**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Enough Is Known For Action Webinar Series**

**Building Registered Apprenticeship Opportunities for Out of School Youth**

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*Transcript by*

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BRIAN KEATING: Again, welcome, everyone, to today's building registered apprenticeship opportunities for out-of-school youth. This is part of the Enough is Known for Action webinar series, and we want to welcome you on behalf of WorkforceGPS. One more reminder, if you haven't already done so, to go ahead and type in where you're from and what organization or group you're representing today.

Also you can let us know how many are joining you, if you happen to be attending in a group. So most of you are listening to my voice through your computer speakers. We have a limited capacity on the teleconference, but we're going to go ahead and post that information for you if you prefer to dial in. First come, first serve there, but hopefully you can just turn on your speakers and turn them up and be able to access the audio that way.

All right. Well, I'm going to definitely move into today's content, and to do that I'm going to introduce and welcome Toni Wilson. Toni is a workforce analyst with the Division of Youth Services, U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. Toni, take it away.

TONI WILSON: Thank you so much, Brian. And welcome, everyone. It's so good to see so many people from across the nation joining us today. We have a great webinar planned for you today to discuss registered apprenticeship with our out-of-school youth and so I'm excited and it's good to get started.

I first want to introduce you to my colleagues who will be presenting today. We have Amy Firestone or Dr. Amy Firestone with the Office of Apprenticeship. And we have Eric Karmecy who is a project manager with Oh-Penn in West Central Job Partnership, and that's in Pennsylvania. And then we have Dr. Philip Starr, executive director OPENTECH LA. He's with Managed Career Solutions in Hollywood Workforce Center in Hollywood, California. So we are very excited to have our presenters here today, and they're going to have some great information to share with you.

Today's objectives is that we're going to be talking about WIOA and out-of-school youth just to kind of give you an overview, give you some foundational information about registered apprenticeship and what is happening, developing, and then some program examples that are happening in the field both from Ohio-Penn and OPENTECH. And at the end we have some resources that we will be sharing with you.

This is our agenda, just kind of highlight a few things. There will be an opportunity for questions at the end of the presentations. So please, as we go along enter your information in the chat, and as we get to each section here on our agenda we'll make sure we pull those over so we can address those at the end.

So I want to first just kind of lay a little bit of foundation and remind people of some things, some reminders under WIOA. WIOA prepares us – prepares vulnerable youth for successful employment for increasing use of proven services models – model services like registered apprenticeship. It serves the 75 percent out-of-school youth, which is the focus of this webinar is that particular population. Also to spend at least 20 percent of youth formula funds on work experience activities such as summer jobs, pre-apprenticeship, which you'll hear about, on-the-job training and internships so that youth are prepared for employment. Also focusing on that age 16 to 24 for out-of-school youth has – in addition there are the five new program elements and the additional allowable activities, including financial literacy, education, and entrepreneurial skills training.

So as you can see, registered apprenticeship as an out-of-school youth placement strategy is a proven model to help out-of-school youth immediately start working and increasing skills and earning. It's an effective strategy to connect with employers in diverse fields and to use as part of the industry sector strategy.

So I'd like to pass this over to Dr. Amy Firestone so she can give you an overview of registered apprenticeship and some great work that is currently happening. Amy?

DR. AMY FIRESTONE: Great. Thank you so much, Toni. Thanks for providing the introduction for us. So I'm really excited to talk to you all today about registered apprenticeship and what we're doing at the Office of Apprenticeship at the Department of Labor.

First, I want to start off by telling you that we've been in a few, not just one transformational year but several transformational years for apprenticeship. In 2015 during the president's State of the Union Address he called for more companies to be involved in registered apprenticeship. He calls companies like CVS and UPS have already been working in apprenticeship, for other companies to expand apprenticeship and to help solve issues of youth unemployment especially.

With this announcement during the State of the Union Address, there have been several large investments in American apprenticeship. The first one I want to talk to you about is the single largest investment to date, the American Apprenticeship Initiative, and a few of our guest speakers will be talking about this initiative as well.

Let me tell you it's $175 million investment. It was awarded on September 9th, 2015, and this investment hopes to gain at least 34,000 additional apprentices. It includes 46 grantees who will work in new industries in healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing. We hope that this initiative will help launch apprenticeship in new high-growth fields, scale models that work, and align apprenticeships to pathways for future further learning career advancement.

In addition we're very excited to announce another appropriation for fiscal year 2016, which is $90 million for American apprenticeship grants. This initiative is split into two different buckets. One is $60 million for state strategies to expand apprenticeships and diversify them, and $30 million to build industry partnerships in high-tech industries and also increase diversity.

As I mentioned, Obama has given us a goal to expand apprenticeships. We are supposed to expand by – in two years a number of apprentices. And on this chart here you can see where we're at as of quarter two of this fiscal year. We're at 455,257 apprentices. So you can see our goal and how we're moving along, and we are excited about these initiatives to help us get there.

As Toni mentioned, registered apprenticeship is also a part of WIOA, and as you can see on this list here, which I won't go into much detail about, registered apprenticeship is on the eligible training provider list for WIOA. And you can also read other provisions in WIOA which mention registered apprenticeship.

I'd like to give you a little bit of background on what a registered apprenticeship is in case this is very new for you. So registered apprenticeship has union and non-union programs. Let me tell you what exactly is registered apprenticeship and what benefits it has, especially for youth. So registered apprenticeship is employment with on-the-job learning. That means that apprentices receive a paycheck on their first day. Many apprentices will start earning $15 per hour.

When they finish their apprenticeship, they can start earning $50,000, which is a really great salary, as we know. There is related classroom instruction, so around 144 hours of classroom instruction, and there's 2,000 on-the-job hours. So when apprentices finish their program, they receive a credential from the U.S. Department of Labor. They have many skills, and they have a great pathway to future employment.

So American apprentices are industry-driven. As I mentioned, they are modern, flexible, adaptable. There's different timelines that companies can use and that apprentices can follow for scheduling. It's nationally recognized, very high quality with all of our requirements, and companies find that it's a proven talent solution.

I'd like to move on and tell you a little bit about what the Office of Apprenticeship is doing with youth. And youth is a very new area for us to work in and we are working mostly now with high school youth but we are very excited to talk to you all about out-of-school youth and how we can start reaching out to this population. Our work on high school youth stems from employers.

Employers are interested in working with high school students, and they see this as a way to work with a younger demographic and start to build a pipeline with younger employees. We also see that there's an opportunity to increase linkages between high school career and technical education program and course work with registered apprenticeship. And many, many schools that are already participating in this system have students who are receiving college credits.

So they're already on their way to earning an associate's and bachelor's in high school. So this is the exciting work that we're starting now, and to work on all of our youth issues, not just in-school youth but also out-of-school youth. We have formed the youth apprenticeship ad-hoc working group. We've been meeting monthly, and we're composed of a group of subject-matter experts on registered apprenticeship and other U.S. government officials, and we're trying to understand ways in which we can better link registered apprenticeship for high schoolers and youth in general.

And in the next slide you can see some of the goals that we have in this working group in terms of expanding registered apprenticeship on the secondary level and some of the ideas we have about identifying challenges and gaps and working with this population. As you know, there are a lot of concerns with liability and child labor laws, especially with under 18-year-olds, and so we're very excited too for this area of proposed recommendations for our advisory committee. So hopefully along with this we'll be able to also work on the out-of-school youth component.

I also wanted to tell you a little bit of information about our work with community colleges which grew starting in 2014. We launched at the American Association for Community Colleges Conference in Washington, D.C. the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium.

And I can tell you more about this in the Q&A period, but if you are interested, we have 244 colleges who've joined the RACC, 956 training centers, and 14 national, regional, and state organizations. The RACC is a consortium in which colleges agree to provide college credit for registered apprenticeship certificates, and we can talk more about that later, if you're interested.

We've developed a little bit of a chart here, as you can see, win-win-win for our work with schools and apprenticeship. This is mostly for our work with colleges, but we're hoping that we can expand this into our work with youth, in-school youth and now out-of-school youth and see how everyone can come together and really benefit from registered apprenticeship, both students, schools, industry, and other partners. And I would like to thank you very much. I'm glad to answer any questions you have at the end.

MS. WILSON: All right. Thank you so much, Amy. And yes. Please enter your questions in the chat, and we will make sure to do Q&A at the end.

So now, we want to hear an example from the field on partnering with registered apprenticeship community as an out-of-school youth career pathway. I'd like to now pass it to Eric Karmecy of the OH-Penn. Eric?

ERIC KARMECY: Well, thank you, Toni, for the opportunity to share today some examples of the work we've done as a local board to better prepare out-of-school youth for viable careers. I'd like to talk briefly about our pre-apprenticeship model as one such example, one way of achieving this.

So I'd like to provide a little bit of history on our collaboration and then talk about how we developed a network of partners. From there I'll review some elements of our pre-apprenticeship model as well as some of the results we've seen so far. And while we're very proud of our work, let me first say that we believe there are many opportunities to improve and expand upon the work we've done.

We also know that there are many other local areas around the country who've been developing new and innovative solutions to better connect youth to employment and apprenticeship programs. And it's kind of the beauty of operating as a local board is that each area is uniquely positioned to put their own twist and their own flavor to these programs. We operate from different locations, different geographies. We obviously serve different industry sector and different populations. So our program is just one example that has worked for us.

So let's talk a little bit about how we got started. First, we've had a rich history of collaboration in our area, and there are a culmination of activities which have influenced the development of our pre-apprenticeship program. As part of the governor's sector strategy, we began developing industry partnerships back in 2005.

The IPs, as we've called them, were organized by local boards to meet the real time demands of key industry sectors. And IPs have brought together businesses, education, workforce, economic development, labor unions, and other community partners to address common workforce challenges facing each respective industry.

In our area we developed a number of IPs but there are three primary driver industries for us and those are manufacturing, healthcare, and building and construction trades. We started looking a little bit more closely at the data to help us drive local investment, and some of the data showed us that, given our geographic position here at the Pennsylvania and Ohio border, we noticed migration patterns between Youngstown – (inaudible) – Ohio were very heavy, even more so than similar patterns north and south to markets such as Erie and Pittsburgh.

So we began speaking with our colleagues across the Pennsylvania border in Ohio. We requisitioned a study that showed similar concentration of industries, and in fact, several industries had began forming their own industry consortia to address similar challenges and opportunities.

This collaborative work across state borders, combined with the codicil and the WIA legislation, allowed for designation of interstate region, which is what enabled us to be officially designated by then Governors Strickland and Rendell in 2006.

From this platform we attracted a number of private, state, and federal resources to build and sustain our efforts, including a round one Workforce Innovation Fund grant. It was within this work that we were able to successfully pilot a manufacturing readiness program which serves as our pre-apprenticeship. It is also here that we developed a strategy for implementing an ongoing partner engagement which can be viewed on the slide here.

I'd like to focus on our action teams. This is really how we've been able to sustain relationships and build a network of partners. Those action teams are depicted at the bottom of the screen, and action teams are designated to provide input, oversight, and monitoring for several categories of activity.

These include employer engagement, outreach, pipeline development, career pathways, and work-based learning. The composition of these action teams vary in size, and many of those serving on these action teams have been partnering with our local board for years. A lot of them have served as contributing members of the industry partnerships.

There are really three important things that I'd like to say when it comes to developing a network of partners. The first is having a clear articulation of roles and responsibilities. Obviously, every stakeholder has a critical role to play, but partners are not going to invest their time unless they have a clear understanding of the benefits of their participation.

So we laid these out in terms of specific benefits in black and white, and we asked, what can we achieve for workers and for businesses if we set out to achieve it together? What type of investment must we make in order to be successful, and what are the things that we as businesses or service providers may be called upon to do along the way? And we answered these questions in the form of a partner benefits and roles document and shared that with all the members of the action team.

The other thing I'd like to mention is giving individualized consideration for each business. Obviously, business engagement is a hot topic and business engagement is about relationships and relationships built on trust are not developed overnight but over the course of time. So when we approach businesses, the objective for us is discovery. What are their challenges? What are their passions? Who are their drivers, and how can we leverage their subject-matter experts and leaders for our own mutual benefit? We want to find out who wants to make a difference and provide them with the support and resources to get it done.

And the third and final thing in terms of partnership development is to nurture existing relationships. Oftentimes we take our relationships with our partners for granted. The recruitment of a new partner is not the end of our effort but the beginning. We want to find champions from multiple levels within each participating business or service provider. We want to work with our partners to ensure the participation becomes part of the culture of their organization so that the work of the representative extends beyond their tenure.

On the next slide I'd like to discuss some specific elements of our pre-apprenticeship track, and while we've been working to develop this track for all three primary industry drivers I mentioned earlier, we've made most significant progress in manufacturing.

And the reason is due to the employer-led industry consortia and the established action team structure that I mentioned around this industry but also we have a very high location quotient of manufacturing operations in the region and we've seen a resurgence in manufacturing, much due in part to the increased natural gas exploration in Marcellus shale play as well as national attention to manufacturing in this part of the country provided by America Makes added a manufacturing institute, the first of its kind, located in Youngstown, Ohio.

So in an effort to create more responsive and seamless manufacturing career pathways, we first conducted a skill gap analysis, and one gap that was identified was at the entry-level manufacturing career pathway to prepare individuals with the basic fundamental skills and competencies needed to enter into and succeed in a manufacturing career pathway. And so to address this gap we worked with our employers, many of which participate in the industry partnerships, to build a basic framework for a manufacturing readiness program.

Each local area has since tweaked the program to meet local demand, but the core foundation remains the same. And the goal of our program is really one of two things, to prepare individuals to either do enter into a career pathway and succeed in a semi-skilled manufacturing production position right away or acquire the requisites for entry level into more advanced manufacturing skills training.

And the next slide here offers a simple depiction of the preparations which are part of the pre-apprenticeship as well as the next steps for those who complete the program. The program for us has been delivered in small cohorts of five to 10 trainees and ranges over a period of 6 to 12 weeks, usually a minimum of 240 to 300 hours. The individuals participating typically have no experience in the industry, and in anticipation of WIOA we've most recently been looking to find ways to make this part of our regular ongoing service offerings.

The program's designed to provide the core general components you see around the pre-apprenticeship preparation circle here on your screen. Elements of recruitment include – well, most recruitment is done through the American job centers and their network of partners. Any recruitment performed outside of this network requires that they funnel interested applicants to the American job centers as a starting point. Older youth are our primary targeted audience. Though we've not designed our programs to serve this target exclusively, we've permitted other targeted populations, including veterans, low-income adults, and dislocated workers access to the program.

Pre-screening components include an aptitude evaluation, TABE testing, career research. Want to make sure that folks are registered on the labor exchange and that they are working with a counselor to develop an individual employment plan. We require that they participate in one of either an online or in-person workshop. And then drug screening and background checks are also a component of the pre-screening process.

In terms of work readiness elements, includes things like the Worldwide Interactive Network. We want to get folks through the WorkKeys national career readiness certification. We have workshops for time management, financial literacy, workplace skills, resume writing. We also make job shadowing and mock interviews available through our network of partners.

The technical instruction consists of 160 to 170 hours of training towards the MSSC certified production technician, which includes an OSHA 10 certification and training in safety quality practices and measurement, manufacturing processes and production, and maintenance awareness. The partners responsible for delivering services and the number of hours in each of these areas varies from one local area to the next and from one trainee to the next, but the core curriculum remains the same.

So our return on investment, upon completion we engage in navigation reset. We examine what each trainee has achieved thus far, and from there many folks go directly into unsubsidized employment. Others enter into employment by way of OJP. Others may elect to continue their education along the career path. We've even seen a few decide as a result of this program that manufacturing may not be the appropriate career for them.

Some move seamlessly into apprenticeship programs, and from our experience this is more likely to occur if the individuals are employed by large manufacturing firms. But the ability to enter into an apprenticeship program depends on the size and capacity of the company as well as the company's selection procedures for registered apprenticeship programs.

Most of our manufacturers are small businesses and therefore require some additional experience on the job prior to entering directly into a registered apprenticeship program. But to date we've completed seven cohorts. We've had 51 individuals who have completed successfully, and collectively those individuals have acquired almost 270 industry-recognized credentials, including the OSHA 10 and various elements of the MSSCCPP that I mentioned earlier.

We are presently working on a return on investment study for those manufacturers in our region who have existing registered apprenticeship programs to help – the goal is that hopefully the ROI study will help inform messaging to better prepare our staff in their recruitment and promotional efforts around both pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs. So that's all I have for you at this time. I'll turn things back over to Toni and answer questions later.

MS. WILSON: Thank you so much, Eric, and thank you for that example, especially highlighting the importance of the role of the pre-apprenticeship aspect as people are planning their strategies. And as Eric said, we will be taking questions. We've been collecting those. So if you do have any questions for Eric, please put those in the chat, and we'll be sure to get those at the end.

So now, I would like to present our other example in reference to creating a registered apprenticeship pathway for out-of-school youth. This is with OPENTECH, and I am happy to introduce Dr. Phil Starr with OPENTECH. Dr. Starr?

DR. PHILIP STARR: Hello. Hello, everyone. Here in Los Angeles we have our grantee of the Department of Labor's American Apprenticeship Initiative, and our project OPENTECH Los Angeles is to help individuals gain access to apprenticeships in IT, biotech, and health IT. We have an outreach to out-of-school youth and a partner and interest in helping them access the IT occupations and actually enter registered apprenticeship. So this is a daunting task because getting IT employers to engage in the registered apprenticeship process, get their work registered with the Office of Apprenticeship, and then work with us to identify youth and get them into the proper pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs is a daunting challenge. But we do have some success to report. The grant, as was stated earlier, started in September. So we are moving forward. We have another four and a half years to work on this grant.

So why non-traditional apprenticeships? New technical occupations are more aligned with work-based learning than traditional classroom-based training. They open doors for at-risk and minority youth to enter these occupations. These occupations are amenable to someone basically learning on the job. Our – for apprenticeships to thrive they must be incorporated into the workforce development system. This entails multiple funding sources that capitalize on individual program strengths and then provide the wrap-around services designed to assist at-risk youth.

So here we have four components we'd like to go over in terms of the customer need that we need to bring to the table for an out-of-school youth to enter registered apprenticeship in IT. First, they'll need basic and remedial training, a bridge program or a boot camp. They need the soft skills, workplace competencies, life skills, and then the actual technical competencies. I guess really the boot camp comes in more at that point for the technical competencies. Once those four are in place and you have the registered apprenticeship identified and it could actually happen but all of that needs to happen first. So the customer needs bridge training, pre-apprenticeship, and then ultimately the registered apprenticeship and related learning.

So our process here in Los Angeles is to engage the workforce development system at the federal, state, and local level to ensure the participant success. And each of us in our own area have to deal with the resources that are there. Los Angeles being a rather population dense area, we do get a good chunk of workforce development funding. So the resources are there, but you still have to get your board to agree that this is an opportunity and a resource that's worth investing in.

So here's an example of an out-of-school youth that we've worked with the last few months who is succeeding and who is in the process of starting registered apprenticeship. Juan came to us a few months ago really in a very difficult situation. He had graduated high school in Los Angeles, but he was out of school at this point. He was unemployed and in a very difficult financial situation. He found out about our program through the alumni association at his high school and – which is a shout out to this teacher there, Leslie Aaronson. She's really an advocate for her youth. She did not want Juan to remain an out-of-school youth, and she's been very active in our program to identify candidates for pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship. And those kinds of champions are really important to identify in your local community.

So Juan enrolled in our OPENTECH program. Through interview with our counselor, he developed an individual employment plan, and we outline each step toward a registered apprenticeship in software development. Now, on the other side, our business services team developed the employer that was interested in hiring Juan and that would consider a registered apprenticeship and going through the application process with the Office of Registered Apprenticeship. Now, our experience in Los Angeles with employers has been that actually the smaller employer is a little more interested because the resources we can bring to the table through this grant – workforce development grant and so on are more appealing and manageable for those employers. Large employers, the funding doesn't make that big a difference to them, and that's been our experience thus far in IT. It may change.

So the first step with Juan was to get him some money, basically. I mean, he was in a really bad situation. So we have here in Los Angeles a out-of-school youth employment program that is actually funded by the City of Los Angeles through the mayor's office. It's called HIRE LA, and the L.A. County also has a similar program. So we had access to those resources. We enrolled him in the program, and he was provided with 120 hours of employment – subsidized employment. In that program he got 20 hours of soft skills training and 100 hours of internship where we could place him at the employer our business services had identified so he is beginning to get the life skills from the internship and the soft skills. The host employer was really impressed with Juan, and they wanted to develop him as an apprentice. So all was going well, but they did not have the resources to train him.

So we – our agency Managed Career Solutions operates an American job center funded by the County of Los Angeles, and we were able to enroll Juan in that program and schedule him for an individual training account at New Horizons, which is an IT training company – school, and I believe they're around the country. They're big here in the Los Angeles area, and a lot of the training they do is with incumbent workers but they also do have a program for people in the community and that's the IT that we scheduled him for. So he began – we developed a pre-apprenticeship curriculum with the employer, with New Horizons that would meet both the industry standards and the employer needs.

The next step was the pre-apprenticeship and to actually fund him on site after the training was completed. So the pre-apprenticeship was developed in software development with a focus on customer relations management using the salesforce platform, and we used on-the-job training funds from our American job center. We actually – the one in West Covina had no more money that it could spend on Juan but we operate another one in the Hollywood area and that one did have on-the-job training funding available. So Juan was enrolled in that program. He'd be on his third program, and they were able to fund the on-the-job training. The trainer provided the mentorship.

So again, our curriculum committee using a specialist incorporated both the industry standards and the employer needs for now registered apprenticeship, and that has now been turned over to the Office of Apprenticeship here in California to register the apprenticeship so that Juan is now an apprentices. And that has not officially been completed, although he is working at the employer as though he is an apprentice, and the on-the-job training funding is assisting him. So in summer of '16 we do hope to have everything approved and he will be officially an apprentice. We can provide further on-the-job learning funds through our American Apprenticeship Initiative grant, and the mentor at the employer will continue to provide training.

So as can be seen, in order to help an out-of-school youth become an apprentice, we needed to combine multiple funding streams to minimize the fiscal impact on the host employer and create the incentives to take a chance on an OPENTECH candidate that they might not have considered otherwise. And I'm pretty certain that Juan would not have been able to get this IT career if we'd not been able to get an employer that would work with him and be able to identify the funding to support him. So each funding stream capitalized on program strengths in order to maximize service delivery to the participant.

So to review again, the Hire LA, the mayor's program, provided the soft and life skills. One American job center was able to provide funding for the ITA. The – another one was able to provide funding for OJT so that he would get the real world experience, and then the DOL apprenticeship funding will support the commitment to hire and train as an apprentice. Not a pre-apprentice, an apprentice. So all training programs must include financial assistance and/or earn-and-learn components to ensure open access to diverse and disadvantaged youth. So our funders at OPENTECH that support the program and the U.S. Department of Labor, the American Apprenticeship Initiative grant, the Workforce Development Board of the County of Los Angeles, the Workforce Development Board of the City of Los Angeles, and then private foundations and corporate sponsorships.

Again, another review of our partners – and we bring this up because I'm sure in your local area you have similar partners and it's good to kind of make an inventory of all the partners you need to make a pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship program work. It includes our mayor's office, workforce boards of both the city and the county, our own agency's economic development corporation. We work with the YWCA of Greater Los Angeles that operates a digital learning academy and a job corps center. STEM Advantage is a mentorship program for women and minorities in IT. Foshay Tech Academy is a high school that can feed us their graduates. East Los Angeles College, California State University, and California State University, Dominguez Hills are all working to get the curriculum approved so that it can become a – so that the students can get actual credits for their registered apprenticeship. And so with that my presentation's complete, and I'd be glad to take questions later. Thank you.

MS. WILSON: Thank you so much, Dr. Starr, and thank you to our presenters today. Sorry if anyone else – if you can please put your phone on mute, thank you. We were about to open up our questions – well, open up to the Q&A section of our presentation today. So if you do have any additional questions, if you can please put those in the chat.

As we are doing that I did just want to kind of point out as you plan and strengthen your strategies for out-of-school youth, registered apprenticeship is a proven strategy. Hopefully these two examples at least help you in reference to start thinking about ways to start to build your strategy. As you heard some of the highlights, partnership. It's all about partnership development, as you saw on the list before. It's really connecting the registered apprenticeship community with the workforce community, your education. It's really all about connecting all of those aspects and really sitting down and developing what your strategy will be for your out-of-school youth. Connecting with your registered apprenticeship sponsors, have them on your boards and have them have that connection and have that involvement. And you can work with your state or federal apprenticeship office in reference to helping to develop and make those connections. You have the workforce. So it's about recruiting and screening candidates to be apprentice, and that includes providing pre-apprenticeship opportunities and that basic skill preparation. And as always, we're in that role of providing those supportive services. And at the end we'll show you some resources that will also help you along with your path.

But let's first make sure there aren't any questions for our presenters. Let's see. So we're going to get started there. Let's see. So our first question – and it's coming up, and I can get started on it – is – this particular question is, "What about the fees for a journeyman's license? My licensed employees only have a few permits, and they are usually in use." Very good question. Unfortunately, we don't have an answer – a very specific answer because it can vary by state and location. But what we do suggest is that you do contact your state apprenticeship office, and they can let you know the details for the area that you're in.

Our next question – I'm going to direct this one to you, Amy – is, "How many CC systems and other affiliated associations are listed in RACC?"

DR. FIRESTONE: Thanks, Toni. So to start out, we have 244 community colleges across the country that are in the RACC, and it's growing very, very quickly. In terms of systems, we list those under the 14 national, state, and local organizations. So I think we have three or four currently in there, and some of those systems also have members as the RACC. So we kind of do two different counts.

MS. WILSON: All right. Thank you. And also for you, Amy, one of our audience members would like to learn more about partners and just wanted to get a little bit of information about that.

DR. FIRESTONE: Yeah.

MS. WILSON: About the partners for RACC.

DR. FIRESTONE: Oh, for RACC.

MS. WILSON: Yeah. (inaudible) saying, "I would like to learn more about the partners." So connecting it with the RACC I assume.

DR. FIRESTONE: Well, the RACC is a consortium of schools. So basically it's a huge database that we usually direct employers and other partners to if they want to partner with community colleges and contact someone there to see about using their curriculum or working with them in different capacities for their program. And so we also have an initiative right now that schools are becoming sponsors of registered apprenticeship programs. So schools are taking this initiative to become the sponsor. We have three schools right now that are sponsors, and we have about 50 more across the country that are going to start the process very soon.

MS. WILSON: Good. Good. Is – our next question, "Is there any partnerships with embassies in DC to partner to promote youth apprenticeship?"

DR. FIRESTONE: Thanks, Toni. That's a great question. We're doing a lot of work with different mostly European embassies. In DC they have many companies across the country, and they're looking to build their pipeline of workers. So we've been working with mostly the German, the Swiss, I believe Austrian, Dutch, British, just to name a few, and Spanish embassies in apprenticeship. And the youth piece is actually very new, and we'll be starting a lot of work with some of these embassies on that shortly.

MS. WILSON: Good. Our next question is, "What are some strategies for getting registered apprenticeship programs to engage with pre-apprenticeship programs?" So I'll put that to our presenters. Anyone want to jump in?

MR. KARMECY: Toni, this is Eric. We are attempting to kind of build this. This is a good question, by the way. We're attempting to develop these concurrently, particularly when it comes to some of the group-sponsored registered apprenticeship programs. One of the things that we're doing right now is we have about 15 different manufacturers who are working together to build registered – or standards for group-sponsored competency-based machinist program. And so we are working with them.

As we develop the curriculum for this, we're working with them to consider – and many of them consider continuing to recruit from our pre-apprenticeship network, graduates from that program for new hires. It's a challenge, and that's why I said it's a good question. But one of the strategies for doing this is to engage with your employer consortium and to build those programs concurrently.

DR. STARR: Yeah. I would say – this is Phil – that it really – the more the pre-apprenticeship is employer or business-focused to that occupation, the better chance that pre-apprenticeship will lead to apprenticeship. So it's really a challenge in terms of your employers and businesses and their – and getting them engaged. That's what we've seen so far.

MS. WILSON: Definitely. I would agree with those, and we – I definitely encourage people to check out the resources at the end on the registered apprenticeship site. You definitely want to connect with your state or federal apprenticeship agency so they can help you in reference to that aspect of your strategy.

And then also on WorkforceGPS itself, as you go in there are a lot of resources in reference to toolkits and strategies people are using around pre-apprenticeship programs. So you'll also want to utilize some of those steps. This is an area where we're all learning and developing and sharing best practices. So definitely look and see where people are at least starting in reference to developing.

Our next question, "Eric, can you share more detail about the aptitude testing, what you were looking for, and if there was a reading/math skill level requirement?"

MR. KARMECY: Yeah. Sure. We have – we give the individuals as part of the pre-screening process a TABE test and require that they achieve ninth grade math level, tenth grade reading level before they move on. We also put them through the Worldwide Interactive Network and require that they reach levels five in the three primary areas, reading for information, applied math, and locating information before we have them sit for the National Career Readiness Certification.

Why we do it? Well, obviously we don't want to set them up for failure, and we want to make sure that we are making a responsible investment of public dollars. So that's kind of what we're – we want to make sure that they are going to be able to succeed in the program before we make those investments.

MS. WILSON: Understood. Let's see. And actually, Eric, this next question's for you also. "Will previously incarcerated youth with felonies be eligible for your program?" Well, both you and Phil can answer this.

MR. KARMECY: Yeah. Actually, I mentioned the background check. So that may be what prompted this question, but we do not use the background checks to prohibit anybody from moving forward. It kind of goes back to what I said about the last question. Just want to make sure we don't set them up for potential letdown for employers who we know are not hiring based on certain offenses.

That being said, there are quite a few employers that we've identified who proactively seek these types of populations. In fact, we're going to be out in Hershey in a couple weeks where the state association's going to recognize one of our employers who's hired quite a few individuals with felony offenses. So what we've seen is that it varies from one employer to the next what type of felonies that they will accept versus which ones they won't, but that is one of the questions that we are asking our employer customers.

MS. WILSON: And how about you, Dr. Starr?

DR. STARR: It's a challenge. Particularly in the health IT occupations that we're looking at, there's a lot of issues around background clearance and live scans and all those issues. But our commitment is to bring incarcerated – formerly incarcerated young adults and adults into the – our apprenticeship programs, but it is a challenge.

MS. WILSON: DOL is currently working with our reentry grantees, and they're also on our WorkforceGPS site. So there's some lessons that may – some best practices in reference to that population that they're connecting for registered apprenticeship. So for those that are interested, I would also utilize that area as a resource.

All right. Our next question, "Are apprenticeship programs collaborating with Job Corps, and have any Job Corps graduates gone on to apprenticeships?"

DR. STARR: This is Phil. Yes. We are working with the Job Corps here in Los Angeles. The agency that manages the job care – Job Corps in Los Angeles is the YWCA and they also have a digital learning academy and that digital learning academy we recruit for our pre-apprenticeship programs. And so we look forward that some of those students will also be Job Corps students and have that additional support.

MS. WILSON: And I would just add that the national Job Corps is definitely working in partnership with the Office of Apprenticeship, and so definitely apprenticeship opportunities are happening for Job Corps graduates both in construction and other high-growth industries. And there's a continuation of partnering in reference to building strategies around that.

All right. Our next question, "Do you provide stipends or wages to out-of-school youth during as part of the 10-week cycles of training?" I know this question originally started for you, Phil, but, Eric, you could also chime in if you have any feedback on that.

DR. STARR: Well, we are able to subsidize 120 hours with the funding we get from the county and from the mayor's office. So that is helpful. Yes. We are able to provide the – the stipend is actually they're paid wages, minimum wage, which is ever increasing here in Los Angeles. And after 120 hours, then they might be able to get additional if they enroll in WIOA young – the youth funding stream. There might be some additional subsidized wages there that we can access.

MS. WILSON: Okay. Any other thoughts?

MR. KARMECY: Yeah. This is Eric. We've provided stipends for transportation, when transportation is required, particularly for the technical training. Sometimes we're working with the current technical centers, which are not on site here, and so to get individuals to those locations we have provided stipends for transportation.

We are also currently working with our board to develop a policy to be able to make investments in paid work experience in between to try to use that as a bridge between the pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, kind of another tool in the belt there, paid work experience. But we've not actually developed that quite yet, but we're working on it.

MS. WILSON: All right. Thank you. Our next question is around the soft skills. Our audience member wanted to know, "What curriculum is being used for soft skills development?"

MR. KARMECY: This is Eric again. We have used – I know in the past we've used components of DeVol's – I think it's Phil DeVol's Getting Ahead In A Just Getting By World, particularly for elements of team building and leadership. But we have also deferred to the recommendations of our partners who are delivering that training as well.

DR. STARR: We've used a program here called Blueprint for Success. It's offered by our community colleges, and that has been a excellent program to help young people adapt and other people who've been out of work adapt to the workforce. I can send information about that to you.

MS. WILSON: All right. Thank you. So we can make sure we include that in this archive data.

So, Phil, this question's for you. "So in the situation of Juan, did you use both pre-apprenticeship funding and on-the-job training funding from the WIOA on the same client?" Someone just wanted to clarify what funding was used.

DR. STARR: Right. Well, we used the pre- – I mean, these terms are – frankly, up until WIOA apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship was not a program we were engaged in a great deal. So these terms are a little confusing to me in that we used an ITA and an OJT. Together they sort of create a pre-apprenticeship. I don't know if that makes sense, but first we did the ITA.

We got the – we got Juan the technical skills that he needed, but then to get the employer engaged so that he could use those skills now on the job, we used the on-the-job training and aggregately they create a pre-apprenticeship in a way. And I'm – our goal is that training, that ITA as much as possible if that could be incorporated actually into the registered apprenticeship so that the – so that it's as seamless as possible for Juan to become a registered apprentice. I don't know if that – my answer helped at all.

MS. WILSON: And if not, I would encourage, as you're building of strengthening your strategy, if you have questions in reference to kind of the funding aspect of this, to – this is a good question for your federal project officer who can kind of help you work through that to make sure that you're comfortable in how that works.

DR. STARR: Thank you.

MS. WILSON: In – let's see. Our next question, "In your experience with out-of-school youth what is the ratio of soft basic education work skill training components of the training?" And I'd put that out to the group.

MR. KARMECY: Well, I would say that that I'm sure would vary from individual – one individual to the next. I mean, our program, if you look at recruitment, pre-screening, and the work readiness portions, those could all – I mean, components of that could all be classified as soft skill preparation as opposed to the technical instruction.

I'd say if you just looked at the core of our program – and again, this is just our manufacturing readiness program – I would say it would be about a third soft skill to – and basic education to two-thirds technical more the work skill training. But that is just one industry, and the soft skills may be more for other individuals, particularly on the front end of the pre-screening component if they need additional work there.

DR. STARR: Yeah. I would concur that the soft skills – certain component has to – is best when it's done initially, and then some soft skills contextualize with the technical skills is an excellent approach.

MS. WILSON: Good. Thank you. This question I'm – hopefully I'll understand it – is, "Where can I start to develop a program? I'm in New York City." So I'm going to make the assumption you're referring to either pre-apprenticeship or registered apprenticeship program. And if that's the case, you should connect with your federal or state apprenticeship office, which we will have the resources at the end, and they have a great kind of a map system where you can click on it and get local information there.

Amy, who's actually from the – that office – I'm sorry. I should have had you answer that. Did you have anything you wanted to add to that?

DR. FIRESTONE: No. That's it.

MS. WILSON: Okay. Very good. All right. Let's see. What is our next question? Let's see. "Other than OSHA, CPT, and WorkKeys, are there any pre-apprenticeship programs that have successfully embedded nationally recognized trade certifications into the curriculum?"

I'm not sure I – have successfully embedded nationally recognized trade certifications into their curriculum. I know I actually work over in the YouthBuild program, and so that's some examples where they also have included the NCCR and the home builder's trade. So they've done some work in the construction aspect of it, and they're just kind of breaking into other healthcare and IT. So there's some examples there.

As I said, I'm sure Job Corps – I'm not – I don't work specifically in Job Corps. So I don't have specific examples, but I know that the Job Corps component is basically a pre-apprenticeship program. So they have nationally recognized certifications there also. I don't know if others on the call have some examples.

All right. But if not, that's actually a great question for our WorkforceGPS site. As you go on the site, there's a section in reference to discussion. That's a really great question to see kind of what others are doing in reference to nationally recognized certifications that are in their curriculum.

Our next question is, "For areas with limited resources and/or limited community-based organizations, education, or partners in their community, what steps might they take to start connecting out-of-school youth to employer-driven central – sectorial models?" My apologies. Sectorial models.

Anything for the group? I'm sure for those that have limited resources, I think is – I would start out by saying by the theme that we've been hearing, it's definitely about partnering. So that would definitely be the first piece is to kind of first kind of get an assessment of what is available in your community.

Even though it's limited, there may be there are opportunities in reference to partnering, and then also, as we said earlier, connecting with your apprenticeship – your local apprenticeship state or federal office so they can kind of – also can connect you to the registered apprenticeship opportunity that your – that are in your area that you may not be aware of. So that might be – that's another piece to connect with.

So others? Amy or do others have any –

MR. KARMECY: Toni, this is Eric. This is precisely the reason why we – because our local area here in Western Pennsylvania, we're just a very small two-county area with less than 200,000 population. This is exactly why we went with a regional approach and established the interstate collaborative and expanded to work with our partners as a region.

And as a result of that we've been able to attract the resources and the additional capacity in terms of the wider breadth of partners through the region to help us put some of this together.

MS. WILSON: All right. Thank you so much, Eric. Great example.

Our next question is, "How can Youth Career Connect grants get involved in apprenticeship?"

Great question. These are our Department of Labor grantees that are working with our in-school youth in connecting with high-growth industries and getting them involved in apprenticeship. We did just do a webinar. So we have a – there's – if you go on WorkforceG – I believe it might – I believe it's a WorkforceGPS.

If not, we'll make sure it's included in the archive – I mean, yes – in the archive of this webinar, but we can provide a link to that webinar. There's also a very good one around a registered apprenticeship, but it's for in-school youth. And so similar resources here but just more for the in-school youth focus. So we'll make sure we share that.

Let's see. Our next question, sorry. Got – things got moved here. "Aside from veterans and other exceptions mentioned, is there an age range that is targeted here?"

Yes. For out-of-school youth we are talking 16 to 24. So that's the area that we're focused on.

Let's see. Our next question is, "I like the model Dr. Starr presented. My concern would be that if we move a client from a youth ITA into an adult OJT, they're not going to meet performance because it's not unsubsidized employment. Was this the case with clients in this model?"

DR. STARR: Well, yeah. You're – this is where for us the relationship with the employer was key because they – we wanted the employer to make that commitment that if, indeed, as a subsidized intern the pre-apprentice showed talent, that they would then move to OJT where they put them on their payroll. And that has worked out so far, but that is the challenge. That is definitely the challenge to get an employer engaged to where they will do that because you do find with subsidized internships some employers don't want to go beyond that.

MS. WILSON: Definitely. Our next – sorry.

DR. STARR: Also, you were mentioning the ITA. So with the ITA we did have a commitment from that employer that with that training they would then do the OJT, but that doesn't – that is a challenge too to get that relationship where you're – the curriculum really is matching the employer's needs.

MS. WILSON: So okay. Thank you very much, Dr. Starr, on that one. And that is a challenge, and we've seen examples where having the employer involved in the curriculum development is another thing to think about in reference to strategy.

Our next question, actually this is for you, Amy. "What does future funding look like for the American apprenticeship grant program? Will there be new funding competition for potential new grantees in upcoming years?"

DR. FIRESTONE: Thanks, Toni. As I mentioned in the presentation, we just announced $90 million, and that went out last week I believe as money to use with industry, $30 million and $60 million for our work with states. So that just came out last week. And the AI funding, that was a really great investment and we hope it will continue in the future.

MS. WILSON: Thank you. Our next question from our audience is, "What best practices are being used to reduce or remove barriers to employment prior to participants starting training?"

So I will pose this to the group. So kind of that soft skills pre-work, as you described. I know you were talking some TABE training and things like that – so testing, I mean. So probably more along those lines.

Anything from the group? All right. Well, I think as it's been mentioned earlier, it's the soft skills. So I think where programs have that as part of their pre-apprenticeship training that they are incorporating that aspect of it is where you see the most success in reference to trying to remove some of those barriers to employment.

So that's kind of one of the pieces, and then also just the partnerships. So if you're really understanding what the individual employer is looking for, you can make sure that that's part of the pre-apprenticeship component of the training that either you're offering yourself or have a partnership with.

Let's see. Our next question, "Are there success stories in apprentice enrollment regarding the disabled?" And, Amy, if you have any feedback on that.

DR. FIRESTONE: No. We – I'm sorry. I believe on our website on our work with disabled youth, I think that would be in the resources. You could find more information with our office of – our disability office at DOL.

MS. WILSON: And as said earlier, we are always looking for examples and what people are doing in the field. So I would put that out. Anybody that has examples to share, we want to make sure we're able to kind of highlight and share these best practices. So please send that information. We'll have our contact information at the end of this webinar.

Our next question is, "Is there housing available for youth to stay at while they're in this type of program? Is the housing covered by any other funding, and at what point are the youth receiving funding? Similar to – is it similar to receiving a wage?" So I'll put that to both Eric and Phil.

MR. KARMECY: Yeah. This is Eric. We've not run into housing as an issue yet. Certainly I think if this was an issue, I think we would look to make accommodations available, but thus far it's not come up. The biggest barrier, going back to a couple questions because this is related, is the fact that most of these folks coming through the program have very little, if any, experience in the industry.

And so the challenge is to get them as much quality training and skills as we can in a short period of time to get them employed. We've had some transportation issues. We've had some issues with remediation, which we've worked with individuals to get them up to the appropriate levels, but the housing issue has never arise thus far.

And in terms of receiving funding, well, obviously we've been able to pay for the training as part of that. So they're receiving free training as a result of this, and we are working to develop paid work experience which would then enable them to receive a paid wage in those circumstances where we need to bridge a way between the pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship.

DR. STARR: Yeah. In our program – this is Phil – there is no funding for housing in our American Apprenticeship Initiative grant. So that's all provided by partners. Los Angeles is expensive, and housing is an issue. So we do have partners that can help with housing, as that issue arises. And as mentioned, we do work with the Job Corps, and they have housing.

Funding is – again, probably with virtually all our out-of-school their initial funding is not going to come from the grant. It's going to come from the partners' programs that we've identified such as the out-of-school youth jobs program provided by the county and the mayor's office.

MS. WILSON: Thank you. Thank you to both. "Can the speakers comment on any non-traditional emerging industries that are on the horizon for registered apprenticeship?"

DR. STARR: Well, this is Phil. Our grant is to look at emerging and alternate industries in apprenticeship. There's of course a very vigorous apprenticeship program in California in the trades. So that's not where we are. We're looking at IT, biotech, and health IT and developing with those employer registered apprenticeship programs.

DR. FIRESTONE: And this is Amy. Thanks for that information. I also wanted to add on that we had a first financial round table in Chicago in March, and so we're expanding apprenticeship in the financial and insurance industries as well.

MS. WILSON: Good. Good stuff. There's a lot of good things on the horizon.

Eric, this next question is for you. "Regarding the sectors you selected, does your relationship with American job centers in your area involve using the training providers on the approved provider list, or can you choose your own trainer provider?"

MR. KARMECY: That's a great question. We have actually – let's see the first part of this question. Yeah. We have – fortunately for us, they've typically been one and the same. When it comes to the technical instruction, we are very limited in who can do that in our area.

So we actually had competitive procurement of that here locally, but it was going to be one of two providers because there were only two providers that could deliver the MSSC in our region. And so that was competitively procured, and the group that was selected to provide that was also on the state approved training providers list.

So in that case they were one and the same. I can see in future situations where – obviously, if we can get them on the registered list, we are encouraging them to do so, but depending on the industry and depending on the availability, we may have to competitively procure that.

MS. WILSON: All right. Thank you so much, Eric.

Our next question is a scenario. "I work with an out-of-school youth program that consists primarily of out-of-school youth who are dropouts. While studying for the GED, we engage them in pre-employment training and paid work experiences and some apprenticeship type programs. Is there an organized apprenticeship program for South Carolina to engage the out-of-school youth that are currently working on the high school equivalency, or is out-of-school youth primarily those in college?"

And others can jump in to add to this, but I would start out by saying the out-of-school youth, especially as you're connecting with apprenticeship, is not just for those in college. So we are focusing on the 16 to 24-year-olds. But this is for young people who are not currently engaged in a high school system. So it sounds like the population that you are serving would fit in that category.

And in reference specifically to South Carolina, as I said earlier, you would have to actually – it would probably be best to connect with your state or federal apprenticeship office. We have – the apprenticeship office has a nice map which we'll be sharing some links with to let you know how you can connect with your local office. I don't know if you wanted to add anything to that, Amy.

DR. FIRESTONE: No. I think that's great.

MS. WILSON: Okay. This question is for Phil. "Are there reading/math skill level or other requirements for your program?"

DR. STARR: Yes. Everyone is assessed as part of their enrollment process, and depending upon the occupation, there are literacy and numeracy standards that need to be met.

MS. WILSON: All right. Thank you. Let's see. And let's see. And let's see. Some of these are good questions. "Can wages be subsidized via financial aid for college credit for apprenticeship?"

That is a very good question. Does anyone on my team? If not, we'll probably have to get – confirm that one and loop back around for our archive.

DR. FIRESTONE: I can give some brief information, Toni.

MS. WILSON: Thank you.

DR. FIRESTONE: So we work closely with Department of Education, and that's kind of their shop, the federal student aid office. But PELL grants can be used towards apprenticeship. So that's an option of federal work study. And so we have a lot more information that we can share with you on that and that we can pass on from Department of Ed as well.

MS. WILSON: All right. Thank you so much. Let's see. Let's see. "Are there any (inaudible) models for commercial truck driving apprenticeships that you can refer me to?" Amy, have any feedback on that? I think – (inaudible) – hits the – this will be another one you need to go to the site?

DR. FIRESTONE: Yeah. You can search on the apprenticeship website, which will be in your resources for different programs, registered programs throughout the country and the occupations and industries. So there's a – (inaudible) – database.

MS. WILSON: And here's another question, Amy. "For states with no limited RACC involvement on the community college side, do you have any recommendation in reference to" – sorry. My question disappeared – "recommend to develop involvement?"

DR. FIRESTONE: Yes. Let me know. Get in touch with me, and we can help. We've been doing a lot of outreach with schools. So it's very possible that some of the schools that you are thinking about we've already been in touch with and they're starting the process.

So if you want to get in touch with us and also the list of the state and regional directors for the Office of Apprenticeship, if they are federal programs. We have some states that are federal programs and some that are state apprenticeship agencies. So I recommend we can have a larger discussion about this if you e-mail me directly, and we can kind of brainstorm from there.

MS. WILSON: All right. Our next question, which is probably a great discussion to continue after this webinar, is, "What are some of the pros and cons presented to the employer or given by the employer for either not accepting, expanding, or continuing the apprenticeship program?" Any thoughts from our speakers today?

DR. STARR: Well, this is Phil. In dealing with alternative emerging occupations, there is an issue of dealing with a government program, particularly with our IT employers where they've never done that before. And it can be a bit negative when you initially approach them.

So that's something to be aware of. In certain sectors they're not as familiar in working with a program that involves government as a partner because in order for apprenticeship to be a registered apprenticeship, you are working with the Department of Labor or your local state office. On the health side it's much easier because those employers are used to working with government.

MR. KARMECY: And this is Eric. We've been – when we put together – when we surveyed our manufacturers, we saw a lot of them thought that – they didn't see the return on investment necessarily, and that's why we're working on developing that with those manufacturers who have had success.

A lot of them thought that the paperwork requirements were too rigorous, too daunting, and that's where, as Amy mentioned, the federal and state contacts have been incredibly instrumental for us in getting these up and running. They've been a great resource for us to help. They've got information and statistics that help demonstrate the pros for how this has worked and are able to point you to real examples of employers who've had a lot of success on this.

So we've heard a ton of reasons why they shouldn't. What we're trying to focus on are the opportunities and the return on investment for those who have found success.

MS. WILSON: All right. Thank you. This is just to kind of loop back to one of the earlier questions we had around industry-recognized certification. We wanted to point out that the North American Building Trades Union does have a nationally recognized pre-apprenticeship curriculum that's called the Building Trades Multi-Craft Core Curriculum, MC3 for short. It is being used in apprenticeship readiness programs, schools, YouthBuilds, and community colleges around the country.

Graduates of the programs are using MC3 to receive a national credential. I just wanted to make sure people were aware of that. That's another – I know I had mentioned one or two, and that's another good one to add to that mix.

All right. So Amy, someone just wanted to clarify. I know you had answered about the American apprenticeship program grant competition, but they wanted to know specifically do you know if there will be another one for next year?

DR. FIRESTONE: Yeah. Unfortunately, it's a year-to-year investment. So we're hope to have the same investment each year. Like I said, we announced the $90 million just last week. So that's for fiscal year '16.

MS. WILSON: All right. Okay. Let's see. This I believe is for you, Philip. "In the case of Juan, would he have been able to receive ITA funding for his pre-apprenticeship training had there not been a commitment from the employer to later provide OJT?"

DR. STARR: I mean, technically yes. It's customer choice, but I don't think it would have happened only because he had started with that employer and they really liked him and they encouraged us and him to continue, that we consider sending him for ITA training. So definitely the American Apprenticeship Initiative grant and its objectives had an extraordinary impact on the kind of program that was offered to him.

MS. WILSON: All right. Thank you so much. All right. So we are coming to the end of our time. I did want to note that South Carolina – Apprenticeship Carolina, wanted to note that they're working closely with their organization to engage employers about apprenticeship opportunities.

So we do encourage people to connect with their state or federal apprenticeship office. That's a really good place to kind of start and help build and think through your strategy as you are looking at this as a way, as I said, to build or strengthen what you currently have in reference to apprenticeship opportunities.

We do have resources. We're happy we're one of the first to have a webinar on our new site WorkforceGPS, and there's a lot of great resources on there. So I encourage everyone to check that out. You heard about the grants. There's a lot of information around pre-apprenticeship. We have fact sheets. There's some good toolkits, things in reference to women in construction, and then this last one is kind of that contact map that I was talking about, which is really a good place to start.

In addition we do have contact information here so you can contact myself or Dr. Amy Stone, Eric Karmecy, or Dr. Phil Starr any questions that you have. I know there were questions just in reference to kind of the funding aspect of it. I encourage you to please connect with your federal project officer. And if you don't have that, you can give one of us – give myself a call, and we'll make sure we help in reference to identifying kind of the who you need to talk to in those specific questions.

So with that said, I want to thank everyone for joining us today. There's a lot of energy happening around registered apprenticeship. We do encourage you to please send us what you're doing in this area, what's working, what's not working, and success stories. We want to be able to share that on our site so we can all learn from each other and use this space for that.

And also, if you have other ideas for future webinars as you're planning strategies under WIOA, we encourage you to also add that in this feedback loop.

So with that said, I'm going to close out, and thanks again for joining us and I will now pass this over to Brian to close this out. Brian?

MR. KEATING: All right. Thanks so much, Toni.

(END)