In the fall of 2015, Beacon Group made a serious commitment to serve more people with disabilities in Arizona through a program called “Ticket to Work.” The program is offered through the Social Security Administration (SSA) to help SSI/SSDI beneficiaries get into, or back into, the workforce. Besides helping reduce the unemployment rate for people with disabilities, the goal is also to reduce reliance on government assistance. Traditionally, less than 1% of SSI/SSDI recipients have found work.

As one of only four Arizona organizations authorized by SSA to serve “Ticket to Work” clients, Beacon has an overwhelming challenge, given that there are over 145,000 SSI/SSDI “Ticket” holders in Phoenix and Tucson alone. Before we made this commitment two years ago, we were only serving a handful of people each year through this program.

Helped by grants from Source-America, Bank of America Foundation, and the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco, we set up offices and hired additional staff to work solely on serving Ticket to Work clients in Phoenix and Tucson. The first challenge would be finding the thousands of Ticket holders who still wanted to work but needed professional help to do this. Our contact information is listed on their Ticket to Work pages of the SSA website, but this can be very hard to find for people with significant disabilities.

Since the SSA does not share names and contact information on Ticket holders, we knew we really needed to do outreach and marketing first and foremost — just to find the clients to serve. We had set ambitious goals for the grants we were awarded for the project. We had committed to serve hundreds of Ticket holders with disabilities and help them find their way into the world of work. The SSA will pay a fee for service to the organization to do this, but only after the Ticket holder has been successfully employed. The cost of reaching out, finding individuals, and counseling, training and coaching clients is all on the serving agency (which is why there are so few agencies providing this service).

After launching an aggressive outreach campaign, we slowly started hearing from more and more Ticket holders who both needed and wanted assistance in finding a job. We had set a goal of trying to find and serve 160 Ticket holders through this new program, and finding jobs for 93 of them. Based on our experience, we knew these benchmarks would not be easy to reach.

We are extremely proud to announce that as of September 30, 2017, we had agreed to serve 300 new Ticket holders, and had successfully placed 173 in employment! We almost doubled our goals and are already one of the more successful placement agencies in the country!
Beacon Group works hard to perform well at every level in our organization in order to maintain our mission for the long term. Working hard is not just the intensity of our efforts — we also make sure the work we do is performed to very high standards meeting the safety, quality, security, and regulatory needs of our customers, employees, and government agencies. One way to maintain these high standards is to benchmark our work against industry or government standards. Here are a few examples:

**REHABILITATION SERVICES** – Most of our rehabilitation services are accredited by CARF, an independent accreditor of health and human services. This accreditation process applies sets of standards to service areas and business practices during an on-site survey. Beacon has been CARF-accredited for over 30 years and continues to be recognized for providing exemplary service to our clients.

**CUSTODIAL** – Beacon Group is certified to the Cleaning Industry Management Standards (CIMS). To meet certification requirements, Beacon has developed a comprehensive set of processes including cleaning techniques, management practices and training to ensure the buildings are cleaned to a consistent (and sparkling) standard. In addition, Santiago Miranda, our custodial Project Manager, is a CIMS Industry Certification Expert (I.C.E.) who can provide training and consulting on CIMS certification to Beacon or any other company.

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SECURITY CLEARANCE** – As required on our contracts at Ft. Huachuca and Hill Air Force Base, Beacon Group has a secret-level Facility Security Clearance (FSC) with the Defense Security Service (DSS). Thirty Beacon Group employees have Secret Level Security Clearances. Our FSC requires us to maintain a security program assuring we meet DSS requirements.

**BEACON SECURE** – We are proudly certified by the National Association for Information Destruction (NAID), which covers security processing, employee background screening, data custody, and equipment requirements. Beacon Secure was the first document destruction company in southern Arizona to receive this certification, and we’ve been NAID certified now for 13 years!

**CONTRACT MANUFACTURING** – Beacon Group has a documented quality system that has been audited and deemed effective by multiple Fortune 500 companies. As a key supplier to these companies, we have consistently been rated one of their highest for quality and service.

**OTHER COMPLIANCE PROGRAMS** – Beacon Group has many other compliance programs in place to ensure that we follow customer and regulatory requirements. These compliance programs are for federal organizations including the Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA); plus State of Arizona agencies including the Department of Economic Security (DES) and the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS).

Maintaining compliance to these benchmark standards is a big investment. We have many knowledgeable managers who build the systems to ensure we are meeting standards and hundreds of other employees who carry out this hard and smart work on a daily basis. The payoff is upholding our mission to provide opportunities for people with disabilities, today, and for the long term!
Beacon has been around since 1952 and has helped tens of thousands of Arizonans with disabilities find employment, additional income, and a greater sense of purpose in their lives. Even with our extensive experience, it is never easy to find employment for someone who has never had a job. And, in many ways, it can be even tougher to help those who have been successfully employed in the past, but now, due to medical conditions or an accident, have disabilities that have been keeping them from working.

Many Ticket to Work holders fall into this category, and Beacon client Raymond Hamilton is one of them. Ray had faced some severe challenges throughout his life but persevered in spite of them. Coming from a troubled family, Ray had to work hard to get an education and obtain a degree. After school, he joined the Navy, and although he was discharged due to medical reasons, he went on to good jobs in Radio and TV. He worked his way from DJ to Program Director and even to on-air Weatherman at a CBS affiliate in Greenville, Mississippi.

In 2009, at the age of 45, he suffered a series of medical emergencies (later diagnosed as strokes) which forced him to stop working and go on SSI for support. He moved to Surprise, Arizona and began receiving therapy in hopes of making a recovery. Looking for support to help him reenter the workforce in 2014, he contacted SSA and asked about the Ticket to Work program. Ray is married with two daughters. He knew he could still work and provide for his family. Like before, he was determined to keep improving himself to earn that opportunity. He went back to school and he called Beacon Group to get the coaching and support he needed to find employment. Working with our Ticket to Work staff in Phoenix, Ray started going to job fairs hoping to find an employer who would understand his challenges as well as his dream of working again.

At the Disability and Rehabilitation Employment Awareness Month (DREAM) Job Fair in 2014 (which Beacon helped sponsor), Ray met with representatives of the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). If anyone would understand Ray’s situation it would be them …and they did!

They jumped at the chance to have Ray come work for them. In November 2014, Ray became a Support Coordinator at DDD in Surprise. He was very glad his history of employment was not over. Unfortunately, his history of disabling challenges was not either.

Ray had developed Type 2 diabetes. In April 2015, he suffered kidney failure, and now must undergo dialysis three times a week. In August he had another mini-stroke, but was able to return to work in September. In May 2017, he had double bypass heart surgery, yet was able to return to work in June.

Then, two months later, he and his wife, Dena, were in a car accident and both suffered herniated discs. The challenges just kept coming, but Ray is nowhere near quitting.

Ray already has a Master’s Degree and is working on getting a second one in Christian Counseling from Grand Canyon University. He eventually wants to open his own counseling practice. He should be great at it. He has managed to achieve much while overcoming many setbacks in life. He could quit. He could stop fighting. He could forget his dream and just live on government benefits due to his disabilities.

Happily, Ray did not have to give up on his goals. Instead, the Ticket to Work Program encourages people like Ray to persevere and realize the benefits of employment. Statistically, two-thirds of people with disabilities do not have a job but, thanks to SSA and Beacon, there are now 173 more people in Arizona who, like Ray, have the chance to work for their dreams.

Ray says, “Don’t let anything hold you back from achieving your dreams.” He knows the help he got made the difference.

Beacon and SSA... that’s the ticket!
Did you know that Beacon Group services reach well beyond the Tucson and Phoenix areas? Beacon Group has been working with employers in Santa Cruz and Cochise counties for some time, and things are certainly taking off!

Nogales is the 29th largest city in Arizona, the county seat of Santa Cruz, and a key gateway to Sonora Mexico. Its border location contributes to the intermingling of cultures and traditions in Nogales, a factor that contributes to challenges when assisting families with members who have a disability. Strong family bonds, gender roles and beliefs play a significant role in whether members seek assistance. It can be a matter of privacy and pride for many Latino families, such that the family will rearrange their lives, doing their best “on their own” and overlooking opportunities for disability supports and vocational services.

Access to services is further complicated by language barriers and communication norms. Yet, the prevalence of disability among working-age Latinos is much higher than average (24% compared to 18% nationally.)

Given the need for services, Beacon has a strong interest in serving Nogales and other outlying areas. “Gradually we are building awareness and trust among the community members, families and businesses,” says Beacon Job Developer Joe Bribiesca.

Joe, who is bilingual, spends two days a week in Nogales, meeting with clients and business leaders. He helps people with disabilities look for jobs, create résumés and navigate the application process. He makes the connections needed to facilitate training and provides individual coaching.

Through Joe’s efforts, Beacon has partnered with Santa Cruz Training Programs (SCTP) to provide additional resources for people with disabilities seeking employment in Nogales and surrounding areas. SCTP strives to make sure that people with developmental disabilities do not need to leave their local community to get services and support their needs.

Through this collaboration, Joe helped secure an On the Job Training position for Daniel Galindo with SCTP as a driver and maintenance worker. Daniel, who has a physical disability, needed paid full-time work. Through his training position, combined with three months of job coaching, Daniel has achieved his goals.

Beacon Group also recently started a contract at the Mariposa Port of Entry employing Santa Cruz residents with disabilities. Beacon landscaping crews work five days a week to maintain all landscaping, irrigation and related services on 52 acres at the border site.

Senior Project Manager Valerie Pullara reports that “in the first two months, we were able to identify issues with irrigation and proper weed abatement to bring the site to our customer’s standards, allowing the natural beauty of the desert landscaping to thrive.”

Beacon won the contract through an Ability One bidding process. Valerie believes capacity was an advantage, along with Beacon’s strong track record of being able to take a transfer program and turn it around quickly.

Beacon has successfully obtained 20 other AbilityOne contracts that employ over 100 people with significant disabilities in three states. Organizational strengths allow Beacon to add jobs for people with disabilities that otherwise wouldn’t be available in smaller communities. Beacon also recently received custodial contracts with Child Safety Services for buildings in Sierra Vista and Nogales.

Yet, Joe stresses that there is much more work to be done to increase awareness within Santa Cruz and Cochise counties. In addition to cultural differences, a lack of transportation can be a big challenge in smaller communities, and few businesses are aware of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

Joe has made presentations to the Mayor’s Office, City Manager, Chief of Police, and community business groups to help spread the message. However, it is the workers themselves that leave the biggest impression as role models in the community.

Valerie explains, “In the Nogales area, there is great enthusiasm to have this kind of work available for people with disabilities. Our crews there include very dedicated employees who value learning new skills. People see and appreciate that.”
Beacon Introduces New Programs in Tucson and Phoenix

...offering more support for job seekers!

In Arizona, the number of working-age people with disabilities in the workforce is less than half the proportion of those without disabilities. Every year, Beacon Group touches thousands of Arizonans to help bridge this gap, though we still have a long way to go.

As the economic and regulatory landscape shifts, we continue to expand our employment services to better prepare people of all ages — especially younger job seekers — for the workforce.

This spring, we introduce several new programs tailored to the needs of young job seekers who are new to the process.

Each of these programs is relevant to Beacon Group’s mission in the many ways they empower individuals with disabilities to train for, apply for, acquire, and maintain jobs in the community as they work towards progressive goals, boost economic self-sufficiency, and achieve personal satisfaction.

If you have questions about these programs, call Tucson (520) 622-4874 Phoenix (602) 685-9703

Transition to Employment (TTE)

Beacon Group will be offering a seven-week job training class for students with developmental disabilities who are transitioning to a more independent employment setting. Small class size and a module-based curriculum allow for highly individualized instruction in a group setting. The new TTE program also provides real world experiences with half the instruction in the classroom and half out of the classroom doing career exploration, job shadowing, hands-on volunteer work, and participating in a business club. Participants, ages 16 and older, will learn positive work behaviors, soft-skills, safety techniques and self-advocacy. Additional modules focus on developing a résumé and other job search related tools, as well as understanding paychecks and disability benefits.

Program Manager Jessica Winchester says, “At the end of the program, students will have a good idea of whether they are ready for the workforce, and which areas they will be good at in order to start the actual job search.”

To be eligible for the TTE class, individuals must be ages 16-24, receiving services from the Arizona Department of Developmental Disabilities, and be motivated towards an employment path.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

A new program to help younger people with disabilities achieve their career goals is being offered to replace the Job Discovery program that was discontinued as a result of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Pre-ETS, offered by Beacon Group, is intended to be the first step in a continuum of activities that offer students with disability the necessary tools to be successful in choosing their selected career path, attain education and/or skills towards that vocation, and secure and maintain employment. Participants can access a variety of supports including counseling on job exploration and post-secondary education options, work-based learning opportunities, workplace readiness and self-advocacy skill development. Services are available through Beacon in Maricopa, Santa Cruz, Cochise and Pima Counties.

Program manager Frances Miller adds, “One of the benefits of this program is that we can focus specifically on students who may not have received some of these important skills during their high school experience. We can also offer presentations and workshops at the schools themselves.”

To be eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services, 16-24 year olds with disabilities (who may be in-school or out-of-school) must be receiving services — or potentially eligible for services — from the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

Skills Development and Training Program

In Phoenix, Beacon is adding a Skills Development and Training Program to help clients achieve academic, employment, and personal goals. Specialized classes are being offered to help people with disabilities to develop valuable tools for living and learning. These classes will address many essential skills that support both personal and work proficiencies including,

Time Management, Budgeting, Stress Management, Effective Communication, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Conflict Management, and Building Self-Confidence.

Beacon Group’s Education Support Specialist, Maren Kato, has been providing personal tutoring for Beacon clients to quality for their General Education Diploma (GED) for many years. She has seen firsthand how test achievement is often compromised by a lack of these “soft skills.” These new classes will help her address this deficiency. Maren stresses that, “Better management of their time, anxieties and ability to solve problems will help individuals prepare for and pass their GED tests, find employment, and achieve the independence in life we all hope for.”

To be eligible for the Skills Development and Training program in Phoenix, individuals must be receiving services from Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care.
Beacon wishes to recognize and thank our generous donors for their ongoing contributions. The list below reflects gifts received in 2017. To make a secure donation using your credit card, visit www.BeaconGroup.org/donate or call us at (520) 622-4874 to discuss other ways to contribute.

**$10,000 and above:**
- Amazon
- Connie Hillman Family Foundation
- Stan & Susan Hilkemeyer
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**$2,500 to $9,999**
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**$1,000 to $2,499**
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- Dollar General Store #14055

**Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this listing. We regret any errors or omissions. Please notify Heidi Kirkland, hkirkland@BeaconGroup.org (520) 622-4874 extension 166, of any inaccuracies.**
Beacon Group presented three exceptional clients with “Outstanding Achievement Awards” to recognize the outstanding progress they each have made in pursuit of their goals. The winners were each highlighted in a short video presentation. Congratulations!

Clayton Patrick works in Manufacturing at Beacon Group and was promoted to work at the client reception desk. His reliability, performance and initiative earned him this award. Joshua Milnes (right) earned recognition for his dependability and positive attitude working in our Custodial Department.

Justin Hammonds, employed at JW Marriott Star Pass, was recognized for making major improvements in all aspects of his job as a dishwasher. He has gone above and beyond by learning several languages to communicate better with his co-workers. Above, Justin accepts a plaque from Beacon CEO Greg Natvig (left) and Marriott’s Julie Lindowitz.

Leroy Adams was a hard working Beacon Group employee who, despite little recognition of the important support he provided, was committed to doing his best for Beacon. In his memory Beacon Group honors two current employees for their significant dedication and effort ‘behind the scenes’ as “Leroy Adams Award” winners:

Beacon’s Lead Hab Tech Greg Jones was recognized for the exceptional care he gives, always with a smile, even on the most demanding days. Ian Mills (right), General Maintenance Lead at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, was acknowledged for living the Beacon mission. As a direct result of his leadership, several workers in his charge have become successful for the first time in their careers.

In recognition and appreciation for his exceptional leadership and commitment to people with disabilities, Beacon recognized Steve Freeman, Regional Director of Linkages Arizona, for the “Leadership Award.” Steve received this award based on his personal advocacy for employing people with disabilities and his exceptional ability to create a community of supporters. Under his leadership, the Tucson DREAM Job Fair continues to grow and expand in remarkable ways.

The “Diane Kovara Employee of the Year Award,” presented in memory of her exemplary dedication and commitment to Beacon’s mission, was presented to Frances Miller, Program Manager, Beacon Group Tucson. Frances was recognized for taking on additional responsibilities this year and doing an excellent job supervising Beacon Job Coaches. Her co-workers say she is a great sounding board and an objective listener.

Beacon’s Lead Hab Tech Greg Jones was recognized for the exceptional care he gives, always with a smile, even on the most demanding days. Ian Mills (right), General Maintenance Lead at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, was acknowledged for living the Beacon mission. As a direct result of his leadership, several workers in his charge have become successful for the first time in their careers.

In recognition and appreciation for enduring commitment to provide meaningful employment to workers with disabilities, Beacon Group recognized two amazing organizations in Tucson with “Visionary Awards.” Both organizations were acknowledged for nurturing the people with disabilities who work for their organizations, in an environment where they are respected and encouraged to grow.

Amphitheater School District Superintendent Todd Jaeger

Richard Meyers and Sergio Centeno of Community Partners Inc.

Beacon’s Holiday Festivity & Awards Presentation was made possible with support from Lovitt & Touché (Premier Supporter), plus Cenpatco and Health Net; TRICO Electric Cooperative; Mutual of America; Gersons Building Materials; Caster Source; Jim Click Automotive, and Casa Sunrise HOA.

At the end of each year, Beacon honors organizations and individuals who support us in the mission to create opportunities for people with disabilities and who have achieved noteworthy success towards their goals. Awards are presented at our Holiday Festivity which, this year, was held at the Tucson Convention Center.

Beacon Group wishes to extend its most sincere gratitude and congratulations to each of our proud, deserving recipients!
There's Still Time to Take the 2017 Arizona Tax Credit!

Your Contribution will HELP provide meaningful employment choices and supports.

- Make a secure donation online at www.BeaconGroup.org/Donate
- File your Arizona taxes and claim the credit
- Receive your income tax credit and feel great!

The State of Arizona allows residents to obtain a tax credit up to $400 per individual and $800 filing jointly for contributions to a Qualifying Charitable Organization such as Beacon Group. Taxpayers can choose to attribute their contributions between Jan 1 - Apr 17 to either 2017 or 2018! Please consult your individual tax advisor for more information.

You make it RIGHT!

Cover Story: Ray Hamilton finds his “ticket” to success — the “Winning Ticket”