**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**LEADER 2016 Strategic Vision and Engagement Strategy Session**

**Wednesday, March 2, 2016**

*Transcript by*

*Noble Transcription Services*

*Murrieta, CA*

BRIAN KEATING: So welcome, everyone, to today's "LEADER 2016 Strategic Vision and Engagement Strategy Session." And to kick things off I'm going to turn things over to Zach Boren, senior advisor with the Office of Apprenticeship, Employment and Training Administration. Zach?

ZACH BOREN: All right. Thank you so much and really welcome to all of our leaders and thank you for joining us today. We are kicking off our 2016 LEADERS campaign that was so effective last year in really moving the ball in apprenticeship, really advancing apprenticeships across the country in new industries and to new populations. So we'd like to lay out our vision for LEADERS in 2016 to really keep the momentum going. Next slide.

I'm joined by my esteemed colleagues and host, including Deputy Assistant Secretary Eric Seleznow and our team here at the Office of Apprenticeship with Rachel David, Sierra Mitchell, and Laura Ginsburg. So I'm going to kick it over to Eric to get us started off right.

ERIC SELEZNOW: Great. Well, thanks, Zach. And, hey, thanks everybody for joining us on the line today. We absolutely appreciate the time you're making for this and the time and effort you're putting into being leaders. We called on you last year, and we'd like to call on you again this year. We had a lot of successes. I'll plan on spending my limited time here just giving you a little update what's going on, and then I'll turn it over to the team who can drill down deeper with you on this.

But we had no idea when we first launched the LEADERS initiative last year, most of you were trailblazers on this and are new to this effort because it's a new effort with us, but it's been very helpful for us to talk about the leaders around town. We met many of you last year at the White House convening, and then you were instrumental at our convening.

Many of you joined us again over on Capitol Hill for a congressional briefing. Really important activities. Both of those things we hear references from both of those communities about our leaders all the time, and we're just thrilled that you're making time to be part of it and helping us drive the issue.

John Ladd and I, the director of the Office of Apprenticeship and I were in Brussels just last week meeting with the European Union and learning a little bit more about what they're doing on apprenticeship and a little bit more about they were learning what we're doing on apprenticeship. And there was a lot of envyness (sic) I think from some of those folks, given some of the positive things we've done here, and they were impressed with a few of the things we did here.

The European Union has their own challenges, both good and bad, with apprenticeship, but it was a great exchange of ideas. And some of you folks joined us on that. There were 12 folks from the U.S. who came to that, and so we appreciate your interest. But anyway, that was interesting.

So we continue to spread the gospel on apprenticeship, try to change percentage – perceptions on apprenticeship. We still do not see it as a second-rate or alternative educational pathway. We see it as a legitimate career pathway, a pathway to the middleclass, every bit as strong as other credential training programs, community college, four-years, or whatever. We keep driving that. We just need folks like you can help us drive this powerful idea on the prestige of registered apprenticeship.

It's one thing if they hear it from me. It's another thing if they hear it from you, and on the phone today we have some great leaders from business, people who've been with us a long time, folks like Zurich who are new to the game. Zurich Insurance and Aon are new to the game but have recently started – Zurich started their insurance apprenticeship program just last month in Illinois.

That was a huge effort. You made that commitment as a leader. Zurich Insurance did, and they followed up on it. It was really an incredible accomplishment in 10 months. Campbell's Soup has been a great partner. Nestle we know is gearing up to do great things. We also met with Nicole's counterpart in Europe from Nestle, some of the work they're doing in France and elsewhere, and I know Nestle's gearing up here.

And of course we're always joined by some of our stalwarts, Detwiler and Bueller (sp) and some of those companies. So we appreciate their ongoing participation and support and also folks from organized labor like IPAT and the painters who have been particularly helpful.

So anyway, we appreciate your commitment. You guys are not just ambassadors. You're advocates, and we appreciate that advocacy. In your communities it's important. In your states it's important, and of course nationally important. And we'll be calling on you for that. And Secretary Perez is forever grateful of your interest in this. He tries to connect with many of you wherever he goes, and we'll be connecting with more of you next week when we do a sectors of excellence in the Chicago region.

You've made a commitment to work with us. We'll try to provide you with the latest and greatest up-to-date information. Just a couple of things I want to flag very quickly. You all know that we had our $175 million grant program that we released earlier late last year. $175 million went to 46 grantees in 27 states. Twelve states received some of those awards, some of who are on the phone today with us. Businesses received those.

Workforce intermediaries, industry associations received some of those grants, and it really is making a difference across the country as those ramp up. Nineteen of those grants were in IT. I think 17 were in healthcare. Might be the exact numbers but close enough. A dozen were in manufacturing, and others were in building trades. So it was a great mix, and it was very interesting to see some of these new areas that the grants reach to. So those grants will be around for a few years, and they're ramping up those programs and driving those activities in those states and locations.

The big news I want to share with you – and Zach will talk about it later today, but if you hadn't heard, in the congressional budget that was approved in December – that was the omnibus; right – apprenticeship got a historic – received a historic appropriation, a historic investment in apprenticeship. We received a $90 million programmatic funding for the Office of Apprenticeship.

So that's over and above what the office is funding at for its base funding. So that $90 million is a huge investment, a bipartisan investment apprenticeship and allows us to start building up apprenticeship at sort of – not sort of. It propels our activities in apprenticeship over time. So we're very excited about that. We hope to work to continue to strengthen state apprenticeship systems, to put some funds aside for industry intermediaries and associations who can help scale up what we're doing, and we hope to invest a little bit in diversity and inclusion and try to find some national partners around that.

So you'll hear more about that, but I think it's probably the greatest news we could share I think in no short order to us being able to say we have 100 and almost 75 leaders from across business, academia, government, and elsewhere. And it does a lot. Those activities at the White House and up on the Hill were very helpful in moving this forward. So again, I think your involvement is showing results.

So anyway, thank you. I'm not going to speak all day, although I could speak about this all day, but I'm not going to do this. I'm going to let the staff get along with the program. The last thing I just want to note is an update. As I think many of you are aware, this – the National Apprenticeship Week, of which many of you partnered or participated, was a huge success.

We just did a little report on that for the secretary and our friends at the White House. We had 30 governors do proclamations. We had mayors doing proclamations. We have many of you hosting activities at your places of business or at your training program. So just want to thank you for that. We spoke about it at the meeting in Brussels with the EU.

There's talk about doing a World Apprenticeship Day. There's some of that activity going on there, but for our first ever National Apprenticeship Week in the U.S. with our first ever presidential proclamation, it was a rousing success. So I want to thank you for that.

So we can go to the next slide just to summarize your leadership and involvement as a crucial part of our success. So this past year has had a lot of milestones. We had our sectors of excellence industry convenings across the country. We'll be doing more of them this year. We're doing one, like I said earlier, in finance and banking.

Also we'll be gearing up again for healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing. Our growth in apprenticeship has been driving by industry sector, and we think our sectors of excellence approach is a good way to do that. And so we're thrilled with your participation in that.

So for 2016 you're probably wondering where do we go from here and how do we keep the momentum or even increase our momentum and to ensure that this lasts into the next administration and Congress. The secretary is very interested in us having a legacy of this or institutionalizing this so we continue.

We've got a lot of ideas for this next year. I think the important thing to note is we've had some great success with Congress. We've had some great success within the federal agencies. We're now partnered up with energy and transportation and commerce and those other federal departments on driving apprenticeship. So it's not just the Department of Labor. It's more of a federal alignment on it.

So how do we keep this momentum going to ensure that it continues into the next administration and Congress and in the federal agencies? So I'm going to turn it over to Zach who's going to go a little bit deeper on these things, share some of our visions and goals for the next year or so and some upcoming events. Zach?

MR. BOREN: Great. Thanks, Eric. And what we wanted to do today was to provide you a few updates on our efforts, really provide you with a vision of what we're going to do in 2016, as well as connect you with events throughout the year. So we'll talk a little bit about those. So as you may be aware, we're making good progress on our goal to double the number of apprenticeships, and since the president challenged the nation, we've grown apprenticeship by over 20 percent, really getting back to a pre-recession level.

So this next 50,000 – so you can see we're at 451,000. Our goal – to hit by the end of September is 500,000 – will be tough. But we really do have the wind at our backs today. Heightened interest in apprenticeship across the country. We have the American apprenticeship grantees getting started and really implementing their programs, and of course, as Eric talked about, our new congressional investment. So the timing for this momentum around apprenticeship really could not be better, including a historic budget investment in apprenticeship expansion.

And so in the coming months we'll see that this – these funds are going to be invested. I'll tell you today we have a request for information out on the street that I'll point you all out to, but we're going to be doing some big investments. So the first place where we're going to invest the lion's share of funding will be in the states, so really to support and elevate the work that apprenticeship has had in the states to really help develop the talent pipeline in the states.

Additionally, we'll be looking at investing in industry. So there's funding to support and develop and scale new apprenticeship models in high-growth industries. Looking at our equity agenda, really thinking about how do we support strategies that ensure that apprenticeship works for everyone, including traditionally under-represented populations like women, minorities, out-of-school youth, and veterans.

And then lastly, really thinking about some national activities. How do we build our national infrastructure and get the word out to more employers on apprenticeships? So this $90 million is really critical down payment on the future of apprenticeship in the United States in the country and really to deliver the results that we want for industry and workers.

So, as I mentioned earlier, that request for information is on the street today. Invite you to go to fed biz ops or hit us up on Apprenticeship USA if you have an interest in taking a look at what that request for information looks like. We want to get an idea of what industry intermediaries would be able to do out in the field to really advance apprenticeship in some specific industries.

So now, let's open it up. We'd like to invite leaders this year to continue to stay engaged in the LEADERS program and reach out to us if you have questions or recommendations on the LEADERS movement. I'm sorry. Let me go ahead and turn it over to Sierra before we do that to talk a little bit about the LEADER network moving forward.

SIERRA MITCHELL: Thanks, Zach. And thanks again for everyone joining on the call. We are excited to just mention that we're considering developing a portal for LEADERS this year.

We envision it as a virtual platform where we can easily share information and updates with you on upcoming events and just a platform where you can virtually collaborate with each other on best practices and ideas for starting or expanding a registered apprenticeship program and to collaborate on events, whether it's National Apprenticeship Week or other events. So please stay tuned for more updates on that.

And we also want to say thank you for participating in some recent sector of excellence accelerator calls recently. They've been taking place over the past two weeks, and we look forward to those convenings over the next couple of months across the country. So thank you for that.

Now, we couldn't have this leader conversation without inviting a few of our leaders to speak. We've been hearing amazing stories about the work being done by all of you and especially in regards to the 2015 commitments. A lot of you have already gone above and beyond the work that you committed to do in 2015.

And so we invited a few of our leaders to talk about that. So first up we have Nicole Collier, the director of government relations for Nestle. And, Nicole, can you please just share some of the amazing work that you all are doing, that you have done for your 2015 commitment and what you plan to do in 2016?

NICOLE COLLIER: Hi. This is Nicole Collier. Good afternoon, everyone. Very happy to be a part of this, and Nestle – just to give a little bit of a background, Nestle is the world's largest food company. We have about 51,000 employees in the U.S. and have a presence in 47 states. And being a Swiss company with a large U.S. presence, we're definitely familiar with the apprenticeship form of workforce training.

We have apprentice programs in lots of different markets, and we have actually had a small program in the U.S. for quite some time but made the decision late last year to expand – or I should say late 2014 to expand our apprenticeship program from 20 apprentices to 136 by 2017. And we really consider our participation in the LEADERS program to be one of our great successes for 2015.

It was a really great opportunity for us to be around other businesses, different sectors, workforce experts, and really take in quite a few learnings about how to expand a program, how to build it to scale, best practices. And so we really have really appreciated the work of the Office of the – Office of Apprenticeship within DOL and all of the folks that we've been able to engage with through the LEADERS program and look forward to continuing that.

We really made the decision to expand our program because of the middle skills gap that many other people have talked about, both publicly in the media and companies have been facing. In addition to that, 33 percent of our skilled workforce will be eligible for retirement in coming years. So we will have quite a bit of workforce to train and be available for our manufacturing facilities.

So we really see this as an investment in developing talent, and that's a talent pool that we need for our business to work well. This 2016 is Nestle's 150th year. We've been in business for 150 years, something we're very proud of. And in order for us to be success the next 150 years, we really need to have a workforce that is skilled and available to meet today's manufacturing demand. So that's really kind of what propelled us forward.

As far as the LEADERS program, we participated in the kickoff at the White House last year. One of our senior executives participated in a panel talking about exploring youth opportunities in apprenticeship, and we really have been able to talk about the flexibility that was needed for our company.

We manufacture a lot of different products, have a lot of different types of manufacturing facilities, both from bottled water to pet food to human food. So lots of different needs, and we really in some of our facilities are near colleges and technical schools. Some are not. We really needed to be able to design something that fit our needs and the diversity of our needs. And so participating in that kickoff was a really great opportunity.

We learned a lot from some of the other manufacturing companies who've been doing this for a long time. We developed relationships with people that we've gone back to individually to help build out some of our training practices.

We had also participated in the National Apprenticeship Week. Our program was still pretty new. So we didn't do an event on a campus, but we did publish an op ed that was written by one of our senior executives about the importance of this base and about apprenticeships more broadly and about our commitment. And we were able to cross-post that on the Department of Labor blog, the website. So that was really helpful.

We got a lot of supportive tweets from sitting U.S. senators and U.S. congressmen about our blog. So that was really, really great, and that was kind of a media push for us as well. We always like that. We also as a company pulled together a stakeholder convening lunch with our U.S. CEO here in Washington, D.C. to talk about apprenticeship, continue that learning, and to just really talk about the business case because we find that to be a really important piece to talk about. And we're looking for more opportunities to do that in 2016.

Additionally, one of our goals for 2016 is to expand the network for apprenticeships. We really want to go out to other food companies and encourage them to do – invest in apprenticeship programs as well. So that's going to be something that we work on for 2016 and hopefully work with the Department of Labor on. There's – the food sector is large. It's growing. There's lots of opportunity for others to kind of do – get involved in this movement.

And we also will continue to talk publicly about our program, about the opportunities and the challenges of doing this type of program to the scale that we're looking at and to talk about the business case because we think that's the best way to get other businesses to join the apprenticeship movement is to talk about what this means for our business, why we're doing it, and how it's going to bring success for the next 150 years.

MS. MITCHELL: Nicole, thank you so much. That was awesome, and congratulations to Nestle on this being your 150th year anniversary. That's amazing. We are excited to hear that your collaboration with other leaders was very helpful. That's our whole goal and – with this LEADERS movement, and so we're happy to hear that you got some good insight and information from your fellow leaders.

And we're also excited to hear that your 2016 goal is to expand the network for apprenticeship and that you'll be reaching out to other employers. So thank you again for that, and we look forward to hearing more and meeting with you more in this coming year.

So next, we want to hear from Becky Holton, the vice president of development for the American Health Information Management Association, also known as AHIMA. Thank you, Becky, for joining us, and if you can, just please quickly share your 2015 commitment activity and your vision plan for 2016.

BECKY HOLTON: Absolutely. Thank you very much for allowing us to share what we're doing with the apprenticeship programs. AHIMA is the industry association for health information management professionals, and the foundation who is running the apprenticeship program is the 501(c)(3) arm, with our real focus being on workforce readiness and research for best practices. We used the apprenticeship week in the fall to launch our program.

We participated in some outreach activities and panel activities specifically on, A, healthcare apprenticeships and how do we – apprenticeships in healthcare is relatively new, and how do we move people into the program and what does that program look like? And we participated in some panel discussions around the recruitment of under-represented populations and veteran populations. We think that these two populations are a really nice – HIM is a nice landing pad for them.

Post those activities we did host a couple webinars, both for employers and for apprentices, to an overwhelming response. We had 400 potential apprentices fill out at least the initial stages of applications to serve as apprentices and more than 50 commitments from employers. So in 2016 our commitment is really to place at least 100 apprentices into these open positions with employers who are interested in rolling this out for us.

We do have almost 80 in the queue to get started. So our first real step is to roll this piece out. Our HIM professionals will be delving into an emergent skills training. What we know is that there is a gap between the education they come out of school with and being able to go into the job and demonstrate those skill set and really work within the MR system. And so we want to make sure they have that benefit.

We'll also be providing some wraparound curriculum training throughout the course of their apprenticeship so that there is a safety net for both mentors and apprentices as they go through the program.

An additional goal that we would like to roll out for 2016 is some toolkits for both employers and apprentices of how can other healthcare providers roll out an apprenticeship program in their organization. What are the steps to getting registered? How can they pair with us? How can they pair with other industries to create new roles? We want to make – provide the messaging and the resources they would need to have a successful program.

We also have some specific outreach to individuals who live on the high end functioning autism spectrum, and we would like to broaden a working with adults with disabilities in this field but also creating some resources for both employers and apprentices of how – the process for applying for apprenticeship and for interviewing for apprenticeship might be a little bit different for somebody with a disability, especially with – who has the high functioning autism.

So we want to be able to help with the skill set in terms of marketing materials and some education prepping so that we are making our apprenticeship program as inclusive as possible.

We're also doing the same for veterans, and we want to be able to pre-assess our veterans for prior learning knowledge so that we can immerse them into this HIM profession but give them credit for knowledge that they already possess and then move them into an on-the-job training and curriculum and wraparound support services.

And so we're very excited that we do believe we'll hit our 100 numbers for this year, and we're looking forward to how we can strengthen that and really advocate for the program throughout the HIM and healthcare field.

MS. MITCHELL: Thank you so much, Becky. AHIMA never ceases to amaze me. We're so excited and happy that – and proud of all of the work that you're doing as ApprenticeshipUSA leaders. And we're sure that a lot of the employers and organizations that you work with in healthcare appreciate that work as well.

Registered apprenticeship, the process especially to start up isn't always easy, and so we really appreciate the work you do to educate our employers on that process, especially, like you said, for those – for hiring apprentices with disabilities. It's also exciting and nice to hear that you have 80 in the queue. That's amazing. And that you've had panel discussions, webinars, and launched your program during National Apprenticeship Week. So again, thank you so much for sharing.

And now, we're going to hear from Makeeda Holley. Makeeda is the director of workforce development with APSME1199 Training and Upgrading Fund. Makeeda?

MAKEEDA HOLLEY: Hi. Yeah. Hi. Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for having me. I'm actually speaking on behalf of Cheryl Feldman who's the executive director here at the Training Fund. So again, thanks for having me, and we're excited to share the work we're doing and what we have planned.

So actually in 2014 we got approved by the state to implement our community health worker registered apprenticeship program. So 2015 was really spent on that implementation process. We put our first cohort of community health workers through the apprenticeship program, and just to kind of give you a sense of what our pipeline looks like, they start off with kind of a bridge up-front training program to orient them generally to the profession. We transition them into classroom instruction.

So they went through 150 hours of classroom training, and then they transitioned into the on-the-job learning component. And our primary employer for that is the community health organization in Philadelphia that works directly with HIV and AIDS populations. And so they got firsthand chance to do that while they were on the work site for over 2,000 hours, and then at that point they were promoted to journey level community health workers. And they just finished and received their certificate from the state at the end of the year. So we're pretty excited about that.

A lot of what we've been doing at this point is kind of wrapping up and lessons learned with the employer partner and thinking about how to scale it and as they bring in their next cohort of community health workers and transition those already trained into the mentor role, what that looks like. So it's an exciting time to kind of flesh this out and figure it out with the employers and go over best practices and lessons learned. So that's been much of our work.

We did participate in the apprenticeship week, and we used it to really connect with our youth. So we're doing a lot of work this year around kind of entry-level pre-apprenticeship thinking with young people, 17 to 24-year-olds and even some in high school. And so similar to AHIMA healthcare, we're in the same boat.

It's a new emerging field as far as apprenticeship goes, and so we really wanted to sort of kind of starting to get the younger population thinking about what this could look like if they were to transition into a apprenticeship in healthcare. So that was the focus of our activities during apprenticeship week. We had a big career fair where we brought in some of the apprentices who were in the community health worker pipeline.

We had many of our employer partners come and talk about what they envisioned for apprenticeship models. John Ladd came and spoke from the Office of Apprenticeship, and I think that he was really able to drill down and make some good points and connect with the young people.

So that's kind of where we were in 2015. We for 2016 have quite a bit planned around building out the pre-apprenticeship piece. Through the American apprenticeship grant, we're part of activities happening in Philadelphia, and we're going to be rolling out a behavioral health technician pre-apprenticeship leading to apprenticeship program with the 17 to 24-year-old population.

And the challenge that we're having around that is it's traditionally not a high-paying job. So our union is in the process of talking to our employer partners and negotiating higher wages, which would actually benefit all of our incumbent workers as a whole. So we really kind of see it as a win-win for incumbents and for our new apprentices moving into the employer positions.

And the other piece that we're building out is our postsecondary partners. So we'd really like for our apprentices to get – receive credit for the hours that they're putting in. So we have some partners who we began discussions around what would it look like if we were able to count the hours and the competencies or obtaining on – as apprentices towards credit hours, starting with associate's and leading to a bachelor's degree. So that's a pretty exciting piece.

We're also thinking about even as a city what strategies we can implement, and we've received funding from the Annie Casey Foundation to really build out our pre-apprenticeship and work-based learning model as a city. So systemically, what will that look like? What supports do we need? How do we all work together to kind of make this happen because our reality, and I'm sure for others, is that the young people who we'd like to move into some of these apprenticeship opportunities really need some up-front work?

So how can we build this pipeline out and really develop it so that they're starting at pre-apprenticeship even in high school and they're able to transition really smoothly into some of the apprenticeship options that we have.

I think I'll stop there, but I would just sum up and say that most of the work that we kind of have on our plate is really thinking about building out the youth pipeline, building out the pre-apprenticeship pipeline and getting folks ready for the opportunities that we're building.

MS. MITCHELL: Thank you so much, Makeeda. The work that you are doing is incredible. John was very impressed with the youth career fair that you did during National Apprenticeship Week, and I'm looking forward – and I'm sure we all are looking forward to the work that you plan to do in 2016 to really build out the pre-apprenticeship piece and develop those pipelines going forward.

I want to mention that we have another poll question, and thank you to everyone who's been providing information in those poll questions. The next one is just, how close are you to meeting your 2015 LEADER commitment? And please feel free to send us that information whether through our regional directors or just through our website, apprenticeshipusa@dol.gov. But please send us your highlights from 2015 and especially updates on that commitment and your plans for 2016.

So now, speaking of 2016, I'll pass it over to Rachel David who will talk to all of us about the vision and goals in 2016.

RACHEL DAVID: Thanks, Sierra, and thank you. A big thank you to Nicole, Becky, and Makeeda for the amazing work that your programs have done and continue to do.

So let's tip it a little bit, and we're going to talk to our vision and goals for 2016. So we are going to continue to rapidly expand the ApprenticeshipUSA brand across both the traditional and our non-traditional industries.

I wanted to mention quickly right here that – and we did discuss it earlier – that this Monday we are adding a brand-new sector of excellence in apprenticeship to our existing industries, and that is the financial sector which will include banking and insurance companies. So we're really excited, and it's a great kickoff to a great seas- – an accelerator season.

So we are continuing also to grow our leader community. Currently, we have 167 of you all, and thank you so much. Our goal now is to increase the number to 300-plus members by the end of the year. So tell all your friends. Tell everybody. Spread the word, and tell them how much you love being leaders and we love our leaders.

And we're going to continue to support and raise your visibility again using the ApprenticeshipUSA brand just to help you meet your training and talent development needs. We are – I want to announce right now that we are actually updating our website to make it more leader user friendly, and it's focused on you. So it is a work in progress, but we did – it did go live about noon today.

Sierra had mentioned earlier that we are going to create a platform. That is hopefully going to be something that is in addition to the leader webpage that is off of our DOL site, and here is where there will be a calendar of events. It will be LEADER updates, what you're all doing with your programs, spotlighting some great highlights, and it will be resources for you. Our fact sheets are up there. The National Apprenticeship Week report is up there, and all the information regarding the season accelerators for the spring and summer, all that information and the dates will be up there as well.

And so just to kind of wrap it up with regard to those particular goals, this is your interactive part. We want to turn it over to you and ask, what are your views about important goals for yourselves in this upcoming year? We'd love to hear it, and we'd love to share it. So another poll question is going to be coming up, and in the meantime I'm going to turn it over to Laura.

LAURA GINSBURG: Okay. Thanks, Rachel.

MR. KEATING: See a open-ended chat there. So go ahead and give us those resources by typing into the chat that's on your screen now, and that's right underneath the prompt on your screen. So go ahead and type in those resources now, and we'll give you an opportunity to do that.

MS. GINSBURG: Hi, everyone. This is Laura Ginsburg, and I want to talk to you about our ApprenticeshipUSA accelerator sessions. This is going to be a real major strategy as far as trying to double the number of apprentices over the next few years. In this upcoming year we hope to hold a series of what we're calling accelerator meetings in targeted industries, and as you see on the slide, we've got the industries that we've been working in.

Rachel mentioned that we've also expanded into financial sectors. We're looking at possibly doing something in cybersecurity. A lot of industries are coming forward and expressing a lot of interest, and also there are a cluster of employers that are very interested in moving their industries forward in apprenticeship. Next slide, please.

So what exactly is an accelerator session that we want to do? So these are going to be a series of gatherings in these industries. Each one will probably be a little bit different, depending on the maturity of the industry and what the issues are. But our goal is to bring as many companies together in that sector and introduce them to registered apprenticeship in an accelerated fashion, or I think the most advanced meeting would be one where we have you as our leaders expand the programs that you already have or bring other employers together that you think may be interested in doing an apprenticeship program here in the United States.

This is something that Nicole Collier was talking about with Nestle where she wants to – Nestle wants to bring in other food manufacturers. Aon and Zurich are bringing together other banks and insurance companies where we really want to create a consortium, a cluster of businesses that are working in the apprenticeship area.

We're really calling upon all of our leaders to help us. We can't do this alone. We need you as industry, as the private sector to really take the lead and help us reach out to employers to help us identify others who may want to learn more about registered apprenticeship and ultimately have a registered apprenticeship program here in the United States. Next slide.

So this is kind of an overview of what we want to do. We want to bring together some experts in apprenticeship that can really help in the industry. We know that one of the most difficult parts of an apprenticeship is really getting it started. We want to bring in other partners. We want to bring in high schools and community colleges. We want to bring in foundations that can really help build the programs so that they will be robust.

So many of these industries – or I'm sorry. All of the industries have met. I hope a lot of you have been on the calls that took place last week and this week that began to talk about our accelerator process. We thank many of you who have agreed to work on the planning committee and to be involved in moving your sector forward. We really appreciate you stepping up to the plate to help us move that forward. Next slide, please.

So what our timeframe is for this year, in these last two months we wanted to kind of gather input from our stakeholders and shape the design of the accelerators. Many of you responded to a Survey Monkey instrument that we sent out to you, and we really appreciate that. That has really helped us identify some of the occupations, some of the issues within your sector that will help us put a really robust session together in your industry.

From March until April we're in the planning phase. We are identifying businesses who are going to participate. We're putting together the planning committee, and then we're going to announce the dates and locations of all of the accelerator meetings we're going to have. And then from May to August we're actually going to hold those accelerators, and there will be probably six to seven that we will have. So next slide, please.

So what do we need from you? And this is really critical. We need you all to step up to the plate and really become an apprenticeship champion in your sector. What does that mean? That means really reaching out to your peers, your associations, other employers that are in your industry to talk to them about registered apprenticeship and kind of bring them along. In our accelerator meetings we need you to help us plan the meetings.

We need you to help us shape the agenda, help recruit other partners other than businesses, those colleges, those high schools, and school districts that can really be instrumental to creating that youth pipeline. And then we need you to attend the events. So you know who your point of contacts are in the Department of Labor. They're the regional directors who held the conference calls earlier this week and last week.

So if you haven't already volunteered or expressed interest, we really hope that you will reach out to them. So that is it on the accelerators. I will turn it back over to Zach.

MR. BOREN: And I'm going to turn it over to Sierra.

MS. MITCHELL: So we just wanted to mention that National Manufacturing Day will be on October 7th this year. I believe this is their fourth or fifth year of having a National Manufacturing Day, and it's very successful. And we know that a lot of our leaders participate in National Manufacturing Day and did last year.

So we just want to encourage our leaders who haven't participated to start thinking about participating this year and to let us know if you plan to participate or if you have any news releases or press releases or pictures or stories from the previous years, to please share them with us so that we can highlight those and make them available for others. We'll send out some more information in the days or weeks to come, but just wanted to mention that. Next slide.

I know that we've already talked about National Apprenticeship Week earlier and – but we wanted to mention our new goal for this year. As Eric said earlier, we had over 300 events last year, which we feel is a huge success, especially for our first year. So this year we feel pretty confident that we can double that number. So this year we set a goal. We want to see if we can get 600 or more events. So stay tuned again for our National Apprenticeship Week website and more information on how to register those events soon to come. And I will now pass it back to Zach.

MR. BOREN: Okay. So we actually want to open it up to the leaders to talk a little bit about what questions or ideas you have. So, Operator, if you could help us by giving some instructions to our leaders about how to access the phone line, that would be great.

MR. KEATING: Sure. So for – I know some of you may be listening over the computer, but if you are dialed into the teleconference, we want to encourage you to go ahead and you can actually unmute your phone line if you'd like to chime in over the phone by pressing \*6. And we see that many of you have asked question and made comments through the chat as well. So feel free to continue doing that. If you need to dial into the teleconference, that information is at the top left-hand corner of your screen. And if you'd like to go ahead and chime in over the phone, you can press \*6 to participate with the rest of our presenters.

MR. BOREN: Great. While folks are pressing \*6, why don't we take a few of the questions that came in over the chat.

The first one was, "What will be the process to access the newly appropriated $90 million?" What a great question. So a lot of the plans are still in the works on accessing the $90 million. As we talked about earlier, there's going to be funding available for states, funding available for industry intermediaries, funding available for increasing opportunities in apprenticeship, and then some national activities. So a lot of those – and I'll mention this.

The request for information is currently on fed biz ops, and why don't we go ahead and after this webinar we'll send out the link to all of our leaders so they can access that request for information. That will be followed by our request for proposals. So kind of really thinking about how industry associations, intermediaries, joint labor management organizations, and others – community colleges and others can really be able to get ready to apply for those fundings that will be made available later this year.

There was another question that we had on where is our LEADERS website. Good question. Of course we invite everyone to come to our main website. It's www.dol.gov/apprenticeship. Once you're there click on the LEADERS banner, and that will take you right to all of the major events and fact sheets and the calendar that we'll be holding over the next year.

Let me check in with the operator. Do we have any other folks chiming in? And I'm glad to take some more of the questions off the chat.

MR. KEATING: I think somebody may have unmuted your line. If you went ahead and did that, go ahead and let us know that you're on the line. Ask your question or make your comment. Has anybody unmuted – it looks like one person has unmuted their line. So I don't know if that person wants to go ahead and speak up.

MR. : That's probably me. That's – I'm Walter Tyler (ph) with – (inaudible). Of course we here in North Carolina, we are still – we are very heavily on the advanced manufacturing end of it with apprenticeships, and I already typed in the comment. But we have eight programs running in the state of North Carolina modeled after apprenticeship 2,000, which was – (inaudible) – started 20 years ago. And we keep pushing in that direction, and I'm just wondering if there are any other areas outside of North Carolina who really would be interested in getting further along that line.

MR. BOREN: I'm sure there's a lot of folks out there that would be willing to work with you Walter. I really appreciate you chiming in. One of the best ways that we're really connecting employers with other employers is through our sectors of excellence in apprenticeship and hope that folks have connected with you, Walter, to get invited to that event that we'll be holding later this summer, especially in manufacturing. And if someone hasn't, we'll reach out.

MR. : Well, I was on the conference call last week.

MR. BOREN: Good.

MR. : But I see a potential problem there because I'm not so sure – and that was actually discussed during the conference call – how many people who are not involved in apprenticeships right now are going to be willing to travel that far, in this case to Chicago, to listen to it. I think that is a potential problem. I think we have to break it down into smaller regional meetings because people are probably not going to travel that far.

MR. BOREN: Right. Well, why don't we follow up with you, Walter, and we'll think about – we'll chat and think about what we can do in North Carolina. We'd be glad to collaborate with you for sure.

MR. : Sure. Thank you.

MR. BOREN: Sounds good. Operator, do we have anyone else chiming in on the line that would like to provide a comment or a question?

MR. KEATING: I don't see anybody right now. Again, if you'd like to unmute your phone line, go ahead and press \*6 to unmute.

MR. BOREN: I see a few other questions I just wanted to get answered. One is National Apprenticeship Week. We're targeting for fall of 2016. Currently we're still deciding with the White House on when the best week will be. Last year we had it – which would have been during election week, and apparently that's not going to work as well this year. So we'll be sure to keep you informed, and you'll be the first to know when we have National Apprenticeship Week. And we're really excited about what we'll be able to accomplish there during that week.

Why don't we go – if we don't have any more comment – folks on the line, we'll go to the next slide, and we'll go ahead and wrap up here.

MR. KEATING: Sure.

MR. BOREN: All right. Great. So again, we invite you to continue to play the role that you've had, as it's so important to the LEADERS campaign and so important to really the expansion of apprenticeship to workers and industry that really are looking for these opportunities in the future. So if you have questions or recommendations for the LEADERS movement, how we're taking it into the future, drop us a line, apprenticeship.usa@dol.gov. Best way to get in touch with us.

And we'll go to the next slide, and we'll just kind of recap some of the events that we're going to be kicking off throughout the year. So looks spring to summer we're talking about these specific industry apprenticeship accelerator sessions. We hope you can join and bring your friends and colleagues along that are interested in getting started in an apprenticeship program. Late spring to summer looking at a Capitol Hill event, really thinking about what is the importance that you bring to apprenticeship and really making that your voice heard on Capitol Hill will be really crucial this year.

Sierra talked about National Manufacturing Day. So for our manufacturers and community colleges and others that are working in this space, definitely invite you to get connected with that. If you go to mfgday.com, you can gather some more information on manufacturing day in October.

And then rounding out our year we're looking at fall 2016 again really having a really robust National Apprenticeship Week, having a lot of presence on social media, having a chance for leadership to get out to your sites. We were so excited to have Secretary Perez and Pritzker and a lot of folks get out to your sites and really help celebrate the week and the value that apprenticeship brings to the country.

Again, I want to thank Walter for chiming in. I want to thank Gerish (sp) from Success and all of his accomplishments. Really pushing forward on the cybersecurity apprenticeship. I want to thank Lonnie for chiming in from IT-oLogy. I had a chance to visit with him earlier this year and see his amazing site. So congratulations. Keep pushing this year.

And thank you so much. Thank you so much for joining us. Anything else from the team that I missed?

MS. MITCHELL: No.

MR. BOREN: All right. Great. Thank you, guys, so much, and have a great rest of the week.

(END)