**WorkforceGPS**

**Guiding and Coaching Trade Affected Workers**

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LAURA CASERTANO: All right. I want to welcome everyone to today's "Guiding and Coaching Trade Affected Workers" webinar, and I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Susan Worden. She's a supervisory program analyst with the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Susan, take it away.

SUSAN WORDEN: Thanks, Laura. Good afternoon, everyone – here on the East Coast, that is. My name is Susan Worden and I am supervisory program analyst from the Performance and Data Reporting Division in the Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance. I'm very excited to be part of today's topic, which is not on the title slide, but which is guiding and coaching Trade-affected workers.

As we've got some great folks from the field to share their perspective and experience, let's not waste any time and get down to it.

So to kick things off, this is the first of two webinars that will further scope out the functions of what is spoken of in both Trade and WIOA worlds as a navigator approach to training. We're also going to look at some TAA demographics that will drill down on why the navigator model can be crucial to training success. And I'll give you a preview of the panel questions that will be posed for our subject matter experts after their formal presentations.

Last, we'll hear – we'll have a dedicated question and answer section, and last but not least, we'll go through all of the related resources for today's topic and save-the-date on future events that are coming up.

OK. So to kick things off I think it's useful to look at TAA demographics, especially with comparison with the American civilian workforce. This is actually a table that is taken from the FY 2018 annual report to Congress that's available on the TAA website in the About section off of the homepage.

The table you see here compares the TAA participant demographic against the U.S. civilian labor force across three defining data categories. The first addresses education. You'll note that, whereas about two-thirds of the civilian labor force has some postsecondary education, less than half of TAA participants can claim anything beyond a high school diploma or GED.

In terms of age, TAA participants are just about a full 10 years older than the average worker in the civilian workforce.

Last, the average Trade participant was in his Trade-affected employment for about twice as long as the current tenure of your average employed worker in the civilian workforce.

So taking into account that our workers are less educated, older, and longer-tenured, you have a perfect recipe for what we have come to nutshell as training-averse populations, that is to say, older workers, who for whatever reason did no pursue education when younger and might find returning to a schoolroom unfamiliar and even hostile. That leads us to the topic of today's webinar.

Given the work-focused, training-averse nature of this demographic, it stands to reason that these folks are in need of special handholding to support successful enrollment in completion of training. And then next week we have a second webinar that's going to focus on hearing from training institutions and WorkSource staff who secure employer engagement in developing training.

So we've put together a Venn diagram to show that together these webinars presented this week and next have certain overlap. The most important area of that overlap is engaging employers in the partnership of creating meaningful training for our workforce-focused demographics.

For our adult learner population, the closer training curriculum adheres to specific employer needs, the better. In addition, both webinars are designed to provide staff-based strategies that can be supported through TAA case management flexibility that supports training that leads to expedited and sustained employment.

So let's review the panel questions that we'll be covering following the formal presentation of today's best practice presenters. The first will be modifying community college culture to tailor to adult learners. The second is working with participants in employee cohorts. And the third is developmental education/remedial learning/work contextualized learning. We put these together for a very specific reason that will be further fleshed out.

So before I turn it over, please note that as usual we'll be capturing and in some cases answering any questions you may have in our chat window. During the presentation and panel sections of our presentation, please don't be shy about asking for clarification or anything else using the chat feature.

In addition, as I mentioned we'll have a dedicated question section at the end of today's presentation to address questions presented throughout the chat window that have not already been addressed.

So let me introduce our first presenter. Laura Lausmann is the Oregon TAA liaison to the 17 independent community colleges and private career schools in her state. Laura works with the Oregon TAA leadership team and college administrations to facilitate a positive solution when Trade-impacted students experience challenges in education due to process misalignment. Laura has worked for the Oregon department for 12 years, 11 of those in various roles in TAA. Laura also brings an employer perspective from her previous work life, having co-owned a grocery outlet store for 16 years, managing a team of 30.

David White earned his degree in speech communications and psychology from the University of Alabama. He served as associate director of instruction for BCTI Technical School and career services director for Pioneer Pacific College, overseeing job placement and employer outreach. David joined Oregon department – the Trade Act in 2016 and in the regional Trade business services pilot program. Currently David is working as Trade Act navigator for the Portland metro-Tri-County area and is one of eight navigators throughout the state of Oregon.

And with that I'll turn it over to you, Laura and David.

LAURA LAUSMANN: Thank you, Susan, and good afternoon. My role as the TAA liaison began in our round one of TAACCCT. In Oregon we started to see the value of the new relationships we were building with our community colleges. And during that time we realized that the continued outreach was going to need to come from us. It needed to be intentional and consistent. We were building relationships with training providers, but we also needed to make investments in the maintenance of those relationships so that when we need to connect or collaborate with them, we can.

Today David and I are going to review how Oregon utilizes specific roles within our program to help inform and influence our shared student success.

We do often find that our adult learners run into barriers when it comes to the needed training, whether it's figuring out the sometimes complicated enrollment process, challenges to technology, and even class cancellations. Add in some TAA criteria for training approval and training deadlines, and you have a mix to potentially and unintentionally create additional barriers to those we serve.

And then we started to think differently. We utilized the liaison at the administrative level and local Trade Act navigators on the ground to build champions within those training providers so that we can influence education processes at the individual, within an entire worker group, or at the system level as needed. And here's some examples of what that work looks like.

So we currently have a participant with an occupational goal of mechanical engineering technician. Our labor market in Oregon shows that employers are requiring an associate's degree. He is a great student. He has a great case manager who asked for a degree audit in the spring of '19. That audit showed he was on schedule to complete by summer '19, and TRA completion benefits were approved.

While waiting for the degree to be awarded, the case manager received an email from the advisor and the student that there was an error in that audit, and indeed he was missing three credits. Fall term registration had closed and the advisor said he would not be allowed to register or complete until the end of winter '20.

We reached out to that dean, with whom we had a well-established relationship with. With a deeper understanding of our program, she knew that that meant that the student would be on a break. I advised her at the time that he would also then not have any additional income support, and the concern that we had was shared that he – we may lose this student throughout that one term.

So a few hours later she got back to us to let us know that behind the scenes they were able to get him into a class. The student will complete this term and is already working with a Trade Act navigator for work search. Without that established relationship, without that dean's understanding of what this meant to that adult learner, it was unlikely that this would have worked out to be a success.

There are also times when we find that multiple workers in the same affected worker group can run into barriers to education. This is an example of one of those times. We were working with a certified worker group of more than 50 workers in rural Oregon. These workers had both English and adult basic skill training needs. It was summer, and there were capacity concerns in completing assessments and enrollment at the community college.

Communication had broken down, and we were hearing that registration was going to be delayed. We reached out to the administrators and staff that we have a relationship and scheduled a meeting. That day we developed a plan to have workshops to help with registration. We also worked out a service and communication plan to serve those Trade students going forward.

The picture that you see was taken that day. The workshop included stations for advising and enrollment, Trade Act training proposal, and even our TRA partners were there to answer questions. In two days we had 45 workers registered, enrolled, and with the help from our case managers, approved for the needed training towards their path on reemployment.

We have also been able to influence our partnerships at the system level. Our program has an agreement with the agency that holds all education data in our state. For a minimal cost we receive credential and Pell grant data for all of higher Oregon – higher education institutions in Oregon and 42 private career schools.

We also have memorandums of understanding with our 17 very independent community colleges that include access and campus time for each of our local navigators. And now, David's going to share more on the navigator role, including that campus time.

DAVID WHITE: As Laura talked about earlier, because of the barriers that adult learners face, it's essential to have a representative, in this case a TAN, serve as the local contact, basically boots on the ground if you will, between the campus, participant, and case manager, which the picture on the slide shows, to facilitate the flow of information throughout the chain and liaise when and where necessary.

The important thing is that, by having a navigator available, it helps our shared student success and retention at school and in the TAA program. The fact that the navigators are engaged at this ground level increases the visibility and awareness of the TAA program, and it encourages and facilitates connections.

In my experience, the training provider and, more importantly, the participants appreciate this type of local engagement. So how do we engage with the training provider?

Well, some of the ways we do this is by, one, we set regular campus hours, where practical. In my area it's very convenient. I'm in a big city. In other areas like rural Oregon, not so. We do this too by meeting with advisors and participants often and when necessary.

Three, by educating staff – the campus staff on Trade process and flow, and this always helps with clarifying information and getting – returning paperwork back and forth. Fourth, by removing the bottlenecks when participants and participants and staff are at an impasse, and there's other challenges that – that we address as well.

And five, by clarifying and explaining program parameters when it comes to what the program can and cannot do, and this is usually the case with things like purchases, supplies, required products or supplies like laptops and tools.

So what this all means is high visibility, easy access to information, and meaningful communication. That's how we do it.

So TANs have desks at local American Job Center offices. We're in a perfect position to offer school advisors resource information that could be beneficial to all students, not just Trade-involved students, who need – who are in need of employment services, SNAP benefits, bus passes, and access to other community resources.

So in this way the navigator role is leveraged across the entire work systems – WorkSource system. Additionally, with the training provider, navigators assist with career fairs. We act in a support capacity to help set up and people the event, while also bringing in our affiliation of employers that we have developed through our business engagement activities. And we're going to talk more about that in webinar two.

But in this way we join forces with the school to help the TAA participants who are in the job mode – who are in job mode, I should say, to connect with employers directly. And the school career fairs are a perfect place for that.

Finally, while we keep training providers informed on Trade, we also keep case managers in Salem updated on important school and program changes, events like career fairs, or anything that can impact the students' academic success. We believe this active engagement is a valuable investment of one of our navigator roles since it benefits all stakeholders on the slide. And it serves to build a deeper, more inclusive connection between the training provider and community resources.

Navigators understand the challenges facing dislocated workers since we meet and build rapport with them at a rapid response – at rapid responses and Trade Act information sessions. How the navigator assists participants in getting back into the educational system is by initiating them in their first-steps process and conducing a strengths-based skills assessment, providing them with current labor market information, and preparing them to drill down into a deeper conversation with their career – about their career options when they meet with their case managers. It's the footwork they need to do to get a running start in Trade.

Additionally, we assist them in navigating through campus materials, helping them find locations on campus and providing a warm hand off, if necessary, to the academic advisor. We also help them with TAA required paperwork that the Admissions Department may not be familiar with or confused about.

At the campus we locate participants on behalf of the case manager in order to get back to them time-sensitive reports and documents. As we know, it's very time-urgent sometimes in our situation.

We can connect participants with internships, if the training provider doesn't offer that service. And just before and after graduation we work with the participants on career services like resume writing, interviewing skills, job search strategies. More importantly, we conduct job development, and additional to that, we also work with them on job training – on-the-job training opportunities between them and the employer, and that too we'll discuss in webinar two.

So what I want to do now is just share a short example of navigator liaising at a local level with a participant, a training provider, and a case manager, just showing the connectivity.

So a case manager came to me and requested support for a second semester natural resources technology participant who was attending a local community college in my area in the Portland Metro. And he was struggling with multiple barriers. He had emotional barriers. He was experiencing anxiety attacks. Academically, he was failing in math, which led to frequent absences from school, and he was not feeling prepared for an upcoming wilderness field event that was going to take place.

So the case manager was concerned that this student would drop out, as was the instructor. And he asked me to assist in a meeting where he coordinated with the student and – that he coordinated with the student and the campus disability director. So the goal of the meeting was to support the student and map out a path that would allow him to successfully complete training and hopefully get to work – suitable work.

So additionally, the case manager needed me to serve as the program representative to set parameters on what the program could and could not do for the student, since one of his requests was unreasonable, to help facilitate the meeting and to serve as a local support to both the student and the disabilities director after the meeting was ended.

So the results of the meeting were this. The disabilities director worked with the instructor at the school in order to bring the student back up to speed, considering his low – slow learning style, and he worked with the case manager on keeping the student focused on the goal.

I acted as a neutral third party so that I could advocate for the student and to facilitate the local community resources that might be needed. The case manager continued to be a strong primary coach, enabling the student to have a sense of direction and continuity throughout the entire process.

All these points of support ended with the student feeling extremely supported. He didn't fail his math class. He stayed in school and ended up going on the wilderness trip.

So this is an example of how collaboration between partners at a local – at a boots-on-the-ground level led the student to improve participation at school and kept him engaged in the Trade program. Local campus support means program success, and that's how we do it in Oregon. I'm done.

MS. WORDEN: Laura and David, that was a great run-through in very brief time of all that you do to affect individual certified worker groups and work on a system level to help acclimate Trade participants to the training environment as well as orient the training environment to our adult learners. But more on that later in our panel.

So I'm now going to turn it over to our next presenter. Katy Brooke serves as the Perkins program manager for the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education in Montana. In her previous role as RevUp project coordinator, Katy worked with stakeholders across higher education and industry in Montana to advance career and technical education across the state and develop best practices for workforce engagement and student success in CTE occupations.

She has worked in various roles within the Montana University System since 2013 and has previous experience in local government, the nonprofit sector, and as a small business owner. What a combo. On to you, Katy.

KATY BROOKE: Thank you so much, Susan. And thank you for having me here today.

As Susan said, I am Katy Brooke, and I served as the project coordinator for RevUp Montana, which was a TAACCCT three grant focused on advanced manufacturing. I'm going to touch briefly today on some of the best practices that came out of that project in Montana, specifically some of the key elements of our workforce navigator pilot project that we did from 2014 to 2017.

So this project culminated in a comprehensive online workforce navigator training that collected best practices from our pilot and from other navigator programs around the country and I'm hoping may be useful for those of you who are on the call today working with your own TAA clients.

So why navigators? In the RevUp pilot we focused in on this for many of the reasons that Susan and – talked about at the beginning of the webinar, these populations of people, adult learners in particular, that are adverse to reentering training, that are in a position where they need to do so.

So in addressing that problem, we started looking at some of the data on workforce navigators and found that in our own pilot we saw these same successes. In Montana enrollment in training programs overall was down 13 percent prior to this pilot, but in programs supported by workforce navigators, enrollment grew 24 percent. So that's a 37 percent difference between programs that were navigated and programs that were not.

Navigated participants were also four times more likely to enroll in training than those not working with a navigator, and they showed much higher completion and job placement rates than those who were in programs that did not have workforce navigators serving them.

So in our pilot program navigators wore many hats. They were responsible for identifying the target population of students and proactively reaching out to those students. Then once they had participants identified, they had to have a good understanding of all of the available trainings, not just in the community college system or the workforce system but private trainings that were available.

They also needed to be able to have good relationships with employers in order to help to place students into jobs once their trainings were complete.

So as an example, we had a participant early in the program who met their navigator at a job service One-Stop on Halloween, and the navigator was dressed up as a welder that day at the job service serving some office hours. And the participant came up and mentioned that they had really liked taking a welding class in school but weren't aware that they had opportunities to engage in welding training in the area.

So the navigator worked with the student through the education system. Very similar type of process as David described, having to do a little bit of the warm hand off to advisors, introducing the student to the instructor, and helping them with paperwork, especially financial aid paperwork.

During the course of the training program, the navigator would work with the student on interview skills and actually introduce them personally to a local businessowner who came to speak to the class at the navigator's invitation.

When the student completed their training at the end of that year, they didn't even realize they had to do another piece of paperwork to apply to graduate. So the navigator had to track them down at their new job to get them to sign this piece of paper so they could actually get their credential. And that's just a very typical story of all the different fluid parts that a successful navigator has to be able to tackle in this type of system.

So the key methodology of our navigator pilot program in RevUp was a focus on strengths-based interactions with participants from that initial contact all the way through placement and follow-up. Using this framework, navigators were able to build relationships and connect with participants in a way that allowed them to proactively address those barriers that come up when they're trying to access or complete their training.

So some of you maybe are already aware of some different style of strengths-based programming. The key concepts behind it are that it involves asking questions that help participants come up with their own solutions.

This method enforces the idea that every person has inherent skills, abilities, and supports that can help them get to success. And sometimes that only support is that navigator, but that is – it's something to help people understand that there is someone in their corner that's going to help them reach their goals.

Strengths-based approach helps teach participants to begin establishing a long-term growth mindset and relying on their own strengths to reach their goals instead of barriers that are placed in front of them.

So part of our RevUp pilot program included developing a strengths-based assessment toolkit that guided navigators through each interaction and to address the major influences and barriers facing the participants at any moment in their training process.

So another example, we had a participant in another welding program at a different community college who was actually doing really well in the class, but her confidence was down. She had an emotional barrier because she couldn't get one specific weld passed in her exams.

So her instructor reached out to the navigator after she stopped attending classes, and the navigator gave her a call just to make sure things were going to be okay with her. Using an informal and strengths-based meeting framework, the navigator helped the student identify that the reason that she wasn't actually coming to class was because she was frustrated that she couldn't pass that weld.

And when the navigator shared with her that her instructor had said she was one of the best welders in the class and that this was a very difficult weld to get a hang of, it really changed the student's perspective. So this concept, called a quick win in the strengths-based methodology, gave the student what they needed to reach out to the instructor, ask for additional help and practice time. And then she ended up attending the rest of the semester. Never missed another class, and had a job lined up before she even graduated.

So again, just another quick example of how navigators have to be creative across the spectrum of working with students.

So another tool in the navigator's toolkit that we developed is the idea of a targeted career training plan. So this is a quick kind of snapshot of a career plan developed between the navigator and their participant using the strengths-based framework. It's designed to be a really quick planning tool that helps participants keep their eyes on their goals, especially when facing barriers during the process.

So in our pilot our navigators found that a lot of times they couldn't set up one-hour meetings with participants on a regular basis because of barriers in time or because they were in class or working jobs. So a lot of the tools in the navigator toolkit were designed to be something that could happen 15 minutes in a classroom or on the go so they could continue checking in with our – their participants when there were other time constraints.

And the last thing I'm going to touch on with our navigator framework was the placement and follow-up, and this is that working with participants after they've completed their training. So our navigators were primarily housed in the community college system, and it became very important to make sure that they understood following up because that is not something that is inherent to the higher education system.

But because our navigators developed those strong relationships with business partners and they were able to understand the specific needs of different employers, they were able to make personal referrals for participants to get specific jobs that met their career goals and took a good look at their skills and abilities and the knowledges and credentials that they had achieved.

And the next webinar in the series is going to go into more detail about that component of matching your navigators and business engagement, but as you can see, our navigators have to wear a lot of hats. And not many people come into these positions with all of those different skillsets.

And that's why as part of our TAACCCT pilot project we developed this comprehensive training for navigators and knowing that the TAACCCT grant would end, that we wanted to make those resources available to people going forward.

So we're going to pull up just a little kind of preview video showing you the RevUp workforce navigator training modules that are available to you, to everyone. They were developed under TAACCCT. So they're fair game, and they are available in a couple different ways, which I will go over with you guys shortly.

There are 12 self-contained training modules, each running about 30 to 60 minutes. Some of the information was specific to Montana, but the majority of the trainings would be beneficial to anyone working with clients or participants who are trying to identify training opportunities for career advancement.

So we designed these trainings based on best practices from our pilot plus other navigator programs around the country. They're full of short videos, highly interactive content, practical tools and resources. There are how-to sections and lots of case studies from navigators that participated in our pilot.

And the modules can be used all at once, if you were perhaps onboarding a new employee in a navigator type role, or they could also be taken individually for targeted professional development in any number of the areas that affect the range of things navigators are asked to do.

All right. I think I'm done with that video. So the navigator training module and the access – we'll get a site up here shortly when we get this video finished.

So there's a couple different ways to access them. The first is through our web-based training. We set up just a website that you can go and actually click on the modules like it's showing on the screen and just take them directly on the web.

You can also download the actual modules from SkillsCommons, and those can be placed on a desktop. They can be modified. It does take a special software that they were developed on for the e-course style, but you're welcome to do whatever you would like with them.

And also, please check out the field guide of TAACCCT innovations on the SkillsCommons website. So we will get those links up. They are in today's PowerPoint presentation, and that wraps it up for me, Susan.

MS. WORDEN: Thanks so much, Katy. And I'm sure you're going to get a lot of folks who are interested in exploring those dynamic training modules that you have available online. Really exciting resources to pursue for really helping folks to have some structure around exploring this really crucial staffing structure to support successful training. Thanks so much.

OK. So for the next portion of today's presentation, we thought we would really try to tease out the subject matter expertise of today's presenters by switching over to a panel format. If we could switch over, Laura, to the larger chat window. So the way this next section is going to run is we're going to lean on our folks from Oregon and Montana to share a story or two that touches on three different topics that we'll be covering that relate to today's presentation.

The first is modifying community college culture to tailor to adult learners, because of course adult learners are a very distinct population, and most community colleges are not necessarily tailored to support that demographic. Laura, are you going to take the lead on this?

MS. LAUSMANN: I'll take the lead. Thank you, Susan.

MS. WORDEN: OK. Great.

MS. LAUSMANN: So example I think that comes to mind is that we have a community college that created a new online platform to deliver some curriculum specific like medical billing and coding program. We were super excited. We're a large state. So the ability to utilize online programs is important to us when we're working with students that live far away from those colleges.

So we had enrolled several students. We did meet with that program and talk about what the expectations of our participants would be. It was an online program. So they had a really good idea. We set out a good plan of what needed to be completed per week, but our TAA coordinator asked us to keep a really close eye on that.

And it wasn't very long before we had some concerns about pace to completion. So we started tracking that data and met with the community college to share the concerns that we had. We had great students, but it appeared all of them were struggling.

Once they reviewed that data and, indeed, looked at their own data within their institution, which they hadn't really looked at before, they agreed with us that the curriculum was just way too hard to offer in this format and certainly to adult learners. So that influenced things back into the classroom. So we were able to modify those plans and actually make them a success from there. That's one example.

MS. WORDEN: OK. Great. Laura or David, would you like to share an example from your field experience?

MR. WHITE: Yeah. So from my level, which is more at the campus level, individual campus – and this is kind of maybe mirrors some of the other TANs – I'm not sure – in our state, but one thing I do is I have a place with the advising staff where they kind of allow me to set up one day a week, one afternoon a week.

And I meet with our participants there, and some of the times those conversations get overlapped with the conversations that the advisors are having with their younger participants. And I think by having that kind of back and forth in that environment, it kind of brings a more heightened awareness as to how I might be working with more of an adult learner rather than many of the young learners that are coming through the school.

So we have time afterwards to kind of collaborate a little bit. And just by the fact that Trade's involved on the campus, it does bring a level of I think awareness and accountability like, oh, these are different types of learners. I mean, they are used to that to some extent, but I don't think they really do a full-on great job with it because they don't do it every single day like we do, I do.

So I think that kind of conversation brought into their academic environment really does set a tone and a move that these adult learners are a little bit different, and they get that. And also too, we share a lot of program information that I think helps kind of drive a little more of the culture that, when a Trade participant does come in and I'm not there, they give them more quality attention, which is exactly what adult learners need.

They need it broken down. They need more of that personal time. And I think that kind of is that side effect of just being – Trade being present and relevant in that academic environment. That's all I have.

MS. WORDEN: Great. Thanks, David. How about you, Laura? Oh, how about you, Katy? Sorry.

MS. BROOKE: That's okay. Thank you. Yeah. I think that I assume Montana is similar to other states in the challenges we face in modifying higher ed cultures in general. I know we still have a big emphasis on seeding four-year institutions and transfer education, which is important but definitely doesn't address the needs of many of the population that we're talking about here.

And funding is a big part of what drives I think changing that culture in our state, which is why we've gained some success in programs like TAACCCT and some of those other types of grant programs that have allowed us to kind of move the needle in changing the culture of how people think about higher education and community colleges.

But for us I think it's similar to some of the things that Oregon has said as well, finding that way to connect with business because, if you have a business coming to your school, to your administration saying, I want this training, I'm going to bring this number of students, or I don't want to hire your students because they don't have these skills when they come out of training, that's a really powerful message.

And if you can get those connections to where you have business kind of driving some of those conversations, it's a really powerful way to see that kind of change take place.

MS. WORDEN: Thanks, Katy. Before we leave this topic, I think I want to ask one follow-up question that I know from working with Laura from several years ago, and that was talking about how the work that you did – and it may play into stuff that David and Katy have done as well – that working with the community colleges in terms of acclimating them or helping them to understand the needs of adult learners had an impact that really starts from the beginning in the enrollment process and kind of just walking them through the requirements in a manner that kind of shifted their general approach when they had adult learners.

Can you speak off the cuff a little bit to that in terms of kind of standing procedures they might have changed as a result when they came across adult learners in terms of materials?

MS. LAUSMANN: Well, I think I can a little bit. I think part of – and we understand that our community college partners, they have a little bit less flexibility to move to the speed of business. And so I think things that come to mind are often we run into mandatory advising appointments and, by gosh, these are scheduled and sometimes they fill up.

And so adult learners are – they're laid off. Our workers need education when they need it, and so I think for me some of those challenges really are trying to – when they call and they're told they – that there's no appointments left, there's some challenges to that.

And that's where we're needing to reach out to those schools to say, hey, we have a large – we have adult learners that need this education now because they have – if they don't – if we don't get them into training now, we're going to lose them and they're going to end up going back into survival jobs. So that's one piece of it.

And then I think really the navigators just really working with those colleges to understand that – when I talked about the example that happened in rural Oregon, those with adult basic skill needs and English second language, the community college was talking and we were talking. And they're as passionate about serving our participants as we are, but we were all talking at our participants.

And these adults, even though we had interpreters, they really needed more, as David mentioned, deeper assessments. They needed somebody to really sit down with them. It was complicated to them. They didn't understand. If you went into a summer term and you got a large layoff happening, it's hard in Oregon.

We're short-staffed. Our community colleges run pretty thin. So I think it's just really understanding and getting them to understand that adult learners need education when they need it. And then yeah. I can go on forever, but I think I'll stop there. Did that answer it?

MS. WORDEN: Yeah. Yeah. I think that's – I think that's a great answer. Thank you. That's exactly what I was hoping you'd clarify.

MS. LAUSMANN: Thank you.

MS. WORDEN: OK. David or Katy, did you have any other things to add to that?

MR. WHITE: Well – oh, Katy, do you want to go first?

MS. BROOKE: No. Go ahead, David.

MR. WHITE: Oh, okay. So one of the things that I noticed how it's kind of changed for me in working with adult learners there – or with our participants at the community college level is that the campus is doing a great job of coming back to me before something becomes a real problem.

So we had a participant that was signed up for cyber. The – I forget the name of the program, but it's like a cybersecurity program. And he was having real challenges, and so he was talking to an advisor who didn't know at first he was Trade. And then he said, oh, yeah. Yeah. Well, the administrative program had mentioned it, and they called me with him on the phone. And they wanted to know what could – we could do together to help this student make it through the program.

Well, we can't change the complete training plan. I mean, you only get one shot at this, but we were able to figure out kind of an oblique path through to the training completion and still fit within the Trade program guidelines. And it was a really great collaboration. He ended up moving more into a business angle of his program.

The case manager did a great job at coordinating all this in the background, but I have to think that if it wasn't for early engagement by the staff at the school that this wouldn't have happened. And we would have had real problems after that. So I think in a way the culture around when we're seeing – they get information before we do because they're at the campus all the time, and the fact that they would reach out quickly and know how to go about doing that made a big difference in this case.

So that's my story, if that fits, because it does seem like, for me, once again, it just means that culture at the school is starting to change as a result of the – just the constant interaction between Trade and the participants and their advising staff.

MS. WORDEN: Thanks, David. And I think what you're saying is it's really important to support why we need to have full-time staff where possible because this is a long journey that the in-roads that you are making did not happen overnight. They are long-term relationships that are established over time, and that's what's required to shift cultures in community college environments like this to basically accommodate adult learners. So thanks so much for your perspective.

So we're going to shift to the second question in today's panel, which is a really interesting one, working with participants in employee cohorts. And we're going to continue to follow the same order of folks sharing starting with Oregon. Laura?

MS. LAUSMANN: Hi. Thank you. So for me a couple things come to mind. I think about those large layoffs that happened shortly before maybe a term starts and it was in a community college. But it actually does create that funnel where we're trying to get them through advising and enrollment.

And so we do work together with the community colleges for solutions to maybe have them offer their services also as a group or cohort style. So we've actually been able to get advisors from multiple campuses come to a location to work with our worker group, and they stand in the back of the room and can ask questions and help with advising, depending on which student is interested in attending which community college. And that's – I'm thinking that's in our tri-county area where they are pretty close to each other.

And then I think the second thing for me is that those workers tend to have the same skillsets. So our navigators at the front end are really helping to identify trends or interests that they can further explore that will help case managers. And really IT and technical really come to mind, and so navigators may be really working to figure out what certifications they have. And it's really from that group level when they're really beginning to dig in and dive with boots on the ground in the beginning. Those are my thoughts.

MS. WORDEN: OK. Great. Thank you. David?

MR. WHITE: Oh, yeah. Sorry.

MS. WORDEN: If you don't have any additional thoughts, we can go to Katy, but I want to give you a –

MR. WHITE: Why don't you go to Katy, and I'll be right back.

MS. WORDEN: All right.

MR. WHITE: Katy, what are your thoughts?

MS. BROOKE: Yeah. So I think that this has all been touched on a little bit before, but I can [inaudible] some big layoffs in Montana too, particularly in the coal industry. And so we would have these large groups of students interested in attending training, and a lot of times our colleges couldn't – they didn't have the capacity for that many. So we had to sort of create some additional cohorts in the school system to make room for them or do some customized type of training.

But this, again, was another one of those things where I think we found having navigators was so beneficial because our – while a lot of the students were coming with those same skillsets because they were coming from the same types of jobs, they all had vastly different ways of looking at going back into training. They had different views on the layoffs and how they were dealing with that emotionally.

And so having our navigators available to kind of work with them in those different aspects right kind of embedded in the training. So I mentioned this briefly before, but our navigators in a lot of these large employee cohort groups would go into the classrooms once a week or twice a week and have little five- to ten-minute kind of mini meetings with each of the students in there.

So they didn't have to pull them out for an additional hour-long meeting or something but were able to touch base on their career goals, talk quickly about any little barriers, and then sort of follow up if there were bigger issues that needed to be addressed. But I think that having that person who's dedicated to working with these specific populations really changes the ability for those students to be successful in getting through their training.

MS. WORDEN: Great. Thanks. So really good examples. It's obvious that having peers who basically know where you're coming from is – really makes a huge difference in being in an environment that can feel as strange as being at a training institution after years of working.

OK. And I don't know if David wanted to add anything additional before we went on to the next topic.

MR. WHITE: Well, actually, just real quick because it's really a unique situation.

So at our community college we had about eight people in a vessel program. They were ESL workers, and they were having a lot of concerns about what they were going to do after they graduate to line them up with jobs. And the school didn't know how to answer that, and each one of them had a separate case manager.

So the TAN went in there. I went in there, and we talked about what the – how we were going to work with them once they completed their training program. And we kind of had to be there to kind of assuage the situation, help them to feel more like they're going to be handled correctly once they completed their program.

And that's kind of a unique situation where either case managers nor the school really could address that, and the TAN was able to do that. So just to put that in there, we – that was an important engagement for us and the workers.

MS. WORDEN: OK. Thanks for that. Definitely there's value added there that was really important.

OK. Let's move on to the last of our panel questions today, which is a big one and kind of does a little bit of overlap with what we'll be covering in our next webinar. And it has to do with what is called in community college environments at least as developmental education. We call it remedial very often because it has to do with generally competency in reading and math that is below the eighth grade level and in a lot of community colleges is kind of required to be able to test out at that level before you can take the vocational classwork.

And of course in a lot of community colleges we know from TAACCCT conferences and talking to community colleges that in a lot of these environments, the developmental education is less than stimulating and kind of alienating for folks that, again, have been away from the classroom environment for so long.

And one of the things that is exciting about engaging employers is the ability to collaborate and develop things that may be work related – tie together work related and developmental or remedial learning needs. So that's why we bundled that together. And again, Laura, you want to take the lead on that?

MS. LAUSMANN: Sure. I'll start. So our community colleges are very strong. We have some really great vocational training in conjunction with English acquisition or adult basic skills, and I think that really comes down to our case managers, navigators.

First, navigators. This is one area where we have a couple colleges that actually offer this – these trainings outside of normal term start dates, which is really exciting for me because adults need learning when they need it. So they will reach out to a navigator to let them know that this cohort is starting, and then that information comes back to our training case managers.

We do have and work with a very diverse population, and so those case managers are having those conversations and assessments, working with those participants that have those needs to really determine whether the vessel program would really be a better fit than a traditional just straight I'm going to do English second language or adult basic skills.

Where I think we often struggle where it ends up that those adults just stay in there term after term after term, and we definitely see that, if we can get vocational training built into that, that the success rate and completion rate comes up.

So I think I would add that – yeah. I think that's – I'll leave it at that.

MS. WORDEN: OK. Great. And David?

MS. LAUSMANN: Go ahead.

MR. WHITE: Oh, I don't have anything to add to that. I think Laura did a great job.

MS. LAUSMANN: Oh, I'll add one more thing. Can I? I think in our state, if I'm allowed to add on David's behalf, we have programs called occupational skills training as well. And that's where we're really working with those community colleges.

So that's where that contextualized learning – the community college will go out and look for an employer, and so kind of the classroom side or what you might call an OJT but it's not paid, where it's truly instructional, they're getting hands-on time. And our case managers really also look for those programs, and all of that is really based on more assessments that happen within our program to see if that's a better fit than just a classroom training or an OJT. And I'll close it.

MS. WORDEN: OK. Great. Thanks, Laura. Katy?

MS. BROOKE: Yeah. Thanks. This is definitely probably my hot button topic of the day. I have a lot of experience and strong feelings about how – how many students this kind of developmental education creates a barrier for, especially in the college system. And we addressed that pretty intensely in our TAACCCT projects.

And one of the things we did was kind of the math emporium model. Other states are definitely doing this better. Idaho I know has some pretty awesome models for that, but that's kind of you standard sort of math lab where students can do accelerated coursework kind of on their own schedule to get caught up into math classes at a level that puts them into the training program they want to enter.

But a few of our schools actually took on an even more innovative approach, in my mind, and actually embedded that developmental educational component into the Trade training programs themselves. So we would have a dedicated math tutor who would essentially be embedded in a welding or a diesel program, and they would go to classes with those students. And they would help them learn the math skills they needed kind of in real time as they were using them in a welding class or in a drafting class.

And so they were earning credits for developing these technically specific math skills as part of their general training program learning. And it was widely successful for the few classes that did it, and obviously, it's a big wish to have a full-time person essentially following students around from class to class and working so individually with them to get each specific student up to where they need to be.

But man, if we could find a way to do that in all of our programs and across all of our systems, I think we would do a lot for removing that significant barrier to adult learners in our education system. So just one of the cool things everyone should be doing.

MS. WORDEN: Thanks, Katy. And I think you're bringing up a larger point is that the thing that we really want to focus on in today's presentation is that we really – in the Trade program we really do have abundant resources for leveraging staff positions to be able to really touch on these not traditionally attached to case management but really, the more that you talk about what you've been able to achieve and identify the need, it really – it's almost kind of like a hindsight is 20/20.

But it really makes it obvious what a difference it can make when you have the bandwidth to apply this level of sensitivity to all the different needs that come up in the course of training in terms of the different types of training, in terms of the different types of needs at different stages, that you really can't – there's no cookie-cutter process for and that you really do need to have kind of close proximity to to learn about.

So really appreciate all of you kind of fleshing out these very specific examples across these three related areas.

Any last thoughts on the panel section before we move on to the general question and answer section from any of our subject matter experts?

MS. LAUSMANN: I think I'd just like to add – I don't know if it's been mentioned before, but we'd love to continue the conversation on our WorkforceGPS TAA for workers community. So I could start a topic there to share – continue to share examples that have happened and then welcome others so that we could continue to learn from each other.

MS. WORDEN: Excellent suggestion. And you kind of preempted us. We were going to talk about that in the resource section, but we'll just repeat it then.

Susan Manikowski is now providing that link that Laura was alluding to specifically on the TAA community. Obviously, this is a very rich environment for exploration, and those of you in the audience, this may be a whole brave new world that you hadn't thought about before and want some time to think about. But we really do encourage you to take advantage of the fact that we've got partners in other states who basically have kind of explored this territory for peer development.

And I'm sure, as has already been proven, we have some states who are ahead of the curve than others, but everybody's got something to add to the pot. And the more that you can dialogue on a peer level, the more that you can work together to develop the networks to really get the support that you need. In addition to just having the funds, you obviously need the know-how.

So we really encourage you, as Laura mentioned, to really take advantage of the formal webinars we have but also on the TAA community of asking questions and reaching out to your state peers.

OK. So this second to last section of today's presentation is designed to address questions, if we want to move over to the question slide, which I think we've got. There we go. Let's look and see what we've archived thus far. I would also continue to encourage those in the chat window, if you've thought of any questions, this is the time to put them in there for being addressed orally.

Looks like we've got a question that we haven't addressed. Well, let's see. "We've heard that Missouri have navigators coming on board next Monday?"

That's great news. I don't think that's a question. That's just kind of an announcement. That's wonderful to hear.

And there was a question early on that I think at least one of our presenters answered, which was, "Do you only work with specific schools?"

I think, Katy, you addressed that in the chat section; correct?

MS. BROOKE: Yeah. I think Oregon maybe did as well.

MS. WORDEN: OK.

MS. BROOKE: I think and it's similar. I think they mostly do community colleges in Oregon, if I understood, and then Montana is slightly different. We do community colleges but also our two-year colleges that are embedded in our four-year institutions and tribal colleges as well. But yeah. I mean, it's generally specific schools you would have an MOU with that you would work with. Yeah.

MS. WORDEN: OK. Great.

MS. LAUSMANN: This is Laura.

MS. WORDEN: Go ahead, Laura.

MS. LAUSMANN: Oh, sorry. I think – yeah. I think Katy has it right. I think our navigators have campus time at community colleges. We do work with every training provider within our state, and then we kind of bleed over a little bit across the border, if we have participants over there. And then – and that's it. Yeah. Just to let you know that.

MS. WORDEN: Right. And I'm not doing these in order, but we just got a question that asks about, "How much time do navigators spend per week at training facilities?" You've got a ballpark for that?

MR. WHITE: Yeah.

MS. WORDEN: Go ahead, David.

MR. WHITE: Yeah. We generally do several hours a week at our local community colleges where it's practical. Sometimes – for me, I'll spend four hours there because there is – it's a great place to just be present and talk to the staff. But yeah. We don't do a ton of time, and some weeks we won't be able to do it because of our workload. But the idea is that we try to or at least I do try to schedule it in so that they know in advance I'll be there and how long I'll be there for.

MS. LAUSMANN: Yeah. And that also fluctuates with the number of participants that we have attending that school. So we can increase or decrease that as much as we need to.

MR. WHITE: Yeah.

MS. WORDEN: Sure. And I'm guessing, Katy, in your very sophisticated training module that you aren't very draconian about saying how much time you must spend in order – at training facilities in order to be successful, but I didn't know if you wanted to talk about that in general in terms of your field experience and how much you've done.

MS. BROOKE: Yeah. What we discussed in our training modules is how important it is to know your community and understand what the needs are because we would have – in one school they might spend half their time working with training providers, and in a different school that navigator might only do one day a week.

So I think that there's a lot of – there's always interagency politics and a lot of different ways you have to kind of navigate those relationships. So I think it's important to be dialed in to what the needs are. If you – we had a navigator at one time who was spending two hours a day sitting at a job service One-Stop, and they just weren't getting referrals. So they changed that and just kind of made it so they had students come to them at the college.

So it kind of depends, but I think it's important to be flexible. I don't think that you need to have a hard and fast number to make that work.

MS. WORDEN: Right. And I like the fact that you really point out that, basically, you modify it based on the results that you're getting.

MS. BROOKE: Definitely. Yeah.

MS. WORDEN: OK. A question for the group. "Do you also work with training providers in regard to registered apprenticeship?" Hot topic. Anyone?

MS. BROOKE: Yeah. I can jump in, and this has been another big initiative in Montana. Kind of our governor's office is driving this a lot. They've put out some tax credits for businesses who are working with apprentices.

So our navigators and navigator type positions in the system have definitely had to learn to navigate that system. We also have some apprenticeship specialists that do navigator type activities just with those looking to enter a registered apprenticeship. But we – we're a pretty small state population-wise. So it's fairly inevitable for us that there's a lot of crossover, but we work on a lot of apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships in Montana.

MS. WORDEN: Thanks. And, Katy, did you have anything to add?

MS. BROOKE: Oh, sorry. That was Katy.

MS. WORDEN: Oh, sorry. I mean Laura. Laura, do you have anything to add that's not going to step on what you're going to be talking about in next week's presentation?

MS. LAUSMANN: Well, that was – that was the only thing I was going to hand out was just a tease to say we do do a really good deeper dive into this on webinar two. But we do work with apprenticeship coordinators across our state, navigators as well. So stay tuned for webinar two to learn more about what we're doing here.

MS. WORDEN: OK. Great. Thanks. All right. I'm just going to give one more minute to see if we've got any other questions. Or, again, anybody from the group like to add any additional things that they think would be relevant to add before we move on to our closeout?

MS. BROOKE: Susan, this is Katy again. I just wanted to remind folks that there will be links for all of those training modules in the PowerPoint that they can download. And if anybody has questions about that – putting that training program together or implementing it, my contact info is also in there. And I am happy to facilitate putting that together for people, if that's helpful.

MS. WORDEN: Thanks, Katy. And I think we'll also be following up with you potentially and kind of talking about further promoting this maybe through a blog or additional discussion topics to make sure that folks who would want to have the access to this really useful structured dynamic resource for exploring this area available to them. So we'll follow up on that.

OK. And just to close out on that – (inaudible), Susan Manikowski has added something to the chat window that, again, provides that hyperlink. It's in – that basically reminds us of the fact that we're going to have a webinar next week that is going to be talking about employer engagement. That will include discussions about apprenticeship.

Laura, if you could move – let's see. We'll move on to the next discussion. Let's talk about that. Yes. That's November 19th from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. Eastern.

Also, before the end of the year we have another webinar on December 11th from 2:30 to 3:30 for our Trade staff. We've got seven tips for preparing approvable TAA program reserve funding requests, speaking of financial resources.

Let's talk about some related resources that we have related to today's presentation. Of course, first is the TAA community on WorkforceGPS. Please do continue to explore that area. We know from our previous webinar that many of our state folks are not familiar with using an online resource. We just want to encourage you to be bold. Go to the discussion topics that are related to today's webinar, and don't be afraid to ask questions.

Additionally, point you to the fact that we have an OJT FAQ, a very robust FAQ available on – for Trade OJTs. And also, just briefly speaking to apprenticeship contacts, we'll be talking about more on this next week – next week's webinar that basically we have dedicated federal apprenticeship contacts in many of your states. And this is the list that is provided.

A previous WorkforceGPS presentation that we did that touched on work contextualized learning and developmental ed within partnership with the Virginia Department of Education, the Virginia Best Practice Model: Workforce and Adult Education Working Together. Highly, highly recommend this webinar.

If you have the ability to partner with adult education in your state, these are really valuable partners for the Trade demographic because they really do understand the need of older learners who are really trying to master remedial skills. This is paired together with a engagement with employers to create work contextualized learning for remedial and developmental ed that leads directly into employment.

And also, our on-the-job training best practice webinar is also available with great best practice examples.

And last but not least, you have our contact information. There's mine as well as today's state-level subject matter experts. Highly encourage you to reach out to them direct if you have any questions or through the TAA community.

(END)