**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**From Design to Implementation, Flexible Apprenticeship Models That Work**

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LAURA CASERTANO: Again I want to welcome everyone to today's webinar. And I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Cheryl Martin. She's a program manager for TAACCCT grants for the U.S. Department of Labor employment and training administration. Cheryl?

CHERYL MARTIN: Hi. Thank you. And yes, this is Cheryl Martin. We're really delighted to have all of you here today – there are well over 100 – and also our speakers.

Before we get into the presenter part of this, I wanted to introduce my co-moderator Amy Firestone, who is with our office of apprenticeship here at Department of Labor. And she is literally running between two other meetings on a very busy day, and a very busy week, and a very busy month, because there's a lot of things happening with apprenticeship right now.

But she's taking a few minutes to let us know a couple of the things that are coming down the pike with apprenticeship here at Department of Labor. Amy?

AMY FIRESTONE: Thank you very much, Cheryl. It's a pleasure to be on this webinar even for a brief moment. Real excited to just talk to you all very briefly about our initiatives that will be very important for colleges.

As many of you know, there was an executive order signed on apprenticeship in June. And there is a lot of attention and priority toward working with community colleges, high schools, and building career pathways starting from high school, to have opportunities for students to obtain postsecondary degrees. So you all are going to be a very important part of all this work.

Next week is National Apprenticeship Week. And if you haven't already registered an event on our webpage, I encourage you to do so as soon as possible. We would love to hear what you are doing for National Apprenticeship Week. The events can be anything as simple as posting a blog about your apprenticeship program on your webpage, to hosting an event at your institution. So we would love to have that information. Just please visit our webpage.

Next week also as a part of National Apprenticeship Week, the taskforce on apprenticeship will have its first convening on Monday. So please just keep checking our webpage for more information on the taskforce on the executive order and all of our initiatives to really work with postsecondary institutions like yourselves on expanding apprenticeship.

So that's just a quick overview of all the excitement happening right now at Department of Labor. And we're looking forward to partnering with you. If you're not a member of our registered apprenticeship college consortium already, we encourage you to become a member. All this information is on our webpage which you will have a link to on this presentation.

And by being a member you not only receive all the benefits of membership as stated on our webpage, but you also hear from me a lot about other opportunities to become more engaged. So I just wanted to thank you all for the opportunity and I'm looking forward to working with all of you. Thank you.

MS. MARTIN: Thanks, Amy. I'm going to take a moment to mention a couple of resources that are available at the doleta.gov/apprenticeship page. And you can see them here, so I'm not going to go through all of them aside to say that there's a quick start toolkit, there's a playbook, there's the registration site, and the RACC site. So that's the Registered Apprenticeship for Community College site. Amy was telling me recently that if you want to get the information first, that's one of the things that you can do is join RACC. It's really just a signup kind of thing. You'll get a lot of information. You'll get emails from Amy. And other technical assistance is available to you.

The other place that information is available is on the Apprenticeship USA community of practice on workforce GPS. And if you sign up to get notices from them as well, between the two of those you will know all of the newest, latest and greatest that's coming out from apprenticeship which these days could be some new and interesting things. So we're going to keep moving here. But thank you Amy for joining us. I am going to turn it back over to Christian Lagarde here. He is our facilitator for the call today. And he will be introducing our presenters and walking us through things. Christian?

CHRISTIAN LAGARDE: Hello everyone. My name is Christian Lagarde. I work for the American Association of Community Colleges. Cheryl, thanks for the introduction. Amy, thank you so much for participating today and setting the context for this webinar.

On today's webinar, as Cheryl just discussed, this isn't a quick start. This isn't an apprenticeship 101. Those resources that Cheryl just put up on the screen are great for that. But from the presenters and what we're going to discuss today is a deeper dive into what is happening in the world of apprenticeship as it pertains to the registered apprenticeship program and how community colleges fit into that.

Today we have Geri Scott, a program director from Jobs for the Future, Rebecca Lake from Harper College, and Valerie Piet from the state of Montana who's really going to talk about what they are doing in the realm of apprenticeships. Today's overview, we're going to talk about the design of their apprenticeship programs, the difference in models that apprenticeships can take – (inaudible) – the European model, the German model that we all know. Geri's going to talk about how community college could be – (inaudible) – colleges are converting those internships to registered apprenticeships.

And throughout the entire webinar we've sort of embedded and baked in some of the pitfalls and how to avoid them. Because we don't want to – we want to make sure everybody understands the good, the bad and the ugly about how these things work, how they are designed, how they're implemented. It's hard work. And both Rebecca and Valerie are going to talk about that hard work that they've done today in the past several years as they developed their apprenticeship programs on their campuses.

I do want to address this before I hand it off to Geri, is your questions. We are going to hold questions to the end. With so many people on the line right now, it's going to be hard to take them in real time. But please feel free as you hear the presenters talk about something or mention something, if you have a question put it in that welcome chat box and we'll address those questions. We'll start to collect them and address them at the end for each of the presenters.

So with that, Geri, I'm going to hand it off now to you.

GERI SCOTT: Thank you, Christian. This is Geri Scott from Jobs for the Future. And let me just start by apologizing for my laryngitis. I had full voice last week. But unfortunately I had a lovely visit with my grandsons and they shared their germs with me. So I've got a bit of laryngitis.

Jobs for the Future. My job at Jobs for the Future is to direct several programs and federal grants with registered apprenticeships. One, as many of you have, we have an American apprenticeship initiative grant, a five-year grant to create 1,450 apprenticeships in the manufacturing, advanced manufacturing sector. And then a year ago we received a contract from the office for apprenticeship. And this one is pretty broad ranging. It's to develop at least 10 program sponsors and 450 new registered apprenticeships per year for the next five years.

And we do that by providing technical assistance directly to employers, to industry associations, and to any other interested entity who would like to become an apprenticeship sponsor. We work all over the country. And we have been working with a great number of community colleges on helping them find their role and their place in the registered apprenticeship system. As Christian pointed out, this is not the introductory course to registered apprenticeship. This is the more advanced course.

But as with any good advanced course, we'd like to start with a review first. And I just want to make sure that we're all starting from the same page, which is that there are five key elements to any and every registered apprenticeship program.

The most key point is that you cannot have a registered apprenticeship without having business involvement. The business must be an employer of any individual who is an apprentice. So an apprentice has to be working in the occupation – (inaudible) – are being trained through the registered apprenticeship. So we start with – (inaudible) – comments and (afterthoughts ?) got to be there at the beginning.

The second key element of every registered apprenticeship program is that it is – and I'm going to combine the second and third element – it's a structured combination of on the job learning and related technical instruction. Registered apprenticeship is really the way that we often bridge the gap between school and work. For both the related technical instruction and the on the job learning, there are identified curricula with skills and competencies that must be mastered.

As the apprentice increases in their skills and competencies, they are rewarded by their employer with skills gains – I'm sorry, with financial rewards, or they get increases in wages as they master more skills. And finally the end result of every registered apprenticeship is a nationally recognized occupational credential that is good all over the country regardless of the state where the individual received their apprenticeship.

Now there are lots of ins and outs here that many of you may be aware of. And I just want to make sure that you are comfortable with the face that registered apprenticeship is – 26 states are covered by the U.S. Department of Labor's office of apprenticeship. But the other states have their own state apprenticeship agencies. And so depending on where you're located, you may either be working with the U.S. Department of Labor or with your state department of workforce development bureau of registered apprenticeship programming.

So what are the roles and responsibilities that all the different partners have in a registered apprenticeship program? I said it starts with employers. Nine times out of ten in the past, the employer has actually been the sponsor of a registered apprenticeship program. That's changing a lot now, but I'd like to go into what it means to be a sponsor, because this can be something that is very, very confusing to people.

The sponsor is the organization who is responsible for making sure that the apprenticeship program as delivered with a specific employer and a specific apprentice meets either the federal or the state guidelines. And they do this by executing an agreement with either the state or a federal apprenticeship agency.

This agreement lays out things like the selection process, a curriculum that will be delivered, the ratio of mentors who are going to be responsible for delivering the on the job learning to the actual apprentices. So the sponsor is the one who is responsible for making sure that everything happens. They sign a contract with the U.S. Department of Labor to do that. Nine times out of ten it has been the employer, but that's starting to change now. We'll get into that a bit when we talk about some of the innovations.

Sponsors are also responsible for documenting the skill gains that the apprentice has received, both with the employer and the apprentice, and with the U.S. Department of Labor, and/or the state agency; because that must be verified that the apprentice has actually mastered the skills that we've got in the apprenticeship curriculum. The sponsor and/or the employer works inside of the company and identifies – (inaudible) – a journey level worker.

What that means, it's a skilled and experienced worker who will have the primary responsibility for making sure that the apprentice learns those hands on applied skills, and making sure that the apprentice rotates through all the different parts of a job that might be outside of what perhaps was their original job description, to learn all the applied skills that they need to master.

So sponsors must identify and select a journey level worker. And then of course the sponsor and the employer work together to select apprentices. And remember, the apprentice must be an employee of the company that is operating the apprenticeship program. The sponsor is responsible for making sure that the journey workers have a plan of action to make sure that the apprentices rotate through all of the skill training activities, and for identifying and coordinating the delivery of related technical instruction.

Now a couple of other points that I want to make clear here. An apprenticeship in the United States must be at least 2,000 hours of training per year. Of that, 144 of those hours must be what you call related technical instruction, something that's ordinarily delivered in a classroom. And it can be delivered in many, many different ways.

We'll talk about that a bit in the innovations point. But the sponsor must make sure that that is delivered to the apprentice. And we have seen some occasions when sometimes the sponsors are great with the OJT part, but they – (inaudible) – related technical instruction. So it's the sponsor's responsibility to make sure that happens.

I wanted to bring out the fact that a journey level worker is actually an instructor. And usually the sponsor will kind of do a little train the trainer to make sure that this journey level worker, who's another employee of the company, understands how to demonstrate and verify skills that the apprentice is learning.

They must show and verify that the individual apprentice and each individual apprentice has mastered these skills to the level that is laid out in the curriculum, to the performance level in the curriculum. And then they document to the sponsor that the apprentice has completed each of the skills.

The journey level worker does not have to sign the apprenticeship agreement. That's the responsibility of the employer and the sponsor to identify that person and make sure they're delivering those services. They don't have any formal contractual relationship, but the apprentice does. The apprentice actually signs a contract, an agreement, with the sponsor and the employer, agreeing to – that they will show up for work, that they will show up for their classes, that they will participate in the on the job training, and that as a result they will earn the skill and wage gains laid out in the apprenticeship curriculum.

Usually the apprentice has to go through some formal assessment to make sure that they have the basic math and literacy skills so that they can complete it. They must complete the actual 2,000 hours a year of on the job, hands on, applied skills, and 144 hours a year of related technical instruction. And then it is the apprentice's responsibility to maintain and track their own completion. They get a little blue book that they must track their own completion with, and have the journey level worker sign off that they have completed the skills that they were supposed to learn on the job.

Now community colleges are now playing a number of different roles with regards to registered apprenticeship. Again in the traditional registered apprenticeship, the primary role for the community college has been to be the related technical instruction provider. They provide the classroom technical training. Usually it's not just a course taken off the shelf in any particular program of study.

It's got to cover the particular skills and competencies that are laid out in the registered apprenticeship agreement. Sometimes the class has to be specially designed for a registered apprenticeship program. Nevertheless community college – so that's a place where the community college has to coordinate with the company and sponsor to make sure that if their courses require any adaptation, that they are providing it.

One of the things that we're looking at community colleges doing more and more now is aligning this technical instruction with degree programs of study. We find that community colleges are looking at the award and academic credit as a positive attribute, that it really does encourage many of the apprentices to continue on towards their associate's degree if they receive academic credit for the courses that they've taken during their apprenticeship.

Another thing that we look at a community college is doing is to help identify potential funding. There is no dedicated funding stream for registered apprenticeship. So we are often looking for Pell grants and other forms of financial assistance. Even though these people are employed, they're not always earning top dollar. And so they can't always afford to pay for their tuition. And sometimes their employers don't have a tuition reimbursement fund. So we look to the college to help on that.

And then a new and evolving rule for community colleges that we're very excited about is actually being the sponsor for a registered apprenticeship. And that is to go back – we have a little asterisk on the slide – and that is to go back and say they sign an agreement with the employer and the state or federal apprenticeship agency, they document the apprentice's progress, and they coordinate the delivery of instruction.

I'm only getting a couple of minutes left, so I want to talk about some of these innovations that we are pursuing now in registered apprenticeship. I mentioned academic credit already as an innovation that we're really pursuing. Flexible scheduling, there are so many different ways that we can organize the related technical instruction.

You can do it concurrently so that it's a couple of hours a week while they're doing their on the job training. You can front load it. You can do it onsite at the company. You can do it through distance learning or online course delivery. All of these are possible in a registered apprenticeship program. And we're really looking at ways to make this as accessible as possible for both employers and for the apprentices.

Competency-based apprenticeship. This is really new to apprenticeship. You educators have had quite a bit of experience and discussion around competency based apprenticeship. But it's really just in the last three or four years that the office of apprenticeship has been urging the expansion of competency based apprenticeship. There is a formal process for identifying the skills and competencies associated with the benchmarks. And then there are standards that the apprentice must demonstrate that they have completed in order to attain their credential. But it's no longer time based exclusively. It can be competency based.

And the German model is something that I think Rebecca Lake will be talking about much more in depth. But this is something that we've heard a great deal about. It is a formal process of aligning the program of study starting in secondary school with employers and with colleges so that there's a seamless progression for the apprentices. I see that I've reached my time and I'm going to turn it back to Christian.

MR. LAGARDE: Geri, thanks so much for what you just shared. And I hope – as we all know for attendees that are on here, it'll be recorded – (inaudible) – will be sharable. Everything's going to be accessible if you want to always go back and see what Geri has shared. Perfect segue, ending with the German model, as we hand it off to Dr. Rebecca Lake from Harbor College. I do want to address one thing though.

For those who know Rebecca Lake and have done work with her, her flawless execution is always perfect. For whatever reason when we uploaded the slides into Adobe, it kind of messed up a little bit of the format and the way the bullets are. So it's not Dr. Lake's fault. I'll blame it on myself and I'll blame it on Adobe.

With that I hand it off to you, Dr. Lake.

REBECCA LAKE: You're very funny, Christian. Thank you and hello everybody. And so you got a great introduction about registered apprentices and new apprenticeship models from Geri. So I'm going to quickly go through these.

And for anybody who wants any of the things that we're going to be talking about, as you've heard, perhaps if you've seen this before, and I've given a speech before at a conference, that all of the stuff that we use are Word documents. They're on our website. You can print them off and use them and change the name to protect the innocent. And please do that. Fact sheets are up there. Even samples of contracts. So please feel free to do any of that and all of that.

So quickly to go through, why we offer the registered apprenticeship programs. Because we're really talking about how do RA programs become integrated into colleges, how do we make that decision. Luckily for us, really the impetus because in community colleges until about three years ago now in 2015, I never used the word in community college of – it wasn't even in my lexicon, "registered apprentice."

But Zurich Insurance of North America is right here in our neighborhood came to us and said, we want to start a registered apprenticeship program here in North America. We use it in Switzerland and it does very well for us. And we want to start it. Do you want to work with us? And of course we said yes. So that was the impetus.

But what we found is many things I'm going to tell you, lessons learned, and I'm going to tell you some pitfalls, just don't do it, because we've already been there and it didn't work. But what we found is it's a win/win/win situation. It's a win for our employers, it's a win for those students, and job seekers, and career changers who are looking for their career, and it also helped us fulfill our mission. And if you're a community college you know that we need to keep those enrollments kind of steady, we need to enhance those retention rates, increase those completion rates. And it definitely does this because with us, we have almost all except for one of our program are AAS degrees. And it improves the bottom line.

So I’m going to tell you about some pitfalls as we got through these quickly, these slides, so that you understand where we were. We asked the general question, should we invest the time, and effort, and funds, and all that sort of stuff, that we have to do this. We also ask, do we have faculty. Because if you don't have faculty that want to work with you to do this at your institution, don't do it.

But luckily I had faculty in advanced manufacturing as we started their and a supply chain, and also with business administration that wanted to work with us. Top administrators, particularly the president, said go for it. And so we're in it for the long haul. If you're just in it to taste the cake and then get out of it, then it's probably not for you. But if you're in it for the long haul looking at ways that you creatively might want to bring those students, and keep them, and it goes to your bottom line and completion, then this is for you.

And is there a leader? It has to be a leader. And for us, we realize that it has to be at least – (inaudible) – position. Because you have to have that kind of power. And you have to be invested. Somebody has to really like this, not just another job. But somebody who really is invested in the project. That's me. But I'm also over a few others areas, but still heavily invested in registered apprenticeships.

Then we looked at the internal evaluation. So if we assess the organizational capacity and readiness, did we have structures, internal structures that were there and ready for us, like academics, and students services, student support, finance, and everything.

Number two is did we have college departments that wanted to streamline some of the admissions. Because what we found out is if you can streamline more, companies and students are more likely to work with you. For example, we do batch registering for our apprentices. So they never have to register. We try to do all of that stuff and streamline it, and streamline even orientation. And it seems to work very well.

Faculty have agreed to tweak some curriculum to meet the standards. And for example, as Geri was talking about, we have an AAS degree for example in advanced manufacturing or business administration. And we brought companies in to say, particularly for example Zurich Insurance, and said these are the competencies. What kind of competencies?

We asked them, do you want to see those people, those apprentices that work with you, when they get done with an AAS degree and the apprenticeship program, what do you want it to – what kind of competencies do you want them to have? And so we got their idea and their feedback. And then we have to have this management structure established so that we can really be responsible for the activities.

Then we had to do an external interest. And I always tell people, you know, every single company in our harbor area will write you a letter of support. But what we really have to know is will those companies hire the apprentice. And that's easier said than done. The culture shift, the pitfall we found, was they will say, yes, we want to do this.

But then when it comes to – but you have to hire them too, and pay them a salary, and then pay for their – we have it set up so they pay for their education. The money is not the issue. It's just that we've never done it this way. So a lot of education has to take place. But it's workable because we now have 87 registered apprentices.

We have to have the companies, like I said, and then you need to talk to those companies about how do you want the program situated and designed. Creativity is really important here. Do you want it in eight-week blocks, or 10-week blocks, or 12-week blocks. It can be anything. It doesn't have to be 16. It doesn't have to be eight.

It can be many different – it could look many different ways. Just be creative. We did it with ours, that they're all AAS degrees. And so that's what we did – the musts, and the don't-dos, and all of that. I always tell people that there are four things that you have to have, or don't do registered apprenticeships for the community colleges. One of them is you have to have employers committed. You also have to have faculty willing to work with you, work with that office, or that point person that's going to kind of move this and guide it forward, this registered apprenticeship initiative in your campus. You've got to have admissions.

I have admissions and his name is Bob Parsey (sp). And you can't have Bob because he's that good. He really gets it. And he and his staff are wonderful. And they meet with us, and they go out, and they do all the things that admissions does at your place, but they also talk about the registered apprenticeship program.

They don't have to know everything about it. They just have to have the ways of perhaps saying, are you a potential student that may want to do this, go to our website. Are you a potential employer that may want to do this? We'll have somebody come and talk to you. And then just give us the names. But admission gets it and it's wonderful to have that on your side. And then fourth is a champion.

So as we were talking about what it should look like and that sort of thing, so we know that every single community college across the country, if you had a company that already was a program sponsor, so this is the company now, then we as community colleges could obviously provide the RTI, working with that company. And so for Zurich Insurance for example, they have their own registered apprenticeship in general insurance. I have it, Harbor has it too; but we provide the RTI.

And so the students graduating will have an associate's degree and other credentials from the institute. It's an AINS insurance credential also. Matter of fact, just FYI, 19 people will be graduating from the Zurich general insurance. And so that means 19 people graduated from Harbor College with an AAS degree this December. And that's great for us.

So we decided that we wanted to become a program sponsor too. And all those things that Geri talked about, we do that, and we can do that, and because we know how to do that. We looked at the website and branding the look. Just make sure that all of you, if you're going to do that, you have kind of a standard look. And so we have the website that has lots of samples that are useful to everybody.

Just to let you know, admissions is helpful for us, that every time it goes out – because it goes to a lot of high schools and places that we can't go because there's little staff, that they always give our brochure and talk about the registered apprenticeship program. And they have streamlined some avenues that students can be admitted to the college. And we have an interest form. And tonight we're having – the first Tuesday of every month we have an interest for potential apprentices from 6 to 7:30. And they're there too. So admissions can really help you.

Here are some outreach ideas for employers. You have to have outreach people go out and talk to them. You can't do it by email, or only a card, or a mailer. You have to have employment breakfasts. You have to go out to those associations in those economic development areas of your villages. But you can do this. That's the main thing to know is that community colleges have been working with their advisory committees and with their workforce collaborators in the villages such as the economic development people. So we've been doing this for a long time. It is something that you can do.

For the potential apprentices, it's the same kind of thing. Monthly meetings, activities in high schools, presentations everywhere under the sun that you can get into, email blasts sent by admissions out to Harbor students that tell them of what is going on and that sort of thing. And you might have more and different creative ways that you talk, so using your social media for your students and those career changers. Use it. Use everything that you can think of. But if I can say one thing to you, be creative, be creative.

So here we are with what we have. We actually have now seven apprenticeship programs. And I just got banking and finance. And if you can see there we have two advanced manufacturing, supply chain, industrial maintenance. And is the only ones we have. So you can do this with other what I call nontraditional. And those who do Perkins understand nontrads, nontraditionals.

And we're getting very well-known for our nontraditionals, general insurance, supply chain, cybersecurity, now banking and finance. We're even going to do graphic arts design, sales and sales merchandising. So there's lots of ways. And those, we're just taking right off the AAS degree of business administration. And as community colleges we all have those.

So here is – and this is all on our website under fact sheets and all kinds of things like that, so feel free to go out there and get these. But this is what we cost. This is the charge per semester. There are of course six semesters to the apprentice towards the AAS degree. And advanced manufacturing we had to up it a little bit because we just didn't have – the fees went up so we had to kind of cover those. But it's six semesters. And that includes books, and tuition, and fees, and mentor training, and registration of all the apprentices. And that's how we run the program. And employers pay that. They haven't got in trouble with the amount of money.

The next slide is just the number of apprentices. And the next few will just be that. Let me tell you lessons learned. Here's number one, we have an academic coach. She's in my office. You can look at how many nice employers we have. We have now 28 employers. But we have an academic coach that touches base with the registered apprentices.

She also – faculty are working with us because they're teaching all these courses. If you look at the curriculum map you'll see all of the 20 courses that's in AAS degrees. And she touches base with them once or twice a week. We touch base with faculty, how is everybody doing, did anybody slip from an A to a C. We also touch base with companies, here's what your registered apprentice is doing. But we learned that that works.

Here's what our GPA of our apprentices is, 3.61 out of 4.0. We have a retention rate of 84 percent. And that'll probably go up at the end of this semester to probably around 93. But it really, really works. You have to take care of all the parts. And that means the faculty. The office of apprenticeship which is here at Harbor is out of my workforce development area.

But you need to really keep faculty involved, keep students involved, and really those employers. You have to get outreach people. And so we hired retired salesmen. And they're really working very well for us. And just keep data. So that's it for me. The next slide just has the programs coming to Harbor. But we have found that it's doable. Back to you, Christian.

MR. LAGARDE: Thank you, Dr. Lake. And I appreciate that one of the great things – you just heard nuggets and nuggets of gold from Dr. Lake. One of the great things about Harbor and the culture there is their willingness to share everything.

So here's the website. It's going to be posted on workforce GPS. If you don't have an account, please do that. But copy it down right now. Click it. Type it into your browser. There's tons of the resources that Dr. Lake just described and information about what they're doing in real time. So please use that website. They're so willing to share. It's fantastic. Thanks, Dr. Lake.

All right, handing off. We're moving from the Midwest over to Montana, Valerie Piet from Missoula is going to talk about what they're doing in the world of healthcare apprenticeships. So with that I hand it off to Valerie.

VALERIE PIET: Thank you, Christian. Again my name is Valerie. I am coming to you from beautiful and cold Missoula, Montana. I'm representing a round four TAACCCT grant named Healthcare Montana, which was broadly aimed to address rural healthcare workforce needs across the state. That grant was awarded to Missoula College, and then there's several other colleges that are also partners on that grant, as well as the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, which is where I work.

As Geri was discussing, some of the states have state apprenticeship agencies and some are run through the federal office of apprenticeship. So the Montana Department of Labor and Industry is our state apprenticeship agency. And we were tasked through this grant to grow registered apprenticeships in the healthcare industry.

Over the two and a half years that we have been involved in this project, we started with zero, never had a successful registered apprenticeship program in healthcare. And now we have up to 130 registered apprentices, in 15 different occupations, with around 40 employer sponsors. In order to provide that amount of growth in a relatively short amount of time, we had to address a pretty severe learning curve throughout the state with regards to registered apprenticeships in the nontraditional occupations.

That curve extended from our employers, our colleges, professional organizations, licensing and credentialing entities, and our workforce development partners. We had a lot of great resources through our TAACCCT four grant, including our dedicated team and other support staff who worked with regards to student support, employer engagement – (inaudible) – college, as well as a lot of the higher ed leadership.

So my experience is mostly with healthcare apprenticeships, but I can speak a little bit to all the other efforts that have been going on in the state of Montana regarding registered apprenticeships. To show how we've grown from zero to 130 apprentices in two and a half years, I've categorized our efforts into five general strategies.

First off, we do have some colleges that are serving as a registered apprenticeship sponsor. I'm not going to go into this too much because that's something that Rebecca covered. But we did receive funding from a private entity for a registered apprenticeship program in which tribal colleges led and sponsored registered apprenticeships across the state. We have seven tribal colleges across Montana and several of those have been involved in that effort.

We've also started a little bit smaller than what Rebecca did and incorporate existing programs as the RTI for apprenticeship, as one strategy. We've also used apprenticeship in the promotion of distance delivery across the state. We've used registered apprenticeship for development of non-curriculum modules, and also developing degree completion pathways for graduated apprenticeship in existing types of programs.

To start, we learned really early on that in healthcare there are some pretty strict licensing and educational requirements, and that we needed to approach registered apprenticeship that it wasn't a way to work around some of those licensing requirements. It wasn't a shortcut or a way to get out of some kind of requirement.

So if there was an education or licensing standard that already existed in the state, apprenticeship was going to need to utilize those requirements as is. We view the apprenticeship as a way to augment existing requirements, facilitating completion and more successful training for apprentices, by having employer sponsors and mentorships, rather than to change any existing educational programs.

So for several of our apprenticeships, the existing types of education programs that have been traditionally used to train those occupations are what serves as the RTI for our apprenticeship. About 25 percent of our apprentices are in programs like this, that are degree bearing or credit bearing programs. Some of the examples are surgical technology, pharmacy technology, practical nurse, and medical claims.

As Rebecca mentioned, faculty involvement is wonderful in this type of utilization. I would say that it's not absolutely essential using this strategy because we weren't really asking for a whole lot of changes to existing programs. But when we had it, it was absolutely fantastic. We've done joint employer outreach with faculty members, and done a lot of work to make sure that the programs are going to work well with apprenticeships.

In general this strategy we hope to increase enrollment in programs and promote degree completion for existing programs. And it helps to promote the grow your own strategy of apprenticeships and in place career advancement. We know that not everyone can leave the workforce in order to advance their careers. One of the strategies that we used with this type of program is something that we call the step down role.

That means while someone is training to become a certain type of occupation, they work in a role that is one licensing, education, credentialing requirement lower than what they're training to become. And that's a way to work with licensing and educational requirements. So for example, an apprentice who's training to become a pharmacy tech can work as a pharmacy technician in training, who's licensed by the Montana Board of Pharmacy, for a certain amount of time while they're going through their program.

So they still could have requirements, competencies, and work on the job while they're furthering their education. So finding an appropriate step down role has been a challenge for some of the programs. But we've been able to work through that.

We also came to the conclusion as a state agency that we were going to consider clinical rotations part of the RTI. I know that some states have taken a different approach where clinical rotations are considered part of the on the job training of the apprenticeship. But that was a conclusion that we needed to make to help maintain the integrity of our programs and coordinate with our faculty. It might be something that we change later on. But for now we do – (inaudible) – clinical rotation part of the theoretical instruction of an apprenticeship.

Another approach that we've used is promoting and expanding distance delivery across the state. A lot of programs in Montana that might be the minimum education requirement for an occupation are only located in one or two places throughout the state. So there is a surplus of graduates in that occupation in one location and a shortage elsewhere. So working through our TAACCCT grant, we were able to develop an RFP process for faculty members to put their programs in a distance format.

And we specifically asked them if they wanted to incorporate apprenticeship as part of their proposal. We had five colleges and eight programs that specifically mentioned that they wanted to incorporate apprenticeship as part of their distance delivery, which we thought was a great testament that the learning curve had been addressed with regards to apprenticeship, and that faculty were eager to play in the space with apprenticeship.

The incorporating registered apprenticeship into a distance delivery program helped to address some of the quality concerns of employers and faculty, that they know – faculty members know that there's someone onsite where the apprentice and student lives on their job to help them contextualize the education they're learning through their formal program. The role of the mentor is absolutely crucial here. And it's definitely a way for them to promote their program statewide. As I mentioned, there are a lot of locations that had a surplus of certain types of occupations. And then if they could promote their programs throughout the state, that helps them increase their applicant pool significantly.

The obvious challenge here is that does take a lot of time on the part of the faculty to put their programs in a distance format. And some faculty really like teaching in a classroom setting. But the advantages definitely outweighed some of the negatives there. And of course we had to navigate licensing requirements, accreditation requirements, and that's something that the faculty has been willing to do so.

I'd also love to give a shout out to our licensing board. They have been fantastic partners throughout this process. Licensing board, their job is safety; it's not workforce development. So when an apprenticeship comes along and talks about that we want to be involved in workforce development for the occupations they oversee, they've been really wonderful and given a lot of fantastic feedback regarding our efforts.

Next up, for colleges that have continuing education departments, this might be relevant. We've used non-credit modules to help promote apprenticeship throughout the state. When we started our effort, our outreach and prioritization was largely employer driven. We did use labor market information and also examples of registered apprenticeship programs in healthcare occupations from other states to gauge interest.

Around 10 years ago there was a pilot program from the U.S. DOL in certified nurse aide specialty programs such as restorative care and dementia care. And that idea really resonated with our Montana employers. So once we had a lot of interest from our Montana employers, we realized that we didn't really have any curriculum that was suitable to serve as the RTI for our restorative care and dementia care apprenticeships.

So through our TAACCCT grant we were able to develop some non-credit modules that are available digitally for all Montana employers. Those are in restorative care, dementia care, patient center care, which includes elements of palliative care and mentorship. There's also behavioral health non-credit modules. Through the RFP process I mentioned earlier, we also have a 15 credit behavioral health certificate in technical studies version.

So two versions that are addressing behavioral health. Successes of this strategy is that there is massive interest. When the restorative care curriculum came out, within a month we had 30 apprentices registered, with 11 employer sponsors, one of which was a consortium sponsor that served 10 facilities. So it's almost a fourth of our efforts so far in this restorative care training. And relatively easy to – (inaudible) – and deliver.

Some of the challenges with this strategy is that we need to find a sustainable business model for this curriculum. Our strategy was that this was going to be available for free to all Montana employers, encourage them to use the curriculum as part of an apprenticeship. But going forward we need to find a permanent home for this curriculum in terms of a learning management system, and for someone to oversee it, update it, and just generally manage the curriculum.

So we are speaking with a few different entities to own this moving forward. It might be a continuing education department at a college, an industry association, or us as the Montana Department of Labor and Industry. There are some advantages for switching this to a paid model versus a free curriculum model, in terms of buy in from the employers and incentives to complete the program.

And then lastly we have an effort regarding promoting degree completion pathways for graduated apprentices in what we consider traditional apprentice occupations in the construction and building trades. This parallels a lot of the work at the national level that Amy and the registered apprenticeship college consortium have been doing. Prior to this effort there was a statewide prior learning assessment policy that capped credits counted towards degree completion from prior learning at 25 percent of a degree program.

For a 60-credit AS degree, there was a 15-credit cap. The barrier here was that for something, for an example, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union, IBEW, that program had been approved by the American Council of Education, or ACE, for 54 credits. That had been done at the national level. So a 54-credit program was being capped at 15 credits, which really discouraged former apprentices from completing a program using their experience as prior learning.

So in response to that a taskforce as convened with leadership from the Department of Labor and Industry, the Montana university system, and all partner colleges, to revise the prior learning policy. And that taskforce differentiated between prior learning from experience and prior learning from instructional programs. The experiential prior learning is still capped at 25 percent.

However, the second category, prior learning from instructional programs, now has no cap. So under the new policy, the 54 credits recommended by the council of education, 29 of the 54 are applied towards a 60-credit AS degree, the remaining 25 percent towards a bachelor's level program. We heard pretty strongly from those partners that their journey level workers wanted not just to finish an associate's degree, but to complete a four year degree in something like management of their businesses. So this was a major policy success that happened at the statewide level.

There were some hiccups involved in acquiring transcripts and making sure that this was implemented. But it was really more of a challenge in learning each other's languages between multiple different parties, rather than an ideological barrier. And we hope to replicate this with other programs, union and non-union, moving forward.

So with that, that sums up all the different ways that we have tried to work through our college system to promote registered apprenticeships. And I will turn it back over to Christian.

MR. LAGARDE: Thanks so much for that. Wow. The statewide initiative and the statewide scale that you guys have done is fantastic. With our last three minutes I do want to address some of the questions, and I particularly want to sort of let – you'll see in a chat box in a second, about some of the questions about WIOA and youth programs.

Today's webinar has been about apprenticeships for community colleges, but I believe – (inaudible) – is going to put something in the chat box about addressing that and showing you where to get some resources to help you with that.

I do want to take this one question because it pertains to the design and implementation for apprenticeships. And it was addressed to Dr. Lake, but I think this is both for Valerie and for Rebecca. "How did you sell apprenticeships to faculty and leadership" – and I'm guess that would be campus leadership – "in a way that made them so willing to work with you?" Rebecca, could you go ahead and answer that one first and then I'll give it to Val.

DR. LAKE: OK. Sure. We had had a TAACCCT grant, so I had been working with the advanced manufacturing faculty. But essentially I looked at the last 10 years, how many of them graduated AAS degrees. And in advanced manufacturing there were very few graduates with AAS degrees.

And so we were talking to them about how would you like to have more retention and more classes during the day, how would you like to graduate some students with AAS degrees, and have courses that never cancel, because we don't cancel once you set the cohort, we don't cancel. And so that was fine.

The administration got it in a heartbeat. It's retention. It's every semester there is money coming in for every single one of the registered apprentices because the companies pay for them, and the graduation and completion rates.

So it really wasn't a sell at the top. And it was more of just an explanation for the faculty; particularly those program directors, or chairs, or whatever your college talks about them.

MR. LAGARDE: Right. Valerie, your take on that?

MS. PIET: Sure. For Montana colleges, the benefits to the faculty were similar to what Rebecca mentioned in terms of increasing retention and increasing enrollment. Because the apprentices are sponsored are supported, it eliminates some of the student barriers that we have for individuals going back to school.

We know that not everyone can leave the workforce to become a full-time student. I also would like to speak to the degree completion component. For a lot of these occupations, we were finding that students were getting hired prior to completing their programs. Something like medical coding is a great example, that those students have value to an employer partway through their program.

But if we can devise an apprenticeship program to structure around that program and incentivize the apprentices to complete their degree program while they're starting to work, which is going to be a benefit to the college that those programs are completed, and to the apprentice in the long run in terms of their future career advancement.

MR. LAGARDE: Perfect. Thank you so much for that. We are at our 2:00 point. I'm going to hand it back to Laura who's going to share some final words today and describe and tell you guys where you'll be able to find the presentation, the recording that's going to be uploaded on Workforce GPS, and the contact information obviously for everyone.

As I was describing, everyone who has presented today is willing to share and willing to be available for questions. So please tap into the recording and the transcript. That'll be posted on Workforce GPS after this is over. Laura, I give it up to you.

MS. CASERTANO: All right. Thanks.

(END)