**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Our Journey Together: TA Series Comprehensive Service Delivery for Youth**

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JON VEHLOW: Welcome, welcome, welcome to today's webinar. My name is Jon Vehlow and I'm here if you need anything technically speaking. Hopefully, you won't need to hear too much of me, but if you do have any technical questions, please let us know in that chat window on the bottom left-hand side of your screen. That chat window is also where we'd like you to introduce yourself now.

So please go ahead and type into that chat your name, the name of your organization, where you're located in the country, how many are joining you today, and if you're attending in a group. You may also use that chat box to ask our presenters any questions you may have during the webinar. You'll also notice that we have a copy of today's presentation uploaded in the file share window. You can download that at any time throughout today's webinar; also a copy of today's presentation, as well as a transcript and recording will be made available on WorkforceGPS in about two business days.

Additionally, to continue producing quality content, we will be sending out an anonymous survey concerning today's events. Please take a few minutes to fill that out once the webinar concludes. We will also be sending out a follow-up survey in a month's time. Again, if you haven't already done so, if you're just joining us, please introduce yourself in that welcome chat. We'll have that chat up throughout today's webinar, where you can type in your questions or comments at any time.

Welcome to "Our Journey Together: TA Series Comprehensive Service Delivery for Youth." So without further ado, I'd like to turn things over to our moderator today, Sara Hastings, unit chief, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Sara.

MS. HASTINGS: Thanks, John. Hello. Welcome, everyone. Thank you guys so much for joining us today. We will be talking about how we can effectively use WIOA youth formula funds to provide comprehensive service delivery for youth in our communities across the country. So thank you so much for joining us. Next slide.

So you may remember if you were with us back in October when we kicked off our webinar TA series Our Journey Together, we had asked folks what type of TA would be most helpful to you. And what we heard was that many of you really just wanted to learn more about other programs in the field that are also doing good work and to hear from them.

We also heard from a lot of you that you were interested in learning about some of these topics here, recruiting and retaining youth, how best to serve out of school use, linkages to mental health treatment, program design, professional development, keeping youth engaged and engaging and empowering youth, and also trauma-informed care.

So with all of that great feedback that we got from you, it sort of sparked our thinking around what would be a good next webinar topic to meet those TA needs. And the topic for today's webinar really kind of floated to the top of the list.

So we're really eager to have this discussion with you all today and are very excited to highlight Spokane, Washington, as an example of one local area that has been really working thoughtful and deliberately for a number of years to build comprehensive youth service delivery approaches with the use of their WIOA youth funds, along with other funding sources as well. That really is for and about the youth in their community.

My colleagues, Evan Rosenberg and Carol Patavan (sp) from our team, our national office and our regional office, were lucky enough to be able to do a site visit back in September and saw really first-hand Spokane's offering. And they both were really so excited when they came back to share what they had learned from that visit.

And they knew the field would actually really benefit from learning from Spokane as well. I've also had the opportunity to hear a bit about their work at a NOB conference this year. They've also presented at the NADA conferences as well. They have been showcasing their work on many occasions. So it's possible that you may have heard from them before today, but we're hoping we can really dig in a bit more on their work and provide you all the opportunity to really ask any questions you might have and to think about the work that you do back home.

So we're going to hear about their program design today, how they engage and empower youth, why they put so much emphasis on professional development and a lot more information. And we think that there's so many aspects to Spokane's work that hopefully, everybody will really benefit from today's presentation.

So from Spokane Area Workforce Development Council, we're going to hear from Jessica Clayton. She is the program and development director at the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council. She's going to provide an overview and some history about Spokane and how they arrived at this approach to youth service delivery.

We are also going to hear from Trina Clayeux, who is the director of the Next Generation Zone, and Stacey Wells, who's the WIOA program manager of the Next Generation Zone, which is their young adult career center that you're going to hear about today. They will be providing us with an understanding of how the Next Generation Zone works and go into a bit more detail about their work there.

So our objectives for today's webinar include gaining an understanding of what's meant by a comprehensive array of youth services, learning about Spokane Area Workforce Development Council's approach to youth service delivery, we're hoping you will leave with a clear picture of what the Next Generation Zone offers. And then, have the opportunity to get your answers to questions and hopefully spark some ideas that can enhance your local youth efforts back home.

So to get going today, let's just take a few minutes to talk about what we think it means when we say that WIOA youth funds must be used to deliver a comprehensive array of services. So what does that mean? You know, behind and beyond the assessment, ISS, the 14 program elements, all the pieces that we talk about under WIOA, what is the program design or the model that really allows you to best serve WIOA youth?

So I want to first ask all of you what do you think are the essentials of a comprehensive service delivery model? What does it actually take to offer comprehensive services? You know, these are the areas that sort of fall between the lines of the law and the regulations and all of our money (T goals ?), but are the essential ingredients to making this all work. So I'm going to give you just a minute or so to type in the chat box your thoughts just to get our conversation going. So what do you think are the essentials of a comprehensive service delivery model? Great.

I'm seeing a lot of pieces come in, input coming in. I saw a lot around strategic partnerships and partnerships in place, flexibility, braided and blended funding, multiple resources, barrier removal, lots of different partners, knowing who all the players are, wraparound services, understanding poverty and youth background. Partner buy-in, coordination of services.

This is great. Start with an environmental scan of what's available. Thanks, Maria. Consistent policy. These are great. Making the system user-friendly. This is great information. I'm seeing more folks typing and I think people have touched on a lot of the big essentials. Thank you for taking the time to do that.

I think – the essentials that we have seen in programs where WIOA youth funds are being used include all of these things and I feel like the responses that came in have touched on almost all of these. They were coming in pretty quick.

So I was trying to read quickly, but I do think folks really touched on many of these things. So strong leadership and vision. You know, this is where you'll see your local workforce development board, your youth committees, making sure you've got the right people at the table. Being really strategic about service delivery strategies and the use of resources.

You might have your mayor providing direct leadership or appointing high-level officials like your heads of your public agencies that serve youth to participate in this youth services planning in the local area. You know, having those key partnerships in place, again, this is really bringing the right people to the table to ensure that your strategies and your policies that you guys develop and think at the highest level can actually be implemented within the agency. So having those right people at the table is critical. Partnerships also include those with employers.

I think folks know employers are – sometimes have been seen as sort of the other customer, but we really like to talk about employers as our partners. They are key contributors to the design of employment and training programs and they ensure that your employability skills and your occupational skills training are on point. You need employers for job shadowing and work experiences, for building apprenticeships, and to be poised and ready to hire our young people when they're ready for un-subsidized employment.

Also, leveraging of multiple resources. A lot of you included that feedback in the chat. I think as you probably all experienced, one funding stream is typically not enough to support all the needs of our youth. So the WIOA youth program funds are likely not enough for everything that is needed to help educate and prepare young people for success.

So this really requires program planners to understand the resources that are available in the community, how those resources can be coordinated and aligned or braided together to ensure comprehensive services for youth. Another essential is having well trained and qualified professional staff. I did see people write that in as well. As you guys know, especially those direct service providers, your case managers, job coach navigators, whatever term you use, they know how not very rewarding this work is, but how incredibly challenging it can be.

So does your programming have structures built in to acknowledge these challenges? Does your program offer trainings and supports to ensure your staff can handle the really tough part of this job? Listening to a young person say that they don't have a place to live or that no one cares about them or they haven't eaten yet today.

Does your staff have the know-how and the capacity to handle these situations? You know, this is challenging work and we need to really ensure our staff are prepared and supported. And I think included in the support is ensuring that the staff understand sort of – and have a sense of customer-centered or positive youth development approaches to delivery.

So while we know youth have lots of challenges in their life, we also know they have even more strength. So does your staff know how to identify them? Does your program design take those strengths into account? Does it meet the youth where they're at? You know, so having a program design and having that staff capacity to put into place the customer-centered or a positive youth development approach is really critical, not only to kind of engage the young people, but also to retain them and help them be successful.

And finally, it's essential that your programs and your data systems allow for assessing – evaluating your work, learning from your effort, and then making those necessary changes to improve. Data collection should not be just seen as an exercise for reporting to your funders, but it should be used to help you assess whether all the work that you're doing is really making a difference. So those are kind of the key essential ingredients to being able to deliver comprehensive services and I think you're going to be hearing some examples of that soon when we turn it over to Spokane.

But just to get you engaged a little bit more before I do, we wanted to do a polling question. What are the areas of need or challenges you're facing as it relates to delivering comprehensive services? So if you could just take us back in here to take this polling question, and you can do more than one. Because I have a feeling that folks have more than one challenge. It is hard work.

So let us know. Give us a sense what aspect or aspects of delivering comprehensive services continue to challenge you. Engaging out of school youth, retaining out of school youth, providing work-based learning or work experience opportunities, partnership building, assessment and evaluation for program improvement.

I see a lot of folks selecting retaining out of school youth, which we know is – it can be really challenging, engaging. Assessment and evaluation for program improvement. It's a bit of a mix. I mean, I think – and then, we've got a few – almost 20 percent, 16 percent, 17 percent that are saying all of the above. This is challenging work and a lot of pieces need to be in place to be able to sort of, again, fill in the gaps, the program design. It's beyond what the law and the regulations and the T goals all say. This is the real work.

So this is helpful. It gives us a sense of kind of where folks are at. So with that, I think it's time to turn it over to our speakers today. I'm very excited for you all to be able to hear from them. You know, we will hear how they have used their WIOA youth program funds to address and implement many of those essentials that we just talked about in their local area. So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Jessica.

JESSICA CLAYTON: Well, thank you. Thank, Sara. Thanks for that introduction and good morning, good afternoon, everyone, depending on where you're located. This is Jessica Clayton with the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council. And thanks for logging on today to share in this webinar with us.

We are excited to share with you a little bit about what we do in Spokane, our philosophy around our youth services and our service delivery and model. Thanks to Evan and Carol and the Department of Labor for having us. We're just really grateful to be here.

First of all, I know we're going to talk a lot about our youth program, but we still have challenges and struggles just like each of you that we're working through every day. So while we've put the model in place, by no means is it perfect and we all are continually challenged every day to keep doing this work. So we hope that you learn some nugget or takeaway, something that you might take with you to your youth program to implement to help make our work a little simpler.

First of all, I'd like to talk a little bit about Spokane and where we're located for those of you who don't know. Spokane is about five hours east of Seattle, right on the border between Idaho and Washington, where you see that little star on the screen. Our population is about 409,000. You can see our unemployment and youth unemployment numbers. While our employment – actually, that number is a little off. It's actually 4.9 percent.

Our youth unemployment rates are still high. Our demand industry locally, our healthcare, transportation, advanced manufacturing, and professional services. And Spokane is a really great place to live and raise a family, but we do face a lot of challenges, in particular with our youth unemployment.

The Next Generation Zone is the way we've delivered our youth services since 2007. We had three different service providers all across our county and in 2007, brought them all together to create a youth comprehensive one-stop. It really started with three partners in the building a vision and a philosophy of build it and they will come. And in the past almost 11 years, we have built it and they have come.

We serve young adults ages 16 to 24, and you'll hear more about our specific partners a little bit later. But on site education, career skills training, community and employment resources, wraparound support to help our community's young adults achieve their career goals. Our board became a non-profit in 2013 and since then, we've been able to blend in other sources of funding in addition to our WIOA money.

We have state funding. We receiving funding from local community foundations, businesses, and we actively seek a diverse range of resources to be able to serve all youth that walk through our doors. When WIOA was passed in 2014, we served about 70 percent out-of-school youth and 30 percent in-school and now, in the past three years, we've moved to serve about 98 percent out-of-school youth and 2 percent in-school youth. So we're truly serving out-of-school youth here as the Next Generation Zone.

TRINA CLAYEUX: This is Trina Clayeux. I'm the director of the Next Generation Zone and what we really are is – more the governmental kind of definition of us is really an education employment center for 16- to 24-year-old out-of-school youth with a comprehensive wraparound services, like Jessica said.

The actual reality of it at this point is that we really can serve any 16- to 24-year-old who walks in our door at some level, and that's really this idea of this fully integrated one-stop area where we've braided and blended funding in such a way that when a youth comes in the door, three years ago we would have really had to try to figure out eligibility before we could really start looking at services or some way of helping them.

And now, when the youth walks in the door, we can spend a considerable amount of time really connecting and engaging with a young person in what their needs are now and what their future goals are without jumping right into all the eligibility requirements. And it really has changed kind of the flavor of the work we do and the way that we interact with young adults over the long haul.

As Jessica said, we're mostly focused on out-of-school youth. We do reserve a little space for in-school in certain situations, but there is definitely enough need for out-of-school youth. On our campus, we have a high school equivalency classroom, a career-connected lab, and it's staffed primarily by college faculty and also K-12 staff, and they keep that operational.

We have classes five days a week with actual 50-minute classrooms every day, but also an opportunity for customized learning, tutoring, help with kids who come with IEPs or 504 plans. So pretty much any young adult – or not pretty much. Every young adult who needs education opportunity should have something there.

We obviously have a heavy focus on reengagement practices. We do practice several different models. Positive behavioral intervention and supports is definitely something that we're doing every single day. We do do more sound discipline processes as well. We have certain philosophies about not suspending youth. Many of our youth are coming to us already suspended, already expelled or already not welcome back into, like, a home school district for those kinds that are coming for education opportunities.

We also focus almost exclusively on the student experience and also really looking at our behaviors as staff rather than focusing so much on doing a lot of student behaviors. I mean, we focus on their behaviors, but the particular focus is on getting all the staff on the same page and making sure that philosophically, all these different agencies are operating with the same understanding.

As you can see, certain on-site partners that we have are different programs and then, I think one of the really cool things, because I saw in the window when people were saying having strong partnerships and having a place to refer, I think that one of our strengths for sure is that we tend to be able to handle pretty much anything that walks in the door and we bring those resources to the facility. Or if we have to refer out, often we will accompany the youth to make sure that we're teaching them how to navigate these different spaces. But otherwise [audio cuts out] a model how to do it and teach them how to navigate these different places.

And so a huge focus is on on that youth experience and I think one of the things that we do really well is that we question our processes and that's a constant opportunity for us to really look at asking ourselves, like, honestly, how many pieces of paper does a young adult need to fill out before we can serve them? Or if they're moving between the high school equivalency classroom and the employment, how do we have that seamless service that we're not having young people do work that isn't really valuable, but that they're doing at one time that serves a purpose?

We really need to look at languaging (sic) to make sure that we all understand what we're talking about. A phrase that we use in our office is connect, then correct. So it's having that philosophy that you need to connect with the younger person before you can start trying to modify some of the behaviors. If you do it too soon, we do the absolute opposite of creating a youth experience.

We do focus a huge thing on creating a sense of belonging. That's from day one, at an orientation. That's when they come in for testing. That's when they work with the person at the reception desk. That's when they're in the classroom. Every single opportunity we have to work with a young adult needs to have an experience that goes along with it. And then, that allows us also to have a systemized introduction and onboarding process that it gives us enough flexibility to also be individualized.

So for a young adult that make come on a Tuesday, which is the day before an orientation, we can give them opportunities to come to the standard orientation or to get a one-on-one experience with someone. But I want to make sure that every time a young adult is there, that they're actually having an experience and an engagement.

And part of that is making that all of their staff honestly know what you mean by engagement or experience because what I've found over time was that we weren't languaging the same thing when you have folks from, let's say, Youth Build on the construction program and folks who are really working intensely on housing or employment or education.

MS. CLAYTON: So a few things about the philosophy of our work. Trina already touched on this a little bit, but the foundation of what we do, really, is an emphasis on trauma-informed practices. We've adopted three main principles of safety, consistency, and predictability that are threads throughout – or the experience that youth have at our center.

We want to make sure our space is safe physically and emotionally, that there is consistent boundaries and consistent enforcement of those boundaries, and then predictability that youth have an idea of what to expect each and every day when they come to our center.

Also, we were able to redesign the physical layout of our center about two years ago and we used the youth focus models. So we did surveys, focus group. We wanted to see what the youth wanted and needed and created a space that is professional motivating, clean, respectful of them and their experiences, and doesn't feel the same as a lot of other places they might be. We've also put a pretty strong focus on professional development in the past three years. You ask the staff, they might say we've over professional development, given them a lot of PD, but it has been to put everyone on the same page in terms of that philosophy. Trina, do you want to talk about the focus of PD?

Trina Clayeux: Yeah. So a lot of the initial stages of professional development have been around trauma and care – trauma-informed practices, mental health first aid, case management. So we actually selected a case management model to follow and that honestly helped to really get everybody's language and understanding on par. And again, so much of the focus was on building the staff and not so much focusing on just the young person, but we really had to have our act together.

So our staff really do work hard to be safe, predictable, consistent, but also with our case management philosophy with how we do job development, all those things were brought in. And then, we've really branched out, I think, in looking at other industries. So not just working on workforce development and education trainings, but to bring in different philosophies from IT, for an example, or the business world, where they have a lot to contribute to the work we do. So it gives us an opportunity to look at our work differently.

MS. CLAYTON: And our common case management philosophy really centers on those three bullets. Parenting versus partnering. So focusing on partnering with a young person instead of parenting them. Empowering them versus enabling them. And focusing on self-sufficiency versus saving. Those are three key components. In addition, we are constantly improving and evaluating what – the work that we do.

We've utilized a model called the Youth Program Quality Assessment to evaluate our program, but there are a lot of models out there and we would encourage you to find a model that is the best fit for your program. In addition, having a board staff and your service delivery staff who are committed to innovation, flexibility, solving problems when they come up, coming to the table with a how might we get to a yes instead of coming with a no at all levels, and really being committed to the vision of the program and of the center.

This is just a graphic of our program design model. You can see the foundation of trauma-informed practices, continue with improvement. We've adopted best practice and evidence-based approaches. And then the three pillars of our work, preparing the workforce, preparing the workplace, and preparing the practitioner or the staff and giving them the tools they need to do the work. And while we have developed this model over time, we would encourage each of you to adopt a model that is the best fit for your program.

So one thing we've done that is a little bit unique is we've been able to fund a few positions with WIOA and other fund sources. And so this is a way that we're able to serve all youth regardless of eligibility, and we don't always have to lead with eligibility. We fund them – we blend the funding for their salaries together with WIOA, private dollars, other grant dollars, to round out their salary.

Three of the positions we funded with this model are our career and college navigator. This person focuses solely on placement and retention of youth into post-secondary education and training. She meets the young person when they walk in the door and is with them from day one to placement and retention that first year.

Her presence and her role has really increased our level of retention in post-secondary education and so provides that support to youth when they enter college for the first time, helps them navigate the various systems, answer their questions, prevents them from falling off the cliff and ending up in a real trouble spot with financial aid or with their course work.

Another position that's brand new to us this program year is our mental health specialist. One of our agencies that we work with is an educational service district and they have been able to help us get a mental health specialist on the team. She started this summer and she focuses on crisis intervention and referrals, soft handoff to a community provider when necessary. We recognized the need for this about two years ago. We have been getting more youth with higher needs and we needed to address those issues when they come up.

So having her on board has helped us mitigate crises, because the job of our career specialist really is the workforce development piece. It's job development. It's work experience. It's not as much of that counseling. One person can't be everything to everybody, and this position has allowed our career specialist to focus a little bit more on the workforce development work that they're doing.

In addition, on deck for us is a health education component. A few grants we've received in the past year are going to enable us to deliver health education classes for our youth on site, including the ones we're looking at right now, are smoking cessation, wellness for work, nutrition, and positive parenting.

We do have an on-site nutrition program in our classroom and so, we're going to use the nutrition program and then some curriculum to help our young adults know a little bit more about cooking, basic food preparation, and preparing healthy meals. So those are just three of our blended funding staff positions and I think it's a unique way to be able to provide a service that not everyone might think of in a WIOA youth program.

MS. WELLS: Hi. This is Stacey Wells. I'm with Goodwill Industries of the Inland Northwest serving at the Next Generation Zone as the WIOA youth program manager. And we started our 21st Century Workplace Skills Academy a couple of years ago, really as a means of delivering services in a group to sort of free up each individual practitioner so that one person didn't have to do 15 resumes in a week.

We could send 15 kids to – our young adults to a series of classes, but we also recognized that we need to do more than just teach some of those skills. We needed to do some soft skills development as well. And so we structured a three-week 36-hour program that goes on every month. We've recently kind of fine-tuned it too, responding to what we saw in the classroom and to some of our employer needs.

So we were seeing – strangely enough, when you think of young adults, you think of them as being really tech savvy and it turns out that they're very good on the social side of technology, but not so much on the production side. And so when we were asking young adults to attach a resume to an e-mail and e-mail it to themselves so that they had access to it later, they didn't know how to attach anything to an e-mail.

So we have an amazing volunteer who comes in and the first week of our academy now, we're teaching specifically Microsoft skills. That's also a response to needs of our employers and we were hearing that specifically in warehousing, that skills in Microsoft Excel were really more valuable, at least as valuable, as having a forklift certification.

And so we do Outlook, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. And that first part where we're learning and setting up new Outlook accounts, work-appropriate Outlook accounts, no references to anything inappropriate for the workplace, we get those set up and then they're used consistently throughout the three weeks. So we have a teacher who's with us for the entire three weeks and they're using that e-mail and learning how to write e-mails and how to respond to e-mails and when to reply to all and how to attach things and really kind of learning that process together.

That soft skill development starts in the first week and it continues in through the three weeks. So Trina referenced the case management model. We use Beverly Ford's group work and then we're also incredibly blessed to have a practitioner among us who just recently completed a master's degree in instructional design. Kathleen Hammonds presented in Chicago not that long ago on soft skills instruction and so, we've really been able to weave those philosophies consistently through the entire academy. So even though it starts with those kind of hard skills, it's really sort of consistently soft skills. So the second and third weeks are your typical resume building and interview practice.

We are very blessed to have some extraordinary community partners. We have a couple of managers, district managers and store managers, from several Starbucks locations that come and help with resumes and interviews. We have a local credit union who sends a representative to do financial education every month. We even have the first Spokane Valley mayor, who is no longer the mayor, but she was the first mayor when the Valley incorporated, who comes and does a civic engagement piece. She also sits on our workforce development board.

So those people come and they also do a panel, kind of a employer panel, that the students participate in. And then, they finish with sort of a job club and so, they're helping each other look for and apply for employment and also look for and apply for education because sometimes that's the decision that's made. A lot of times, we have people come in not really knowing what they want to do and leaving with the plan, a really solid plan, for something that they never thought they could do.

The college and career navigator that Jessica talked about is also sort of the last day of the academy and we celebrate on that day. We have pizza and we have certificates and we take pictures and we celebrate these young adults and I have heard people really excited if they're – especially if they're still working a GED or HSE say that this is the first graduation they've ever been to. So celebrating that is really, really important as well.

This is also partly in response to knowing that our business partners are counting on us to prepare these young adults for the workforce and also just knowing that even though young adults will walk in and say I know how to do that, I know how to do a resume, I just need a job, they really do come out of this better prepared. And so we also require the center program before we spend any WIOA dollars on WEX [ph] or an OJT.

It's also required that if a student comes in and is basic skills deficient, that they make educational functional level gain. And we have resources that can help with that too, but this really is intended to prepare our workforce and our business community's needs. So it is something that really every young adult coming through the center does before we spend a bunch of money on them.

MS. CLAYTON: So when we're looking at how that model, the transformational model, actually applies to the work-based learning that we do with young adults, it can kind of show you just a reflection of how that lines up with our in-demand industries for this area. And so part of our goals are to move more into what we would consider corporate, even though in Spokane, it's a lot of small and medium-sized businesses here.

That having enough of the non-profits available for those young adults, that that would be the most appropriate environment for them to work on that soft skills development or build some technical skills. We also have an obligation, a responsibility, to respond to our business community in making sure that those investments that we're making in young adults are actually matriculating into a young person who's ready to work in more of the corporate side of our business community.

And so I think that right now, we have a pretty good blend in where we have some additional initiatives that are coming down in this next year that will really focus on that healthcare career ladder from CNA to MA through the potential apprenticeship program looking for different areas in transportation and warehousing, where we're finding that there's really a misalignment of skillsets that our young adults who are not having it. And so our program manager has really tried to identify and drill down what those are. And so we can put together more of a customized training to address those individual needs to make sure that we can get young adults who can get hired by the transportation or warehouse industry.

And then, professional services has been just a slower-moving vehicle for us, which I'm sure a lot of you are experiencing as well, where we are getting young adults into finance and insurance, but there's a lot of upfront work that goes along with that as well. So we've had a couple of really good business partners who had some successes who've definitely bought in and are making those opportunities more readily available.

So a few other key components that we believe are keys to success is, first of all, that the leadership at all levels believe in the Y. This has been an evolution for us over about the last 10 years and it's taken a group of people that are committed to the vision and committed to the why, why we're doing this, and really it is for the young adults, for the betterment of our community, to help them be strong for their families and wage-earners for their families. And keeping that why as a focus when it's challenging when there's difficult decisions to make has been a huge benefit for us.

In addition, our board is very committed to the vision and the strategies and how and why we do our work. We have board members who have hosted paid work experiences. We have board members who contribute to our non-profit. Having board members who are invested and understand the program and come down to our center. We have board members who've done coffee talks, we call them.

Young adults sat down with a young person for an hour and talk about their career and their career pathway. And we have a committed and involved youth committee who meets every other month, comes together to talk about youth issues and helps contribute to the work of the center. And a lot of those folks have been on these committees for five years, eight years. They're very committed to the work and the vision and supporting the staff at the Next Generation Zone.

In addition, our board has really focused on diversifying our funding sources. In 2016, we raised over $500,000 to supplement our WIOA funding. In addition to the leverage funds that our partners provide, that brings us to the operations budget of our center total is about 50 percent WIOA, 50 percent non. And 10 years ago, that was 100 percent WIOA and becoming a non-profit has been a huge benefit to us, being able to bring in other fund sources so that we can serve every young adult that walks through our doors without starting with an eligibility questionnaire.

In addition, as I mentioned, our business sponsorship, our annual donors, private foundations, just continue to put time and effort into seeking those fund sources and creating a case for why. We've been able to diversify our funding sources to be able to serve any young person and to provide them supportive services they need. I've seen questions coming in about transportation. How do we help with transportation for young people and not something we do through private grants? So before a young person is enrolled, if necessary we're able to help them out with bus passes paid for with private dollars so that they can get to our program.

Just a few results for you. Our average wage at placement is about $12.21 an hour and Washington State's minimum wage is $11.37 right now and going up. So wage is a challenge for us because of our high minimum wage, but our staff continue to place youth at a higher wage than minimum wage.

The academy that Stacey talked about a minute ago, we had 84 young people graduate from that academy last year. 418 youth enrolled in our WIOA funding stream. 148 youth were employed or entered post-secondary education in the last program year, and you can see the stats there. One we're pretty proud of is that 97 percent of young adults remained engaged with us after graduation from our classroom and placement. We've been seeking other performance measures beyond our WIOA measures and that 97 percent placement is a number we've been tracking and that we are proud of.

In addition our college and career navigator has a college retention rate between fall quarter and winter quarter of 100 percent. The rate for one year is 64 percent, which is still well above the college– community college average retention rate. And last year, we graduated 123 young people from our career connected learning classroom. So all in all, those are some numbers of our program and our results and we look forward to PY '17 to serving more youth and maybe having more graduates. I think so far this program year, since July, we have almost 40.

So you might be wondering why should I or my board or my staff, why should I think about this youth one-stop model? It allows you to create and sculpt a unique brand, harness the power of partnership, most – so many people at the beginning, when Sara asked about key traits of serving youth, you talked about partnership. Putting everyone in one place really allows you harness the power of that partnership and leverage and braid and blend, integrate programs, integrate funds. Most of our young people have no idea what program they're in or what fund source may be funding them, but they do know that they're connected to the Next Generation Zone.

In addition, a youth one-stop allows you diversify resources and increase your sustainability. So if we lose one fund source or if one fund source is reduced, we have other fund sources that are able to pick up the slack. And then, finally, those relationships that we talked about and we focused on really do lead to transformative results. Results for your young adults, results for your community, and that's something that we're proud of. So now – I know we kind of flew through that. We would love to take your questions.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you so much to the Spokane team. That was awesome information. I bet people are – have a number of questions. We've seen a bunch of them come in and we are just assessing which ones have come in and looking through them. Get your – please send in additional questions and we will try to get those in the remaining time we have. But why don't we just take them in order as we've seen them here.

So a question for you guys, where are you physically located? Is the public transportation in Spokane robust enough to ensure youths from different neighborhoods can attend? I know you talked about bus passes, but maybe you can talk a little bit more about where you're at in your transportation options.

MS. CLAYTON: Definitely. So at the very beginning, when we created the Next Generation Zone, we did a study of where our customers were located and what ZIP codes they came from and we picked a location based on that data. In addition, our – so our center is centrally located right next to the downtown – our downtown and right next to our major transportation arterials. In addition, it's on a – directly on a bus line. We have buses that come on two roads. Parking is free, parking is ample. Those were things that were important to the committee at the time. So it's a very centrally located location.

And Spokane is unique. Most of our population is centralized in the downtown core. Rural is very rural and there is a workforce area area us that serves those folks. So when we took into consideration our ZIP codes, our numbers, who was coming to us, picking a centrally located location on a bus line with that free parking was key to us.

And most people are able to access our center. We don't have too many complaints, especially since we started. We had the ability to hand out bus passes to participants before they were enrolled, with private dollars, to help them get to the center and come back before they got enrolled and were able to get a monthly pass from us.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. Well, that's awesome to hear, that you guys are really thoughtful about sort of figuring out where it made sense to centrally locate the center and to be able to do that kind of in the beginning is great. So the next question is can you describe more about your staff, kind of the number of people, educational or work – the backgrounds as far as degrees or years' experience in workforce?

MS. WELLS: Yeah. I can do that. I – we only have about 3.5 WIOA-funded practitioners specifically in workforce, but our center, which really is big and includes our AmeriCorps staff and our youth build staff and the employees that kind of go between the workforce and the education side, it's really more, like, 30. Everybody comes from different backgrounds. So some of us came from working with folks and families in homelessness and some in mental health and some in workforce and some in education. We have teachers. We really have – we have somebody from big box retail. It really is a huge variety, but I think collectively, just for this specific work, we have over 100 years of experience together.

MS. HASTINGS: Wow. Great. Thank you. The next question is can you share your case management system that you use? And you talked about an evaluation system and I'm not sure if that's the same system that you use, but tell us a little bit about the technologies that you're using.

MS. CLAYTON: So we use our state's MIS to track our data – to do all of our data entry. In terms of our case management system, we really use the model on the earlier slides. Oh, great. Stacey clarified it for me.

So I think the model that you're referring to is the Ford. I'm sure a lot of you out there have heard of Bev Ford and used some of her techniques and we were able to partner with a few other agencies and actually bring Bev Ford out to do a one-day training with our team.

Stacey, anything you'd like to add about Bev Ford training?

STACEY WELLS: Well, that's really the model for her group work that we used in the academy, but it's also how we're all sort of on the same page when we're interacting with young adults. This was something that was also stressed, that consistency and predictability when we were working on our trauma-informed approach and learning about the adverse childhood experience skill that no matter – because we don't spend our – how do I phrase this?

The young adults aren't isolated with one person. Everybody knows everybody. So every staff member really knows every young adult. It's a very collaborative process. They may work or be enrolled with one particular practitioner, but everybody knows everybody and so we wanted to make sure that people weren't getting different answers from different people.

So that's partly the trauma-informed approach. It's partly Bev Ford and then I think the other think that Sara might have mentioned was the YPQA, the Youth Program Quality Assessment. And Jessica can probably tell you more about that, but that's an assessment tool that we use to make sure that we are really putting the youth first.

MS. CLAYTON: So briefly, the Youth Program Quality Assessment is a tool developed based on research by the David P. Weikart Foundation. It focused on youth engagement, safety, and there's an assessment that our staff completes and then we also have an external assessor who actually comes in and sits in a session where youth are there and evaluates the content and then gives us a score.

And we get to stand up what we – how we think we're doing with what the evaluator actually thinks we're doing. And this has resulted in some big changes and helps us identify some of our weaknesses. Our strengths really were that safety piece and accessible space and things we've improved based on the YPQA assessment has been engagement, incorporating more leadership opportunities for youth in our program, and making sure that we identify a schedule for the day.

Really things that are pretty basic, but have helped youth to feel more engaged and safe and committed to our program. And it's challenging to bring in someone outside of your organization and a little scary maybe, but our staff and our leadership look at it as a learning experience, that evaluation piece.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. That was all really helpful. Next question is just your recruitment strategies. What does that look like. How do you recruit young people?

MS. CLAYTON: We get this question a lot and it's – the answer is truly we don't do a lot of recruitment. Youth hear about our program through word of mouth, through the school district, with our Open Doors affiliation. If a student has dropped out, oftentimes they're referred to us. But mainly, youth hear about our program word of mouth. People have had positive experiences. They bring in their family, their friend, their cousin.

MS. WELLS: And I would say one of Spokane's superpowers, too, is that we have a tremendous number of similar serving organizations that are very collaborative. There's not a lot of competition among agencies. And so the agencies all know who we are and make referrals to. So we get referrals from juvenile detention and from homeless-serving groups and from health communities and from other non-profits. So it really is also just a result of having really great connectivity among similar serving programs.

MS. CLAYTON: We do have a Facebook and an Instagram presence, but I would say that that – social media is not a primary recruitment strategy for us. It helps the community and our stakeholders stay involved in our work, but word of mouth and those community partners and referrals are really key for us.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. And the next question, how do you differentiate services for the older within that out-of-school youth population, so the 22 to 24? If you could talk about that.

MS. WELLS: I think most of those services are the same. When they're younger, 16, 17, many times they're still working on HSE/GED, but that academy is really intended to serve everybody in that 16 to 24 group. So if we have somebody who is 22 to 24 that maybe has more work experience, really does know how to build a resume, we have in place a system where we can maybe send them over.

We're fortunately placed very close to WorkSource where adult and dislocated worker and everybody else in the Spokane community can go for help with employment. And they do some really great workshops too. So sometimes, we'll maybe fill in a gap or two with a workshop over on the adult side. But then, we'll continue to work with them to place them into work-based learning or OJTs or get them into training.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you so much. So next question. How are out-of-school youth getting to your academy? I think we addressed this one. Do they drive? You talked about your transportation. Let's go to the next one. For the 36-hour academy training, how many days and hours are there per week?

MS. WELLS: It's three weeks, but it's Monday through Thursday from 1:00 to 4:00.

MS. CLAYTON: So it's three hours a day for four days a week.

MS. HASTINGS: Great.

MS. CLAYTON: Three weeks.

MS. HASTINGS: Perfect. Thank you. Have you dealt with– no. This was another question. I think we already did that. Does the construction industry fit into any of those categories that you talked about in terms of demand industries?

MS. CLAYTON: Yes. Definitely. Construction industry fits into – it can fit into manufacturing or professional services. It really just depends on what they're doing. But yes. We do place youth in construction jobs and construction apprenticeship; heavy equipment operator; electrical apprenticeship.

So we definitely have partners in the construction industry. We also have people that attend our youth committee who are from an apprenticeship program. So we are definitely focusing on construction of one of our – as one of our industries and we do trainings for youth. Through Youth Build and through WIOA, we are looking to get into construction or the trades.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. Speaking of the youth committee, there was a question – can you talk more about the youth committee? How do you get youth interested in it?

And so I think some folks when they talk about youth committees, they're thinking it's a committee of young people. I think when you were referring to your youth committee, you were talking about the standing committee under WIOA, where there are adult leaders in the community that strategically develop programming and resources for youth. So can you talk a little bit about your youth committee and if you do have any young people that are engaged in that?

MS. CLAYTON: Definitely. So yes. I was referring to our standing youth committee that's required under WIOA. Let's see. Ten years ago, there were a group of four people that were really invested in the vision of the Next Generation Zone and that's when our first youth committee was born. In the last few years, we have worked to get representatives from industry.

So currently we have at least one, sometimes two, representatives of each of our five demand industries. They serve for two-year terms. They attend meetings every other month and we require that they participate by helping us make what we call career connections. So some people will host a work experience. Some people will do a job shadow or a tour of their company or serve on another committee for us. And those folks are engaged because they are about the young adults in Spokane County.

We also have providers from different youth services on our youth committee. We have a representative from a youth homeless housing organization, from the juvenile justice system, from vocational rehabilitation that serve on the committee. And those folks are engaged pretty heavily in the work of our system. Some are board members, but a lot are not on our board. They're just really invested in young people.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you for that. Is childcare provided on-site? And connections to household costs, like rental assistance or transitional housing?

MS. CLAYTON: So we do not provide on-site childcare. However, we have a lot of young people who do bring babies and toddlers to our program – to the site. We have some toys that we'll stick out and kids are welcome to attend the academy with a parent if need be. We're just flexible like that. Our staff will hold the baby or toddler if necessary for a young person to take a math or reading test or go to class. We try and make our space as accessible as possible.

When a youth is ready to go to work, our staff do talk with them about plan A and plan B for childcare and help them connect with other resources. But no. Unfortunately, we don't provide a special on-site childcare. And the second half of that question, referrals to rental assistance or other assistance. Yes. We do provide that assistance as we can and as necessary. And we also do some of it through supportive service dollars as well.

MS. HASTINGS: Okay. Thank you. That's great. You had said you have a youth-friendly design. What does that look like?

MS. CLAYTON: So I wish I had put pictures on our presentation, but I didn't. Our lobby is very clean. We have some bright colors. Our colors, you probably saw in our presentation, are an orange, a teal, and a beige. It's a bright friendly space. It's clean. In our lobby are some computers that youth can use. They can come in and just use our computers for job search or other activities. We also have a computer lab that we do testing and classes in. Our lobby space is a comfortable space where they can hang out, charge their phone.

Our career connected classroom has an open classroom space and then a student lounge with some couches, some bistro-height tables, resources. We have a small library. You can take home books or magazines. And we also have a nutrition room upstairs that we partner with a local credit union and our local food bank to provide food for that. It's like a little mini-cafeteria.

We try and offer as many healthy foods as we can, fresh fruit and vegetables. We have supplies there for them to make sandwiches, cereal, ramen. I'm trying to balance the youth-friendly foods with food they'll actually eat. And if you go on our website, nextgenzone.org, I think there's some pictures on there.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. And that's awesome. Where are you referring youth for hard skills vocational training?

MS. CLAYTON: We work with a wide variety of training partners. Our local community colleges offer a lot of technical programs as well as the pre-reqs to get into a four-year school. We work with private training programs like a local computer skills training program, CNA training programs for medical, welding, safety. What else?

MS. WELLS: Those were the ones I was thinking about.

MS. CLAYTON: All right. Yeah. Just local community training providers that we have agreements with, in addition to our community colleges. CDL, truck driving. Those in our community provide training.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. What specific suggestions do you have for addressing retention challenges among out-of-school youth aside from financial incentives? Have you guys had some success in retaining the young people?

MS. CLAYTON: Retention is not a problem for us and I think it speaks to our – the youth-friendly design. Our space is welcoming. They almost – sometimes almost feel too comfortable in our space. But retention hasn't been a huge struggle with us and that's a hard question for us to answer. Each of our staff takes the time to talk to each young person when they come in. They can grab some food.

So they obviously want to come and grab a sandwich if they can. And then we engage them that way. We don't mandate that you come to us a certain number of days a week or hours per week, but they do come all the time. Our highest traffic hours are probably between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., but every day can be a little bit different.

So I'm sorry we can't more specifically address that retention question, but I think it's about building an engaging program model with staff that truly care about each young person, not just the performance outcomes, but the why of the work and the vision for the work.

MS. HASTINGS: Thank you. And no need to apologize for that response because I think the – that you answered it perfectly. That's, I think, what it takes; right? What is your – what level of WIOA youth funding – it says each program year, but I know that changes each year, but –

MS. CLAYTON: We are roughly around $1 million year for youth, give or take a little bit.

MS. HASTINGS: Okay. Thank you. Let's see here. How is substance abuse addressed or is this part of the mental health services that you had mentioned? Talk about that process a little bit if you could.

MS. WELLS: You know, it's also part of the health practitioner that Jessica was talking about because recreational marijuana is legal in Washington State. And so it is something that is a challenge and that we address pretty consistently. Some of us have some experience with that. So we will make referrals when that's necessary.

Really, the legal marijuana is the biggest issue that we face. So it's mostly about relationships and conversations and helping young adults make a decision about what they value; right? So they're all fairly deep discussions, but then, we do have some good community resources to help with the more physiological aspects of substance abuse.

MS. HASTINGS: Okay. Thank you. And this question, I think Evan, you can respond to it. But you posted 98 percent out-of-school youth served, which is what you had said. Our in-school youth served. Also perhaps I have it wrong. Thought WIOA required 70 percent/30 percent services for out-of-school and in-school youth population. So Evan, do you want to clarify that?

Evan Rosenberg: Sure. I can talk about our policy and then maybe I'll ask Spokane to talk a little bit about how they came to where they are. So it's 75 percent is the minimum expenditure requirement for out-of-school youth, but it's important to keep in mind that that is a minimum and there are many local areas and even some states that choose to spend even higher than 75 percent on out-of-school, some up to 100 percent.

There is no requirement to serve in-school youth in a local area or a state can choose to exclusively focus on out-of-school youth and the 75 percent is a minimum. But I'd be interested in hearing from Spokane why they've chosen to focus primarily on out-of-school youth given their 98 percent rate.

MS. CLAYTON: Thanks, Evan. So we made – our board right when WIOA was passed because we felt like there's no other services for this population. Youth that are connected to the school system have a wide array of services and programs available to them and the disconnected, disengaged youth that have dropped out of school aren't connected to work or school.

They really don't have the same level of service available to them. So our board voted right when WIOA was passed to do 90 percent out-of-school, 10 percent in-school. However as that has actualized over the past three years, it's come 98 percent out-of-school primarily because of our connection with our Open Doors, which is a date reengagement program that operates in our city. So we focus on out-of-school youth because we want to make sure there's equitable services for that population in our community.

MS. HASTINGS: All right. Thank you. What other resources are out there for clients with disabilities and/or other physical-emotional impediments? What are some best practices? And maybe we can just ask you for – Spokane just in your local area and at the Next Generation Zone. How do you provide services to youth with disability?

MS. WELLS: We do serve a lot of youth with disability. It's a huge percentage. And we do have a good relationship with our department of locational rehabilitation and a staff person who has some grant money available to assist with that.

But we're really working with young adults to identify what their disability is, what accommodations they might need, how to talk about that with an employer, and how to ask for what they need. And that's something that we are developing during the academy process so it's really about teaching young adults how to advocate for themselves and get what they need from the workplace.

Also, here's some work opportunity tax credits for hiring people with disabilities. So it's sort of akin to someone with a conviction history really knowing what options they have, knowing they can be bonded, knowing there's a tax credit for those employers as well, and really about educating the young adults so that they can navigate that system on their own. Because it won't be something that they do for their first job only. It'll be something they do for the – every job they have after that.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. How do you approach employers in your community and invite them to mentor your youth clients? Example, how do you approach Starbucks to join you in helping youth with resumes? So if you can talk about that a bit, that would be great.

MS. CLAYTON: Yeah. So we've really – over the last couple of years, we've really tried to change the narrative and our message to employers from this youth has these barriers, do a good deed and help them out, to our youth have skills and talent and will benefit you in your workplace. It's that shift in narrative, helping the employer understand the benefits to hiring youth and show them, really, what they can do that they're going to be an asset to the workplace. Stacey can speak directly to Starbucks because she actually made that connection.

MS. WELLS: Well, actually, the district manager was in a community meeting and we were present in that community meeting and she just decided that she wanted to know a little bit more and she came and she did a tour. We do a lot of community tours and kind of showed her around and it sort of blossomed from there, where we reached out to some of the other – some of her store managers.

MS. HASTINGS: Okay. Great. The next question. Can you describe how you use social media? I know you talked about Facebook a little bit before, but are there other uses of social medial to engage or to communicate your work?

MS. CLAYTON: So we use primarily Facebook and Instagram. We do have a Twitter, but it's not heavily utilized. We post on Facebook once or twice a week. We try and highlight – do a couple of different types of posts. We do posts directed to youth that might highlight a skill or highlight a training program or highlight and upcoming event. One thing we do at our center is FAFSA Fridays. Every Friday or most every Friday, there's a FAFSA class, and that's highlighted.

And then one of our primary audiences on social media is our business supporters, our board members, our funders, other community agencies. And so we do post success story posts. We'll stick a youth picture up there with a brief about a success story. We also use Facebook to communicate if we're closed for a certain – a day or holiday or if let's say we're closing early because of snow or another – for another reason. So we use Facebook to communicate in that way.

We also have youth who message our Facebook page. Usually, it's very early hour in the morning asking if we're open or asking for a specific staff person's number. And there's a few of us who manage that and reply to those messages. Parents sometimes ask us if we're open the next day. So we use social media to engage in that way. We found it really beneficial. It's a way to share what we do with our broader community, help them to understand a little bit about the Next Generation Zone, and put some faces out there and connect them to our work.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. And that is a good lead into the next question, which is just what hours are you open and do you offer evening hours for youth?

MS. WELLS: We're Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 4:30. And no, we don't have any evening hours. We – when we were serving in-school youth several years ago, we were open until 6:00 so that we could serve young adults who were coming after school. But we changed when we went to the out-of-school youth model.

MS. CLAYTON: And we actually did a study for about a month of our traffic and what hours had the most number of youth, what hours had the least, and designed our hours based on that pattern of traffic and pattern of our customers.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. That makes a lot of sense. How do you prioritize the type of spending and supportive services dollars?

MS. WELLS: Prioritize the type of spending of supportive services dollars? You mean by person or as a whole?

MS. HASTINGS: Yeah. I think maybe – and if the questioner wants to clarify, I'm guessing just how do you think about supportive services and kind of what do you sort of offer for young people and how do you determine whether young people are receiving some of the supportive services? So maybe you can talk generally about –

MS. WELLS: Sure. We do have a support service policy that helps with things like transportation and work clothes and interview clothes and that sort of thing. We can help – I mean, just following the law, we can help with all the same things everybody can help with. But we also, about a year ago, really tried to switch more to an incentive model. And so we can incentivize completion of GED or of the skills academy or leadership activities and encourage volunteers in community engagement.

And so now we do a lot more – if somebody needs a bus pass, trying to find a way for them to earn the money to purchase a bus pass. So at some point, your intentions with support services are very good and the first response that you get from people is gratitude. But over time, you can create dependency and so we really try to do more towards maybe even a short work-based learning experience so that young adults are earning more.

But it is nice to have those support services, and I've said this before, especially in that follow-up phase. Because sometimes, that's the reason that they'll reconnect with us, is because they need help paying their phone bill for a month or something. So it's important, but we try not to make it the first resource.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. Do you all provide any out-of-school youth training with the use of ITAs?

MS. CLAYTON: Yes. We do use ITAs for training. We – primarily, we use ITAs for training, actually.

Sarah Wells: Exclusively now.

MS. CLAYTON: Mm-hmm.

MS. HASTINGS: Okay. Great. Aside from your youth center, your Next Generation Zone, do you also maintain a youth presence at the WorkSource? So if you can talk a little bit about how you work with or partner with the One Stop?

MS. CLAYTON: Definitely. So our comprehensive One Stop center is actually located in the same – in a different building, but in the same parking lot as the Next Generation Zone. So you step out the front door of the Next Generation Zone, look across the parking lot, and our comprehensive One Stop center is right there. So we do not have a youth person at that center, but we have a very close relationship with that center and they refer young people over to us all the time. So if a young person walks into WorkSource, they will most likely be referred over to the Next Generation Zone. We also do system-wide trainings amongst the whole system, the folks that are at the Next Gen Zone and WorkSource, and we call it our One Stop campus.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. How long is follow-up services for graduated youth? Any youth returned and hired by WIOA?

MS. CLAYTON: So follow-up is one year after placement. We've tried to take the word exit out of our vocabulary and call it program completion. Because really, they're just transitioning into that follow-up phase. Staff follow-up, e-mail, phone call, maybe a Facebook message to check in. And honestly, most always, they come back and they update us and they us how they're doing and they reach out if necessary. That career and college navigator position we talked about earlier, that person specifically sticks with youth that enter college for that first year.

MS. HASTINGS: All right. Great. Do you encourage your out-of-school youth customers to utilize LinkedIn? I don't know if you use that or want to speak to that. The next question. Do you use LinkedIn? Is this promoted with the – it sounds like the two folks asking those questions were thinking the same thing.

MS. CLAYTON: I think they mentioned LinkedIn during the academy. I don't think there's a ton of time spent on LinkedIn, but they do talk a lot about networking, establishing and promoting your own personal brand, and making brand – kind of like business cards, just a little personal business card. So that personal branding is promoted and I – they talk about LinkedIn as maybe a standing resume, but don't necessarily focus on it.

MS. HASTINGS: Awesome. And I think that's – I just am checking our time. I think that's probably it for our questions. Thank you to everybody who sent in really good questions. That gives us much better sense of kind of what it looks like on the ground in Spokane. And so I didn't know, Jessica, Trina, Stacey, any other final comments before we sort of move into kind of some next steps? Any last little bits of thoughts from you guys?

MS. CLAYTON: Well, I know we threw a lot at this audience. Thanks for sticking with us. And I also just want to stress again that this – our center and our service delivery model and our philosophies have evolved over time. It hasn't – we just didn't – we didn't do this in a vacuum. We didn't do this in a brief amount of time.

We really spent time, almost 10 years now, getting to this point. It's not perfect. We have plenty of struggles. We're continuously evaluating, seeing how we can do better, see where we can be innovative and flexible, and just continuing to push those bounds. So if some of you are out there thinking oh my gosh, how can I possibly do this? Pick something small to get started. Take those baby steps. Get some people together to have the same vision and start from there?

MS. WELLS: The only WIOA-specific advice that I give to all of our practitioners is do the work and performance will come.

MS. HASTINGS: Yes. I love that. Thank you. That was a great message to end on. And hopefully, everyone, I'm sure, was able to take a lot of nuggets from your presentation. Lots of great information. Hopefully, one day, I'll be able to come out and take a visit.

We know that there's a lot of good work going on across the country that have pieces of this great work going on. So thank you, three, for taking the time to share all your work and the time that you've put into thinking about how best to serve young people in your community. So thank you all so very, very much for your time in putting this presentation together for everybody.

So before we say goodbye to our audience today, we wanted to quickly just give you a few little updates, an announcement. Hopefully, everybody has seen we have a youth cohort challenge where we have a big question that we're sort of putting out as a challenge question. Is effectively engaging or retaining out-of-school youth a challenge in your local area?

We are asking folks if you're interested in applying for to be part of this cohort challenge where you would participate, we plan on selecting about five to seven cohorts, and cohorts are made up of about three to five folks, in a local area that are working on engaging and retaining out-of-school youth. So similar to what we talked about today.

And that cohort will get together over the course of about 12 weeks to really think through that challenge and come up with some deliverables that will then be shared with the field? So we will have good technical assistance facilitators to guide those conversations and help those teams in that cohort think through this topic in more detail.

And again, coming up with some really good deliverables and some good thinking from that group to then be shared at the national level. The applications are really short. It's just a couple pages. If you go to that link there, that is a hyperlink. I think you can actually click on that, but on our youth.workforcegps.org, you'll find the announcement. It's due December 15th. So soon, but it's not a huge lift. So if you are interested in applying, please, please do. We're hoping to get a good group of folks that kind of think through this work between February and April of this next year and then come up with some good pieces to share back out with the field.

And our next webinar will be on mentoring. That's another area of technical assistance that we heard from folks back in October when we had our kick-off of our TA series. Mentoring was a big one. This is going to be a great webinar, the Power of Relationships, and it's workplace mentoring with youth. And so we'll have a lot of good information there along with some employers to kind of hear how they offer mentoring.

And just a quick little reminder where you can find some of our resources. Hopefully, everybody goes to the page and knows that it's there, youth.workforcegps.org. This is our youth connection community of practice. You can find all of our program elements, information, lots of resources, a lot of announcements of what's going on with that, and then ways to engage and connect, both with DOL and colleagues. We need to hear from you. So if you have information you want to share, you have to become a GPS member first.

And so there's some links to become a member. Directory. You want to share your work, you can submit resources through WorkforceGPS. If you've got some lessons learned and information you want to share with us, you can also e-mail us at youth.services@dol.gov. And then, we have discussion threads on our youth connections community of practice. That's also where we want to hear from you.

So feel free to share some exciting work that you've got going on. It's also a place for us to kind of know what's happening and then maybe reach out and have you be our next Spokane, Washington, where we get to highlight your good work. So a few different ways to engage and connect with you all.

But with that, I think that that's it. So thank you again to Spokane, the team. We really appreciate your time pulling everything together and we learned a lot. And thanks to everybody and I hope you all have a good rest of your day. Thanks so much.

MR. VEHLOW: Thanks, Sara. And I just want to thank all our participants and presenters today. And if you could just stay logged into the room for just a minute longer to provide us with some feedback. You'll see a feedback window where you can let us know what you thought of today's webinar. Please take a second now to share your thoughts. Let us know what you liked or what we can improve on. There's also an additional topics window. You can let us know what you'd like to hear in future webinars.

A recording of today's webinar, as well as the transcript will be made available on WorkforceGPS in about two business days. Also to better connect with your WorkforceGPS colleagues, please take a few minutes and sign up for the member directory on WorkforceGPS. That link is located at the top of the feedback window.

So again, we want to thank everyone for joining and with that, have a wonderful day, everyone.

(END)