**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Call**

**Collaborative Solutions for Increasing Diversity of Apprenticeship Partnerships**

**Thursday, June 4, 2020**

*Transcript by*

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LAURA CASERTANO: I want to welcome everyone to today's "Collaborative Solutions for Increasing Diversity of Apprenticeship Partnerships" webinar. And I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Andrea Hill. She's a program lead with the Office of Apprenticeship for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Andrea, take it away.

ANDREA HILL: Great. Thanks, Laura. And thanks so much to everyone for joining us today. As Laura said, I'm Andrea Hill and I'm the ASE programs lead. So this is being presented primarily for SAE and ASE grantees. And today we're going to talk about these three things.

A little preface, though. Nearly a year ago, after hearing a really remarkable presentation at a symposium, at which really many of you were probably present, the OA grants team – of which I'm a part – and our TA provider, Maher & Maher, starting planning a special cohort for our grantees to be able to help grantees focus on one of the most important goals of both the SAE FOA and also the ASE TEGL, to conduct outreach and recruitment activities targeted towards underrepresented populations.

We knew when we started planning the initial equity and inclusion cohort that we would also hold this webinar at the completion of the cohort to share with a larger group of grantees some of the lessons learned and to provide a condensed overview of some strategies and approaches that the cohort discussed during the four months that it was active.

What we didn't know, even at the start of the cohort – or even at the time that we scheduled this webinar – that today we would find ourselves all in the confluence of a very particular passage of time and set of events to make the cohort, and even this webinar, more pertinent than we could have ever imagined.

So we're going to talk a little bit today about the importance – (audio break) – apprenticeship pipeline, and discuss ways to increase the diversity of your grant participants, which speaks directly to the overall DOL goal of expanding apprenticeship, not just in numbers but in many different ways. And we'll talk about ways to approach programs so that they're more accessible too.

I've got a bit of a – there we go.

So as you're looking over the agenda for the next hour, towards the goals that we just talked about, it just occurs to me that many of us – or most of us on this call began our public sector work kind of with a compelling desire to serve our communities, large or small; and to make a difference, to improve people's lives.

So again, with these unprecedented events, from the first weeks of this year through to those of just the past few days, we've really got a remarkable opportunity and responsibility to reflect and also to truly listen to our community neighbors, familiarizing ourselves with what to some may be completely new perspective.

We're then presented with the opportunity to join what we're hearing with one of the overarching purposes of these grants, to help all people gain meaningful work that provides a living wage. And so as I mentioned before, there wasn't any way of knowing those few short months ago that the timing of this webinar would be so remarkably germane.

But we find ourselves in a unique position of being able to combine the lessons that we're learning, both today on this webinar and over the last few months with the opportunity of this grant funding, to be in a larger position to be able to take significant action and make a concerted effort to ensure that apprenticeship as a model reaches the widest possible scope of people.

And to plan – to make certain to include those who find themselves newly unemployed, while also ensuring those who are traditionally underrepresented in apprenticeship are fully incorporated within the plans as we re-emerge from our quarantines into a new reality. And it's a reality I think which we still have the chance to shape into a better one than the one that we left at the end of 2019.

So I'm really excited today, because to help explore some of those things and provide the overview of the cohort activity, and to discuss these important topics, we have a really great panel, which includes one of the speakers at that remarkable symposium that sparked the idea for this cohort, Dr. Ben Williams.

Dr. Williams is a chief executive officer of the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity – or NAPE. He's a national expert on equity in CTE and a master instructor in NAPE's professional development curriculum. He's the project investigator for two of NAPE's NSF-funded projects and is a passionate educator and advocate, which I think you'll find you as you listen to him, for social justice and equity in education and careers. And we're just thrilled that he's here.

We have Megan Scott with us today, who is a project manager for the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development. She was one of the participants in the cohort and will be able to provide us with some insights maybe that they achieved through their participation in this cohort. Her most recent work has focus on expanding apprenticeship opportunities across the state of Oklahoma, with a particular focus on the recruitment of women, individuals impacted by the justice system, vets, individuals with disabilities, and also youth into apprenticeship programs.

And then to guide the discussion is Jennifer Jirous-Rapp, who is a senior analyst with our TA provider, Maher & Maher, with whom many of you are familiar. And in her work at Maher, she supports initiatives related to apprenticeship and inclusivity in the workforce. And also serves as a TA coach, an apprenticeship coach, for a number of the grantees – state grantees across the country. So just really looking forward to what you guys have to say.

So with that I will pass it over to Jennifer. Thanks so much.

JENNIFER JIROUS-RAPP: Great. Thank you, Andrea, for the inspiring message and for providing the context for the webinar today.

We'd like to start out the conversation by talking about the "why." So Ben, why is it important to build a diverse and equitable apprenticeship pipeline?

BEN WILLIAMS: So thank you, Jennifer. And welcome to everyone. And thank you also for the partnership of this work. NAPE has been honored to be a part of the work of the cohort and very pleased that we can be part of the conversation today.

And I think Andrea did a wonderful job of setting the stage for us. And one of the images she gave for us is this opportunity that we have before us in a situation unprecedented where the systems and structures that we have all taken for granted in education and in work have been upset in new ways. But with that, comes the opportunity as we enter back into that work, as we think of where do we go from here, to look at where there are opportunities within our structures, our systems, our processes, to set things up with different and new outcomes in mind.

Many of the systems that we inherit, that we work in, were not necessarily set up to be fully inclusive in the way that we would like for them to be. So let us actually enter into this conversation thinking about how we can actually set up systems and structures that have equitable outcomes, that have truly representation from the communities in your areas, in your regions, in your states and your parts of the country, to really be able to fully realize the human potential in our world, in the areas around us.

And to really be able to tap into that, because it will have huge effects from an economic standpoint, from a business standpoint, and of course in terms of doing the right thing, in doing right by those who look to us for that leadership and guidance, especially at a time of uncertainty and fear and concern; but also, as I said, an opportunity for us to really lean in as we look towards the future.

And so as we think about apprenticeship and the opportunities that are before us, one of the key things to do is to really know what the current landscape looks like. And so in our work at NAPE and in our work that we've done with the cohort, one of the first things we wanted to do is really ground people in the data.

And what do the data tell us are the equity gaps that currently exist? And as we talk about these equity gaps, I think it's important to talk about them through multiple perspectives and multiple lenses. And you'll see how this plays out also in the whole process that we can use towards continuous improvement as we move forward with this work.

So the first thing is let's look through the lens of gender. And what we find is that over the last 10-plus years, the representation of women as compared to men has remained nearly flat, at about 7.3 percent women as compared to 92.7 percent men in apprenticeships. So there's still a huge disparity in terms of participation of men and women.

And in terms of wage earning, there's a huge difference in women's earnings in apprenticeship that can partially be explained by certain factors, but particularly explained by the types of occupations where women and men tend to gravitate.

What's interesting is when you look at 4 out of the 10 top occupations for women and men – or I should say this different. Of the top 10 occupations for women and men, only four are shared; and they tend to be in areas considered high-skill, high-wage, in-demand, and that's construction craft laborer, correction officer, electrician and truck driver, heavy. And so when you look at the earnings in those four aggregated, it's $20.37 per hour. But when you look at the top 10 positions women as compared to men, you see it's $14.47 versus $23.19.

And the reason I want us to think about this is often times people gravitate towards positions or occupations where there may be a strong cultural (presence ?) or where they may have been encouraged. And that can sometimes come out of unexamined and unintentional biases that are coming from those who might be advising them.

So one of the things to be super mindful of as we look at ways to really diversify the workforce and to truly make open to everyone the full spectrum of what's out there, is to really be aware of how those biases can play out and be intentional in interrupting that. So that people can make a truly informed decision as to which position, which occupation, is the best fit for them and will give them the opportunity that they want, especially with family-sustaining wages.

When we look through the lens of race and ethnicity, we find that there are major discrepancies in the median exit wages, and in particular for black and African-American registered apprentices. And that is the lowest hourly wage across the group. As you can see, $14.35. In 2008, the average was significantly higher.

Now, what's important when we look at data – and I am remiss in telling you the source of these data. These data are actually from a report that came out from the Center for American Progress about two years ago called "The Apprenticeship Wage and Participation Gap." And there's great data in there and that can act as a helpful model as you look at your own local context.

But one of the important things is when we look through the lens of gender and we've looked through the lens of race and ethnicity, we also need to look through the intersection of those lenses and look in particular where there might be overrepresentation, underrepresentation, equity gaps in terms of participation, retention, continuation, and also in terms of wage.

And so if you look at these data, these are looking through the lens of race and ethnicity and gender. And what you can see here is that when you look at black African-American registered apprentices, black women are making $13.23 per hour, as compared to $20.47 per hour for men. And Hispanic women are making the least of any subgroup at $12.59 per hour.

So the reason I want to share this with you is to help us to really be intentional about looking at the data. Looking at the national data is a helpful lens to then really look deeply at your local data to say where are our current gaps? And then look at that as compared to the community you're serving. And do you have representation of that population, either an underrepresentation or overrepresentation? And then enter into that question of why. Why is it that there's that underrepresentation? And that's what we'll begin to unpack as we move forward.

So I think it's back to Jennifer.

MS. JIROUS-RAPP: Great. Thank you, Ben, for sharing that data with us and for the thoughtful recommendations in how to interpret and communicate that data as we're working with others.

Now we'd like to shift gears a little bit and take a look at what states are already doing to address these gaps, and how our technical assistance is helping them with this work.

This slide identifies a variety of things that states, federal partners, programs, intermediaries, and other partners are doing to develop the apprenticeship – diverse apprenticeship pipeline. So we started to pull these actions together in what's called the Five Elements of Effective Apprenticeship Expansion Framework. And you can find that framework, actually, on the WorkforceGPS link that you see at the bottom of the slide.

Element four of that framework focuses specifically on the development of the apprenticeship pipeline and steps to take to increase diversity. We've seen states doing five key things in this area, and you can see those on the slide in front of you.

States are taking steps to change perceptions of apprenticeships by offering youth, families, and workers the opportunity to learn more about apprenticeship programs and their value, and to actually see themselves as apprentices.

States are also increasing access to apprenticeship program application processes by providing an easy way for potential apprentices to learn about and apply for positions.

States are supporting the expansion of quality pre-apprenticeship programs that prepare individuals to be successful; and provide onramps, especially for underrepresented, disadvantaged, and low-skilled individuals.

And states are also broadening outreach to and support for these populations by leveraging the strengths of other state agencies and nonprofits who engage with these diverse populations, including the workforce system.

And finally, states are encouraging businesses to implement hiring practices that support diversity by sharing the value of having a diverse workforce, and facilitating partnership between employers and organizations that support these underrepresented populations.

To further help states explore needs and opportunities, DOL also supported the technical assistance – or ASE and SAE grantees – this spring. And Andrea mentioned this earlier in the webinar.

The Increasing Diversity of Apprenticeship Participants Innovation Cohort consisted of nine states that collaborated through an organized process. And these states looked broadly at challenges and opportunities related to increasing diversity in the apprenticeship – of apprenticeship participants.

Nine states participated; you can see those nine states up there on the slide. And these states were selected based on a short application that was released the first week of January.

The Innovation Cohort consisted of six virtual meetings that took place between February and May, and followed an action learning process that responded to the challenges and interests of the actual cohort states themselves. You can see what those interests were up there on the slide, industries of interest and also populations of interest.

The state teams worked through a structured set of activities that included a combination of state assignments and full cohort discussions and collaborations. And they participated by using an online learning platform to share ideas and engage in peer-to-peer discussions.

Throughout the cohort, teams also explored promising practices to increase diversity, including existing programs that served specific populations. They learned about policies and approaches such as pipeline development and pre-apprenticeship. And they also learned about strategies to address root causes of inequity.

As the final activity, states created action plans and then identified specific strategies that they will implement to increase diversity, putting what they learned into practice as part of their ASE grant. During the final session, the teams actually had the opportunity to present their state strategy to other states and engage in peer-to-peer dialogue with them about their strategy.

So during that Innovation Cohort process, states were guided through this four-phase process to look at the barriers and opportunities for increasing diversity. The process begins by identifying and researching data about the particular diversity challenge or goal that they had identified, and then spoke a little bit to this value of data earlier.

They then dug deeper beneath the surface to understand what the root causes of that existing diversity and equity data were telling them and where the gaps were. They also then were engaged – developed strategies to engage stakeholders and identify promising practices that then helped them develop solutions for their particular challenge or goal.

So for the remainder of the webinar today we're going to explore the information, tools, and resources that each of these four phases – that were part of each of these four phases. And then we're going to hear from one state, Oklahoma in particular, that actually participated in the cohort.

So let's start by again looking at understanding the root causes of equity gap. Earlier we saw some striking data about gender and ethnic diversity in the apprenticeship pipeline. But knowing the data is not enough to move the needle, as we heard from Ben.

The National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity has identified numerous root causes that impeded equity and diversity in education and the workforce. So we're fortunate enough today to have Ben with us to be able to share that expertise.

So Ben, tell us about NAPE and your work on root causes and equity in general. And how can this work be applied to the registered apprenticeship system?

MR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely. Thank you, Jennifer. So NAPE – the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity – is a consortium of state agencies, workforce development agencies, and individual institutions who are really focused on building the capacity of those in education and work to implement effective solutions to increase access, equity, and ultimately workforce diversity.

And in our approach I want to share with you this image. It's an image that comes from education, but I think it's one that we can easily translate into work. One of the important things is, often the stance that is taken when doing program implementation or doing recruitment or looking at any kind of activities, is to kind of do the same thing for everybody. And that's what one might look at as an equality standpoint.

So when you look at this image on my left – or I should say everybody's left-hand side right now, you'll see that everybody's standing on a box – or situated on a box, I should say. Whereas when we take a focus on equity, which is ensuring that everyone has what they need to succeed, you see how the equation changes.

Because in the first image on the left, you have the first person who's able to reach the blackboard or whiteboard or that place of learning; you've got the second person who can reach it with the box; you've got the third person who probably can't reach it; and then you've got the fourth person who's dangerously perched on that box and cannot reach that learning because it's not set up for them.

Whereas in the image on the right, the person on the left doesn't need a box. That box can be used for the person in the third spot. And then that individual in the fourth has a laptop, which provides another way for that person to be able to engage.

And so that differentiated approach, that looking at what are the potential barriers that might exist to access an opportunity? And what are those particular needs and how can those be addressed intentionally?

So as we move forward, I want us to move forward through that spirit, through that lens, through that approach of focusing on equity. And that is that everybody gets what they need to truly succeed. Everybody gets what they need to have access and opportunity.

And so as we started the conversation a little while ago, we look at the data. And this is the model that NAPE uses in our work and which helped to ground some of the work that we did with the cohort. And you can see that model also in the image that Jennifer just shared a minute ago. And that is, we first organize a group who can speak to the dynamics at play.

So what's important as you're looking at any type of continuous improvement – and especially when you're looking at how to address those barriers to access and opportunity – is to really engage stakeholders from many different perspectives, including the internal assets that you have within your organization, especially those who are connected to those communities that you hope to attract, engage, support, and really be able to involve in your work. And then be able to benefit from the assets that they bring to that work.

So you first organize the group. You explore the data, which is what we've just done. And then come to understand the root causes. And so we're now starting to talk about those root causes.

What's important is when you think you've got a handle on what are the barriers to access and opportunity, it's important to then find out whether what you suspect is really what's happening, is what's happening. And that can be done through surveys or other things like that, but more importantly through conversations, through focus groups, through engaging people to help you to understand the experiences of those with whom you are working.

What's super important, especially in the context of where we find ourselves right now, with so much fear, pain, civil unrest, unemployment, uncertainty, is the relationships that we build that are authentic and reciprocal. And when we do that, then we've joined people where they are, learned from them, and then really are able to more effectively increase that access and opportunity into those fabulous opportunities that we know are available through registered apprenticeship.

And then identify those specific strategies. Select those that are most effective and then act on them and see whether what you're doing is actually having the desired effects, the desired results.

As we do this, I want to share with you a model that grounds a lot of our work. And I know these are a lot of images, but this I find particularly helpful. And that is an understanding that what often causes barriers is the effects of unexamined biases on people's perceptions of and experiences in education and work.

And so if we recognize that cultural stereotypes, which is this first image right here, lead to bias, that bias is communicated through micromessages, small subtle messages that are sent – and equally as important, received – that accumulate over time and have a direct effect on someone's self-efficacy or their belief in their ability to be successful, which then ultimately affects their behavior.

And where we see those micromessages playing out is in the terms – way people communicate, what they may say through nonverbal – para-verbal is how we say something; nonverbal is in our whole communication, which is 80 percent of our communication. But also, very importantly, in the context of the environment.

So if you're trying to recruit more people of color, for example, from the community, but when people come to work or are coming to be mentored or learning more about the program and they see no other people of color; or they see a very, very few; or they see no one who has a common experience to them in a relationship as a mentor or as a leader; that also communicates something very powerful that can say, yes, I belong; or no, I don't. Or this may not be a safe place for me. And so being intentional about recognizing that is very important.

The micromessage of omission is a message that's sent by what is not present. So if you are serving a community where, let's say, Spanish is a language that's spoken by many people in the community as their primary language, yet none of the information that's being provided is being provided in Spanish, or there's no one who's bilingual to communicate with people, that is definitely an omission.

So this can be a helpful way for us to look and examine at the individual level, but also in terms of how that plays out in the work environment and the degree to which one feels a sense of belonging, feeling valued, included, and that positive experience we want people to have.

Because this ultimately affects someone's self-efficacy, or their belief in their ability to be successful. If they have low self-efficacy, they're much more likely to – much less likely to persist or continue in the face of challenges. Whereas if someone has high self-efficacy, it's quite the opposite. They're much more likely to challenge themselves to persist in the face of challenges and obstacles. And at the same time, if we're intentional in providing support, can help those individuals to be very successful.

I want to share with you another way to think about this whole process. And that is what we look at as key equity principles in our work. And that is to be very intentional about looking at, understanding, and utilizing the assets that exist in the community that can really enhance the work environment.

So we're giving the example of Spanish speakers, for example. If you've got people on your team who speak Spanish fluently, and you want to attract more Spanish speakers, putting people in leadership positions who can inform the process, who can help to structure things from the beginning, and those – and hopefully people are also part of the community and connected to that community. That can be a huge asset in the process.

And that also brings the community more directly into the work and doesn't just expect people to confirm, but actually is saying, we're going to become something new as we expand who is working in our environment, who we are engaging, who is part of our work. Grounding our action, ground our research in the experiences and stories and narratives of the people who hope to serve is super important, and that's the image you see on the top.

And then "systems are not neutral" is a reminder that systems are set up to get the outcomes they get. So if you're finding that you're consistently seeing gaps in participation, in wages, in persistence, that could be because the system itself is set up to get those very outcomes. So how can we unpack things and create new systems to have much more equitable outcomes?

So back to that original statement I made. The apple cart is upset, if you will. So as we look to the future, how can we be intentional about setting up systems and structures that have different outcomes in mind?

So with that, I'm going to pass it back to Jennifer who will introduce us to Megan.

MS. JIROUS-RAPP: Thank you, Ben. This is – that's really valuable information as we consider strategies for increasing diversity in apprenticeship participants.

So Megan, you learned about this during the innovation cohort this spring. How has your perspective shifted based on what you learned, about root causes and micromessaging and data? And what did – how did what you learn about Oklahoma – how has that shifted the diversity focus of your grant?

MEGAN SCOTT: Yeah. So you guys showed the data about racial and gender disparity in apprentice wages. And I think all of us who were in Innovation Cohort were really shocked by those statistics. I think some of us – well, speaking for me personally, I was kind of in this – oh, pie-in-the-sky, apprenticeship will solve all your diversity needs.

But even though we tout apprenticeship as a way of diversifying the workforce in Oklahoma, it only diversifies the workforce so long as you're strategic about it. Apprentice population is still 90 percent male and 79 percent white in our state. So we actually have a lot of work to do.

So when working with employers, it's important that we don't really end the conversation at, this program will help you increase diversity, period. And we need to really help our employers re-evaluate the criteria they want for their program with an equity lens.

This can happen by reading those ask questions, like, do the minimum qualifications that we have in our standards, or are there micromessages in our recruiting materials that limit the kinds of applicants that we get in for a program? Are the demographics of our mentors reflective of the workforce we actually want to have? And are you paying our apprentices a fair and livable wage for the work that you expect them to perform?

In Oklahoma, child care development specialist, which is a couple programs that I'm working on, make about – a little over $9 an hour, on average. While linemen apprentices would make three times as much. So we want to be really cognizant of what those issues are that keep our apprentices from having a fair chance.

While the intent of our grant was always a focus on diversifying apprenticeship, the data and research we've looked at has really caused us to think more strategically about the way we do it. Starting out, we were really focused on, oh, well, we'll just do some really good communication plans targeted toward a diverse population.

So that has – as we looked more to data, that has molded into focusing on making sure the employers we work with are really equipped to support a diverse workforce through additional training. We want to make sure that we're developing RAPs that are managed equitably and that we're examining our own biases in our agency when creating our strategy to diversify apprenticeship. But also that we're using that data to find a root cause of the inequity in our system and that we're including as many people in the conversation as possible.

MS. JIROUS-RAPP: Thanks, Megan. It's really great to hear your perspective directly on how this work has – how the work in the cohort has impacted your goals for the grant.

We learned that understanding the root causes is a critical step for engaging stakeholders and being able to tell the story about why this work is important. Next we want to talk about how partnership with a variety of stakeholders strengthen diversity efforts.

So partnerships – a strong network of partnerships allows states to leverage the strengths that everyone brings to the table. For instance, many nonprofits already support these underrepresented populations, either financially or socially. So connecting with them allows for more resources to be available to you to support those populations.

Partners who are also involved in career pathways work can provide opportunity for the creation of onramps and offramps for apprenticeship, as individuals are either starting their career or continuing down their career path. So these partners can actually remove barriers for entering onto those career pathways that may exist for certain populations.

Also, businesses can sometimes have unintentional barriers in the application or hiring process. An example of this may be something as simple as an online application, where some individuals may not have access to that technical – technology to be able to complete those applications. So partnering with a workforce center or a job center or some agency that has access to that technology can provide individuals with not only access but often times assistance with filling out those online applications. So these partners become very important as well.

And lastly, the value of partnerships does not stop once the underrepresented populations are in the door. Often times individuals need supportive services to continue in the program and to be successful in the program. So it really becomes a necessary village – it becomes a village is often necessary to support the apprentices' success over time.

When we talk about partners, it's important to also talk about a foundation of trust, because that foundation of trust is what often enables partners to quickly see the opportunities together. As part of the Innovation Cohort, teams considered which partners they needed to bring to the table and how they could build trust with the organization.

This case study example that you see here up on the slide tells the story about how a community college and a workforce development nonprofit organization built a shared vision to launch a joint training program. So to do that, the partners built the foundation of trust that enabled them to quickly seize opportunities together, including the major federal grant that allowed them to launch this training program.

So if you have an opportunity, take a look at that case study because it really illustrates the leadership and organizational dynamics of a new partnership and how important it is to build that trust throughout the partnership.

Lastly I wanted to share a great tool to help you think about partners in your own state. So this tool was developed – DOL actually created the Universal Outreach tool to specifically assist registered apprenticeship programs in broadening and diversifying their hiring pool, by providing a list of government and community organizations that might be able to help with recruitment. This tool can also be used to target outreach to underrepresented populations.

So the tool actually will create a map of potential partners in a specific geographic area and identify the populations that they serve, and provides the contact information for those organizations. So you can see at the bottom of this slide is a link to a webinar recording that provides a walkthrough of the tool as well as perspectives from some of the sponsors on the benefits of inclusion and diversity in their program.

So in context of partnerships I wanted to shift gears again to Megan. Megan, based on your diversity goals with justice-involved populations that you identified in the cohort, what partners are critical to your expansion work?

MS. SCOTT: So a few. So we have our community organizations and nonprofits that actually serve individuals who have been recently released from the Department of Corrections. So they're a re-entry population. So we're aiming to work with them to build up partnerships in order to provide that support to those apprentices who have been impacted by the justice system.

We have (other ?) state agencies, like Department of Corrections; Office of Juvenile Affairs – (inaudible) – Rehabilitation Services; DHS, which serves our SNAP and TANF; and then our Career and Technical Education department has what's called skill centers, which are embedded in our Department of Correction centers.

And so we felt like it was opportunity to leverage the fact that skill centers, which are training individuals who are incarcerated in things like welding, culinary arts, and construction – to leverage that as a way to create an apprenticeship focused on that population and partner with organizations like Manufacturing Alliance to develop apprenticeship that lead straight from training while incarcerated to a job with a good salary and the supports when they are released. And we feel like that is just a good opportunity to leverage those partnerships that we already have.

MS. JIROUS-RAPP: Great. Thank you, Megan. So in addition to partnership, it's also important to explore some promising practices that may currently exist for increasing diversity. So let's explore some of the promising practices that both state and program-level entities can take.

Here are a few at the state level that can help increase diversity. The Innovation Cohort took a close look at a range of promising practices and identified some of these key ones that you see up here. Things like developing partnerships with state agencies that already serve these underrepresented populations.

Also, some states are including equity and diversity goals in their subaward contracts, or providing subaward opportunities that are specifically targeted towards certain populations. Then they're capturing those successful strategies and looking for ways to replicate them.

States are also adopting policies that define quality pre-apprenticeship programs, which we know lead to apprenticeships for many populations. And then state offices are providing training and professional development to subrecipients and partners on the things that we're learning about today.

So you can find many examples of how states are addressing and developing strategies on the WorkforceGPS page that is centered on development of the apprenticeship pipeline and steps to increase diversity.

Also, from a program level, we talked in the Innovation Cohort about best practices. These were – some examples of these are things like using images that reflect diversity in their outreach and recruitment materials. Or recruiting from a variety of organizations that serve these populations. Also the importance of aligning to career pathways, as we discussed a little bit earlier. And then really digging deep into the data and identifying root causes to be able to tell the story.

Also, at the program level, providing supportive services and high-quality mentoring, which is so important, as we heard from Ben when he talked about micromessages and microaffirmations. And then programs are also educating sponsors, mentors, and other stakeholders on the power of micromessages and microaffirmations.

And again, you can find more examples and resources around this on both the WorkforceGPS page as well as on NAPE's website. So we would encourage you to take a look at both of those as well.

So now that we've explored a few promising practices, let's talk about some solutions, especially solutions in our current economy and workforce conditions. We're going to learn again from our panelists about some solutions that they've developed.

And as we do this, I want to encourage you all to, if you have any questions, go ahead and type them into the Q&A – into the chat box – and we will try and address those as we can.

So let's start with Ben. Ben, what are some things that states need to consider in our current economy and the shift to the virtual collaboration that we're experiencing?

MR. WILLIAMS: So I want to be mindful of time. I know we've got just about 10-12 minutes left, so I'm going to try to be brief in this comment. But one of the things that really struck me recently – and these are data from the Census Bureau American Community Survey, which was conducted in 2017. So granted, it's a couple of years old, but these are the best data about the digital divide.

And that is that over 40 million Americans had no internet subscription in their homes. And this includes 11 million American households – or 9 percent – without any type of computing device, and 9.5 million households – or 8 percent – with only smartphones.

And so when you look then and you peel back that onion further and we look through the lens of race and ethnicity, 10 percent of black and 10 percent of Hispanic or Latino Americans – more than 10 million people – had no internet subscription. More than 13 percent of American Indians and Alaska natives, about 350,000 people, are without. Whereas among white families, only 6 percent lack internet.

And the reason I bring that up is because the interruption of the COVID-19 crisis and the move, especially in education, but in work, online and into virtual high-speed internet-required type environments, has only exacerbated equity gaps that we see, especially when you start unpacking things through the lens of socioeconomics and race and ethnicity.

And so I want to cast a light on that so we're really intentional about ensuring that there's truly access to any type of opportunities that are being available virtually, and that they're also being made available through other means that are safe and feasible based on the current situation.

And then as I said before, I think it's really important that we engage the community to really understand where the needs are, where the opportunities are, where the connections are; and recognize that none of us has the solution alone, and that we have much better solutions as collectives. So how can we bring in these partners from the community, from business and industry, from education? We've talked a lot about many different connections today. How do we pull all of those folks into these conversations?

And so I'm going to pass it back so we have enough time to answer questions as well.

MS. JIROUS-RAPP: Great. Thank you, Ben. So real quickly, Megan, what solutions are you exploring in your state related to this?

MS. SCOTT: So in addition to leveraging the skill centers to develop registered apprenticeship programs to serve re-entry population, we are incorporating training on micromessaging into our mentor training. And then we are leveraging COVID response dollars to increase access to broadband in our state, and also using it to incentivize employers to create registered apprenticeship programs.

MS. JIROUS-RAPP: Wow. Great. Thank you. So we have about eight minutes left, I guess. So we'd just like to take a few minutes and be silent and let anyone that has any questions type those into the chat box.

We have one here on – I think, Megan, was this related to your presentation? "Are those other communities aligned with registered apprenticeship programs?"

MS. SCOTT: They will be. That is the intent is to develop registered apprenticeship programs that are either sponsored by the skill centers or sponsored by industry associations to provide apprentice opportunities for individuals who are impacted by the justice system.

MS. JIROUS-RAPP: Great. Thank you. Another question just came in, "Do you have any resources related to training mentors on micromessaging?" So Ben, I'll hand that over to you as the micromessaging expert.

MR. WILLIAMS: OK. Great. Yes, there are resources that are available on the NAPE website, NapeEquity.org. And you can click on the link for professional development. And under there you can see resources around micromessaging.

If you want to go deeper still, there are online classes that can be taken. And then also NAPE is available to provide assistance through webinars or through in-person professional development, when that becomes feasible again, to assist in the work ahead. One of the things you'll see on our website is three different webinars that are being offered this summer in the context of COVID-19 to help those in education and work to be able to move forward with some of these things we've talked about. So that might be of interest to you.

And then we're also further engaging the community in a series of webinars that are archived on our website called "Let's Talk" that you might find helpful. And our next one is next week.

MS. JIROUS-RAPP: Great. Thank you, Ben. Any other questions? Again, feel free to type those into the chat box if you have and we will facilitate those as we can. (Pause.)

OK. And there was a suggestion of put the web address in the chat Q&A box. The web address that you were just speaking of, Ben, perhaps.

OK. So just being conscious of time, we've got about five minutes left. And I wanted to provide an opportunity for our guests to share with us some final thoughts. So Ben, what advice do you have for states developing strategies to increase diversity of apprenticeship? Let's start with you.

MR. WILLIAMS: Well, I think today has been a really rich discussion where we've given you some ways to really think about being intentional in engaging the community all around you.

And so I'm going to say again how important it is to look at the assets that surround you in terms of other agencies, in terms of partners, in terms of community organizations, in terms of community organizers, in terms of potential mentors and current staff and leaders who can help you with making connections and be a resource, mentor, guide for those in the communities that you hope to attract.

MS. JIROUS-RAPP: Great advice. Thanks, Ben. And Megan, how about you? What advice do you have for states?

MS. SCOTT: Yeah. So two things. First, I'd encourage everyone on this call to examine your own bias. And one way you can do that is something that Kathleen Fitzgerald from NAPE had recommended to me, is to google "project implicit" and take the Implicit Association Test. They had me do that just kind of as something possible to do with the Innovation Cohort. And it really helped me kind of examine what my own biases were personally. So this was soul-searching.

I also really want to challenge states and partners to include those most affected by the inequities of our system in their planning and strategies. And that can be hard, but it is possible. And that means asking the people what they need instead of making the decision for them. Often times we really get caught up in looking at the data and trying to put pieces together in a way that makes sense, that we forget that those data points are actually people.

And the best thing we can do is to support them by making sure our programs – our registered programs are flexible enough to meet their family and social needs, equitable in the supports and services that we provide, and really informed by the desires and dreams that they have for themselves.

MS. JIROUS-RAPP: Thank you, Megan. I think you both hit on the fact that this work is not done in isolation. There's just – it's a very holistic approach and it takes a lot of partners and a village to make this work successful.

So I wanted to just share with you in closing a few resources. These are resources that were identified earlier in the webinar. WorkforceGPS, as well as the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity's website, as well as the U.S. DOL EEO website.

In addition to that, just some more specifics around EEO technical assistance, this slide contains some resources that can help your programs meet the EEO requirements. These requirements were actually updated at the end of 2016 and they regulate all of the registered apprenticeship programs with OA. And SAA states are also working on developing their own EEO plans. So these can help you ensure that your programs are diverse and inclusive also, by providing an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment.

So with that, I'd like to transition back to Andrea.

MS. HILL: Thanks, Jennifer. And thanks so much to both Ms. Scott and Dr. Williams for sharing your expertise and experience with us today.

Ben, if you don't mind, there's just one last question that – since we are running up against the clock here. But there's just one question that came in that if you could – it's a big one, but – (chuckles) – but just really quickly, if there was one thing that you could suggest for these grantees to do first to achieve great diversity, what would that be?

MR. WILLIAMS: I don't think one person or a small group of people can do this alone. So there has to be a commitment that is wide and broad. And it can come from the leadership of those who are on this call.

But I think there really needs to be a commitment and a commitment to create spaces for these conversations; a commitment to piggyback what Megan was talking about, the importance of understanding our own biases that may have been unexamined but that might be creating barriers to opportunity; to create safe spaces to have those conversations, to really learn together how best to serve the communities that have been underserved; and to really build those reciprocal relationships.

And the reason I say "reciprocal" is it's got to go both ways, where what you're offering is of value and that that relationship is one that is shared. And so when that can happen, when you have that shared commitment, when you create the spaces for that work, and those relationships are authentic and reciprocal, then it can be extremely effective.

MS. HILL: Thank you so much for that. And to Jennifer – (audio break) – so very much appreciated.

As always, to grantees, if you've got questions about your grant program, please contact your FPO. And we thank you for joining us today.

We do have Dr. Williams' contact information here if you're interested in either your grant program or your state maybe continuing work with NAPE. We've got that contact information up here on the slide.

We hope that the presentation was able to spark some ideas for your programs and – (audio break) – which will help apprenticeship expand even further, and to help you change even more lives than you already do with this work. And to help us all do more of what we began with the hope of, to make a real difference in people's lives.

Check out the NAPE website. And thanks so much for being with us.

(END)