**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Podcast**

**Region 4 & 6 Rural Podcast Series, Episode 3**

*Transcript by*

*Noble Transcription Services*

*Menifee, CA*

Ronald Vargas: Welcome back everyone. In today's podcast, we're going to continue with our YouthBuild Grantee Olympics ESD 114 out of Washington State to continue discussing the strategic approach when it comes to implementing service delivery. That includes aligning your YouthBuild program model with the organizational and participants needs within the rural setting.

This presentation is part of our Exploring Rural YouthBuild Program podcast series. We will explore the dynamics YouthBuild programs experienced on program planning, implementation and program sustainability efforts in the rural areas.

Our focus will center on the common factors affecting service delivery in regards to funding, staffing, geographical accessibility of services, training and employment, technological capacity, partnerships and population. I'm Ronald Vargas.

Marjorie Fong: And I'm Marjorie Fong.

Ronald Vargas: And we are out of the U.S. Employment and Training Administrative -- I messed that up. I want to do that one part again, the I'm Ronald Vargas part. Actually, let's see. Grace, if you don't mind if we can -- if I can just pick up on this sentence, our focus will center on, in the second paragraph; is that okay?

Grace: Oh yeah. That's fine.

Ronald Vargas: Okay. Our focus will center on the common factors affecting service delivery in regards to funding, staffing, geographic accessibility of services, training and employment, technological capacity, partnerships and population. I'm Ronald Vargas.

Marjorie Fong: And I'm Marjorie Fong.

Ronald Vargas: And we are from the U.S. Employment and Training Administrations Office of Special Initiatives and Demonstrations. Our guest today, Mr. Jeff Allen, director of youth services from Olympics ESD 114, will provide insight and details into the unique challenges and best practices surrounding strategic planning and program implementation in rural communities within their area. I'm done. I forgot what I'm supposed to say after I'm done. Hello? Grace? Can you hear --

Grace: Yeah. I'm there. Just you said you weren't sure how to keep going so I was just [inaudible]

Ronald Vargas: No. How to stop.

Grace: Oh. You don't need to. We're just going to keep going through. So like --

Ronald Vargas: Oh. Go through the whole thing? Okay.

Grace: Yeah. So just go over --

Ronald Vargas: Got it.

Grace: So Jeff, you could chime in. I believe you're --

Ronald Vargas: Perfect. Okay. All right. Yeah. Okay. All right. Sorry. Okay. All right.

Grace: Oh. No worries.

Ronald Vargas: Welcome back, Jeff. Let's dive into our third podcast. Let's talk about eligibility. So how does your staff correctly determine that all participants are eligible for your services? And how do you fully support the eligibility determinations?

Jeff Allen: Well, hi Marjorie and Ron. Thank you for the opportunity to share some of our program with you. When we talk about determining eligibility, we really rely on the resources that the DOL or YouthBuild U.S.A provide.

So the YouthBuild handbook, the TEGLs that the Department of Labor produces. WorkforceGPS provides an immense amount of resources. So we leverage all of that to determine our eligibility paperwork.

And so we have a checklist that we use as a youth comes into the program and we're having conversations about inviting them into Mental Toughness. We kind of make sure that they have all of the important boxes checked in terms of them being eligible.

Sometimes it's a little bit difficult. Once we get that enrollment process rolling, it's -- in our area, it's a challenge sometimes to collect all of the documentation necessary to document their enrollment.

For example, a lot of our youth have come from areas that they're away from their families. They don't have a birth certificate. They don't have a social security card. And so our staff does a really good job of trying to scramble and work with the youth and their families to try to collect that documentation so we have that verification.

Sometimes, we get youth that are clearly not eligible by word of mouth from other schools. We -- one of the challenges is making sure that schools in our region are understanding of what the eligibility requirements are for our program.

And so they often will send us students that may not be eligible clearly. And so that communication with schools and other providers that make referrals to our program make sure that they understand what our eligibility is. We use a check-off sheet that I can talk about a little bit later that we ensure documentation is collected and that then we build a file based upon that.

Finally, the last thing that we do is our program manager and a second staff member work with the case manager and then they pick up that eligibility file and then they do a double check to make sure all of the documentation, all of the forms are complete. And then at that point, we say, all right. We can enroll them and then put them into the system. Done.

Ronald Vargas: Okay. So we're going to skip question two then because you answered it already.

Jeff Allen: Oh. Well, I can talk a little bit more about that, Ron. I mean, I can --

Ronald Vargas: Okay.

Jeff Allen: Or it can go into the next question too or the [inaudible]

Ronald Vargas: Okay. I know how I'm going to ask you. Okay. So okay. I'm ready. Okay. Wow, Jeff. That's pretty awesome. I noticed that you mentioned that you do use the checklist when it comes to gathering eligibility documentation; is there any other specific tools or spreadsheets or other forms that you gather when it comes to eligibility documentation?

Jeff Allen: Yeah. Actually, the first page in their file is an eligibility form and it's a checklist where we have everything from their placement information, their status with respect to income and social selective service registration and proof of residence and their school status and all the other eligibility elements of disabilities or offender status or migrant youth, foster youth, which is something, by the way, that we're working on and building some relationships to access with Department of Children and Family Youth, accessing more youth that are in our foster system.

So we have that form. And so as we sit down and work with the process -- and enrollment is not a sit down, 15-minute process. It takes a little bit of time because we have to make sure that students bring the correct forms. We can get all those signed off. So that checklist is really valuable because we check off that we have it, put an initial and a date that we have it, and then put that in the file. End.

Marjorie Fong: Oh. Thank you, Jeff, so much. Can you share how do you handle participants who are ineligible?

Jeff Allen: Yeah. Thanks, Marjorie. Yeah. It's tough; right? Because we want -- we wish we could take every youth that comes into our program. But clearly some just are not eligible based on the WIOA regulations. So we have a number of different other resources that we can direct them to.

We make referrals certainly to our own -- our agency is the contract holder for the WIOA youth program in the three county regions. So we can refer them to that. Or there's other resources in the community through our partnerships that we can refer them to to help them meet those needs. But again, we'd love to take every youth that comes into the doors, but sometimes we just can't.

Marjorie Fong: Very -- sorry. I'll do it again. Very informative, Jeff. Thank you again. How about sharing participant service or discuss. What assessments are used to customize participant services and inform the participant service plan?

Jeff Allen: Well, a key component of our program and our culture is goalsetting. And so goalsetting starts at -- during Mental Toughness. We espouse to hope theory which is a -- I'm going to start that over again. So our program is really focused on goalsetting and helping our participants learn how to use goals to further their pathway and their ambitions.

And we start that goalsetting process during Mental Toughness. We do a session around hope theory which is a philosophy around understanding the power of hope in developing goals and developing a plan to achieve those goals and accessing the support and the beliefs in yourself to achieve those goals. So we begin right at the beginning.

And then we work with them. After enrollment, our participants meet with the case manager and the job developer very early to take a closer look at what their goals that they started to develop during Mental Toughness are and begin to develop a service plan that includes how to address potential barriers that might come along the way and a pathway to achieve those goals.

So it's -- every youth that comes into the program has a different path and so customizing those goals is really important and customizing those paths are really important. But we use the philosophy of hope theory to help them build that sense of how they can envision a positive future for themselves, set a pathway for achieving that positive future, and then accessing the resources and supports that can help them along the way.

Ronald Vargas: Jeff, all of that is great. And I heard you mention that the assessments are used to keep everyone on track when it comes to attaining goals. Can you expand a little bit and tell me how you use the assessments to determine a participant's suitability for specific training, for educational coursework and even employment?

Jeff Allen: Sure, Ron. Well, we take a couple of approaches. From the academic lens, early on, soon as they get into the program, we do a number of academic assessments to determine a plan for completing the GED.

We find that some students are ready to go and could take the GED right away and others have specific areas that they need to work on. So we can, with our academic partners at Bremerton School District's Open Doors Program, we work with them to customize what their academic pathway is.

Now, with regards to construction training and on the job site, we -- our staff are observing our participants all the time and evaluating how they relate to each other, how they relate with partners and volunteers, how they engage together as a team, follow directions and receiving critique and their leadership skills.

And around every four or five weeks, the team has a check in with each participant to review their progress. And we use that by -- we have a goalsetting checklist. So the different elements of the program that they might be able to accomplish, we sit down with them early on to align their goal and their success in the program and how we can leverage the program towards achieving those goals.

So it may be getting a driver's license as a part of their pathway. And so they set a goal to get their driver's license. So then we can work with them to make sure that that goal is achievable for them.

And so we use this goalsetting checklist to meet with them every couple of weeks to see, what is our progress? What are the things that we want to make sure we focus on? And we set those goals around the construction training, their academic training, their community service and employment goals.

Ronald Vargas: That's excellent. This next question I want to lead into really centers around the case manager and the participant and that relationship. So do you use case notes to document that there's ongoing contact between the case manager and the participant, also to track the participant's progress?

And is there a service plan? And how often is that updated based on those goals that were established during assessment and based on different circumstances? And how does your organization approach these responsibilities?

Jeff Allen: Yeah, Ron. You nailed it at the beginning. This is all about relationships. And so our case management team really attends to that. If they don't work towards building a relationship that is caring and competent and compassionate and trusting with those participants, then it really makes it difficult for those participants to leverage the resources that we can provide in the program.

So in addition to tracking the data in MIS, our case managers maintain a separate file with case notes that document their progress. If there's a change in a new circumstance -- for example, we've had a couple of youth that came into us in the program that were living in a homeless shelter.

And so there was a lot of different circumstances that would come about for them along the way. And the case manager was able to keep track of all the participants by maintaining that set of case notes in a separate file and then conferring with the rest of the team when significant changes happen in that new slide so that we can make sure that any adjustments are needed to help them maintain that progress towards their goal, but also make sure that the support services are there for them. Marjorie, I think that's you.

Male: Maybe she got disconnected. I can ask the question.

Grace: She should still be connected. Marjorie, it says you're on the phone line still. Are you on mute, Marjorie?

Marjorie Fong: Oh. Sorry. I was trying to move to the mute button. Sorry. Thank you, Jeff. Are there unique services, specialized supportive services, that your participants are provided in your region of rural area? Are there any written policies and procedures for the provision of supportive service? And are staff trained?

Jeff Allen: Well, in our area, transportation is always a challenge. Kitsap County, again, is on the western side of Puget Sound, directly across Puget Sound from Seattle. So you would think that we have the access to all the resources of the big metropolitan area.

But the fact of the matter is the vast majority of this county is considered rural with pockets of communities, the city of Bremerton, the city of Port Orchard, the city of Poulsbo, and then [inaudible] land in between those cities.

So transportation is a huge challenge, getting students from other parts of the county into our program. So bus passes are a pretty standard issued item, as well as gas cards, to make sure that transportation is not a barrier for them.

Another challenge that we have in the region is accessing providers for some real standard certifications that we want to ensure that all of our participants have like OSHA and CPR and flagger certification if that's a path that you want to go.

Recently, our agency -- we lucked out. Recently, our agency started providing a CPR first aid coursework through our [inaudible] management department and approached us and offered to create special sessions for just our YouthBuild participants. So they -- now we have a real, reliable source to provide CPR, first aid AED cards for all of our participants.

We've also -- OSHA 10 certification which is another requirement that we make sure every participant has, it was really difficult to access. We were working with our Regional Builders Association and accessing that training was pretty sporadic.

And then we discovered through CareerSafe an online program that we got certified to be able to deliver. And so we're now delivering OSHA 10 training online with our participants, more of a hybrid fashion because our construction trainer works with them.

But accessing a lot of these online resources, especially in the last year-and-a-half during COVID, we've learned to access a lot of different online resources to make sure that we're able to provide some of those services along the way.

As far as written policies and procedures, we have that well in place. As I mentioned before, our agency is the WIOA youth provider in the three county areas. So providing supportive services and training support is something that we've got documented within our policies quite well and so we've been doing that.

And because we have that WIOA youth contract, we have a pretty solid team that work with each other and train each other and help each other out in terms of ensuring that we're hearing the policies for providing supportive services and accessing resources in the community to get at those supportive services.

Marjorie Fong: Great. Thank you, Jeff. Also, can you share about -- let me do this again. Sorry. Great. Thank you, Jeff. Can you share about supportive services provided through a partner organization, as you describe? Sorry. Let me do it again. Sorry. Okay. Great. Thank you, Jeff. Are any supportive services provided through partner organizations? Can you describe a few, if any?

Jeff Allen: Well, on a case-by-case basis, we can make referrals to other organizations in the region. So we connect with DSHS, the Department of Human and Health Services and DCYF which is the Department of Children, Family and Youth.

We make sure that if they need access to SNAP -- we've had a couple of youth that were participating in TANF, that -- a young mother who was participating in TANF. And we have a Work First program in the state of Washington.

We're able to use YouthBuild as part of their educational path through TANF. We also have childcare resources. Our agency also has a large Head Start ECAP program. And so if our participants are in need of childcare, we can make those referrals as well.

In a small, rural kind of community, it's -- the most important thing that we can do is build relationships with those partner organizations. Cross-referral and accessing in the resources that all of us can provide for each of our clients is real key to having success in the delivery of services in a region like ours. So we really work hard to maintain those relationships.

Ronald Vargas: Jeff, that is excellent and all the information that you shared with us today, what's going there over in your organization. Thank you so much for another great YouthBuild podcast. I want to remind everyone to stay tuned for more podcasts to come. Thanks again.

Grace: All right. And end of take. Nicely done and we have a bit of time so I think we'll do a take two, again, just to have multiple versions for me to draw from. I don't know if there's anything you guys want to discuss before that second take, any notes, any changes.

Jeff Allen: Yeah.

Ronald Vargas: I think --

Jeff Allen: I'll just ask, Ron and Marjorie, is that -- I want to make sure that this is giving the right kind of information, good information that you guys are looking for?

Ronald Vargas: Absolutely.

Marjorie Fong: Yes.

Ronald Vargas: Really great.

Marjorie Fong: Absolutely.

Ronald Vargas: Thank you so much, Jeff. Yeah.

Marjorie Fong: Yeah. Thank you. Sorry my mute button wasn't working. I was like hitting it more. I think it made it worse. Sorry. I mean, this is great information, Jeff. I really appreciate it. I know I'm getting more information ready for our review with you now.

Ronald Vargas: I can't remember -- and I haven't listened for a while, Grace. Did we do that -- I guess we did. I just -- let me -- I might do this take a little bit different. Let's see. Okay. I'm going to -- I know what I'm going to do. Okay. All right. I'm ready.

Grace: All right. And yes. If everyone's good -- I don't know if you want to also take like a break for water or anything, or is everyone good to go back for take two?

Marjorie Fong: I'm good.

Ronald Vargas: I think I'm ready.

Jeff Allen: Yeah.

Ronald Vargas: You're ready? Okay.

Grace: Sounds good. Then this will be Exploring Rural YouthBuild Programs, Podcast Number 3, take two. Whenever you're ready.

Ronald Vargas: Welcome back everyone. Today's podcast will continue with discussing the strategic approach to implementing service delivery to include how to align the YouthBuild program model with your organizational and participant needs within the rural setting.

This presentation, again, is part of the Exploring Rural YouthBuild Programs podcast series. We will explore the dynamics YouthBuild programs experience during program planning, implementation and program sustainability efforts in rural areas.

Our focus will center on the common factors affecting service delivery in regards to funding, staffing, geographic accessibility of services, training and employment, technological capacity, partnerships and population. I'm Ronald Vargas.

Marjorie Fong: And I'm Marjorie Fong.

Ronald Vargas: And we are out of the U.S. Employment and Training Administration's Office of Special Initiatives and Demonstrations. Our guest today, Mr. Jeff Allen, director of youth services from Olympics ESD 114, will continue providing insight and details into the unique challenges and best practices surrounding strategic planning and program implementation in rural communit- --

Welcome back, Jeff. Let's dive right into our third podcast. So let's start with eligibility; right? How does your staff correctly determine that all participants are eligible for services? And how do you fully support the eligibility determinations?

Jeff Allen: Well, hi Ron and Marjorie, and thank you for inviting me back. It's a pleasure to share what we're trying to do with our program. So we really rely upon the resources that are provided by the DOL and YouthBuild U.S.A.

We leverage the YouthBuild handbook and the TEGLs that are coming out as well as WorkforceGPS which has a tremendous source of resources for us to make sure that we are in compliance in determining eligibility.

So we use those to develop kind of a checklist where we go through that checklist, ensuring that all of the elements for eligibility are checked. And we can talk about that a little bit later. But sometimes it's a challenge, particularly in gathering the documentations necessary to verify those enrollments.

In a rural community like ours, we get kids from a lot of different areas. They may be disconnected from their family. They don't have a birth certificate or a social security card or other documentation necessary for us to validate their eligibility.

So we have to work really hard to assist them in gathering that documentation to ensure that we're in compliance when we enroll them in the program. We sometimes get youth that are clearly not eligible enter the program that are referred to us from other organization like schools.

So one of the challenges is we work really hard with those organizations that refer to us and make sure they are understanding what the eligibility requirements are for the program. But then we use -- once we get them in and discuss their eligibility and ultimate invite into our mental toughness program, we use a checklist to go through all of that and determine if they are in fact eligible.

And we create a documentation file for all of that with a checklist that then gets double checked. So once we make a determination on eligibility from the case manager, then our program manager and another person on our case management staff do a file review. And so they go through the checklist that we have, review all of the documentation that's present to make sure that we are enrolling someone into the program that is in fact eligible.

Ronald Vargas: Excellent. Now, I heard you mention a checklist that you use when it comes to eligibility. Are there any other tools or documents that you use there in your organization to gather eligibility documents and make decisions about eligibility?

Jeff Allen: Yeah. Absolutely. So all of those resources that I talked about from the DOL and YouthBuild U.S.A we use to build an eligibility form or a checklist form. And that becomes the first page of their file.

And so the staff member that is talking to that youth about determining their eligibility and collecting those requirements can literally check off verification of identity, selective service registration, proof of residence, documentation of low-income eligibility, if they have a disability and so forth.

We can literally check those things off, make a quick note of where they are, and then put that into the file. So that's been a real valuable tool for us to make sure that -- and then when we have monitoring, we can go back and take a look. Here's our file that has all of these elements. Here's the checklist. Here's all the forms and documentations are in the back. So it's been a real useful tool to help our team make sure that everybody's eligible for the program.

Marjorie Fong: Great. Thank you, Jeff. Can you share, how do you handle participants who are ineligible?

Jeff Allen: Well, gosh, Marjorie. The -- our wish is that we want to take any youth that comes into the doors of our program that is interested in our program. We wish we could take every single one of them. But clearly some are just not eligible under the Department of Labor requirements.

So we have partners around the region that we can make a referral to, whether it's a local school program. As we are the WIOA youth provider in the three-county region, so we can refer them to our WIOA partners in WIOA programs or other partners in the region. So we have a heart for every kid that walks in the door and we want to be able to serve them. But if we can't serve them, we try to find somebody in the region that can.

Marjorie Fong: Thank you, Jeff. How about sharing, as participant services are discussed, what assessments are used to customize participant service and inform the participant service plan?

Jeff Allen: Well, we --

Marjorie Fong: Let me repeat that.

Jeff Allen: Okay. Go ahead.

Marjorie Fong: I'll repeat that. Sorry. Thank you, Jeff. As participant services are discussed, what assessments are used to customize participant services and inform the participant service plan?

Jeff Allen: Well, a foundation of our culture in YouthBuild Kitsap is goalsetting and that goalsetting process starts during Mental Toughness. We do a session during Mental Toughness around hope theory which is a philosophy of understanding the power of hope.

And hope is defined as being able to envision a positive future for yourself, being able to then set a pathway and set goals towards achieving that positive future and then accessing the resources and the agency to be able to achieve those goals.

So we start training them during Mental Toughness to be goal-oriented along the way. So during mental toughness, they begin to identify some of the goals that they have for themselves and how they can leverage what we can offer them in YouthBuild towards achieving those goals.

After a youth has been enrolled into the program, our case manager and job developer take a closer look at their goals and sit down with that youth and make sure that we have a service plan that addresses some of the unique goals that they may have and help them address some of the barriers that they might have along the way.

And it could be anything from achieving a driver's license to they want to get -- go to school beyond their GED or looking at other elements of employment down the way. We can help them with those goals and we check in with them along the way.

Ronald Vargas: Jeff, that's outstanding. I wanted to gather a little bit more information, if you can share with us, of how you use the assessments. How helpful are they when it comes to determining if a participant is suitable for specific training or the educational coursework and employment?

Jeff Allen: Well, certainly sometimes when a youth defines a goal for themselves, they might have a long path towards achieving that goal. And so we use a number of different assessments to help them understand what is the path that's going to help them achieve that goal?

From the academic standpoint, if their goal is to achieve their GED or high school graduation which is a requirement for us. We want to make sure every youth exits the program with their GED. We do a series of academic assessments to determine where they're at, what their strengths are academically and what their weaknesses are and what things that they need to work on.

And then with our partner, the Bremerton School District Open Doors Program, who is our academic partner, we develop an academic plan for them towards achieving that GED goal. From the construction side, when we have youth on site or in our construction training elements, staff are observing how participants relate to each other, how they relate with partners and volunteers, how they engage with each other as a team, how they follow directions and receive critique and their overall leadership within the program.

And they're always assessing where are participants at. And then every couple of weeks, sit down with the participants and have a check in. Here are some of the elements of our goal for you and your goals and here's how we're seeing you progress.

We have kind of an exit goalsetting checklist that we start at the beginning as well that covers the areas of their academic pathway, their construction training, their employment pathway, their transition and support and leadership that they need along the way.

And so we spend a -- kind of a check in with each student to go over that goalsetting checklist and make sure that they're aware of, here's your progress towards this goal. Here's some course corrections that we might need to take along the way to make sure that we're still on track.

And again, it goes back to what I was referring to earlier, about how important the relationships that we build with those youths are, that we are there for them, that they can trust us, that we can demonstrate that we are a caring, compassionate and competent resource for them to be able to achieve those goals.

Ronald Vargas: That's excellent, Jeff. Yes. Goals are very important. But I want to shift a little bit with -- and move into the relationship that the participant has with the case manager and how that relationship plays out when it comes to tracking participant progress and updating the service plan, if there's any changes to the circumstances or goals planned prior. How does your organization approach these responsibilities?

Jeff Allen: Well, we have a great case management team. And in addition to survey tracking and entering all of the data necessary in MIS, our case managers maintain a separate file of case notes documenting that use progress, changes along the way. I think every [inaudible]

Automated: The passcode has been confirmed. If you need technical assistance during your call, press star 0. There are seven parties in conference, including you.

Jeff Allen: -- youth to what are some of the things that we can do to navigate that barrier challenge that comes along the way and what we can do to help them provide additional support. But again, it's those relationships. It really -- it's really crucial that we build that positive, caring, compassionate relationship with every youth.

Marjorie Fong: Thank you, Jeff. Can you share, are there any unique services, such as specialized supportive service, that your participants are provided in your region or rural area? Or you have any written policies and procedures for the provision of support service? Let me start over. Sorry.

Thank you, Jeff. I want to see if you have any unique services, specialized supportive -- sorry. Let me do it again. Thank you, Jeff. Can you share, are there any unique services, such as in your supportive services, that are -- sorry. Let me start over again.

Thank you, Jeff. Can you share any unique services, such as specialized supportive services, that your participants are provided in your region or rural area? Do you have written policies and procedures towards provision of support services and are staff trained for this?

Jeff Allen: Sure, Marjorie. One of the big challenges is transportation. Kitsap County is on the western side of Puget Sound, directly across from Seattle. So you would think, oh. Well, we're in a major metropolitan area. But the fact of the matter is this west side of Puget Sound is very rural.

Kitsap County is defined by a couple of denser communities -- the city of Bremerton, the city of Poulsbo, the city of Port Orchard. But they are separated by [inaudible] land and strips of highway. And so transportation is always a real challenge to get youth, particularly from outlying areas in our county, into the program.

So one of the biggest supportive services that we provide is bus cards and working with Kitsap Transit, which is our regional transit authority, and making sure that every youth has access to a bus pass. We also provide gas cards as well so if they have a vehicle, they can get to and from the program.

Another challenge in our region is being able to find providers for some of the standard credentials that we want to make sure that every participant has, such as OSHA 10 and CPR and maybe flagger certification, if that's a pathway that -- a certification that they can use.

Recently, our agency began providing CPR first aid AED training to school districts in the region through our regional risk management pool. That department came to us and offered to provide training for our participants in YouthBuild in a separate course. So we've been able to leverage that now where we have a reliable provider for CPR, first aid and AED certification, that we can ensure every participant in the program receives that.

Another example is OSHA 10 certification. That's another element in the program that we require every youth to have. And so we had previously been working with different organizations like our Regional Builders Association, who was providing some OSHA 10 training, but it really wasn't reliable in the timeline and its availability to us.

And so we've explored some online schools. So now we're using CareerSafe which is providing an OSHA 10 training online. It's kind of a hybrid fashion because our construction trainer is with them while they're doing the training. But that has allowed all of our participants to more easily access OSHA 10 certification and get that.

And we're finding, gosh, in the last 18, 19 months of COVID and trying to figure out how to run a YouthBuild program when we've had lockdowns in a pandemic, we've really been leveraging a lot of the different online resources and tools to provide some of those supportive services and training along the way.

As far as policies, again, we are the WIOA youth provider in the three-county region up on the Olympic Peninsula. And so we've been -- we work off of those policies that we already have in the agency for the provision of supportive services as well as maintaining -- updating those policies when new TEGLs come out.

And then again we have a great team. Our staff, both in our WIOA program and in our YouthBuild program, work together and talk to each other and make sure that everybody's up-to-date on different strategies for providing services as well as what the regulations are.

Marjorie Fong: Wow. That's a lot, Jeff. Thank you so much. Can you also share any supportive services that you have provided through partner organizations, if you have any?

Jeff Allen: Sure. You know, it depends on the need of the youth and so it's on a case-by-case basis. If they need housing resources, we have community agencies that we can connect them to. If they need food resources, we have a number of different food banks and cooperatives that are around that they can access that.

We also work with the Department of Human Social Services, or DSHS, and our State Department of Children, Family and Youth. We have had students in the program that were on TANF and in Washington state, when you are on TANF, you also have a Work First requirement.

And our YouthBuild program served in some of the Work First requirements that they had under TANF. If students need more food benefits, we have enrolled them into SNAP. Our agency also has a large Head Start ECAP program. So if they're in need of childcare, we can also connect them to those resources.

I think the key here is that, particularly in a rural community, you have to work towards building the relationships with all of the different service providers in your region, whether it's healthcare, whether it's housing, whether it's childcare, whether it's food resources. Those are those basic things that everybody's going to need access to at some point in time.

And so it's really important to continually maintain those relationships with those organizations, and the staff working in them, to make sure that you have access to the resources that you can provide for each of your participants.

Ronald Vargas: You know, Jeff, I think you shared some excellent information with us today, I have to agree with Marjorie, when it comes to service delivery, specifically eligibility and assessments.

Thank you so much for all the information that you shared with us today. This has been another great YouthBuild podcast and I want to encourage everyone to stay tuned for more podcasts to come. And we are going to end here today. Again, thank you so much Jeff and thank you for everyone that could join in and listen.

(END)