**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Career Pathways: The WIOA Way of Doing Business**

**Wednesday, November 30, 2016**

*Transcript by*

*Noble Transcription Services*

*Murrieta, CA*

LAURA CASERTANO: Again, I want to welcome everyone to today's webinar. Again, if you haven't done so already or if you've joined late, just go ahead and introduce yourself in the chat window in the bottom left-hand corner of your screen.

And now I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Jen Troke. Jen, take it away.

JEN TROKE: Thank you so much, Laura, and welcome, everybody. I'm so glad we have such a large turnout this afternoon. This is actually one of the largest webinars that we've hosted in a while, so I'm glad that there are so many career pathways aficionados from across the country. So welcome, welcome.

And I'm here with the whole federal family. I'm delighted to be presenting today with Robin Fernkas, Felipe Lulli, Corrine Sauri, Deborah List, and Sarah Hastings – who cannot be here today but she's here in spirit. So again, welcome.

So today we have some pretty straightforward objectives. We're going to discuss why career pathways system building is so critical to our shared work, and we want to share the specific citations in the law around career pathways. Then we're going to provide a quick trip through our new toolkit that really is a great planning and system building tool for your use right now.

So in the next 90 minutes our agenda is going to cover a few things. We're going to look at how and where career pathways fit into the WIOA world. We're going to talk to our federal family about their own career pathways work and where it aligns and blends and impacts ours. We're going to share the toolkit. And we really want to leave plenty of time at the end for Q&A. Again, it's a large crowd but we're going to do our best to tackle as many of those questions as we possibly can.

So first, let's figure where you guys are on a scale of 1 to 10; how would you rate your current knowledge of career pathways? Are you a subject matter expert, very deep in career pathways; or are you just getting started in the career pathways world? Laura, if you would pull up that poll that'd be great.

OK, great. So the votes are coming in. Looks like we're trending towards pretty good, getting stronger every day, which is awesome. And we've got a fair amount of people who are here to learn more, so that's cool. And then there are very few people who don't even know what career pathways are. But I think we have a little bit of something for everybody today, is the good news.

So Laura, let's go ahead and find out who we have on the line with us today. We'll close that poll; thank you guys for voting. Let's open up the next poll. Many of you may already be on state and local career pathways teams, but tell us who you are. Are you with the workforce system, education, human services; are you a community partner? Or maybe you're not on a team yet or you might even be an employer. So tell us who is on the line today.

Let's see who's coming over. We've got education getting a good run for the money there. Human services is coming in. We've got others, too, not on a team; community members. And welcome to our employer friends. We're glad that you joined us today. Thank you.

Let's give it just about 10 more seconds. This is a really good mix of people. Again, we knew this was going to be a very large webinar, so we were excited to see who was joining. All right. It looks like the voting is slowing down, so I think we can keep moving.

Our very first presenter today is Robin Fernkas and I'm going to turn it over to her. Robin hails from the Division of Strategic Investments here in the Department of Labor, and she was actually a part of the original career pathways institute that happened back in 2010 with about 11 states, I believe. She has really remained a passionate career pathways advocate.

She ensured that career pathways were a key feature in our Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training grants – or affectionately known as the TAACCCT grants – and made sure that those were a key feature. So she really has a great understanding of career pathways, how they operate at a systems level and also at a program level; and ultimately how career pathways can benefit our customers. So Robin, please take it away.

ROBIN FERNKAS: Great. Thanks, Jen, for the kind introduction. Good afternoon, everybody. We as Jen said are really excited about sharing this information and we hope that we are addressing many of the questions that you have, and we will later in the webinar, too.

So to get started we wanted to just recognize that career pathways are not a new concept to any of you. What is new is that the concept has really evolved from a best practice to a core function now of the state and local workforce development boards under WIOA. They're no longer viewed as special projects; they're layered on to your daily operations, as they may have been for those of you who've been pursuing this work for many years.

But really, the emphasis on taking a comprehensive and integrative approach that enables the system to provide a wider range of coordinated and streamlined services to shared customers is new. That is the way we view and refer – or why we view them and we refer to them as our new way of doing business at all levels of the workforce system.

These hallmarks that are here on this slide of allowing the needs of our primary customers to drive solutions, of providing excellent customer service, and of supporting strong regional economies, are really the same hallmarks of excellence for career pathways systems.

Beginning with the state and local planning process, we've viewed WIOA as our opportunity to transform and integrate previously siloed systems and to provide longer-term services that can assist individuals, particularly those receiving a priority of service due to their income or skill levels, in gaining industry-recognized credentials through the development of sector strategies and career pathway systems.

So career pathway systems – and we do keep emphasizing that word "systems" – as the cohesive combination of partnership, resources and funding, policies, data, and shared accountability measures that support the development, quality, scaling, and dynamic sustainability of career pathways and programs for youth and adults. That's really what's reflected here in this framework.

So we hope this framework is familiar to many of you, as it is the same framework that we have developed with our partners and have been using for the past five years and with the states who've been engaged in career pathway systems. It presents the key elements of building a career pathway system; a framework of how states and local regions can organize and deliver education and training services and core WIOA programs to individual participants. So as you can see, career pathways are operating at many levels.

As we gathered information through our request for information on career pathways – this was something that we did, the Department of Labor did with the departments of Education and Health & Human Services a few years ago. We also, through our WIOA comments and general feedback that we've heard from all of you, we hear that the biggest challenges for many of you in implementing these systems is the difference between the way the programs define career pathways, the inconsistencies in the performance outcomes, and the inability to braid funding easily; along with challenges for financial aid for career pathway programs.

So WIOA takes us a few steps forward in addressing these issues, particularly in providing a common definition for the core programs, which is what you see on this slide. And while before WIOA, the federal family has similar objectives for career pathways, we often spoke in different dialects to our grantees and customers. So with WIOA we now speak the same language.

So WIOA presents new opportunities for all of us to ensure that our policies and guidance catch up to the tactics of career pathways that has been emerging over the last decade. So Section 101(D)(iii)(b) makes career pathways a required function of state and local workforce to develop strategies to support the use of career pathways for the purpose of providing individuals – including low-skilled adults, youth, and individuals with barriers to employment – with workforce investment activities, education, and supportive services to enter or retain employment.

And in Section 101(D)(iii)(c) it calls for these programs to provide real-time labor market analysis, and really for these to be grounded in the labor market so that the competencies and credentials that people are receiving do have labor market value. And to underscore its importance, career pathways are now a permissible activity under all parts of the act.

So there are additional specific references to career pathways in Title I, Section 129, 134 and 169 related to services for youth and adults, as well as the evaluation and research component of the act. All address requirements and opportunities for career pathways.

So overall, WIOA provides an opportunity for us to support individuals enrolled in longer-term training programs to demonstrate skills attainment along the way. As reflected in our career pathways framework, building partnerships is fundamental to the developments of career pathways. So as we like to say, it's a team sport.

Section 107 in the statute reflects this by requiring local boards to work with representatives of secondary and postsecondary education programs to implement career pathways. To support your partnerships and work on career pathways, the Labor Department is also working across departments with our federal partners, who you will hear from shortly.

So one thing that you saw through our – it wasn't explicit in the act in terms of what we needed to put into state planning guidance, but we thought it was really important given that this is now a core function of the board – is to have the state plans that were just sent reflect what states are doing to take this opportunity to develop their career pathways systems.

And so if you look, for example, at a couple of the state plans that have been submitted, most did focus on in-demand jobs and skills and really described innovative strategies for how to implement through these partnerships. If you look at Kentucky, for example, Kentucky's career pathways program aligns major education, training, and workforce development programs to meet the skill needs of students, job seekers, and workers; and the skill requirements of employers in high-demand industries and occupations.

If you look at Arizona's state plan they have a workgroup dedicated to the development of career pathways and a committee of the state council that will focus on career pathways. Their local area plans are required to describe how they will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, particularly for those with barriers to employment.

And finally, if you turn to Oregon you will see that they've been – they're actively pursuing the development and expansion of credit-bearing career pathways certificates across the 17 community colleges in their workforce system. This has been a key strategy for enhancing the training and job skills of Oregon's workforce.

So that's just to give you a flavor of some of the things that were included in the state plans that were just submitted to our respective agencies.

Now, if you turn to Section 108 of the law, within there is the description of what the local plans should include. This includes a description of how the local board, working with the entities, carrying out core programs will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment, including how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment as appropriate in core WIOA programs.

So wherever you are in your local planning process we do hope that career pathways are an integral part of those conversations. So if you can – we didn't do a poll here – but if you wanted to take a moment and tell us how you're doing with that local planning process, we'd encourage you to put that into the chat.

As you're doing that I'm going to keep moving, just to keep us going forward on our timetable today.

So as I mentioned previously, one of the things we've heard as one of the biggest challenges for you in implementing career pathways systems was the inconsistencies in the way performance outcomes are defined and measured. WIOA takes us a few steps forward in addressing these issues, because for the first time, the core programs – for adult, dislocated workers, youth, Wagner-Peyser, adult education and vocational rehabilitation – under WIOA will measure the success of their program's strategies in the same way, using the same definitions and the same data elements.

So under WIOA there are six primary indicators or common indicators of performance; three are outcome-based, employment and earnings – and then credential attainment rates is also measured after participants complete the program.

There are two new indicators of performance. One is a program measure, measuring skills gains achieved by participants in each year. This is a good way to assess progress made on a career pathway system, such as completion of one year of an apprenticeship or a gain in an educational functioning level or completion of a secondary diploma.

There are five types of allowable gains, as you can see here on the screen. The measureable skills gain in particular will support career pathways for individuals enrolled in longer-term training programs to demonstrate their skills attainment along the way.

The other new performance indicator is the effectiveness in serving employers. The Departments of Labor and Education are testing the definition of this indicator, and for the first year of implementation states may choose two of three methods of measuring the success. The results will be shared among the core program and the different programs will work collaboratively to best serve the employer customer and the participant as well.

This is important for career pathways efforts as employers are central to the design and implementation of the pathways resulting in employment and career advancement opportunities. We're going to show you a few cool employer engagement tools later in the webinar that can support this work.

So I'm going to turn this back to you, Jen.

MS. TROKE: Thanks, Robin. That was super-helpful for us to understand where all the different citations are in the law.

I want to take a moment now, if Laura could help me out, and open up our next poll question – whoops, not quite yet – oh, there is a poll question. Laura, do you have that ready for us?

MS. CASERTANO: Yep. It'll come up very soon.

MS. TROKE: Great. And just to let everybody know, we have a little bit of a lag in the slides, so if you're seeing the slides – you can certainly feel free to download the entire deck, just to let everybody know.

The poll coming up is, where is your state or local team in the process of developing strong career pathways systems? So now that you've heard from Robin about WIOA, where do you think your state or local team might be landing in this process of developing your career pathways system? Are you advanced, intermediate, beginner, or novice? (Pause.)

And I apologize. It looks like our poll is not coming up. So no problem. We will just continue with the slideshow. Laura, if you will pop back over, that would be great.

The next thing I really want to talk about is career pathways across the federal government. As Robin noted, we began our work in 2010 with state teams who came to DC to begin building their career pathways systems. From that work that we developed the career pathways toolkit that was published in 2011 and it did include the original framework.

On the heels of that exciting document, the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, and DOL, our work expanded dramatically across the entire federal government and now includes 12 federal agencies. Those 12 federal agencies – "the family" as I like to call them – we actually talk monthly through an interagency career pathways workgroup.

That group has supported our most recent work around career pathways of WIOA-sizing, as I like to call it, the toolkit. And we've worked with a host of state champions and national stakeholder organizations with deep, deep subject matter expertise in career pathways work, who really understand how to implement career pathways on the ground level and also at a policy level how does it all fit together.

So with that being said, I am going to quickly turn to our first exciting speaker, because I don't want you to take my work for it. I want you to hear directly from our partners who are here today to share their own career pathways initiatives. And I know many of you have been involved in this work, but if not there's many of you that it gives you a great chance to get up to speed.

So it is my pleasure to introduce you to Cory Saurri, who is with the Department of Education. Cory, how are you today?

CORINNE SAURI: I'm great. Thanks for having me.

MS. TROKE: Oh, good. Well, welcome. It's good to chat with you. So of course we just talked about WIOA and so I've really got to ask you, what is the Department of Education's own career pathways work, and how does that fit within this larger career pathways framework?

MS. SAURI: Well, so much of our work focuses on career pathways. I think the two big programs that we work on over here at OCTAE are the – Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act Title II is the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. We administer the adult ed formula grant program for states. We provide lots of assistance to states to improve program quality and their accountability and their capacity to implement. And we establish lots of national leadership activities to enhance the quality of those state plans.

And then on the other side of our office we also administer the Perkins Act. The idea with Perkins is – well, first of all we have state formula and discretionary grant programs, and then we provide lots of technical assistance, again, to improve program quality and implementation. And we have lots of national initiatives that I'll talk about a bit later, to make sure that career and technical education and is really integrated into the broader landscape of career pathways systems.

And then additionally we also provide leadership around community colleges, because community colleges are a great place for students to advance – to access opportunities for workforce development.

MS. TROKE: That's great. So you talked a little bit about both sides. On the adult education side, how are you supporting states and local providers through technical assistance?

MS. SAURI: Sure. We have lots of pieces happening, but I think some of the things I'd like to highlight are – first is the report that we have been talking about now for a couple years, and it's called "Making Skills Everyone's Business." The idea, it's really a call to action.

The idea behind the report is that we need to increase convenient, effective, high-quality learning opportunities for adults; that there are equity gaps that remain among youth and adults and these need to be addressed; that skill levels are undeniably correlated with other quality-of-life issues; and that we all need to work together among various stakeholders to reach adults and establish solutions.

And I think the big thing is that this report calls for an expansion of career pathways systems to every community in the country. This sort of becomes a bit of a framework for us in terms of how we talk about adult education.

MS. TROKE: That's great. I especially love the collective action aspect. I think that's so important. I love to talk about "the one team" and you guys really encapsulate it with that.

Where can folks keep up with everything that's happening in career pathways?

MS. SAURI: So we have a really strong website. It's called the LINCS Exchange – the career pathways exchange. You can find – we do career pathways policy briefs and just cover lots of implementation issues related to WIOA and career pathways.

The career pathways exchange has lots of different pieces of information on it, and the idea is to really facilitate a deeper national dialogue on career pathways systems development and implementation. We have email digests that folks can subscribe to. There's stuff related to career pathways. We have lots of information around lots of different aspects of adult education and career pathways.

There's stuff around industry sectors and how to engage employers; designing education and training programs; how to identify your funding needs and potential sources; how to align your policies and your programs; and then how to measure change and performance.

You can also find the exchange on social media. We have Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest accounts for that project.

MS. TROKE: That's great. And I love that you've aligned your content to match with the framework. That's really awesome. And I know that the career pathways exchange is my own personal career pathways cheatsheet, and it's really all the latest and greatest career pathways tools and resources. So I look forward to getting that email in my inbox every week to let me know what's going on.

But tell me, are there any resources, Cory, that you're really excited about? Anything new that our audience should know about?

MS. SAURI: Yeah. I think the two big things on our adult education side – we're working on something we're calling "Connecting English Learners with Career Pathways."

Right now we know that more than 40 percent of our adult ed learners are also English language learners. So we have some resources in development that are going to address how states and locals can effectively build systems that support English language learners.

This TA will be consistent with WIOA's expanded focus on career pathways, integrated education and training, and placement in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to self-sufficiency. This project really just got off the ground. We're expecting over the course of the next couple years to be slowly releasing additional resources around this focus area.

And then the other thing that we're really excited about, been working hard on, is implementation of – or administration of the ability-to-benefit provisions in the Higher Education Act. These provisions allow students without a high school diploma or its equivalent to access student financial aid, which is generally – (inaudible) – checklist that will support institutions of higher education in making a determination that career pathways programs meet these federal requirements for student financial aid.

We hope to release this in late December; it might be early January. We will share this through the career pathways exchange.

MS. TROKE: That tool sounds awesome. I know I'm looking forward to that. You know, we were thrilled to be invited to present on the ability-to-benefit webinar.

But let's talk a little bit on the Perkins side of the house, what kinds of TA or grants have you provided to your system that really support career pathways; and then how might our audience get involved?

MS. SAURI: OK. Great. So our national activities work on the Perkins side really support lots of technical assistance with work career and technical education in acquiring that academic, employability and technical skill that employers demand.

Pieces that are related to job-driven training that I'd like to highlight are – this slide sort of covers lots of different pieces that we've been working on – mapping upward; that's about stackable credentials.

The idea behind this project is to connect learning and work so students learn workplace skills and accumulate credentials that help them build careers. The goal is really to create greater articulation between secondary CTE and career building. Right now we're developing a stackable credential toolkit, and that we'll be excited to share soon as well.

Another piece that we're really excited about is the role of secondary CTE programs in preparing students for apprenticeship. Again there, the goal is alignment. Secondary CTE programs should be aligned with apprenticeship programs. The work includes site visits and interviews that share information about the special programs that align with and articulate apprenticeship programs.

And then, advancing career pathways in career and technical education. This is a two-year project. Five states are receiving intensive TA. We have dedicated career pathways coaches that use an integrated education model. Seven states are participating in something that we're calling a CTE leaders academy, and that focuses on career pathways system development and the pivotal role of CTE within those systems.

We should be starting to share on our Perkins website, PCRN, in the next year. We'll have lots of technical assistance resources that are really geared towards state and local CTE stakeholders.

I think the thing that I really want to talk about is probably on the next slide. We have a set of regional career pathways meetings that are part of this advancing career pathways initiative. We already had the first one but we have three more happening, and we're really encouraging anyone who's interested in participating to reach out to your state. There's one happening in Texas, one happening in DC, and one happening in Salt Lake City, and there's a website at the top of the slide that tells you where to go to find out more information about those meetings.

And then finally, to answer the second part of your question, about additional resources, other than going to LINCS we also have the Perkins Collaborative Resource Network, which is CTE.ed.gov. There are also newsletters and a vlog, and both of those are really great resources and places to find information about the CTE side of career pathways development.

MS. TROKE: That is awesome. Thank you, Cory. I would to go attend some of those meetings myself. It sounds very exciting. I would love for you to stand by because I know people are going to have a lot of questions for you, but let's keep talking.

I want to talk to Felipe Lulli, who joins us from RSA. He's with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, or OSERS. Felipe, he's a friend, and he's also a big fan of career pathways. So Felipe, welcome.

FELIPE LULLI: Thank you very much, Jen. I'm very happy to be here.

MS. TROKE: Oh, good. Felipe, we would love to know more about what vocational rehabilitation services, what you're investing in under WIOA. And I know specifically we'd love to hear about your career pathways for individuals with disabilities program. If you will take it away, that would be great.

MR. LULLI: Yes. Be happy to.

The career pathways for individual with disabilities – or CPID – is a demonstration project that enables individuals with disabilities, including youth disabilities, to acquire marketable skills and industry-recognized postsecondary credentials to secure competitive integrated employment in high-demand high-quality occupations; and to increase their salary, wage, and benefit potential.

The ultimate goal of this project is to disseminate and replicate successful career pathways practices for individual with disabilities among other federal and state career pathways programs nationwide.

The program is administered by the rehabilitation services administration, or RSA, at the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services within the Department of Education, as Jen mentioned; and it is funded through the vocational rehabilitation services program, or VR, authorized by the The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of WIOA.

The VR program is a federal-state partnership that enables individuals with disabilities to prepare, secure, retain, or regain employment consistent with their priorities and capabilities and through a wide range of VR services, ranging from career counseling to support for postsecondary education.

Under WIOA the VR program reaffirmed that individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, are capable of achieving high-quality employment in an integrated setting with salary, wages, and benefits commensurate with their peers.

It also expands VR program services and support for students and youth with disabilities, including pre-employment (condition ?) services. It promotes career advancement through graduate degree, particularly in the STEM field. It engages employers to develop customized employment and work-based learning opportunities, including internships and registered apprenticeships, that benefit both employers and jobseekers.

In short, WIOA reaffirms VR's focus on rewarding career – not just job placement – for individuals with disabilities.

And within that context the career pathways for individuals with disabilities benefits individuals with disabilities by adapting, customizing, or creating career pathways that address the particular needs and barriers of individuals with disabilities. It does this by incorporating all the career pathways in WIOA while adding other components for individuals with disabilities. These are components that individuals with disabilities need to really take advantage of career pathways.

These components include, for example, comprehensive support services such as benefit planning, educational and financial support, self-advocacy training, family engagement, assistive technology services, and others.

(Inaudible) – flexible education and training program design that improves these programs through flexible work schedules, alternative class times and locations, innovative uses of technology, and other necessary accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

MS. TROKE: That is so great, Felipe. Thank you. I love – you know, Robin started talking about the systems; we've touched on the programs –- and you're going to talk a little bit more, but I love that you've gotten right to the heart of it, the individuals that we serve.

I'm wondering, can you describe some more about the actual investments and a few – maybe share some highlights for us?

MR. LULLI: Yes. Well, the career pathways for individuals with disabilities program – project is in its second fiscal year. It authorizes up to $3.5 million annually to state vocational rehabilitation agencies of Georgia, Kentucky, Nebraska, and Virginia; and this will run through September of 2020.

Now, each of these states that I mentioned have a distinctive strategy. Georgia, for example, focuses on youth with disabilities, and it uses a multiplatform social media outreach strategy to reach these young jobseekers.

Kentucky seeks to promote work-based learning opportunities including registered apprenticeship. Nebraska uses the upskill-backfill model, which is a very interesting model that helps individuals with career advancement but also with entry-level opportunity. They try to encourage individuals who currently work to climb the career ladder to other positions, thereby making room for others to come into the career through entry-level positions.

Virginia is partnering with the Virginia Manufacturers Association – VMA – in advanced manufacturing training, certification, and production system design. In fact, VMA's manufacturing skills institute has just recognized the VR agency in Virginia – in its career pathways program in particular – as its workforce partner of the year.

So we're already making an impact in these states.

MS. TROKE: That's great. And I know that – I love those examples, Felipe, and I know our workforce system partners on the line, too, really want to understand more about exactly how they can get involved and how they can work with CPIS.

MR. LULLI: Yes, yes. This is a very important point because this program is based on collaboration at all levels, starting with the workforce partners – state workforce boards as well as regional and local boards.

What it does is the program brings the perspective of individuals with disabilities, their potential and their need, to the state and local workforce boards and statewide career pathways workgroups or councils.

Secondly, it works directly with regional workforce boards and American Job Centers; also state and local education agencies, institutions of higher education, career training, customized employment and training providers, social services organizations, employers, employer networks, and others to implement the program at the local level.

It also reaches out to other federal career pathways initiatives in their states as required by the federal priority. We partner with DOL, with Agriculture, with other federal partners in their initiatives in the states.

And also, consistent with WIOA Sections 101(b) and 102(b), which Robin discussed, the career pathways for individuals with disabilities project – (inaudible) – hands of the participating states. And this is only the beginning. We hope to expand our collaboration across the board.

MS. TROKE: That's awesome, Felipe. Thank you. That's very helpful. And please, although I want you to hang tight, don't go anywhere; I know people are going to have a lot of questions for you, so thank you so much.

And last but certainly not least we're going to turn to Deborah List, who joins us – she's from the A-team (sic) over at the Office of Family Assistance in the Administration for Children and Families at HHS. So Deborah, hello. How are you?

DEBORAH LIST: Good.

MS. TROKE: Thanks for joining us. We're really excited today to learn more about the intersection between TANF and career pathways.

So your first slide – and I think we are back in sync, so thanks everybody for bearing with us on that tech issue – is a bold one. What does it tell us really about the intersection of career pathways and TANF; and what flexibilities exist within the TANF program to really support career pathways?

MS. LIST: Right. So this is that pie chart on slide 47 that I wanted to share. This chart shows how states spent their federal TANF and state maintenance of effort funds in fiscal year 2015.

So as you can see there, of the $31.7 billion spent, only 7 percent went to work, education, and training activities. Now, this varies by state, but in general it shows that there's an opportunity for states to do more to support work preparation, education, and training in their TANF program.

I also note that states have the flexibility to spend TANF funds on other supports for needy families while they're in worker training, including cash assistance payments, which totaled 25 percent of national spending in 2015; childcare; refundable tax credits; and other work supports. So states have a lot of flexibility as long as their expenditures meet one or more of the broad purposes of the program.

The next slide shows these four statutory purposes of TANF. Almost any activity associated with a career pathways program would likely fall under the second purpose, which is to end the dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.

MS. TROKE: I love how this all fits together. It's really complementary. And how is ACF encouraging TANF agencies to get involved in career pathways work?

MS. LIST: Well, we have a number of TA and guidance documents to states, but we've recently published an information memorandum – which we call an IM – that specifically encourages TANF agencies to use their funds and to build partnerships in support of career pathways programs for TANF recipients. I'll encourage everyone to check out the document online, but I'll go over a few of the main points here.

The IM highlights opportunities for state and tribal TANF agencies to incorporate career pathways approaches and specifically addresses how they can count toward the agency's work participation rate requirement, because we've had many questions about this over the years.

States receiving assistance are engaged in work activities specified under federal law. So to count toward the rate there are rules about how many hours of work an eligible individual in a family must participate in certain qualifying activities, which are divided into two categories, core and non-core.

I won't go through all the details, but I'd just like to note that despite some limitations there are a number of flexibilities and ways to combine activities to meet the requirement. For example, while the law restricts how much of a state's work participation can come from vocational educational training to no more than 30 percent each month, the vast majority of states do not hit that 30 percent cap and could still increase the number of TANF participants that count in vocational educational training.

So it's just important to note that there are certain flexibilities involved and that states can still fund career pathways activities even if they're not able to count them toward the work participation rate requirement.

MS. TROKE: That's great. I love the specifics on the work activities. Thank you for sharing the opportunity with us.

And I'm wondering if you also have a few examples you want to share that really show where TANF agencies are partnering around career pathways work.

MS. LIST: Yeah. There are a bunch of examples out there; a few of them are highlighted in the IM. The IM also tries to pull out some of the promising strategies within those examples so that others can replicate them.

One thing we highlight is the partnership between the health profession opportunity grant – or HPOG program – and TANF agencies. The HPOG program is also administered by ACF and it provides education and training so that TANF participants and other low-income individual may advance along established career pathways for occupations in the healthcare field.

HPOG programs have worked on establishing formal agreement with TANF agencies; aligning service approaches; and co-locating services, such as in the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County in Washington State, where HPOG navigators work within the TANF offices to help their TANF partners understand the components of the program, training, and how to code them appropriately to count toward the state's work participation rate.

As another example of promising strategies, a number of TANF agencies, including in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, and Washington, fund campus-based coordinators in postsecondary settings to ensure that TANF recipients get the support they need to complete their program while they're in training.

The TANF agency and Pascua Yaqui tribe in Arizona provides an example of assigning case managers to students to provide intensive support from the time they enter career pathways programs through job placement and retention.

So there are a number of examples that I mentioned here and more in the IM, and then we also have a TANF technical assistance website called OSA Peer TA, which has a dedicated career pathways hub and has more examples there, too.

MS. TROKE: That's really helpful. Again, thank you so much, Deborah.

And we get a lot of questions about career pathways and do we really know if they work. So what do we know about career pathways?

MS. LIST: Well, ACF in conjunction with our federal partners, we have a robust portfolio of research and evaluation efforts underway so we can build that evidence base around career pathways approaches. Some of the experts already have reports out and others are forthcoming. I'll just mention a few of the efforts here and there's our website there for more information.

So in 2007 ACF's Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation initiated "The Pathways for Advancing Career and Education", or PACE Project, and that's a rigorous evaluation of nine innovative career pathways programs. There's already descriptive reports online and we expect initial impact reports beginning in early 2017.

ACF is also undergoing a multipronged evaluation strategy to assess the success of that HPOG program I mentioned earlier. We have a CTIO study to evaluate the intermediate outcomes of career pathway program models and the educational progress and self-sufficiency of individuals who participate in the program.

And lastly I wanted to mention that within our career pathways research and evaluation portfolio, there's a strong focus on providing useful information for practitioners. We recently published a number of resources that state and local TANF agencies can use to help connect TANF recipients and other low-income families with good jobs.

This series of three reports listed at the bottom of this slide provide state-level information on promising occupations expected to experience growth that an individual can enter after completing a relatively short training. Those short trainings are helpful because of those limitations I mentioned from the TANF agencies.

So the OBRE website here has further information about our evaluation efforts.

MS. TROKE: That's great. And I love that the federal family is really working hard to build the evidence and understanding that we really want to make sure we have evidence to show that career pathways are working. So thank you.

So Deborah, excellent, and thank you to all of our federal partners, very helpful information. Hang tight and I know we do have a couple of questions coming in. If you haven't had a chance to put your question into the chat please go ahead and do so now. I think the chat is working fine. So go ahead and enter your questions now.

And in the meantime while you are doing that, I think we're going to get to the actual toolkit, so thanks for hanging in there with us, guys. We've talked about it and Robin and I are going to walk through it.

I want to say that the toolkit is really a product of so many people, and we can't even take credit for it. I know I can't name everybody but we work with a whole bunch of state champions – Illinois, Kentucky, Oregon, Minnesota, California, South Carolina, Washington, Michigan, Colorado, Arkansas, New Jersey, and North Carolina – yay, state champions who helped bring this toolkit to life.

Also I want to thank a huge host of stakeholders organizations who really challenged us and pushed us to make this toolkit a very interactive, cool thing. So thank you Jobs For The Future, Abt Associates, Maher & Maher, the Chamber, Social Policy Research, RTI, CLASP, Alliance for Quality Career Pathways, National Skills Coalition – I said I wasn't going to name them all; I think I might have named them all. But thank you, thank you, thank you so much to the team that helped us work on this toolkit. The full list is available in the introduction, but let's get to it.

The new toolkit. It's WIOA-sized (sic); you've got that part. It also has a lot of examples that you can use of how states have done some system building and also local career pathways programs or grantees that will be of interest to you.

There are a whole lot of new worksheets included in this toolkit. The worksheets are exciting because it makes the toolkit now interactive. We divvied the toolkit into six modules that align with the framework. Those six modules are now basically PDF files. They're fillable; they're interactive worksheets that teams at all levels can use to start having strategic planning conversations about their work together in career pathways. So it's very exciting that we have a hands-on resource that you can grab ahold of.

Where do you get the toolkit? You go to our career pathways community of practice. If you go to CareerPathways.WorkforceGPS.org you will be able to grab the toolkit in its entirety. And right now is the headliner on our page, which is no surprise.

When you get to our page, what you're going to see is the framework itself; and on the left-hand side there you'll see all of the career pathways modules available for download. There are six modules, again, and then two bonus documents there. One is the introduction, that has some nice framing language if you're going to, let's say, take the toolkit on the road and train. There's a lot of information there that will help you as a trainer. And then there's a resources doc available for you as well.

So Robin, tell us more about the toolkit.

MS. FERNKAS: All right. Well, for one thing, the toolkit has a table of contents which I think you'll find very useful – which you may be saying, well, most things have a table of contents.

But in this one it shows the content has been organized into modules, which we do like modular learning for our career pathways, so we followed that example. You can easily click on the specific worksheets that you want within each module, because this isn't a linear process and that you may be working on one or multiple components of this as you go.

The toolkit retains the narrative text that we had published previously so you can – but now you can grab all the WIOA citations and the other words that you need along with the worksheets as you're working on those.

Finally, a bit more about the worksheets themselves. They're embedded and writable, which means that users can type into the fields, save it, print it on a computer, or just print them out to use at a committee meeting or whatever. I think Jen's going to tell you a little bit more about we had envisioned folks would use it based on some of the states that have already tested this out.

One of the tools that's previewed here is our six key elements readiness checklist. So for those of you that have been working with us for the past several years this will look very familiar because this was included in our very first toolkit, and we thought based on the feedback we'd gotten from the states that this was a very useful tool.

It helps benchmark how mature your partnerships are and where you are in your process. You can do this as you're beginning or you can also do this as you go along periodically to refresh for all the members the progress that you've made. As you can see there, you're rating yourself against a number of factors and along along a spectrum of minimal, emerging, functional, or optimal. It gives you some idea – a roadmap of things you need to either shore up or things that you want to focus on for your short- and long-term goals.

The next tool here in element one, building cross-agency partnerships and clarifying the roles. As we mentioned before, the career pathways building is a team sport, and this tool in particular helps you work through as you've formed your team what the partner agencies' strengths and contributions are to the process; and really lays that out for everyone to see and work through.

So I'm going to turn it back to you, Jen, to talk about element two.

MS. TROKE: Great. So I'm going to share my favorite worksheets for module two around employer engagement. We actually got a question already about employer engagement, so I'm hoping this might be helpful to you.

We know that employers are always asking us for – the government, anyway – one single point of contact. This employer engagement self-assessment really gets to that issue, and our messaging to employers that resonates with them and keeps them engaged in our work as a valuable partner.

So picture your team. You've printed out this particular worksheet. You're sitting in your conference room. Everybody is quietly filling out their own assessment, making decisions about where you think the team is on employer engagement.

And then you're going to take a few moments; you're going to compile the results of the survey; and then voila, a very scintillating conversation will ensue among the team members – we hope – really around are we doing as well as we thought we were doing around employer engagement? Are we all 100 percent clear on the value proposition that we're bringing to employers? Do we need a little bit more conversation about that to figure it out?

The next slide actually shows then once you've had that conversation, how you can then capture your top three solutions – what do you want to pick off as a team, what do you want to prioritize around employer engagement, what's the need, who will take it in – always a good one – and then what are you actually going to do?

So for the doers on the webinars today these worksheets are hopefully touching all your happy buttons. I know they touch my buttons big time.

The other favorite tool from element two is engagement. So again, you're sitting with your team but this time you're at the coffee shop and you have your laptops open and you've already sorted out how you're messaging to employers and who's doing what. And so now it's time to really figure out who the inventory of all the employers are, how engaged they are with you.

This particular worksheet is a really nice tool. It allows you to make decisions about where you stand with each employer. Are they a Level 5 – are they leading your career pathways team? Are they a strategic partner? Or are they really just starting to build that – (inaudible) – will actually show how you can then do this inventory.

So for a Level 1, new relationships, you'll capture what sector they're in, what agency, who's the contact person – very important – and it gives you a really nice rack-up of different engagement activities that you might be pursuing and that are appropriate to a Level 1 partner.

It will also help you make decisions about do we want to do more for this partner, do we want to really deepen the relationship and move them up the continuum? Where are partnerships we need to walk away from? What is our level of effort around different employers? Again, working as one team.

MS. FERNKAS: Element three is the design of the education and training programs in your career pathways. What we really call this is the meat-and-potatoes of your career pathways system.

And accordingly it's one of the most comprehensive modules in the toolkit. It really incorporates all the key attributes that you're incorporating into your career pathways system as well as your career pathways program.

The intent of this exercise here, 3.2a, the building recruitment strategies for target populations, is it's a tool to really help you identify the diverse target population that you are trying to reach through your career pathway system and devising a cross-agency recruitment strategy to reach each of the populations.

So once your teams have gone – (inaudible) – to develop joint marketing materials as well as intake and referral processes, to really assure that there's no wrong door for any of the customers.

MS. TROKE: I love that one, too. So for element four, one reason the partnership and the collaboration were so important was because we are not the only experts and we didn't want to reinvent the wheel, and we certainly didn't want – (inaudible) – worksheet from our friends at CLAS, who basically said, let's help teams map out where there are actual dollars to accomplish and really support the key task that you have to undertake to build that career pathways system.

So this really a roadmap across all the core and partner programs to understand where there are resources. So really, whose funds can support a variety of the tasks within our career pathways elements? So thank you, CLAS. If you're online, we love this worksheet in element four. Robin, element five.

MS. FERNKAS: So element five is one of the key components of building your system, aligning your policies and programs, which is no small task. So element five gives some tools for you to use to get started.

For example, this one, partners may identify the co-enrollments a policy area that they all want to pursue, and this tool that you see here is one that you could use to get started to map out what some of your key steps might be in that process.

MS. TROKE: Great. And then bringing it home is element six. Element six is all about measuring change and performance.

There is a logic model in element six that teams can complete. Once they've completed that they can shift to completing a theory of change template. And really, this theory of change template identifies a problem that needs to be solved. So this is the sample template for you so that you can think about what is the problem, what are the community needs, what are the strategies, and then any assumptions.

It really helps the team evaluate whether the model is accomplishing the anticipated outcomes and whether or not you need to do any tweaking. So this is a great way to sort of be reflective about the work and adjust as needed.

And then the next slide, Gary, is actually a blank template. This is where your team will fill it out. Again, you're at the coffee shop, on your laptop; you're typing in your notes and you're saving it and you're sending it off when you get back to the office and you're the new office hero. So that's exciting.

So very quickly I want to just open a chat. And Laura, if you can help me out, we really would like to know how might you and your team use this new enhanced toolkit? Tell us what your thoughts are and if you can see some uses for this. Again, we gave you – we pulled out our favorite worksheets from the toolkit. There's loads of worksheets in there and I hope you'll have time to explore that after this webinar.

While people are writing into the chat – oh, thank you, Laura Hall (sp); you're already using the resources and information. Yay. You can't wait to start using the roadmap. John's a maybe; OK. All right. Others? "Is there a personality assessment included?"

Actually there is not a personality assessment included. This is not – they're not individual assessments here. This is all about team assessment. But that's a great question. Thank you, Agwen (ph).

OK. Kathy (sp), thanks, it'll be a great benefit. Cool. And I'm going to let others keep coming in. As you guys are coming in on the big chat I want to pitch a couple questions that came into our partners who've been waiting so patiently.

The first is for Felipe. "Felipe, we've had some students with disabilities who've taken our medical billing and coding program. We've created flexible schedules for those students in the classroom but we're having trouble finding employers who will accommodate them in the workforce. Can you offer any advice for finding employment for these students once they complete the career pathway?"

MR. LULLI: Of course. Yes. First off, I want to thank the person who asked the question for working to make it easier for students with disabilities to take advantage of their educational program and career development program.

Secondly, I don't know what state you are in, but there is a body of knowledge and practice about how to – knowledge geared towards employers that show employers the benefit of hiring people with disabilities, and ideas and help to incorporate individuals with disabilities in their workplace setting.

And also in states – especially because of WIOA – there are a lot of employer engagement activities that are helping employers accommodate individuals with disabilities.

On the practical level what I suggest is that you contact the state vocational rehabilitation agency for your state and contact the main office, probably in the capital of the state, and try to find out what your state VR agency is doing, what kind of support they might be able to provide.

But that support might even involve reaching out to employers in the medical coding field; especially if that field happens to be a field addressed through the state's career pathway.

So that's the best I can do right now without knowing what state you're in, and I have a good sense that this might produce some good results for your students.

MS. TROKE: Felipe, that's awesome. That is perfect. People are continuing to weigh in with chat and ideas about how they might use the toolkit, so thank you for that.

We want to clarify that the new enhanced toolkit is available at CareerPathways.WorkforceGPS.org. I think Laura or Gary can throw that into the chat for us as well.

I want to pitch a question for another federal partner while you guys continue to chat and share with each other – that's my favorite part. "Deborah, how are you defining a good job?"

MS. LIST: Thanks. I think that question relates to the last resources I had mentioned, which are really practical resources for TANF agencies to use, and those mentioned this kind of general term "good job."

I pulled the resources up and they have described them as those characterized by plentiful job openings, sufficient hours, living wages, job security, and the potential for promotion and career advancement. I think the general idea is using local labor market information to find in-demand jobs that would have some opportunity for advancement on their career pathway.

MS. TROKE: That's awesome. Thank you, Deborah. And we have a question I think that came in at the very front of this webinar about, "What is the state of Illinois doing for career pathways?" Robin, can you field that one?

MS. FERNKAS: Sure. That's a great question, and I wish that we had time to go through what each state is doing because it is really exciting and we were really heartened to read a lot of that in the state plans.

But what we can offer you is in the next couple of weeks all of the state plans are going to be published; and they will be accessible through ETA's website along with our partner website. So we'll make sure – I don't have a website to give you today but we will make sure that that is broadcast wide and far to everybody.

And one of the features that's going to be accessible on this website with the plans is it's going to have a search feature so that you could search career pathways and that you could see what all the states are doing, or if you're just interested in a handful you could do that, too.

MS. TROKE: And just fair warning. When you do search that database you will get a whole lot of stuff about career pathways, which is super-exciting for us. So great question.

People are coming in with more ideas and thoughts, so thank you very much. And a lot of questions are coming in around what's in the toolkit? Is the "good job" definition in the toolkit? Could we add more examples in the toolkit about secondary and postsecondary career pathways models?

So yes, the toolkit, as you guys have sort of heard today, is evolving. We released in 2011; we released again in 2016; and my guess is there'll be another iteration of it as we continue to move forward. That's all good things for us to consider.

I want to quickly open one more chat, as the specific questions come in. But the last chat question is, "How might the federal partners support your work in this area?" So when you think about technical assistance needs, when you think about policy needs or any programmatic needs, what is it that we as the federal partners could do to better support your work in this area?

And we would absolutely welcome any and all ideas in the chat. I'm going to give you guys just about 30 seconds to start thinking about that one. (Pause.)

This is good stuff coming in. Thank you, Valerie (sp); the single-site clearinghouse, yeah. That's a very valid point. We still do as a federal family have multiple websites and you've seen those today. So that is definitely a goal for us.

And then Jackie (sp) has a comment about funding competitions and submission deadlines – yes, 60 days instead of 30 days. That's a good comment. I think in the uniform guidance now there is some new language about the number of days. It's either 45 or 60 (days). I think 30 is not possible anymore, but that's a good comment, especially in relation to when you're trying to secure those funding sources. That's a lot of hard work on the ground.

And then this might be a question for you, Felipe, if you know; if not, that's no problem. But the name of the agency that won the VMA partnership award in Virginia.

MR. LULLI: Yes. I saw that question. Yes. Brian (sp), the name of the agency is the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, DARS.

MS. TROKE: That is awesome. Thank you.

And then another question just around accessible technology in the workplace, and I don't know if anybody wants to take that one. Is there an easy website to provide?

Of course, Jan, thank you; Diane, and Shirley. The Job Accommodation Network. Thank you, thank you. Perfect.

And somebody had a great comment – or a helpful comment, anyway – about the toolkit. It's awesome but many of the links are not working with the resources at the end.

So my last slide is pointing to the resources module and what's in there. So while we don't have one website, we do have one resources document that compiled all the federal partner resources. I will double-check links and make sure that they're working. My guess is that it might just be a technology glitch in this PowerPoint itself, but I will double-check on the community of practice, so thank you for that.

And again, the website for the enhanced career pathways toolkit that we've been sharing today is CareerPathways.WorkforceGPS.org.

Great. Any other – I love this, Adena Taylor (sp), "Ask employers to partner with the outcome of getting more federal dollars to support the training of these career pathways. Just one idea for employer engagement." That is great, Adena.

And somebody also was commenting on the employer engagement inventory and the different levels and they love the level one and they had just created something. So there's one for every single level. You can do that same worksheet for level one through five.

Oh, I like this, Joel (sp). "Career pathways need to be accepted across states, certificates, and employers accepting more sectors; getting assistance and making it possible would be huge." Oh, I love that. OK. Keep the ideas rolling in. This is great.

While you guys continue to roll in with ideas or questions I will quickly just flip to this slide if that's possible that shows the resources; again, resources from across the federal government. This is just a sample from that particular module, and it features – upfront and center is the catalog of catalogs, that shows all the different resources. HHS was the originator of this great resource, and now all of us are contributing to that. So there's lot of collaboration and lots of partnerships. (Pause.)

Yes. So again – and this is the slide that shows the resources, and these links may or may not be live because these are just screenshots. We took the liberty of doing screenshots just to make sure you guys could just get a flavor instead of waiting for us to click through.

OK. Any final questions? Let's just take a moment and see if there's anything else coming in.

(Inaudible) – has a lot of questions about how this could be used, who this could be used with, and then are there train-the-trainer certificates available? That's a really good idea. We don't have anything formal or official with this toolkit, although we know that a lot of organizations are very interested in implementing it. So that's a great idea. Thank you.

And there's a question from Jeffrey (sp) about career pathways, "Have they been formally linked to the SIP code maintained at the Department of Ed?" And I don't know. Cory, if you know the answer, if you don't, it's no problem. We can get back to Jeffrey as well. But that's a good question.

MS. SAURI: I believe the answer is no, but we should follow up; find out a definitive answer.

MS. TROKE: OK. And thank you, Keely (sp), for sharing Kansas City, your definition of good or quality job. That's interesting that Deborah's generated that conversation. I think that's an important one.

Any other – another comment around secondary schools, thank you for that. "Is there a way to get the whole toolkit in one file?" Well, Jen Tobias (sp) it is absolutely ginormous. Could we roll it into one file? I don't know. We could try if that would be helpful to you, sure. We'll just post it up on the website.

OK. My colleague is suggesting maybe we can just zip it up onto the website – again, CareerPathways.WorkforceGPS.org.

So Gary Altman (sp), hello. You want to know about is there a concerted effort across organizations to jointly work with employer groups in order to further penetration, effectiveness of efforts.

Right now I would say probably at the state level that's happening. At the federal level that is not happening right now. But I love the idea. If that is going in the box of how we can help you I think that's a very cool one.

OK. So Missy (sp) says yes, we can make a single PDF. So we will try to do that. And if Jim can open it – I don't know. Zip files have always plagued me, so good luck. Good luck out there with your zip files.

Anything else? We get really geeky and excited about this toolkit. Again, it's not us; it's a whole host of people, as you heard, who've helped us put it together. So we hope you love it. We hope you use it. We would encourage you to share your stories with us as you do use the toolkit and what things can be fixed.

We are running just to the end of our time now, so I think Laura and Gary – keep chatting with one another. We would encourage that. But I'm going to flip it back to Laura. On behalf of all the federal partners today, thank you guys so much for joining us. Laura, please take it away.

MS. CASERTANO: All right. Great.

(END)