**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Reaching Your Homestretch**

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BRIAN KEATING: All right. Welcome, everyone. Thanks for joining us today. My name is Brian, I'm going to be your technical facilitator today. I'm here if you need anything technically speaking. Hopefully you won't and I'll get myself out of the way quickly here. Before I do, though, I want to encourage everyone, if you haven't already done so, to go ahead and type in who you are in that welcome chat that you see on your screen. We're going to be using a similar chat to get your questions and comments throughout today's webinar and we may even invite you to chime in over the phone.

So you can start to think about that. We'll have some interactive polling questions, that sort of thing, but for now, I want to definitely invite you to go ahead and type in who you are into that welcome chat. While you're doing that, we're going to go ahead and bring up today's presentation so we can kick things off.

So welcome, everyone to the "Reaching Your Home Stretch" webinar. Thanks for joining us today. One last reminder, if you haven't already done so, go ahead and let us know who you are, where you're from and how many are joining you today if you happen to be joining us in a group.

So type that into the welcome chat. And again, you can type in questions, comments, technical or content related, at any point today and we'll be addressing as many of those as we can. So thanks for participating with us today and we'll have some interactive polls and even invite you to participate over the phone as well. So be on the lookout for that.

And to kick things off, I want to turn things over to our moderator today. That would be Caroline M. Hertel from the Division of Strategic Investment, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Workforce Investment with the United States Department of Labor. Caroline, take it away.

CAROLINE M. HERTEL: Hi, everyone. This is Caroline. I just wanted to thank you all for joining us today. I know everyone's trying to wrap things up before the holidays and the New Year. I wanted to also encourage you to take this opportunity, since you have joined us, to really participate, tell us how we can help you as you're coming into this home stretch in your grant. Even for those who have extended your grant period, these are your last opportunities to focus on meeting your performance, the goals and wrapping up your program.

So today, we have Mike Lawrence and John Metcalf and they'll be talking to us about products mission, partner continuity, staffing issues, all of these topics as the grant period comes to a close. So again, thank you so much for joining us today and I'll hand things over to the Coffey team.

MIKE LAWRENCE: Hey Caroline, thank you very much. This is Mike Lawrence and you see our presenter today, John Metcalf, he's having a lot more fun than I am, and myself. We're going to talk a little bit about some things today. I certainly appreciate everybody's wrapping things up for the holidays, that you're wrapping things up for your grant and we want to talk a little bit about that. We hope you're ready to chat. I'd like you to share some ideas, old ideas, new ideas, reaffirm some plans. But it's time to take a look at this and see how we can work out some things.

Today's objectives, we want you, at the end of the webinar, to be able to identify some key strategies, to maintain focus on meeting your program outcome goals, look at the way that you transition staff, help participants achieve their employment goals and sustain program continuation.

I know many of you, this is part of a major effort that you do, but it's often, for a lot of you, not your only funding source and it's ways that we can expand and help get those things done. John and I will certainly share some of our experiences with you. John has many years at AT&T and then consulting time.

So he knows about ramping up and ramping down and that work and I've had the same efforts. So we're going to certainly talk about that. John, anything you want to mention before I roll to partner continuity?

JOHN METCALF: I'd just like to say hello, everyone, glad you're with us today and we've got a lot to cover, but at the same time, we'd love to hear from you.

MR. LAWRENCE: Thanks. One of the things we're going to start with is talking about partner continuity. In many ways, we all can't do this alone. We all have to work with our network of partners. We talk about, who are they as an organization and on the personal level. I think in many of our webinars and many of our successes, it all builds on relationships. When we did our case studies a while ago, several of the job accelerator grantees, one of the things that stood out about that was as we built the relationships, they really helped out. So again, who do you work with organization on a personal level and also, engage the level of commitment within each partner.

Do you work on a formal memorandum of understanding or can you pick up a phone call and get that done without necessarily as for moving MOU? So again, your partner continuity is going to be critical as you reach the home stretch. Some of the continuity pieces you want to make sure it's in way is that your in-processes establish ongoing meeting schedules. I know we can do webinars and I wish we could all teleport and be face to face, because face to face time is an important ingredient, like establish communication strategies to stay in touch.

Fortunately, we have a lot of ways to do that now with social media and many other ways. And that's both internal among partners and also, external with your stakeholders. It's always a broader group that you always want to work with. You all have a very significant presence in your community and this is one way to maintain that community. If you have good partners and good relationships, they're going to last and continue and grow as these grants ebb and flow. And of course, continue to measure this all to maintain the level of accountability.

What you measure is important and that will salvage benchmarks for your success or your next steps or your ongoing continuity. So some of those things you certainly want to consider in some of those areas. So as you look at this, I'd like to do a quick poll. We'd like to ask you, how would you rate the strength of your partnership in general? Is it strong, is it good, but needs some work or weak, needs a new start? You may have some comments on that that you may find effective there.

MR. KEATING: All right. You'll notice we brought up that polling window. So again, we're asking you, how would you rate your strength of partnership? Your choices are strong, good, but needs some work or weak and needs a new start. And we noticed many of you have already voted. If you haven't done that, go ahead and just click the radio button on your screen now that best selects your choice, that best mirrors which one fits for you. Now, a couple more of you voted. Just go ahead and vote now if you haven't already done so. Meanwhile, I'll turn it back to team Mike to comment on what you're seeing so far.

MR. LAWRENCE: Thanks, Brian. Appreciate it. Yeah. You know, the strength of your partnership, many of you say they're strong, good, but needs some work. I know in some of our technical assistance efforts, all of our partners, this is one of many things that we're doing. And so sometimes as the partnerships ebb and flow, as the event goes about, those things happen. But generally, the stronger they are, the better they seem to work. So any comments on the partnership that any of the people have experienced?

MR. METCALF: We'd love to hear from you.

MR. KEATING: Do you get any comments? Yeah. We can invite you to participate over the phone. I'm not sure if we want to do that at this point. You're definitely welcome to type in any comments that you might have in the chat window as well. So I think this is meant to be interactive. You know, we can certainly open that up and invite you to chime in, but for now, you're also welcome to type any comments or questions you have into the chat window on your screen just like you welcomed yourself earlier in that chat window.

MR. LAWRENCE: John.

MR. METCALF: It was good to see, Mike, that most everyone either had strong or good relationships with their partners and I think that's critical. As you're going forward, that's one of the most critical components, I think, of the work that you do out there is that partnership development. And seeing that over half of you have strong partnerships in place, that's good news, but needing some work. For those who checked the good box, that's OK. A lot of times, these things are continuing as long as you're building that relationship to be strong going forward and it's just helping to sustain the work.

MR. LAWRENCE: You know, John, I'm going to slide this over to the next one for you.

MR. METCALF: OK. Thank you.

MR. LAWRENCE: It's about employer engagement, because it's all about partners and you partner with employers too.

MR. METCALF: Thank you, Mike. I think this becomes the second point in the strong chain that is built out there and as you begin to think about closing out your grant, it's never too late to go back and build those strong engagements with employers. One of my favorite quotes that I like to use a lot of times, and it comes from Michael Porter, MIT professor who is known as the father of cluster development, he said that without engagement, there is no lasting change and I believe that. I think that that's a very strong word when we get to engagement and having engagement with employers is critical.

What Michael said, I think, is the same that goes for our grant outcomes. And aligning our efforts to the demand side of the equation determines how effective, I think, we'll be to get our participants into the talent pipeline that we're creating for them. And having that great relationship with employers, not only, I think, is good, but it also leverages our plans for participants to become employed. And one of the main things about our grants was not only getting them into the position and condition they've prepared, but having them in front of those employers so they can have that opportunity to become employed.

If you haven't thought about it already, some of the things we want to take a look at now is some of those strategies to build great relationships. I know most of you are doing many things out there, but there were three that really stood out to me as I began my journey with a number of you in the grants, what you were doing and how those were coming off. One of those is about creating a forum of employers where you gather them at periodic times and talk about what is going on in their industry and building what I would call a formal/informal relationship with them there.

But I think as critical is the whole idea around building and aligning to our sectors, which I think is critical, because now we can get a defined component of those and having our participants being able to come out of the grants with the certifications and the training that they need, aligning those employers, make them a much better candidate all the way around. The other one, a lot of times, we fail to see that visiting our employers, talking to them face-to-face, looking at our employers and they looking at us eye-to-eye, to talk with the decision makers about what their hiring practices are, what some of their goals are, getting to know these employers on a first name basis.

Many of you, in the work that you do day in and day out, circle your communities, your regions in a set of networks. Many times, you'll run across these same employers and having that relationship with them, I think, is critical. Why is that? Because I think we want to understand their timeframe, what their hiring rates are. Many employers have seasonal hiring practices where they do a lot of the hiring at certain times of the year. Others, they do it consistently.

The idea is to know when they need participants, when they need applicants, when they need candidates to fill the jobs, because one of their main goals, I think you'll find when you talk to them, is that filling workforce needs and filling those certain occupations with those critical components that you are developing in that talent pipeline is very, very important for them.

Let's take a poll. When you step back and begin to look at your relationship with employers, how would you look at that? Would you say our relationship is built around industry sectors? Yes, it is or no, it's not or somewhat, it's more a hybrid. We'd like to talk about that, if you would. So give us some of your input on the poll how you built your relationship around these industry sectors.

MR. KEATING: All right. Everyone, it looks like, is voting. So thanks for that. And then we want to encourage you to also go ahead and if you've got comments on what we're talking about, whether it's this poll or anything we've covered so far or going forward, we want to encourage you to go ahead and feel free to jump in over the phone as well if that's appropriate. So to unmute your phone line, you are going to press \*6. So go ahead and feel free to do that if you'd like to chime in. And then I also just want to note, we can mute you too, but we want to encourage you once you unmute your phone line, press \*6 again once you're done participating to re-mute your phone line. And please don't put us on hold, because we don't want to listen to your hold music.

But press \*6 to unmute your line, introduce yourself, ask your question and then if you could re-mute, that would be great as well. So we'll turn it back to the team to comment on what you're seeing on the poll.

MR. METCALF: I'll tell you what, this is encouraging that almost 100 percent of you are using sector strategies as a way to align to the employers and getting your candidates ready for that specific set of occupations within those industries that you found were critical with that. Is there any comment that you would like to type into – I see one here, "Strong partnerships are the most important element of our successful grant implementation." That is very good to hear. I would say between employer engagement as well as your partnership development, those have been the two main critical elements to a successful grant with both the JA and the TST, very important with that.

Somebody else like to make a comment, what it's meant for you? Well, let me ask this question; are any of you using employer forums where you gather more than one employer together to talk about their needs? If you would, like Brian said, unmute and let us know what's going on. Would love to hear from you.

MR. KEATING: All right. Thanks for being the first one to comment, Debbie. And for everyone else, if you want to tell us about that, go ahead and press \*6 or type into the chat. We'd love to hear from you either way.

MR. METCALF: Partnership development and employer engagement, the two critical components of the chain to help not only build your grant, but also, successful grant outcomes as well. If there's no other, I'm going to turn it back to Mike.

Q: Hello, this is Ashley from the workplace. Can you hear me now?

MR. METCALF: Hey, Ashley.

Q: Hey, how are you guys? Great webinar so far. We've actually tried something new a couple quarters ago using a World Café format where we posed actual problems for our labor market and using employer feedback as potential solutions. So to have a different forum whereas instead of just getting together, providing breakfast, the same old, same old, we kind of did a facilitated structure, which was much more interactive and was workshop-based to really see what the demands are for our area, but also, the demands for the individual employers, because our grant is healthcare specific.

So there's a big difference between hospitals, facilities and in-home healthcare in small businesses. And people seemed to really enjoy that format, because it was different.

MR. METCALF: Very good. I'm going to have to steal that one from you, Ashley; is that OK?

Q: Yeah. Absolutely. Send me an email and I can send you our report.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yeah. And actually, emphasizing all those differences in healthcare is a good thing. I was in a similar situation and it certainly makes sense. I find, and maybe you did too, you can add this, people like to be asked to share those kind of things.

Q: Yeah. Absolutely. And if you pose to employers that their part – you know, we're a workforce development board. So our job is not just to get our residents of our service delivery area trained and placed, but it's also to serve our employers to foster the growth of the economy and the local businesses. So if the employers are the ones that feel that they have the ownership of it and that they're really steering as opposed to training providers, you get a much more positive relationship building.

MR. LAWRENCE: And the more you engage the employers, the better it works. So good point. OK. Mark has a question. "Could more information on the World Café format be shared?" And I believe that Ashley, you mentioned about a report. Anything else you could provide? We could certainly do that.

Q: Yeah. What I'll do is I'll go through some of my stuff and attach some things for everybody to be able to view on the webinar. While you guys move forward, I'll do some back research.

MR. LAWRENCE: OK. That'll be fine, Ashley. And if you would, take my email address, very easy to remember, workerskills@gmail.com.

Q: OK. Is that two S's?

MR. LAWRENCE: Workerskills –

Q: Workerskills@gmail. Great.

MR. LAWRENCE: There you go.

MR. KEATING: And I typed that into the chat, Ashley. You should be able to just click on that and hopefully –

Q: Awesome. And I'll share my email so anybody can feel free to email or call me at any time.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yeah. We'll talk about it later, because there's going to be some things we'll be sending out later after this webinar as resource links and so forth and I think that would be a great one to add to the list, Ashley. Thank you so much.

Q: No problem. Great.

MR. LAWRENCE: And that's great. Any other examples? I know some of the people that are on here, I happen to know you do some great stuff, like the folks at New Century Careers, New Jersey Institute of Technology, but are there any other ideas or examples that have worked for you?

MR. KEATING: All right. Well, thanks so much, Ashley for participating. But again, it's \*6, everybody is you want to chime in as well and you could always, as a couple of you have done, just type into the chat as well, whatever is easier for you.

MR. LAWRENCE: Thanks. We're going to talk a little bit about another part of reaching the home stretch. It talks about staff transition. In some cases, staff move in and out of grants, staff move out of their priorities, depending upon what role they play in the grant. So if you're ready to do \*6, we have a question, how are staff members dedicated to the grant now that it's winding down? And again, how do you transition their talent to other tasks or how do you keep them on certain tasks in order to complete the grant? Anybody have any comments on that, keep them excited, keep them active? John, have you done anything in your experience that you've found?

MR. METCALF: Well, a lot of times, I have felt worked with the organizations that at least six months ahead of the grants ending on whatever type of grant it may be, that they've begun to help build that person's resume, find connections with other employers in the area in their network as well as some of their own partners. So what I've found is being able to get with that person early. One of two things will happen if you don't, they'll go ahead and pack up and leave before the grant ends, which will leave you empty-handed or they will wait around until the last minute and have nowhere to go, look at you and blame you for not helping them. So I always thought it was a great strategy to get ahead of the game.

MR. LAWRENCE: I see Susan Thomas (sp) has a comment. You're really fortunate to have another H-1B and you're continuing right on your grant. So that's a good thing to have happen if you can do that. I mean, some of the strategies, you may want to think about as you tug at this and as Debbie said, we have other grants the staff can move to those grants is certainly a way to go. You know, again, as you have suggested it, they are part of the permanent staff considering a portion of your time to maintain the grant's work, keep them in the flow.

They're tied to grant funding and not permanent staff. Again, as some of you mentioned, some additional funding sources to support their positions. You know, you hate to lose that institutional history and all that knowledge that they've worked out with that. You know, as Susan said, have another grant end and had a plan to move a staff member to another project, good point. So any comments, Susan, feel free to comment. As you have already suggested, consider transitioning them to other grant work.

Again, you don't want to lose that institutional history. You know, we hire people, they become family, they become family with the sector they're working with and it's an opportunity to keep them engaged. Normally, those of us that work in this business, we get this passion in this stuff and it gets in our blood and it's hard to get away.

Q: Yeah. This is Susan. You know, I will also tell you that it's not just grant funding. You know, when I worked in industry, everybody was, quote, "on the regular payroll," and yet we'd have reorganizations, we'd sell a division, there were always things going on with people and you would try re-deploy them as best you could. We try to do the same thing here. As I mentioned, I knew the other grant was coming to an end after five years and the person I had managing that project was somebody with a good history with this organization and I certainly was looking to retain her in my group if I could.

And fortunately, we did have something. So you can plan and I guess the only thing I would say, there are times when you just don't have anything in-house and then you have to say, tell all of your colleagues outside and maybe they have something.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yeah. And that's a good point about look at your network partners to consider hiring, because they should be interested in that same kind of institutional knowledge as Ashley mentioned. So you're right on about that.

Q: Yeah. I mean, sometimes they have a need when you don't. You know, I hear about jobs all the time.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yeah. We're all out there looking at that. So any other staff updates or staff transition? Well, going to another poll, we want you to think about staff transition considerations. And again, you can feel free to continue providing comments and stuff as we look at this poll. You know, I think we're all working in a situation where we're managing resources, whether you're private sector, public sector, nonprofits, some kind of intermediary, you're all in the midst of managing some of those resources. So we even get some ideas of staff transition considerations.

MR. KEATING: All right. Just like the previous polls, you just go ahead and click the radio button. So take a moment to read through these choices and then we'd love to get your feedback. So it looks like folks are voting. So we'll give you another minute or so or 30 seconds. So go ahead and read through these and make sure you choose an option and then whenever we're ready, we'll go ahead and respond to what we're seeing come in.

MR. METCALF: Right now, the majority of the staff is not permanent. So other ideas and other plans have to be made.

MR. LAWRENCE: So for those of you or anybody that's been in that situation where the staff is not permanent, the corollary of that is are there any issues or anything keeping them interested or excited or keeping it toward the grant outcomes on that?

Q: Well, there's a certain amount of lead time. You know, we pretty well finished our outcomes, fortunately, because we're doing OJT and even if you're not doing OJT, there's other grants that finished with mainly classroom university type training and we took extra cohorts in year four, because we knew year five would be a short year given that we couldn't necessarily finish a class or put everybody into a placement mode. So you've got to be sort of six months ahead.

MR. LAWRENCE: That's a good point.

MR. METCALF: Well said.

MR. LAWRENCE: OK. Well, that's a good point. I'm going to flip it over and turn it over to John if anybody has any questions, talk a little bit about participant group pathways. John.

MR. METCALF: Thank you, Mike. You know, one of the important things our participants, when they have a relationship with us in the grant as participants, one of the things I think is always on top of the mind, once at the end of the – so like the training tunnel for me, when this is over, trying to get into that job, but I think more importantly is not just to get into a job for a job sake, but to become employed with a career pathway. Wherever they enter, they always have a chance to really develop their skills to even higher level education components to a higher level.

And as we all know, those of you who are affected by it day in and day out, the new Opportunity Act, really begins to emphasize career pathways more now than ever. And it would be a big benefit to our participants. So I think a lot of times, having that A-list of employers that we can always go back to and we've got a great relationship with them so that they've bought the added value of what we are doing and the talent pipeline creation that is specifically for their occupations, that we can go to them and increase what I call the chances for those opportunities and the options that come along with it.

Some of the other things, too, to consider is some of your business partners may have an interest in your graduates as well as other components with that, another option to think through, who are some of those other partners as we begin thinking about that? Consider community level partners, such as your staffing agencies and CBOs or those community-based organizations. A lot of times, I've seen people, one, coming through that become very acclimated to the field that they're working in and there are others out there that may be able to pick them up.

And don't forget the impact of American job centers where you have that relationship with the AJC so that you can get with the employment counselors and employer counselors there so that you can find those openings with that. And I think Susan, you just brought up about on-the-job training, which will continue beyond the grant, because it's separate funding.

But that OJT training and those other work-based opportunities – and a lot of times, we forget about apprenticeships and I don't know how many of you out there are using apprenticeships as an avenue for career pathway development and/or employment opportunities, but that is a great one to take on, because it also is getting a lot of new emphasis in the Opportunity Act.

And I think that's important when you go through everything so that people, when they have that opportunity, they can see and be able to be carried through. Let me ask, anybody want to chime in, are you using any of these particular strategies of apprenticeship, on-the-job training to really drive some of the career pathway development?

Q: Well, our first grant was all OJT, the second one is OJT plus apprenticeship.

MR. METCALF: OK. Is this Susan?

Q: Yeah. And the other thing is is that as an agency, we're looking to do apprenticeship. We've been awarded at least one other situation with apprenticeship in it and we've got two more that we're waiting to hear on.

MR. METCALF: OK. Good. I saw where Ashley – thank you, again, Ashley where Connecticut doesn't have a healthcare apprenticeship program, but you use both OJT and paid internship options. Paid internship options, thank you for bringing that up, that is another great idea. I've seen a number of grant recipients do that, not necessarily in these grants, but others as well. And Dana, you talked of using the apprenticeship and OJT, that's fantastic. And what you find is a lot of times, apprenticeships work great in that manufacturing as well as healthcare area sectors that you have there.

But again, thank you very much for those. Thinking in terms of those staffing agencies and CBOs out there and American job centers, anybody want to chime in, maybe some of what I would call some of you are experienced in using those for career pathways and getting people in? OK. If not, let's take a poll here. How well are you aligned at participants to their career pathway? You know, we put them in the training and we do a lot of what I call counseling with them, get them prepared, get them ready.

The majority of you feel very well about that, that's good. Some of you, fairly well, but needs strengthening, but we'll get to that in just a minute, but I think that's important. So we have everyone either very well or fairly well. Anybody else want to participate in that poll? Someone, if you're OK with it, let me just ask, some of you who checked the radio box fairly well, but needs strengthening, what do you think is the one thing that would help you the most, if you don't mind chiming in?

This is the place where we feel free to share. I see where Mary's typing. Thank you, Mary. Give us an idea of what you think those needs might be.

MR. KEATING: All right. Again, if you chose fairly well, but needs strengthening, we'd love to hear from you. What would help you the most? You can type into the chat or just chime in over the phone.

MR. METCALF: Yeah. We like to hear voices as well. OK. Let me say thank you all for taking that. We would love to hear from you if you would like to drop us a line later or when we get to the very last question on today's webinar and we can pick it up from there. But Mike, I'm going to go ahead and turn it back to you right now.

MR. LAWRENCE: Sure. So I'm going to talk briefly a little bit about American job centers, but prior to doing that, I'll just talk briefly about there's a lot of really great talent across all of our different grantees, having had the pleasure of working with a lot of you, I'm aware of that. For example, Ashley noted that Connecticut doesn't have a healthcare apprenticeship program, however, I saw Susan last week at a different conference and we were talking about – and I know that they do some outstanding healthcare apprenticeship work with rural areas as well as urban areas.

So there's a lot of good ideas to share in those kind of areas across here. So that's why we like to make people aware of the different activities and we can share those practices. So Susan, your ears should be burning a lot, because I do talk a lot about the 1199C in the work that you folks do.

Q: Well, thank you very much, nice of you.

MR. LAWRENCE: Well, I'm going to talk a little bit brief about American job centers just because we all have worked with our one software that you called Career Link or WorkOne Center or whatever, Workforce Solutions or whatever. They all have different names, but they're also being, with this administration, coming into one common brand. And with the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, now is the change to revisit them. You may have known them for a long time and have worked with them for a little while or you may have worked there.

Some of you that are workforce boards could be reinventing and redesigning them as we speak. Other areas that you've worked with them for certain aspects, maybe it's time to go and revisit that just for a second. And so they are a product that wherever you're working, they're around. They're a great place for worker transition to connecting and networking. There are a few things you can do to take a look at that and again, change is now. But you have a couple choices to move participants.

First, as it says, directly connect with employers who have bought into your mission, understand the quality and are willing to hire and work with that. The other option is to use your connection with AJC to link participants with the employers' job opportunities. So even if they're logged online and get those things ready, it's still a chance to revisit this among your many options, because they can do additional assessment or case management, provide specialized services or customize different services.

The world's changing and there is a lot of ideas and stuff we could do there. And a couple strategies to enhance those connections, you can meet with the staff. And I threw in both management as well as front line, because we all build this intimate knowledge of the labor market and in many cases, the best way we can work together, we can build that knowledge in order to find the right connection and the right relationship and the right job. You can ask the staff to describe their services and you can look at some various related materials for job seeker and employment placement efforts.

Again, I don't want to beat that, but it's not what you may have known years ago or several years ago. So something to think about. So with that, any comments or questions? We'll take a quick poll. Where are you now and what would you like to utilize? Again, I find in a big country like ours, even across a multi-county workforce area, I see very different relationships.

MR. KEATING: All right. Thanks so much, everybody for voting in that poll now. And just like last time, if you said strong, what do you think the key is there? Why do you think that is? The same way if you vote existent, but not where it should be or even nonexistent, we'd love to hear your thoughts about that as well. So thanks, everyone for voting and based on how you vote, we'd love to get a reaction from you, whether that's through the chat or you're also welcome to chime in over the phone. So thanks to those who have done that and if that's not you yet, you're welcome to jump right in and interact with our presenters today verbally.

MR. METCALF: I'll make a comment here. The AJC is considered the local workforce board's what I would call the primary flagship product, I like to call it. Without that working properly, it's hard for them to get credibility on the other work that they're doing. I'd like to know with the nonexistent, is there a barrier there? Is there something that maybe some others can chime in and talk about what they've done around the AJC and building that relationship with them and utilizing the relationship, because it's an important one. There's a lot of resource sitting there that you should be able to go after and get the work done.

MR. LAWRENCE: Or on the converse, what would make it strong? What benefits do they bring to the table to help you in your efforts? Some of you, it's part of your shop, because you're a workforce board and work with that. In other cases, you've built the relationships.

Well, my experiences where they're strong, where they work well, they have – again, and they have a great presence in the community and they're just getting more and more of a presence as jobs evolve and as work evolves and as we emphasize sector strategies and engagement to employers, bringing in apprenticeship, I think there's a lot of opportunities there that are going to – that you may have thought may or may have not been as available for your participants that are on their career path.

You may not have thought of apprenticeship, but anything can be an apprenticeship and there's thousands of jobs that aren't apprenticeship. On-the-job training is taking a forefront, work-based learning, as Ashley said, they do layer credentials that are woven in with experience. That's the name of the game today.

You know, as she noted, we're a local board and work with our local AJTs, one-stops to combine opportunities for the same target population participants. It's all competitive to do that. Thank you, Ashley. That's a good point. But there's a lot of really strong relationships built in those locations that you can take great advantage of.

As you wished, if any of you that don't have a relationship yet, or you want to strengthen that relationship, or you want to enhance it, or ones that you have a strong relationship, we're certainly there to help and assist. I have, John, we've all worked in those situations and we can certainly help you build those relationships or enhance those relationships, just to think about. John, let me move you to the next slide.

MR. METCALF: All right. Big bulb there with a big question mark. We want you to use the chat box and we would love to hear from you. Taking everything into consideration, what is your biggest concern with grant completion? Some of you have more time than others just because of the structure of the grant, some of you have had expenses of your grant. But let me ask, what's the biggest concern that you have right now? Open chat. And if anybody wants to chime in and talk about it as well, that would be great, because we'd love to hear from you what those concerns are.

MR. KEATING: All right. And like we said, it looks like a few of you are typing in. So thanks for that, but the rules remain the same, if you'd like to chime in over the phone, just press \*6, we'd love to hear from you, again, or hear from you for the first time if you haven't yet taken that opportunity. We'd love to hear from you.

MR. METCALF: OK. Thank you, Brian. In some of those other previous poll questions as well, when you felt there was some extra work to be done, reflect on that as well and let us know what you think some of those pieces are – components are or things that are getting in the way or what they may be and they might fill into this area here. Melissa, thank you very much. She asked, "What are the final reporting requirements for closing out the grant?" I do not have those in hand right here. Mike and Caroline, you may want to offer something on this, what those final will be and how should they be able to hold down those requirements and understand those.

MS. : Hi. This is Erica (ph) from the Department of Labor. Can you all hear me?

MR. METCALF: Yes. Hey, Erica.

MS. : For that question, I just wanted to share that they can just check with their FPO.

MR. METCALF: OK. Thank you. Mark, thank you for that comment. It's a challenge about meeting those final employment and employment retention outcomes. That is where we're focused as well in providing any help, any strategies that we can help you with around that, but at the same time, we understand that challenge and as you get your last cohorts coming out of training and finding those opportunities for them to be employed, no doubt about it.

MR. LAWRENCE: There's always tricks of the trade to keep them retained and keep in touch with them and keep them engaged. And that's always an effort that we certainly want to help and assist however we can, that's a good point.

MR. METCALF: Jerry (ph), you mentioned a slow grant start, that additional time in order for participants to complete training. That is something I think we all are learning that as we go through the initial points of the grant and that initial wrap-up time, how much time is left and then we get into that slow grant start. Building those partnerships and building those engagements with employers on the other end really does bode for some of the time.

And you were asking, we need a period of performance extension, I'm going to chime in with Eric on that, because I do have some experience with that and that is, check with your FPO and build a case for it. Anybody else?

Let's see, anybody want to speak up on the phone, any pieces? Melissa, you asked, "Is there a final reporting handbook on the Workforce1 site? Erica, do you know if there is?

MS. : Melissa, I'm going to have to get back with you on that particular question and see where that might be located.

MR. LAWRENCE: Any other questions or comments? Any other of the grantees? I know some of you have some very good programs that are wrapping up and stuff. Any other challenges? Tara in New Century Careers, Debbie (sp) in Shenandoah, I know you have a lot of great programs, a lot of good stuff.

MS. HERTEL: And Melissa, this is Caroline in the program office. So we did a – or Kevin from our team did a performance refresher for the reporting issues coming through the close of the grant. And so we'll send out the link to that call after this webinar.

MR. METCALF: Thank you, Caroline.

MS. HERTEL: But if you have any other specific questions, feel free to email businessrelations@dol.gov and we'll add that email address. You know, if you have any specific questions about reporting any issues, just let us know.

MR. METCALF: Thank you, Caroline.

MR. LAWRENCE: So there's another participant question/comment. "We participate in a state grant that requires co-enrollment of WIOA and the community college based program with our workforce – (inaudible) – leaders, all of the more integration of our efforts. So whoever put that in, I'd just like to ask, is that a work-based learning kind of thing? Do they go to college first or do they go to school first and then work-based or some kind of internship like Ashley had mentioned?

It's certainly a way just to be successful toward. Again, that speaks to effective partnerships and a lot of those things.

MR. METCALF: And if you'll notice in the open chat, there Brian put in the businessrelations@dol.gov link and Erica has typed in the links also to the handbooks and performance reporting. Thank you very much, Erica and Brian.

MR. LAWRENCE: Thanks, Debbie. I know a lot about the Job-Driven National Dislocated Worker Training grant, that's a good one. I coordinate that in Pennsylvania in another hat that I wear. So there's a lot of opportunity for some real good innovative ideas that could be driven through there. So that's a great use of that. They receive a credential in both and receive an OJT, that's great.

MR. METCALF: We appreciate everyone's comments in the open chat and thank you for asking those questions and thank you, Caroline and Erica for getting us the links to some of the answers, that's fantastic. I'm going to turn it back to Mike now where we –

MR. LAWRENCE: Sorry, John. We messed up on that. Here's just a couple quick resources. One's about apprenticeship and my only comment is that if you really want to talk about employer engagement, I've had the pleasure of talking to a couple of the apprenticeship grantees that have just gotten those and one of the things that they point out about it – and I don't know whether Debbie or Susan may add to this, but one of the things that they've said is that it really builds on employer commitment and the real centerpiece of that.

So again, there are so many apprenticeship opportunities out there and they're going to be growing and changing that I think there's a great opportunity. And then the job centers, as you all, will be working on some of those.

As you know from this discussion, we'll have a lot more resources when we're done, because that's what's coming next. We're going to look at all those resources and ideas that you've provided to us today. We're going to throw them out and into a one or two-pager to you that's going to provide you with links and contacts and all that information.

And of course, our links and contacts will be on there too, because we certainly want to help you make those connections and bring those things together. So if you're challenged on a healthcare apprenticeship or if you want to learn about the latest internship or how you can do that, we'll certainly help you bring those pieces together.

So John, I'll turn it back to you to have comments about that. Another thing, also, we may want to talk a little bit about some of the things we talked about before with partnership and staffing and any of those other areas that we talked about. Is there any questions on any of those topic areas that we covered today? Because it's all related.

MR. METCALF: Thank you, Mike. Thank you, Caroline, Erica and I just want to say to everyone, thank you very much. Ashley, I did receive your email and I will be getting that information back to DSI so we can send that out as part of the resource that Mike was just talking about in the follow up. Any other questions that you might have? I see where Susan's typing.

But again, I want to say thank you, everyone for participating and having hopefully what I would say is a good time with us on the phone today, we had with you as well. And let me turn it to Brian for the closeout. Is there anything you'd like to say, Brian?

MR. KEATING: Sure thing. Before you log off, we want to encourage you to go ahead and stick around long enough to go ahead and give us some feedback. So you'll notice at the top right-hand corner of your screen, we'd like to know if you'd recommend viewing this webinar to a colleague and then go ahead and rate the overall quality of today's event in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen.

And then if you've got open-ended feedback, we'd love to get your comments in the – so whatever you rate or vote us, go ahead and give us your open-ended feedback on the left-hand side of your screen in that feedback chat.

And last but not least, if there are any other additional topics you'd like to see covered, let us know in the topics chat on the right-hand side of your screen. So again, whatever you vote, go ahead and let us know why you voted that way, whether it was technical or content related in the feedback chat and then we'll give you a few minutes here to type in those comments and questions to give us your feedback.

And I want to thank everyone for participating today and hope that you'll join us in future events. Have a great day, everybody.

(END)