**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**A Model Career Pathways Network: NFJP, Columbia Basin College, & Benton Franklin Workforce System**

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LAURA CASERTANO: While you fill in your answers, I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Sara Hastings. She's with the Division of Youth Services for the U.S. Department of Labor. Sara, take it away.

SARA HASTINGS: Great. Thank you, and hello, everyone. Thank you so much for joining us today for a conversation around career pathways. We are so happy to have all of you with us today to learn about how one local area has really worked to build out and really offer career pathways in order to better serve and provide opportunities for farmworkers in their area. So thank you for taking some time to fill out this poll here.

It looks like we have a majority of folks coming from the workforce system, direct service providers, workforce professionals. We have a few educators here. Welcome. And our administrators, our policy makers, a good number of them as well as some folks in other category. So it looks like we have a good mixture, a good diverse group in our audience today. So welcome.

Again, my name is Sara Hastings, and I am the unit chief in the Division of Youth Services here at the Department of Labor. I have been engaged in career pathways now for a number of years, and I co-lead with a colleague of mine, Robin Fernkas an interagency working group on career pathways.

This group includes 12 federal agencies that come together every so often to really talk about how each of our agencies can align and collaborate around this idea of building career pathway systems and programs at the state and local level. So I was asked to moderate today's conversation and provide a little bit of a framework around how we talk about career pathways not only at the federal level but also hopefully how folks are talking about it out in state and local areas and doing this work on the ground.

So our objectives today are to provide you all with a high-level understanding of a framework around career pathways, and then I'm going to turn it over to our guest presenters who will first sort of introduce each of their three partners. They are a grantee of the National Farmworker Jobs Program, which is the Opportunities Industrialization Center of Washington or OIC, Columbia Basin College, and Benton Franklin Workforce System. And they'll discuss their roles, and then they're going to talk about their collaboration and really provide some insights into what this partnership has been able to offer the farmworkers that they serve.

So before we get going – and I think some of you maybe already filled this out, but let's just get a sense of how familiar everyone is with career pathways. So just take a minute here quickly, if you have not. Let us know whether you're familiar, somewhat familiar, or really don't know career pathways at all, and that is totally fine if you don't. We wanted just to get a sense of who is all with us today, and it looks like we've got a bunch of people really in the middle around somewhat familiar.

Hopefully, you've kind of heard a little bit about career pathways, but wanting to learn a little bit more today. So that's great. Majority of folks in that somewhat familiar. We have quite a few in the very familiar. So that's terrific as well. Next slide. So – but thank you for taking the time to answer that question. It's good to see that we have kind of folks in a range of sort of understanding career pathways. Hopefully, after today's session you'll have a bit more of an understanding of what career pathways are, how they can be implemented.

So let's just discuss now what we mean by sort of career pathways and why we at the federal level really believe that career pathways system building is a helpful framework for WIOA implementation.

So wanted to give you a little history here. The Department of Labor, along with the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, as I mentioned, we've been working on promoting career pathways system building for a long time. Since probably about 2010 we've been starting to have these conversations. At that time there was no common definition for career pathways. So we started to think about how could we structure and build an understanding around all the key elements that are essential to developing a career pathway system.

Well, so we worked on that for a while, and then when the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 or WIOA was passed, it included this definition here of career pathways. And that's our shared understanding of what this concept is all about was really codified in this new law.

So that was very exciting for all of us. This provided all of us at the federal level and across the government an opportunity to begin aligning our work and our understanding of the critical components that make up career pathways and, similarly, for states and locals on the ground. I won't read through every piece of this, but you can see the career pathways definition is A-G. It's a combination of rigorous and high quality education and training, and it has some components that you would expect to see like career pathways should align with the skills needs of the industry.

It will prepare individuals to be successful in secondary and postsecondary education options. That includes apprenticeships. Hopefully, folks know that we've got a great focus on apprenticeship these days. And it organizes education and training and other services to meet particular needs of individuals in a manner that accelerates the education and career advancement of individuals. We'll hear a little bit today about how our local program that we're highlighting was able to accelerate.

What this definition – as you look at it, hopefully you'll notice things like what it says under C, "includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals." So counseling is incorporated. It provides supportive services. It helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster. So there's quite a bit there in the definition within the law, and what WIOA did was really allow all of us to align around a common definition.

And we can start sort of from this place of understanding and not have to recreate the wheel every time we needed to solve a specific economic or labor force problem or to really meet specific needs of our customers. So the federal government's very excited about this, that inclusion of career pathways in the law. And we really recommend to all of you in the field that are looking to do this work to take a look at this definition closely and think about your system building and your programs and really ensure that you are addressing all of these key components of career pathways.

So many of us have probably heard the term career pathways thrown out there in lots of different ways, and it's important to recognize, when we're talking about career pathways, we're talking not only about career pathway programming but we're also talking about systems, so systems that allow for the design of a career pathway program. And then the career pathway program should address all of the components that you just saw articulated in the definition in WIOA. So we have career pathways systems, and we have career pathways program. You cannot build successful program without having all of these key elements in place at the systems level. So what you're looking at right now is sort of a systems level framework.

Back in 2010 and 2011, as I was talking about, before we had the definition in the law, the Departments of Education and Labor and Health and Human Services, we agreed upon these six key elements of career pathways. You can see these here. They include building cross-agency partnerships, identifying industry sectors and engaging employers, designing education and training or this is kind of where the career pathway programming sort of fits in, identifying funding needs and sources, aligning policies and programs, and then measuring your systems change and performance.

So all of these different pieces are really necessary and part of the system building that's required to ultimately design that education training program or your career pathways program. So you can imagine if cross-agency partnerships like the ones we'll hear about today do not exist or partnerships with employers do not exist, it's really unlikely that your career pathways can be built and sustained over time; right?

Often there's a need to identify many different types of funding sources, and then you figure out how those can be aligned and leveraged in order to build programming. So if there are particular policy barriers, again, to coordinating or collaborating across different programs or partnerships, those barriers really need to be eliminated in order to, again, build and sustain career pathway programming.

And finally, it's critical to measure performance and track activities in order to know whether all of that work that you're doing to pull your resources together and serve your customers is actually making a difference. So having the right measurement tools and data systems in place is critical not only to report to your funders but also, and probably more importantly, is to measure success and make process improvements over time.

So all of these key elements really help a state or a local area ensure that all the parts and pieces are in place that will allow you to develop thoughtful and strategic programming that can then best serve your customers. So again, in order to have a strong career pathway system with all the right partners and resources and tools, in order to develop and build programs that get results and can be sustained over time. Next slide.

So now, as you could probably imagine, I could do six webinars on each of our six key elements, but I wat to quickly get through my part of the presentation so you can hear from our experts today who are going to really walk us through their efforts with these six key elements as the framing for their presentation. So we're very excited about that.

But so to kind of get you to the good stuff, we're happy to share with all of you our career pathways toolkit. It's an enhanced guide and workbook for system development that provides a very thorough description, and it gives you lots and lots of examples of what is needed within each of those six key elements of career pathways. This is an updated toolkit. We've done an earlier version. This one has references from WIOA. It also provides lots of examples and worksheets and resources that you can work through with your partners together, not really in any specific order, but you can do it over time as it makes sense to you and to help you put in place the necessary pieces for a career pathway system. You can go to the next slide.

So here's a screenshot of all the toolkit modules that can be downloaded and saved to work from. Again, as I just mentioned, you do not have to go through these in any chronological order. So you can take a look at the different elements and modules and select the one or the few or all of them that you and your partners are interested in working through. So there's a lot of resources there.

So where can I find this awesome resource, you might be asking. Here you go. You – all of the modules are online at careerpathways.workforcegps.org. So you'll find this toolkit and lots of other resources here. So I know I ran through this very quickly but we've done a few webinars on career pathways already and you are welcome to go and listen to those archived recordings at WorkforceGPS. Search for career pathways. You'll find a lot of really good information.

So without further ado, we have a great presentation for you guys today, and I want to turn it over to our presenters. So we are going to hear from Leonor Rico Barker who's the business services manager, OIC of Washington. We'll hear from Michelle Mann, the director of Worker Retraining Program in Columbia Basin College. We're also going to hear from Janese Thatcher who's the dean for career and technical education at Columbia Basin College, and also Leticia Torres from the adult, dislocated worker and youth programs manager at the WorkSource Columbia Basin.

So with that I will turn it over to Leonor.

LEONOR RICO BARKER: Hello. This is Leonor with OIC of Washington. We are the National Farmworker Jobs Program – sorry. Suddenly got tongue tied – the National Farmworker Jobs Program provider of career services and training for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents in the state of Washington. We serve over 700 MSFWs and their dependents annually throughout the state of Washington, and we're located in all the highest ag producing areas of the state. We have offices that are collocated with the American Job Service Centers. Four of our offices are collocated, which means that we actually reside within the centers, and our other offices are not collocated. However, we have very strong partnerships with the job service centers in those areas.

We are tasked with assisting migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents with developing careers, and we do this by helping them first to assess their existing skills and identifying how those transfer to their career interest. We help them to develop career plans by providing them career counseling and then providing them work supports and helping them work through those plans to facilitate access to training and work-based learning opportunities. And each individual participant receives services that are tailored to their particular needs and interests.

MICHELLE MANN: Good morning. This is Michelle Mann from Columbia Basin College. We are an institution in an area of southeastern Washington State. Our population for our workforce area is almost 300,000. We serve almost 7500 students a year. Within that we have 33 two-year degrees, eight four-year degrees, 40 one-year certificates, and 24 short-term certificates. We have substantial engagement from our employers in our community.

Each of the programs I just mentioned, whether they're short-term or long-term or degree programs, all have advisory committees that include the employers in our local area. So that allows us to really stay on top of what's happening in the workforce, what the skills needs are to make sure that our programs are relevant.

Our employers have been very active in telling us that they need various skill levels for their skills needs. So it's not just the degreed students that they're looking for. Short-term training is very relevant to them. And then we have existing partnerships with our WIOA contractors in our area that provide training that leads to year-round employment, and that also helps us in this process.

LETICIA TORRES: Hi. My name is Leticia Torres, and I am with WorkSource Columbia Basin. Our local WorkSource houses many of our valued partners who work together to identify and fulfill employer and jobseeker needs. Some of our partners include, but are not limited to, Columbia Basin College, Opportunities Industrialization Center, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Career Path Services, and Employment Security Department.

Just to give you a little bit of background on WorkSource, as mentioned a little bit ago, we include partners from all four WIOA titles, and on average we provide over 2,000 staff-assisted services to jobseekers each month.

And also, Washington State monitors have recognized us as a statewide leader in case-noting practices. We've adopted a customer-centered approach to service delivery. Our center has recently embarked on a mission to become a better WorkSource via human-centered design methods to ensure that customers are a priority and that we provide them with what they need. We're always looking for ways to better serve our customers through braiding services via co-enrollments to increase the chance of success.

And we're building awareness through counseling, career exploration, labor market information, and by providing on-the-job training work experiences, and training opportunities. Financially, we can also assist with support services and tuition assistance, and of course we're always looking to collaborate with our partners to develop new opportunities and to assist with recruitment efforts as well.

MS. BARKER: This is Leonor, and I'm going to start out by talking about how we began engaging across our agency partnerships and the motivation kind of behind the forming or expanding of the partnership that already existed. We, as I mentioned, serve migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and those farmworkers have a lot of really great skills that I think a lot of times are unrecognized even by the workers sometimes themselves as a skill and sometimes by employers.

And so the areas that we serve are very highly ag concentrated, and so a lot of the skills that workers have even working in the fields are transferrable to other aspects of the industry. And so through this partnership we were looking at how we could assist them in identifying those skills and building upon them and then helping them to use what they knew to begin to move into careers and not just a job for right now.

As I mentioned, we had an existing partnership with Columbia Basin College in the past. We have referred our program participants to GED completion courses or English as a second language courses and enrolled students in other short-term credentials, but there had never been something that was developed specifically for our participants.

And it was really important for us to partner with someone who really understood the challenges that our participants sometimes face, especially in regards to limited English proficiency and occasionally low basic education skills. We were really fortunate that CBC understood that and shared our vision and that they were able to help us to utilize their connection to the community to build that partnership and extend it further with employers.

Our other really important partner was WorkSource Columbia Basin, and they helped us to engage other system partners such as Career Path Services who manages the adult, dislocated, and youth program to assist us with recruitment for the program and also to market the basic industrial maintenance program that we eventually developed. They also helped us to maintain our focus on serving both the needs of customers and employers.

Our first step was to identify the industry, and I've spoken a little bit about this as far as identifying the skills that our participants already have and then what was necessary out in the community. Some of the information that we started out with was kind of anecdotal. We knew over the years of working with our local employers and our participants that there was a need for maintenance workers.

We were able to confirm that information by working with employers and accessing labor market information. To make sure that we were looking at the correct courses, we contacted Columbia Basin College and asked them to help us determine what would be the best course of action.

I am so sorry. I am suddenly totally nervous, and hopefully, after I say that I'll be able to do what I'm supposed to be doing here.

MS. HASTINGS: You're doing great. We're learning a lot, and good questions are coming in. So keep it going.

JANESE THATCHER: So this is Janese Thatcher. I'd like to pick up there in talking about CBC or Columbia Basin College. One thing that we did was we contacted the maintenance managers, not the HR departments, and that was very important for us. The maintenance managers, they have the practical knowledge of the work, and they knew what the best course components were.

So we had them – we invited quite a few of the employers, the maintenance managers from the employers to come in and we met with them and we said, we know that you need employees. So what are the most important skills for those employees? And we got a list from them, and remarkably, they were very similar. They wanted them to have some knowledge of basic electricity.

In some instances, some wanted some basic HVAC, and they needed to have some basic refrigeration ideas. They wanted some basic welding and some basic maintenance practices. So we put that list together from them, and we saw that we already had a basic industrial maintenance short-term certificate that was in our catalog but really hadn't been used for quite a while.

So that's how we started. So we really did work through that six key elements of the career pathways, and we already had that – the cross-agency partnership and then we went to identify the industry sector and engage the employers. That was our meeting and then we took that information and then we were down at the next step, which is we designed the education and the training programs for them.

And of course we used the CBC brand recognition to engage employers in that conversation. The idea – well, the employers believe that Columbia Basin College is the place for training. If somebody wants to upgrade their skills, where do they go? Well, in the area around here feel that Columbia Basin College is the place to get the training for those skills, and so we stepped up to it on that. We've stepped up to that idea, and we believe that we are.

So the existing college level basic industrial maintenance – we call it BIM. We have acronyms for everything – it was modified to include the most relevant skills and offered as a short-term non-credit certificate. The first time we offered it non-credit, and what it consisted of was blueprints and drawings, basic electricity, fundamentals of maintenance, and basic welding and it only required a basic skills assessment for program entry.

Now, that's very important because a lot of people feel that they shy away from Columbia Basin College because they think that they need to pass a assessment for – that assesses their math and assesses their English. Well, if they want to go into a degree program, yes. They do. But if they want to go into one of the workforce programs that we have, we do not make them do that because, number one, we know that many of our students would not pass that.

And as many colleges have, if you don't score high enough on your assessments when you apply, then you have to go through classes that get you ready so that you're at college level. So we wanted to take the entire fear about taking those assessments out of the way so that students could just say, hey, I need the – I want to get out of the fields. I'm tired of a seasonal employment. I want a steady full-time job that I can feed my family. So we knew that's what they wanted, and so we were really able to make their entry into the basic industrial maintenance program very easy and make it very safe and very easy.

So one thing about our instructors is our instructors were able to see way beyond the barriers of these students and recognize the capability of each one. One thing that I learned not that long ago, because I had – previously, I'd been in Minnesota, and so I didn't – I wasn't around the student population that had – the high Hispanic student population. But one thing that I learned was that many of the students in Mexico only go to the sixth grade. Public education goes to the sixth grade, and after that, then their family has to have the money in order to pay for them to go to school.

And so that was a big revelation to me. I'm like, I didn't know that because I always wondered why the – many of Hispanic population didn't have the scores on the assessment test. And I realized it wasn't that they – they're not smart. It's just that they haven't had the opportunity to get beyond the sixth grade. So they had a lot of wonderful skills in where they were working and what we did is we turned those skills into more skills and we actually eventually are offering this now for college credit. So they can actually take this program from now on as college credit and feel good about having college credits that they can apply in the future to other programs.

MS. BARKER: This is Leonor, and I'm going to talk about how we leverage some existing resources to move participants into the program and then through the services – and through the services. We – one of the things that we did in collaboration with WorkSource was to market the basic industrial maintenance short-term certificate course at the unemployment insurance orientation. So in Washington State at that time when individuals opened an unemployment insurance claim, some of them were required to attend an orientation at the WorkSource. And so we went into these orientations and provided information on the – not only on the NFJP here, the National Farmworker Jobs Program, but on this course specifically.

We also tried a few different things to – because initial response was a little bit low. So we began posting information about the course on Craigslist, and we also utilized our Facebook page to disseminate information about the course and our program. Another thing that we did is we went back to the employers that we had previously surveyed when we were preparing to put the course together, and this time we spoke to the HR personnel who we redoing the seasonal layoffs and encouraged them to refer seasonal workers that they felt had the skills to transition into these positions for full-time year-round employment to our program.

In order to pay for the tuition, we didn't go after any new funding. We used the funding that we already had, the funding that existed within our partner programs and our own. And this was what we used to pay the tuition and then also for the books and tools and safety equipment that was required for the training. When we contracted this training with Columbia Basin College, the cost per student was all inclusive, and this was really important to us because there are things within this that could have become really expensive.

For example, the welding safety equipment would have been hundreds of dollars for the students to purchase on their own or for us to purchase. So the college actually provided all the welding safety equipment. The tools that were used for the class came in kits. All of the students had exactly the same toolkit with the same tools, and all successful completers of the course were able to keep their toolkits so they could have starter toolkits because these are often required for maintenance positions.

MS. MANN: This is Michelle with CBC again. One of the things that we talked about was the first course being for non-credit, and the reason we did that was because the timing of the year when the farmworkers are off is in the winter months. We started planning for this late summer.

So we decided to go forth with a class cohort, which we depended on both the NFJP and WorkSource to fill the class for us, and then we just wrote a contract and we charged a cost per head for each of the students, depending on which organization referred them and where they came from. So that was our way to get this – to see if it would work. It was a one-quarter course.

So it was funded by WIOA primarily. It could have been funded by TANF. That's one of the questions that's come in. TANF in our state is a little bit problematic in terms of – it's – we're called a work first state. So they prefer that they go to work rather than go to training. So it's been problematic getting TANF recipients into some of the programs, but now that they're offered for credit, we've had more luck with that. Once the course was offered for credit, we were able to put it on the ETPL list so that WIOA would have that qualification met for their program.

So once the initial course was over, we did go through the process and created the course for credit as the short-term certificate. Again, it's one-quarter long. We do have a flexible registration process. So the registration process for these short-term trainings does not require that the student go through the regular college assessment ACCUPLACER and some of the different names that you have out there in your colleges for the various assessments.

So the assessment we're using is COCIS, which I think everybody is really familiar with, and that allows us to at least get a baseline of where students are so we know what they need when they enter the course. Again, it's a more flexible registration process. They don't go through all the gyrations of regular students who are there for two- and four-year degreed programs.

The basic skills assessments can be conducted at WorkSource, through OIC, or at CBC. So it depends on where the student enters the process, and once the courses went for credit, then it's open enrollment for all students. And it's not just farmworker students that we see coming through the program. It can be low income people. It can be people that are laid off from their seasonal work that are looking to get into year-round employment, and again, it's not just farmworkers. It's anyone with low basic skills that needs to get a start into an industry and get an industry credential.

MS. THATCHER: Hi. This is Janese. I'd like to talk a little bit about the slide communication kept us nimble, measuring the system change and performance. So based on our employer feedback, we emphasized certain subject areas to accommodate their production. For example, in one of the courses was basic – fundamentals of maintenance. So in that fundamentals of maintenance we really stressed pneumatics, and the reason is that we have a lot of food industry employers and instead of using hydraulics, because of the food contamination with the hydraulic oil, they use pneumatics. So we were really able to stress the pneumatics in that fundamentals of maintenance to accommodate the employers' needs.

Communication really did keep us nimble. We constantly evaluated our work throughout the whole process. We kept in communication with the students and the instructors, and that was really an important piece. All the students were provided ongoing support and follow-up services, and I have to say we had some students with some real challenges. Some of them had been in jail. Some of them had had a family situations or were homeless. So we had quite a complex group of students that we worked with.

And I believe we had 14 students coming into that first program, and two of the students actually were offered jobs. They had filled out applications at some places and were offered jobs, and they said the reason that they were offered jobs is because they told those employers that they were in this class and they were learning these skills. So in one case the employer let the student continue in the class while they put them on a schedule that they could work after the course.

So the basic industrial maintenance, we're on the quarter system here, and the BIM class is only 11 weeks. So we really did a lot with those students in the 11 weeks and – but they did great. We had a little graduation ceremony at the end, and you know what? Everybody had tears in their eyes because for some of those students, they had never achieved college credits, and they had never felt like they had learned or anyone really cared about them and wanted to see them succeed as much.

So we were very happy about how it all turned out, and in fact, after our experience with that first class, we did make some changes. We did make it so that any students in the subsequent basic industrial maintenance courses, they did get college credit. The course numbers for the basic industrial maintenance and the other workforce short-term certificates we have are different numbers than we have for our degree programs.

Part of the college – when I first went to the curriculum committee, part of the college was worried that how can they take these classes and get college credit if they never went through the assessments – the initial assessment, which is ACCUPLACER and ALEKS for us here? And so the way that I took care of that is that I – all of the course numbers did not transfer into a degree program, but we – what we are doing is we're using this basic industrial maintenance class as the stepping stone.

It's like the welcome mat. It's like, OK, you've gotten this far, OK, now, let's take a look and see – if you want to move up into another area, let's see about getting you into a manufacturing technology program that we have because you already have the blueprints and drawings. So we can say, if they did the blueprints and drawings class in the basic industrial maintenance certificate, they don't have to repeat the blueprints and drawings class in the manufacturing technology degree program.

The other change that we did is that we realized from talking with the employers that they had a lot of different needs. Some are food producers. Some are manufacturers. So what we did is we put together a whole list of their needs, and we created a new short-term certificate called an industrial technology certificate.

What that has is it allows the students to choose between 13 up to 19 credits worth of 10 different classes, and those include forklift, OSHA, basic electricity, basic electronics, basic HVAC, the blueprints and drawings, basic welding, the hydraulics and pneumatics, basic industrial maintenance. So we put all of those courses that industry said that they need people with those skills, we kind of put it into this big bucket called the industrial technology bucket.

And we created a short-term certificate that can be completed in one quarter and said, OK, if you're interested in working for a manufacturer – a food manufacturer, then pick the courses out of this bucket. We can put together the basic skills that you'll need to document to the employer that you have these skills. And it's very important to the employers that these students have documentable skills because the attrition rate can be very high if they're just hiring people without going through any of this training and not having any of these skills.

So we now have an industrial technology certificate made up of including what the basic industrial maintenance had but also other things that are needed by the employers in this area.

MS. BARKER: This is Leonor. I'd like to answer one of the questions that was asked about how we recruited our MSFW customers. And so, as I mentioned earlier, we did some of the recruitment through the UI orientations and we did some recruitment online and we did recruitment out in the community and we also did what I would consider our traditional recruitment where we went out to the areas where we know farmworkers are, to farmworker housing areas. We contacted our local support service providers, other partner agencies that provide housing assistance and utility assistance. We also contacted growers that we recognized as growers who – this is agricultural growers who have a history of making an investment in their workers and promoting their growth.

And so those are the ways that we recruited our MSFWs for this program. And our partners referred workers because as they came into the WorkSource, they didn't always make the first connection with the NFJP program. So sometimes they spoke to an adult program representative or a youth program representative, and because they are cross-trained on our basics for eligibility, they were able to refer farmworkers over to us so they could access those services.

MS. TORRES: And this is Leticia with the adult, dislocated worker, and youth program. So during this time as well we looked for any opportunity to try and qualify for either the adult or dislocated worker program so that we could assist with the living expenses such as rent or gas assistance and that sort of support. For some of them they were receiving unemployment insurance benefits, but for those that were not, it can pose some difficulties as far as your living expenses are concerned. So we were able to support in that manner as well.

MS. MANN: I see a couple of questions regarding employer input. We did not use any formal survey instruments. We have a more informal process here, and basically, we invited employers that – from the relevant industries into a room, gave them some Starbucks coffee, told them what we had in mind, and then listened to them in terms of what specific skills needs they had. That's usually done by the dean, by Janese or the associate deans here.

Sometimes instructors are involved, but generally, the time of the time day those meetings happen oftentimes they're in the classrooms. So the deans just have direct interaction with the employers and listen to what they need. We can make suggestions in terms of what we have, and then Janese knows what needs to be tweaked so that what we – if what we have isn't meeting the need, then she can ask direct questions about what needs to be tweaked so we can provide that specific need.

MS. THATCHER: This is Janese. One thing I did want to tell you about the success of that first group was that everyone got jobs. I mentioned that there were 14 students. Two were offered jobs before they even finished the class, and then the other 12, they all were employed very soon after. And their pay went from $16 an hour up to $36.01 an hour. So we considered it to be very, very successful.

MS. MANN: We do have a number of limited English skilled students of course, and we didn't have any trouble in the first class that I recall. Janese is shaking her head no. So we didn't have any in the first class. Now that the courses are offered for credit, we are using I-BEST, and so that's oftentimes how we can do that. We also on campus, of course, have regular ESL classes, and we often recruit right out of those classes for these short-term certificates now because we know that that's a good fit for some of these folks. So we go in toward the end of their ESL instruction and give them information about the classes so they know what's available to them, should they want to take that next step.

MS. BARKER: This is Leonor. I wanted to add a little bit to that. We had students who on their own began to form study groups. Before they started the class, we had talked about learning styles, different things that they could do to take notes. We provided them with highlighters and encouraged them to use different strategies for learning, and we feel that this was very beneficial.

They began one or two studying together and ended up forming a couple of different study groups. There was a lot of relationship building that happened that was really I think beneficial for the students because they all met at orientation.

We held an orientation for them prior to starting the course. Some of them exchanged phone numbers. They shared rides. They, as I said, studied together, and they supported each other throughout the process. So I wanted to share that that is something that happened that we did as part of the enrollment in the course process.

MS. THATCHER: So I see there's a question about what happens to the students that are not offered positions. All of our students so far have been offered positions. The employers have hired all of them. The difference I think between our students that go through the program and other folks that are applying for positions is, once they have this college transcript that says they have this certificate, it provides the employers with documentable skills.

Because the employers knew about the courses and what was in there, they understand when one of these students comes to them and says, I have this basic industrial maintenance certificate. That has meaning to the employers and they know and they understand. So I think that really makes a difference because this – so far all of our classes have had 100 percent placement.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. This is Sara Hastings again from the Department of Labor. You guys are doing an awesome job. There have been a bunch of questions come in – coming in that I think you have been able to answer. We're kind of looking back to see if there were any questions that maybe you haven't yet addressed in your presentation or as you were starting to answer some of these questions, but let's just kind of go back. I'm going to ask you all if you – if you need to continue to test NFJP applicants in reading and math. Maybe you addressed that slightly a little bit, but if you could take that question again, if you haven't yet done so.

MS. BARKER: This is Leonor. We do continue to assess them because it's really important that they have the fluency to be comfortable and to be successful in the class. What Janese was speaking about is that they were not required to do the college level entrance exams. We use – (inaudible) – in order to assess that, and so we do that. The students received passing – they did pass-fail grades for the course the first time through, but they receive actual grades now.

So yes, it is necessary to continue to assess. We had initially set a target of ninth grade reading and math level for the students who would be enrolled into the class. We actually had students who were below that, and we provided that additional support and the study skills. And again, many of them I think were surprised by their own capacity to learn. It was a very collaborative learning environment. There was a lot of hands on. There was a lot of work done on boards. So it was – the curriculum was adapted to assist those adult learners.

MS. THATCHER: Yes. The instructors understood that the students that were in the class had varying degrees of abilities, and the instructors really did a great job with doing basic. If it said basic welding, it really was basic welding. If it said basic electricity, then it really was. In fact, I taught part of the basic electricity, and I started out with a real – something that was – it was cute. It was like a comic, but it's something that they would all remember because it emphasized the difference between volts, amps, resistance, and watt. And so we didn't assume that they really had any previous training, but they all caught on very quickly. And, as Leonor mentioned, the – some of the students who did have more knowledge of some of the systems, they would work in study groups, and they would help the others understand.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. And it sounds like the big take away with all of that is that you guys offered a lot of flexibility in really trying to meet your participants and students where they were at, which is critical really to a career pathways design.

And I believe you answered this question, but let's just repeat the answer for this. "How long is the BIM course, or how many hours?"

MS. THATCHER: OK. The BIM course goes for one quarter, and it has a varying number of credits. I did mention that in the new certificate, the industrial technology certificate where we make this bucket of classes and let the students pick, that they could choose from 13 to 19 credits. Well, 19 is kind of the magical number because you can make short-term certificate in Washington up to 19 credits, and it doesn't have to go through any big approval process. It can just be a certificate.

Once you get over 19 then, you have to complete a program approval request, and it really does take a long time, maybe a couple months to get that approved because then you have to – they send it out to the other colleges for them to comment on that program. In order for us to really be proactive and give the employers what they need, we really needed the ability to put things together very quickly and provide the training. So that's why our short-term certificates that we've developed as a result of this are no more than 19 credits. And our quarters are about 11 weeks.

MS. HASTINGS: Thank you. Great. The next question is around cost per. "So the cost per student for an organizational grant can be used to pay for tuition into another program?" I don't know if you could speak to that question, anybody.

MS. MANN: I guess we don't really understand the question. I don't know what an organizational grant is. The WIOA grants paid the tuition. I mean, the use of grants to pay tuition at CBC, if that helps.

MS. HASTINGS: Yes. That's helpful. Hopefully, it's helpful to the person who asked the question. If that didn't quite answer it, feel free to expound upon your question.

The next question, I think you addressed it to some degree, but I want to check to see if you have any more to say around how you worked with employers. "So what roles did the employers play specifically? Who at CBC" – maybe the role, not the person – "or at other agencies interface directly with employers, and how did you keep them engaged, if at all?" So I know you touched on this a little bit, but if you could say anything more about your connections with employers, that would be helpful.

MS. BARKER: This is Leonor. So I'm going to start first, and then I'm going to hand it off to Janese. So part of what I did in relation to employers was contact employers that I had an existing relationship with, so employers that we had placed people, assisted with on-the-job training contracts for people in the past, or provided services through one of our other programs through a safety training program that we provide, and talk to them about what our plans were and talked about some different options and asked them whether they would be interested in hiring individuals who completed this type of course. So that was part of the conversation that took place.

I also contacted maintenance leads or managers at different facilities over the phone and did kind of an impromptu survey. That's where the brand recognition of Columbia Basin College came in really useful. I would say who I was and that I was working in partnership with the college and that we were conducting a survey to improve training programs for workers in their industry. So that's how initially I engaged with employers. Janese did so on a different level, and I'll let her talk about that.

MS. THATCHER: So as Leonor mentioned, one of the best things that she did is to contact the maintenance managers and not the HR because the maintenance managers really have the knowledge and understanding of the skills. But we actually put a list together of employers that were contacting Leonor at OIC and also over at WorkSource, and I have to say that it's – on that – back to that six key elements of career pathways, on that – those steps, that top one, build cross-agency partnerships, that is so important.

If it wasn't for our great relations with OIC and with WorkSource, we wouldn't have been this successful because it really takes their connections and their networking with their employers and – to get that information, to come to us and say, hey, we have employers looking for this and this and this. What can you do to train them? So it really takes us collaborating and sitting down together and say, OK. This basic industrial maintenance, this looks like this would work the best for this. And so we've also done this – (inaudible) – some other programs and short-term certificates that we have such as our truck driving program, our CDL program.

So that's basically what – how we worked with the employers to get the employers' input, and we continue to work with the employers because we follow up with the employers on how the students are doing. So we do get feedback. I usually send e-mails out. I usually talk to many of the employers either by e-mail or see them at some other event, and I ask, how is it going? How are the students doing? We even had some of the employers come to the program and interview them and – right there from class. So it was a tremendously successful thing that we did with this, and we're very excited to continue and to use it with some other short-term certificates.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. And just kind of a follow up, a similar question but really focused on working with limited – folks with limited English skills. "How have you worked with the school and employers for those participants? Did that look any different? Were there any specific strategies or ways in which you connected or worked with the school or employers that was different, particularly for this population?"

MS. BARKER: I think that what we did with the students who were interested, who maybe weren't quite at the level, was we assisted them in connecting with the English as a second language courses. The nice thing about this program is that it's ongoing, and there are different components that people can participate in at different times of the year, depending on their employment.

In the state of Washington winter tends to be the time when most people can participate. However, there are different times of year where there is a slowdown in between crops, and depending on the crops that people work in, there are other opportunities for them to participate in components of the class in order – and also to connect with ESL.

There are a few employers who have bilingual staff already in place and are more open to workers with limited English proficiency, and so we've been able to work with some of those workers and connect them to those employers. However, I think we're far from completely resolving that, or I think we – that's one of the areas where we are continuing to build and to change, and I think that's where I-BEST is going to be instrumental in helping us connect more limited English proficient workers with employers.

MS. THATCHER: This is Janese. I'd like to – there's a question about the approximate grade level and I think what we did is we did the COCIS test and Leonor mentioned that. The COCIS test, we kind of had the students – we hoped that they were at the ninth grade level. So that's what we were hoping for. A few were a little bit less than that, but that's what we used. We basically used the COCIS.

Some students I think maybe had Work Keys tested. So we made sure that they were at a certain level because we wanted them to be successful. We wanted them to come in, have a great college experience. We wanted them to get the skills that they needed for a good job, and we wanted to see them become employed. So we were all working on their success. If they did not have the language skills, then we did have them go through the English language acquisition classes and through some of our transitional studies programs at the college.

I see there's another question about the students balancing the desire for earning a diploma with the need to go to work. In the professional technical or the career and technical area, employers are so much more focused on skills and not so much on a degree. They do not pay a student any more money per hour for having a degree in the work – in the career and technical areas here.

If the students do have a degree, like an associate of applied science degree, well, that's great, but they don't get any more money per hour. So we really focused on getting the skills to get these students a job. And as I mentioned, the hourly rate went from $16 an hour all the way up to $36. So for going to training for 11 weeks and being able to get a $36 an hour job is quite an amazing thing.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. The next question, "Where does the funding come from to support your pathways?" And I know you talked about the use of WIOA funding. Are there other funding sources?

MS. THATCHER: Well, other – we just charge tuition. So some students are paying tuition on their own, and certainly, anything – any other organizations that might potentially fund like labor and industries or Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, that kind of thing. But other than that, I'm not aware.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. "Are you replicating this with any other program fields based on the need in your areas or with other colleges?"

MS. THATCHER: Yes. We've replicated this with quite a few other certificates. We've established other certificates from – based on our success with this and with the need in the area, we've established a certified production technician certificate, a logistics technician certificate, and we've also done truck driving. We established truck driving, and all the production technician, the logistics technician, and the truck driving are all approved for I-BEST. So the truck driving, the CDL program that we had, when we had the – it was approved for I-BEST and we had the additional instructor in there.

That was wonderful because that instructor put together study guides and vocabulary that really helped the students whose – who hadn't – whose primary language was not English. And we had – we had students who were Spanish speakers. We also had students who were Russian speakers, and we had students in there who were Iraqi, Arabic speakers. So having it I-BEST really, really did a – it was a great successful thing to have that truck driving class as I-BEST because it really helped the students with their language.

MS. BARKER: This is Leonor, and I'd like to add that the partnership in extending those services and trainings out to workers in the community continues. So as a matter of fact, tomorrow we will have an event here at WorkSource Columbia Basin, and the college will be here providing information on all of the short-term certificate courses that they have available.

We will have some employers who are ready to hire completers of those certificate programs, many before they even complete and certainly upon completion. And then we will have all the WIOA partner programs on site as well to provide information and schedule appointments for jobseekers to be enrolled into the programs, to receive screening and then begin the process to enroll into the program so that we can get them started on these career pathways. And so I expect that this is going to continue and we will see even more short-term certificates available.

MS. HASTINGS: Awesome. Great. The next question, "How did this program establish instructor buy-in?" If you could talk about whether you needed to kind of do any training or professional development or conversations with your instructors around this project.

MS. THATCHER: Well, instructor buy in was really quite easy. We used instructors that were already in our regular teaching the regular degree programs. I went to them and said we're doing this short-term certificate. This is going to be for a group of students that are coming in. They have various abilities, and can you help by running this basic welding class, for instance, for me? And they're like, oh, sure, yeah, no problem.

And then the only question was, how many are there, because they have additional personal protective equipment that they needed to make sure that the students had. So same thing with the basic electricity class. I asked the automotive instructor. I said, hey, can you take this class? It's for an hour two mornings a week, and can you fill in? Can you take that? Sure. I'd love to.

So we already had the instructors there, and there wasn't much buy-in. That was just absolute agreement because they knew that these students were unemployed and they were looking for a job to make their lives better.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. The next question, "How many classes did you have or did you offer?"

MS. THATCHER: Well, the first group there were four courses in there, and they were listed on the one slide. It was basic electricity, basic welding, blueprints and drawings, and fundamentals of maintenance.

So there were four courses. They totaled up to I think about 18 credits, and of course some of the classes were lecture. So our lecture is 11 hours per credit. Our lab credit is 22 hours. So the students – I think all together it was over – it was well over 100 hours of actual in the classroom time.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. The next question, "Do the students have a clear understanding of the next career after this one? Is there an actual physical career pathway map?"

MS. THATCHER: Well, I'll tell you what we did is we made sure that the students toured all the programs and saw what the opportunities for them were. There isn't an actual career pathway set up – a map set up for the basic industrial maintenance, but we're working on one to go into the manufacturing technology program.

MS. BARKER: This is Leonor. What we did as far as a career pathway, prior to enrollment in the class we did career exploration. We looked at O\*Net. We looked at the related industries, the related job titles, what the pay, what the requirements were, and we shared that with the students, and then we continued to have those conversations as they moved through the class.

And some of them gravitated more towards an interest in welding or into electricity, and from there there was conversations about apprenticeship, and we actually had two that applied for apprenticeship programs but decided to stay with the employment that they'd found. So in that respect there was that type of work related to a career pathway, not necessarily just staying in the basic industrial maintenance but having this basic industrial maintenance course be the first step on a career pathway that they could build.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. And the next question, the longer one and, Laura, you can probably edit a little bit, around the six key elements. We have career pathway systems need to be in place for success and sustainability, but what about that state level?

Do you guys have any experience with sort of working with the state and ensuring that you're getting sort of the high level systems in place? I think it may be different in Washington State since there is such a strong career pathways infrastructure and system in place, but can you talk about sort of your local level work as it relates to kind of the state level activities around career pathways?

MS. MANN: The four of us are smiling because the state really didn't play a role in this process. We didn't really need them to, and we didn't need to let it slow us down.

And I noticed part of the question talked about backtracking, and that makes me smile bigger because sometimes we're all backtracking to help the state understand what it is we're doing and how we're doing it and what gets in our way from our perspective in terms of their regulations. But there was nothing that was happening at the state level that stopped us from going forward with this. So we just plowed through and went for it.

MS. HASTINGS: And I don't know if you can speak a little bit because when you talk about I-BEST, that is a Washington State –

MS. MANN: That – yeah. And that's a good point. Again, the first course we offered for non-credit. So we were able to get it moving and see what worked and what didn't work and whether we wanted to pursue going forward. Once we knew we were going to go forward with this, then we did have to go through that process of getting it recognized and approved by I-BEST. That's correct.

MS. THATCHER: This is Janese. Yeah. I lived and taught in Minnesota for 38 years. So I think the first thing to do as far as the catching up with the state is just to see how they have their certificates divided up, and that was the basic thing here when I came to Washington. I'm like, OK, how many credits can we have for a short-term certificate? Then it's like, OK, 19 maximum.

So then I knew what I could do to put things together rather quickly. Since we did this for the first time and since we had this certificate on the books for a while but it had been not utilized for a long time, after we talked with the employers and understood some of the other things that they needed like basic HVAC and refrigeration, I've been now busy getting those courses together and through the curriculum committee so that we can respond really quickly to our employers' needs in the future.

And that's how I established that industrial technology short-term certificate. I put all of the courses and all of the things that we heard that the industry needed together so that we could be nimble and we could respond quickly and put some training together.

So I think I would just go check with Minnesota because I don't remember what it was, but see how they have their certificates and their diplomas set up. And then put something together based on your advisory committee or your industry employers, and don't exceed those – the credits for that short-term certificate. That's what I would recommend to get started.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Thank you. That is helpful. The next question – we'll just take a couple more questions before we close this out and talk about some next steps here. "Were there any soft skills addressed in the BIM program? Anything like interviewing critical thinking, problem solving skills?"

MS. BARKER: This is Leonor. So all of our participants in the program participating in job readiness training where we did cover soft skills both in the classroom and in the work – at the work site. And then we continued to meet with them throughout the course to encourage positive behaviors. Being in a classroom setting, again, was a bit different, and so that was one of the things that came up.

Sometimes we had students who were late in getting back to class after break. So those were things that we had to remind them of and their responsibilities in doing that. We also did mock interviews. We assisted them with applications, and all of the students had resumes that they completed. So all of that – parts of it were done prior to enrollment in the actual course. Some of it was done during the time that they were in the course, and then upon completion of the course we continued that.

MS. TORRES: And this is Leticia. So if we had customers that were enrolled in the adult and dislocated worker programs, we also provided intensive case management. And so that consisted of doing mock interviews, lots of coaching and counseling, helping them with problem solving and critical thinking, discussing their progress reports with them.

Going back to school when you haven't in a really long time can be really difficult and can be challenging. So they did need some of that counseling and coaching support to try and think things through and identify – find solutions to different barriers. And so I think it was super great to have the support of all of the programs involved because it wasn't just them trying to figure things out. They were getting support from all different angles in ensuring their success.

MS. HASTINGS: Wonderful. Thank you. And I think this might be our last question. We've got a few more questions, but let's get to this last one here. "How challenging was it to remove the ACCUPLACER/math and English prerequisite, and what strategy did you use to obtain buy in at the college level?"

MS. THATCHER: OK. This is Janese. I'll address that one. It wasn't challenging at all because we – what we did is we set up a registration process for our – for these workforce – we call them workforce certificates that bypasses the college application process. Because these are just a one-quarter program, than we just used a registration form. We added them in, and I'm sure that other colleges have some kind of a community ed course or something or registration form that they can use.

I don't think they make the community ed programs go through the regular college application process or actually do the testing. As we mentioned before, OIC and WorkSource already tested the students with either COCIS or with Work Keys. So that is what we used as our initial assessment. So it didn't really need buy in at the college level because we already had a system set up for our community ed classes to use a different registration form.

MS. HASTINGS: Great. Well, we have a number of other questions that, unfortunately, we didn't get to answer today. If you have any just burning questions that you didn't get answered, we do have contact information for our presenters. Can we give them a round of applause from the room here?

They did such a wonderful job and really getting into the details. I'm sure you could speak even longer about all the good work that you're doing, but thank you so much to the speakers. I will turn it over to my colleague Bhavani here who's just going to give us a few sort of next steps and things to look forward to. But thank you, and here we go.

BHAVANI ARABANDI: Thank you, Sara and the presenters. Thank you for an amazing webinar and an exciting project on hand. And I'm hoping the audience walked away with a lot of things and ideas, and we do – like Sara was saying, we do have a list of their contact information for you to do some follow up and feedback and questions that were unanswered – left unanswered.

So I'm Bhavani Arabandi. I'm at the Department of Labor, and I'd like to invite all of you to our next upcoming webinar on combatting sexual harassment and human trafficking. We will be looking at strategies to identify sexual harassment and human trafficking. How do you document cases of sexual harassment and human trafficking?

How do you refer them to appropriate enforcement agencies and also promote trauma-informed services and learn some best practices? So please save the date. This is January 25th, 2018, and it's the same time as now, Eastern Standard Time, 2:00 to 3:30.

And here are some resources that we have. The career pathways resources were already on the slides that Sara had talked about ahead of time. So I did not put that here, but we have NFJP if you wanted to learn more about that, the migrant and seasonal farmworkers monitor advocate system, the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, and WorkforceGPS if you want to learn more about the different kinds of programs that are going on here.

Here is the contact information for all our presenters and our lovely moderator, Sara Hastings. Thank you very much. On to you, Laura.

MS. CASERTANO: All right. Great.