SA IT/Cybersecurity Affinity Group Discussion Summary

Grantees tackle challenges and strategies around employer engagement and apprenticeship enrollment.

SA IT/Cybersecurity grantees participated in their monthly affinity group discussion to share their employer engagement strategies and challenges and their ideas around planning for and maintaining good apprenticeship enrollment numbers. During the call participants discussed:

- New and developing employer engagement strategies and partnerships including:
  - New partnerships with college small business development centers and local chambers of commerce.
  - Partnering with SHRM to conduct regular Lunch and Learns to increase employer awareness around the apprenticeship program.
  - Conducting virtual employer-student networking events that provide students an opportunity to engage with employers in real-time.

- How to develop more creative and engaging e-mail blasts to employers and potential program participants. Some grantees have created interactive e-mails that encourage readers to answer clickable questions in the body of the e-mail.

- Strategies, protocols, and techniques for using social media and job sites such as LinkedIn and Indeed to engage companies intentionally and consistently with existing openings.

- Partnership strategies to aid in increasing program apprenticeship enrollment including partnerships with:
  - Educational organizations (non-profits) with outside funding to conduct training. Grantees are connecting with these organizations in hopes that the training provided through the agencies can fulfill participant Related Technical Instruction (RTI).
  - Trade associations to give the program exposure doing chapter meetings.

- Challenges to consistent and fruitful employer engagement including:
  - Getting employers to embrace the idea of promoting workers after they have upskilled their workers. Lots of companies are trying to conserve money.
  - Developing a quick and comprehensive program pitch.
  - Finding and interacting with employer stakeholders with decision making powers. Grantees may be able to make an initial connection but are not able to get past company gatekeepers.