**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**From Exploration to Launch:
Registered Apprenticeship Quick-Start Toolkit**

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BRIAN KEATING: And without any further ado, I'm going to turn things over to our moderator today, Chad Aleshire. He's a program analyst with the Office of Apprenticeship, Employment and Training Administration. Chad, take it away.

CHAD ALESHIRE: Thanks, Brian. And again, my name is Chad Aleshire, everyone. I'm a program analyst with the Office of Apprenticeship. And welcome to today's "Exploration to Launch: Registered Apprenticeship Toolkit" webinar.

Today on the webinar you're learning about our new tool that provides step-by-step actions to help you build a registered apprenticeship program. And you'll hear from practitioners on how they built successful partnerships and new programs.

As the introduction to the toolkit states, this toolkit aims to provide helpful steps and resources to start and register an apprenticeship program, from exploring a registered apprenticeship model as a workforce strategy to launching a new program. Whether you're a business, a labor organization, an industry association or another kind of workforce intermediary, the community college or the public workforce system or a community-based organization, we invite you to use this toolkit to explore, partner, build, register and launch your new registered apprenticeship program.

And before we introduce our speakers, we wanted to take a moment to hear from you with a polling question on what organization you represent. And Brian will give you a little bit of instruction on how to do so.

MR. KEATING: Sure thing. And some of you may have already voted in the poll earlier. But if you haven't, we want to know, like Chad said, what organization you represent. So go ahead and click the radio button on your screen if you haven't already voted.

Again, your choices are business or industry, state workforce agency or state workforce board, local workforce agency or local workforce board, American Job Center, educational institution, state registered apprenticeship or something else. And if something else, go ahead and let us know what that something else is in that chat window.

But it looks like many of you have already voted. If you haven't, though, go ahead and click right now to vote in that poll window on your screen. And to go over what we're seeing I'll turn things back over to you, Chad.

MR. ALESHIRE: All right. I appreciate it, Brian.

I'm watching the votes come in. It looks like we've got a large section of you from local workforce agencies and local workforce boards, also state workforce agencies and state workforce boards, also see some of our educational institutions. I see our business and industry partners. So it looks like we've got a wide spread today. So we appreciate that.

All right. So I am going to move our slides over to our speaker introduction. Our speakers today will be John Ladd, the administrator with the Office of Apprenticeship. Grace Waddell; Grace is the dean of Agape University with Agape Senior Care. And Brad Neese; Brad is the director of Apprenticeship Carolina.

And before I turn things over to John Ladd to provide more on the toolkit and the exciting things happening in apprenticeship, I wanted to give our speakers an opportunity to introduce themselves.

So let's start with Brad Neese. Brad, tell us a little bit about yourself.

BRAD NEESE: Yeah. Thanks, Chad. So yeah, Brad Neese. I'm with Apprenticeship Carolina; that's in South Carolina. And we are housed out of our South Carolina technical college system. And so we have 16 technical colleges in our state and a small state agency that sort of oversees these technical colleges. And we have a division of economic development within that South Carolina Technical College system and it houses Apprenticeship Carolina.

And what we do is we help companies – South Carolina companies – learn about, create and ultimately register their apprenticeship programs. And I know John's going to get into some pretty good detail of what it means to register. And Grace is with Agape, which is one of the companies that we've worked with to help create some of these really cool programs.

But we've done a really good job of growing apprenticeships in our state. We started with only 90 companies back in 2007 and we're now at over 700 companies in South Carolina. So we've really seen just an absolute explosion of apprenticeships in our state.

MR. ALESHIRE: All right. Thanks, Brad. Really appreciate you being here.

And now I'd like to give Grace Waddell – again, Grace is the dean of Agape University with Agape Senior Care. And as Brad mentioned, they've been working together to do some really innovative things. And Grace, just wanted you to introduce yourself and give us a little background on how Agape is using registered apprenticeship.

GRACE WADDELL: Thank you so much. It's a pleasure to be with you all this afternoon. Agape Senior is a company in South Carolina that provides integrated health care services to seniors. Obviously, that's part of our name; that's our goal and our mission. We employ about 2,500 people all around the state of South Carolina and believe that our apprenticeship programs continue to make a huge impact on our workforce of Agape Senior.

Just to give you a little bit of information about our company, so you know when I say integrated health care services, we have three different post-acute care centers, which are like a skilled nursing facility. We have 10 assisted living. We have about 24 – I say "about" because it changes every day – 24, 25 hospice offices all around the state. We have a hospice house. We provide dementia, memory care for senior adults. We have physicians care, a pharmacy, a medical mart with medical equipment.

We have restaurants – yes, that's for health and well-being as people – with nutritious foods, raw foods, vegan foods. A catering company; that's all part of the package. A 24/7 health and wellness fitness gym. A real estate company. It goes on and on, as you see. A plethora of businesses that all operate as Agape Senior around the state.

Agape University, which I'm very blessed and proud to be part of, is our own internal employee education program that we established about three-and-a-half years ago because our CEO, Scott Middleton, is very committed to education. And knowing that if we provide the best education possible to our workforce, we will then provide the best care possible to the seniors in this state that we want to give them the quality of care they deserve.

We are in our fifth year of apprenticeship programs, currently have eight different programs, one more just submitted to the Department of Labor and one more in the development stages right now, with 43 different locations all around the state of South Carolina for these programs.

The last tidbit of information is right this moment we have 279 current apprentices in all these different programs. And we graduated 388 that are credentialed by the Department of Labor in the four years we've had a program, going into our fifth year. We love working with this and are very excited that we continue to grow it as we move forward in our company.

MR. ALESHIRE: Outstanding, Grace. Outstanding. You guys are doing amazing things down there. We really appreciate you being here today. And again, we want to thank everybody for joining us for the webinar.

And with that I want to turn things over to John Ladd for more on the toolkit, to hear more from our practitioners, our speakers today. And John's also going to share with us more on the exciting things happening around registered apprenticeship. John?

JOHN LADD: Thanks, Chad. And good afternoon, everybody. Really appreciate everybody joining us today and for our speakers being available and sharing their experience and their expertise.

What we want to talk to you about today is a tool that we've developed to help people navigate the process of developing an apprenticeship program and registering their apprenticeship program with their state apprenticeship agency or the U.S. Department of Labor.

And the reason we decided that we needed to do this was for a number of reasons. As folks know, the president has set a goal to double the number of apprentices in the country. So we have a big goal in front of us.

And we've spent a lot of the last year talking to a lot of groups, talking to a lot of new industries, talking to a lot of new partners. And a common theme that we heard was that they just don't really understand the process for setting up an apprenticeship program, how to register it. How do you do it? What are the steps? And there was a lot of confusion, a lot of just lack of awareness of what the process was. And to be candid, we felt like a lot of the information that we had available earlier really wasn't accessible to a wide range of different audiences.

And so we looked at some of the things that South Carolina's been doing and they've been getting a lot of attention lately for the rapid growth that they've seen in employers adopting apprenticeship programs in their state. And at one level – and Brad can certainly talk more about this – but they make it easy for employers to get engaged and make it easy for them to get through the process.

And so we wanted to learn from people that have figured some of this out. And one of the immediate things that we decided we needed was really an easy guide to help navigate people through the process, to be in as plain English as possible, to make it as accessible as possible. And that's really what this toolkit is about.

There aren't enough Brad Neese's to go around in the world, unfortunately. But what we wanted to do was have a resource that people could look up online and be able to quickly understand what the process would be. So that is what we've done.

And what you see on the website here is the front page of that toolkit and the URL below it for how you can access it. I believe we also have it available as a download through the webinar. But it is essentially a quick-start toolkit for setting up an apprenticeship program.

And – sorry. I'm trying to move the slides here. Here we go.

And how this toolkit is organized is essentially in five simple chapters which correspond to kind of five simple steps. You'll see them here as explore, partner, build, register and launch. So it's a step-by-step action guide. It has five simple steps that goes from exploring to launching.

And within each chapter what you will see is certain details on aspects of registered apprenticeship; links to other resources, so you can get templates, you can get additional webinars, additional tutorials, other clearinghouses that may be relevant; and then some real-world examples to provide some inspiration, companies that are doing it, other organizations that are leading the way on setting up apprenticeship programs, why they do it and how they did it.

So again, very simple, five steps, and breaking it down into some key information, the basic information you need to know, some additional resources and some additional examples.

So that's the structure of the toolkit itself. What we're going to do now is walk through each of these chapters in a little bit more detail. Our intent today is not to cover the toolkit and drill all the way down. We really want to have a conversation and engage our other panel members in this process, bring the process to life a little bit more. But we'll cover it at a high level.

And then we hope this whets your appetite and encourages you to go take a closer look at the toolkit, download the toolkit, review it, check out the resources, check out the links and see how it can help you as you think about setting up your own apprenticeship programs.

So we'll start with step one, which is focused on this idea of exploration. There are lots of different workforce development strategies, lots of different workforce development approaches. We know apprenticeship isn't going to be right for everybody. But we want people to take a look at apprenticeship, particularly 21st century apprenticeship; some of the ways that apprenticeship is adapting to the needs of the 21st century; and basically answer the question, is apprenticeship right for me? Is it right for my company? And we walk people through that.

So we provide an explanation about what apprenticeship is. And for those that don't know, it is again very much an employer-driven model. It's the combination of on-the-job learning with classroom instruction. It could be customized to meet specific business needs. And it's at its core an earn-and-learn model, where apprentices will earn a paycheck from day one.

A key part of this exploration really comes down to what are an employer's workforce challenges? And for those that are in the workforce community or those in the educational community, I think there are certain questions that if you hear an employer articulating some of their challenges around workforce development, then maybe that should start triggering the idea that, hey, maybe setting up a registered apprenticeship program is a solution – a workforce solution – for that particular employer or that particular industry.

So some of the things that would trigger those kind of conversations would be is that industry or are those employers having difficulty in finding workers with the right skills? We're hearing this so much now as the economy continues to expand, as businesses are starting to hire more, more and more companies are talking about how they just really can't find skilled workers for critical positions.

It could also be companies with high turnover that are having issues with retention and other issues that could drive the conversations towards apprenticeship.

All industries, generally, but particularly many that we're working with, are really looking at this gray – the graying of the workforce, massive pending retirements that will be coming over the next couple years. And a real concern about how they're going to transfer and pass on that knowledge and expertise to the next generation of workers. So that's an important issue that could connect them to apprenticeship.

And also whether – you know, the pace of technology is moving so quickly and workers are having trouble keeping pace.

So these are some of the questions that could arise but there could certainly be others. But as we talk to employers, these are often some of the conversations and challenges that we hear and often leads those employers to consider apprenticeship.

So what we'd like to do now is stop and engage our two panelists. And I'm going to turn to Grace here a little bit.

So Grace, so we're talking about this idea of exploration and trying to decide if apprenticeship is right for a particular employer. Can you talk a little bit about why Agape Senior decided to use registered apprenticeship as a talent development strategy?

MS. WADDELL: Be glad to. That is – to me it's just an easy answer from four-and-a-half years ago. We wanted a way to retain more certified nursing assistants in our health care. They are the backbone and the hands-on front line people of caring for the senior adults, the patients and the residents, that we provide services to. The retention rate was not anywhere where we wanted it to be.

Nationally speaking, turnover for a certified nursing assistant is 80 percent or more. And most of the time that's in the first three months of employment. Ours was probably about the same.

We incorporated a CNA apprenticeship program as one of our first programs that we developed several years ago. We have seen that turn around to where – I actually calculated this again yesterday to make sure I was going to give you the right number. We right now have a retention rate of 72 percent. That is huge when you look at that particular job in health care, what it typically is. So that's big.

The fact that we are providing the education through Agape University, which is for our employees, and we're providing that through online learning, through classroom learning. We are there. We did that because we wanted our employees to be better educated, because we wanted to be able to give them free education through us and to grow our own staff the way we wanted to grow our staff. So that has been a big employee benefit.

The other thing is when somebody says – which happens a lot, and especially in health care – what do I have to do around here to get a raise? The answer our CEO will always say is, get in an apprenticeship program. That's the answer every single time. So for us, that was the reason we started and it has proven successful.

MR. LADD: That's great. That's great.

Brad, I'll turn to you. You work with a lot of companies. You see a lot of different challenges. How have you seen registered apprenticeship used as a strategy to help employers overcome their workforce needs?

MR. NEESE: Yeah. A lot of what you guys have already mentioned, but just some specifics is the development of an incumbent workforce, sort of getting more out of the folks that you have and really taking someone to a higher level. Seeing companies that have, like, five levels of maintenance technicians and everyone's stuck at level three and they want to get everyone up to level five. So using a process that everyone is on a – using common terms, using common education and getting everyone up to a really high level.

You know, one thing that I'll mention here is that this isn't just a big business thing. We really see a lot of value in apprenticeships with small business. And one way that small business really tends to use this, especially with apprenticeship and developing competencies and those sorts of things, is the idea of just retaining institutional knowledge.

And being able to go in with a company and help them define what competencies are and really understand what their folks do on a daily basis is another reason that people register apprenticeship programs. There is some documentation behind it that's really helpful that can help you standardize what a training program can look like for employees.

So other things that we see that I think we'll talk about in a little bit too is developing youth, developing 16 and 17-year-olds apprenticeship programs are awesome pipeline opportunities. And those pipelines can be from technical colleges, they can be from the workforce system or they can also be from the high schools. And so that's another way that we're seeing companies use apprenticeship programs.

MR. LADD: Great. Great. Thanks. That's fabulous.

All right. We're now going to move on to the second chapter in the book, which – in the toolkit, which is around partnerships and developing partners. And we think this is really important and in some ways kind of a new direction for apprenticeship. In many cases, some of this is already happening.

But often the history of apprenticeship here in the U.S. has been – this has been essentially a private sector-driven activity where some employers are doing it, doing it often in partnership with their union partner, but it really hasn't expanded beyond that realm.

And what we're telling people is don't go it alone. There are lots of other partners that can help in this process. And Brad and his group can talk really directly to this. But our system here in the United States, probably unlike some other countries, we have a more flexible system, which is good, but it sometimes can be a little bit confusing for employers and others that are trying to navigate that system.

And what we're trying to do on this chart here is really show that employers are always at the heart and core of any apprenticeship program. You can't have apprenticeship without employers.

But there are a host of other organizations that can help support employers in both developing and maintaining and sustaining their apprenticeship programs, whether it's the workforce system, the educational system, of course the apprenticeship system. But community-based organizations, foundations, others, there's really almost no limit to the kinds of partnerships and the variety of partnerships that can be put together.

But the main message here is that there are places to leverage resources, there are places to align systems, and there are places where employers can get additional support to develop a really robust apprenticeship program to meet a variety of different goals. So again, it should be employer-driven and employer-centered.

So we'll just go through quickly some of the partners and some of the roles that they can play.

Obviously, business partners are again really the key and at the heart of any apprenticeship program. They're the ones that are identifying the skills, the knowledge that apprentices must learn, providing on-the-job training, providing mentorship and supervision. Again, the indispensable partner in any apprenticeship program.

Workforce intermediaries are incredibly important and we think will be even more important as we continue our efforts to expand apprenticeship into new industries. Workforce intermediaries, which can include industry associations, joint labor management organizations, CBOs, community colleges, the workforce system – these are the entities that can help bring business together, can convene business, can aggregate the demand, particularly for small- and medium-size employers.

And we see great consortia like Apprenticeship 2000 to the north of South Carolina, up in North Carolina, and other places, where maybe the lift for a single employer is just a little too much or they just don't see the justification if they only have one or two apprentices. But if they can share the development of an apprenticeship program across multiple employers, that can be a model that works.

So there's a growing and really robust role that workforce intermediaries can play in setting up an apprenticeship program, which can include in some cases even serving as the sponsor of the apprenticeship programs and handling the administration of the program itself.

There are educational institutions. Again, there are many different models of apprenticeship. The classroom instruction of an apprenticeship can be provided by the employer, can be provided jointly between the employer and labor organizations, or it can be done by a third party and be done through a partnership with your local community college, or other entity. So educational institutions are a key partner in providing that curriculum.

And increasingly the trend that we're seeing is creating opportunities for apprentices to earn college credit while they're in their apprenticeship program and for completing their apprenticeship program.

The public workforce system. We really see a growing role for the workforce system, particularly now with the passage of WIOA with its strong emphasis on work-based learning and apprenticeship.

The workforce system can be that key partner, bringing the supply of qualified candidates to employers to be apprentices, to be the provider of pre-apprenticeship that could lead into an apprenticeship program, funding for tools and equipment and books. Or even going much more – having a much more robust partnership that includes providing funds for on-the-job training or related instruction. So again, a growing role there for the workforce system.

And of course, and very importantly, a role for the apprenticeship system itself through its network of consultants and support, that there are apprenticeship staff in every state that can provide technical assistance and support, that can connect businesses with training providers and partners, and of course guide the sponsors through the registration process itself.

So again, these are just some of the partners that can be involved in an apprenticeship program. Again, it's the apprenticeship program itself that determines who are the appropriate partners. There are no right or wrong set of partners here, other than employers must be part of an apprenticeship program. But there is lots of room for innovation and lots of room for collaboration in designing your registered apprenticeship program.

So I'm going to bring Grace and Brad back into this discussion. So Grace, can you talk a little bit about what partners you've worked with and maybe what advice you might have regarding what kinds of partners to look for from the business perspective?

MS. WADDELL: Well, from my vantage point you need one partner; you need Apprenticeship Carolina. There's no way we could be where we are in our programs today with the number of programs, the number of apprentices, the support that I get on a daily basis from them. So everybody just needs a Brad Neese. (Chuckles.)

They're phenomenal to work with. The support is great. And I just know they're a phone call or an email away; whatever I need is there.

The other part of that is there are times that I do get questions, I do get things that come my way that people want me to be able to handle. And I tactfully say to Brad something about it and he says, don't worry about that; I got that covered. Oh, I love that. That's one less thing I've got to do or handle or worry about. So that is a huge part of this partnership that we are in.

And I have to say, we as a team work very well together in this collaborative effort that we're in.

The other side of that, though, is that there are many times I might ask a question and Brad and his helper Brian, who works closely with me, Brian will say to me, Grace, it's your program; it's Agape's program. I'm your connector and I'm going to keep you on track and all that, but it's your program.

That's phenomenal too because we're – I know my employee base. I know my workforce. I know the needs. I know what I deal with. I know the challenges. I know what we want to produce as outcomes. So yes, I've got that. It's the connection of the process that Apprenticeship Carolina helps me with.

We use the technical colleges for if we need to go outside of Agape University for educational components. They are great to help us with that, to support us with that. We use our own internal long-term care experts in producing more educational components that we need, as well as of course that's where the competencies of apprentices and the skills and the ability and capability for them to perform what we want them to perform to move through the apprenticeship come into it.

And of course, hopefully we'll get to talk more about this in a little bit, but the youth apprenticeship programs. I'm working real closely with a lot of the high schools around the state of South Carolina who are teaching health science classes to these students. And it's the future of health care. Very supportive of that and working with them has been a great experience as well.

MR. NEESE: Well, and I'll also say, Grace, that they've done some really creative things with the workforce system too, with things like on-the-job training contracts or working with youth with the youth summer programs. So they've done a few other things with some partners that are real integral to this.

MR. LADD: Great. Great. Well, it seems like you really have provided a lot of value to your customers there in terms of being able to bring those various partners together.

Are there other – beyond workforce and other entities, are there other partners that people might not have thought of in terms of a potential partner?

MR. NEESE: You know, I'll talk about a creative one that I really like to talk about is down in the Charleston area is their chamber of commerce. One of the things that they've been able to do down there is partner with the Charleston area chamber of commerce, with a youth apprenticeship program, and the chamber has stepped up to pay for the education of these apprentices.

So that's sort of an unexpected partner in apprenticeships, but they're helpful in a lot of different ways. They're helpful because, as it turns out, they had some funds. And it also – for a person like me, that sits in a job that is about developing more apprenticeship programs, it also gives us an entry into more businesses. So the businesses that are members of the chamber of commerce, we're able to connect with them.

You know, I think if I were to give some advice to folks that are looking to be a partner within the apprenticeship system, I think some of the things that Grace was getting at that we do at Apprenticeship Carolina, you could do this in your own community. Someone can step up and do these things. The keys to it, though, is that – Grace and Agape, their primary day-to-day job is to take care of folks. And anything that takes away from them providing quality care is not value-added.

So the thing that I would say is to make registered apprenticeship – make these things easy. Make them accessible. Personalize them, by the way. One of the things that we're – you'll hear Grace reference Brad or Brian. You would also hear her reference people's names at organizations. So she might know that they're a partner in some way, but she probably doesn't really know which organization they represent because we brought them in as people and they've brought their services.

And the other thing that I would say real quickly is to be comprehensive and creative as a partner. A lot of times I think we have the ability to sort of – to close in what we think our abilities are within our partnerships. And I would just say look at what your capabilities are and question those capabilities and look to see if you can – and see if you can broaden them a little bit to help out these companies. And always be business-focused. And I think you'd see some real successful partnerships that way.

MR. LADD: Great. Thanks. That was great.

We're now going to move into step three of the guide. And three is really very much the meat of the toolkit itself as we really get into issues of program design and building the core components of your apprenticeship program.

And there are of course a number of various requirements in terms of setting up a registered apprenticeship program. But we really wanted to boil it down to kind of the five essential components of an apprenticeship program that if you don't have one of these five elements, you really don't have a registered apprenticeship program. You may have something that's very good and other forms of training, but these are the five things that are essential to a registered apprenticeship program. And some of them we've already touched on before.

But of course, it's business involvement. It's structured on-the-job training. It's related training and instruction, or classroom training or job-related education, as they call it in South Carolina. That there are rewards for skill gains. And that all of this ultimately leads into a specific national occupational credential.

And we're going to talk a little bit more about each of these components. But these are really five core things that we believe are essential and critical to any registered apprenticeship program.

So why business involvement? For those of you in the workforce world, you know that just about a year ago we were in the midst of the vice president's review of employment and training programs that led to the job-driven training report. And in that report, repeatedly apprenticeship was held up as the epitome of job-driven training. And the reason for that is very simple. Apprenticeship is never a train-and-pray model; it is a model where employers are at the core of apprenticeship, that it is demand-driven because apprentices are hired from day one.

So there cannot be apprenticeship without employers. They're the foundation of every apprenticeship program. They should be involved in designing and driving the program design. So that business involvement is really the indispensable part of an apprenticeship program.

The second element is on-the-job training. And it really is a structured on-the-job training program with an outline of what an individual is going to learn and when they're going to learn it. So this isn't throw somebody at the job and hope they stick; this is a planned program of on-the-job learning experiences.

And so it is structured; it's organized; it's part of what gets laid out in the standards of apprenticeship in terms of what a person will learn and when they will learn it. And generally comes under the direct supervision of an experienced worker, someone who's passing on their skills and knowledge and abilities to their apprentice.

So on-the-job training is about 80 percent of any apprenticeship program in terms of the time commitment. And so it is a key essential element of any apprenticeship program. And again, if you don't have on-the-job training, it's not apprenticeship; it's more of a traditional classroom training model.

But at the same time, we believe very much in classroom training as critical to an apprentice's development. That there should be theory as well as practice but that this theory is applied and that the person is learning in the classroom but gets to apply that learning in a contextual way and gets to apply their learning on the job every day.

And so there is a minimum, about 144 hours that's recommended of classroom training that should accompany an apprenticeship program. But again, it gets to the core of providing that technical and other skills that are necessary to be fully proficient in their chosen occupation.

The last two elements are equally important to an apprenticeship program. At its core, apprenticeship is really a contract between an individual and employer where the individual is saying, I will – I'm willing to take lower wages in return for you teaching me a skill. And so as part of that bargain, there is an expectation that as my skills increase that there are rewards for acquiring those skills and rewards for those skill gains.

So there's generally some kind of a wage progression included as part of an apprenticeship program. We don't dictate what that wage progression should be. We leave that to the employers and the sponsors of the apprenticeship programs to decide what those wage progressions should be. We do have a minimum, that the minimum starting wage should be the minimum wage, but there's no hard and fast rules as to what the wage progression needs to look like. And so it needs to be what's appropriate for that particular industry. So that is a key element.

And then the last element that we want to talk about is apprenticeship should lead to becoming fully proficient in an occupation. Apprenticeship doesn't lead to a component of an occupation or getting a credential for a particular skill. The apprenticeship certificate of completion is a validation from the employer that that individual is fully proficient to do their job in whatever chosen occupation that they're training for.

So you really should be thinking about if apprenticeship's right for me, at the end of the apprenticeship someone should be fully proficient to do a specific job that they've been trained for. Not just a component of the job or a part of the job. Lots of jobs you can earn various credentials and certificates that relate to the job. But an apprenticeship really means that you are fully proficient to do that job from the day that you are certified by your employer as having completed the apprenticeship program. So I think that's another important distinction of apprenticeship itself.

So those are the five elements. But you know, sometimes what we hear from people when we talk about this is that they think somehow, this is way above and beyond what I'm doing. Or are you asking me that all of these things have to be above and beyond what I'm already doing, separate from what I'm already doing? And in many cases that's not the case.

Many employers are doing very good training, very – have very strong internal workforce development programs and employee development programs. But sometimes they feel that it's just not quite structured enough, it's not getting the outcomes that they want, and they're coming to us looking for how they can take it to the next level or how they can create more consistency in their training outcomes.

So we often work with people – and I'm sure Brad can speak to this as well – where you're not standing up something scratch. You often have many of these components already within your corporate structure. So many businesses are already providing on-the-job training to new employees. They most likely supplement some on-the-job training with other educational opportunities, whether they're classroom-based or other. They have mentorship programs or their supervisors are directly responsible for their training. And that they have in-house processes for providing raises as employees advance their skills.

So many of an employer's existing internal workforce development efforts can be included as part of their apprenticeship program. Many cases it's really about finding the gaps, finding the areas where things could be strengthened or – and sometimes just laying it out in a structured format that becomes the value-added that working with a registered apprenticeship consultant and just going through the process can do for a company.

So we do really want to be clear on that, that we recognize that most companies – it's rare that you're going into a company where they're not providing any training at all today and trying to go from that position to one where they're trying to stand up or register an apprenticeship program.

And then lastly, just very briefly on the program design options, we do want to make clear that we're moving the apprenticeship system into the 21st century. And as part of that, we're embracing competency-based models for apprenticeship. The traditional model has tended to be kind of a time-based approach to apprenticeship. But there are many new emerging competency-based programs, as well as a hybrid approach, which lays out kind of minimums and maximums for how long it takes to accelerate through an apprenticeship program.

So we have lots of great resources in this toolkit about exploring those different models for moving through an apprenticeship program and we encourage you to take a look at those.

And we also have some very good information about different ways that you can segment the OJT and the classroom instruction as part of the training model. The traditional model that probably most people would think about when they think about an apprenticeship program could be either an apprentice is working five days a week and going to school at night and that is their path throughout their entire apprenticeship. They may be working four days a week and then classroom on the fifth day; that's a potential model.

And some models, and particularly in health care, what we see is that sometimes the classroom instruction is front-loaded, which means there's an intensive period of classroom instruction on the front end, followed by on-the-job training on the back end and kind of scaling down on the classroom instruction as the OJT component becomes a higher percentage of the total.

There could also be a segmented model where it's more like following the academic calendar, where someone could be in an apprenticeship program for six weeks in class and then doing OJT for the next three or four months and then coming back for another six weeks.

So there are different ways that you can piece together the OJT and the classroom instruction. It doesn't all have to happen sequentially; it can happen in different formats. And again, we want to make sure people understand that the employer, the industry, needs to drive these various models, but that these various models are options that are available.

And lastly on this section, an area that we're excited about more and more is thinking about how we can link pre-apprenticeship to registered apprenticeship, particularly when we're dealing with populations that may need some additional remediation or may need additional exposure to that particular industry. And how we can create high-quality pre-apprenticeship programs that are directly articulated to registered apprenticeship programs, where those sponsors – where industry is involved in helping to design the curriculum for pre-apprenticeship.

But that that also provides opportunities to provide some of the classroom instruction, some of the softer skills, some remediation, other things that may be driven by the particular industry needs.

But do that out of the context of the registered apprenticeship model but do it through pre-apprenticeship, which would bring someone directly into an apprenticeship program and which could carry over and provide advanced credit, advanced standing for those individuals that successfully complete that program.

So again, more information about this particular model is in the toolkit. But we particularly – with the workforce community and for CBOs and others, we really encourage people to look at this model and look at our guidance around pre-apprenticeship as a way to really knit these two strategies together.

So that did take a little bit longer section to get through, again, with the build part of this toolkit really being a lot of where the meat is on developing your program design. And there's lots of different things to consider.

But I wonder if can come back to Grace here again. And you mentioned what you're doing around youth and that would probably be a great place to make this really concrete and real in terms of the program design models that you looked at. As I understand it, you're building your talent pipeline now for bringing youth into your industry. Can you tell us a little bit about your youth apprenticeship program and how you designed it?

MS. WADDELL: Well, our young people are our future. And as I sit here with Brad and the other people I work with, and as we already talked about and alluded to today, the future of our workforce – we need to start these students early and engage them early in knowing what their career opportunities are.

We are very excited about the youth programs that we have just gotten started last year. But we are growing rapidly with that. It's not – in our industry, it's not just the old adage of saying, what do you want to be when you grow up? And the answer's going to be a doctor or a nurse. I mean, the plethora of diverse jobs in health care is amazing.

So for students to be exposed to that at an early age to understand it, they just get very bright-eyed about those opportunities that are out there for them in our industry. We're able to get them with a mentor on the job at ages 16 or 17 or 18. They are there on the job, shadowing with a mentor, then working with a mentor and then actually being able to perform the skills that they're learning.

They're getting their educational component in their high schools because we have excellent health science teachers in our high schools here in South Carolina. They're getting that, so we're giving them that on-the-job component of being able to expose them to that.

Because we've got integrated health care services – for an example, in an assisted living at Agape, they will get exposure to – it's not just an assisted living, but they'll get exposure to rehab therapy and physical therapy, speech therapy, to medications management, to medical equipment, to physicians care, to dementia and memory care. The exposure to that, the big picture, it's huge.

And of course, we want to have them grow with us so that they're going to be our future. And we're already seeing some amazing results of that from what we started last summer. And the support – they know that we're going to be their cheerleaders. We are there to support them and they in turn are part of us. They're part of our family. The relationships are already being formed.

As Brad mentioned a little while ago – and he mentioned the Charleston Chamber of Commerce in Charleston, South Carolina. We're involved in the career academies there. What they're doing there to put the businesses through the chamber together with the education, the schools and the college, is just amazing. And it's the right way to go. It's the right next step for us to do that and to start young people early.

I kind of jokingly say, why wouldn't we want to have these young people, who typically they may be out working the typical thing, the fast food? Which is great. They have a part-time job after school and on weekends, fast food, minimum wage. Why wouldn't we want them doing that with us, minimum wage, getting that exposure, learning that what they want to be in the future, starting that path and that career early? They're only going to be better employees, better workforce to contribute to their own communities where they grow and live and learn together, to give back to that.

So we're very excited about those opportunities that we have right now. And that will only just – I keep saying it's an explosion. It's just going to get bigger and bigger and bigger because the opportunities are huge for that.

MR. NEESE: And John, I'd like to just – if I can, just maybe weigh in on their program and talk about a little from the mechanics side.

MR. LADD: Sure.

MR. NEESE: So the mechanics and partnerships, really. You know, some of the keys – so when we set up this apprenticeship program for these youth, obviously these are folks that are in school. And so we can't expect them to work a full work week; it's impossible. Because one of the things that we're requiring of these youth apprenticeship programs is that – it's written in their agreements with these companies is that they are agreeing to complete high school. So that's a big deal.

So one of the things that we do is we'll take a one-year occupation and we'll stretch it out over two years. And we'll say, you're going to get some education on the front end or at the high school, and maybe you're going to do some work over the summer with Agape, or on the weekends or at night. Some of those things so they can start getting some of that work experience.

But it sort of does stretch the model a little bit for what a – of how to register apprenticeship programs. And it doesn't have to be that rigid four-year and coupling it with education simultaneously. It's a little bit different.

Some of the partners that have come into play with this have been really neat too. So the workforce investment system has been able to come into play by sponsoring these youth apprentices through summer youth programs. What they were able to do is look at it and go, hey, wait a minute; summer youth programs can actually operate outside of summer. We can actually do them in different times of the year. So being able to do that, wrap into on-the-job training contracts.

And then also pulling in the high school system to be the job-related education provider with these. Typically our apprenticeship programs are – their education comes from the technical colleges, but we stretch that a little bit. Like Grace said, hey, look, the education that's being – taking place at the career centers at the high schools is good; it's great. So it is lending value back to these companies.

So that's just a little bit about the mechanics of how it's all set up.

MR. LADD: Great. Great. Not sure if you want to talk a little bit about how youth apprenticeship is growing in South Carolina. I know that was not the original focus of what you're doing, but yet it's becoming a fast-growing part of your business. You want to talk a little bit more about that?

MR. NEESE: Yeah. Absolutely. And it really is. So two years ago we had no companies with youth programs and now today we have 59. And we probably have 30 or 40 more companies that are in the works that are looking at doing this. And I will tell you, it's all over the place in terms of industry.

And that's another important message I think that we really need to get out on this webinar is the idea of taking this to new and different occupations. So we've got youth apprenticeship programs in health care. We've got youth apprenticeship programs in manufacturing.

If you go to some of these really fancy restaurants down there in Charleston, if you go to High Cotton or Vendue Inn or some of those places, they have youth apprenticeship programs. And it's really the idea of sort of getting to sort of an untainted pool of talent earlier. And that's what they're doing and they're doing it in droves.

So one of the things that we'll do now as we even go in to help set up an adult program is we'll ask the business as we're setting up an adult program, hey, would you consider doing a youth apprenticeship program? Because what we can do is sort of strip down what your adult program looks like and get you a nice entry pool apprenticeship program going on from the youth side.

So it's become a daily sales tool for us that we use. And it's really caught on in terms of being the next way to grow the workforce.

MS. WADDELL: And John, just to add onto what Brad said, when I speak – sometimes I get invited to speak to high school students, which I love to do. And they know I'm from health care – Agape Senior.

But when I start saying this is not just a caregiver and assisted living apprenticeship; we have culinary art for those students that are in the food industry and they want to go into that industry. Well, of course we have kitchens in all our assisted livings and our skilled nursing facilities and we own two restaurants. So that's another one.

And then one of the programs we're developing now, a new one, is a digital technology one for youth because, obviously, in health care it's all electronic now. It's all technical. It's electronic charting and medical records and our communication system obviously is. Everything we do – I mean, what we're doing today, it's all about technology. So I say health care, but it just goes on and on and on and on. So that's another new program that we're working on with Apprenticeship Carolina right now.

MR. LADD: Well, that's great. I know – and maybe we haven't made it as clear for folks on the call, but the South Carolina technical college system plays a very important role here. And that's where Apprenticeship Carolina is housed.

Brad, could you talk maybe a little bit about given that relationship, is it more of the norm that the technical college system is the provider of what you guys call the job-related education for your apprenticeship programs? Or is there a mix of those that are doing it in-house or with other partners? And do you see any general trends in kind of that – those kind of program design questions?

MR. NEESE: Yeah. Good question. And you're right, yes; we're housed within the technical college system. And that has been a great partnership because of how important education is in the development of apprenticeship programs.

But yeah. You know, if I had to put a percentage on it, it's somewhere upwards of 70 percent of all of our programs have some affiliation with the technical colleges. And that's – technical colleges, for those of you out there listening, you all might call them community colleges. Here in South Carolina we call them technical colleges.

You know, what we see is great value. So there's really two sides to these colleges. They have credit-bearing education and they have non-credit-bearing education. And we're seeing that our companies are really using both. The customizable non-credit-bearing education to help someone learn a skill very quickly in a customized way is really a way that they use it here. But another way is wrapping things like associate's degrees into their apprenticeship program has really started to come on the rise.

There's a couple of benefits to doing that, by the way. If you're able to wrap this into credit, you can access things like Pell. Or in our state we also have a lottery tuition assistance. So some of those things can cut down the cost of education for apprentices; it can cut down on the cost of education for the companies. So there's a cost factor there.

But you talked about trends. Yeah. You know, I would say for us the newest trend is the idea of having the high schools come on as the job-related education provider. But an interesting twist to that, though, John, is having these guys going through apprenticeship programs at a high school and coming out – and the high school teaching this, but coming out with college credit.

So a lot of our apprentices, though they're taking classes at the high school level, they're actually coming out with college credit, in some cases 27 hours towards an associate's degree. So that's a real trend that we're seeing too.

Agape's a little bit different because they have a really robust training program. They keep most of their training in-house and we'll probably – I don't know if we'll talk about the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium. But one of the things that we've talked about with Agape is the idea that once their apprentices have completed their apprenticeship program with Agape, it's going to be great to have the RACC in place where we can possibly put these folks through and earn college credit back in South Carolina through their apprenticeship programs.

MR. LADD: That's a great point. And probably, unfortunately, we won't have time to cover the RACC today. But for people who are interested, the RACC is the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortia. You can find more information about that on our website, as well as an additional resource regarding leverage federal resources for apprenticeship, which will cover issues like accessing Pell grants for apprenticeship that Brad mentioned as well.

But in the interest of time I'm going to have move us on here. Such a great discussion; I'd love to keep going. But I do want to move us on to step four in our process here and following the outline of the toolkit, which comes to the important part of the process.

As you've designed the program, you've built your partnerships, you're understanding what your workforce needs are, the next step in the process is registering that apprenticeship program with your state apprenticeship agency; or if there's no state agency, with us here at the federal Office of Apprenticeship.

And we believe that this is a very important step and an important part of the process for a number of reasons. And part of this is as we grow and expand, we really want to build this community, this movement around apprenticeship and have a clear community of companies and industry leaders that are spearheading this effort.

So we believe it's important that as people register as becoming part of this community, part of this movement, joining these leading companies across the country, many of which you see up here and many, many more are not being highlighted here but are signing up.

We have an active leaders program where we're asking employers to sign up and make commitments to apprenticeship. So this is a movement that we're trying to build. And we want to make it clear that registration is part of how we build quality and rigor and consistency in what we're talking about when we talk about apprenticeship.

But we know that we have to get very clear in our message around the benefits and value of registering your apprenticeship program. And we're very aware here in the Department of Labor that we have really two sells to make when we're talking to employers. The first sell is really around why they should do apprenticeship, why they should invest in their workforce, why it makes sense to use the elements of an apprenticeship program to grow their own talent.

And then there is kind of a related then next question or next sell around and we believe it's important that you register those apprenticeship programs with a registration agency, whether it's DOL or a state apprenticeship agency. And we really break the reasons for doing that into a couple of different buckets.

The first is really that registration at one level is an administrative process, but like people like Brad and others, what it really enables you or provides – opens the door for is access to this nationwide network of consultants and technical assistance and support that apprenticeship staff can provide, all at no charge.

So there is a community of people, whether they work in my office or with a state apprenticeship agency, who could help guide employers through this process and connect them to partners, connect them to resources. They're a valued part of that community who can help employers work on these issues.

I think as importantly, by registering what you're really saying is that your work-based learning program has met national standards for registration. And that is a seal of approval. It's a form of accreditation for work-based learning and is a way to signal to your community, to your perspective employees, to your supply chain, to others, that investing in your workforce is important and that you have a program that meets really independent standards for quality and rigor.

And we talked about youth earlier. That's an important element when you're out there talking and trying to recruit youth into your program. When for years everyone's been telling that same person that their only path to the middle class, their only path to economic security and getting ahead in America is through the traditional four-year degree pathway. And it's a lot easier to make that sell to that parent, to that young person to say, come to me, come to my apprenticeship program and this is going to provide you with unlimited opportunities. And you don't just have to believe me; I have the Department of Labor's good seal of approval on this apprenticeship program.

So again, it's that third-party accreditation for employer training programs that's a critical role that registration can play.

But we also know that people are sensitive to the bottom line, that they want to know that there are real and tangible benefits that they can go back to their corporate headquarters and make some of the justifications for these investments. And so increasingly what you're seeing is more and more benefits of membership that we're putting on the table.

South Carolina has a great tool at their disposal; they have a state tax credit that helps to support apprenticeship. A number of states are developing their own tax credits for registered apprenticeship.

But there are other federal programs and resources that have unique benefits for apprenticeship. Just one that's close to home here is under the Workforce Investment Act previously and under the new law, WIOA, registered apprenticeship programs have unique access to the ETPL, the eligible training provider list. They are the only program that is automatically included on the ETPL because they've already been screened and vetted and gone through the rigorous registration process. They don't need to again justify why they need to be on the ETPL.

But there are other benefits related to the GI bill, to other funding sources, that we're increasingly working with our federal partners to make sure that, again, membership has its privileges.

So those are some of the benefits for the individual. Those apprentices are receiving a national industry-recognized credential that's portable, that it's not just specific to that particular company and only benefits them if they're at that specific company. So there are some broader protection for the apprentice themselves, as well as – that derives from programs that have gone through the registration process.

So we believe it's very important that our role here is to be kind of that quality assurance role that the government can play, that the welfare of apprentices are protected in the system.

But I'd be really curious to hear now from Grace and Brad. And I'll go to you, Grace, first. Why was registering your apprenticeship program important to Agape Senior?

MS. WADDELL: John, that is like, really, you're asking me that? That is just crucial. The fact that we can say the United States Department of Labor, it's a credentialed program, it just – the value added just is huge; it goes off the charts as soon as you say that. So to register that, they get that credential from the Department of Labor that really is theirs forever; they've earned that. That person has their name on there. And it's a beautiful certificate, I have to say, so thank you very much for producing those.

And then of course they do get the wage progression, which is always a big part of anybody in the workforce who wants that. And then the company, Agape, we get the tax credit. So the win-win-win for everybody through that registration is great.

And I will just once again say I could not do – we could not do what we do at Agape without Apprenticeship Carolina and their support with that just go-to. And anything and everything is that go-to connection from me to you in Washington at the Department of Labor is through them, and that's been huge to us.

MR. LADD: That's great. Brad, how about from your side? I know a lot of people talk about the tax credit that you all have. But maybe you could tell us a little bit more – as much about how it works at a high level. But what role do you see the tax credit having played in your success?

MR. NEESE: Sure. Well, so it's $1,000 per apprentice, up to four years, off the state income tax liability for a company that has a registered apprenticeship program. So they have to register an apprenticeship program.

And it's a super simple tax credit, by the way. Again, I think that's a theme that I use a lot with this is it's a one-page form. It says, how many apprentices do you have? Multiply it by 1,000 (dollars) and that's your tax credit.

So the roles that it play – sometimes I think that the role that it plays can be – it can be overstated, to be perfectly honest with you. But I'll also tell you that we love the tax credit too. One of the ways that we use it from my side – from the Apprenticeship Carolina side – obviously is a door-opening tool. It's a really great door-opener to a company to say, hey, there's a possibility to look at your training program, formalize it, and be able to offer a tax credit for that.

But where we really see a lot of value in it is when a company is actually able to offset the cost of education for their apprenticeship program by using this tax credit. So some folks may look at apprenticeship programs as being cost-inhibitors, but really anything like this – like this tax credit – that can cut down on the cost has really been helpful. So that's where we've seen it.

You know, when I say maybe it's been overstated, the one thing that I would say is that not all companies have a tax liability. Certainly nonprofits don't have a tax liability, all of those and government entities don't have tax liabilities. And those are all folks that are registering apprenticeship programs in South Carolina and often they're coming back for more.

So what they're really benefitting from – yeah, they'll benefit from the apprenticeship tax credit. But Grace has come back to us time and time again not because of the tax credit but – now, she ain't turning it away; I'll tell you that. But really the reason she's coming back to us is because of the process and the end result that folks get out of these registered programs.

MR. LADD: Great. Thanks. All right. I know we're getting close to the top of the hour here and we want to leave some time for questions from you all. So we're going to jump ahead here to step five and we can be fairly quick here.

Step five is really about you've done the hard work, you've built your partnerships, you've designed your program, you've gone through the registration process and you're ready to launch, you're ready to start your program. And this is a lot of the ongoing work that would happen with any apprenticeship program, where you're conducting marketing and outreach to attract high-quality candidates, staying in touch with your apprenticeship consultants. But again, really beginning that training process, that training cycle, moving people through the program that you've laid out and established.

And as you get more experience, as you go through cycles of apprentices, really thinking about how to assess how it's working, how it can be improved. Apprenticeship programs – the best ones don't set it up on day one, put it on the shelf and then you're done. People are always looking at what else they could do, how they could improve it, what could be tweaked. What's the latest development in their industry that might need to be covered in the curriculum that maybe you hadn't identified at the beginning?

So it's a living, breathing document and program, and one that as your business needs are changing, as your industry is changing, you want the skills of your apprentices to keep pace and to make sure that you've got that high-skilled trained workforce that you want to continue to be the lifeblood of your organization. So that feedback cycle, that continuous improvement cycle, is really important.

And then lastly, we really I think as a system don't do a great job of sharing our success and talking about the great models that are out there, the lives that have been changed, even where people have moved through an apprenticeship program and are now at senior levels of their organization or have started their own companies.

Again, there's a lot of misperceptions, a lot of lack of awareness about what apprenticeship is. And I think we all collectively need to do a better job at telling our story, getting the good news out there and putting our successful apprentices out there visibly for people to see and to be role models for others to follow.

So we really believe that that's an important part of what we will be doing over the next couple years as more and more industries and more and more employers and others start up their apprenticeship programs and begin to have some success.

So my last questions for Grace and Brad here would be around to what extent has feedback from either your mentors, your apprentices or your partners resulted in changes to your particular apprenticeship model over time?

MS. WADDELL: You know, when we start a new program, I start building the excitement for that early on and start telling the leaders to get ready to nominate their worthy candidates. That's what I always talk about. And they do.

It's a building up, it's a relationship, it's a recognition that starts at the beginning. Then the support that they receive from us throughout the process, throughout the way. We recognize them at staff meetings, we get them to write essays about what they are going to contribute to Agape, what they've learned as a person, as a professional, how they're going to do their job better tomorrow than they did it today. I mean, that is what all this is about. The education is only going to be as good as the effectiveness of the implementation and the application of it.

So all those things that matter – we do evaluations; the mentors play a big part of this. And we improve. We always are looking to improve. And I always say, we don't usually get it right the first time, but we keep working. We build the foundation and we improve and tweak along the way as we need to.

And of course, as time moves on, from one year to another year to another year, you can't just stay stuck in the same education you were providing two years ago. So it's an evolving process of staying on top of our game to provide what we believe is the best for these apprentices, these employees, to further themselves both as professionals and in their personal lives. And we know that works; we know it happens.

They thank us for what we are allowing them to have the opportunity. They thank us for that. They appreciate that. They tell us the things that they have learned to do differently about handling a situation with a hospice patient or a resident because of what they've learned.

I love getting the feedback and the evaluations and what they – we have made the program more challenging and they keep wanting more. I mean, that's the thing. It's not like they're saying, oh, no. It's like, what can we do next? And did you think about doing this? And it's coming from them; it's not us making these rules that are – it's what they want. And so for them to want to be challenged, to want to grow, to want to learn, to be better as people and as professionals, is what it's all about.

Of course, with the stackable credentials, that's another part of what we do too. So someone could move from being a certified nursing assistant to a certified nursing assistant supervisor to a middle management leader. And we've got two or three programs set up that way. So those stackable credentials that they earn while they're in these programs is another big recognition part of how the programs work.

MR. LADD: Great. Thank you. Looks like we only have a few more minutes left here. So I'm going to turn it back to Chad here for a minute to get us to see if we can take a few questions from you all before we wrap up here. And then we have a final few points here at the very end.

So Chad, could you take us through some of the questions?

MR. ALESHIRE: Sure, John. I can definitely do that. And thanks again to our speakers. You guys have done a great job.

Time is – we're really up against time. We had a lot to cover. So we're going to try to jump right in here. And we had a ton of questions. We won't be able to get through them all, but we're going to do the best we can to give you as much feedback as we can.

Let's see here. And I apologize. I'm scrolling through.

MR. LADD: I can jump in here because I think it's a great question. Probably one for Brad. If you could talk a little bit about the role of Apprenticeship Carolina compared to how you work with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship in South Carolina.

MR. NEESE: Yeah. So there are two ways to have a system set up. So you've got the – I guess you call them an OA state and then a state – what do you call that one, John?

MR. LADD: State apprenticeship agency state?

MR. NEESE: State apprenticeship agency state. And so what we do is we're sort of the face of apprenticeship in South Carolina, but we work really closely with the Department of Labor. And so what we do is we handle all of the stuff that Grace and the companies in South Carolina need to do in order to register their apprenticeship program. And we submit it on their behalf to the Department of Labor.

Department of Labor loves it because it's always done right. I mean, it's done right, it's done correctly, and so – but it's a true partnership between Apprenticeship Carolina, companies and the Department of Labor.

MR. ALESHIRE: Great. Thanks, Brad. And I'm just going to try to roll through again and get to as many of these as we can. John, I know you were looking too.

I was going to go back to a question we had earlier in the presentation. And I would like to throw this one out to Brad again. What part of the tax credit – what part does the tax credit play in registering an apprenticeship program in South Carolina?

MR. NEESE: Well, we talked a little bit about that. I'll tell you what. You heard my piece on it about the way we use it with Apprenticeship Carolina. Maybe we could talk about from Grace's perspective how – the value of it.

MR. ALESHIRE: That'd be great.

MS. WADDELL: The fact that we do – we have Agape Senior but we have all the different entities and companies under the umbrella of Agape Senior. So we are turning – as Brad said, it's a pretty simple thing. And we're keeping all that documentation. And obviously, we have all the backup documentation for that.

But when we have 38 apprentices from 2014 who were in the program for seven months or more, completed the apprenticeship or were in the apprenticeship, then we pretty much can turn in for Agape Assisted Living – we turn in the one-page sheet that there were 38 apprentices, which means you say 38 times $1,000 and there's $38,000 as a tax credit.

It's a pretty easy thing to do as long as you're keeping up with that backup documentation. And we do that very, very well at Agape University as far as keeping the records of that. But what gets turned in as a simple form of a number and a dollar amount.

MR. LADD: That's great. That's great. Well, Chad, it looks like we're running out of time here. I think we'll have to commit to try to find some additional ways to answer some of the questions that came in through the chat.

But can you walk people through the resources that we have available, for those that want to learn more about what we talked about today and to drill down a little bit deeper?

MR. ALESHIRE: Indeed. Indeed. And Brian, if you could bring our screen back. I'm not seeing it on my end. Just so we can show folks that slide. Appreciate that. And he's pulling it up now. Thank you, Brian.

You'll see on this slide, folks, we have got a list of the resources that we've discussed today, some websites where you can find more resources. First and foremost you'll see a link for accessing the quick-start toolkit off of our doleta.gov website. We've also got a ton of great information about a lot of the new initiatives going on around apprenticeship, Apprenticeship USA and the leaders program John touched on earlier; you'll see that off of the doleta.gov website.

Also, always want to throw out a nod to our 21st Century Apprenticeship community of practice, where we keep you up-to-date on all things apprenticeship.

We've also got another resource out there now that is a really great tool. It's a Federal Resources Playbook, provides you a lot of information on how you can access federal resources to support your apprenticeship program.

And then we also wanted to highlight the great video on the youth apprenticeships that Grace touched on, off of the Apprenticeship Carolina website. We encourage you to review that video. It's excellent.

So use these links to find out more. And as John said, we will work to find a way to get some info out to all the participants to answer more of your questions. We really appreciate the questions and we want to make sure we can assist you as much as possible. And as always, you can reach out to us in the Office of Apprenticeship.

And with that, I'm looking right on the hour. I wanted to thank all of our speakers again, thank all of you listeners. And really appreciate you being here today. We hope this has been helpful to you. And I'm going to turn it back to Brian to close us out.

(END)