**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Industry Driven Sector Strategies**

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BRIAN KEATING: And without any further ado, I'm going to turn things over to Diane Walton, the project lead for the Office of the Regional Administrator, San Francisco, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Diane, take it away.

DIANE WALTON: Thanks, Brian, for everything, and having technical backup makes my heartrate so much more calm. We're about to have a bunch of fun. We have a bunch of really smart people who are going to go through what they've done, the experiences they've had, how they've gone about increasing their sector strategies work.

And I think it's just – it's been a really important endeavor over the past year trying to sort through how actually to increase the number of states and regions who are in sector strategies work. We started this endeavor before the innovation act passed, and then low and behold it's in the law. So it's not just a good idea. It's the law. I want to apologize to my friends in Alaska and Hawaii for their time zones not being one of the options listed earlier, and the people on the east coast have been thoroughly chastised and will never, never leave you out again.

So on to the sector work. We have lots of partners in this work of course, and it's been interesting for us at ETA. We've been – a lot of people have been doing this work, and for us to figure out how to bring our guys in the field and in the national office and in the regional offices up to speed and then to be really, really big contributors as the sector strategies get framed is – it's a big piece of work, and it's one that's provided a great deal of joy.

What we want to know from you – and Brian's going to bring up a poll – is where you really are in this whole notion of engaging in an industry-driven sector strategy. So sometimes we ask are you a leader or a learner and try to figure out what that arch is.

And then – but we've gotten a little bit more specific so that – to try to understand who's – how many people on the phone are already out there with an industry-driven sector strategy, meaning they've got multiple employers. They've got lattices. They've got ladders. They've got everything going. And then people who are just figuring out how to do this work. We have some people on the phone who are glad to walk through the different pieces of how you do the planning, how you even get to the table, how you be the table or what exactly your roll might be in whatever it is that this thing is.

And so it looks like nigh on 40 percent are out there with an industry-driven sector strategy, and their job is going to be to help the rest of us as we go.

So I've been reading through the welcome chat, seeing what people want. I think we're going to be on target on that. It's this notion of what does it mean when the sector partnerships are driven by industry rather than just reflecting it. We've had people say, oh, yeah. I put together an industry-driven sector strategy and then I called my employers and it wasn't exactly what they wanted. So really how you get it so it – really that they're the drivers.

Sometimes it's hard for us to give up control but it really does work out in the end and you'll hear some great stories about that. And then the other two pieces you can read, but it's really seeing how it works and how those results pay out for both our businesses and our workers, and then you just get to hear great stories about what people are doing and you get to ask them how that's going to help you.

So we have – the roster is rather impressive. Stephanie from Colorado, Barbara and Brian from Philadelphia, Frank and Navjeet the cleanup hitter, he's fifth (sic). It's kind of confusing if you're a baseball fan, but Navjeet's okay about that and will talk to you a little bit more about who they are. But it seems like the point would be to get right into the heart of the matter. This is the agenda with us trying to figure out how to organize this and give you smatterings of everybody's time.

We'll take a couple questions after each. I don't think we're going to be able to answer all of them, but we'll give it a go. And then when this is over of course we get the printout that has all the questions that have been asked, and then we'll figure out how to sort through that and get you whatever it is you need to be able to really deploy some industry-driven sector partnerships wherever it is you live. So without further ado, here's the fabulous Stephanie Steffens from the Colorado Workforce Development Council.

STEPHANIE STEFFENS: Thank you very much, Diane and everyone, for allowing us to be a part of this presentation. I really truly enjoy getting to talk about Colorado's work because most of it has been borrowed or as we still stole from Lindsey Woolsey, our R&D rip-off and duplicate from most of the other states that are probably on this call. So I'm happy to share what we've done with what we've taken from all of you and grown Colorado's sectors work.

So first, this really intense infographic that's on the screen. This is an infographic that really we use to demonstrate that the way Colorado is working to do our work with business and with our public partners are through two strategies, sector partnerships and career pathways, and the integration of those to have truly industry-driven pathways in Colorado, that if we do this correctly, it will lead to our vision and our mission and that its continuous improvements, it never stops.

This isn't a grant thing. It isn't a do-it-because-somebody-told-me-to-do-it thing. It is the way we work with our industry and public partners in Colorado across all of the different agencies and in all the different regions of the state.

So really quickly I was asked to kind of talk about how we got here and what our approach is.

So history. Colorado has actually been working in sector partnerships and sector strategies for many years. We were a part of a sectors – I mean, a policy academy with the National Governors' Association 12 years ago that resulted in a toolbox. So we've been around for a long time. This isn't something that we did overnight. Originally we were like many states. We funded 12 sector partnerships from across the state with planning and implementation grants, and at the end of those three-year grants was about the time that I had come on as the director and built a new team and was really looking at the way that we were overseeing the collaboration of workforce economic development and education in Colorado differently than it had been looked at before.

And really not getting into the weeds of the details, recognizing that that gets done at the local level, that our job at the state level is to provide the infrastructure and the support and to walk the talk, if you will. If we expect our local partners to collaborate and work together, we better be ready to demonstrate it at the state as well. And so that was where our work was going.

So that process developed our next generation of sector partnerships, which resulted from some case studies of the 12 partnerships from the reality that of the 12 original funding partnerships, only a handful would be left at the end of the grant, that they hadn't used the time to demonstrate that they could be sustainable, and that there needed to be a better way of doing it to build off of the really good lessons learned and the really good practices we had but that we could still take it to another level.

So we used some national experts and some support from several different organizations to really help us develop our next generation of sector partnerships, which are industry-based – or sorry – data-based, industry-chaired and driven, and really support a designated convener. And I'll talk about all of those a little more.

And then ultimately, we are getting to the point now, after two years of intense work on this where we have really good examples of where a sector partnership – where the industry has identified workforce as one of their top priorities, how we integrate that in partnership with our K-12 system, our community college system, our four-year colleges and universities to develop really meaningful career pathways that are going to solve those workforce needs for industry, not for them but in partnership with them. And so that's the sectors approach that we're taking in Colorado right now.

Again, another kind of messy graphic. This is a graphic that we totally and completely stole from the National Governors' Association and the Woolsey Group. When I saw this at our sectors academy right before we launched our next generation, it was a huge a-ha (sic) for me.

It was the recognition that a sector partnership isn't one of the many things that we do, but the sector partnership is the place that we bring industry in a single geographic region together with the public partners to identify what the priorities are and solutions to solve them as partners. And we just grabbed ahold of this and used it to launch the 37 sector partnerships that we have in Colorado now beginning launching in January of 2013. And it was really this framework that allowed us to do that.

I'm not going to read all of these little bullets there, but to just kind of expand a little bit what we mean by state level framework and aligned programs, again, that's walking the walk, talking the talk. We can't expect our local partners to collaborate and work together and put aside their competitive nature, and we can't expect businesses to do that if we aren't doing it across state agencies and partners.

So we have to do that as well. So we really looked closely at the best collaborations on the ground in Colorado, and we tried to emulate those at the state level and have stronger partnerships than we've ever had because of that mutual respect between local and state.

It's also about empowering a variety of conveners. A lot of people think that the only way you can do a sector partnership is if the workforce, the public workforce system is organizing that or in some states that is in partnership with the community colleges. One of the best things that we did and I'm very thankful for now is that we empowered our conveners to be anyone that is trusted by both the industry and the public partners.

So we have conveners that are economic developers, that are community college leaders, that are career and technical education leaders, that are workforce boards, workforce center staff, and also industry trade association staff. So there is no way we could have scaled sector partnerships in Colorado to the level that they are if it was all done on the back of our local workforce boards.

They're a critical partner. They're involved in every single one, but by sharing the love and sharing the responsibility, everybody can be involved in all of the sector partnerships in their region without having to be that constant convener and champion. And I think that was a real key for us.

We also intentionally decided that we were not going to fund any implementation grant – or any planning grants and implementation grants, that we are working to figure out how to fund sustainable sector partnerships. So in order to get sector partnerships launched, we are using a resource.

The technical assistance to the regions is how we are launching sector partnerships, and then once they demonstrate that they can be – that they're active and they have a business plan and they're truly industry-led and they have the real collaboration of the partners, then we work with them to identify funding and things to implement the programs that come out of them and to help take some of the pressure off of that – the cost and pressure of being the convener.

What does that technical assistance look like? It looks like our – well, we have a toolkit on our website, sectorsummit.com. It's full of videos, step-by-step guides for launching a sector partnership or having a career pathway. We have a peer learning network with calls.

We have access to subject matter – national subject matter experts, and we just provide a lot of technical assistance and support and we're constantly listening to what is needed at the local level and doing our best to adapt our resources to meet those needs through our local partners and especially our partnership with the Colorado community college system and the Workforce Director's Association are probably our most critical partners in that as well as our Office of Economic Development and all of their partnerships with the local economic developers around the state.

I referenced lessons learned. Again, I'm not going to read these to you. You can all see the screen, but I want to just hit the high points. The things that people always have talked about but we realized that every sector partnership must have is that you have to have that convener that is the single point of contact, and it has to be somebody that is trusted by industry and your public partners. Besides that it can be anybody.

You really need to focus on data and ROI. You need to operate your sector partnership like a business would operate an initiative of a business, and you have to make sure that industry – your partnership should only happen if industry is driving them to happen. And be flexible. Most importantly, don't overpromise. We have a tendency as public partners to want to promise business that we can do everything, and we can't. let's be honest with them, just like you would want your – anyone you're working with to be honest with you.

The last slide is a slide of the state of Colorado, and again, this just really emphasizes that we have 14 regions. In these regions we have 37 sector partnerships that are different stages. Those stages are listed as exploring, expanding, active, or high-performing.

We're still figuring this all out. The one thing we do know is exploring means we're looking to see if there is the will, the resources, the desire, and the commitment at the local level within that industry, and that if you go to the exploring stage and find out that that's not going to happen, you don't have all of that, it's perfectly fine to say we are not moving any farther forward. It's not a failure. It is part of the exploration to make sure that you're really meeting the needs of industry that are in it with you as a partner and not predetermining what you should be doing but waiting for industry to help you determine that.

We're working on creating key performance indicators and dashboards for both our sector partnerships and industry engagement as well as career pathways. It's a lot of work. We've been working on it with national partners and other states for about two and a half years, and we're not there yet. As soon as we are, we'll be happy to share it with everyone, and we have begged and borrowed from many other states to put it into what we're working on.

And then the last key is just they're not grant-driven. They – it's based on technical assistance and partnership and really having an extreme focus on project management because you have to run it professionally or businesses are going to get frustrated and burned out. Giving specific focus to a real project manager is key, and spreading that responsibility out across partners is the only way you'll be able to scale.

So with that I'll leave you with the resources that we're happy to share and ask that you just give credit where credit is due, if you use one of our papers or things that have been done by one of our national subject matter experts that we've contracted with.

MS. WALTON: So now you can take a breath, Stephanie. That was just – it's so much information to try to deliver so quickly, but thanks for getting that all up on the board. We have had some people who have sent in some things that they're doing, which is great but – and a question is coming in about how you built relationships. And I think that that's going to be key.

MS. STEFFENS: I think the biggest thing for us was, as the state, making sure that we built our relationships with our local workforce directors, our local community college leaders, our local economic development folks through their statewide system.

So for us in Colorado, the Colorado community college system, our Office of Economic Development, our Department of Higher Ed, our Department of Education, really using them as resources but having intentional conversations at the local level with those partners also. We leveraged the governor's bottom up economic development plan back in 2011.

We went around the state to all 64 counties, to each of the 14 regions and really pulled together groups of teams, and our first sector summit, which was in January of 2013, we funded 10 to 12 people from each of the 14 regions to come to our first sector summit. And we were very specific about who had to be on the team and the work that they were going to do in that summit, but it really empowered them to get out of their local community and have some focused time on what it meant to build a team of public partners.

And then we started exploring now how do you bring industry in and teach them how to engage you, and what resources and tools can we give you to be really good partners with industry. And that took us probably a year of convener trainings and conversations about how you talk to business in a different way than you're used to talking to them. It took a long time.

MS. WALTON: Just one more thing. One more thing about that, the role of the convener and then how you trained local conveners; right? There's some sort of tiering there as well; right?

MS. STEFFENS: Right. On our website we have a step-by-step guide for sector partnerships, and a big part of that was that we did a convener training where we brought in our national experts to help us. We trained several of our state agency staff, and then they went out with the national experts and conducted convener trainings throughout the state to teach people how to run a launch meeting, how to have a conversation with industry, how to be a well-behaved public partner, how to not overpromise.

And I think those were really key, and we continue to do those at least a couple times a year. And we now have some of our own local partners that are good enough at doing it that they can teach the classes themselves.

MS. WALTON: That's fantastic. So clearly there are lots more questions that Stephanie in Colorado could handle, but we're going to move on. The – and thanks so much for bringing that, the role of the state into such great focus for what's possible.

We're going to move on to a local possibility now, and for that we go to Philadelphia. The presenters Barbara and Brian stand prepared to let everybody know the work at the local level is not the same. And then there's some – well, there are similarities, and there are differences. Here they go. Welcome.

BARBARA STANFORD-ALLEN: Well, good morning, everyone. This is Barbara Stanford-Allen and –

BRIAN OGLESBY: Brian Oglesby:

MS. STANFORD-ALLEN: – Oglesby, and we're going to talk about the work that we've done here in Philadelphia on a local level. But I have to say that much of what we've done actually mirrors a lot of what Stephanie said, and similar to the principles and strategies that they put in place, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania saw the need to engage in sector work in about 2004. And they did – they kind of engaged the local –

MR. KEATING: And I'm sorry, Barbara. Could you speak up a little bit? We're getting some feedback that you're – just if you could speak up, that would be great.

MS. STANFORD-ALLEN: And that's a complaint I've never had.

So at any rate, as I – the commonwealth has been engaged in sector strategy since about 2004 and similar to the way Colorado went about it. They also engaged local areas in terms of planning and implementation grants and also engaged them around how to do this work.

So before any – anyone was ever funded to do any work in any sector strategies, basically what was put together was a planning and a convening that happened in Harrisburg to talk about what sector strategies looked like, or as we call them here in the commonwealth, industry partnership and how you need to go about it and how that differed from what the work – the way you had been engaging businesses and industry previously.

MR. KEATING: I'm sorry to cut in again, Barbara. You're – we're still getting feedback that you're hard to hear. If you could just speak up or move the phone closer to you, that would be great.

MS. STANFORD-ALLEN: OK. So our partnership was actually formed in 2007, and we basically formed this partnership around manufacturing. And as a result what we did was learning – building on the lessons that we learned and one of the academies that we had gone in – that we participated in on a state level.

Our partnership was actually formed with seven manufacturers. One of the things that we came to know very quickly is that we needed to have them organized around some organizing principles. We needed to let them, most importantly, tell us what it was that they were looking for.

And I need to kind of emphasize that our organization was not the WIB at that time. We were the fiscal agent for the city of Philadelphia for workforce funds, and so we also had a lot of skepticism that was there within the community about what was going to be different about this program than all the programs that had gone before.

So I'm going to say that initially when you're building this partnership, one of the first things that you're really going to do is you're going to need to build the trust of that employer community, and you're also going to need to convince them that their interest, what they want to do is really going to be what sets the agenda. So as we moved through this, we had a series of strategic planning meetings that we went in, first of all, to introduce and educate and inform them about what sector strategies or industry partnerships were about.

And then we had a session – a series of focus groups and listening sessions where we asked them to tell us exactly what it was that they wanted first and foremost from the public workforce system and how we could be responsive. But then looking at a broader view, what were the problems that they were facing, the industry was facing that we might be able to help them with?

So quickly, our industry partnership was formed around the principles that were there that are outlined here that most of our manufacturers were addressing a very – an aging workforce, that they were worried about where their future workers were going to come from, that they were not – they had difficulty navigating a public workforce system and how we could be of help to them.

And they also wanted to raise the profile of advanced manufacturing, and they wanted to have input, real input that someone was going to listen to them not only about workforce policies and procedures but also about training programs because they felt as though a lot of them weren't meeting their needs. And they wanted to have a unified structure whereby they could begin to kind of develop and address career pathways and continuums for growth.

So that's where we landed initially, and it was from those organizing principles that we began to form what we needed to do. We took on the role here at Philadelphia Works of being the project manager for that, but by no means were we the driver of the partnership. What we also found from them is that we needed to run this like a business in a manner that businesses were used to. So very quickly we really found out that we needed to kind of develop strong leadership.

Now, again, as I said, I'm talking about seven companies that came together who were somewhat reluctant, didn't really know what this was about, but we did have a few champions that stepped up to the plate. And I'm going to say that if you're forming your partnership, you're going to need to quickly identify who those champions are because regardless of the work that you're doing – again, I must reiterate if you cannot get business to buy into this strategy, you're not going to be successful.

So we identified some leaders. We also identified the need to have some principles and guiding principles, strategic plans, committees that needed to be quickly formed or at least be able to be talked about based on what those organizing principles were. We needed to form some committees to address some of these areas that we wanted to address. And we also know within the leadership, coming back to what Stephanie mentioned about avoiding employer fatigue, we also knew that especially with seven individuals, we couldn't burn these seven people out.

So we kind of needed to kind of stretch that work out among them. As we've grown to now represent over 50 employers in the region and still growing and have partnerships that have extended into with economic development organizations, our local community colleges, I'd say that leadership has managed to change roles on several occasions so that we're able to get everybody involved in the areas of appeal to them.

So again, these committee-based structures to evaluate our strategic initiatives and also to approve expenditures. One key point that I need to mention with the formation of this partnership is that one thing that we all recognize from the very beginning is that the funding for these would not be forever. And so the commonwealth, when they basically put these grants together, required that there be a matching component.

Stephanie also mentioned about being flexible. So I need to mention that our partnership was funded at the height of the recession. And so matching dollars at that time trying to get people to buy into that was a difficult concept, but we were able to do that by having the partnership or the state become somewhat flexible in terms of those guidelines, which allowed us to build that sustainability fund and to go on to do some other things.

I'm not going to read again every bullet point that's here, but again, things like having facilitation taking the work away from the partners, making sure that whoever is managing these partnerships, that you do all of the work, that you get together the content for them, that you go over the agenda. But again, you do this in recognition with your industry leaders.

I'm going to turn it over to Brian to talk about our outcomes and go from there, industry's role.

MR. OGLESBY: Hello, everyone. If you don't hear me, just let me know right away. Basically what we try to make sure is the industry has a significant role in the management and the progress of a sector-based partnership, in our case industry partnership. The primary is they function as an advisor to us as a workforce investment board, and they give us real-time intel on industry needs and labor needs.

We do a lot of – we do a very effective job as a WIB of doing research and gaining labor market information that's relevant to our region and to our industry sectors. And I want to make sure that we are very clear about when we have a sector-based partnership, our industry folks provide that advisory thing for us because we can compile statistics and we can do a lot of things anecdotally, but the industries themselves lead us in terms of what's effective for us.

So we always vet our data against what they tell us in those meetings because oftentimes we'll present them with information, and the feedback we'll receive is, well, I have a circumstance right now that falls outside of your data. And we try to make sure we adjust our expenditures, our programming to fit the needs of the industry partnership members through their role as advisors.

One of the things that they also do is vet our strategies. We do things like develop career pathways, and you'll see in the next slide that we've developed career pathways and developed things such as definitions of work readiness and making sure that all the data that's related to the development of this type of pathway – and what you're seeing on the screen now is an advanced manufacturing career pathway where we have quality assurance, production, and maintenance or repairs.

And it's in the hierarchical structure to demonstrate pathway from an entry level position to a senior level position, and it's all vetted based on labor market data, required education, and direct feedback from the industry folks themselves.

So without belaboring it and going through each bullet, that's an example of the type of information that we present to the partnership for their vetting and feedback. And with that I will turn it over to the illustrious Frank Cettina, who is –

FRANK CETTINA: Wow. Thanks.

MR. OGLESBY: – who shares our industry partnership and does a remarkable job of it, and you can send me the check any time, Frank.

MR. CETTINA: You got it. Thank you very much. I think my boss is online. So that's very helpful. To start out, I heard so many good things from everybody on this line. Thank you very much for letting me be involved, and thank you to Brian, Barbara, and her team. Their level of skill and professionalism that they bring to the table is what makes these things get done. I can't reiterate enough what Brian said earlier. You absolutely need to support the industry and help them along and do that work for them. There's a lot of heavy lifting that has to be done.

I like talking with my hands. So it's rather difficult in this kind of environment. So I'm going to do my best. To start out with, we talked about industry engagement, and we talk about getting together around a table and making it easier for the employers to get there. We do a combination of live meetings and conference call meetings.

We try to keep them to a minimum and be respectful of the time of all the employers. That way we have people that show up to the table, that if we stay aware of time and everybody is then much more likely to be involved. They don't feel like it's wasteful of their time.

We do a lot of peer learning. We found that getting together, there's not too many environments where industry can get together in an environment and speak relatively freely about the different challenges that they're faced. So we ended up finding many other benefits from this as well.

We're able to talk about different HR issues, different legal issues that might be coming down the pike, different training that would be beneficial to all of us, which gives us the opportunity to combine training. So all of these things are fantastic. When we're face to face, we're able to get that, and that's what draws people together.

I think the first couple meetings we had, the engagement was very everybody sits down and is waiting for something to happen. And it's a challenge in the beginning, but over time it tends to work through. The benefits and the return on investment, we found that it decreased attrition quite a bit. It helps us with hiring costs. We're able to retrain people that we currently have to do jobs that we didn't think maybe they could do before.

We have issued more than 2,000 credentials. It's really fantastic. We see the growth of our employees and the benefit to both themselves, to their families, and to the company. So there's really a fantastic outcome that you can see as you go along.

There was an independent study that was done by JOIN, and JOIN is the Job Opportunity Investment Network, and they provided some funding for our partnership. And then they came out and they jumped into a couple companies and did some measurements of what that return on investment was.

In particular at our company, they looked at some training that we did with employees here, and on a five-year business plan we had a 407 percent return on investment. It was a combination of maintaining current employees, being able to retrain them. We were able to rebrand ourselves. We were able to market new technologies. We were able to invest in robotics because we were able to then get training and combine training and the new skills so that we can move that through where we may not have done that before, if we didn't have that support.

We were able to improve our customer service. We were able to train people to do their job better or find better ways to do it and to seek new technologies to do it and thereby improving our customer relationship. So we were able to really define a concrete return on investment, and it was very exciting.

The additional measures you can see here there's more engagement with the public workforce system. You'll see that there's credential attainment. There's a lot of credential now is transferrable. We're finding that people can get a credential in electrical technician and be able to use that at multiple companies. So if they leave our company, go to another company, they can carry that with them.

So people are becoming more excited about getting training. We're able to track wage increases, promotions, and then sustainability. And sustainability for our partnership, we, like Barbara and Brian had said earlier, early on when we look at these partnerships, we knew money wouldn't be around forever.

And so we had to define a way to come up with some ability to sustain this, and we put together a plan and we've been able to maintain that. And even in times of low funding, we were able to still provide training to the employers and be able to maintain what we've been doing all along because we were building sustainability funding and controlling it according to some early developed policies.

So we're on to some lessons learned. We talked about industry led. It truly means that. I think Barbara and Brian pointed out that, although they mentioned earlier putting together materials, putting together agendas, but they're doing the hard part, what I always think the hard part, the leg work, pulling it all together. They're getting it on paper, getting it out to everybody, which really could tie people up.

But they go through it. They go through it with all of us. They ask us, what are the things you want to talk about? What do we want to cover in the next meeting? And then they do the heavy lifting and pull it together. So it is industry led, and by them making it easier it's making it easier for us to voice our opinion and what we need.

Actively listening at our meetings. I – multiple times as we go through our meetings we may address a policy or an idea or a training that we're thinking about doing and through some polls and some ideas we may find that not everybody's on board. We'll find that then it's – maybe it's not the place and we'll put it aside and we'll bring it back at a later time. So it's important to listen to the whole group and make sure that everybody's on board.

Flexibility is absolutely beyond – I can't say how important it is. I think the thing that impressed me the most, I was one of those seven companies that started out in this industry partnership, and the first thing we heard when we were talking about training is don't worry about how to navigate the system. Just tell us what you're looking for. We'll take care of it.

I've heard it multiple times, and to this day I hear it every time. Just tell us what you're looking for. We'll figure out how to get it done. And I think if anybody can take a lesson out of this, it's really hard work to do that but I think if you can do that, that's what brings industry on board.

And then the last item on there, if it doesn't fit, don't force it. It's really what it is. If industry doesn't want it, don't push it because it's only going to drive people away. So that's a rundown of where we are, and entertain any questions that people might have.

MS. WALTON: Thanks so much, Frank, Barbara, Brian. Just that the story of how it evolved is so interesting, and then to have you, Frank, representing it so well makes me smile. One of the questions that's come in particular to you, Frank, is how being involved in a sector partnership decreased attrition for you at Computer Components or if you mean that it decreased it overall.

MR. CETTINA: I can answer it twofold. Specifically for Computer Components, we have been able to retrain and train employees so that we have more cross-training in the company.

So we're getting people that may not have felt that they had a future at the company. They may have started out in a position that might have been sweeping a floor and they've had the opportunity to get trained and learn another job and we've exposed them to welding or we've exposed them to machining.

And that immediately makes people look at this and say, wait. I do have more of a future here. I'm not just going to be a guy who's going to sweep the floor or clean up. And so that attrition, people look at it, and they know that, wait a minute. This company is providing some training. I'm going to learn more. I'm going to do better. I'm able to provide for my family now. This might be the place for me to stay.

At the same time, we brought people on with various programs where we were able to – where we may not have been able to afford to bring an employee on, there were grants that paid for OJT. That exposure to the availability of that made us take a chance on some employees that we may not have otherwise have taken on board, and I still have those employees today five and six years down the line.

So that's fantastic for us, and through the other industry partners that are on our team, they resoundingly have similar stories. So it's – really it's an amazing thing when you give people the exposure to the availability of the various programs that are out there and the various types of training that are available.

MS. WALTON: Thanks. Barbara, question for you and Brian, says, "You said we do all the work for the industry leaders; it's not quite how you phrased it, because you don't do all the work, but anyway, do you have personnel dedicated only to this process?"

MS. STANFORD-ALLEN: I would love to say yes to that but – what it boils down to is it really boils down to Brian and I. I do have a team. I just – I oversee our business engagement unit. So I do have other industry specialists, but I only have one other individual who's dedicated to the manufacturing sector. So between the three of us, we do all the heavy lifting around the manufacturing IT.

MS. WALTON: And then, "Is it a collaborative funding structure? How are you sustaining the partnership?" People are pretty interested in that.

MS. STANFORD-ALLEN: I'm so glad you asked me that question because I have to really give credit to our employer partners. As I said initially, they really recognize the need that this was going to be – need to be sustained beyond the grant.

So we have been first and foremost very successful in securing other grants from other sources. We've received social innovation funds, funds from the National Fund, and also from the local successes that we've had, we've also been able to draw funding from our local banks who have supported our manufacturing industry partnership. But more than anyone, it's the own employers who have supported it.

Their share – our employers match 50 percent on every dollar for training that's put out there. So if training is $5,000, our employers are paying back in $2500 of that. And originally when the partnership was formed, it was only a 25 percent match, but these employers themselves elected to increase the employer contribution to 50 percent. And they also give of their time, which that goes without saying, and their energy to participate in events that kind of get our partnership out there and promoted.

MR. CETTINA: I'd like to add to that. I mean, sometimes people hear that as employers that we – we're going to contribute to our training. As an employer, I look at it as a 50 percent off sale, and everybody likes a 50 percent off sale. So that opportunity of getting training for half price is a fantastic deal to us, and when we do that, that just builds our sustainability. And we value this partnership. So to us, that's a small price to pay.

MS. WALTON: See. And I love it because we so often describe it as, oh, my God. They're going to pay for half.

MS. STANFORD-ALLEN: And the thing about it is is that, as I said, there were organizing principles in the beginning, and one of those organizing principles was around the pipeline. So this partnership has really gone beyond the things of training. Training is something else that comes with it, but it's not the full benefit.

So this partnership through the sustainability fund also has created a manufacturing industry pipeline that we not only fund for those summer interns. It has a co-op component that happens when students finish their academic requirements, and all of that is funded and hosted by these employer partners. So they pay the salaries or the wages of these young adults and host the locations for them to get that experience. So they're basically building their own farm team.

MS. WALTON: That's so great. We have a couple more questions, but we don't – let's – we're just not going to answer everything, and we're going to move along. There's a poll that will show up that will say – it's kind of a trick poll. What are some of the benefits of an industry led sector strategy? And so you can vote away, and then as soon as people have finished voting, Navjeet, you have to get ready. You're in the – what do we call it? You're on deck.

NAVJEET SINGH: OK. Thank you. I am ready here.

MS. WALTON: You're ready, willing, and able?

MR. SINGH: Yes.

MS. WALTON: It looks like people have figured out that all of the above in the polling question are absolutely true. And we're going to move right along because time – wow. So interesting.

Anyway, here's the fabulous Navjeet Singh from the National Fund.

MR. SINGH: Thank you so much, Diane. And it's great to be here and to follow Barbara, Brian, and Frank. And I'm actually going to build on some of the remarks that they made. So I am with the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, which is a national partnership of employers, workers, communities, and philanthropy, and this was set up in 2007 with funding from philanthropy and subsequently in 2010 we received a social innovation fund grant from the federal government.

And I think there's some key elements that the first slide describes, that we are focused on demand-driven or employer-driven strategies that create talent supply chains or talent pipelines. And that's what you heard Barbara just refer to. That's our goal, that these should be employer-driven and that our goal is to create pipelines. We also at the same time one of our goals is to advance workers into family-supporting careers, to help to improve workforce development systems. We are currently operating in over 35 communities across the United States, and obviously you have the website here for more information.

Let me sort of go to the next slide here and give you a little idea of our structure. So the national funders, national philanthropy created the National Fund. We are based at Jobs for the Future in Boston. We have three kinds of goals, systems change, goals for employers, and goals for individuals that are being served. The two-tiered structure we have is – and I will use the references before our friends in Philadelphia made, Barbara, Brian, and Frank.

So we fund regional collaboratives. Frank made a reference to JOIN, the Job Opportunity Investment Network. JOIN is a public-private partnership based at United Way in Philadelphia. They essentially bring together local philanthropy as well as workforce boards and other kind of public entities to align, coordinate funding in workforce development efforts. And they in turn fund industry workforce partnerships such as the one that Frank, Brian, and Barbara are working with.

Our funding typically tends to be relatively small because we ask for a lot of leverage, but the key resource that we provide, based on a survey of our communities, we learned is the network, is the peer learning, is the coaching, and the technical assistance. And so as you see, each industry partnership has in its goals that they have to serve the employers, and obviously they are serving the individuals who are being trained, employed, or who advanced based on the training. And that sort of kind of highlights our model.

That's it again. We provide some funding, but most of what we provide is a ready network of practitioners and experts who are available as coaches, who provide technical assistance. We put together learning events for our collaboratives, for peers of Barbara and Brian.

We also bring together some of our employers in this work, and let me take you to the next slide to give you a little bit of an idea of our geography. And I can certainly see we are missing in certain time zones here, Diane, and we could definitely kind of benefit from some further movement west.

MS. WALTON: Yes.

MR. SINGH: So I think that's sort of my high level. I do have one more slide.

One of the lessons we have learned from working with over 170 industry workforce partnerships during our eight-year existence, we try to highlight those aspects in a document called "The Characteristics of a High-Performing Industry Partnership" that is available to all of you.

And the number one characteristic is employer leadership. Those partnerships that are either created at the instance of employers or businesses or that over time are able to kind of develop employer leadership tend to be the most high-performing and the most successful. And that's one of the, I think, the advantages of some of the funding that we provide or that our local funders provide.

Sometimes it enables some funding for staff time to help kind of inform and even bring together employers, and that's extremely powerful to the – (inaudible). I think the single most critical element, as we said, is employer leadership.

It's important also to have excellent outcomes, both for employers as well as individuals. It's important to have both short-term and long-term goals. You can't just sort of have people waiting for sort of long-term wins. So you have to have a mix of goals. You have to address immediate needs of employers, while at the same time working with companies like Frank's to help build this pipeline.

So lot of our folks are dealing with – a lot of our partnerships are dealing with immediate employee needs. At the same time they are often working with high schools and even middle schools and working with employers to reach out to middle schools and high schools to develop further interest in manufacturing or healthcare or whatever the focus of the industry partnership.

You can see a number of the other elements here. Our primary focus does tend to be low-skill, low-wage individuals, which is very much like kind of what the kind of market that workforce boards tend to cater to. We do promote industry-recognized credentials and pathways. And I think the key element we recognize or one of the key purposes of the partnership again is to be a forum for exchange of information.

There's critical information that educators, community-based organizers, and those in the workforce development system need from employers. What's happening? What is the current need? How are their needs changing? How are their needs likely to change in the future? And at the same time we can kind of a forum also where they can kind of learn how to leverage let's say OJT funds, how to leverage different kinds of resources in the public system. And that's where number seven is extremely important, and you heard two other people.

You heard Barbara and Brian. You need knowledgeable staff who are provided often by a workforce board. It could be an intermediary, as I think Stephanie mentioned earlier also that there could be various kinds of folks who can play the role of convener. But it's extremely important that these are knowledgeable folks who understand the industry.

They understand the workforce development landscape, and so you need both strong – (inaudible) – knowledge of folks like the staff from workforce boards or other intermediaries as well as employer leaders who are willing to lead the partnership.

And I think with that I will stop here and see if there are any questions that I can address.

MS. WALTON: Thanks so much, Navjeet. We're running close on time, but maybe if Barbara and Brian could speak to – there's a question about what's your watershed moment. "When did you know that you were primed for success?"

MR. OGLESBY: Want to take this one?

MS. STANFORD-ALLEN: I think I knew when we no longer had to recruit manufacturing companies, that actually our member companies started doing the recruitment for us. And by that what I mean is, Frank, you can probably give the best example as to how you did that.

MR. CETTINA: Well, I think that when we saw value in it, we started spreading the word to our vendors, our customers, even our competitors that this is something valuable for them to get involved in, and then that just fostered growth.

MR. OGLESBY: I think my perspective is a few years ago we suffered from some significant budget cuts at the state level, and we had to consolidate several partnerships into one. And it was a nearly seamless operation, and everyone bought in.

We didn't lose anyone, and we functioned at probably less than 10 percent of our original funding levels combined for all the sector-based partnerships in the Philadelphia area. And we maintained our – not only maintained our membership but we consolidated four partnerships and expanded our membership and nearly – and probably nearly doubled the numbers since then.

MS. WALTON: Well, the three huge, huge moments. And I just want to thank everybody who's on the phone lines or on the computer lines and all the presenters. This work is not easy, but when you break it down the way you did, it shows that it's possible and it also shows the huge rewards that are coming for people once they line it up. So big thanks for everybody.

A couple reminders. We do have some information that's available. We've been having these convenings. Several of you have been at those. That information's available on the web. Later in May, the week of May 18th through 21st, we're going to do a virtual institute online. It's going to be a little chaotic, but it's going to be great.

And we'll have more of this sort of how it happens time for you to spend with some of these fantastic people who have done such an extraordinary piece of work. We also are continuing with our peer learning groups, and those will go on throughout the year. And there's a way to get the information on that.

And then mostly, it's just the speakers' contact information is all on a slide, and it's just a big thank you to all of you for what you've done and what you're about to do. So go forth. Do good, and let us know how it's going and how we can help. Thanks.

(END)