**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**State Apprenticeship Expansion Grants**

**Engaging Your Audience and Telling Your Story: Marketing Registered Apprenticeship**

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JONATHAN VEHLOW: Again, if you haven't already done so or you're just joining us, please introduce yourself in that welcome chat. We'll have a similar chat up throughout today's webinar where you can type in your questions, comments, or concerns at any time.

Welcome to engaging your audience and telling your story: marketing registered apprenticeship. So without further ado, I'd like to turn things over to our moderator today, Chad Aleshire, team lead, Division of Investment, Operations, and Performance in the Office of Apprenticeship with the U.S. Department of Labor. Chad?

CHAD ALESHIRE: Thanks, Jon. Appreciate it, and appreciate everybody joining us today. As Jon mentioned, we are here for the engaging your audience and telling your story: marketing registered apprenticeship webinar. We wanted to have this webinar today to share some of the states that have been really innovative in their approaches in marketing registered apprenticeship through their grant projects. We've got three speakers today, and they'll be introduced shortly.

I want to go ahead and run through real quick just the objectives for today. Bear with me one second. All right. Today's objectives are to learn about the grantees who are using their SAE grants to help expand traditional and non-traditional marketing tools, to learn more on guiding principles around marketing apprenticeship to businesses, and then to think about and share your own marketing and outreach strategies with your peers.

As you hear our speakers today, hopefully you can make some connections to the efforts at your – in your state and we encourage you to – through your questions and comments, to share your strategies as well. And then also at the end of our session, you can get some answers to your questions on marketing registered apprenticeship through some Q&A that we'll have with our three speakers. So with that I want to jump right in. So I'm going to turn it over to Christina Herzog with the Maher team.

CHRISTINA HERZOG: Thank you, Chad, and welcome, everyone. Today we have three speakers, Mr. Christopher MacLarion, director of apprenticeship and training with the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation. He's going to kick off our conversation today. Then we'll switch to Rachel McAloon, apprenticeship outreach and education specialist with the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, and we will conclude our panelist presentations with Gerry Ghazi, president and founder of the Institute for American Apprenticeships at Vermont HITEC.

Before we get going today, I wanted to start you off with a poll. We're going to have three poll questions today in between our presenters, and we'd like you to share your thoughts on what marketing strategies you are currently using or planning to use. We will use your responses as we move throughout our conversation today and at the end. So are you using a website? Have you employed the use of videos, brochures, social media, or are there some other avenues that you're using? And if you are, please include those in our main chat section. We'd love to hear from you. I'll give you just another 5 to 10 seconds to enter your responses there, and then we'll transfer to our first presenter. All right. Terrific. Thank you so much.

Our first presenter, again, is Chris MacLarion, director of apprenticeship and training for Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation. Chris, I will turn it over to you.

CHRISTOPHER MACLARION: Thanks, Christina, and thank you for having us on the call today. I'm joined in the room by our communications team here at the Division of Workforce Development, Adult Learning. Brittany Krisafoli (sp) and Vanessa Bosner (sp) with me, and I think that's important because they helped to put everything together for the state of Maryland in terms of what our communication approach has been, what our outreach approach has been, and how to develop and distribute new materials.

So the first poll question was actually a great kickoff for us because in Maryland we've used every single one of those, to include the option E of other, and I will talk about that a little bit as the presentation goes on.

So registered apprenticeship in Maryland is a little bit of a different approach now. Historically, has been a unit that was up in our Division of Labor and Industry, and it was heavily focused on working within the skilled trades. That's something that we know that nationwide is a similar story and that the non-traditional occupations tend not to have been something that we focused on. All the excitement that has come around registered apprenticeship over the last couple years and with the United States Department of Labor leading the way and distributing grants to so many different states and workforce entities has really given everybody an opportunity to do things differently, as well as to reach out to different markets, different occupations, and different populations of people.

So prior to October of 2016 this unit, as I said, was upstairs at labor and industry, and then we moved it down here to the Division of Workforce Development, Adult Learning. That is done in large part to help us to better integrate registered apprenticeship as the premier workforce solution with our workforce centers, with our workforce systems, with other state partners, and with the community of registered apprenticeship as a whole.

So when we moved it down here, we looked backwards through it. What we have tended to do in Maryland was to, again, just target the skilled trades. The move down here, in addition to letting us assimilate with the workforce system, has also allowed us to work with new partners, for example, reaching out to workforce intermediaries or working out – reaching out to thinks like the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare, which is a sub-grantee for our Apprenticeship USA grant, and they're working with healthcare, for example, in healthcare-related occupations.

So the branding and the outreach and the money that's come out of our Accelerator grant as well as what we've been able to use through our Apprenticeship USA grant is back to the initial kickoff polling question. Videos, for example; we've created several different types of videos.

We have videos that are being released this month that target employers, videos that target potential apprentices that are interested in registered apprenticeship, as well as we're creating a new youth apprenticeship video to go along with the Maryland youth apprenticeship pilot which will target not just high school kids that are interested in options other than college but also it will help to communicate to the parents the value of a registered apprenticeship program, not just the work and learn model but also the value of not leaving college with a massive amount of student debt, all the great things that registered apprenticeship can offer to somebody that might want a career pathway other than going to college.

We had to rebuild and redesign our entire program. So that includes the logo for the Maryland apprenticeship and training program. It meant all new literature, new brochures. It meant a new website, ordering all new resource material. All of those were new innovations and new things that were allowed to us through the Accelerator grant as well as leveraging funds that we already had available to us. One other opportunity in doing this when we redesigned the website is the – under WIOA you have the option now – now the option. You should be adding to your eligible training provider list your registered apprenticeship programs.

One thing that we did when we kicked the year off, for example, is every sponsor in the state of Maryland – (inaudible) – received a letter from us. It was personally sent out to them. It was directly from us to them as an individual sponsor. Asked them to reply to us, let us know if they were interested in being on the eligible training provider list. We started the calendar year with no sponsors on our eligible training provider list, and as of today we have 15 sponsors on the list.

So while the number seems low, when you start the year with zero and you climb to 15, it's a pretty significant improvement. We are shifting our focus now from just the letter outreach to calling each individual active sponsor and asking them, did you get our letter? What's your next steps? Are you interested in being on the eligible training provider list? And if not, what would keep you from being on there, and what questions can we answer to help make you more interested?

In terms of the other, I talked earlier that there was option E on the poll question. We've also secured some radio ads that we ran in targeted areas that was geared towards youth apprenticeship, and our secretary, Secretary Kelly Schulz of the Department of Labor, License, and Regulation has regular radio broadcasts to where she is regularly talking about registered apprenticeship using radio as a forum to continue to put that message out, to continue to talk about all the excitement and options and possibilities that surround registered apprenticeship as a workforce solution.

So the ETPL website. When we took a good look at it, we had everybody that was in the state of Maryland that was on the ETPL just listed in singular fashion right down the site, and we realized that really doesn't work for us. It really doesn't show registered apprenticeship as its own option. It really doesn't show the customer how do you look at this site and differentiate between a school, a program, or a registered apprenticeship opportunity.

So we've actually broken the site down now so that, as you navigate through it, if you're looking for a WIOA training, you can click registered apprenticeship and it will open up. And when that opens up, you can see every single sponsor that is signed up, and you can then sort by occupation. So if you were looking for electrical or HVAC work, you can see every sponsor that's on the list that offers the program, how long the program is, and what the work processes are.

Our next step in that is to get the next level of connection is we are going to work with our programs as they have hiring or as they have vacancies and they're looking to take applications so that they can direct click on the sponsor and go right to an application page. So that's not in this quarter, but it's something that we're really hoping to continue to do with that outreach message to how to make registered apprenticeship more interactive with the jobseeker.

One last note is at the bottom you'll see we talked about placing customized RA job boards, registered apprenticeship job boards at all of our American job centers. We have billboards and we have postings and we have ways to distribute literature and job openings, but we want to put something in each of our American job centers that highlights registered apprenticeship on its own so that as you go in, you've got a job board there. You have every program in the region that's hiring or not hiring that could put out information on how the jobseeker can find them, what the occupations are, and what the possibilities are for them.

So after the outreach. While we're talking about what has been new and what has been innovative and what marketing strategies, for example, we've used, the Department of Labor, all the states surrounding Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, D.C., for example, there's a lot of hype and excitement around registered apprenticeship. As we began to revamp this program, Maryland of course was right up there with those states and advertising and promoting and conducting outreach on behalf of registered apprenticeship.

We realized we had a lot of inactive programs which we thought initially would leave us with some low-hanging fruit, some opportunities to reach out to sponsors that, for their own reasons, hadn't been active in the last year or more and to try to bring them back into the fold. So as we brought our new staff on, which was possible through our Apprenticeship USA grant, we called every inactive program in the state of Maryland, and some of them we've had to call three, four, five times to get ahold of somebody or just to do follow up. But that's led to a lot of great things.

We have dozens of sponsors that are interested in reactivating their program. We've begun to set up site visits and meetings with those sponsors, and we've talked about ways that those that are still inactive that don't want to become active for various reasons, which usually is around related instruction and getting one or two apprentices every so many years to the related instruction, ways that they could possibly combine with somebody else, with a larger sponsor and become – and their group sponsorship, for example.

So the rest of it was you had to make these calls. We can't have 200, 300 sponsors that are sitting out in your community at large that begin to hear the message of registered apprenticeship and all the outreach that we're doing when they haven't been touched in the last year, two years, three years, five years. We spoke about this at the Apprenticeship Forward event, and we had a lot of feedback from other states that found themselves in similar situations.

So one thing that I would say that's been really successful for us and I think it's very important for your community as a whole for registered apprenticeship is that you contact all these programs. Every customer that you miss, every chance you don't take to talk to somebody that was once involved in your program is somebody that's potentially out there saying a negative thing about registered apprenticeship. Oh, we had a program, but nobody's contacted us. So we felt that that was a critical component of our outreach steps is to engage active ones before we move solely into new areas.

We've also used our grant to try to find ways to bring the community back to us, to show them that we don't have all the answers in Maryland on what registered apprenticeship is, what it can be, and how things have to be done. So we've used our SAE grant to create an apprenticeship innovation fund, and that was an innovative way for an employer to build a new program, add an occupation, create new means to offer related instruction.

It can be used to target populations which are traditionally under-represented. It can be an existing program or a new program. It can be an association. It can be a labor union, and we've had applications from all of the above. To date, when we made this slide, six awards were issued, for example, programs that solely target under-represented populations using pre-apprenticeship or direct entry into registered apprenticeship programs.

So as part of our outreach, it's not just focusing on creating new programs, which is fantastic and it's always exciting when you add a new program and we hear a lot of talk about, oh, I've added 10 programs this month or 20 programs this year, but we want to make sure that we're targeting populations that really need these opportunities and that the traditionally left behind. And it's been a great opportunity using the grant money to do outreach specifically to that.

And not to get off the topic of other, other opportunities that we've had to do outreach is our communications team and our policy director here worked with another state agency to get bus ads. So that goes hand in hand with our targeted populations looking to send the message out on registered apprenticeship to people that normally wouldn't hear this, that don't have access to the – I don't want to say to the job center but that aren't in our job center network maybe or they're getting the message in a different way.

And what better way to hit a population than a bus ad? So working with a sister agency, the slide that you see in front of you is a slide that we have up and – or add we have up and is on our Maryland bus system. So that's a pretty fantastic opportunity to reach people, and it gives them a means to directly connect right back to us.

The brochures and the website that we talked about, here's a slide just showing the logo, showing the brochures that we put up, and we pulled all the old literature off our site and moved all the new stuff up, trying to make it a little more targeted to businesses and to participants and give them a new look at what we're doing. Here's our website and Facebook link, which I know you'll have a copy of, and some highlights into how we tried to integrate National Apprenticeship Week. We had multiple events throughout the week.

We did I believe it was seven events for National Apprenticeship Week alone, and we did several events prior to National Apprenticeship Week to help kick it off. We did a veteran's day, trade's day, non-traditional day where we did our cyber IT and digital and social media sponsor. They had their signing of their standards with us. We had a youth apprenticeship event, and we tried to target everything that we were doing in the state of Maryland so that we could show recognition and we can highlight all the possibilities that registered apprenticeship affords. And with that I will turn it over.

MS. HERZOG: Terrific. Thank you so much, Chris. The – you're making leaps and bounds moving forward with those, the bus ads, updates to the website, your new marketing materials. Thank you for sharing those with us. As I mentioned previously, please feel free to enter any questions that you have for Chris specifically into the main chat there. I know a couple of you have already, and we will be getting to those questions at the end of our presentation. But without further ado, I'd like to move us over to Rachel McAloon, apprenticeship outreach and education specialist with Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. Rachel?

RACHEL MCALOON: Thank you, Christina, and thank you, Chris. That's a lot of great information coming out of Maryland.

So my name is Rachel McAloon, and, as Christina said, I am the outreach and education specialist here at labor and industries in the apprenticeship section. My job is a new role. It's funded under the Accelerator grant, and I'm going to talk today about how Washington is marketing towards three areas, so industry, employers, and youth.

So before we begin, a little background on apprenticeship in Washington State. So here are some numbers from 2016. So we have 7,723 employers currently registered a training agents in Washington, over 200 standards of apprenticeship, over 600 occupations in work-based learning and classroom instruction. Last year in 2016 we had 5,000 new citizens register as apprentices in Washington State, and on any given day we have roughly 15,500 active apprentices in the state. And both of those new registrations and active apprentices are up from 2015. So moving right along. And before we begin too, as Jon said, you can download the PowerPoint, and I did go ahead and put under every resource a hyperlink to all of the either publications or websites I'll be talking about. So feel free to take a peek at that.

So when we market towards industry, right now we market towards – you'll see on the left – the registered apprenticeship in the construction industry, and then the top right we've expanded in Washington into non-traditional fields. We have had great success in expanding in the healthcare realm. So you'll see some advertisement there for a registered medical assistant apprenticeship program, and currently there's certainly an imbalance in our marketing in today's climate where we have much more geared towards the building trades and the construction industry.

So we would like to see and one of our goals is to make more of a balance there. So when we're talking apprenticeship and particularly to employers, we're talking a common message. One of our grant goals partnering with the workforce system was to really create a common message around apprenticeship. So whoever is talking apprenticeship in the state of Washington, whether it's to an employer or to a youth or a school district, that we're all talking the same message and we're all communicating the same resources.

So next, we will talk about marketing geared towards employers. So on the left side there is a little screenshot actually of Washington State's labor and industries' page for employers, and you will see right at the top we do talk about ROI, the return on investment for employers. We have a link to a cost benefit analysis of apprenticeship, but one of our goals really is to update that information. A lot of the information we have now is very outdated. It's from 2006. We rely heavily on a old Canadian study there.

So one of our grant goals – and I saw there was a question about an RFP, but we currently have an RFP out to partner with Washington State University to get some new data that really talks to employers about what the return on investment is in today's climate and today's market and some real statistics. Another thing we're really focusing on is when we're making our new marketing is to really cite where our resources are coming from in these snippets. We – you see a lot in the apprenticeship world of these kind of altruistic messages like, oh, it's more productive. Well, why is it more productive? How is it more productive? We really want to have data to show the employers.

We'll also be redesigning our L&I website, and Washington State is a state-approving counsel state. And one of the barriers we have when talking to employers is we are administered under labor and industries, and if there's anybody in the room from Ohio, Ohio and Washington State are the only states in the country where we are also monopolistic with our workers' compensation system. So we all know it's a hurdle when we're talking to employers about apprenticeship about government being in their papers, in their work.

And coming from labor and industries, that can be a hurdle right from the get go. So when we are redoing our website, we've really broken down the communication into three levels, level one being what is apprenticeship, which we know a lot of people need education on. So we are actually looking at the possibilities of moving our level one information off of the L&I website, and it will be housed as a microsite on our ESD page, our employment security page under the workforce system. And I really think that that's going to help eliminate some of that barrier we have as a state coming from labor and industry.

And then also we've had a lot of success when we talk about employers and engaging with associations. And this kind of falls back on talking to industry. So when we go and we talk to associations, a lot of these employer associations have a creed in their organization where they really want to provide training and education to their members. So if you haven't already, I would really encourage you to look at exploring some of the employer associations in your state. Lots of times I've had nothing but success when I've contacted them and said, we just want to talk to you about the benefits of apprenticeship. And one of the great things about that is, instead of talking to one employer, you can talk to 400 employers. So – and they know that it's coming from a trusted source, their association.

And then lastly we'll be talking about marketing geared towards youth. So we – in Washington State we registered our first youth apprentices in 2017. The top left there you will see one of our grant partners AJAC, which is Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee. They have a great website. Great resources not just for youth but also employers. One thing we are doing with – we've got marketing money that's going to be for non-print materials.

So we're creating some videos and some social media, but if you have some time, I would really encourage you to check out AJAC's website. They have a great video focused – it's a YouTube video focused on youth. And then another thing we actually just recently finished was the flash drives you see on the top right. So those all come preloaded with information for youth we can leave at job fairs, at school districts.

We're actually going to be using them at take your child to work day here on the 29th at labor and industry. But the great thing about these flash drives too is that they come preloaded with the youth information, but we can also kind of dump them and then upload any information we want. So when we go and we talk to employers, we can put the employer information on there and then leave that with them and it's that great little piece of information.

And then on the bottom left you will see this is our current registered youth apprenticeship page, and it's a couple years old. The content has been updated, but it's really an area we'd like to improve. We're happy that it exists, but you can see just by looking at it it's geared towards a much younger audience than we would like it to be. We really are focused on the 16-, 17-year-olds who are ready for the workforce system, and so, while the content on there is updated, we do want to update the messaging and design to appeal more to a career-ready youth.

So with that I will hand it back to Christina. If anybody has any questions, I'd be happy to answer them at the end of the presentation, or feel free to direct – or contact me directly. Thank you.

MS. HERZOG: Terrific. Thanks so much, Rachel. As I mentioned, please do enter any questions that you have in the main chat section there. Rachel, truly impressed with the work that you guys have done around targeting messages in the healthcare industry. The youth flash drives I think are a tremendous advancement, and the segmented communication strategy with the microsite is really interesting.

MS. MCALOON: Thank you.

MS. HERZOG: Yeah. Impressive work. We do have another poll question for you, and we'd like you all to enter in your responses. What methods would you like to use or do you already use to determine the focus of your registered apprenticeship messaging? And I know that some of you have mentioned in the chat that you've been using focus groups.

We're also interested in hearing about round tables, statewide regional meetings, surveys, and if there's another approach that you're using, please do enter that into the chat. We'd like to hear more about that. I will give you another 5 to 10 seconds to enter there. It looks like a lot of people are using the regional and statewide meetings and the focus groups. Not seeing a lot in the other category, but if you do have an innovative approach, please tell us about that. OK.

And with that we have our last speaker for this morning before we – or this afternoon before we move on to questions. Speaking the language of business, our next presenter is Gerry Ghazi, president and founder of the Institute for American Apprenticeships at Vermont HITEC. Gerry, I'm happy to turn it over to you.

GERRY GHAZI: Great. Thank you very much, Christina. So what I'd like to do today is kind of tie together both what Chris presented and what Rachel presented because that's you have your macro outreach to both employers as well as participants in registered apprenticeship and getting the word out. So what do you do once you get that phone call in? So you have someone who actually picked up some literature, went to a website. Employer's now really interested and saying, what's the next step? What do I do? And how do you actually bridge both the employer's language with those marketing efforts that you invested in?

So the very first thing what we want to do is, when you actually get that call from an employer, is to kind of switch gears from a marketing standpoint to a problem-solving standpoint. And what you want to do with employers is basically start with a problem statement, not the solution. So even though the marketing materials all point to registered apprenticeship, what you want to talk to that employer about is what is their business challenge for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and educating individuals, and you want to talk to them in their business terms.

So the key is to understand what their business challenges are and then actually relate to them on their terms, so avoiding sometimes at the very beginning any language around registered apprenticeship but knowing that you can tie any language that you use right back to that employer set. The very first thing I advocate that every individual does when they get that telephone call is to do up-front research with the business. Understand the business. Go to their websites. Identify what job openings they have. Understanding what products they are and what they're using. Understand what they're building, if it's a manufacturing.

And then by looking at the job openings, kind of download a couple of the ones that you feel that you have a program in place already that you can possibly support that problem that they're having with recruiting. And so a lot of research is spent, a lot of time is spent up front before ever actually engaging that employer.

Next thing you want to do is when you finally have a face-to-face meeting with the employer, don't start off by saying we're here to talk to you about registered apprenticeship. Really what you want to start with is talking to them about what business problem are they trying to solve, and it could be any aspect of the talent acquisition. It could be that they just don't have a marketing plan to get enough individuals in the door, or there could be a large skill gap between the resumes they're seeing and what they have to offer.

They may have no way of onboarding folks, and they have no way of training them once they're in house. So these are the kind of things that you want to kind of seek to understand from the employer bases. One key aspect and a lot of times is missed is try to understand what that employer has in terms of on-boarding and training organizations and departments within the organization itself. The last thing you want to do is present a solution that bypasses an integral part of their corporate structure.

And then finally, you want to look at how to solve that problem, and you want to define the problem and their challenge in terms of their terms, so again, whether it's a recruitment challenge they're having, whether it's an on-boarding, whether it's internal training, whether it's mentoring, et cetera. So that's when you start bringing in the five components of registered apprenticeship. You basically start with understanding what their problem is and not with the solution.

And then once you have that dialogue, once you engage that employer, once you've done the research and you're in front of that employer, you basically want to do an inventory of what they already have done. So you're taking notes and trying to understand using their language but knowing in the back of your mind you're always tying it to registered apprenticeship. So when they talk about terms like recruitment, to you that's your outreach for apprentices.

How are you going to market? How are you going to help them recruit? When you think about competencies basically in terms of a registered apprenticeship, their description or their terminology is job descriptions and what are the responsibilities and tasks associated with job descriptions. That's why it's really important before you go on site if you know where they're struggling. Let's say they're struggling for medical assistants. Get a copy of that job description, knowing that you can match it up again the competencies that are laid out in a registered apprenticeship.

Then when you move on to the education part of a registered apprenticeship, which is the RTI, the related technical instruction, don't use that term but use what type of training or on-boarding do you actually have within your organization and how do you actually bring people in and educate them? Do you go out to external education partners like the community college system, or do you have an internal training opportunities that you actually provide? Again, one of the worst case scenarios that I've seen play itself out is someone came in with the registered apprenticeship as a solution but had it very tied to a third-party training provider, not knowing that the organization itself has invested millions in their own internal education, because you can actually start pulling together the pieces of what they do in terms of that sales pitch to them.

And then finally, OJT. Talking about on-the-job training or on-the-job learning may go above them. They may not understand that terminology. So what you want to do is talk about, well, how do you mentor folks when you bring them? You know you hire them. You know there's an on-boarding process where you train them, but then how do you actually mentor them?

Do you have direct supervisors or managers during the mentors? Do you have team leads? Are they paired up with a peer who is fully competent? And you start using their language and trying to understand how they actually engage a new hire into the process, knowing that you can tie that back to the on-the-job learning.

And then finally, you talk about performance reviews because that's really where the stepped up wages occur within a registered apprenticeship. You're basically paying based on merit. So you want to understand how do the review cycles occur. How often do they occur, et cetera? And that's where we go back to those stepped up wages, the merits performance. So again, describe their problem in their terms, knowing that you can then wrap it around a construct of a registered apprenticeship program.

And then finally, once you're ready to actually introduce registered apprenticeship as the solution to their business problem, what you want to be confident in is the return on investment that employer will see. And the key that we've been successful in in doing this for over 18 years probably for 50 different employers in 24 different occupations running 75 different cohorts is to convince them that an investment in registered apprenticeship hiring, in the model, it will actually be better than their traditional hiring process.

So you want to be able to compare and take notes on how do you traditionally recruit? Where are your expenses going? Marketing for those individuals. How do you basically do your selection process for the new hires? And then when you on board them, what's the skill gap that you're usually finding from a resume to the job description? And then how as an employer are you filling those – that skill gap? And then finally, the mentoring. How much time are you already basically spending with an individual to do that mentoring? And here you want to highlight the important factors that you can bring in with the structure of a registered apprenticeship program.

So you want to talk about, in fact, an important ROI to an employer is that you don't have to pay that full wage. How often is an employer bringing on an individual where there's a skill gap between the job description that they posted and the person they're about to hire and yet they're going to pay full wages? Well, in a registered apprenticeship model you can sell the ROI by saying, hey, there's going to be stepped up wages.

You don't have to pay that full wage, and the savings in wages, it will offset the cost for the on-the-job learning or the mentoring that's going to occur. Again, recruitment costs and hiring incentives. This is where that outreach and marketing that both Chris and Rachel talked about comes in because you, as creating an apprenticeship infrastructure within your state, can offset many of the recruitment costs that hiring costs that are involved with bringing on new hires where within a structure of a registered apprenticeship program on a statewide basis, you may be able to take on those costs and find those candidates coming in.

And then also there may be hiring centers that you can actually bring in to both from a registered apprenticeship, having state and federal incentives, but also they may have to rely on hiring centers to bring in traditional folks. So again, when you look at the ROI, that return on the investment from the traditional model of hiring compared to the RA model, you'll be able to lay out certain factors for that ROI.

And of course supplementing all that for registered apprenticeship, you can look into the state and federal subsidies, whether it be tax credits, workforce development grants, WIOA ITAs and OJTs. All those basically up the ante for showing an ROI in a registered apprenticeship program. And most importantly, we always emphasize the retention and attrition rates because with the registered apprenticeship, you're actually changing the business model.

You're actually asking employers to actually look at a different paradigm shift, one in which they're going to be investing from ground zero of an employee. That person is going to come in with no competencies and they're going to actually spend resources and time both educating and mentoring and in return that employee is going to have basically the loyalty back to the company that's going to generate long retention and there's less attrition because you're actually able to create a stackable credential at the end of a registered apprenticeship.

So these are just some points to use as you take the marketing strategies that you're implementing statewide and actually getting those calls to come in and then utilizing those calls and approaching the employers on a one-on-one basis. So at that point I want to turn it back over to Christina.

MS. HERZOG: Terrific. Thanks so much, Gerry. It's increasingly evident that a key part of marketing and employer engagement is really speaking the language of business, and that's critical in successfully getting employers on board. So really appreciate you sharing that perspective. If you do have specific questions for Gerry, please do enter those in the main chat.

Before we switch to our Q&A portion, we have one last poll question for you, and this is have you collaborated with other partners as part of your employer outreach and marketing strategies? We want you to check all that apply, economic development, K-12 as well as postsecondary education, human services, other businesses directly. So please check all that apply, and if there are other organizations that you have partnered with, please include those in the main chat. We're very interested to know what those are.

So with that I'm actually going to pass the microphone, as it were, back to Chad Aleshire of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, and he will moderate our Q&A session. Chad.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thanks, Christina, and thanks to all of our speakers, Rachel and Chris and Gerry. We really appreciate it. You guys did a wonderful job.

So I'm looking at our Q&A now, and bear with me. I just need to scroll up a little. The first question I see coming in is really to all three of our speakers. So I'll throw it out there, and you all can jump in. "We're really interested in whether or not any of our speakers used marketing firms and, if they did, what their RFPs looked like." Can any of you speak to that?

MS. MCALOON: I can. This is Rachel. So we forged the ROI – and I think this was a question that came up too with the university. That was grant-funded under SAE, and we put an RFP out. It actually closes today but that will be grant-funded and it will be a third-party marketing firm that will be completing that for us.

MR. ALESHIRE: OK. Thanks, Rachel. I hope that answered your question, commenter. We appreciate it. And again, keep the questions coming in the chat, and we'll continue to try to run through these. We've got some time before the hour. So let's try to get as many questions answered as we can.

The next question I see is to Chris. "Chris, what would your RA, registered apprenticeship job board do? Direct postings to sponsors?"

MR. MACLARION: So yeah. Great question. Thanks for asking. It would do both the direct postings from the sponsor, but it could also be informational if the sponsor does – for example, they might do yearly hirings where they take applications. Some of our bigger programs, for example, will open up for job applications in the spring, but they might want their information posted year around. So that would give them the resources to be out in the public view and to make sure that the AJC customers know that they're there.

MR. ALESHIRE: Great. Thanks, Chris.

All right. We have another question actually coming back to you, Chris. "What kind of organizations – you mentioned the six awards. What type of organizations were those awards made to?"

MR. MACLARION: So they went to a pretty large variety, and I actually just – when I saw the question pop up, I made a quick list. The very first award that went out went to the Finishing Trades Institute. That's a union-based program. They wanted to do a pre-apprenticeship training, and they wanted to target underrepresented populations. We've had one that went out to manufacturing. We've had two different types of award that went out to both pre-apprenticeship and program building and occupation building for cyber security.

We had one that was a community group that will work with Baltimore city underrepresented populations as well that will connect them with a pre-apprenticeship training right to an electrical sponsor that we have. We also had an award that went out to a national organization, the Tree Care Industry Association, which is building the arborist occupation in Maryland, and they brought a host of Maryland-based businesses together to register their occupation, register their program, and build the related instruction. That actually comes up before our Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council next month.

One of the last ones that we awarded was with the community college in a Baltimore city high school that will directly connect four students that did not quite receive all the education they needed in their occupation in the high school because of a loss of a teacher mid-cycle of their program but it will connect them to a paid pre-apprenticeship opportunity in conjunction with the community college system and they will work with a sponsor during their pre-apprenticeship and directly roll over into an apprenticeship program once they meet the minimum skill criteria.

So those are the kinds of programs that we've given out to. So they're everything from business to community-based to existing sponsors. One of them I didn't mention was the Mid-Atlantic Carpenters. They're targeting a pre-apprenticeship training for women within their program. So we've hit all different kinds of populations. We have programs that are just doing occupation building and other ones that are doing new registration. And back to you, Chad.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thanks, Chris. And I'm sorry. I started to speak, and I was on mute. I apologize, guys. As Chris mentioned, you can see the diversity of the organizations that they reached out to. So kudos to Maryland there. I mean, as you ticked off your list, I'm noticing community colleges, industry associations, labor unions, community-based organizations. That is really the reach that we're trying to make through these grants to expand the population that has access to registered apprenticeship. So kudos to Maryland on that.

All right. To our next question, it's actually probably – I'm probably best to answer this. "How do we get more info on Accelerator grants?"

What I can tell you is that the grants that were issued by the U.S. Department of Labor, they were $200,000 grants. There's some information on the apprenticeship page off of the dol.gov website. The registered apprenticeship page, our investment section of that page gives you a great snapshot of all of our recent investments.

Bottom line on the Accelerator grants, though, there was $10.4 million given out to 51 states and territories. Each of those states and territories received approximately $200,000 to help integrate apprenticeship into their education and workforce systems, engage industry and other partners, also to conduct outreach and work with employers, promote greater inclusion and diversity in apprenticeship, and then really develop statewide and regional strategies around building state capacity to support apprenticeship. I'd say that last bullet there, building state capacity, that was really our main focus of these grants.

As we promote the expansion of apprenticeship, we wanted to make sure states had the opportunity to build their team, if you will, in areas where maybe the registered apprenticeship focus wasn't really there in those states or wasn't staffed up as necessary- – as needed to expand. So again, you can check our DOL apprenticeship age and from there the investments page, which is a link right off that main page where you can get a snapshot of the Accelerator grants. You can actually read the original grant opportunity announcement, and you can also find more information on all of our investments.

So with that I'm going to go on to our next question. Looks like it's for Rachel. "Rachel, can you provide more information on your work with the university and/or around return on investment?"

MS. MCALOON: Sure. So that is the RFP that we were just speaking about. It closed yesterday. So we are partnering, though – what I can tell you is generally what we're hoping the study will do for us but it's going to be focused on manufacturing employers currently in the apprenticeship program and we're going to be getting actual data.

So the little token we use right now is out of the Canadian study that it's $1.38 return on investment for monies put into the apprenticeship program. So we're just looking for really, like I was talking about – really specific data points that we can actually give to these employers and say, here is this recent study; right? Not even this decade-old study, but here is this recent study. Here are the results. Here's why it's such a benefit to you.

Another piece that I didn't really talk about in my presentation but I think the ROI study will kind of help with is another area we're looking at is employer champions, so employers that are currently in the apprenticeship system and love it. So we all know when we're thinking about buying something, we want to know from the – hear from the people that actually utilize it and have had positive experiences with it. And we will be also, in addition to highlighting the ROI on our new website, we will also be highlighting the employer champions. So together we just want them to be really selling points for employers that know nothing about apprenticeship and want to get involved. Does that answer the question?

MR. ALESHIRE: I think it does, Rachel. I think it does. I appreciate it. Thank you.

And then we had a similar question come in. Gerry had mentioned ROI. The question is, "Where can we find more ROI info? We see different ROIs. Is there one site that lists all and the scope and date of the study?" I'll let Gerry give his reaction to that. Then I've got a little bit of more info I can provide.

MR. GHAZI: Thank you, Chad. So when I reference ROI, I do it in two ways. I reference it for past performance of other employers, and there are numerous reports. So there was one recently released by the U.S. Department of Commerce, and it actually features a whole host of – I think there's six or seven different employers in a very in-depth ROI study on registered apprenticeship to those employers, two of which are Vermont HITEC employer partners. One is Dartmouth-Hitchcock in the healthcare, and one is Hypertherm in the advanced manufacturing. So I always have those in my back pocket to send out before a sales call.

The second piece of the ROI is an employer will say, that's great, Gerry. I see it worked for others, but how is the ROI going to work for me specifically? So you have to be able to do a look forward, and that's where we break down all five components of the registered apprenticeship. And we say, this is going to be your return on investment if you do it through a direct hire or if you do it through a registered apprenticeship program.

And what we do there is we actually have a spreadsheet that we use to walk section by section, whether it's for the training cost of a new hire versus an RA, a registered apprenticeship program, the mentoring costs, the on-boarding costs, and we break down basically the five components of registered apprenticeship and we show in their normal hiring structure this is what it's going to cost.

So we do a cost analysis by component of a registered apprenticeship program, and we show the difference in a spreadsheet and the cost savings they would recognize if they went through a traditional RA model versus their – I should say through the registered apprenticeship model versus their traditional RA. So we do a look forward at an individual employer-by-employer level versus a look back at other employers that we're trying to convince a new employer to register with. Chad.

MR. ALESHIRE: Great, Gerry. Thank you. And yeah. The Department of Commerce study that you mentioned was the one that I was going to reference actually.

We can try – I'm not sure, and I apologize for that – that study was included on the resource page for this webinar, but let's see if we can get a link out. When we share the archive materials as part of the resource materials, I'm wondering if we could include that. I'll leave that question to the Maher team. Maher team, can you chime in on that? Is that something we could add?

MS. HERZOG: Yeah. We could make sure to add that to the resource list when we post. I'm going to see if I can pull that up and put it in the chat momentarily.

MR. ALESHIRE: Great. Thanks, Christina. If you can't do it on the fly, we'll circle and make sure we get you access to a link to that report. Thanks.

Also, okay. I'm looking at the questions. I'm looking at the clock. We still have a few minutes. "Can someone share" – and I guess I can take this one – "what material the DOL is creating to promote registered apprenticeship?" The commenter mentioned the video we shared at our grantee conference in May. "When will those materials be available? Can you share what DOL is doing so we don't duplicate efforts?"

I would say this. In terms of that video, the video is something that we have put together to highlight really the direction we're going with marketing around expansion through the Apprenticeship USA initiative. In terms of when materials will be available, the honest answer is this. We've got a new secretary of labor and his team on board now. We are working very closely with our public affairs and our secretary's team to identify materials and strategies for marketing.

The secretary's team is new to the Department of Labor. They're learning more about our program and we're learning more about their approach and strategies to market apprenticeship and we're sort of marrying our efforts with theirs, obviously. So I would just say bear with us. Stay in tuned in the near future. As information and materials become available, we will make those readily available to everybody.

And then our next question that came in, I believe it's referencing back to you, Rachel. They're asking if you could share the RFP. "Looking for examples of what we should be asking agencies to do." Rachel, I'm not sure if that RFP – I'm assuming it is on a public website that you could direct people to?

MS. MCALOON: It was actually put out by a grant recipient of ours. So I'm not sure – it was done through the Construction Center of Excellence, one of our grant partners under the SAE. So I did privately message Deanis Polk (sp), which I believe is who asked the question, and I am going to see if I can't get my hands on that RFP and get it sent over to her team.

MR. ALESHIRE: OK. Great. I appreciate that, Rachel. Thank you for being so proactive.

MS. MCALOON: No problem.

MR. ALESHIRE: All right. We're at 2:52, and we've got questions continuing to roll in. So thank you very much, participants.

"Has anyone had any success with digital media ad placement? If yes, what worked? If no, what didn't work?" I know Rachel and Chris had both spoke to advertising, and Gerry some to that – some also. Chris, you want to take that one?

MR. MACLARION: Yeah. I suppose I can take it. So where – what you're looking for in terms of actual digital media versus social media versus conventional media, it's kind of hard for us to say where we're having the most success. But every event that we do, whether it's a graduation for an existing apprenticeship program or whether it's something we're out with the community doing, whether it's a resource fair or a high school career fair, whether we're doing a job fair, we're participating at the community group, we film it, and we use it as part of our outreach.

So what that's actually producing for us in terms of tangible results, I can't sit down and tell you that there's a hard number to it. But I can tell you that the volume of calls and e-mails that we're getting, whether it's people that hear the secretary on the radio or they go to a business round table and they hear one of us talk, whether it's somebody from the governor's workforce board, whether it's somebody from the apprenticeship team, it's just continuously generating things.

So it's hard to break down where the link comes from the media and where it comes from just what we're doing day to day, but we're certainly seeing an increase in results. So hopefully that helps a little bit.

MR. ALESHIRE: Great, Chris. Thanks. And I think what you're saying, it really speaks to sort of the saturation and different approaches you're using to get the word out. Obviously, the more the better in terms of impact. I would say time will tell as you go to see which of those options is the most impactful, but again, I tend to think saturation is obviously the most impactful. I know you mentioned when your secretary's heard on the radio, that makes a big impact. I know just locally here in the D.C. area, I know radio and print media are both things that catch my eye and we really pay attention to in the Office of Apprenticeship in terms of areas that are really reaching people and create the buzz, if you will, around it. So all right. Thanks, Chris.

Let's see. "I've heard that DOL's registered apprenticeship marketing push will be in the fall in conjunction with the 80th anniversary of the passage of the National Apprenticeship Act. Will marketing materials be made available to grantees at that time?"

I would say that's our goal for sure. We are definitely trying to ramp up some of our marketing efforts to coincide with the 80th anniversary celebration later in the fall. Again, I would just say pay close attention over the next month. I would say over the summer you're going to continue to see materials roll out, and a lot of those efforts probably will culminate around the 80th anniversary in the fall.

There's obviously a lot of buzz and momentum around the Apprenticeship USA effort. Our job and our goal is to keep that momentum going. So over the next few, four, five months, just continue to stay close to it. As materials are made available, we will be sure to share them out to everybody.

And then the next question we have is, "Will DOL be making different one- or two-page flyers that grantees can modify for marketing?"

I can't really speak to that to say if we're going to do that specifically or not. I will say we're going to continue to brand and market the Apprenticeship USA effort which your grants are a part of. I think all of the grantees know that you're able to use the Apprenticeship USA logo on your materials, on your websites with certain – oh, boy – words added. Excuse me. I was blanking there for a second, but you are able to use the DOL Apprenticeship USA logo. There is some language that needs to be included on websites, but I can't speak to the one- or two-pages specifically. But just continue to pay attention as we roll information out, and take advantage of using that logo when and where you can.

All right. I'm checking our question queue right now. We look like we've captured all the questions. Did we have anybody else that wanted to get in the last-minute question before we're at the top of the hour?

All right. With that I want to thank our speakers again. I want to thank you, Rachel, Chris, and Gerry. Thank you so much for the information. This has been a great webinar. The marketing discussion is one that always creates a lot of questions. There's a lot of interest. So over the next few months we'll continue to provide examples of marketing strategies we see working around the country.

Ask all of you to continue to share the successes you're having with your marketing strategies in your state around your grant project. We can highlight those and capture them and share them through our Apprenticeship USA Community of Practice, also through our Apprenticeship Connections newsletter. So as you find strategies and push them forward and have success, by all means, share them with us. It helps us get the word out.

So with that, again, I want to thank our speakers. I want to thank the Maher team for helping put this webinar together on the technical side and also thanks, most importantly, to you our participants for joining us and bringing the great questions and driving the discussion.

With that I think I'm going to turn it back over to Jon from the Maher team.

(END)