**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**WIOA Wednesday: High Impact Workforce Boards**

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LAURA CASERTANO: Let us know who you are in that window. Now, I'm going to turn things right over to today's moderator, Amanda Ahlstrand. She's the administrator for the Office of Workforce Investment, Employment and Training Administration. Amanda?

AMANDA AHLSTRAND: Great. Thank you, Laura. And good afternoon, everyone. Good morning to those of you in Hawaii. I did see that pop up on the screen. So I think still morning there for you, but thanks for joining us this afternoon. We're excited to be here and spend some time talking a little bit about high impact workforce boards today.

I am joined by two great panelists, Beth Brinly, as you can see, is the vice president of innovation at Maher & Maher, and Ron Painter, who's the CEO at the National Association of Workforce Boards. We have great resources in both of these people and do have time today at the end of our conversation for some Q&A. So please take advantage of having Ron and Beth with us. We're looking forward to hearing your thoughts and questions for them and engaging in some back and forth towards the end of our webinar time today.

We are here today to – as part of the series of WIOA Wednesdays we have been doing a lot of introductory courses on what the regulations are and how they read and what they mean for you. One particular one related to today is on the roles and functions of boards themselves, but today's a chance for us to take a step up from the regs, if you will, and think about the opportunity that WIOA created in setting forth the rules of the boards at the state and local levels to take a visionary leadership role and pushing the system forward.

So today we're talking a little bit about why it's important to think about yourselves and as board members or as staff to boards, as strategic at both levels. We're going to focus in specifically about some experience in Kentucky and think about the transformation of – from kind of a transactional approach to a strategic approach in how at least one board has thought about this. And I think our speakers today will be keeping on that kind of theme throughout. So thinking about how you can start from where you are today and move yourselves forward we hope you have in the back of your minds as we go.

Given the vision set forth by the legislation that we're all working to implement together across the system, we are looking at boards as the key place at the state and local level that makes sure you're getting to an implementation that realizes the vision for your communities and for your regions.

We are focused on keeping employers at the center of that and keeping customers at the center of our conversation, and we're also focused on thinking about how do we keep ourselves in check, if you will, and setting forth some ways to assess and measure where we are today versus where we want to go and hold ourselves accountable for making progress against that.

We also want to keep in the back of our mind some of the activities that the legislation charges the system with and that the board can and should play a key role in maintaining, if you're already doing some of these things, and improving your processes but also in some cases starting brand-new efforts in things like sector strategies or career pathways, taking a deeper interest in how staff of the AJCs – or American Job Centers, if you will – are engaging in the process, how you're using your business engagement staff, the conversations you're having across partners, and how you're weaving together the integrated system that is envisioned by the Opportunity Act.

So let's take a minute before I turn it to my colleagues here to get a little deeper. We would like to hear a little bit more about who you are. So if you can let us know via the polling question here, where are you in the workforce system? How connected to a board directly? Are you an agency staff member, local staff? If you're other, please let us know. But it looks like a lot of staff to local boards and state agency staff. That's great.

Thank you, everybody, for filling this out. And certainly, depending on where you are, you have a different view of the conversation today, and we know that's important. It's helpful for us going forward to kind of know who's listening in here so we can make sure that additional and future resources are available to you.

Let me also take a minute to say that today's webinar is part of a series of technical assistance that we have available through the Strategic Boards Toolkit. It is also on WorkforceGPS where you're viewing this here today, and I encourage you to take a look at that toolkit and us its many resources.

So keep that in mind. Today is the tip of the iceberg, if you will, and there's lots more out there. The National Association of Workforce Boards in and of itself is also an excellent resource and is very interested in your success, as we all are. So please keep that in mind.

Let's see. We've also got – the next polling question is up for you now. We'd like to just kind of hear how long have you been connected to a workforce development board. Are you new to the system? Have you been here for a while? This is looking like a good mix of all of these options. 37, 38 percent on 10-plus years, but the next highest one is 30 percent on one to two years. So I will say that feels kind of like my own organization here at ETA. So that's really cool. Three to five and six to ten getting closer to 15 percent as well. So that's great.

Given kind of now we know a little bit more about you, let us start getting into the meat of our conversation today. I'm first going to turn it over to Ron Painter, and I think Ron is – well, I know that Ron is joining us from a meeting he's at in Washington State today. So I'm turning it over to you on the Pacific Time zone, Ron. Go ahead.

RON PAINTER: Thanks, Amanda. And, yes. I guess early good afternoon to most everybody here and still morning – aloha to our friends in Hawaii. Thanks. I want to take a couple of minutes, and I appreciate Amanda's comments. We really are at NAWB very interested and invested in your success as state and local workforce boards.

I think – and I love the introduction as we step outside the worry about the regs because all of us have to contend with regs. We understand that. I know that there are about 11 board members on, and I'm sure they contend with regulation in your own industry. It's something that's a given, and despite that you got to move toward innovation and you got to move toward creative solutions for not only your company but in our case for our communities.

And I think that's really critical for us to remember today. This is still about problems in our community, solutions that we are a part of. And I think to remind folks that we deal with something that's very, very dynamic in the labor market.

If we look at last month – and one of my favorite reports is the JOLTS Report produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. If we look at that report, we can see that last month there were five plus million, maybe 5.4 million hires. There were 5.2 million separations in the labor force, and there were five million active vacancies.

That's a very, very dynamic market, and I'm sure that plays out in your regional area in your local area. People make decisions both personally and business based on what's happening in the dynamics of that market. So really workforce boards thinking, planning, and acting in a strategic manner understand, analyze their market, and to help people understand what they see happening in that market.

So if you think about all of the investments that are being made, public investments, federal investments, state investments, there are many states and local areas now that have general revenue funds into workforce development. If we think about all of those investments, if we think about the billions that are invested in economic development projects, again, whether that's at the state level, whether that's at the local or regional level, all of the success of those hinges on people having good information about what's going on in the market and where they should invest, how they should invest.

And to me, again, that comes back to workforce boards can be the lynchpin in their region, in their community to help advance an efficient, effective workforce development system that has concern around access and equity in the market. So we want to build a very effective structure in your regions.

When I was going to school, I do basically kind of remember that when they were trying to teach me economics, they said the formula was land, labor, and capital. And we know today that that talent becomes very, very critical in that whole formula because companies hunt the world for talent. Talent hunts the world for opportunities to use their skill.

And I'm going to ask you to just jump to – I think I'll have you just jump to the next slide because I'm having a wee bit of internet problem here. Oops. Let me go – all right. There we go.

So when we think about the board's role – and it really should be this strategic thinking. I tell board members when they come to the board meeting, you know everything about this business that pretty much you need to know because you understand the demand side. You understand the complexity of hiring, the risk that's involved in hiring that next employee. So all of those things you need to bring to the meeting.

So workforce boards really need to focus on the vision for their region. What kind of workforce development system do you want? And I would also add to that the other V, the values. How do you want to do your business? How do you look at the customer? How do you express value, that you value your customer, the business customer? How do you indicate to people that you value them as a part of the workforce development system?

Workforce boards I think it's very difficult, but I think they've got to integrate the various initiatives that are happening in workforce development in their region. We talked a lot in Washington. There was a lot of conversation when WIOA or the INO, as I call it, was going through Congress about alignment.

And I think boards are in that position to understand the dynamics of their local labor market, to combine the people that you've got to have in that system, whether it's housing, transportation, childcare, certainly education, and I think boards that are focused on the market can understand how all those players are a part of that market, what their role is.

And I say to boards, then you need to work with those people as the players in the system. As they go to their state legislature, as they go to their funding source, you need to be there supportive of their work. So I think – I can't emphasize enough how critical we think this role of local, regional, state workforce boards are and the thousands, thousands of private sector volunteers that are a part of that – part of that board.

So I think I'm going to hang around for questions, and I think at this point in time I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, my friend Beth Brinly who joins us – and for those of you who know those of us in this business at a certain level, it's not surprising. Beth Brinly is in an airport.

MS. BRINLY: Thank you, Ron. I so appreciate the – your joining the conversation today and really setting the stage. And yes, if you hear a little airport noise, you know that's the case.

MR. PAINTER: And we will compare notes later, Beth, about where the best restaurants are in the – (inaudible) – airport and elsewhere.

MS. BRINLY: Excellent. I look forward to the conversation. Well, hello, everybody, and I'm really excited to see all the different folks at all the different levels of the workforce system and board members on the call today. I'm really excited to share with you some great collaborative work that went on in Kentucky and has been refreshed under the context of WIOA.

So the Kentucky High Impact Workforce Board's initiative was part of the Kentucky WorkSmart Strategic Plan that our state board had put together, and they wanted to set some standards for what a high-impact workforce board looked like not only at the local level but to hold themselves accountable at the state level. And they had three overarching focuses around this. One is they wanted to grow and engage local boards. They wanted to set some clear and strategic goals that help boards become more efficient and results driven and to manage and leverage the resources of boards more effectively.

And so as we went about that process, our expectations were what we would see happening at the local level is that we'd see our local boards working more strategically, that they'd be managing their resources in new and exciting ways, and that they really would have strong boards that were serving as the backbone of the workforce development system, which I believe the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act just reinforced for all of us.

I'll give a little bit of a history lesson, and I think this is important, especially for those folks who are on state boards and serve as staff to state boards that may be considering undertaking a state-level approach to high-impact local workforce boards. And as I'd said before, this was an action item in our WorkSmart Kentucky plan and with all of our projects at the state board level we had identified a champion on the state board that served as lead and it was actually a local board chair at the time that undertook this process.

We established the steering committee, and that steering committee was made up of local workforce board chairs, local workforce executive directors, all of our partners in the system. So we had adult ed, vocational rehabilitation, the community college system, some of our career center service providers, and others on the steering committee. So it was reflective of all the partners who play a real strategic role in boards being effective.

We started out the process of establishing standards as the overarching area, then criterion, and then elements underneath that. And one of the handouts actually is a – I call a sanitized version of the Kentucky standards that we use with local boards. And we did an initial development of those criteria, did training for staff, and then actually used a process of local board directors and chairs as well as other folks that served on the steering committee going out and doing baseline assessments based on that criterion.

And then from there we provided technical assistance funds based on the feedback from those reports, and then finally, our high-impact WIB initiative was a voluntary process. So five local boards as well as the state board went through the application and review process for the standard year. So we had the baseline assessments. Then we set the final standards. We put technical assistance money out there for local boards to address the challenges, and then the next year they could apply on a quarterly basis for consideration for high-impact WIBs.

And really proud to say in that very first year that we did it we had five local boards apply and receive recognition as high-impact workforce boards, and then the state gave the local boards some of the governor's discretionary money, $50,000 each for each of those local boards to continue to advance their strategic plan initiative that they had moved forward with. So for those of you at the state level, I just thought that this could be really an important piece of the dialogue today just to – if you want to do something similar to what Kentucky has done, that might be the consideration.

The last note before I move off this slide is that we were undertaking a review of those standards before the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act passed, and so our steering committee then took the new law and all of the new roles and responsibilities of state and local boards and incorporated that in the standards and in that attachment, one of the resource materials that you have going forward. That will provide a lot of the detail. I'm going to talk more at a higher level or an overarching level about the criteria that were established through this collaborative process of local and state folks and partners talking about what our criteria were for those standards.

There were three standard areas that the group established, and the first one was strategic planning and implementation. So at your state board level or at your local board level these were some of the things that we thought were essential for a strategic board. So, for example, planning, it was comprehensive and inclusive.

And so a number of our local boards actually went through a process of community engagement discussions with partners and across their local workforce investment area or their region to gather input about the state plans. And so that was really an exciting process for these folks because they came to appreciate, as Ron had alluded to earlier in his comments, understanding how people viewed it from the customer perspective, whether that was an individual customer or a business customer or one of our partners along the way.

Another major kind of criteria area was aligning with other community plans. So the workforce plan wasn't written in a vacuum. It took into consideration economic development plans and education plans, K-12, the community colleges, universities, and other community-based organizations so that the workforce plan was comprehensive and really economic development plans and others were taken into consideration so that we were allotting resources within the community to truly build that talent pipeline that we wanted to see accomplished.

Another key area that our local high-performing boards meet were that they had goals beyond WIOA, and so the objective was, what is important to talent development and supply chain management in your particular region that go above and beyond the federal performance measures, and putting those in place and holding themselves accountable for achieving those goals and objectives.

Another is that the document itself is not one that you write and you put on the shelf but that it's a living, breathing document, and Ron had alluded to how dynamic the workforce world is right now and the need for talent; recognition that when you wrote your plan, you may not have been anticipating that significant layoff that has occurred or a major expansion of a company or a group of companies or the attraction of some new sector or the economic development focuses shifting in your community.

And so the need to make sure that at least on an annual basis, if not more regularly, take a look at that plan and say, hey, what do we need to do? How do we need to make this live and keep it fresh and responsive to what's happening in the community?

And then finally, under strategic planning and implementation really recognizing sector strategies and career pathways as the vehicle for employer engagement and maximizing and efficiently utilizing those hundreds of thousands of business partners that are working with us and trying to streamline their engagement and maximize their impact on our workforce system and the whole talent development system overall.

So let me move into the second standards area that we had which was really focused on developing and managing resources, and it's really interesting here to see the evolution that has happened with some of our local workforce investment boards in Kentucky. And some were already doing this type of work, but we saw the evolution from local boards that the money that they were working with or aligning with was just the Title I adult dislocated worker and youth money to an evolution where only 40 percent of their asset portfolio, if you will, was comprised of the Title I money.

And it wasn't necessarily that the board owned and managed those resources, but as they had developed community plans, there was alignment of resources among education, economic development, workforce development, then social service agencies and community-based organizations. So there was that leveraging.

As regional sectors were identified and the system overall started putting priority focus on some of those key sectors for growth and sustainability of the economy, they were able to document that they were leveraging those resources and the assets of all of their community agencies and partners. And that's a pretty powerful thing, and that's really one of the things – the greatest assets that your local board members can bring to bear.

I was recently, for example, in Virginia and was working with the state board and the local boards, and they had a retreat. And so one of the local board chairs said, look. I serve on five different boards. Well, we now bring the chairs of all those boards together and we start talking about how we can braid our resources in new ways and that's really powerful. That's when we know that we're moving into the strategic realm versus the tactical realm; right?

And then finally, one of the new priorities for local boards under the new law and the state board is the effective use of technology to manage, deliver, and maximize the efficient use of programs. And so thinking about different tools and resources that will allow partners to work together to take a team-based approach to our individual customers and our business customers, thinking about the fact that our younger customers are far more tech-savvy than our older customers and what does that mean for us long-term as far as bricks and mortar of our America's job centers versus technological interfaces with our customers? And so there's a lot of robust conversation that can happen around that. So those were the key elements under developing and managing resources.

So let's move to the third area that we wanted to talk about, which is actually managing the work of the board itself. And one of the things that we learned out of this whole high-impact WIB effort was that we at the state level really needed to do some education, training, and support for our chief local elected officials in regard to how they thought about making board appointments and that maybe going about the process of each county or whatever your local government structure was, making individual appointments in isolation but the thought of bringing them together for a broader conversation of who is the leader in this sector and how do we go about making sure that those champions of the key sectors in the region are represented on the board?

And then also the discussion of how do we measure our effectiveness as a workforce system, and as a local board ourselves how do we know that we are having the type of impact that we should be having in our community and if the new policies and directions – strategic direction that we provide to the staff and to the system is really achieving the outcomes we want and hold ourselves accountable and really create a culture of continuous improvement and support?

And so recognizing that we have the federal measures. We may have state measures that come from our state boards and local measures that are important to our economic region. Are we making improvements along the way? Do we even need to tweak what it is that we're measuring so that we can drive the type of system change that we want?

So that's a quick overview of some of the criteria that was associated with Kentucky's high-impact WIB initiative, and it was really a powerful process to go through, and the local boards are now going through their next round under the new WIOA standards that we just talked through. And so I'm sure that some of the folks [inaudible] some of our Kentucky friends both at the state and local level are on. So you all can chime in in the chat room or with questions or things that you might want to expand on.

Wanted to throw open another polling question. So what we have here is, in terms of measuring the impact of the work of your workforce development boards, where would you candidly place your board with your work? And so we'll just give a minute and let folks respond to that. So it looks like we have a lot of folks who have developed specific metrics to measure the impact of their board. That's great to see.

There are folks who have developed specific criterion but really haven't measured their impact yet and there are some of you that are just starting on the process and there are others that have a track record. So it's nice to see. Sounds like we've got a good group of people who know what they're looking for in regard to their boards and where they want to go. So give it just a minute longer and see what else comes through there. All right. Well, it looks like we're still staying pretty high in regard to that we have not yet developed the specific metrics to measure the impact of our board.

So along those lines, the next slide that we have really kind of speaks to that. We have developed a tool and it's one of the resources that's in the box today and it's the high-impact workforce development boards exercise. And this exercise you could actually use with your state board or you could use with your local board to have a conversation with your board members around those three standard areas I talked through and the 10 criteria underneath those three standards and the elements underneath those.

So I have used this exercise all across the country at this point with local boards and state boards and state and local boards and just breaking up your board into small groups. There are 10 criteria, as I said, and you have three or four people take a look at a specific criterion, take a look at the elements underneath that criterion, and say, what would we be doing as a high-impact workforce board to meet that criterion and those elements underneath that?

And the creativity of the local board members around that discussion has really been a powerful thing and has led to discussions about how they might structure their board meetings differently, talked about what performance measures they might want to put in place in the local level, how they want to rethink their business services maybe in a unified business service approach, or how do we most efficiently gather input from employers in our sector work, in our career pathway work that we're doing, and how do we make all that work together? So if you're looking for a tool to kind of have that conversation with your local board, this might be a great resource for you.

And in Kentucky we not only did that with the local board. We did it with the state board, and there's some fine tuning you'd have to do to those criteria because they were originally written by the local board but then we had an outside evaluator come in and then we made some adjustments to the way that the board worked based on the feedback that we got.

So I think this is a great conversation starter, whether it's at your state board level or the local board level. So if you take a look at that tool and you have questions about it, I certainly would be glad to talk to you. And for those of you in Kentucky, it will look awfully familiar. It's the last version of our standards that were built under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. So it's very fresh.

So with that I think one of the things that we really want to talk about is the most important thing about having a great strategic board is that it sets a real strong policy direction that then moves into practice. And so this next chart is a graphic that really shows the interplay between our customers and the system and how it all works together. So we have employer demand on the left and in the center and on the right we have our labor supply.

We have industry sector partnership, apprenticeship and work-based learning, and career pathways really being intertwined. And I stress this a lot because for me sector strategies is the what, and career pathways is the how to making sector strategies real and tangible for both the individual customer and the work – and the business customer. And we all have our part to do in that process.

So our business community is really focused on the talent needs. We need them to validate the labor market data and to be very clear with us about the skills that are needed of – as we're building that talent supply chain; right? And then also our business community is really critical for providing the opportunities for work-based learning and to apprenticeship and shadowing and mentoring and internships because we have so many companies that are not only looking for somebody with a credential but with experience, and that is the thing that the business community can do in support for us.

Then on the qualified workforce side of things our objectives is education, economic development, workforce development, vocational rehabilitation, and other partners is to really focus on making sure that we're creating very highly competitive workforce that has the right credentials and has the type of experience that business and industry needs from their workforce to bring it all together.

So this kind of captures all of that, and so you can't – it's so important that your sectors work is being done in collaboration with the career pathway work and what's going on with apprenticeship and work-based learning so that you can really target and align those resources and then we'll start seeing the ability to move from policy to practice there.

Finally, I wanted to showcase one of the high-impact workforce boards in Kentucky and talk about the business case they've been able to make about their relevancy within the Northern Kentucky local workforce investment area and their region called Employ First which takes into account actually not only Northern Kentucky's workforce investment board, the two local boards in Ohio and one in Indiana where they have a driving and share a joint workforce.

So first of all they were focused on results, and they were very specific about their performance metrics outside of the federal performance measures. Second, their chair at the time was the head of Toyota, and Toyota uses key performance indicators as means of tracking their impact. And so the Northern Kentucky Workforce Investment Board established key performance indicators that they then tracked over and above the common performance measures.

They then also took a collective impact approach to say that – to address the talent supply needs within their local labor market and within their Employ First region. It was bigger than what the resources of the workforce services were, and so they track the collective impact of all of the partners' contributions. And finally, they had the Northern Kentucky University Center of Economic Analysis actually do an economic impact study, and as Northern Kentucky utilized its funds, this very quickly shows the impact in all sectors and then in their targeted sectors.

They had a $1.4 billion impact in their region in regard to the targeted sector needs of their business and industry that they could document. And very quickly the direct impact means the actual hiring of that individual, the indirect are the costs the company spends to support that new employee, and then induced is reflective of what that new employee spends in the regional economy.

And so you can see pretty powerfully and taking a look at both the all sectors and the targeted sectors, their impact was very strategic. It was in their targeted sector areas. So just thought that that was something that could be exciting to see and to reflect. Sometimes we wonder whether or not people truly appreciate the impact of the system, and this was reflective in a very powerful way to demonstrate that.

Now, what we'd like to do is share with you a voices of experience podcast that was done by local workforce board members talking about what they were doing as far as the high-impact WIB. So, Laura, if you wouldn't mind playing the video at this point, we'll do that, and then we'll be ready for question and answer.

MS. CASERTANO: Sure. And for those of you listening over the phone, just go ahead and unmute your computer speakers because the video will be playing through your computer.

MS. AHLSTRAND: And just one more addition as it's loading. This is Amanda. We are just going to play a portion of this video today, and as we talked about, it's part of the toolkit. So we hope you'll go back and take a look at the whole thing, but we thought it would be helpful to just see some additional perspectives to the conversation today. So here we go.

MS. CASERTANO: All right. Now, I'm going to turn things right over to Amanda Ahlstrand. Amanda?

MS. AHLSTRAND: Thanks again, Laura. Thanks, everybody. I hope you'll return to watch the remaining few minutes of that video and look at the rest of the toolkit, including the exercise that Beth talked about.

We're going to transition now to our conversation question and answer part of the – our time together today and first, starting off with a polling question of you all. And then I'm actually going to ask Ron and Beth if they could comment on kind of their observations of the same question.

So the last polling question we have is, what is getting in the way of your board not becoming a high-impact one? If you can use the chat feature, we'd like to talk about that a little bit, and then we do have here that insufficient funds is not an okay answer. So I challenge us all to think about challenges beyond that one, and this does give us a chance too to take a minute and just recognize the voluntary nature of these boards and thank our colleagues, particularly board members who are joining us today but across the country keeping that in mind that that's an important piece of things.

So, Ron or Beth, do you have any comment you would want to make here in terms of things that you've seen boards work through and move out of their way in their efforts to become more high impact?

MR. PAINTER: Amanda, it's Ron. I guess I'll kick off with a couple of examples that I've come across. One that I use often is Philadelphia sits of course next to New Jersey, but it sits in the midst of a very important chemical and pharmaceutical region in the U.S. As Philadelphia Workforce Board looked at what Paul was talking about, their labor market analytics, they realized that for them it was very, very true that people were going to need postsecondary training in order to be a part of that market and meet employer need.

When they looked around, they also realized that they had a large number of people in Philadelphia who had literacy needs. They also had a large number of people who had some college. So what the board did, because today it's not WIA or WIOA funds but the board started to look at what became Graduate Philadelphia. How could they convince foundations, others in the community to invest in a counseling center that would help people understand how to get that college degree completed? I think there's now six cities of Graduate that are focused on the same thing.

So that's a measurable goal beyond what the INO establishes because Philly looks at and these other cities are now looking at how many people have we been able to help them finish that postsecondary degree. I think the other example I would use would be in the Hartford, Connecticut area where in the midst of the recession Hartford looked around and realized that the concentration of poverty, while there was great wealth, there was still a pretty good concentration of poverty.

So the board set out to look at how can we convene these conversations of how do we alleviate or how do we reduce that concentration of poverty and then how are we impacting that? What are the employers, the wage rates we're working out, the industry sectors that we're working with – how are we impacting being able to bring people out of or wages above poverty to self-sustaining wages.

And Seattle – much the same way, Seattle has an index here that will help people understand what is self-sufficiency. So I think it's really – again, it's key to me in looking at the labor analytics what is going on in your market, and then how is that impacting both business?

How is that impacting, as David said very eloquently, our talent? And sometimes that is – the INO can contribute some money, but in many cases it's really the board stepping up and figuring out how do we convene this community conversation because we see that this is an issue that's holding our region back. Beth?

BETH BRINLY: There's a lot of chat in here that speaks directly to their concerns that their board appointments are not rigorous enough or that they aren't the movers and shakers in your community. And one of the things that I would go back to is that's where the education of your chief local elected officials really is an important thing.

We learned through our high-impact WIB work in Kentucky that in many cases those local elected officials were let's say not being as strategic in their board appointments and they may have been appointing a friend who owns a small business. And not that that's not relevant but just the – from the perspective of are they reflective of the sectors in your region that are critical for the long-term growth?

And not only that, but are they a person that – I use the term, when E. F. Sutton talks, people listen. Are those board appointments and those business representatives those folks that have the relationships in the community that when they talk it gets the attention of leaders in the community and a desire to move forward? And so I think that's a really important part.

I think another, when you're talking about really creating an active board – and in Kentucky, when I got there, the governor had just reconstituted the board. They were not even – they weren't even getting quorums at meetings, and so the whole effort – the board went through a process of developing guiding principles about how they wanted to conduct their business, and they gave very clear direction to the staff about how they wanted to be engaged, what they wanted to be engaged in.

And instead of creating standing committees, this effort that we talked about with the strategic action items where a board member was a champion of that strategic action item and then they had a project manager from in the workforce system, not necessarily the Department of Workforce Investment, but an agency partner. And that's something you could do at the local level just as easily.

And that business person decided whether they were engaged at critical milestones along the way, or in other cases they rolled up their sleeves and really had some expertise to lend. And they worked through that strategic action item and were engaged with that and it was tangible and it was real to them and they were the ones who gave the report out at the board meetings. And during the life of that process of our engagement strategy with the board at that level, we had 42 members on our board.

We never had less than 39 board members at a meeting. And to me that speaks volumes. So yes. You may have your standing committees, but people come and serve on those boards for specific reasons, and so really spending the time to understand what strengths your board member brings and what they want to accomplish on that board and playing to that and utilizing them in accordance will really make a big difference because they'll have ownership of the work that they're doing.

MR. PAINTER: Yeah. Beth, that's a really good point because one of the things that you and I have chatted about and I think that doesn't – probably doesn't rise to the level of conversation that maybe it needs and that is actually focusing on the board's meeting agenda.

And when I say that, please remember that once upon a time – it seems like a long time ago – but once upon a time I was a local director. So when I talk about what I've come to realize is we really got to focus on the board agenda, it comes from being a little embarrassed when I look back at my board agendas and then thinking about what does an agenda look like for a strategic conversation.

And I really think Tulare County Adam and Bill really do a great job I think, the director and the board chair, of sitting down and thinking through that agenda. Bill described it as I'm – the board meeting is a dinner. I'm inviting people to dinner. Shouldn't I think about the mix in that crowd? Shouldn't I think about what I'm going to serve, how I'm going to serve it, those kind of things? So I would encourage everybody to step back and examine their meeting agenda and see if that – and talk to your board members about what are the – how do we have a strategic conversation? I will give a pitch.

We're going to be – I'm going to be in Colorado next week with Tom Cavanaugh and that's part of what we're going to be talking to the boards about. How do you craft a strategic agenda? And I know, Beth, it's something you've thought about and you've done some work and you mentioned it earlier in your slide, looking at what the agenda is.

MS. BRINLY: Exactly, Ron. And when we set board agendas at the state board and even some of our local boards, the executive committee of the board would take a look at the – they got monthly progress reports that we actually posted on the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board website about where we were with each of the 25 strategic action items. The board would take a look at those reports, and if a project wasn't moving along as had been built out, they might have that particular project be the main presentation at a board meeting.

And then there would be two or three key discussion questions that were already prepped, but the executive committee set up that agenda a month ahead of time, which then gave time for folks to develop materials and get it out to the board two weeks in advance to then have a meaningful discussion about those things. So how you set that agenda and how you prepare the board members for those meetings is important.

Another thing I noticed in here was someone talked about the fact that there's only one staff person to the board, and I know that that can be a daunting feeling to be that one staff person. Ron, do you have some suggestions that folks may think about as far as a support for the board that goes beyond that one staff person?

MR. PAINTER: Oh, listen to how easily you just slid that question over to my side of the desk. I'd began when the workforce boards were created. Even I began as the one-person staff.

So I do appreciate that, and I think that part of that has to come back to what Paul was talking about, working with your partners at the community college, the chamber, and thinking about where is it the most critical. What can we do that's going to have impact? What's the most critical next thing to do? I also think that is a conversation that the board needs to be engaged in as well. How are you going to move forward? How are you going to move this agenda forward?

The board I think has to own that agenda, which means they've really got to be engaged in the planning and the planning process. So I hope as part of that planning process that you've taken a – you've gotten the board really, really engaged.

MS. BRINLY: Yeah.

MR. PAINTER: Hey, in –

MS. BRINLY: In – oh, sorry.

MR. PAINTER: Just a quick reminder, in your chat window, if you have a measure – going back to the question, if you have a measure that you think is beyond the INO that you really figured out is pretty cool, it generates conversations with local elected or it generates conversations with your board or both or it's something you all use as an indicator to your community, please share that with us. We're really interested in helping boards that are trying to figure out how I set a goal and then move toward it. So don't be bashful. Kind of fire something out there.

MS. BRINLY: I know of one powerful one for one of the high-impact workforce areas in Kentucky was that they had a metric around market penetration with business community.

And they went from 500 interactions in a year operating in programmatic silos around business services to moving to a regional business services team that had 5,000 meaningful interactions with the business community by rearranging their – and taking that unified business services approach where they brought the adult ed, the vocational rehabilitation, economic development, the community college, the university, and the business services staff of the workforce board together and started organizing their work. Some of them organized it around the sub-regions.

Some of them organized it around region – their targeted sectors, but what a powerful difference and what an impact for that region and education about what services are available to the – from the workforce system and providing them in a unified approach. So that's just one that came to my mind, Ron.

MR. PAINTER: Cool. And I'll – I see an answer, and I'm not sure if we're supposed to say, but, Jason, that's a pretty cool – Jason wrote in that they're really looking at the new pathway system and have made a commitment to gather data about the impact.

And, Jason, I'm guessing – and help me if I guess wrong. I'm guessing as part of that what I've seen people look at is these are the postsecondary certifications, degrees, credentials that are important for our industry partners. How many people are going into those programs today? How many were, and then how can we influence more people in selecting those? And I – if that's not accurate, let me know the data points that you guys are looking at.

Yeah. And somebody else wrote in, and I agree. Looking at the measure of U6 data. If you're not using U6 data, it's really pretty important that – I think, at least as directors, that you get familiar with the U6 data that BLS puts out because it does, to me at least, capture a pretty good view of who's in this labor force and what's happening to them because it does reflect how many people are working part-time because they want to, how many out of necessity.

So somebody pointed out in their – Jim pointed out that you might want to be able to look at how many are disengaged have we joined and what's happening. I think that's a really pretty cool idea what you're doing in terms of job generation.

Hey, thanks, Jason. He wrote back and said I was pretty accurate in my response. So I think that's a pretty cool one. Actually, I really like that because there are ways that you can impact it.

One of the funnest (sic) ways I saw a workforce board impact potentially what people decided to take was, if you have kids and you do that night in the fall around following their schedule during the day, you go to school and here's their schedule and you spend – I don't know what it is – 15, 20 minutes in each class, one of the workforce boards that we work with convinced one of their school districts not to skip the lunch period on the young person's schedule.

And they designed a 15-minute labor market orientation for parents. And so they delivered a very concentrated 15-minute presentation to parents about what was happening in the labor market and what kind of postsecondary credentials were being honored or valued by employers in the region. I thought it was a pretty cool way to reach an audience of important decision makers, particularly for young people, around what pathway they're choosing.

MS. AHLSTRAND: Ron and Beth, this is Amanda. Again, I wanted to do a quick kind of commercial. We've talked just recently a bit about the unemployment measures and labor market information, and just a plug that I've heard here recently is to make sure to take advantage of your state labor market information shops.

The INO, as Ron calls it, challenges us all I think to move forward on better integrating the use of that data to our day-to-day work. So I think from the ETA perspective we have a fair amount yet to do there to help facilitate that, but a lot of you have made a lot of progress on that already. So I think that's an area looking toward the future we really want to focus in on.

I also just wanted to jump in and make sure that folks were taking this time to ask questions beyond the polling one, and we're evolving here into a great conversation about measurement. If there are other questions that you have for Ron or Beth, please jump in particular areas that would be helpful for you in the next for the time we have together. Give it a minute here to scan through some things.

MS. BRINLY: So there's – I see a little bit about the discussion of how to bring all the agency partners together and how do we get them to do system thinking as opposed to working in their programmatic silos.

And one of the great tools and some great resources are on the ION Network are around customer-centered design because lots of times, when you bring your various partners who are serving common populations together and you start the conversation around the customer and what the customer needs and wants and what would be most efficient and effective for them, that oftentimes can help break the ice among all of the agency partners as far as trying to address those concerns and to get beyond, well, I can only do this or I can only do that.

If we start with the customer in the center and have that discussion about how we can improve, whether business services or a team-based approach within our career centers or other strategies, supporting that customer-centered design work among the partner agencies can be really effective. So hope that helps. Anything you want to add there, Ron?

MR. PAINTER: No. I would agree, Beth, and I think this is – I mean, I know that this is what we're talking about is really hard work. I also think it's really, really exciting to get people who are committed to their communities to come together to figure out how to solve it. I've often said this is – if we think about this from the standpoint of what we get to do every day, is really colossal. This is about our communities, our regions. It's about the people who live here. It's about our families. It's about our neighbors. It's about our kids.

It's really – yeah, it's a lot of work, and sometimes we really have a lot to contend with in terms of regulation and trying to understand that law. We did a webinar the other day for our members on the business of the business. When you're a non-profit, what do you have to think about? The key is really encourage people to keep in mind that at the heart of it this is about our communities having a better chance at it.

MS. BRINLY: Yeah. I love – Carol had typed in about how important it is that we treat our board members as executive decision makers as opposed to just idea generators, and I think that's really important. The board is responsible for developing the budget for the workforce system in consultation with the chief local elected officials, and their investment strategies are sometimes different than – and their priorities are different than ours in the workforce system.

And so that is an important role that they play together. Another is the whole working out of the inter-relationships and how services are delivered and structured. They are the certifiers of the American Job Centers, and that is a role of the board and a pretty significant responsibility.

And oftentimes just going through that board orientation piece and working through between the chief elected officials and the local board how they're going to conduct their joint responsibilities is a eye opener for those local board members in regard to the weight and responsibility associated with their service on the board. And they then take ownership at a level because they have worked through that relationship between the local board and the local elected officials and the service providers. Anything to add there, Ron?

MR. PAINTER: No. I think that's a good answer. And I guess the only other thing I would add, Beth, is that coming back to that it's not easy being the director, I'd encourage you, whether it's a state board or a local board, go back and look at the process through which we create public policy and how issues arrive at the agenda. It's a framework that I think we should keep in mind.

Yesterday certainly indicated that there were issues that were out there apparently, and they rose to the policy agenda. So I think it's important for us to keep n mind that the market's dynamic, the public policy arena we're in is dynamic. So how as director do you keep looking at all those things?

MS. BRINLY: Yeah. Another thing that was really very impactful part of our high-impact workforce investment board initiative was having our chairs and directors go and be a part of those evaluations of high-impact WIB applications in other areas. And so just going to visit another local workforce investment board in your state or across your state line and seeing how they operate can sometimes add a lot of context for how you might think about doing things differently or ways to engage your business representatives and other board members in some new and exciting ways.

MS. AHLSTRAND: Thank you, Beth. We're – there's not a lot more questions coming in at this point, it doesn't look like, and I think you both have made some very good almost kind of closing remarks in the last couple of minutes of the challenge or the opportunity that we have to do this work.

While there is a lot to do, it's good work. It matters to people's lives. Sometimes takin a simple step of reaching out and visiting one another can help you a whole lot, and I think this has been a great chat this afternoon too. There's clearly been some back and forth and sharing of ideas here. We're very appreciative of that.

And like I said, I don't see anything else new coming in, and I want to remind folks that the toolkit for strategic boards is on the ION website. You can go there. We'll put up a slide here as we're closing out, but any other closing remarks that you would want to make sure to leave people with today, Beth or Ron or both of you? I want to give you both that chance.

MR. PAINTER: I would just say, Amanda, with kind of behind the scenes people don't always say thanks to you, to the folks over at ETA. This has really been a – I think a collaborative effort in trying to produce technical assistance across with you guys, with our partner organizations, associations here in Washington, USDM and NASWA and NGA and NACo and the legislators and NASWA. It's really I think been a collaborative process, and a special thanks to everybody who logged on. I mean, really thanks to what you people do in your communities out there on the ground. It is really – I'm always amazed and always honored to be a part of this community.

MS. BRINLY: And Beth. I echo all of Ron's comments and just say so many of you were wanting to just start down this road of setting measures for your local board. So take a look at the handout, the high-impact workforce investment board exercise. Work through it with your local board or your state board, and if those standards and criterion and elements resonate with you, great. That's what it's there for.

We really went through a local and state collaborative process in building it, or if you want to use that as the foundation and personalize it to your area, great. That's what this sharing is all about, and so we appreciate the opportunity and all the good work of all the Kentucky local workforce board folks that are on this call. And I'm sure the high-impact boards would love to have you come visit and take a look at what they've been doing. So thank you, Amanda, for the opportunity.

MS. AHLSTRAND: Well, thank you again, both of you, and as you both said, thanks to everyone for joining today. We're excited about the work ahead together and glad you could join us. Encourage you to return, and we'll be back for the series of WIOA Wednesdays as we go along.

Look forward to working with you going forward. I think I'll turn it back over to Laura to close us out. Thanks, everybody.

MS. CASERTANO: All right. I just want to say thank you to all the participants and presenters.

(END)