**Building Opportunities Through Innovation**

**2018 NIB/NAEPB Training Conference and Expo**

**Friday, November 16, 11:45-12:45**

**Salon A, Marriott Crystal Gateway Hotel**

Innovation is key to running a successful social enterprise and in a rapidly changing marketplace, can be a key differentiator. Join NIB associated agency representatives to learn about innovative new business strategies and technologies being implemented to advance the interests of people who are blind. This panel-style discussion will include tips, lessons learned, and other information your organization can use to stay at the forefront of innovation.

**Moderator: Michael Monteferrante, CEO, Envision**

**Panelists and Topics:**

**Operational Innovation**

***Dennis Steiner, CEO, VisionCorps***

In 2013, VisionCorps launched its food processing and packaging operations thanks to a partnership with the Hatfield Corporation and the Clemmons Family Foundation. During the first three years of operation, VisionCorps employees processed and packaged a variety of food products including granola, quinoa snack foods, and a line of meat substitutes. In 2015, VisionCorps began packaging of parboiled rice for sale to the subsistence division of Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support. During the panel discussion, VisionCorps will share its experience including, successes, lessons learned, and the risks and opportunities that come with the processing and packaging of food products.

**Workforce Development Innovation**

***Mike May, Executive Director, William L. Hudson BVI Workforce Innovation Center***

The William L. Hudson BVI Workforce Innovation Center is a 12,500 sq. ft. state-of-the-art facility dedicated to knowledge-based job training for people who are blind and visually impaired. The center, which opened in June 2018 at the Envision Building in Wichita, Kansas, is focused on seven verticals: youth development, contact communication services, media management, hospitality services, hardware and software application development, consumer services management, and smart cities initiatives. In addition to its contact center and multi-use training facilities, the center is specifically designed to promote company accessibility/usability testing services and workplace assessment training and employment support services. Hear about how the center was envisioned, and its role in creating the workforce of the future.

**Technological Innovation**

***Pamela Tully, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired***

The ability to explore and manage strategic partnerships is vital to long-term growth of any organization. Learn how The Chicago Lighthouse is implementing successful strategies that leverage corporate partnerships and state-use programs to drive business and employment growth. The discussion will also include how advanced technology is being implemented in The Lighthouse’s customer service and contract management support programs.

***Lou Moneymaker, CEO, Bosma Enterprises***

In 2012, Bosma Enterprises was in the midst of considerable growth and needed a business system that could scale with these expanded opportunities and be fully accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired. Bosma implemented the Salesforce platform to meet these business objectives. Learn how Bosma implemented VisionForce, the most accessible, cloud-based, end-to-end business operating system ever used by the company. The system integrated more than 30 systems into one, creating efficiencies and driving employment for people who are blind or visually impaired.