

## **Leadership in Linking Education and Workforce Supports**

A panel presentation highlighting the policies and opportunities for schools, government agencies, and non-profits to collectively deliver effective services to underserved and marginalized communities. Presenters will share examples of leveraging the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and facilitating practices that go beyond simply meeting compliance to effectively serve young people with intersecting identities (e.g., race, disability, gender).

### **Chris Clause**

#### **Coordinator, Program Development & Consumer Affairs Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation**



Chris has been employed with Missouri VR since June of 2007 where his career began as a VR Counselor in the Sedalia district office, and currently serves as the Coordinator of Program Development and Consumer Affairs. Prior to working for VR Chris served as an outpatient mental health counselor in Sedalia. Working with people with severe and persistent mental illness is where he discovered the power of employment. Chris is a 2002 graduate of Indiana University, where he received a BS in Psychology. After graduating from IU he moved to Warrensburg, Missouri where he completed an MS degree in Psychology from the University of Central Missouri. He is currently pursuing a PhD at the Truman School of Public Affairs at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Chris chose the vocational rehabilitation field because of the wide-ranging benefits that employment provides in the lives of all people.

Email: [chris.clause@vr.dese.mo.gov](mailto:chris.clause@vr.dese.mo.gov)

### **Kimberly Gee**

#### **Assistant Field Operations Manager Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation**



Kimberly Gee is a graduate of Missouri State University with a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling. Ms. Gee has worked in the field of vocational rehabilitation for 26 years, both in the public and private sector. She is a certified rehabilitation counselor and a licensed professional counselor and has been an adjunct professor in the Rehabilitation Counseling program at Maryville University where she taught on a per course basis. She is an active member board member of the Missouri Rehabilitation Association. She currently serves as Assistant Field Operations Manager for Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation.

Email: [Kim.Gee@vr.dese.mo.gov](mailto:Kim.Gee@vr.dese.mo.gov)

Twitter: @KimberlyGee

**Kirk A. Lew**  
**Senior Policy Advisor, Youth Team**  
**Office of Disability Employment, Department of Labor**



Kirk currently leads the Federal Partners in Transition initiatives and is intimately involved in number of workforce related policy initiatives with several key federal partners and national organizations. Kirk is currently assisting DOL's Employment and Training Administrations with the facilitation of their accessibility innovation cohort. Prior to coming to ODEP, Kirk worked for over 20 years with all types of youth populations. Most recently, serving as the senior policy analyst for New Jersey's Workforce Development Board with a focus in youth, disability and adult literacy. Kirk started his career in direct care roles serving NJ's youth, as a counselor at NJ's Edison Job Corps center, managing a supported employment vendor and creating several school transition related programs

Email: [Lew.Kirk.A@dol.gov](mailto:Lew.Kirk.A@dol.gov)

**Thomas Showalter**  
**Executive Director**  
**National Youth Employment Coalition**



Thomas Showalter is an expert on education and workforce policy and related areas (disability policy, juvenile justice, antipoverty programs), as well as Congressional politics and processes. He's a talented strategic planner and thinker, project manager, and policy analyst who enjoys getting to know new policy and practice landscapes. As executive director of the National Youth Employment Coalition, he is a leading advocate for opportunity youth (young people who are out of school and out of work). With NYEC he sets the organization's direction and strategy, working with the board of directors, and lifts up promising strategies and practices of NYEC members. Prior to NYEC, he advised advocacy organizations and foundations on communications and strategic planning at The Hatcher Group, a Bethesda-based communications firm. He also spent nearly five years on the majority staff of the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, working for chairmen Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) and Tom Harkin (D-IA). With the committee, he contributed to the passage of several pieces of legislation, including the Serve America Act of 2009 and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, and was a negotiator on proposed reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Workforce Investment Act. He organized hearings on topics such as special education and workforce development and developed coalitions in support of bills.

Email: [thomas.showalter@nyec.org](mailto:thomas.showalter@nyec.org)

Twitter: @TheNYEC