EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT

NATIONAL TAACCT ROUNDS 2 & 3 CONVENING

NOVEMBER 3-5, 2014 • WASHINGTON, DC
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Abstract

On November 3-5, 2014, the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration hosted a national convening for TAACCCT rounds two and three grantees. During the meeting, federal employees, grantees, and consortium leaders discussed topics relevant to common grantee obstacles and challenges. Speakers provided valuable information based on success stories and shared promising practices for their peers. Federal staff provided insights on methods and procedures relevant to the grant process and delivered updates on evolving regulations. This report offers a summary on a number of concurrent sessions that took place during the convening in an effort to provide grantees, applicants, and interested parties with key aspects of each discussed topic. For more information on TAACCCT grant programs please visit www.doleta.gov/taaccct or email taaccct@dol.gov.
Acronyms

AEFLA  Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
AMT   Advanced Manufacturing Technician
CAEL  Council for Adult and Experiential Learning
CBE   Competency Based Education
CLASP Center for Law and Social Policy
CPL   Credit for Prior Learning
CTE   Career Technical Education
DOL   U.S. Department of Labor
ED    U.S. Department of Education
FSA   Federal Student Aid
GPA   Grade Point Average
MERLOT Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Training
NAC   National Aviation Consortium
NSF   National Science Foundation
OJT   On the Job Training
RA    Registered Apprenticeship
RACC  Registered Apprenticeship-College Consortium
SSA   Social Security Administration
STEM  Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TA    Trade Act
TAA   Trade Adjustment Assistance
TAACCCT Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program
TCI   Transformative Change Initiative
WIA   Workforce Investment Act
WIB   Workforce Investment Board
WIOA  Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

For more information on TAACCCT grant programs, please visit [www.doleta.gov/taaccct](http://www.doleta.gov/taaccct) or email taaccct@dol.gov.
BRAIDING MULTIPLE FUNDING STREAMS:
LESSONS LEARNED FROM TAACCCT GRANTEES

Speakers:  
Heidi Silver-Pacuilla, Team Leader, Applied Innovation and Improvement, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education  
Andrala Walker, GCDF, Education and Accountability Program Specialist, U.S. Department of Education  
Facilitator: Matthew Valerius, Education Policy Specialist, U.S. Department of Education

Session Description

This session focused on strategies for braiding funding from multiple federal agencies to support specialized education and training programs such as WIOA Title I, WIOA Title II, Perkins Career Technical Education, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, among other programs.

Key Points Discussed

New developments in WIOA law are improving the prospects of funding for career training programs. Core competencies such as English language training, critical thinking skills preparation, and digital literacy have been included in WIOA legislation as “workforce preparation.”

To continue expanding career pathways and sector partnerships, WIOA allows for the transfer of all funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

Additionally, the Act allows Governors to reserve up to 15% of formula funds for innovative programs. Even with this new legislation, grantees should continue to search for a variety of funding and strategies, both federal and/or non-federal, to leverage programs.

Session speakers expressed a need for greater transparency between local, state, and national levels to increase flexibility and effectiveness in disseminating and distributing funds. With greater transparency, funding streams will be more easily identified and requested in the future.

As programs continue to progress through WIOA and further develop training and education, grantees are strongly encouraged to voice their opinions, needs, and concerns. For further information on WIOA, see www.ed.gov/aefla and www.doleta.gov/wioa. For opportunities for apprenticeship program funding, see www.ctd.ed.gov.

Promising Practices for Grantees

→ WIOA reforms allow for greater coordination amongst stakeholders across education, state, and federal government agencies. Collaborate with multiple agencies to produce a single unified plan for core programs.

PEER ADVICE

Search for funding from a variety of sources, both federal and non-federal, to ensure that there is a steady funding stream available for the grant program.

Question Asked

How many colleges get National Science Foundation (NSF) funding? Are those sources separate or are you trying to leverage between sources?

It has been challenging because there is no good way to bridge STEM and CTE, or to mesh program funding while maintaining some clear-cut limitations as determined by the NSF.
Key Points Discussed

The National Aviation Consortium (NAC) uses aviation certificates to build a national credential for the assembly mechanic pathway. NAC created both short and long term educational pathways to provide students with an accelerated route to employment.

Flexibility in program length supports the idea that training programs must have room for flexibility to ramp up and cool down according to market changes.

Another important process that should be implemented to ensure program success involves employers. Grant program leads need to work directly with industry partners to determine the number of trained professionals required in the workforce. From there, program personnel may identify the number of students recruited.

In addition, the process of aligning course material with certification tests should be emphasized. This creates a clear career pathway for students to follow and complete. Ultimately, it serves to ensure the emerging workforce is prepared for jobs they are expected to perform.

Similarly, the ACT-On Retail Management Careers Project uses the national model successfully to implement a regional Retail Management Certificate pathway. During this process, program leads identify training methods to not only fulfill retail expectations, but to also teach students skills that are relevant to jobs in other sectors. Much success in this area has resulted from educating students to aim for retail management positions as viable career choices that are more readily transferable across different industries.

Promising Practices for Grantees

→ It is important to identify how long it will take to achieve educational and vocational goals. When describing a path, delineate job positions that may be expected upon the accomplishment of each educational level to create proper expectations.

→ Work directly with industry partners to produce the dual benefit of 1) helping a community college better prepare for changes in the industrial marketplace and 2) contribute to creating higher caliber certification programs.

Questions Asked

1. How does the credit for prior learning assessments work in the retail sector where most students probably do already have that work experience?

We have a program under development that will allow department chairs to choose three or four classes with initial challenge exams that will enable students to score out of the courses. The program requires a shift in attitudes on campus, as well as challenging college politics.
2. Will you be working with retailers themselves to map these certifications to a wider variety of job options?

One of the retailers in our region has partnered with us to do exactly that, but we are still working to develop a map to the appropriate certifications.

3. Are the retail groups themselves saying they have a need for managers, and that students can come in directly after certificate completion to those manager positions?

A student would not likely go from certification to a full store manager position. It is more likely that they will fill an assistant manager position and would quickly get a promotion to a store manager role rather than someone who for instance, who started as a cashier. Our task is to go to department stores and other retail locations promoting the certificate programs and the caliber of graduates to create these points of access for students.
Key Points Discussed

Allen explained how one of the initial challenges the consortium faced was learning to manage TAACCCT grant expectations while bringing about change on a statewide level. Community colleges in the region began meeting on a weekly basis and now meet monthly to encourage communication, share ideas, and maintain a sense of community amongst stakeholders.

A group was assembled to focus on expanding the applicant pool and resolved to increase integration between college and career navigators and students. All fifteen of Massachusetts’ community colleges now offer flexible, modular schedules and stackable credentials, allowing less traditional students to attain a degree. Having built on these foundations, as of the end of 2014, 70% of students who have completed their degree have found employment.

35% of individuals in central Massachusetts now choose to go to public community colleges and because of the higher demand, all fifteen colleges have dramatically raised the number of available programs, even offering courses that start on off-months to fill the demand.

Phair then spoke about Northern Essex Community College’s program in particular. He explained how the college began by hiring a Program Manager, Navigator, Achievement Coach, and Job Developer to create stackable credential and intrusive coaching programs to keep students on track for success.

The team broke down existing barriers by listening to staff feedback and by establishing monthly meetings between all members of the college team and the career center. Phair discussed how these changes built trust amongst organizations, created more active career centers entrenched in college culture, and established a sustainable program.

Promising Practices for Grantees

→ Offer Stackable credentials, shorter modular terms, intensive systems, and building programs to fit high demand jobs to eliminate
many of the barriers that keep non-traditional students from applying to community college programs.

→ Build teams to tackle specific challenges and meet weekly, if possible, to generate innovative ideas and quick solutions for transformative change on a consortium level.

→ Align credit and noncredit courses with financial aid to increase student involvement.

→ Create a shared platform where colleges in the region may be able to share information easily and efficiently.

Questions Asked

1. Do all 15 colleges have a career center on site?

No, but it is increasingly happening as demand increases.

2. Is there any duplication of services when a college supplies a career center with regards to your programs team of specialists?

The Navigator does an excellent job of working with career centers to eliminate duplication and make sure each college is offering the most for its students.

3. Does the administration fight back against the large changes? How do you get them on board with your proposed changes?

Faculty can be hesitant to accept accelerated programming but, once they start to work with the new schedules, success will be evident. The key is to make the decision to incorporate accelerated learning optional while using data to show the high demand for these programs.

Another barrier can be financial aid as specific courses may need an exact number of contact hours to qualify for aid. Building a great relationship with financial aid departments from the beginning can be a huge help when developing accelerated programs.
Key Points Discussed

Wisconsin Technical College’s program includes sixteen technical colleges with statewide goals as follows:

- Reduce the skill gap to meet employer needs by expanding and enhancing advanced manufacturing training. The consortium committed to training 2,657 individuals in two years.
- Develop systems that help align employers, colleges, workforce development, job centers and industry within districts.
- Expand and improve existing adult manufacturing career pathways.
- Develop college’s capacity to provide short-term training to meet immediate employer needs.
- Develop new models of technology-based aptitude assessments and career appropriateness.
- Improve consortium colleges’ ability to identify and award credit for prior learning/experience in defined pathways.
- Provide supplemental instruction through use of technology.

To begin the transition to CPL, a roadmap of deliverables was developed and included competency based learning, documenting pathways, and using CPL. A sample template for roadmap creation is available on www.advancewisconsin.org. Then, the group delved into CPL researching its history and current practices. A profile of the sixteen colleges was established with a focus on assessment procedures. Lastly, the group involved the Council for Adult Experiential Learning to create a consortium scope. CAEL interviewed colleges, created process mapping, provided training to staff and advised the consortium.

CPL is an attractant for adult learners. 62% of returning adult students stated that CPL influenced their college enrollment process as it leads to degree completion.

The next step for the consortium was to determine the path to credit including paths for transfer credit, military, testing, portfolios and other learning. The hidden value in creating the path to the credit process map was to encourage all participating institutions to use the same language making it possible to compare and learn on a state-wide basis.

Promising Practices for Grantees

→ An instrumental point to the development of the project was the process mapping: creating path to credit maps. This aided in standardizing
the language and therefore facilitating comparison and analysis amongst all sixteen partner institutions.

→ CPL is an excellent resource for any institution, and it attracts a larger number of adult learners. Adult learners are 2.5 times more likely to complete an associates/bachelor’s degree than adults without a credit assessment.

Questions Asked

1. If you can progress through at your own rate, how long would it take to get one credit?

A typical student takes five credits per semester.

2. Manufacturing credits are currently non-credit, can they be used for other credits/academic credits?

Some colleges will accept manufacturing credits since they are usually not as concerned with academic credit, rather skills possessed. In Wisconsin, manufacturing courses are worth one academic credit.

3. Are there credits toward a technical certificate?

One of the benefits of breaking down credits and pathways is that they are made very specific so students are more easily able to determine if they already possess the skills taught in the course.

4. Have schools wanted to transfer CPL or credits from institution to institution?

Yes, we had faculty line up statewide credentials and identify base skills.

5. How do the assessments look practically? Do students need to go to a particular department, is there a test, or is it a hands on assessment?

The goal of our coalition is that every college will create swim lane/path for credit processes. We are presently working to create an intake tool to record this information as students enroll and express interest.

6. What is the cost to the student to attempt experiential credit?

This is variable; some schools offer it at the cost of the course. Some offer it as a transcript fee, others as an instructor fee. We would like to standardize this in the near future.
Speakers:  
Lee Oswalt, Workforce Director, Itawamba Community College  
Alice Schuster, ShaleNET Project Director, Pennsylvania College of Technology  
Dr. Marion Tutor, TAACCCT Director, Itawamba Community College

Session Description
Employer partnerships, such as Toyota and Yokohama Tire, are integral to the TAACCCT Career Accelerated Pathway (CAP) project for the Mississippi Corridor Consortium. As the TAACCCT grant progressed, the concept of employer engagement evolved. This created a cultural change in participating consortium colleges. The discussion described strategies to advance and sustain business relationships.

Key Points Discussed
The Mississippi Community College CAP project in Advanced Manufacturing solicited partners (WIA, WINs, non-profits, engaged employers) by explaining their goals and each group’s role in achieving them.

Through the utilization of management meetings, team emails, individual coaching sessions, and working with TAA and employment centers, the team was able to improve the system. Most recently, to expand employer engagement each college targeted regionally faltering industries help displaced employees find employment.

Presenters from Itawamba Community College spoke about the consortium’s working relationship with Toyota to design a training program that would provide multi-skilled technicians. Tutor described the Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT) program, a two year associate degree where a student attends two full classroom instruction days, works three days a week with an industry partner while earning actual wages, and then upon program completion, competes for available skilled production positions. There is currently a waiting list for this program because it has been so successful.

The best way to get industry partners to work with the community college programs is to:

- Engage employers directly and speak to them about what the grant program can offer them in terms of a prepared workforce.
- Do not solely approach companies with questions, but also ask questions to facilitate a dialog where both parties are identifying solutions.
- Network at business meetings and organizational meetings, using faculty as a “secret weapon” to emphasize the abilities of your programs, can make the biggest impact.

Promising Practices for Grantees
→ Start with a large enough goal before making plans for the TAACCCT grant. Ensure there is flexibility to adapt the program to regional needs and industry changes.

→ Build a motivated team to create campus-wide change.

For more information on TAACCCT grant programs, please visit www.doleta.gov/taaccct or email taaccct@dol.gov.
→ Work with a local business partner, it can make or break your program. Strong working relationships with employers will give the program insider knowledge and support to prepare students for the workforce and will have the additional benefit of industry partners preferring program participants.

→ Building blocks for an educational pathway: 1) Start every applicant/student off with an assessment; 2) move students to paid work experience or an equal opportunity to build necessary skills; and 3) The educational pathway should then lead to a career choice and workforce certification.

Questions Asked

1. _When did you start changing your perspective and goals for your programs?_

As soon as we got the grant, we began meeting every Friday continually looking for the best way to do the right thing. Flexibility is the most important quality to have when planning the program.

2. _Is there any difficulty in finding jobs for students out in rural areas?_

We are booming right now in our region in Mississippi, so it is harder to answer that question. Many people do have to relocate when they have been trained for an industry or skill that is not in their local area.

3. _How do you connect your students to jobs?_

There are specific state programs where students may enroll in a job search program. Career counselors and the OneStop programs match students with industries and make it much easier for students to have a job position lined up after graduation.
Key Points Discussed

The mission of the U.S. Department of Education’s Policy Liaison and Implementation Office is to ensure that Title IV aid is correctly implemented. Staff members receive feedback from parties involved, and use collected information to make improvements in the process and system. To that end, the speakers discussed requirements for career pathways.

The presenters first reviewed the Short-Term (ST) career pathways. These programs require a minimum length that may include the following: 600 clock hours, 24 quarter hours, or 16 semester hours. The calendar component for STs is a required sixteen weeks. Under certain circumstances, there can be variations of these requirements. For example, grantees may still apply for aid in a 300 clock hour program if a prerequisite for the program is an associate’s degree.

The other type of short term program is referred to as a short term vocational program and is available for direct loans. There are requirements for this sort of program as well, such as having completion and placement rates in place for annual reporting. Both types of programs are required to lead to gainful employment.

In addition, the Department of Education is currently hosting an Experimental Sites Initiative to examine the changing nature of the field and see the results of waving current requirements.

Some of the Experimental Sites are testing programs that are 150 clock hours or eight week programs and about half of the students enrolled receive Pell Grants.

Another area presently being studied at Experimental Sites is competency based education, a relatively flexible program that looks at a student’s skills and abilities rather than traditional classroom structure to determine their course placement.

ED is in the process of collecting and analyzing data from these sites. If any institutions are interested in applying for the Experimental Sites Initiative, please visit www.experimentalsites.ed.gov

Promising Practices for Grantees

→ Consider that two key components of the Gainful Employment Regulations are accountability and transparency when planning grant programs.

→ Under the regulations, a program would be considered to lead to gainful employment if the estimated annual loan payment of a typical graduate does not exceed 20% of his or her discretionary income or 8% of his or her total
Questions Asked

1. A lot of the trainings we can offer fall below 600 hours or 24 quarter hours, we are combining programs to make the time requirement work. Are there any other options? Financial aid offices are not staffed to take on clock hour requirements, what are the options for shorter programs to get some aid?

We are looking into the changing nature of this field by conducting the Experimental Sites.

2. Is the debt to earnings ratio calculated by one year or two years out?

If we were looking at a group of students that graduated in the 2014-15 year we would see earnings approximately three years after graduating the program. The total debt is the amount of debt the student accumulated at your institution only. Almost no community college failed this metric previously, greater than 99% passed in previously reported studies.

3. Will Gainful Employment Regulations apply to all for credit certificate programs?

The regulations apply to almost all for profit institution, for public or private schools it refers to Title IV eligible non-degree programs.

4. Data tracking at the Community College level is not a strength, is there another way to collect earnings data for the students? We currently query in the state system.

Under this rule, we will be getting earnings information from the Social Security Administration (SSA). The SSA will provide aggregate information, nothing particular to one student.

5. Will the information obtained from the SSA be shared back to the colleges?

Yes, the debt component does have a challenge component, if the college does not feel it is reflective of the data they collected the institution can challenge the finding and submit their own information from the state database. The institution can also provide a survey of their students.

6. In regards to the earnings data, does it matter if the income is in the field they were trained for?

No, it will just be a metric of their reported income – any earnings.

7. What happens to students that transfer to a four year school?

If the student is still in school without income, they will be excluded. If they have completed another program, they will be counted. This applies to graduates only; they must have completed a certificate through your program.

8. In the short term experimental groups, how many students get aid? Can we subsidize the students who do not get aid with foundation money?

About half of the students will receive financial assistance and all who apply will have to meet Pell grant requirements.
Key Points Discussed

The Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) is working to understand student borrowers and how to improve student financial literacy. The FSA has identified that there is a considerable knowledge gap among borrowers. They are attempting to identify the specific characteristics of students who are most in need of financial literacy information.

Those most at risk were identified as being: non-completers, first generation college students, non-traditional students (over the age of 25), students who have dependents, and non-academically prepared students (might have lower high school GPAs).

Furthermore, it is important to identify what times students most need financial literacy knowledge. Information needs to be specific to each particular student’s needs and should be as simplified as possible.

For the most part, the FSA has identified that timing is the most crucial aspect. Despite the challenges in generalizing information for all student types, the FSA has identified at least three main areas in which students must have some knowledge: budgeting, borrowing, and repayment strategies.

Budgeting, as a pillar of money management, remains central to financial literacy education. Online resources are available to students and financial aid officers at www.studentaid.ed.gov.

One method of incorporating online resources into the financial aid process has been the use of the FACT tool. FACT is an online borrowing and counseling tool that provides students with entrance counseling prior to borrowing and exit counseling prior to graduating when students are entering the loan repayment period.

Coogan encouraged colleges to make counseling tools part of their existing requirements. The FACT Tool can be found online at www.studentloans.gov. Other tools include the financial aid toolkit that provides teaching materials to guide students on their college career paths.

Promising Practice for Grantees

→ Take advantage of the various tools have been made available to help financial aid officers assist student borrowers such as the financial aid toolkit and the FACT tool. For more information, visit www.ed.gov and www.financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov
Session Description

Competency-based education is taking hold as an innovative approach to learning, particularly for adult workers. This workshop provided an overview of Competency Based Education (CBE), examples of CBE higher education programs, and the Department of Education’s efforts to support the development of CBE through experimental sites.

Key Points Discussed

Centering on the innovative concepts of CBE, this session reviewed many available and creative education solutions. McCarthy explained how a common misconception in the traditional approach to education has been its measurement in terms of time, instead of in terms of learning.

Thus, she described how an educational system based on subject mastery would lead to students saving valuable time and money, while allowing them to fulfill their individual career and educational goals.

By removing learning from the limitations of a rigid schedule, students would be able to test-out of subjects should they have adequate knowledge either through prior work experience or previous education.

There were concerns among attendees that allowing students to test out of courses in order to accelerate the student’s progression could lead to perceptions that institutions become “diploma mills.” However, to keep programs credible, colleges must maintain outcomes as a priority, regardless of the approach chosen to implement programs.

Additionally, unbundled models were also discussed. These models provide access to courses and content at any time, and allow students to have faculty mentors assess their progress. Soo encouraged schools to participate in similar programs via enrolling in experimental sites where CBE can be performed and analyzed for rates of success. Colleges can sign up to participate as an experimental site at www.Ifap.ed.gov.

Promising Practices for Grantees

→ Continuous and open discussion is highly encouraged between institutions and government entities to expand progression in CBE learning.

→ Keep outcomes a priority regardless of the approach chosen to implement college programs.

Questions Asked

1. There have been many discussions regarding students acceleration through competency-based education, but how will CBE impact students that need more time?
Students that need more time can also benefit from CBE because this approach underlines results and learning above all else.

2. How can we move accreditors into the new age? How can we create a standard for all accreditors to accept?

Credits need to be transferable/transcribed between institutions, meaning the language behind CBE needs to become common among institutions and government agencies. The federal government encourages meetings between institutions and government to overcome barriers with accreditors.
Key Points Discussed

Brock explained methods of acceleration, compression, placement, and student integration to improve overall rates of completion for adult learners. Developmental education serves two crucial functions: a helping function and a gatekeeping function.

The supporting function refers to the role of assisting underprepared students reach the level of their peers in basic subjects, such as math, reading, or language skills. While the gatekeeper function prevents programs from becoming watered-down by students that might be ill prepared for the level of work expected of them in college level classes.

Brock explained how combinations of acceleration and contextualization have been successful. Attendees in this session agreed that through a form of hybridization or acceleration, students demonstrated up to 70% better scores and higher levels of course completion in community colleges.

Promising Practices for Grantees

→ Implement developmental education in a career-specific framework.

→ Colleges continue to have success by rethinking developmental education using innovative ideas and working with faculty members to be sure they support the changes.

PEER ADVICE

Consider including faculty in the curriculum design process and provide them with a greater amount of autonomy and resources to ease transitions.

Questions Asked

1. How are we dealing with challenges concerning older students?

Developing a different math scheme, which contextualizes problems and experiences towards particular jobs, depending on the student’s end goals.

2. What can we do for veterans who are returning to school but may not be ready for algebra?

They might be able to take advantage of modularization, where they can take only what they explicitly need to keep them on track for their career pathways.
Catherine Kirby opened the discussion with the Transformative Change Initiative (TCI) and its purpose: to assist community colleges in scaling innovations to improve student programs, organization, and system performance. Scaling requires significant improvements in overall performance and impact due to the shortened timeline of a TAACCCT grant. Scaling, spread, and endurance rely on the adaptation and adoption of innovations to fit local contexts.

Kirby provided guiding principles to consider when enacting transformative changes in dynamic environments at the local and regional levels:

1. Leadership: Effective leaders should envision and encourage innovation.

2. Innovations: Chosen for scaling to demonstrate the potential for expansion. Innovations should be very specific to a local context and community.

3. Storytelling: Facilitate learning about innovation and transformative change by describing the goals in a simple and exciting way to get others motivated.

4. Adoption and Adaptation: Consider the cultures of the settings involved and adjust accordingly for efficiency and efficacy.

5. Evaluation: Evidence collected through ongoing and responsive awareness should be used strategically.

6. Networks: Engage practitioners in networks to gain expertise, professional development, and other vital resources. Community colleges are encouraged to take advantage of their partners and network affiliates.

7. Dissemination: Led by individuals with deep knowledge of their settings and can encourage stakeholders to disperse information for adaptability.

8. Technology: Should strengthen resources and expertise, looking at innovations that have promise for growth and far-reaching impact.

**Promising Practice for Grantees**

→ Innovation is not predictable, but scaling, spread, and endurance can encourage innovation to continue and improve a community or region.

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**Session Description**

Eight guiding principles emerged from work groups facilitated by the University of Illinois’ Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL). These principles have been used to encourage and support the scaling of transformative change under TAACCCT.

**Key Points Discussed**

Speaker: Catherine Kirby, Research Information Specialist, Office of Community College Research and Leadership, University of Illinois

Expand networking opportunities between the college and local partners to create region-wide impact.
For more information on TAACCCT grant programs, please visit www.doleta.gov/taaccct or email taaccct@dol.gov.

Session Description

Oregon’s Trade Act (TA) Team builds partnerships between TAACCCT grantees, American Job Centers, support service partners, and Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) across the state to improve and accelerate training. Through relationship building, knowledge sharing, and the development of navigational tools for both staff and participants, the TA team is improving service to trade-affected workers in Oregon.

Key Points Discussed

There are four TAA programs which include workers, firms, farmers, and communities. Oregon’s TA team helps workers, specifically those impacted by foreign competition, find new employment. The average TAA participant is slightly older than the American Civilian Labor Force, at 50 rather than 42 years of age. They are significantly less educated (58.6% have a High School Diploma, GED or less) and some lack technological skills and confidence to participate in today’s workforce due to their age.

One of the projects led by the Oregon TA dealt with the Oregon Southern Coast Call Center. The team experienced great success when mitigating the call center shut down that left an estimated 285 workers affected.

Rapid response strategy meetings for TAA eligible persons met and determined that basic computer skills were needed to integrate these workers successfully into today’s workforce. Community colleges in the area provided computer labs for TAA career planning workshops. WIA also provided assistance by sharing initial rapid response information including skill assessments, term by term schedule, and a course outline for workers interested in training.

Promising Practices for Grantees

→ Quarterly Grant meetings were essential to the establishment of a common language amongst parties involved.

→ When leveraging existing resources it is important to understand the different systems and cultures of participants, TAA workers, and staff involved.

→ Teaching networking skills to new TAA students enrolled in community colleges is an important skill for them to acquire as they seek to expand their knowledge and career choices.

Question Asked

What was the biggest challenge experienced when taking on this role of Liaison?

It is probably being in constant motion and doing all the driving across the state. I know that site visits are vital to maintaining working relationships with various community colleges, and the best way to do that is through frequent visits.
Session Description
There is often a disconnect between training programs and employment. Relationships between employers and educational institutions can be extremely beneficial, especially if person-to-person contact is emphasized. Ultimately, the overarching model for job placement must be one of employer involvement every step of the college pathway. This session primarily looked at roles employers play in TAACCCT programs and how to make them sustainable.

Key Points Discussed
Many institutions have not implemented career offices effectively to work directly with employers for the purposes of job placement. Without a direct connection it is likely that training programs will not align with industry needs. Furthermore, familiarity with the applicant and training program allows the employer to differentiate TAACCCT grant programs graduates quickly.

Washburn Institute of Technology has gone from a 29% job placement rate to almost 80% placement rate by improving relationships between the college, students, and businesses. Grantees must create lasting partnerships with regional industry leaders to ensure a promising future for their students.

Partnering with industry associations can be an extremely efficient way of often leveraging limited job placement resources. National organizations have local chapters in other areas, thus working on a national level can have a force multiplying effect.

One suggestion for colleges is to involve employers in an advisory capacity when formulating programs and courses. Not only will it improve training program relevancy, but will also boost the rate at which companies visit community colleges for recruiting.

Promising Practices for Grantees
→ Involve employers in program creation and execution, whether training or academic-focused, to ensure applicability of learning to industry labor demand.

Questions Asked
1. Do you have any recommendations for encouraging our staff to think about the result?

Emphasize the compliance level of grant requirements to motivate staff to consider the job placement process.

2. I get an attitude from co-grantees that once the training is done, their job is done. How can that be ameliorated?

Approach community college presidents directly so that they may lead faculty and staff.

Session Description
There is often a disconnect between training programs and employment. Relationships between employers and educational institutions can be extremely beneficial, especially if person-to-person contact is emphasized. Ultimately, the overarching model for job placement must be one of employer involvement every step of the college pathway. This session primarily looked at roles employers play in TAACCCT programs and how to make them sustainable.

Key Points Discussed
Many institutions have not implemented career offices effectively to work directly with employers for the purposes of job placement. Without a direct connection it is likely that training programs will not align with industry needs. Furthermore, familiarity with the applicant and training program allows the employer to differentiate TAACCCT grant programs graduates quickly.

Washburn Institute of Technology has gone from a 29% job placement rate to almost 80% placement rate by improving relationships between the college, students, and businesses. Grantees must create lasting partnerships with regional industry leaders to ensure a promising future for their students.

Partnering with industry associations can be an extremely efficient way of often leveraging limited job placement resources. National organizations have local chapters in other areas, thus working on a national level can have a force multiplying effect.

One suggestion for colleges is to involve employers in an advisory capacity when formulating programs and courses. Not only will it improve training program relevancy, but will also boost the rate at which companies visit community colleges for recruiting.

Promising Practices for Grantees
→ Involve employers in program creation and execution, whether training or academic-focused, to ensure applicability of learning to industry labor demand.

Questions Asked
1. Do you have any recommendations for encouraging our staff to think about the result?

Emphasize the compliance level of grant requirements to motivate staff to consider the job placement process.

2. I get an attitude from co-grantees that once the training is done, their job is done. How can that be ameliorated?

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Key Points Discussed

The Registered Apprenticeship-College Consortium (RACC) is a network of colleges and registered apprenticeship programs working together to provide college to career opportunities. Through the RACC, the American Apprentice Initiative seeks to double the number of registered apprentice programs in five years. This is a job driven strategy to train skilled workers, develop career pathways, and become an integral part of sector strategies. Furthermore, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) strengthened connections for the Registered Apprenticeship program to succeed.

There are benefits for all involved stakeholders. An apprentice can earn credit “as you learn”. From the educational institution perspective, closer relationships may be built with industry personnel leading to an increase in enrollment and articulation. For businesses and unions, there is increased credibility and the expansion of viable education and training options that creates greater chances of employee retention and a trained and educated workforce.

The RACC is based on three principles:

1. To enhance and achieve educational, vocational, and career goals and minimize the need to repeat coursework. Successful registered apprenticeship program graduates should be able to receive appropriate college credit for prior learning obtained while in these programs.

2. To facilitate apprentices’ entry into two-year and four-year post-secondary educational institutions, flexibility should be maintained in programs, procedures and scheduling.

3. To ensure mutually beneficial and productive partnerships, college and registered apprenticeship program sponsor consortium members should exhibit a clear understanding of, and support for, their respective roles in articulation efforts.

Session Description

Leading colleges across the country are joining the Registered Apprenticeship-College Consortium (RACC) to facilitate the transfer of the U.S. Department of Labor’s rigorous Registered Apprenticeship (RA) completion certificate towards college credit among RACC members. Credit for prior learning is among the hottest educational issues facing today’s academic institutions. For more information visit: http://www.doleta.gov/oa/racc.cfm

Promising Practice for Grantees

→ Make sure staff have a clear understanding of RACC. The criterion and specific requirements for membership in the RACC can be found on the website www.doleta.gov/oa/racc.cfm
Questions Asked

1. As a Workforce Investment Board (WIB) how would colleges deal with unions?

This would depend on the sponsor of the apprenticeship.

2. What are some ways that we could shift the paradigm of apprenticeship away from manufacturing and toward research and development?

Apprenticeship is just a model used to acquire skills; it can be adapted to many fields, not just manufacturing. The institution must be willing to work with any employer/industry that take one year or less to make participants ‘work ready.’

3. Who bears the cost of ACE accreditation?

The employer bears the cost, and this can be an expensive process. We are currently investigating ways to bring this cost down.

4. We have a Health/IT program in the works, but employers cannot find a value proposition. Do you have the initiative to help companies see the value?

This is something we need to do a better job of – we need to explain why you should do an apprenticeship to prospective students and why employers should register their apprenticeships with the DOL.

5. If you register for RACC will that mean that you have to submit a statement of work change for TAACCCT grantees?

Please consult your FPO on this matter.
Session Description

This session discussed the history and rationale of Virginia’s PluggedInVA program. Presenters reviewed the program’s different tiers emphasizing its applicability to adult learners across the abilities and experience spectrum.

Key Points Discussed

PluggedInVA’s high level of retention points to the program’s success in terms of targeting courses and training programs for different adult learners based on academic ability and experience.

Adult learners typically have complicating life factors and financial constraints that make their needs differ from those of the general college population. For this reason, PluggedInVA is not necessarily sequential, but there are opportunities to start and stop at different levels to increase availability and flexibility for students.

The curriculum is specific to industries for both hard and soft skills. Co-enrollment at colleges or universities is pursued along with an employer-focused component to expand student’s awareness of possible career pathways. Overall, the goal is to secure job readiness both in terms of skills attained and industry-recognized certifications achieved.

Promising Practices for Grantees

→ PluggedInVA works with Virginia’s community colleges using funding from the state. Consider replicating this for grant programs.

→ Offer a series of modules geared towards different levels of learning, with appropriate focuses on academic skill building versus direct work preparation.

→ The cohort model groups adult learners together in teams based on their area of study. This both provides a shared support mechanism and allows instructors to tailor courses to meet their needs.

Question Asked

How long does an individual take under PluggedInVA to complete the program?

The program typically comprises 15-20 hours per week for a period of six months.

For more information on TAACCCT grant programs, please visit www.doleta.gov/taaccct or email taaccct@dol.gov.
Key Points Discussed

Ganzglass began the session by defining key elements of working with stacked and latticed credentials. Credentials can be anything from degrees, diplomas, credit-bearing and non-credit educational certificates to apprenticeship and industry certificates, or even licenses and digital badges.

Stacking credentials proves to be more beneficial to students by eliminating dead ends that often appear when students try to combine education and work. It provides students with credentials that have direct economic value while earning their degree. Stackable credentials reduce time and costs for students and employers and focus on results by making clear and manageable pathways for students to navigate as they move closer to their goals. This process is integral to career pathways by benefitting students that enroll in community colleges with previously acquired skill sets and work experiences.

Ganzglass discussed different techniques used to create stackable credential programs:

- Embed industry or professional certifications in career and technical programs
- Streamline and scale processes for awarding credit for learning represented by non-collegiate credentials
- Create latticed credentials and dual enrollment programs to accelerate programming and allow students to move through multiple career pathways.

Suggestions provided for creating stackable credentials:

- Manage different standards, metrics, and quality assurance mechanisms underlying industry and education credentials.
- Overcome the disconnect between credit and non-credit educational offerings.
- Negotiate federal financial aid rules.

Promising Practices for Grantees

Krismer discussed eight strategies and building blocks necessary to reform:

→ Prior learning assessment and career guidance
→ Contextualize education
→ Competency-based core curriculum
→ Industry recognized stackable credentials. Every community college must have an ambassador from the industry on their advisory board to certify the curriculum.
→ Enhance retention support
→ Improve data and accountability systems
→ Galvanize a national movement to improve professional training

Questions Asked

1. What’s your shortest time frame credential?

Our most succinct credential is two weeks long. It involves long hours each day and intense training with a faculty member. Our most extended credential is two years long.

2. Do you have a hard time finding faculty to teach those less traditional timeframe classes?

Yes, this can be a problem because you need the most skilled teachers to lead accelerated and condensed programs. Most of the time, however, instructors enjoy the atmosphere of building a cohort environment in a short span of time and having such dedicated students. We have also tried team teaching, using two to four instructors, for courses to alleviate some of the burdens that would otherwise be with only one instructor.

3. Can you elaborate on how you got people across different divisions to come together on a Core Curriculum?

It is not an easy process, especially if you have faculty within a state that cannot agree on what employers and different licensing bodies’ need—but it is doable. We created several basic tenants on how our program was going to do its work: competencies, basic credits, and so forth. Each community college would adopt as many of the competencies as they were able. It takes time to get faculty, universities, and state legislators to change. Having organizations like ours go in and facilitate these discussions can help changes develop more smoothly. I would suggest utilizing a national advisory council to help develop competencies and industry standards.
Key Points Discussed

Collin College developed a Business and Industry Leadership Team model, where technological executives, managers, technicians, and other industry representatives help formulate programs at the community college level. Companies involved in this program made commitments to not only guarantee interviews to applicants, but furthermore to hire a certain number of new employees in a given cycle.

As an alternative to traditional internships offered by employers, an ‘externship’ is another option available to students. It provides an opportunity for non-traditional students to have the same experience and resume building as an average college student. By taking advantage of the virtual participation of business representatives brought in through community college-industry relationships, externships contribute to the creation of a hiring pipeline.

Promising Practices for Grantees

→ Community colleges that work with businesses to create and run education and training programs will see better hiring statistics among their graduates.

→ Foster relationships with organizations allow for more accurate labor market predictions and, by extension, a more efficient allocation of community college resources to relevant courses and programs.

→ ‘Externships’ that cater to non-traditional students are essential for providing needed experience and credibility to employers looking for the right employees.

Questions Asked

1. Can you walk us through how the outside internship [externship] works?

An externship can be a capstone project. A business person designs a situation or problem, and then works with the professor to oversee teams of students working to solve the problem. While the teacher serves as the primary project leader for multiple groups, the business representative can participate virtually and receives periodic progress updates from the students. At the end of the project, students must ‘sell’ their solution to a panel of business and technical experts. As a result of these kinds of externships, students have been offered very promising jobs, and their write-ups become part of their portfolios for future interviews.

2. How do you market to existing employers to get new people on advisory boards?

We let employers know that this was as much
their problem as ours. Involving the head of the training organization is essential because they need to be invested in the program for the pipeline to work. Investing partners in the outcomes produces greater chances of success. Our curriculum committee has workforce training representatives on it.
TAACCCT REPOSITORY: GOING FORWARD WITH SKILLSCOMMONS.ORG

Speakers:  
Gerry Hanley, Ph.D., Executive Director/Assistant Vice Chancellor, Office of the Chancellor, MERLOT/California State University  
Rick Lumadue, Ph.D., Director, SkillsCommons.org, MERLOT/California State University

Session Description

California State University (CSU) /Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT) discussed the digital repository and library support services available to TAACCCT grantees for their instructional and program support materials. This session offered attendees a chance to learn about the current services and plans for ensuring project success using a broad range of customizable MERLOT and CSU Academic Technology services that will become part of SkillsCommons.org.

Key Points Discussed

Overall, the goals for SkillsCommons.org focus on capturing and preserving materials, and increasing accessibility to information. Hanley reported that uploads must include descriptions that are highly descriptive and should clearly state the main focus. Targeted reports and unlimited upload ability make it easier to find content unique to various stages of development and implementation.

Ultimately, students themselves will be able to benefit from the site as they will be able to save thousands of dollars in learning material. For faculty, cataloging is also made simple in the sense that instructional materials are easily accessible and are built to be shared among many users. Educational materials on the site are fully editable and customizable depending on program needs. Browsing the repository is made easy and can be refined by industry, date created, and institution.

The program includes customizable pages that demonstrate how available material has been used and the subsequent success of its utilization. To fully take advantage of Open Educational Resources, there will soon be a catalog that will capture the type, format and licensing for all uploaded TAACCCT-funded materials. Furthermore, the creators, working in conjunction with the Department of Labor, will be adding “terms of service” to the site in order to define better what materials are suitable for upload.

Design questions should be directed towards ricklumadue@calstate.edu. To get started with SkillsCommons.org and set up a new account to contribute your TAACCCT Grant materials, please contact support@skillscommons.org.

Promising Practices for Grantees

PEER ADVICE

Connecting institutions through open access educational material helps colleges reach common goals.

→ SkillsCommons.org is a step into the future of Open Educational Resources.

→ SkillsCommons.org is easy to use and accessible, both to faculty and students.

Questions Asked

1. Do we need to re-label all materials with DOL and CC bylaws for each description and upload?
The purpose of the Open Educational Resources is to allow people to re-use and remix materials as needed. For the time being, the terms of service are still being discussed.

2. How is the quality of materials rated/determined?

MERLOT, and in turn SkillsCommons.org, uses peer review and user ratings.

3. Is the material transferable across system forms?

MERLOT is already integrated with a number of systems such as Moodle and Soft Chalk, as well as some others, but as long as the material is editable it can be in any file format.

4. How do I know how to create the materials appropriately?

We are working to create training materials and how-to webinars to show step-by-step instructions of use for the site.
Key Points Discussed

TCI has a network of consortia from all three TAACCCT rounds that engage in peer-to-peer learning and the exchange of ideas among peers and experts. These learning events include the Learning Lab, webinars, and conference calls with thought leaders. TCI also hosts a virtual platform for participants digitally to share ideas, promising practices, questions, and to facilitate discussions.

The goal is to raise the performance of community colleges without sacrificing access for students. To accomplish these objectives, Liu presented the eight guiding principles of transformative change and discussed how they can be utilized to encourage spread and endurance of innovation:

1. Leadership: Effective leaders should envision and foster innovation.

2. Innovations: Chosen for scaling and show the potential to spread and endure; these should be very specific to the local context and community.

3. Storytelling: Facilitates learning about innovation and transformative change; how to tell the story in a simple and exciting way to get others involved in ideas and best practices.

4. Adoption and Adaptation: Consider the cultures of the settings involved and adjust accordingly for most efficiency and efficacy.

5. Evaluation: Strategically use evidence collected through ongoing and responsive awareness.

6. Networks: Practitioners engaged in networks to gain access to expertise, professional development, and other vital resources; community colleges are part of a bigger system and using them and their partners to evaluate and judge resources is encouraged.

7. Dissemination: Led by individuals with deep knowledge of their settings and can support stakeholders to disperse information about adaptability.

8. Technology: Should strengthen resources and expertise; looking at innovations that have promise for growth and far-reaching impact.

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**PEER ADVICE**

*The best ways to leverage the TAACCCT grant is to take the best ideas and scale them to specific communities and industries.*
Promising Practices for Grantees

→ Revalidate competencies

→ Enhance the curriculum through open-source educational models

→ Eliminate developmental courses and accelerating the programs to completion

→ Stack and lattice courses to ensure credits apply to both credential programs and degrees

→ Be as flexible and responsive as necessary for the potentially unconventional community college program/student

→ Employer engagement is necessary. Have roundtables by sector to build a regional system focused on understanding what makes a more resilient worker.

Questions Asked

1. What is going to be a better way to get potential students and community college partners to understand the value of this certificate program?

Develop a map of educational pathways and courses available. Then highlight how each level of completion in these training programs can lead to particular jobs and higher positions.

2. How do we replicate the goals of the TCI in the community college system?

We (the TCI) are designing a toolkit that will be available online that will have all of the information and resources necessary to replicate successful systems that have already adopted the TCI’s goals.
Key Points Discussed

The average TAA customer is at an 8th-grade level of education and is typically 50 years of age. These characteristics alone can make enrollment into college programs an intimidating process. Adult learners have several fears that prevent him/her from attending a course, whether it be fear of failure, fear of being the oldest person in the classroom or a lack of confidence. As a result, this group finds work with a relative or at a low skill job and does not consider furthering their education.

To alter the perception of college for adult learners, Southwest Virginia recently implemented convenient and flexible programs that allow adults to maintain their jobs while developing their skills in a college classroom. The first step in attracting TAA-eligible participants is to contact state coordinators and create an active partnership. From there, ensure that the institution administers a user-friendly application process that is easily understood by TAA customers.

Partner with administrators to provide financial planning assistance and time management counseling to engage these individuals. Recruit potential TAA eligible participants at social services agencies, parks, and train stations.

Miller and Worden also outlined a number of benefits to enrolling TAA participants:

- Tuition for training (including classroom, distance learning, OJT, and apprenticeships)
- Training related cost (computers, books, fees, certification exams)
- Income support (usually equivalent to UI payments while the participant is in training)
- Supportive services (transportation, subsistence when training is far from home)
- Job search allowance
- Job relocation allowances
- Wage subsidies

For State Trade Coordinator contact information, please visit www.doleta.gov/tradeact.

Promising Practice for Grantees

→ Use retention specialists and student success specialists as they are essential to ensuring adult learners remain on track.
Key Points Discussed

Over the past two years, there has been over two billion dollars invested in TAACCCT grant programs to develop innovative solutions for training individuals through the WIOA. Many steps have been taken to reauthorize adult education programs and align the programs’ strategies with on-the-ground operations. The reauthorization of WIOA is necessary for the development of adult education and community college programs.

WIOA reauthorization has catalyzed a tremendous amount of work at the federal level. Gagliardi shared that daily meetings with educational heads and leaders in health and human services are still taking place, creating various opportunities for stakeholders to voice their concerns.

Other significant changes include plans to implement the strategic and operational alignment of programs within states. WIOA requires the engagement of stakeholders in strategic planning. Some notable changes include the streamlining of the board, a greater focus on regionalism, and attention towards identifying performance measurements.

There is also a greater focus on giving graduates industry recognized credentials, emphasizing career based training. Gagliardi reported a tremendous focus increase on apprenticeship. Additionally, with the new provisions of WIOA, there is now an increased emphasis placed on servicing out-of-school youth.

Promising Practice for Grantees

→ Greater emphasis on career-based training and education integration is needed to bring up the skill level of the lower-skilled population.

→ Successes include a notable increase in the specificity of laws terminology (codification of terms).

Question Asked

Is there any change to the individual training account process?

It should essentially work the same.