Cheryl Olson’s experience and expertise in the world of apprenticeship programs is exceptional. She currently holds two positions: Apprenticeship Navigator for the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and Director of Nevada Alliance for Youth Apprenticeship (NAYA).

In June of 2021, Ms. Olson found herself unexpectedly faced with the possibility of a significant roadblock to program implementation. Recently passed Nevada state legislation would limit apprenticeship programs to specific industries. Ms. Olson quickly turned to her Federal Project Officer (FPO), Tiffani Thomas, for guidance.

Ms. Thomas proved to be invaluable by connecting Ms. Olson to Patty Garcia, interim Office of Apprenticeship (OA) representative for the State of Nevada, who has assisted her in advocating on behalf of apprenticeship programs. Ms. Thomas also provided much needed clarification and additional information that eased Ms. Olson’s concerns about funding.

Ms. Thomas is a strong supporter of the Nevada Alliance for Youth Apprenticeship. She maintains consistent communication, makes herself available for monthly meetings, and goes above and beyond to ensure the success of NAYA’s programs. Ms. Thomas is also a critical resource and strong supporter of NAYA’s YARG grant. As a result of the relationship between the project director and the FPO, NAYA is able to proceed with their plan to offer opportunities in multiple non-traditional occupations.

We hope this story will encourage grantees to lean on their support team (i.e., FPO, OA Subject Matter Expert, and Technical Assistance coaches).