, before you move on, we do have some people really interested in what those businesses were.

Lori Baier: Yeah. Okay. Well, I don't think we're gonna have time to watch this video, but I promise if you email me, I will send you some presentations, cause it is fantastic to watch. But we have, um, so we have two centers that have done a graphics printing, um, type, um, where they, they, um, have original artwork, which is super cool because that's therapeutic in itself.

So clients actually design their own t-shirts um, you know, anything that they want to kind of support, um, recovery efforts. Um, and then they print those t-shirts and sell those in an online format. So we've had a couple [00:43:00] of places do that. We have one, um, male facility that takes, um, they have a partnership with Walmart and Lowe's and a couple of other lumber companies in the area and they do what's called reclaimed furniture.

So they make, um, you know, uh, made to order type items for folks, but they also make a lot of beds and things like that, um, for individuals in the community, um, that, that need beds.

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And actually the project that they did for their pitch competition was, um, a twin sized bed out of that reclaimed wood, um, for a little girl in the community that needed a bed.

Um, so they do a lot of, um, community, um, outreach with that program as well. Um, we have another facility that's getting ready to open up a business called Barbecue Addicts. Um, so it's going to be kind of like a food truck type idea where, um, they sell barbecue and it's, uh, they have their own recipe and it's pretty neat because the name of their recovery center is Hickory Hill.

And so, you know, they're, you've got the hickory smoked kind of theme going with it and it's, it's just super cool. So that one should be starting up in the next two to three months. [00:44:00] Um, and then we have another, um, facility that, um, has a coffee truck idea. So we're looking for a little larger grant to get theirs going, but, um, it's a fantastic idea.

And it's called All About That Bean. Um, and you know, that's just people that have that, the centers that have started businesses, that's not including all the people who have gone out and actually started businesses on their own outside of the facility. Um, we just added a little spinoff on this called REEL Kentucky Invents.

So we're currently doing a class, um, where they, they invent a product instead of a business. Um, so we will have that pitch competition a little later this month. So if anyone out there would like to participate, watch or be a judge, you let me know because we're always looking. Um, so these teams have, have, um, they're creating an actual product.

Um, so, um, but like I said, if you would like to see any of the pitch competition footage, just email me. And I would be glad to share that with you, but it's is such a fantastic, their creativity is just unreal. There's so much talent. It's great to tap [00:45:00] into it.

Dr. Ernie Fletcher: Yeah. Lori, let me just add, um, anybody's watch Shark Tank,

you kind of get an idea of the pitches. So I had the opportunity judging before, but you bring, uh, four or five centers together and they have teams and they've really developed, uh, an entrepreneurial enterprise along with proforma and the products. And they present that. And it's, it's really fascinating because even if they don't win and we have winners and losers, obviously, but

everybody. Um, and I will say there's real, no losers, cause everyone has an opportunity to start that business, but we're able to give some prizes to it and it really has instilled a tremendous amount of enthusiasm. So Lori you've done a great job on that. Cause what we find is a lot of these people are just extremely creative and um, they find this extremely rewarding.

It gives 'em a lot of meaning and purpose. Just wanted to interject that. Lori, you did a great job on that.

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Lori Baier: Well [00:46:00] thank you. And like I said, I mean, you know, if anyone is ever interested, we would love to have your facility as part of this. Um, the more, the better, you know, we, we would like to share it with everyone.

It's a super low cost training. Um, that has great, great benefits at the end of it. And even if they don't start a business, they're a better employee because they've had this training. Um, so you know, it, it's, they, I mean, they're really, you can't lose by doing something like this. It's it's just so much fun. Next slide, please.

And so how do we know it works? Of course we're going to track our outcome and our data. Um, you know, have those conversations, watch your local data, um, and always be willing to continuously adjust and improve. You know, um, as we go through, you know, even like with REEL Kentucky, it, it's fantastic, but how can we make that better?

You know, how can we reach more people? Um, you know, always have an open mind that, you know, any, any program can always be improved. And so that's just what we try to keep adding new [00:47:00] things and improving upon what we've already done. Um, so, so far, you know, it's, it's been a learning curve for sure. And not everything has worked a hundred percent, but we've adjusted ourselves and, and, um, had a lot of success.

Okay. Next slide please. Um, this is my contact information. Um, if you have questions about anything related to workforce, I would love to work with you. Um, brainstorm with you, um, um, any or all of the above share, whatever I've learned. I'd be happy to. And also the, the dos and the don'ts, cause there've been a lot of don'ts along the way too, but I'll share all of that information with you.

Um, maybe save you a headache or two down the road. I'll turn it back over to you Ernie.

Dr. Ernie Fletcher: Yeah. Lori, thank you. We're ready to take some questions. Let me just kind of provide just a few thoughts in summary. Why? There's a tremendous need. I mentioned the 11,000 unfulfilled jobs or unfilled jobs in the United States and that exists in every state in the union.

So, there's a tremendous need out there. [00:48:00] We we've got a tremendous resource, and it really is so synergistic, synergistic. I, you know, coming from Kentucky was a thoroughbred industry. Uh, I hate to say, but that, uh, video always brings tears to my eyes, because you, you think of the therapeutic aspect of meaningful employment.

And in that case, it's, it's rather special because they bond here with these horses. And the fact that Taylor Made Farm, which is one of the finer, uh, thoroughbred farms, uh, really in the nation. I think they happen to make a few golf clubs too, but they're willing to, to, to really allow these individuals to take care of these horses.

And these are multimillion dollar horses. And, uh, as you see, they begin to, you know, love their horses and bond with them. And it's just a tremendous impact. And I, I think the bottom

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line is that getting into meaningful employment is something you love is transformative in your [00:49:00] lives and it builds resiliency.

So I think it's an extremely important part of that full continuum of care. Let me close with that. We can take some questions. Again, Lori, thanks for all the work you're doing and this presentation.

Janice Fulkerson: We have many, many, many questions for Lori and Ernie today. So, um, let's make sure that people know that if, uh, we didn't get to your question in the webinar, uh, we'll get to them in the follow up.

Um, and also if Ernie and, um, Lori can stick with us a little bit longer, we'll try to get to everyone. Um, so first, uh, how would we get some of the programs into a company? How would we partner with Future Plans or Fair Chance Works or Made 180? Lori, what would be the first step? How can we like get to it?

Lori Baier: Yeah. All you would need to do. I, I would be happy to set up a call with you, a Zoom, um, and I can fill you in, on all the details and make those connections for you. And then [00:50:00] ultimately let you decide if you feel that's right for, you know, I, I speak from my experience and just what I've encountered and it's worked

very well for the, for the work that I'm doing, but I would love to connect you with those folks. Not that it's the only resource out there. It's just the one that I have found that has worked best for me and the region that I'm in. But, um, they would be happy to set up a call with you as well. Um, so if you just email me and I, I do not mind or call me, um, I would be more than happy to make that connection and, and let's get on a Zoom and see what they can offer and, and determine if that's right for your clients.

Um, but I can help you make all those connections.

Janice Fulkerson: Thank you, Lori. I put your email in the chat um, and also a couple of other resources in the chat for people. I didn't put your phone number in there, but I'll let you give that out when you're ready.

Lori Baier: Yeah, that's on my slide.

Janice Fulkerson: Second question.

Lori Baier: Call me, text me. all the above.

Janice Fulkerson: Do you interview businesses to assess if they're [00:51:00] recovery ready or recovery supportive?

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Lori Baier: Um, well, I do make contact with businesses and you gain a lot of information about that. I don't necessarily do an assessment on them. I just sit down and have a face to face conversation with them. You know, I think it's so important to kind of be on that personal level and just say, you know, tell me what you feel like you, what do you need?

And you tell me what you're currently doing. And let's see if we together can build a program that's mutually beneficial to you and that client. So I kind of take it from that approach. And I think, you know, having that personal approach with these businesses, it's before you know, it, you've got a really solid relationship that, you know, you're just kind of one, one team, um, helping these folks.

I have never had a business ultimately tell me no. And I know that sounds crazy, but we have not. Some of them are a little hesitant, but I, in the end we're able to work something out. So. Maybe just one person.

Dr. Ernie Fletcher: Yeah. [00:52:00] There's a tremendous need out there and we're finding more and more employers are willing to be what we would refer to as second chance employers.

And a lot of these folks with SUD have, you know, have some criminal justice involvement. So, uh, the employers have been more open to, to really look at an individual. As you mentioned, the very beginning, Lori on an individual basis on a personal basis and look at their background and been very open. I think also with that continued, you know, touching the employer.

Uh, sometimes I think there, we can also help in them establishing a recovery friendly workplace and that's just part of being, uh, you know, connected with them. But reach out, don't hesitate to call your employers in your area. Just about everyone that, uh, you know, in this today's environment are looking for employees and, and these are good employees.

That's the, that's the thing you can [00:53:00] assure them of.

Lori Baier: They usually will want more. They'll call and say, okay, we took, you know, we hired four, can you give us 10? You know, that's usually how it goes. So just be prepared for that too, which is fantastic. That's a great problem to have. Right?

Janice Fulkerson: Right. A follow up question for you related to, uh, along those lines, can a granular sector approach be used in partnership with others, even the Department of Labor or the state or federal the example given was App Harvest, great insight into agribusiness.

Yes. Um, would something like that in a, you know, when we think about a geography versus, um, or an industry?

Lori Baier: Yes. I mean, uh, you can, I mean, all approaches are you, you have to attack it from all angles. I mean, you, uh, nothing to me is out of, out of reach, you know, um, I mean,

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if you find a way to make it happen, you just start making those calls and making those connections and pulling anybody and everybody that [00:54:00] has interest.

And before, you know it, you know, you will you'll achieve what you're hoping to achieve with it. Um, but it takes one person kind of being the cheerleader for everybody and pulling all those resources together. And I think that's something that Fletcher Group kind of does nationally. You know, we try our best to kind of be that person that, that connects everybody.

And when you get everybody there, um, you can really get a lot done. Um, and so, you know, I'd say, you know, all approaches are welcome.

Janice Fulkerson: Thank you for that. Um, question about rural America, Ernie, I had typed in the chat that The Fletcher Group works in rural communities across the U.S. and this, uh, person is asking

can you talk a little bit about ways to integrate the different types of rural into the discussion?

Dr. Ernie Fletcher: That's a good question. I'll tell you what we find. Of course now it's true, both urban and rural. But again, there's still a tremendous need in the rural areas. [00:55:00] And the nice, I'll talk about it in general, the real thing about rural areas is, most of them have a tremendous need for economic development.

And this is an extremely important part of economic development. You can't recruit employers. You can't keep employers. If you don't have a good, well trained, reliable workforce. And, and that's what we're bringing. Different communities. I, I'll say if you've seen one community, you've seen one community, uh, there's a lot of similarities in rural areas because generally they don't have quite the resources you have in the urban areas.

Uh, a lot of times they, they don't have the collaboration. And I think it's important to realize that in this kind of effort, Lori kind of pointed out indirectly, but you've got a lot of different entities you need to bring together. So I think the first thing is to look at the uniqueness of your rural community and see who are the stakeholders, who are the [00:56:00] players? Look at

who are the companies? There's also the opportunity of looking regionally. And I think that's important, especially when you get some rural areas. Don't have a lot of employers, maybe in one county you're working in, but regionally they may. And so I think if you can, uh, you know, look at each county, and that means the surveillance,

if you will, come in and see what the resources are, see who the employers are, see what the workforce development entities look at, the educational facilities that cover that area and bringing all those groups, you know, to the table. One of the things we found in Kentucky too, and, and I would encourage you to reach out is the Chamber of Commerce is really taking up this issue in Kentucky, and in other states they're beginning to as well.

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And that's because they see the need for a workforce for the companies that belong to that, uh, entity, the Chamber. So they're also an entity that you can reach out to and will help you understand [00:57:00] the employers and employers need in the region. So I'll leave it with that. But, uh, the rural areas are a particular area of opportunity because

um, most of the rural areas that we work in really have a need for a workforce. And that usually is why sometimes even those rural counties are not growing or the population is decreasing, cause they're not able to attract and keep the industries. The other thing is entrepreneurship is extremely important in rural areas.

Lori has found that out because you can generate businesses and value added businesses, which increase the wealth of a rural community. I'll leave it at that. And

Lori Baier: I just, I just wanna add one thing to that Ernie. And, uh, one more, um, one more thing to consider is when we were talking about those remote work hubs. Um, you know, when you find a, a rural community that really doesn't have a lot of opportunity for employment, that is a great solution because you can work all over the world remotely.[00:58:00]

Um, but then, you know, so you're training them for high, higher paying careers, but they're still living and, and working and, and paying taxes in that local community, which helps boost the economic growth of that community. So, you know, you're gonna have individuals that that's gonna be very attractive to remote, you know, to work remotely.

And that, I mean, like I said, they can work anywhere in the world, um, remote environment.

Dr. Ernie Fletcher: It's a great point. And I, another program you're doing, you gotta look, you know, referenced it. But for example, an individual, if they're trained in CAD, which, uh, doing that down in London, Kentucky computer assisted design.

They can do that from anywhere. And that's a high skilled job, uh, to being able to, you know, to do computer assisted design or drawings. So that's just one of the many remote jobs that you could develop. And I think that's Lori, you really made a good point there that bringing the community together, you can also attract and build those kind of businesses that fulfill needs that may be across the world.[00:59:00]

Janice Fulkerson: Thank you. We have, we still have many more questions, uh, and a couple minutes left. So let me see if I can get to a couple more. Um, Lori, do you have the ability to send certificates of completion or attendance um, when somebody's in a program?

Lori Baier: We do. So, you know, some of them are nationally recognized credentials that we use.

Um, some are not, but we do, um, offer, you know, certificates of completion for them to include in resumes. And, and some, you know, sometimes we're a Department of Corrections,

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um, to satisfy, you know, um, if it's a good time credit served or something like that. So yes, we, we do offer depending on what the, what the class is. Um, depends on what type of credential they earn.

Um, but we do make it recognizable that they have completed, um, whatever, every training that they complete, because to me, that's, that's something to be celebrated.

Janice Fulkerson: Great. Thank you. And, um, if somebody's looking for part, certificate for participating in this webinar today [01:00:00] with us, we don't have a certificate for that,

Lori Baier: but I can make you one, it might not hold much worth, but I'll be happy to make you one.

Appreciate you being here.

Janice Fulkerson: We're happy to have everybody here. Alright. Um, I think the rest of them, um, are ones that I'm gonna encourage everybody who had a question to email Lori directly. Lori, we have someone who's interested in working with you on, uh, connecting with their Department of labor, um, and talking about financial resources, um, in to start up a program, um, also in how to decide which recovery center to work with.

Um, and talk more about working, um, with employers and what motivates groups to buy in and participate, in addition to the things that you talk about today. So, so fantastic. Everyone, this has been such a good discussion. Um, and, uh, at [01:01:00] that we will invite you to, uh, check out our website, um, at FletcherGroup.org, all of our bios and resources that are available to you through The Fletcher Group are available on our website.

Um, we have a newsletter that goes out once a month. We would encourage you to participate in that. And then in the months of October and November, we'll be launching and announcing some fantastic tools, um, for individuals to use in their work. One is a Recovery Ecosystem Index we're going to talk about in October, and then in November, we're gonna talk about some recovery house handbooks, materials, and other things that are available, um, for you.

And with that we'll thank you for participating. Lori, and, uh, Governor Ernie Fletcher. We are happy that you're here today and thank you.

Lori Baier: My pleasure.

Dr. Ernie Fletcher: My pleasure, and thank you all very much for all the attendees and, uh, folks that helped put this together. We really appreciate this [01:02:00] opportunity to share with you.

Lori Baier: Yes. And please reach out

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Michelle Day: This concludes our webinar session. Thank you so much for joining us today. Also, please tune in on the first Thursday of each month from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM Eastern Standard Time where we will be hosting subject matter experts from across the nation to bring you valuable tools and resources for rural recovery house operators and SUD professionals.

If you would like information on technical assistance, you can go to our website again, www.FletcherGroup.org, which I have also copied in the chat, and submit a technical assistance request. Lastly, please take a moment to respond to the survey questions once they become available on your screen.

Your feedback is very important and greatly appreciated. Thank you and have a blessed day.