**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Effective Workforce Partnerships:**

**Leveraging Resources to Improve TAACCCT Outcomes**

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CHRIS WATSON: I would like to move us over to the PowerPoint and introduce Cheryl Martin. Cheryl Martin is the TAACCCT program director here in the Division of Strategic Investments at the Department of Labor. Cheryl, why don't you take it away?

CHERYL MARTIN: Good afternoon and good morning, and thank you, Chris. This is Cheryl Martin, and thanks for that introduction. A warm welcome to everybody on the call today. You chose a good one. I'm excited about this one, and before we jump in to hear from our presenters this afternoon, which is what it is where we are here, I just wanted to let you know where we are on the map of the TAACCCT learning network today.

You as TAACCCT grantees are all part of the TAACCCT learning network, and there are a number of resources available to you from multiple sources, including our office at the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, and then from various other folks who are helping us with technical assistance for the TAACCCT grants, including Jobs for the Future and their partners, CalState/Merlot and so on as you see there. Today where we are on that map is that Jobs for the Future and some of their partners, including Ron and others at NAWB, are helping us pull together this webinar and present on this topic to you today.

So without further ado on that, I would like to introduce Ron and he will introduce the others. Ron is the CEO for National Association of Workforce Boards, and NAWB supports its members – member WIBs through advocacy training and TA, communication, and the promotion of strategic partnerships for the advancement of our nation's workforce. With TAACCCT, partnerships are everything. Well, maybe almost everything.

So it's really – partnerships are just critical to the success of every TAACCCT grant that is a message that we want to make sure that people here in all kinds of ways. And a particularly important partnership is that with the workforce system. So that's why I'm excited about what we'll be hearing about today.

Ron has been a key partner in our effort to build strong linkages between community colleges, WIBs, and American job centers to support the success of TAACCCT program. And he's joined today by two WIBs and a community college representative who will discuss the local partnerships they built and provide you with helpful information for working effectively with your local WIB and AJC partners.

So with that I'm going to turn it over to Ron and the other folks on the call today. Take it away.

RON PAINTER: All right, Cheryl. This is Ron Painter to all of you and thank you, Cheryl, and thanks to the department and a shout out to Jennifer and the crew at JFF for some great work in helping to bring us all together. I'm really excited, as Cheryl is, about the opportunity to hang out with you guys. As I was watching the – some of you join us, obviously some great community colleges jumping online here, some that I'm familiar with because I've probably hung out with you guys or because of the work that you've been doing with workforce boards across the U.S.

And a special shout out to my friend affiliated with the University of Hawaii. They were gracious enough to host a fantastic meeting, the East-West Center that we held with some of our colleagues across the Pacific Rim a couple years ago, and I understand we're all looking forward to doing that again. So that would be great.

Cheryl mentioned NAWB. We represent the workforce boards, local led workforce investment boards. We do that not only in the traditional sense of advocacy but also working with a number of other organizations here in Washington, D.C. and around the country, trade associations, business associations, chamber executives, and a number of others.

We're also a member of what's called the intergovernmental organization. It's a group of organizations, and I won't get them all but National Governors Association, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Association of State Workforce Administrators, the Conference of State Legislators, National Association of Counties, and us. We meet frequently with the Department of Labor to talk through issues, TAACCCT among them. So it's also great to be here.

As Cheryl mentioned, I'm going to introduce these folks, and then we'll – I'll walk us back and talk a little bit about how today is going to proceed. As Chris mentioned to you all, you have a screen there. If you have a question or a comment, please put it in there. I've got Josh Copus, our vice president, hanging out with me today. We're going to look at those and hopefully be able to bring those into the conversation.

But it's great to have Sherry Kelly Marshall who is the president and CEO of the Southwest Ohio Regional Workforce Board with us; Regina Livers who is the Pathway to Employment Center at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, a great partnership, a project that we at NAWB and me specifically got to be a part of.

So it's a real treat to give a shout out to the folks at CSTCC and also a great partnership up in the Minnesota area, Randy Johnson who is the executive director for the Workforce Development, Incorporated in Rochester. So you're going to hear from those guys in just a minute.

Cheryl mentioned that partnerships are the heart of TAACCCT, and I really think that in the new legislation, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which I refer to as I&O because I think innovation and opportunity are the – maybe the critical words in that bill. But I&O builds the notion that there is a workforce development system and that that system is being challenged and called on to deliver results not only for the businesses across the country but also for job seekers.

And I think two of the most important partners in that workforce development system are the workforce boards who focus on labor market analytics, who look at the what do we have in terms of the labor force, what do we need in terms of the skill and their partners at the community colleges who help deliver those skills.

I think some of you know from having hung around me that I am a Pittsburgh boy. And some of you got to, when you were younger, probably hang out with one of the folks that was really special, having known him personally but also pretty special to Pittsburgh, and that was Fred Rogers.

And lots of times when I get into this work I'm really reminded of the lessons that Fred tried to teach us, that it's a wonderful day in the neighborhood and won't you be my neighbor. And I really think that that's kind of the same message in a way for me. The TAACCCTs have not – there have been some bumps along the road in the first few rounds of the TAACCCT grant between community colleges and workforce boards. There are some great examples of partnerships.

You're going to hear two today. But I think it's we're involved at any NAWB because we believe in both of our systems. We believe that we've got to figure out how to work together. There's a lot of work to be done out there to make certain that funding, that public policy is aligned to produce the kinds of positive results that both of us are charged with.

Both of us have high expectations on us to make certain that America has the world's leading labor force. So I'd really encourage you to reach out. We're certainly here. We're working with JFF. We're working with the department so that where there are some problems or where issues arise, we're certainly prepared to work with you to try and resolve those.

So without any further ado, I want to get to the partnerships. The first thing we want to do is we want to ask about those partnerships. So you can answer – there you go, Chris. Thanks. If you could answer what ways you're currently collaborating with your WIB and/or One-Stop, and we would really appreciate that.

Awesome. We have some votes coming in. I like it. It's not CNN, but it's almost like a lecture night. I can feel it. Cool. Interesting. Wow, recruitment, we have seen that across a number of projects where the boards have really worked with the college to recruit, identifying industry needs. I think job placement is an area that a number of the boards are working with community colleges on, not only in – where there is specialized instruction going on but in general working with placement and advice. OK. This is pretty cool. Pretty cool. All right.

So we're going to move on, and it is – it's purely my pleasure to introduce not only a great workforce board director but a great and good true friend. So with that I'm going to turn this over to Sherry Kelly Marshall who is the president and CEO of the Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board. Sherry, welcome.

MR. WATSON: And, Sherry, you might be on mute.

SHERRY KELLY MARSHALL: You're exactly right. I was speaking quite fluently on mute – and mute.

MR. PAINTER: All right. Well, welcome, Sherry. Thanks for joining us.

MS. MARSHALL: Thank you, Ron, and thanks to my panelists and thanks to everyone who's on the webinar. I see we have 69 participants. Unfortunately I can't tell whether most of the – where most of them are from and what their affiliations are. So I look forward to questions that help with that as we move through the webinar.

Let me first explain why my title is president and CEO. We are a combined city and county and the metropolitan center of a three-state area, and our leadership in the early years around 2004 was extremely progressive about being sure that we had the right formation of the board and they also encouraged and we followed their advice to form a 501(c)(3).

So our organization has been a 501(c)(3) for a little over 10 years now, and in the world today those organizations, when they're using the kinds of levels of funds that we manage as the WIB for our area, tend to label their directors executives instead of director or president and CEO because John Pepper, who was the Procter & Gamble chairman at the time, really thought that workforce was so important and it needed a president and a CEO, not just a director.

I'm a little caught by the fact that we don't – I was looking at the way the questions were being formed for all of you, and we have worked with our community college and I have worked for the community college Cincinnati State for a time period between working at the chamber and then coming onto the board. So we've just kind of been doing this in various ways for a pretty long time, which you can see on the slide.

We actually began when I was working with the chamber around a health careers collaborative that involved working with people with disabilities to serve the hospital community, and that group wound up inventing something called Project Search, which is now marketed to a variety of industries that have some particular kinds of needs that can be very concentration oriented or confined in terms of variety. And this has worked extremely well with people with certain kinds of disabilities.

That was kind of the basis for the big build out of our healthcare collaborative efforts that resulted in our being a TAACCCT grant recipient in 2012. Subsequently we have a partnership for advanced manufacturing, and then subsequently we have a partnership for transportation, distribution, and logistics that are all TAACCCTs in this tristate region.

Working together with the PTEC – we call it PTEC, the placement initiative that was mentioned earlier by Ron – we amended then converted the lower level of our One-Stop Center, known in Ohio as Ohio Means Jobs Centers into the PTEC location on site with us. It's a partnership with Great Oaks as the career technical school and then Cincinnati State as the community college and the One-Stop.

There are classrooms. There are testing assessment centers. There are offices of both the national TAACCCT partners and the Cincinnati State and Great Oaks staff who offer the services. And then on the second and third floors we have a comprehensive One-Stop operation and it's simply a matter of going up and down the stairs or the elevator in order to link these connections as strongly as they have been.

The referral services and academic advising work for both adults and youth and for many individuals. Particularly we also have our community link partner housed in the One-Stop, and the community link partner operates with the TANF population. So we've got a real movement of a variety of funding sources for adults and youth to be able to participate in not just the TAACCCT grant activities but initiatives that Cincinnati State has to offer and Great Oaks have to offer our community.

You see below the description with Great Oaks about being the Project Search inventors, and then the classes moving and then everybody kind of having a combined operation there. And now, oddly enough, the WIB has moved its offices from within the Cincinnati Chamber to within the Great Oaks/Scarlet Oaks campus as a result of some mergers of various entities in economic development that then all wanted to be together in the space that we were somewhat sharing with the chamber of commerce.

The pathways that we have been involved in therefore are the ones that – you can see easily the ones that relate to the TAACCCT grants that we received, but we also have always been partners since about 2001 in construction both with union apprenticeship partnerships and non-union apprenticeship partnerships.

We also were asked to devise a way to begin to do outreach to middle schoolers and invented a program that was called Middle School Outreach, not real nifty but extremely successful. It is funded entirely by the Spirit of Construction Foundation that serves the tristate region and was begun in 2008 and continues today.

However, a couple years ago when we had to start talking to our volunteers about taking a particular kind of training for working with kids that were 11, 12, and 13 – and that was not something that we did as a WIB board, we generally started our youth activities at 14 – I worked with the Spirit of Construction. And a local entity that is construction oriented adopted that program and has maintained it since 2012.

Advanced manufacturing, we have General Electric. They began the initiative for veterans, and that partnership was the WIB and Cincinnati State and GE and all of their subcontractors. Energy and power we go back and forth on. It relates much more to some activity here that you all probably know of as shale.

We don't have it so much in our area but on the other side of the state it's extremely active and it tends to attract the best of our trades talent. So then we need to work with the trades to be able to infill for those talents that have moved over into the shale side of the energy source in Ohio.

Information technology is relatively recent, although we did also run an initiative when I was with the chamber on regional information technology to kind of predict how big the growth would be. We were relatively wrong in how big.

It looks three times bigger than we were predicting it would be 10 years later. But we now have a chief information officers group that is all of the top 60 company CIOs and we work with them on information technology needs that they have so that we can meet their needs and that helps to also meet the down line level of competencies that are needed.

TD&L is our newest one, and then we're in conversation now and Cincinnati State as partner, with an administrative professional's certificate of some kind related to both the finance industry and the healthcare industry. In our role as the WIB looking at labor market, we have been seeing this huge growth in administrative professionals, and it's posted more often. It's been recognized by – (inaudible) – technology nationally as one of the highest level postings.

And we began to talk to our partners in finance and our partners in healthcare about what's this thing for you. Why are you posting these positions? And now we have applied jointly with the state of Ohio from one of the national emergency grants on sector initiatives based on this particular occupation and further exploration of it and creation of some certificates that can be used by ourselves and our customers to meet those needs.

We've been a really big partnership organization from the beginning. When you're the large metropolitan area at the center of three states, you kind of have to have partnerships in order to really serve employers in particular as well as job seekers who come back and forth across the bridge to come into Cincinnati. We have always had a cost-sharing agreement at our One-Stop. It has been a full cost-sharing agreement. Cincinnati State is a cost-sharing partner.

Great Oaks is a cost-sharing partner. I know that under the new I&O law that Ron referred to, there's a lot more conversation and expectation about those cost-sharing agreements, but we've been doing them all along the way the new law has wanted for them to be done.

We are partners with the competitive workforce. Formerly it was known as Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network, and it's a national fund site and works in the same three-state area and it works with all four of the workforce boards that are part of their leadership council.

We have a partnership with ACT for the NCRC and with Manufacturing Skill Standards Council for the certified production technician, certified logistics associate, and certified logistics technician. Some of those credentials are used in part of the TAACCCT for manufacturing and now part of the TAACCCT for distribution and logistics. We had several closings in 2012 that gave us 3,000 manufacturing workers that needed new jobs pretty quickly. Many of them were not high school graduates or college experienced.

So we refreshed their resumes with the National Career Readiness Credential and actually got a very good lesson about what was happening in our marketplace in terms of people's general education competence. And then the MSSC followed our recommendation to require people to take all three of the assessments for the National Career Readiness Credential, and it boosted the graduation performance – completion performance on the certified production technician by 15 points. Some research was done on that, and you can find it on our website.

We have a very large United Way that serves the whole tristate, and we are part of the goals for income, which are part of every annualized fundraising campaign. And we focus on what projects to spend those resources towards achieving the income goals. We have the Ohio Means Jobs website, which was one of those DOL workforce innovation funds that allowed for states to improve their basic website presence, and we were lucky.

Ohio Means Jobs became one of those and has done a stellar job. Wanted technologies and talent dashboard resources are available there, and as the workforce board we're given subscriptions to those background kinds of software programs that help us with the labor market assessment.

Employers First Regional Workforce Network is the combination of all business services for all four of the workforce boards. We meet whenever there is a warn notice of any kind or a layoff of any kind or a new major growth in a company or a major company coming in so that we can all work with the employer to get the workers that they need. Jobs Ohio Economic Development Network is our local area and state development network, and I am one of the community partners on that.

We also have a Regional Economic Development Initiative. Any of you who have a river running through that produces another state on the other side know that sometimes governors don't like to work across the state lines. So we have the Jobs Ohio for the counties that are down in the southwest area that are strictly Governor Kasich's regime. And then anything that we do that involves Kentucky and Indiana we do through the Regional Economic Initiative.

Our board is also always encouraged that we proceed to apply for funds and sort of administrative entities for others that apply. So since 2008 we have obtained $158 million in grants that have been awarded to economic development and workforce organizations in association with the WIB's support.

In terms of things that we would suggest to you guys that we kind of accept now because we've been doing this with our community college and career technical schools for so long, there's a lot of potential for success when you're in partnership with the public workforce system. Our workforce system has met our performance measures for the last 10 years. We've received national recognition, state recognition, and international recognition for our workforce initiatives, and we like working with education partners to help to make this bridge a better bridge to employers.

We do think, though, that there are different paradigms on responsiveness that requires both of us to have some tolerance and adaptability. Having been a workforce dean at the community college for a while, I know that college tends to think about things in years, multiple years sometimes, and career technical tends to think about things in a year or two.

But workforce boards think about things in the next quarter. So that conversation about what we're happening – what we're doing together have to understand that the time paradigms are different. And if you don't recognize that and talk about it, then you wind up getting mad at each other unnecessarily.

Employers want and need workers with specific competencies and delivery frameworks that can sometimes be a little harder to be supported by community colleges. Lots of community colleges are looking at business service units that can adapt academic programming to fit employer needs, but basically, if you've worked with employers, you know they tend to want what they want when they want it.

And you can coax them that the time frame has to be different than that in some ways, but if you participate with them in that kind of business readiness way, they'll eventually understand the timing differentials and be much better partners to both the workforce board and to others.

We think that sharing results and knowing that those results are meaningful and of service to the individuals, the employer, and the community is a way to get along when we do have some challenging things before us.

In terms of the mutual benefits, you can see them on the chart here. So I won't go through each of them, but I think that it's just really important for you all to know that there are good connections for community colleges. And the workforce boards know that there are good ways to partner with the community colleges to serve both the job seeker community and the employer community.

I do have one little caveat though. There is funding for training with the workforce board, but recently with the new law the TAACCCTs have always had to follow the Department of Labor performance measures similar to what the WIBs do. But now they've added some complication. We not only have to evaluate training provider investments on completion and credential and employment and pay rate, but we also have to compare them to other sources of funds that they receive and publicly disclose or post on websites or whatever how those training investments worked.

These are just a list of some of the partnerships and successes that our WIB has had, and now I'll turn you over to my colleague in success here in Cincinnati, Regina Livers from Cincinnati State.

REGINA LIVERS: Thank you, Sherry, for that thorough backdrop of our historic relationship. And what I'd like to do is provide some – just the details around how Cincinnati State came in and enhanced the relationship as it relates to working with Ohio Means Jobs and the One-Stop Center.

So Cincinnati State saw an opportunity to provide services to students, allow them to make an informed decision around their educational and career goals because, unfortunately, at the community college we do not have a career development center, per se.

We have advising. We have cooperative learning experiences. We have counseling services, but we do not have an employment career services program. And so we saw PTEC, Pathway to Employment Center, as an opportunity to provide wraparound services, supportive services to students from intake all the way through the employment services concept.

So 2011 was when we launched the concept of PTEC and it was incorporated into our first TAACCCT grant initiative and that was a round one, a health professions pathway grant. We are one of nine colleges, an elite college for a national consortium called H2P. So the PTEC infrastructure provides advising, student support, completion, and employment services to those individuals that are involved in a grant impacted program of study.

The college made a strategic decision to collocate our offices at Ohio Means Jobs and, as Sherry mentioned earlier, there was space. It was renovated. The college made a financial investment in renovation of this space. We are a partner and a tenant, and the presence here has really allowed us to have access to some of the targeted populations that we are serving through the TAACCCT grant to include veterans because one of the veteran-related partners that are housed here at the Ohio Means Jobs.

Also for TAA eligible participants, the individuals that are involved with doing rapid response, dealing with the petitions, also providing orientation, they have space here. So it's great access. It is the hub for individuals that are looking for employment resources. So it's literally a matter of running up the steps or up the elevator back and forth to access the participants that we are targeting through our TAACCCT grant.

Cincinnati State has had the pleasure and honor of being a recipient of a round one healthcare, as I mentioned earlier, a round three TAACCCT grant which is an advanced manufacturing, and most recently we are a recipient of two grants, one of which is a state of Ohio initiative consortium, Ohio Tech Net. We're one of 11 colleges, and we're offering a welding initiative there and then also a newer program for us, a supplied chain logistics program.

And so on a regular basis, weekly in particular, Ohio Means Jobs, they offer an orientation for WIA eligible participants. PTEC has presence each week as we present our grant impacted programs, and also there's an opportunity for individuals to visit our table and booth to talk more particulars. And then they can literally come down the steps for more information and services upon completion of the orientation.

PTEC is also the coordinating entity for intake for WIA participants for the college overall, and so we offer the process for paperwork to get a person started in the process for WIA eligibility. And we also offer the National Career Readiness Certificate, NCRC, which is the credential that is a requirement in order to get WIA funding, and that is a certificate that a person can have and earn coming right out of the gate which we have employers that are recognizing that certificate in this marketplace.

And then we provide support for successful completion of the programs once they are enrolled in the WIA related funding and then employment services. And reporting is also part of the services that we provide.

So you can see that we have captured some outcomes in terms of results. The WIB has been very proactive in identifying outcome measures, and this process has been in place for some time. So you can see here the completion rates and that we are reaching our goals. We're at the goal of 50 percent, and we've – as of 2014 we had 53 percent that had graduated. And you can see our program training as it relates to employment, that we're at 56 percent, and we secured that information from UI wage data.

And then we also asked for supplemental information as it relates to employment, if we're not able to get that through the UI wage data, given that those numbers are in arears. Then you can see that we're reaching and have exceeded our hourly wage rate. Overall this process has been very meaningful, the partnership and the opportunity to collaborate and have access to individuals and participants that are part of our targeted population and has been very instrumental in helping us reach our grant outcomes. Thank you.

MR. PAINTER: All right. Regina, thank you very much. Let me ask you or Sherry one question before I get to Randy, and then I want to remind Frederick, I'm going to come to your question at the end, Frederick. So hang in there with me. Frederick's question was about recruiting and some of the nuances between what's in federal legislation and what has to happen on the ground. But let me ask the two of you a quick question. Are the PTEC offices actually on campus or nearby?

MS. LIVERS: Well, actually the PTEC offices were off campus about three and a half miles from main campus, but some WIA participants and or TAA eligible participants, they are coming to the One-Stop Center, Ohio Means Jobs, where we're located for paperwork and sometimes for orientation. And so we're very conveniently located to be able to access those individuals.

And there is a matter of coordination in terms of how you can have access to those individuals, and it's really about relationship building with the contact individuals for the TAA certification process. Sometimes they'll let you come and be outside of the room at the end where you can share information. We have some examples in other cities that we've learned about through the national consortium where mailings can be made where the state entity would make the mailings on your behalf and include information about your programs.

So it is challenging to have direct access because individuals have to make informed decisions, and technically the state entity cannot refer them to a particular institution for educational resources. But being creative about how you go about exposing the participants to the opportunities is what I would suggest, and that's again about relationship building.

MR. PAINTER: OK. That's a great segue for my question back to Sherry. Sherry, if you had – you've got 15 seconds. What's the most important thing in your partnership with Cincinnati State? What's been the thing that has made this work?

MS. MARSHALL: I'd say the thing is that we all care about helping people to get the jobs and helping employers to get the workers and keep them in the community, and we just remember that when things are tough.

MR. PAINTER: Awesome. Keeping the big picture, the vision about why we do this. Very cool.

I'm going to turn this over now. Again I know that he's not necessarily fair but a great friend and a good director, great director in Minnesota, long-time friend, Randy Johnson, welcome to the call today. Thank – or the webinar today, and thanks for joining us. Appreciate it, and we're interested in hearing what's going on in Rochester.

RANDY JOHNSON: Well, thanks for having me, Ron, and thanks for all those that are on the call. Can you hear me all right?

MR. WATSON: Yep. We can hear you.

MR. PAINTER: We can hear you.

MR. JOHNSON: Just to make sure I'm not on mute. Yeah. Let me give you a little background here. We're in southeastern Minnesota. We cover a territory of about a 70-mile radius. The largest city here is Rochester, 110,000, which isn't real large, but the others are smaller. So we end up with about seven cities that are about 25,000 or so more people, and each of those have a college campus. They represent four different college systems under four different college presidents in our area.

Now, I've been doing this for 30 years, believe it or not, and in that process we've had just about everything we could think of that we've done. Every cow pie we could step in we've done, and so I just wanted to lay some background here about how we got to where we're at, some of the things that we've covered.

What I hope to illustrate in going through this, that there is a lot of opportunities. I'll echo much of what Sherry's already said. The opportunities that we saw were working with folks on the front end.

That is I would call the front end being the outreach and recruitment strategies, getting them aligned with the different kind of industries that are moving in our area, and a lot of work in the middle ground where we play the role as navigator and career counselor and always to the back end here with the employer connections and employer liaison kind of work in that process. But let me just back up here and tell you where we've come from because it hasn't all been duckies and bunnies.

We've had again some things that have been hiccups but we started out with an idea that – way back in the early '80s that we have a need to provide training and training is education. And so early on we made a partnership with the community college system and located our efforts on campus. So we were on all of the college campuses in the early '80s.

We had subcontracted work. I think WIOA would have been proud of all the kinds of connections and partnerships that we had going on, a lot of subcontracting, including that to the community college. We'll need direct subcontracts to them for – they provided the career counseling. They had access and budgets for all of the training that was provided and dispensed.

That kind of thing lasted for three, four years, but in that process the colleges actually came to us and said, I think that this would work better as an arrangement if we were more of a training vendor rather than managing it, that there were complications with moving staff around within the college system and how do you dedicate those to a project and maybe they'd want to leave us in the middle of things.

They also realized that we got grants at various times, especially dislocated worker kind of activities would pop up in the middle of the year. It was difficult for them to ramp up very quickly and put different counselors in place. So that right of the bat started with a relationship that needed to be strong and joined at the hip between our counseling process and the school's training.

And so all of them were located on a college campus, but by the early '90s Minnesota, like many states, have had up and down balances of income in their coffers. And so there was a bonding pause back in the early '90s, and then when the bonding pause was released and colleges were allowed to build again, it was said if you're not using all this space yourself, we'll likely not get another bond. And so that made college presidents come to me and say, it was nice knowing you. This is really a great relationship. However, we need to continue to expand and meet our own capacity needs. So we migrated off from campus.

And it was the early '90s when I think everyone was wandering in the wilderness here, including our other partners. And then later on we coalesced under the One-Stop areas between '96 and '98. I want to back up though. There was one thing that makes us a little unique in this area is that by '93 or so IBM, a large provider here in our area, came to us and said that they wanted us to mirror something that was going on in other large cities and that is for us to operate our own job training center.

And that really caused us to become a school. We're actually registered in the higher ed office to provide introductory training. It was an interesting relationship. We certainly placed a number of folks. We had a mini board that was overseeing our activities that were very engaged, did some great work, and in fact by '98 just prior to Ron's time at NAWB – in fact it was NAPEC (ph) at the time – we earned the Theodore Small Award for activities and providing that kind of training.

The issue was that the school had stopped providing some of the original trade and industry courses, things like welding and some very basic carpentry, but they also had yet to make the full transition to the high-tech – the computer age courses. And so we had to try to fill that gap, and so we attempted to do that.

About that time in '98 the WIA law was passed, and Senator Wellstone was from our area. And I got a call very late in that summer. I'd really – just like WIA to WIOA. I didn't think that this was actually ever going to happen. They said, no. We're actually getting closer to pass it, if we could have one thing, which we do. And we said, well, we're unique in our area because we do provide training. And they said, OK, we'll put a waiver in to allow for WIBs to actually provide training.

Now, with that as a backdrop, our next adventure though was to turn the corner on that whole business. This is about the time I came in as director. Before that I was the operations director. I stepped into this role and I really saw this as some promise but it was a problem for us because this job training center was expensive.

We were really throwing starfish in the sea back one at a time. It was low volume, and we had employers in that late '90s period that were really hiring. Our unemployment rate at one point reached 1.6 percent here in Rochester. As an aside, by the way, it's still – it's coming down now again. We're in the middle-3 percent range. So we've been known for that kind of thing.

The issue that I saw was that everybody that was offering coursework, either the college or our self, were offering courses to be started that is customized courses to employers, but they were canceling them because they couldn't find enough people to fill the class. And so they would wait another month to see if they had more people, and that still never materialized.

So I called a meeting and I said, this has got to stop. We need to get out of this business, and this was a rather interesting challenge to take apart something that had just won national recognition that people were very proud of. But I said, it's really not our work. We need to work in concert with the community colleges and make this thing work better.

So we actually pulled together then by mid- – well, about 2000 we pulled together the community colleges and what I'd call the training consortium, and the idea I would say it's fairly unique. And we had very competitive community colleges in our area, and then I should say Minnesota, the community colleges also include the technical schools and four-year training universities here in Minnesota.

And they're all again put out there in a – under the guise of competition. And so to pull them together to share training leads is pretty inedible, but we insisted on doing it and in trade for that we're going to get out of that business of operating coursework. And that really opened the door for some great collaboration.

So then we started working in concert and started to compete on a regional basis for competitive grants and were able to secure some of those. I think one thing that really helped coalesce this concept – I see a typo here, but in 2008 we had a regional innovation grant that was secured through Department of Labor, and we forged this relationship not only with southeast Minnesota but western Wisconsin and northeast Iowa.

One of the trigger mechanisms for this was that we had a major flood. We had actually 17 inches of rain fell in a seven-hour period of time in a very small area. It was devastating, and that allowed us to really pull together and try to say, what does this region need, these three areas? And the training came right to the surface. It was their number one need, and of course community college systems really were the preferred system to make that happen.

So by pulling them together we were able to then compete for another round of competitive grants, and prior to the TAACCCT grants they were community-based job training grants. And we traded leads on this one. We managed a very large one out of Iowa. We had several others that went through our Riverland Training Center for simulation-based healthcare training. And I really think that's been because of how we've collaborated so well together.

Now, I'll slide into in 2012 we coalesced another concept here, and in Minnesota we know this as FastTRAC – actually with a C instead of K – but FastTRAC is the concept of bringing together the workforce system, adult basic ed providers, and the community college system. And one of the issues that we saw right away was that we had basic skills being taught by both adult basic ed and the community college system, and there was quite a bit of overlap.

And we saw folks actually draining a number of their financial aids funds just paying for coursework that was really remedial. And we acted as a broker and brought these groups together, and using our model that we had developed with academies, pre-vocational academies, we were able to bring this whole thing together.

In doing so, we've operated as a navigator again. We're finding that maybe others have just known it as, oh, a case manager, somebody that takes care of the folks when they're going from one agency to another to make sure that they don't miss what they need to get done. Anyhow, I'll move this forward. I see ran out of time. But we've been able to land quite a number of other grants and in the process we've moved back now to five out of the seven college campuses. That's been very helpful.

We've noticed that our training expenditures that in '98 had dipped to a low of less than half of our expenditures, were made with the community college system here in Minnesota, because of our collaboration we moved that back up to 76 percent. We've landed again more grants. We've operated these pre-vocational academies that were tided the Office of Manage and Budget as one of the 14 best practices.

And in doing these things we also found that it helps with retention for people on the jobs. We've had employers say, as I've noted here, they've reduced turnover rates from one in a quarter, total of 60 percent to 6 percent because of the work that we've done. And our completion rate for students has shot up to about 80 percent in our process.

My last slide here is that we have other opportunities yet. We need to continue to expand, which we've already done now, to pull together our career training consortia to include adult basic ed and career tech ed. We are looking forward to – we've been part of advisory committees at the tech college. We'd like to help co-facilitate those. We offer services for the universal customer. I think that works better when we get in the front end for the orientation for new students.

And final thing here is that we're working toward credit for prior learning and expanding apprenticeships. I want to say that our role here on apprenticeships, in competing for a grant here just last month, we were able to identify 104 apprenticeship sites in a month and a half in relation to a grant that's being submitted through the college system. So it all works if we work together. I'm going to stop there.

MR. PAINTER: Awesome, Randy. Thanks. Let me – I hope people hang in there with us for a little bit longer. We have a couple of questions, but then I'm going to call on you and Sherry to answer one of them. But let me ask you the same question I asked Sherry. So if you had one thing that you think has been key to your partnership over the years, what would that be?

MR. JOHNSON: Well, I think it's active engagement. I know that everyone goes to meetings, and oftentimes they're web meetings and telephone conferences and so on. That really doesn't suffice for meeting with each other, looking each other in the eye, and developing – we actually have a chartered agreement between the colleges and ourselves of how we conduct our business. I think that's the first place you want to start.

MR. PAINTER: All right. Cool. Got a comment about the – a couple of areas that we might want to follow up on. One is looking at, "So what does it look like when you're working with the community college?" Randy, you're located on the campus. I know that there are other workforce boards and One-Stops that are located on community college campuses. So we'll put that – Cheryl, you and I should put that in the – in our minds as bringing up what we could do together with the department.

But Frederick asked a question. So, Sherry and Randy, I'm going to ask you guys to join in this. Frederick brought up a question in regard to one of the areas that I think is often overlooked and misunderstood, and that has to do with the obligation of workforce boards around customer choice.

Both WIA and now the I&O remind workforce boards that in working through the One-Stop centers, that they need to be cognizant of customer choice with regard to where the training happens, and I think back in the day when I was a local director what we used to call reverse referrals was something that was really prominent. That's where somebody would go visit a training provider, and the training provider would say, hey, you're just who we're looking for. Walk over there to the workforce board and get money.

Randy, Sherry, in your experience I think both of you talked about data. Both of you talked about how critical marketing – good solid marketing material is. I've been talking to people as I travel the country saying, if you're looking for education and you have kids, you're probably paying more for your kids' education than any of us paid for our first house. And so how much information did you have about the choice you were making?

So, A, do you guys – do you agree that the kind of fact sheet on what the outcomes of training are, what kind of job placements, opportunities? Secondly, do you have other suggestions about ways that marketing or successful marketing of what the community colleges are doing?

MR. JOHNSON: Let me just delve – (inaudible) – in here, Randy. One feature that you need to have, I think we all have but we have target job strategies. And in doing that we identify always the top 100 hottest jobs in the region, and that list is very comprehensive. Some of those jobs you need anywhere from a master's to PhD down to no training at all and on-the-job training and everything in between.

Some of those courses you can't actually get through the community college system as well. So it's really a sterile LMI look at this kind of thing, and we give that information to everyone. I think it also is helpful if, even though we're co-located on the campus, even though its counselors are on the payroll of the WIB provider, and so maybe 60 percent, two-thirds of our people that come to a given campus receive training at that campus.

But the other third – and that's an important third – get their training where they need to have it. So it's a real independent broker arrangement that we have.

MR. PAINTER: Sherry, any thoughts?

MS. MARSHALL: Our board began evaluating training providers in 2008, and we did it quite collaboratively. Gave them three years. We aimed at those measures that the TAACCCTs have had to deal with and that we're going to have to deal with going forward under WIOA.

We also devised what we called informed customer choice, and we educated our customers who wanted to go to some of those schools that don't ever seem to graduate people about proprietary schools and about predatory education and found that once people got really direct information, they could have an epiphany that other choices were better for them.

Our state also has a governor who requires us to expend 85 percent of our formal formula funds on in-demand industries and occupations. That is referenced in WIOA as well. I think the direction is clearly that the public's investment in people being trained needs to be a blend of an informed customer choice about what their employment opportunities are in industries once they've completed.

It will take us a while as a whole country to shift that mindset, but I do believe that that is part and parcel of what WIOA is advancing when they say that there's going to be comparable analysis of WIOA customers to other funded training by institutions that are eligible training providers and that we're all required to publicly inform people by posting that in some venue where people can look for the data.

MR. PAINTER: Great. Great point, Sherry. And I would remind folks that the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking with regard to INO is currently out there, and if you want to jump out to – not that I know these sections by heart but you want to jump out there to Section 679 – I think it's .410 and .430, it does talk about the relationship of staff in organizations that provide multiple functions. So you may want to jump out there.

Nicolette, you asked a great question. I just turned to Josh and said, maybe this is something we should get a WB, promote a webinar with One-Stops and the boards that work closely with community colleges.

Chris, do we have time for any other questions that pop up? Did somebody have a burning question that we can get to?

MR. WATSON: Sure. You have probably about 30 seconds.

MR. PAINTER: All right. We got 30 seconds. Anybody got a quick question? All right. The presentation is going to be available. Chris, do you want to tell us where that's going to be available?

MR. WATSON: Sure. The presentation will be available on Workforce3One. Actually, the slides are already uploaded, but both the transcript and a recording will be posted within two business days.

At this point I've moved us to the feedback portion of our webinar. If you could please respond to the polls, please rate the webinar quality, whether it's excellent, satisfactory, or poor today. And also would you recommend the viewing of this webinar to a colleague, whether it's yes or no. If you can let us know some tangible feedback in the – either the feedback or the additional topics portion, that would be great as well.

If you chose excellent, kind of let us know why you chose excellent. Or if you chose satisfactory or poor, let us know what we can do better to improve and make webinars excellent. If there's any additional topics that you would like to hear on this subject, you can let us know in that additional topic portion.

MR. PAINTER: All right. This is Ron. A reminder that none of our guests today, Chris, received any gifts or prizes as a result of their appearance today. So we can skip that part of the announcement.

I want to personally thank Cheryl Martin, Jennifer and the crew at JFF, Sherry Kelly Marshall, Regina Livers, and Randy Johnson for joining us today on the call. Chris, thanks for your technical help. Truly appreciate it.

MR. WATSON: No problem.

(END)