**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Scaling Career Pathways in Wisconsin**

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LAURA CASERTANO: With that I'm going to get myself right out of the way and move us into today's presentation. I want to welcome everyone to today's Scaling Career Pathways in Wisconsin webinar.

And I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Robin Fernkas. She's the director for the Division of Strategic Investments, Employment and Training Administration, with the U.S. Department of Labor. Robin, take it away.

ROBIN FERNKAS: Well, thanks, Laura. And good afternoon everybody. And welcome to this webinar on scaling career pathways in Wisconsin.

As Laura said, I am the director of our Division of Strategic Investments at the Employment and Training Administration, and I'm going to serve as one of your moderators today. Joining me will be my co-moderator, Erin Berg, the community college program specialist for the Office of Career Technical and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education.

This webinar is one of a series of webinars that we are co-hosting with the Department of Education to share promising practices and innovations coming out of our Trade Adjustment Community College and Career Training Program, which we refer to as TAACCCT for short. So you'll hear that acronym throughout the webinar.

The TAACCCT program provided nearly $2 billion over a seven year period to help the nation's community colleges deliver industry aligned credentials for unemployed and underemployed adults. The Department of Labor has administered TAACCCT in partnership with the Department of Education, so we're delighted that Erin could just us for this series. Erin, would you like to say a few words?

ERIN BERG: Thanks, Robin. Yes, I'd just like to say good afternoon and thank you so much for joining our webinar today. As Robin mentioned, I'm Erin, I'm with the Office of Career Technical and Adult Education with the U.S. Department of Education. And in my job it's my pleasure to serve as liaison to all community colleges in the United States.

As Robin mentioned, since the inception of the TAACCCT program, the Departments of Labor and Education have been working together to support applicants, grantees, and then now the greater workforce community through products – (inaudible) – online – (inaudible) – educational resource repository.

In my role I'm able to hear about many of the great successes and innovations at community colleges. And I'm also often asked what resources might be available for colleges facing challenges or looking to improve and update their curriculum or instructional practices.

And today's webinar addresses one of those challenges that I hear about is developing and implementing career pathways for academic and career and technical programs. So today's we'll hear about some of the resources that have been developed with a Wisconsin project. I believe a lot of those will be available in the SkillsCommons.org repository.

And we'll also hear about the statewide effort to align programs in the technical college system with career pathways using their tax funding from Wisconsin. So we're again very excited to be part of this webinar series.

We've got at least three or four more opportunities in the next month or two to learn about some of these resources and things that have come out of the TAACCCT program. And I just wanted to say thank you for inviting me to be a part to our colleagues at the Department of Labor, and also thank you for joining us today to our excellent presents from the Wisconsin technical college system. Looking forward to hearing from you.

MS. FERNKAS: Thanks, Erin. So with this final round of TAACCCT funding, I wanted to take a moment and just reflect on what we were attempting to accomplish here. And then Scott's going to tell you in real time what is happening with the funding that we've put out there.

But our departments were focused on advancing innovative sector based system change and career pathways in regional and statewide economies. And so we're interested in taking promising approaches to scale and driving policy changes that would lead to changes within institutions, within state community college systems, or across community colleges in states where centralized systems didn't exist or still don't exist.

And so while all of our rounds of TAACCCT focused on building career pathway programs, what was different about the final round of the TAACCCT funding is that it really encouraged colleges to partner with employers, their workforce system, and others, to build career pathway systems for their state.

And so the state of Wisconsin received additional funding to build a career pathway system. And I will have to say, and Scott can say here too, a lot had happened in Wisconsin prior to getting the TAACCCT money. So not all of this happened with TAACCCT money.

But what he can tell you is how they used the TAACCCT resources to leverage what they were doing, and really help foment a system that made it a seamless progression for individuals to take one educational step to another, and to ease their transition into the labor market.

So we were looking for grantees to go beyond building their career pathway programs, to building their statewide system. And really that would encompass accelerated degree paths and credentials, competency based education that incorporated credit for prior learning, and looking for other innovative strategies that would really pave the way for making the college more accessible for adult workers.

So you'll hear how Wisconsin leverages grant funds to align the programs of its 16 colleges in the Wisconsin technical college system with its labor market needs, in partnership with secondary schools, the workforce development system, and a host of other partners.

So this work has really been foundational for their implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act that requires the development of career pathways. So I see on the webinar today we have a lot of organizations from the workforce system as well as from other parts of education, adult education, as well as career and technical ed. So it's great to see a lot of the partners who are required to build these systems logging into the webinar to hear about Wisconsin's experience.

So talking about the webinar series, Erin already did. But if you're tuning in for the first time, just be aware that – (inaudible) – series we hope you will enjoy today and come back for future webinars. So we're going to turn to a polling question now, just to find out a little bit more about you, and wanted to know how you would best describe your organization.

So it looks like if you're from the secondary career/technical ed, whether you're from community or technical colleges, a four year institution, the workforce system, or other. For those of you who are other, I don't know if we want to -- maybe you can add that in the chat box to let us know a little bit more about where you're coming from. But it does look like the largest percentage of you are coming from the workforce system. So that's great.

We're going to move on in the interest of time to some of our other polling questions. So if you didn't get a chance to tell us about your organization, feel free to do so in the chat. But we'd like to know what best describes your experience working with career pathways at your individual institution. We're going to ask you in a moment about working within your state.

But right now we want to know what are you doing in your individual institution, how much experience you've had. So it really looks like the bulk of you, we've got people at all ranges here, from having little experience, to being in the process of developing them, to having robust and well-defined career pathway system. But really many of you are in the throes of developing it. So we really hope that you'll hear some things today that'll help inform what you're doing at your individual institution.

And then similarly, if we can move on to the next poll. We'd like to know your experience in working with career pathways within your state. And I'm sorry if we're moving a little too quickly. We wanted to make sure we have plenty of time for Scott to present, and then to lave time for some questions today. So we're moving a little quickly here.

But this one, again we were asking about whether you've had very little experience, whether you're in the process of building them, whether you've coordinated at the state level, or whether you're really not aware of what's happening in your state. I'll give just a few more seconds.

So it looks like most of you are in the process again of building those -- building a career pathway system. And that's great to hear. And that you are coordinating at the state level, which is also great to hear.

I don't know, Erin, if you had anything you wanted to say about your reactions to the polls before we move on.

MS. BERG: No. It's just exciting to see the movement in that direction and glad that we could potentially provide some best practices or resources that could help.

MS. FERNKAS: Great. Well, I think we're going to move on and really wanted to present the star of our show today, who is Scott DuBenske. And he's the education director for career transition/workforce development at the Wisconsin Technical College System.

So I'm going to turn this to Scott and then we'll be back after Scott's presentation for some questions and answers. Scott?

SCOTT DUBENSKE: Great. Well, welcome to today's session, everyone. Thank you for all taking the time to be here. Thank you, Robin and Erin, for all of your support in pulling this together. It's been quite an experience so far here in Wisconsin.

And there are a number of people, a number of organizations that have all played truly significant roles over our experience in career pathways, talent development, and more importantly growing and sustaining partnerships.

Because as we'll identify later on in the session, the partnerships, the collaboration, and really growing and building those, are what creates the true opportunity for everyone to expand their talent pipelines to grow both economically and as an organization, as a community.

So very special thank you to the Department of Labor, the Department of Education. Important thank you to all of our stakeholders in and around Wisconsin, all of our partner organizations, some of whom I saw log in a short time ago. They've been just tremendous partners to work with, some of the best I've experienced.

And lastly a very special thank you to Dr. Morna Foy, the president here of the Wisconsin Technical College System. Dr. Foy has as long as I've know her been a true champion of pathway work here in Wisconsin.

And her vision and leadership has truly been instrumental in some of the accomplishments that we've been able to achieve here in Wisconsin. So without further ado, let's talk a little bit more about why we're all here. And that is Wisconsin's experience in this thing called career pathway development in partnership, establishment, and more importantly how does that all fit into the world of WIOA.

Well, as you can see now, part of Wisconsin's vision for our state plan under WIOA is to develop and deliver a results driven talent development system providing opportunity for Wisconsin's current and future workforce and businesses to sustain economic viability and self-sufficiency.

So there's a lot there. Let's unpack it just a little bit and find what are we really talking about when we read this on paper, when we see it on the screen. What we're talking about is results, producing results, producing opportunity, and enabling, empowering individuals and organizations to move forward, ultimately achieving academic and employment success.

So that sounds interesting. It sounds like a very lofty ambition. But how do we actually go about accomplishing this especially across multiple organizations, multiple partners, various geographic regions, and certainly a broad range of citizens, whether they be clients, students across your individual state or across the country.

So going as far back as 2014, there was really a lot that was beginning to happen in the state of Wisconsin. Now as we mentioned earlier, the foundations of some of the career pathway work in Wisconsin date as far back as early 2004-2005, when Wisconsin really had an amazing opportunity to begin working more closely with the career pathway methodology through some of our early work through the Rise, through Shifting Gears, and some of those early projects. But ultimately that's what got the ball rolling.

And as we would later discover, career pathway methodology had the ability to truly transform the way that we deliver education, the way that we develop talent, and ultimately the way that that talent begins to interact with the business community, with the economic development community around the state.

Now about the time we got to 2014, we had pockets of excellence that existed throughout our system. And it's worth mentioning at this point that the Wisconsin Technical College System has a governance model as a system.

And that is that we have a system office that provides policy and technical guidance and support to all 16 of our technical colleges. So by being organized in that way, we have a small but significant built in advantage as to how we communicate, how we approach initiatives together, and more importantly how we understand the ever changing landscape of economics, of education, and more importantly student development across the state.

So about the time we got to 2014, the WIOA regulations were really beginning to take shape. We had guidance pieces in place. And a lot was beginning to happen. Now the timing of all this was extremely helpful, as you'll see in just a minute. But it wasn't absolutely necessary. Certainly we would have been able to accomplish what you're about to see without all of that coalescing at about the same point in time, but it sure did make our life a little bit easier.

The reason for that being that about the time that Wisconsin was working to develop its Wisconsin state plan under WIOA, we had a multitude of various state leaders involved on a leadership team, representing all four of the WIOA tittles, to begin to come together, to work collaboratively, and really figure out what Wisconsin's vision for the future was going to look like, and how that might fit into our state plan.

About that same time, Wisconsin was very fortunate indeed to have the opportunity to compete for and win funding under TAACCCT 4, and subsequently and exceeding the Cap grant from the Department of Labor for $5 million, specifically designed to take career pathway advancement in Wisconsin to greater scale and greater alignment.

Now when we talk about increasing scale, about increasing our alignment, we're not simply talking about increasing the number of pathway options that are available. What it really means is taking a hard look at credentialing, and building out better, deeper, more fundamental ladders and lattices for adult learners around the state, to engage and deeply align in all policy across all organizations that play a role in developing talent and ultimately helping Wisconsin move forward as a state and being a leader within the country.

So within this exceeding the Cap grant, we had three very specific goals that we wanted to accomplish. For the purposes of this afternoon's session, we're going to concentrate primarily on goal number one, which was aligning pathway policy between systems through collaboration.

Now as I mentioned before, as I alluded to, pathway development in Wisconsin or quite frankly in any state across the country, really involves a number of different partners, a number of different stakeholders. And I really can't stress enough the importance of those collaborations.

Whether you are in Title I, II, III or IV, whether you're in K-12, whether you're a community based organization, everyone, every organization has a significant role to play as we develop individual talent, as we award credential, as we develop and embrace new opportunities for our students, for our clients, and ultimately for our citizens.

So in seeking to align pathway policy across systems through collaboration, that state leadership team that had begun their work under the auspices of WIOA really became a great jumping off point for us, for those us leading the project here, in that we already had a collection of leaders, a collection of very forward thinking individuals, who were coming together, who were building and establishing trust as a group with one another, and more importantly they were beginning to think more dynamically about what do the new regulations under WIOA truly mean for Wisconsin in the way that we interact with one another, and more importantly in the way that we interact with our clients, with our students, and so on.

So in aligning policy across organizations, in developing additional collaborative partnership, and truly in strengthening existing partnerships, what we are going to see in this presentation is the approach that we took from the state level, as well as the approach we took from a local or regional level, and more importantly how that dynamic, how that evolution of partnership evolved and really shaped the Wisconsin experience.

And lastly we're going to talk a little bit more about how data is really enabling and empowering us to make better informed, more strategic decisions across all levels of pathway and partnership development here within the state of Wisconsin.

So at the state level I mentioned the state leadership team that was working on the WIOA state plan. My fellow co-leads and I took this opportunity to approach each one of those individuals, do a little bit more research about who they were, the roles that they held within their respective organizations, and more importantly begin to think much more closely about who we want to have involved in this project, in this committee.

And in doing so we were able to be very strategic about which organizations we needed to have together, and more importantly who within each organization was the right individual to come to the table and begin to participate in a really transformative way, in a way that would guide and support statewide agency collaboration, in a way that could create stave level system alignment, in a way that would create alignment both within and across multiple organizations and agencies.

And lastly a group of people who representing their individuals would be in a position to both plan and support professional development that would both enable and empower workforce across the state of Wisconsin.

So as you can see on the screen, our Wisconsin pathways committee is comprised of 14 different members representing all of those organizations there on the left hand side of the screen. This committee has been instrumental in accomplishing all of those tasks you see on the right hand side of the screen there.

And it's important to note that this committee is continuing to grow and evolve every step of the way. And while some of you I'm sure are looking at the list of the 14 members and the organizations on the left, rest assured that those bullet points, those list of organizations is continuing to grow and expand where it is appropriate.

Again, it's very important to be very intentional and very strategic about how you approach that collaboration, how you approach building a team, and really creating a committee, an atmosphere, and an element of trust and of camaraderie that will enable you and position you to accomplish the goals that you set out to accomplish, not only now but into the future as well.

So that brings us to the composition and the purpose of the pathways committee here in Wisconsin. Now it's important to note that balance on this committee is really achieved through the compositions of the committee. I mentioned that it was a very intentional membership list.

And while there are individuals that ultimately come together under the banner of the pathways committee, it's also important to note that these individuals are there to represent their organizations. And in so doing, the conversation, the decision, the planning, and ultimately a strategy that evolves as a result of these people are really reflective of their organization and not the individual who's there in the room.

So it's important to note too that there are a couple different underlying elements that really lend a significant degree of authority and legitimacy not only to the group itself, but to the work the group is seeking to accomplish together.

Some of those are the obligations to the Department of Labor, both under TAACCCT 4 as well as TAACCCT 2 and are exceeding the Cap grant. But there are other obligations in play such as those found in WIOA, those found in our state plan, sort of the model of shared accountability and really seeking to better understand how we can accomplish all of the great things that are ultimately going to improve our state, to improve our citizens' lives as a result of our collaboration, and the alignment and better understanding of one another's not only policies, but operating procedures as well.

So some of the parameters that exist around the pathways committee certainly do include a protocol. We developed a simple three page protocol document that really guides and shapes what each one of these meetings looks like, how the conversation is brought to the table, and more importantly how decisions are made, and how those decisions, how that information is communicated not only back to the respective organizations, but from those organizations to the committee members at the table as well.

So getting the right people on board was a tremendous undertaking and one that really bears repeating. Any team, no matter how well-intentioned, simply has to have the right people on board as part of that team if you want to accomplish your goals and ultimately find success in and around that organization.

Now we ended up bringing our collection of people, our collection of organizations together because we had some background knowledge to work from, specifically the lessons that Wisconsin and our Technical College System was able to learn from previous career pathways work, and some of our early grants such as Rise, and the Shifting Gears grant through the Joyce Foundation.

But ultimately we arrived at the decision and at the conclusion that there are just a handful of factors that would ultimately guide and answer the question, who are the right people to have on the committee to represent their organizations.

We needed people who could make decisions on behalf of their organization. We needed people with the ability to not only deliver information, but to commit resources on behalf of their organization as well. We needed people who ultimately could take action relatively quickly.

Certainly if we had an opportunity, a discussion, a decision made at a committee meeting, it was certainly in everyone's best interest to have people lending information, lending analysis to that decision, who could not only act on the decision, but ultimately commit resources to assure that that course of action or that approach could effectively be carried out at the organization.

We also needed individuals who could essentially have the authority to delegate as needed. Certainly we all have a lot to do certainly in the world of workforce, economic development, as well as post-secondary education. So it is important that once leaders, once strategic thinkers have the opportunity to make an informed decision, they have the resources including staff and people resources to effectively carry out that action.

Those individual at the table also need to be content informed. Now this is a very important term here, content informed. That is, they need to have a solid understanding of their organization, of the work that occurs within their organization, as well as how that work intersects with and aligns with some of the work of other partner organizations.

Ultimately we arrived at meeting people here in Wisconsin who were at the bureau director level or above. So simply put, executive level or above here in Wisconsin. Content informed was critical because we discovered from early lessons that there are a number of very talented individuals at all of our organizations who could be considered content experts, but normally their expertise is very, very focused in a specific area.

So we ultimately needed people who were content informed as opposed to being content experts. I mentioned previously that the partnership model is absolutely key in making all of this happen. And looking back on the previous slide, if it wasn't for that initial WIOA state planning group bringing many of those leaders together in the first place, our goals will still be the same, but certainly our task would be much more difficult to carry out.

So in building a team that was based off of mutual benefit, off of trust, off of a commitment to the work that needed to be done. We found that playing off of that familiarity, not only with the pathways work but with one another, ultimately accelerated our progress toward building an effective and engaging team.

But ultimately you need to keep people engaged on that team, keep them involved and motivated in order to continue making progress, in order to continue moving pathway alignment, policy development, in a forward, in a positive direction. Ultimately we relied on the three dimensions of fit as they apply to our team here in Wisconsin. Ultimately we had to work from the goals or the vision of our project, exceeding the Cap to scale career pathways in Wisconsin.

But ultimately it was the requirements under WIOA, that shared accountability, that partnership and collaboration across title partners, that ultimately drove us to recognize that strategy, finding a purpose and a common thread to come together, chemistry, more importantly how you interact with one another, what you do in the moment with that plan, to develop that strategy, and ultimately that forward looking approach to keep people engaged under operational management were the three primary domains, if you will, that we focused on in order to keep our team engaged, and keep people moving forward, and keep them motivated in the work.

Now let's take a little bit closer look at each one of those domains. The strategy that we employed involved a lot of very intentional, very thoughtful activity prior to, during, and subsequent to each and every interaction that we had with the team. First and foremost, we needed to have an agenda that allowed people to have a true impact.

And that is really moving our team to a place where each and every agenda could be developed from an organic level, from the ground up, whereby the strength of the team itself came from, an agenda that was populated with and built around issues, ideas, and elements, that were important to each and every member at the table. And by allowing that input, that organic growth of agenda in the first place, there was that opportunity to be impactful, to really contribute to the time we spent together.

Now as I mentioned before, these are leaders, these are executives within each one of the organizations. Bottom line, these are some very, very busy people with a lot of work to do. So in doing so, we found that one of the strategies to bringing them together in this way was that it allowed them access to one another.

Again these are high level individuals that ultimately don't have any extra time on their calendar for any additional activities that aren't going to add value to the work that they have to do. So by providing them a chance to build an agenda from the ground up together, to discuss important issues together as a team, we gave them access to one another.

And that is really recognizing the influence of their peers around the table, and ultimately it provided them one additional avenue to access one another. It gave them an avenue to share and receive information, to discuss policy, and interact in a new way that they might not otherwise be as easily accessible to one another.

Following up to every action, every idea within the committee is absolutely essential. It's very important to not only engage them in each topic, each policy discussion, but to continue reengaging in order to keep the items, keep the momentum moving forward in a meaningful way.

Now I mentioned before we were very intentional about who we invited to participate on this committee. And in doing so our membership roster is somewhat limited. We identified key members from each organization that would ultimately add value, and add depth, and a richness to the discussion, to the work that we were doing.

But also because this membership is limited to certain level of people, the members ultimately are there to hold one another accountable for the work, for the discussion, for the ideas that are generated in and around each one of these interactions.

Now taking all that together in context really allows for an opportunity where there is no wasted time. Again these are busy people, we all have a lot to do, and we still want to make meaningful progress around aligning our strategies and our operating procedures in a way that is going to benefit our clients, our students, and the citizens of all of our communities together.

So in doing so the agenda was purposeful. And what we also discovered, and this might be the golden insight of the day, is that food is a magical thing in bringing people together for a meeting and for a discussion. We would provide a menu out to individuals on the committee. We would order food ahead of time. Every member of the committee was happy to ultimately pay for their lunch and move forward together.

But in doing so you not only allowed people to connect during a time of day that was accessible to them, but by bringing food into the picture you create a certain level of comfort, you create an opportunity for everyone to share a common experience, and ultimately deepen the bond, deepen the trust and the relationship that exists among all the committee members.

Now if that sounds a little bit fluffy and a little bit light, it might be. But I can tell you from experience that food, accessibility, and really adding value to everything that you do within a committee, has only strengthened the work and the bond that we all have as professionals, as partners in the strategy development together.

Now it's very important too that leaders within each one of these organizations, CEOs, executives, whatever title you may give them in our organization, be involved so far as that they understand and support the work that the committee members are doing.

It's very important that leaders are able to champion the work that the committee members are doing, but ultimately are not the ones that are on the committee. Leadership support, leadership championship is absolutely essential into ensuring that resources are provided, to ensuring that the work can continue forward. But it's also very important that the top executive, the CEO if you will, is not involved at the committee level simply because their role within the organization

is quite different.

Their view, their perspective – (inaudible) – topics, common – (inaudible), the goals set to not only expand, but align the policies and the methodologies to grow a pathway system in Wisconsin. We were able to provide intrinsic value within each one of those goals, within each one of those items. And ultimately, as I mentioned previously, that work that was done with our state leaders under the WIOA state plan certainly accelerated our progress because it created a positive past experience for everyone to come together. Certainly this wasn't a requirement per se, but it certainly did accelerate the work that we've been doing.

Many of these leaders have connections in other settings as a result of the work they do and the position that they hold. And providing that commonality, I mentioned before, food, meeting around lunch times, that ability to maybe relax just a little bit and experience and embrace that informal interaction with one another, has gone a long way toward deepening trust, to getting to know one another on a level that goes well beyond our job description, and ultimately make one another more approachable and more accessible, so that when we need to take action and think very critically about how our work is ultimately going to move toward a goal that we've set as a committee, we're able to do that from a very collegial and a very deep level that has been established through time and trust.

And more importantly, it's important not to lose sight of our accomplishments. And not just accomplishments as a committee, but accomplishments as an organization, as an individual, by celebrating, by recognizing, and embracing accomplishments that occur in and around our system in our state here in Wisconsin. We ultimately position ourselves to better understand and better support and champion one another toward the goals that we have to drive career pathways, to drive curriculum, to include employers as a voice, to grow the talent pipeline, and many of the other goals that we have and that we're working toward here in Wisconsin.

Lastly both of those two domains, if you will, feed into this last one that we call operational management. It's critical that you have someone identified as a convener and as a facilitator. The convener needs to be someone with whom all of the members are familiar, all of the members have presumably work with and trust, someone who very busy people, very busy executives are willing to come to a meeting, to embrace a policy, to look at resources, to guide and support the group. And certainly without the facilitator, the individual, to do the legwork, to make it happen, to reserve the space, ultimately many of those efforts to come together as a team will fall flat.

Now I mentioned some of the importance of follow up and of interest-based perspective there along the way. But then lastly the scope of influence that we achieve as a team ultimately grows the deeper we get into our system and the more work that we do as a committee. Certainly building statewide systems is not something that happens quickly.

It takes time, it takes a very specific and intentional approach, a very strategy approach, and it really takes a lot of effort to build, to grow, and maintain relationships. In doing so it's been very important for us to always maintain that clarity of role. Who are the experts at the table? What organizations do they represent?

If I have a question about how one of my technical colleges in northern Wisconsin interacts with one of the local job centers, I know exactly who at that table I can talk to, how that policy might impact other people around the table, and from that perspective we can ultimately arrive at that win/win perspective.

And that is truly helping and empowering one another to get what they want or what their organization needs to more effectively operate and provide a value to the clients or the students that they're serving. Remember, in the end we're all about empowering the individuals and the organizations around the table.

We're not necessarily surrendering control. Instead we're giving other people the opportunity to influence, to guide, and to shape the path that we all take together. And again this commonality, this common link we have under the requirements of WIOA, under the methodology toward talent development and economic growth called career pathways, is going to drive that and create that system for us.

Certainly we've had a lot of great accomplishments and we've been able to celebrate along the way. And again I have to mention one more time that everyone on this call here today, by virtue of the role you play within your organization, you all have a role to play within the pathway development component, within talent development, within workforce development. And it's only through that collaborative effort that you're truly going to recognize where that role fits into the greater equation, and thereby provide value to the work that you need to do, and ultimately the goals that you want to accomplish.

So one of the other critical pieces that we've been incredibly fortunate to experience here in Wisconsin is the role of the career pathway coordinator. These are 16 full time FTE positions located around our state, one at every college, who are ultimately the boots on the ground, the individual at the local level who's going to work from the perspective of the technical college, to coordinate not only within their college, but within the community, with local and regional employers, as well as their workforce development boards. They are the person who are going to orient and guide the conversation at the local and regional level to ensure that some of the policy drivers, some of the conversation that's happening from the state level, can meet in the middle and be consistent with one another.

Ultimately we want the policy alignment – we want the conversation to meet with and align both at the local and the state level. We want to be in a position to empower one another instead of inhibit or slow one another down. So ultimately these pathway coordinators have been a tremendous addition to our project, and one that as you'll see a little bit later, is going to continue in many cases around the state of Wisconsin.

So as you'll see on the screen now, I promised we would talk very briefly about data in Wisconsin and about how data is really driving the decisions that we make. Very early on in this experience some of our best data people here at our system office were taking a holistic approach to identifying consistent quantitative needs that were identified as key indicators of pathway success, of program health here in Wisconsin, across our technical college system.

The pathway scorecard is just one early example of how we've harnessed a tremendous amount of data that exists within our system, and more importantly data that we're already collecting and using it in a way that's going to provide us a very clear snapshot, if you will, of each one of these key transition points to better inform the conversation around pathways, that we might be able to begin having those conversations moving forward and a regional and state level.

Each one of these indicators is derived from a specific business rule or metric that exists here within our data systems. And if you're asking yourself, how do we actually use this, simply put we use data to inform our decisions, to engage in conversations, and ultimately explore why things are happening, or more importantly how things could happen.

What does one program measurement mean to another program? What is that look through the perspective of completers, through credential holders? How does that impact our pipeline to talent development for workforce? And ultimately everything is connected to everything else. Data in Wisconsin is very exciting right now.

Because as you can see from the screen, we have a number of different data sources here in our system. And we're really embracing now business intelligence to begin driving those decisions moving forward. Really expanding our capability and growing our data infrastructure to ultimately add value to the work that we do and the work of our partners as well.

So in looking forward, we're in a position now to begin embracing more of the guided pathway approach in order to provide a stronger advising process, to really take the system that is continuing to evolve called career pathways, and ensure that students are successful along the way.

And in doing so we are creating a Wisconsin student success center. And as you can see on the screen, this whole pathways journey is continuing to evolve. And again it's because of our collaborations and our relationships that much of this work is continuing to grow, thrive and evolve.

As I mentioned earlier, the progress that we're making is going to continue to accelerate by virtue of the work we're doing on the committee, by virtue of the roles that our pathway coordinators play, and our colleges continuing to evolve and take on different meaning and different value, and last by not least the value that enhanced data infrastructure is adding not only to the academic side of the equation, but more importantly to the role that we as a Title II partner play within the operations of all of our title partners and stakeholder agencies across Wisconsin.

So I mentioned earlier, everyone has a role to play. And in Wisconsin we've been incredibly fortunate to have such amazing partners at the table with us to continue to have this journey and this experience together. So with that, I will either entertain questions on the chat box as you have them, or certainly I can hand it back over to Erin.

MS. FERNKAS: Scott, this is Robin. And Erin's with me, I think. And we just want to thank you for that comprehensive look and deep dive at how Wisconsin has approached this. It did generate a number of questions while you were talking.

And so I do think since we have a few minutes left here, we do want to try to get some of these. I was looking at some of these, and Erin you may want to pull out some too, but the first one, just can you talk a little bit about whether this work and the committee aligned with your sector partnership work?

And is that managed at the state level as well? I would suspect with the integration with the work that you've done under WIOA that this is. But if you could talk about that for a moment, that would be helpful.

MR. DUBENSKE: Yes. Absolutely. Well, as you saw in previous slides, one of the key partners on our pathways committee is – (inaudible) – the local and regional employers across Wisconsin.

So certainly that provides a unique opportunity for us to operate not only from a state level, but from a regional level as well, from that talent development, from that employer demand driven side of the equation.

And certainly it provides I think a much richer opportunity for our post-secondary education system here in Wisconsin to engage more deeply around employer needs, and how those sector strategies can truly begin to leverage the career pathway methodology in a much more meaningful way moving forward, in order to address many of the questions and the needs that are not only here with us now, but are on the horizon looking in the future as well.

MS. FERNKAS: Great. Well, thanks. I think another question is, what part does adult education play with the credit side? And I think there's another question further down that is related to that about technical credentials embedded, do the technical degrees embed within an academic degree at colleges?

So if you can kind of address both of those, talking about both adult ed and then how the technical degrees embed. They're somewhat related and so we'll try to cluster as many questions here as we can.

MR. DUBENSKE: Yeah. Absolutely. The amazing thing about the career pathway methodology and the way we've been really able to harness it here in Wisconsin, is that it truly doesn't matter where you are starting from, whatever experiences you're having in your life, whether you are an adult student, someone exiting K-12, someone who is maybe an English language learner.

The pathway methodology says that we can figure out where you're starting from and show you what is possible and what it's going to take to get there. More importantly by having that partnership, having that collaborative approach not only to policy alignment and development, one other key feature of our Wisconsin Technical College System is that within the curriculum development process here within our system office, one key requirement of that development process is the labor market information, and that clear connection not only to employment need, but projected employment growth within each industry around the state.

So in doing so we are providing an opportunity for people to come into our system, engage deeply in learning no matter what their need might be, receive some form of co-instruction, whether you're an adult returning to the classroom for the first time in a number of years, or someone coming out of the K-12 system, it gives you the opportunity to begin working toward a credential that is correct for you. And the beauty of our curriculum review and approval process is that each and every one of those credentials is absolutely connected to a job that exists in the field once you attain that credential.

So we can say with confidence to our students that if you take these credits here, complete this credential, not only is there a job out in the field waiting for you or multiple jobs, this credential automatically builds into and ladders onto the next credential within this academic program. So the opportunity to continue to grow, and learn, and not lose time or credits along the way, is tremendously powerful in giving people the opportunity to gain the tools or the resources they need in the near term, to successfully engage the labor market, and then return when that time is right for them, when that opportunity is right for them.

So in doing so, much of that revolves again around that clear connection to workforce, our employer partnerships, on our curriculum advisory boards, and really collaborating across organizations in order to ensure that we're creating not only opportunities, but we're creating the right opportunities.

MS. BERG: One of the questions the audience had was, how are these career pathways connected to K-12 and high school – (inaudible) – work in the area?

MR. DUBENSKE: Yeah. Well, here in Wisconsin we have what we call the academic career plan process. And I saw we have a handful of our K-12 partners on the call here today. The academic career plan exists within our department of public instruction, who is a key partnership member on our pathways committee.

What it allows K-12 students to do is begin thinking and engaging what they enjoy from an academic point of view, what types of careers could that feed into, and thinking more critically about what does my future look like based on what I enjoy or what I'm good at. So it allows K-12 students to begin thinking in a way about a career, about life after K-12, that maybe wasn't quite as prevalent just a few short years ago.

In doing so, that academic career plan then becomes an instrument, a tool if you will, to engage and inform post-secondary providers, community based organizations, any organization that can begin providing that learning, that resource, in order to engage the student on a level that allows them to achieve that career.

Certainly my son is very, very interested in technology. He loves science, he loves electricity. And when he has the opportunity to begin creating his academic career plan here in Wisconsin, all of those attributes will come into play so that he has an informed picture of not only what education following his high school experience could look like, but what his career options could look like as well.

And that is very powerful in that it prevents a student from getting to post-secondary education and realizing that they maybe aren't as well-informed about what is possible as they thought they would have been. So again, that's one example, as well as dual credit opportunities.

Here in Wisconsin we have a tremendous connection between our K-12 partners in our public school system, as well as our technical colleges, in that there are a number of opportunities for high school students, primarily junior and seniors, to begin earning post-secondary credit while they're still in high school, giving them a tremendous leg up and certainly an accelerated advantage moving into that next phase of their life, whether that be post-secondary education here within our tech college district, or maybe with one of our university partners around the state.

So again, the collaboration and the partnership around key initiatives is absolutely what creates success.

MS. FERNKAS: So Scott, thank you for entertaining all these questions. There are many more in the chat. And unfortunately we're coming to the close of our hour. So a couple things that people have raised though is how we're defining career pathway program.

And I wanted to say, I think we can direct you to some resources in the links that we're going to provide that will address some of that. But one thing that people were asking about is, can they have your scorecard, your metrics, and other things.

And I was going to say, if you are willing to share those types of materials, we are posting things coming from the TAACCCT grants, including Wisconsin and a lot of the things they're developing, on SkillsCommons.org. And that is the repository for what has been developed through TAACCCT. It's open and available for free for you to download and use the materials there. So Scott, I think if you're willing, we can have those posted.

What you're seeing on the slide there is an example of the types of resources that are already there. And there will be more posted -- there's more posted throughout the year and there will definitely be more posted after September 30th of this year.

MR. DUBENSKE: Absolutely. And if you want to jump back to my email address, I'm happy to talk with people if they have more detailed questions about anything I've discussed.

MS. FERNKAS: Great. Okay. I'm going to just very quickly in addition to the resources on SkillsCommons, I wanted to make you aware of some additional career pathways resources that we have here at the Department of Labor. We've worked with the Department of Education, and Health and Human Services, along with several state workforce colleagues to develop a toolkit.

So if you haven't looked at this toolkit before, it's got a lot of useful tools in there that will help guide your career pathway development efforts. We also have a career pathway community of practice that connects you to what others are doing and provides resources on tools, research, and upcoming events.

Because I did see in there some discussion about how do we know these are working and what types of evaluation and outcomes are we getting. And so that would be a good place to go there.

And then Erin, what about at OCTAE? I know OCTAE also has some resources that people might be interested in.

MS. BERG: Sure. Through our Perkins Career and Technical Education Act national activities, we were able to create some career pathways, resources, and technical assistance to states as well. So there's a couple links on the presentation. One of the main page, it's just basically a primer on career pathway systems.

There's a crosswalk about Perkins – (inaudible). I think I saw something come up in one of the questions asking about that. It's a really great chart to sort of look at the difference and the overlap between the two different sort of parallel movements. There's also a technical assistance project that we're undertaking. It's closed to new applicants, but there will be some resources, including sort of like a toolkit or a playbook for CTE state leaders.

And then finally we have Mapping Upward, which is stackable credentials that lead to careers, which is a technical assistance project to several state networks of community colleges, looking to embed stackable credential within their technical associates degrees programs – (inaudible) – 12 colleges. There'll be some resources publishing soon.

There's currently some podcasts and some links through that URL that's listed there on the website. So I'm happy to chat with anyone. I think I'm listed as the contact on at least a couple of those projects on our cte.ed.gov, which is the Perkins collaborative resource network.

And that's just a few things that are there specifically related to career pathways. There's several other national initiatives that we've had in various other areas related to CTE and community colleges. So I hope that you'll check the full site out if you haven't already.

MS. FERNKAS: Great. Well, we're at the hour and we just wanted to remind you, if you haven't registered for our upcoming webinars, please do so. The registration is open. And we want to thank you for taking the time to participate in today's webinar.

(END)