TORI:

So folks, this is your official welcome and opening. Thanks for joining us today for employer engagement part two. For those of you who attended part one, the intent is to build upon some of the information that you received in part one. And if you did not attend part one, no worries. We’ll get you caught up. Feel free to use the chat to ask questions. There will be an opportunity for you to engage with your presenters. And with that, we are going to dive right into it.

For the day here, we just completed the welcoming opening. I'll do the introduction of speakers shortly. We're going to talk about business engagement. Again, you'll have an opportunity for a Q&A, and then we're going to go ahead and close it out.

So your speakers today, Lisa Rice, project manager with Safal Partners. She's the project manager and lead TA coach for this project with DSI. She also supports other apprenticeship work with Safal, including the registered apprenticeship in cybersecurity and the RA Technical Assistance Center of Excellence grant. Lisa has over 20 years of experience in-- excuse me, I'm sorry-- workforce development, included as the former CEO of CareerSource Brevard in Melbourne, Florida.

Erin, our second speaker, is a senior analyst with Maher & Maher, and as a CCGG coach and subject matter expert at Maher, her work focuses on apprenticeship initiatives, including supporting state and US territory grantees with TA efforts for apprenticeship expansion. Erin works on several other projects, helping states and regions implement, showcase, and highlight workforce development initiatives and sector strategies. And so with that introduction, ladies, take it away.

LISA RICE:

OK, great. I'm really glad everybody's here today. We're going to do a very, very quick review of what we talked about in part one of the business engagement. And Tori, if you'll go ahead to the next slide. We really want to make sure this is quick because we want to get you into everything for today, along with some role playing and conversations.

So we just want to remember that we're doing this business engagement process as a way for us to eventually establish trust with the employer to give them value, to make sure that you are different from every other person that's knocking on the door. And so you become an SME. And all of that business process is around-- go ahead and go to the next slide, please-- our steps that we had, where we're identifying all of our opportunities, where we're creating a plan. You have to research about the business. You have to figure out what do they have currently. How could you maybe help them with their pain points? And where can you deliver that value and those results to them that will make them see that you can actually help with the pain points?

And then the last part is once you get them hooked, we got to keep them growing the relationship, and growing the relationship oftentimes means that they are actually helping you be referred to other people. OK, next slide, please.

Excuse me. So all of this goes through the consultative sales approach, where you're really focused on your customer, focused on what do they need, not trying to sell yourself. Remember not trying to sell your program, but asking those questions. What about, what if, how do you, all of those good questions, and then also just really looking for how do you tell them a solution.
So again, it's not about, hi, I'm Lisa, I'm from ABC College, and I'm here to talk to you about apprenticeships. It's what's happening in your workforce and then helping them figure out how to solve that. All right, so, Erin, let's get going into our main meet for today.

ERIN DUCKETT: Thanks, Lisa. First, I just wanted to see if there was any questions on what you learned before or anything you wanted to review in the business engagement process.

LISA RICE: Thank you, Erin.

ERIN DUCKETT: Does anybody have any questions that they didn't get to ask last time or something that they wanted to review? All right, well, we'll go ahead and dive in then to today's content. Please feel free to add any questions along the way into the chat. We want to keep this a dialogue and really a conversation.

So I'm going to talk a little bit about business engagement sort of in a next level, business engagement specific to apprenticeship, which seems like it should be obvious. But there are certain things that encompass apprenticeship and can help frame your thinking around business engagement when you're talking about that specific strategy. Next slide.

So as you all know, this grant-- and there's a number of other DOL supported apprenticeship funding out there to states, to local areas, to regions, to really help drive business engagement, particularly around apprenticeship. Every state in the nation and six territories are working on expanding apprenticeship efforts in their region. And so it's really an important time to talk about how are we engaging businesses and other partners into that space.

It's really important to think about apprenticeship as an employer driven model, expanding business engagement strategies mostly that businesses already do. States and territories and local areas are using many different strategies to build more engagement in the apprenticeship space, so deploying awareness building activities, marketing campaigns, working on awareness of the model. We've seen states do videos with apprentices showing the day in the life of what they're doing, marketing towards employers, marketing towards school counselors, marketing towards parents. And more than sort of that awareness piece, a number of states are also putting into place policies, procedures, practices to support apprenticeship, so whether that be a state level funding that supports apprenticeship expansion, whether that be certain tax incentives or credits or business incentives if you hire an apprentice or put in a new apprenticeship program.

And then also some-- we've seen giving access to specific talent pools or working with certain community partners if they take on an apprenticeship program. Next slide. It's important to think about apprenticeship in business engagement as another tool in your toolbox. So looking at apprenticeship as another workforce development tool and really thinking about it in that way.

Now, I know that for a CSG grant, we have a mix of registered apprenticeships, unregistered apprenticeships, work-based learning models, but really talking about it-- how to enhance existing business practices. So the model in itself really is something that businesses already do. When you're talking about apprenticeship in particular, registered apprenticeship, in the eyes of business, your pitch and your success is really as good as the program that's created. So making sure that you couch it as an asset in your toolbox, help employers understand the concept, and be able to develop on that promise.
Mary has a question. I'll get to that, Mary. Are there specific states that are doing more than others? Where would it be easiest to focus our outreach? We'll talk a little bit about that, and if that doesn't make it clear, we can come back to that as well. But about specific states, I wouldn't necessarily say some are doing more than others. So right now, there are anywhere from three to six state level opportunities in each state. States have various levels of apprenticeship funding that they've received over the last five years with various requirements, outcomes, goals, but all in the mindset of helping employers access, develop, and disseminate apprenticeship programs.

All states don't have all of those opportunities. The newest one has been around increasing diversity efforts with an apprenticeship. But all states are working towards expanding apprenticeship in their local regions. Next slide.

So here are some things that might help when you're trying to decide sort of who might be right to target for outreach, looking for businesses that have workforce challenges that would be suited for an apprenticeship as the solution. So some challenges are listed here. Is there a known or a parent skills gap, or are they having a challenge with the development of their existing talent? So needing to upscale their existing workforce due to maybe technology changes or environmental changes, policy changes in the industry?

Are they having trouble recruiting and retaining talent? Does their sector have a looming or apparent or current mass retirement of the workforce? We saw this in the last few years in the utility sector really trying to embrace those work-based learning and apprenticeship programs because of the high level of retirement in that industry. Are there advancing technologies that will impact the workforce in that sector?

You can also determine who might be good to target by seeing these types of indicators for those things. So have you noticed that a particular employer has job postings that are open for a long period of time? Are they posting mid-level positions? So something happening at that mid-level where they can't seem to fill those. Do they seem to have openings posted and then reposted constantly? So having that issue with retaining the talent.

Are you seeing information in the labor market information that shows retirements are coming, and then have they expressed an interest? One of the most easiest employer groups to focus is someone that says I'm interested in customized or technical training. So looking for those businesses that have these challenges or have maybe shown these indicators in any of your news outlets or information that you know.

Next slide, please. So I wanted to share this slide with you. You might have to click a few times, Tori. This is the graphic that shows the five elements of apprenticeships. So is there business involvement, related technical instruction, structured on the job training? Is there rewards or pay increases for skill and competency gains? And then do you receive a national credential?

So looking at it in business development and business engagement, relate these steps to what businesses are already doing. So businesses need to hire and promote staff. They're involved in workforce development and the process right now.

You know that when they hire staff, there's always that onboarding time. So that can be related to instruction. They're always training and giving classroom instruction or cultural training into their business, filling in those gaps that those individuals might come in with to be able to be fully productive at their job.

Three, when they hire new staff, a lot of times a new employee will be assigned a mentor or a staff that sort of supports them during their onboarding and their training time. That's part of a registered apprenticeship as it is, having that mentor, having that structured support on the job.
Rewards for skill gains. So businesses conduct performance reviews, and they reward monetarily with merit-based increases once they see that certain competencies or credentials are met. They're already doing that sort of process. National occupational credential. They might not regularly assign or give out the national credential, but they do promote into new levels, new positions. There are some sort of fine act that happens when they've become proficient in that job. So talking about apprenticeships and the apprenticeship model and relating it to what businesses already do. Next slide.

It's also important to build trust, particularly in apprenticeships and when you're targeting businesses to potentially work on apprenticeship. So one thing that we've seen have huge success and apprenticeship expansion is to have employers hear from their peers. So provide examples, success stories of how other businesses have used apprenticeship for the occupation that they're targeting. Offer to connect them with a peer, hearing directly from another employer in the same sector about how they've used the model, how they've been successful, what's occurred in their workforce is really effective to them.

As you're building your proposal to how to help the employer, use apprenticeship as a solution, and then provide a rough return on investment calculation. So a few states and different organizations have created tools to do that. There's lots of tools online that you'll be able to access. But provide that information on return on investment. Speak their language as far as bottom line and what they can benefit from by taking advantage of that strategy.

Next slide. And we talked a little bit about this during the first session but enable commitment, first and foremost by addressing concerns. So what are those things that the employer is concerned about? Make sure that you're addressing them. Be honest and transparent with any of the challenges or what it's going to take to put a program together. And also build organizational buy-in, so making sure that the individuals that you engage either they, or they have access to the real decision makers that would be able to take advantage of creating or implementing a program.

It's really hard once you've done so much work to not have done the due diligence of going up and making sure that your work will be able to be fulfilled by getting the entire organization to buy in. Bring the right partners to the table. So be the one to engage others as needed. Maybe it's another training provider. Maybe it's a community organization that will need to support the apprenticeship program, but do that navigational work for the employer and having them see the value of your assistance and your participation in helping them create it will really help to solidify the commitment.

So I want to take the next few minutes to just open it up to all of you. Next slide, Tori. We've talked a little bit about strategies and language, and I have a few more slides that I'm going to go over. But before we do that, I just want to hear from all of you. What has been effective, specifically in engaging businesses with apprenticeship? What's been challenging? How have you sold or struggled in selling the apprenticeship model? Are there specific language that you used? Feel free to either type in the chat or take yourself off of mute as well.

Does anybody want to share? Signing the dotted line on their standards. Can you expand a little bit about that, Cameron?
CAMERON: Sure. So once the initial meeting is discussed multiple times over email and Zoom, and then when you bring in the Department of Labor, and then you bring in the HR manager, and either the foreman or the plant manager, they're ready to go. They know it's the right thing to do. And then you give them their documents, which as we all know, 85% of the work is pretty much done for them. It's just then getting them to just say yes, yeah, yeah.

And then once they do, you know, I don't know a business policy that could be ever changed, but I believe they have even up to six months to a year to even put on [?] apprentices [?] through RAPIDS. I'm talking through the USDOL. I know some states-- or some apprenticeships to run through the state.

ERIN DUCKETT: So you're talking about Office of Apprenticeship supported states.

CAMERON: Correct. Thank you for clarifying that.

ERIN DUCKETT: Yep, no problem. So you've done all the work. You've done everything. You've gotten them to verbally commit. How do you get them to sign on the dotted line?

CAMERON: So some of the strategies we're using is the multiple grants, the financial incentives, braiding the funding for them. That's all very, very enticing to them. Then it's still a challenge to get them to sign the dotted line. And then if they do sign the dotted line, then it's a challenge having them put on [?] apprentices. [?] You know, I would like to see them onboarded within that following week. I don't like the six months to a year. So again, I don't know if the states have different instructions or different-- if they have to be registered within a certain time period, through their state.

ERIN DUCKETT: Are others seeing similar things, that you've done all of the work, it sounds great, everyone is yes, yes, yes, but getting them to the actual execution, are others seeing the same?

CAMERON: Oh, bummer. Now I feel like it's just a challenge for us.

ERIN DUCKETT: No, I don't think so, Cameron. Well, I'm going to share something, and there's a few of you that are in this meeting as well. But I'm going to share a few things that we've talked about. Thanks, Beth. We talked a little bit about this yesterday.

And Amy, I might call on you, but we've been talking about this in our understanding the industry affinity group. So you know, what is it that's sort of holding employers up? And a lot of what we've talked about is the words that we're using. Some of the folks in or call have said, you know, I can't use the word apprenticeship. I can tell them all about the components, everything that it takes, but if I use the word apprenticeship, they scurry away.

We've had one organization in the group talk about an enhanced internship program, so using that terminology has given some more support to engagement. What are other things that folks have used, other kind of language to get over that hesitancy when you're talking about apprenticeship?

LISA RICE: So Erin, I'll jump in here. This is Lisa. While people are getting their thoughts and ready to come off their mic, I'll jump in here and say that one of the things that we've seen that works is just to kind of go back through. OK, so you guys are excited about this. We've talked through all of these standards. Is there anything that's holding you back from signing the standards? What else do you need to be able to sign them? Kind of doing some things like that, where you're-- again, it's always that questioning of the employer to try to get them to respond with more than just a yes or no kind of answer, too. So that's part of what we've done. Others?
Hello. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is David, and I'm from UCR Extension in California. And I will say that we did have, when the state was closed, some real big challenges with also having employers sign that document. But I think since things have opened, we've seen a lot more commitment from employers, and it's really our challenge-- our challenges have kind of shift from employers are really excited to engage with apprenticeship program. We find ourselves doing a lot of education on apprenticeship because in the beginning, they think it's internship, and we kind of have to differentiate the two.

But once they learn all the benefits, they're real excited. But I think our challenge now is we have a lot of employers that want to engage. And we have a limited pipeline of interested candidates. So things have kind of shifted here and in Southern California at least from an apprenticeship standpoint.

But one of the things that employers have said that we've really tried to fill that gap is they've told us that-- I hired these people because they say they're interested, and then three months down the road, they say, oh, you know what, this isn't for me. I thought it was a good opportunity. And then the apprentice winds up leaving because they really didn't understand their career strengths or fully understand what an apprenticeship is and more of a career than just kind of a job that leads to that next stepping stone.

And so what we've done is we've really listened to both apprentices and then also employers. And what we've done on here at the apprenticeship team in Southern California is implemented a career assessment. Before we send anyone out and start the interviewing process and get the employer engaged, we have them take a Strong Interest Inventory, which really gives us a profound insight, and I would also say not just us but the participant insight into their career strengths.

So it creates a better alignment of occupations and employer. And we have seen higher retention rates, which have been a really big concern with employers here in Southern California as retention rates. And so we really want-- I mean, obviously, one of the goals of the apprenticeship grant is high retention to create a skilled workforce. But we really, both taken qualitative and quantitative data, and really tried to meet the need of employers in this area. And then with our affinity groups because some of our challenges for our pipeline is child care concerns with things still being kind of limited here in California. And so yes, it's the pandemic, but it's also other types of concerns. Safety, child care, those type of things.

So I think that through our partnership with our technical support professionals, we've really got some really good insight into kind of how to combat those challenges. And I'll wrap it up here because I know I'm kind of going long, but that's how we really try to listen to employers and participants and really try to identify career strengths through this assessment. So that way when we do send people to organizations where or these individuals to an organizations that's looking for a project manager, we know that their career goals and are in alignment with what that employer is looking for. And as I said before, we've seen higher retention rates by implementing this interest inventory.

That's great. Thanks for sharing that, Dave. I think that you hit on a few really good things, you know, the assessment as something to think about beforehand, but also executing your partnerships to provide that whole package. So you talked about accessing supportive services or how can you really play a different role, both for the employers and for the apprentices and the participants. How can you provide some of those other services or engage partners that provide those other services to have that whole package?
Yes. So if you have other strategies you're using, put them in the chat, or if you even have links that you want to share with others. But thanks, David, for sharing that. I want to go to the next slide as we are talking specifically about language. So this is not a comprehensive list, but this really starts to talk about specific words that can engage or really disengage if you’re using them in the correct way.

So apprenticeship speak. We use words like outreach and selection. To businesses, that's really recruitment, interviewing. In apprenticeship world, we talk about work processes and competencies. Those are job descriptions, position descriptions, what's the position responsibilities. Related technical instruction. I talked a little bit about this in the other graphic. So that's really internal training, education, or onboarding. What are those gaps in knowledge that the individual might come with?

On the job learning, having that mentor, supervision of work, having that dedicated person to assist them in getting up to speed. Stepped up wages, wage increases, which we know is a requirement of apprenticeship. You know, businesses do this in merit based increases in performance bonuses, and things like that when they demonstrate certain competencies or knowledge is met. Certificate of completion. That can relate to a business talking about a position or title change. Once they see that that individual has met a certain level.

Are there any other terms that you can think of that relate to businesses when we talk about apprenticeship? Anything that you think is missing?

All right, well, I think it's important to think about these terms and how you're using these terms as you're speaking to businesses about engaging in apprenticeship.

**LISA RICE:** And Erin, this is Lisa. I'll just toss one more in there that I've heard used a lot recently. I mean, it's not a new statement. It's just kind of cycling back again. It's a lot about this whole earn and learn. And even for the employer, they understand that very easily about oh, yeah, they're going to be working, but they're also learning at the same time. So earn and learn has been one of the new kind of-- or old terms that we're using. New old, old new, whatever.

**ERIN DUCKETT:** All right, so I want to take this language piece sort of to the next level if you could go to the next slide, Tori. And I want us to do-- we did this a little bit in the last session, if you could back up one. But we're going to do a little bit of role-playing. We did this in the last session, sort of giving your elevator pitch on how to engage employers if you saw them at a Chamber event.

But I want to talk specifically about selling apprenticeships. So I'm going to ask if anybody in the audience wants to volunteer to play the employer, or anybody who wants to volunteer to play an educator or business staff trying to sell the employer on an apprenticeship. Anybody brave?

**LISA RICE:** Don't everybody jump at once here now.

**BRIDGET:** I could be the employer.

**ERIN DUCKETT:** All right.

**LISA RICE:** Who was that, Bridget?

**BRIDGET:** Yeah.
LISA RICE: Awesome.

ERIN DUCKETT: And then do we have a educator?

LISA RICE: Or business services rep, kind of that. Come on. Don't be shy. We will pick on you.

ERIN DUCKETT: We do have the participant list.

LISA RICE: Yes, we do. OK, Erin, it looks like we get a pick somebody.

ERIN DUCKETT: All right. Anybody from-- only because I know that they do this really well-- anybody from the Oakland team want to volunteer? No?

CAMERON: I might be the only one on. I'll try my best.

ERIN DUCKETT: All right. So Cameron, tell Bridget about an apprenticeship. What are you trying to-- how are you talking to her about the opportunity? And then Bridget, if you wouldn't mind after Cameron sort of starts to sell you, let us know what worked, what language really piqued your interest.

CAMERON: OK, is Bridget the employer or--

ERIN DUCKETT: Yes.

CAMERON: OK.

LISA RICE: And Bridget, feel free to act like the employer throughout the whole thing. If you want to ask a question or do something, do that. We want this as real life as possible.

BRIDGET: I will be a nice employer then.

CAMERON: Oh my gosh. So I guess, hi, Bridget. My name's Cameron. You know, I work at Oakland County Community Colleges. I work with employers and helping them build their talent pipeline. One smart way to do that is apprenticeship programs. They're a great way to build, retain, and recruit your skilled workers, whether it's within or externally. Are you currently hiring or have any job postings out there that are unfilled?

BRIDGET: We do, but can you tell me what's an apprenticeship? Is it like an internship?

CAMERON: So an internship is different than an apprenticeship. Both offer that work based learning component, where students can go on the job and learn, whether it's on a shop floor or in an office setting. Apprenticeships that are registered with the Department of Labor also are entitled to some financial benefits, some funding that can help your business with return on investment and on the job training funds as well.

And if you work with your local-- this is when I go into like if they usually-- sorry, go ahead. If you asked another question, I'm sorry. I'm used to this routine.

BRIDGET: No, no, you're good, and actually every employer asks this, but another question that is very similar-- it's like, well, my company has the internship program set up in the model. Setting up the apprenticeship program, is that something your team would help us or help us navigate that since it's different than an internship?
CAMERON: Yes. Yes, we would. We would have many conversations, learn about your company's needs, what's the training plan model that you're interested in looking to do. We would work with the Department of Labor on your training plan. Then I'd kind of speak to internships. There's nothing wrong with internships. It's a good opportunity to look at someone's skills. And if they're on the right track and you're seeing some good output, you might want to bring them on full time. And then I would just offer that as an opportunity to stay within an internship program and just maybe formalize it through an apprenticeship.

ERIN DUCKETT: Awesome. Thanks, Cameron. Deb, do you have your hand up?

DEB: I do. A great phrase that I heard on one of the learning coffee hours or whatever recently was internship is-- think of that as try before you buy. You're looking at the same thing-- the apprentice-- or the student is trying you out, deciding if they like you, you're trying them out before anybody invests. And consequently, you don't develop any loyalty or investment in each other, where apprenticeship is train to retain. So you're training them and giving them all these advantages, which builds up that loyalty. And apprentices tend to stay with companies much longer.

ERIN DUCKETT: Yes, thank you, Deb. I think those are some great points, too. So talking about it as a long-term investment, a long-term solution. You guys both use some great language to talk about what you need and then what you can provide. I think that employers are always thinking about how is what you're going to do for me different than what I already do myself.

So you had some good ways to talk about how you can support, how you can take that internship program or that fundamental work-based learning program, and elevate it into an apprenticeship. But always wanting to think about how is this different, how is this an enhancement of what they currently do.

Anyone else, what would you do differently? Are there things that you took away from their sort of role playing that you agree with, that you disagree with? What would you do differently, if anything?

DAVID: Hello, everyone. This is David again. I don't know if I would do anything differently. I would add what we do is we add on the job training opportunity with America's Job Center, and we talk about how it reduces risks and costs for the employer. So I would just integrate that into the conversation as well because it is a risk for employers to take on an apprentice. So you know, that solutions based approach is how can we reduce their risks and their costs if they're going to train this apprentice.

And so we talk specifically about on the job training and how that can help with reducing risks and costs.

ERIN DUCKETT: Yep, speaking to their bottom line, which is money. Anyone else? All right, well, we're going to move on just in the interest of time. We're a little bit behind. Tori, if you want to move to the next slide. There were a couple of things that came out of the first session. We had such a good conversation and presentations during that that we didn't get to the questions that were asked during the chat.
So we wanted to be sure to bring them up today. If you want to move to the next slide. So these were a couple of things that came up, and I'm going to ask Lisa to give her perspective on them, and then we'll move to the audience as well. So a couple of questions. How do you approach businesses that want to pay lower wages? How do you help businesses not feel like control is being taken away from them? How can you help them understand braided funding? We heard about that in the example. And then we've talked a little bit about this, but anything other than that to add. How do you secure commitment after the initial meeting or meetings?

LISA RICE:

All right. Thanks, Erin. And so I'm going to talk to these, but I also would love it if you guys are typing into the chat what you would say to this as well, so we can capture that for everybody to have. So first of all, when businesses are talking about they want to pay lower wages, well, guess what, with an apprenticeship, they actually can pay lower wages. They do not have to pay at the level that they would for someone who is experienced that they're bringing in.

So when I'm talking to a business about that, I'm talking about it still should be a marketable rate. You still want to be able to make sure that you're paying at a wage where the people won't just suddenly jump to next door because they're going to pay $0.50 more or something like that. So you have to be able to share some labor market information with them to show them, here's what the average is for this. And it's OK if they're just slightly below that because hopefully, they're having milestones along the way, where they're going to be paying those increases in the wages to the people fairly regularly throughout the process, although they're really could wait until the whole apprenticeship learning part is done and just do one wage increase.

So it's kind of up to the employer, but I always try to give them labor market information. Second piece here, how do you help them feel like control is like-- they aren't having the control taken away from them basically? Well, OK, if they're joining in on an already established registered apprenticeship program? They're really not losing any control. The only thing that they're doing is saying, you know, I want my person to go through xyz courses, and I'm going to tag with that on the job learning piece.

If they're not the sponsor, they haven't lost any control. They've established up front what are the courses, they've established how many hours, they've said here's where I'm going to give that wage increase. So it's all in their hands. Now, I can see where if they're starting up their own registered apprenticeship, and they're the sponsor that they could feel like maybe control is being taken away from them. That's really kind of a myth. Businesses oftentimes think that government's going to suddenly storm their building and want to see all the records and everything, and in the past, we did have businesses who were maybe not wanting to do any of that EEO compliance? What's the words of the day right now, diversity, right? Inclusion.

It's a very routine kind of process that you get asked as the sponsor, how are you doing on your EEO, where's your policies for that, how are you doing on hiring. And in the past, we did have businesses who were maybe not wanting to do any of that EEO compliance? What's the words of the day right now, diversity, right? Inclusion.

So you should have an easier time to be able to say this is actually a program that can help you focus on making sure you get more diverse people into your workforce. Third one, helping businesses understand braided funding. OK, first of all, is it really their job to understand braided funding, or is it our job to help them understand braided funding in the terms of here, here's everything that we're bringing to you, so bringing from the workforce system, bringing from the educational system, bringing from your grant funds, et cetera, et cetera.
I don't know that they need to understand it fully because honestly, aren't we all just learning about it every day, too? There's always something new. So instead, I like to look at this as how can I help you make the most of all the funds that are out here? So I would talk to them about the workforce services and how-- for hiring, this helps with diversity as well. How can we use those workforce funds and get you attached to eligible people out of the workforce system?

So I feel like with that, it's our responsibility to understand what they're facing and then to provide them with a variety of funding that can help. And then we did talk about securing commitment from the business after the initial meeting. I really want to encourage you guys to just ask them more questions, ask them questions about what's going on, what your time frame kind of thing, just anything and everything you can think of. If you heard through the grapevine that they suddenly just got a huge production order, and they're suddenly ramping up on something, OK, you could even ask something along those lines. Is this impacting your ability to move things forward? I can do A, B, C for you and helping them kind of get to it that way.

So I haven't seen any of you type into the chat. Why are you so quiet today? I'm going to ask you guys if you have at this point any other suggestions that you use or that you would have thought of as we've been talking through this of how you would answer some of these questions there. So if you want to come off your mics, you can please. Or if you have another question that goes with it.

**JULIA:** Hi, Lisa. Julia [? Costin ?] here with [INAUDIBLE], how are you?

**LISA RICE:** I'm good, Julia. Thank you.

**JULIA:** Yeah. So another suggestion that I have, and I don't know if it was mentioned, is talking about the H-1B changes in the legislation. So right now employers are hurting because they cannot get a lot of H-1B talent for critical STEM roles, like cybersecurity or like developers and so on. So those that are focusing on H-1B occupations, I think that's also a good value added to employers.

**LISA RICE:** Yes, I like that a lot, Julia, because suddenly, they're going to start thinking, well I've really got to worry about growing my own, right?

**JULIA:** Yeah.

**LISA RICE:** Yeah, that's good.

**JULIA:** Especially with organizations that are global organizations, so not necessarily US based, maybe out of Europe because they're very familiar with the program. So I personally get more buy in from companies out of UK, Spain, Ireland than US based organizations.

**LISA RICE:** Right, and yet they have US based operations here. So that's why you're able to serve them. I just wanted people to understand we're not serving over in Ireland. We're serving still in the US.

**JULIA:** Yes.

**LISA RICE:** Although I could take a trip to Ireland. Others? Any ideas? That was great, Julia.

**DEBBIE:** Lisa, this is Debbie.

**LISA RICE:** Yeah.
DEBBIE: One of the things that our consortium in Michigan, Workforce Intelligence Network, we have the intermediary. So we do that for small businesses offering that service. But through our intermediary, we've actually developed a complete EEO, AAP policies with templates and everything generic. So if a small company is intimidated by some of that and wants to do their own apprenticeships with DOL, but don't have those kind of things, we offer all of that for them. Again, more value added to take that burden off of them.

LISA RICE: Oh, that's wonderful, and thank you so much for mentioning the intermediaries and how they can help all of you guys on these grants, too. Simple little things like that, having the EEO policies, having just different forms for how they can step by step process for how do you fill out the 671 form and so on and so forth. Those little things make a huge difference to your business, people.

Because remember, most of this falls on to HR, and HR's sitting over there going, oh, yay, more to do.

DEBBIE: Yeah, absolutely. A lot of small companies don't have the HR support to do all that.

LISA RICE: Yes, you're right. The smaller ones don't even have HR. Maybe there's supervisor, lead supervisor, or sometimes even the CEO of the organization is trying to do it all. Yeah. Really good. Thank you. All right, Erin, you want to take us into-- I see we have about five minutes left.

ERIN DUCKETT: We have a few things left to cover. So if we want to go to the next slide, I just want to see if there's any other overall questions that you want to ask either to Lisa or myself or to each other? Feel free to unmute, or you can type them in the chat as well. And if there's things that you think of otherwise, you can also discuss them with your coach. And they can bring them back to us.

But can I get a copy of 13 and 14? Yes. Tori, correct me if I'm wrong. But once the recording is ready, we'll also include the slides.

TORI: Correct. We will send out a copy similar to what we did for part one. We'll send out the PowerPoint, and we'll also send a link to the recording as well as-- don't forget-- the feedback form.

ERIN DUCKETT: Yes. All right, well, let's go ahead and move on to the next thing. We just have a couple of polls. Feel free to type in the chat, or you can also bring yourself off mute. But just open text. What new tools or insights did you gain today about business engagement? Is there anything new that you learned that you plan on implementing? So feel free to type in the chat if there's something that you came away with from today.

LISA RICE: And Erin, while they're thinking and typing, can we go to the next poll so we can pop that one up?

ERIN DUCKETT: Yes, the next poll. Other topics that you want address in future workshops. So we'll have a couple of options there. Great management best practices, industry specific webinars, registered apprenticeship process, participant engagement, or other. So feel free to select. Tori, I don't know-- I didn't see the box pop up.

TORI: Hey, Erin. No, I didn't save the poll. I just realized when I went to go check. So my [INAUDIBLE] for that.

ERIN DUCKETT: Feel free to type in. Looks like we have a couple for industry specific webinars, which you'll be happy to know we're already starting to address. We'll talk about that in a minute. So if there's other things that you want to see in future workshops, go ahead. Type them in the chat, or you can also let your coach know as well.
A couple of things came out of our other poll. I just wanted to share. I love the phrasing about internships and apprenticeship, using the business terms train to retain, love that. Wanting to know more about participant engagement, framing the value add, keeping in mind how to directly address their concerns, maybe a session on registered apprenticeship process. Cameron, we'll get with you about the apprenticeship mythbusters definitely. Train to retrain framing, love that. Grant management best practices.

Yes, and you'll also be able to share future topics on the feedback form. Deb, your phrasing is very popular. Internships, try before you buy, apprenticeship, train to retain, and then leveraging sector strategies. That's a good one, Julia. We can talk about the sort of intersection between sector strategy and apprenticeship as well. We'll talk about that with the team.

So just a minute or so left. I want to make sure that we share with you a couple of resources. So a couple of resources are on the screen with links, Discover Apprenticeships at apprenticeship.gov. Also a link to the business engagement tools, some of what I shared today as far as talking to businesses specifically about apprenticeship. Some policy examples from National Governors Association on employer engagement.

We are also still-- coming soon, our Closing the Skills Gap Community of Practice. Once that's launched, our links and our recordings will be on there as well. And then the WorkforceGPS link to the business engagement collaborative. So some resources that you might want to check out as well.

And Tori, if you wanted to go over a few key dates.

TORI:

Yep, just a few things to keep in mind. Our industry forum will be coming up on September 16. You all will receive an invitation for that. We will also be having our participant engagement and recruitment resources webinar. You will also receive an invitation to that on September 28.

Our peer affinity group calls our ongoing, just a reminder about that. And you can expect our first CSG newsletter to come September 2021. So a couple of things to look forward to, I think pretty exciting things to look forward to over the course of the next few weeks.

And I realize that it's 3 o'clock. So for those of you who have to go, please feel free to do so. Just remember to also set up some time with your coach. Any successes and challenges that you are having, please share those with your coach. Ask for any TA that you need. And if you haven't already, registered for a WorkforceGPS account. That's how you will be able to access the community of practice that will be coming here soon. And of course, if you have any questions, concerns, you need to send a comment or ask a question, please feel free to reach out to your coach, or you can send an email to ClosingSkillsGap@dol.gov. So thank you for those of you who stuck around. Sorry for going over a bit. We appreciate your participation. Have a fantastic day.