



**Interview with Wendi Copeland
Vice President of Mission Advancement
Goodwill Industries International**

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the NTAR Leadership Center. Helping state leaders help adults with disabilities to employment and better economic opportunities through collaboration, innovation, and change.

[Laurie Harrington] Welcome to Research in Brief, a feature podcast of the NTAR Leadership Center. I'm your host, Laurie Harrington. Wendi Copeland, Vice President of Mission Advancement, joined the Goodwill Industries International Member Services Team in January 2005 after supporting the Goodwill Movement as a field consultant since the nationwide roll out of the twenty million dollar US Department of Labor Census 2000 Welfare to Work grant. In her current role she leads a team of professionals who support 166 North American Goodwill member organizations in advancing the mission with data, strategy, and resources. One of North America's most recognized non-profit organizations and a leading social services enterprise, Goodwill Industries International is a network of 183 community-based independent agencies in the United States, Canada, and 14 other countries. To pay for its programs, Goodwill sells donated clothes and other household items in more than 2300 retail stores and an online shop, goodwill.com, the first and only non-profit Internet auction site. In 2008, 1.5 million people in the United States and Canada benefited from Goodwill's Career Services, and more than 172,000 obtained job placement services. Goodwill channels 84 percent of its revenue directly into programs and services. To find your local Goodwill, use the online locator at www.goodwill.org or call 800-664-6577. Thank you, Ms. Copeland, for being with us today. Could you please tell us a little bit more about your organization, Goodwill Industries International?

[Wendi Copeland] Goodwill Industries International is one of the world's largest private providers of job training and placement. We provide services that promote strong families and help people have sustainable careers. In 2008 we served 1.5 million people, about seven percent of which had disabilities.

[Laurie Harrington] Please describe your recent grant, Pathways Out of Poverty, and tell us about what you hope to achieve with it.

[Wendi Copeland] About a year and a half ago, we decided to focus our efforts in business engagement with sectors. And we chose two sectors in which to focus because they were high growth industries with family sustaining wages. And one of those was green. So we began then planning if we did a green jobs initiative, what would it look like? We developed a logic model. We did an analysis of the markets around the country because green jobs, as I'm sure you know, the sector works very differently depending on where in the country you are located, and we were prepared when the Pathways Out of Poverty request for proposals was launched. We



developed our proposal with six organizations across the country and this consortium of Goodwill are deploying Goodwill Goes Green. G3 is our shorthand. We're 70 business and community college and service providing partners in their locations. Pathways Out of Poverty for Goodwill will be launched in Phoenix, Boston, Atlanta, Charlotte, the District of Columbia, and Grand Rapids, Michigan area. We will engage about 1300 people with about a thousand people going through training and about 93 percent of the completers being employed in the industry.

[Laurie Harrington] Specifically, how do you envision targeting people with disabilities in his program?

[Wendi Copeland] This is definitely a high partnership opportunity. One of the requirements of the Pathways Out of Poverty grant was that you engage the local community in accessing needs, that you engage business in determining where they were going with the jobs so you could specifically target the training. So required partners include business, work force investment at the community, the other service providers. You know there is a broad array of acquired partners in this, and, as I said, with six locations we have over 70 partners who are signed on, and we're leveraging with this grant. We're leveraging over three million dollars worth of investment from those organizations.

[Laurie Harrington] Who is Goodwill partnering with on this program?

[Wendy Copeland] In all of the services Goodwill provides, we specifically engage people with all types of abilities including people with disabilities. Because our organizations have a long history of engaging and supporting people with disabilities, we know that we can recruit, engage, and sustain the success of people with disabilities.

[Laurie Harrington] What do you anticipate being the greatest challenges for workers with disabilities in a green economy, and how do you anticipate helping them overcome?

[Wendy Copeland] I think that, you know, when it comes to getting a job in this economy, there are many barriers for anyone, and some of the key ones are the availability of jobs. Where are the jobs? Understanding which sectors are growing, understanding what jobs will be available in the future, what skills will be required is a key advantage. When people are engaging with Goodwill Pathways Out of Poverty grant, they will understand the sector, they will have stackable credentials that can be built upon so people can not only get that first job, but they can advance their careers up the ladder or across lattices in other industries and move ahead. Whether you are a person with a disability or you're a person with some other type barrier, the key is having the credentials that will get you the sustaining wage.



[Laurie Harrington] What level of occupations is the Pathway Out of Poverty program going to focus on?

[Wendi Copeland] The skills that we are training for are a bit above entry level and they are on career paths where you could get more credentials, stack the credentials, and improve your earning gains and broaden the number of jobs for which you would be qualified. So those jobs would include things that are very relatively simple, not for me necessarily [laugh], but things that are organization to something more complex like residential retrofit, commercial weatherization, things like smart meter installation and reading, a broad array of skills that will be trained in partnerships with community colleges with Workforce Investment Act administrators and other local entities, and we'll know what jobs are coming so we can help people target their skill development for jobs that will exist in their hometowns.

[Laurie Harrington] What are your plans, if any, for recruiting participants with disabilities?

[Wendi Copeland] Goodwills are well connected with the disability community and with the general population. One of the things we know is that as a person with a disability I can either choose to disclosure or nondisclose. So we have general means where people can come to a Goodwill career center, they could call us as many have since the grant was announced and tell us they're interested in this training and inquire about this and other services available through Goodwill.

[Laurie Harrington] Thank you for being with us today, Wendi. I have been speaking with Wendi Copeland, Vice President of Mission Advancement for Goodwill Industries International. This is Laurie Harrington for Research in Brief with the NTAR Leadership Center. For more information about the NTAR Leadership Center and its research activities, visit www.ntarcenter.org.

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