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## **Burton Blatt Institute awarded \$4.7 million for disability learning consortium**

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of the U.S. Department of Education has awarded a \$4.7 million, five-year grant to the Burton Blatt Institute (BBI) of Syracuse University to manage the Region IV Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Learning Consortium in eight southeastern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

The consortium is a collaboration of the Disability Business and Technical Assistance Center's (DBTAC) regional Southeast ADA Center, managed by BBI, and nationally recognized state vocational rehabilitation (VR) administrators, educators, rehabilitation providers, researchers, self-advocates and employers. The consortium will implement new ways of meeting the employment objectives of VR customers across the full spectrum of disabilities.

Building on years of experience and lessons learned from the Southeast DBTAC, the TACE features a technology-enhanced learning platform anchored by a user-friendly website with a vast library of resources, interactive learning tools and distance learning options. The TACE will engage and support the target audience of 2,000 learners annually in all eight states and leverage significant nonprofit resources from the Southeast DBTAC and other public-private sector partnerships to reach more than one million relevant stakeholders in the region.

The consortium brings the leading subject matter experts in the nation and the region to classroom, distance and experiential learning to accelerate knowledge for VR customers with significant disabilities, including members of traditionally underrepresented populations.

“The TACE project enhances the premier role of BBI as a problem solver and innovator in the advancement of employment goals for individuals with significant disabilities,” says BBI Chair Peter Blanck, University Professor at Syracuse University. “The Consortium will coordinate and leverage public and private resources to develop the next generation of leaders in the VR system at state and local levels,” says Michael Morris, BBI CEO and a member of the TACE senior management team. Co-directing the TACE project will be Shelley Kaplan, director of the Southeast DBTAC, and Lucy Wong-Hernandez, who is a nationally recognized expert on consumer choice and multicultural competency.

BBI fosters public-private dialogue to advance the civic, economic and social participation of persons with disabilities in a global society. The institute takes its name from Burton Blatt (1927–85), a pioneer in humanizing services for people with disabilities. BBI currently has offices in Syracuse, New York City, Washington, D.C., Atlanta and Tel Aviv. For more information, visit <http://bbi.syr.edu>, or contact Kaplan ([sakaplan@law.syr.edu](mailto:sakaplan@law.syr.edu)) or Wong-Hernandez ([luwong@law.syr.edu](mailto:luwong@law.syr.edu)).

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