**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Best Practices in Retention & Supportive Services
of Women in the Construction Industry**

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BRIAN KEATING: Welcome, everyone, to the "Best Practices in Retention and Supportive Services for Women in the Construction Industry" webinar.

And if you haven't already done so, again, go ahead and let us know where you are in the country. So introduce yourself in that questions chat by letting us know the name of your organization or group; where you're actually located in the country; and last but not least, if you happen to be joined in a group today, let us know how many are joining you so we have a better idea of today's attendance.

While you do that, I'm going to introduce our moderator, and I'd like to turn it over to Felecia Hart. Felecia is a WANTO federal project officer with the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Apprenticeship. Felecia, take it away.

FELECIA HART: Thank you, Brian. Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the women in apprenticeships webinar.

The Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations – WANTO – grants provide competitive funding to organizations to increase access for women in nontraditional occupations, which the U.S. Department of Labor defined as an occupation that comprises of less than 25 percent women.

The current WANTO grantees are Nontraditional Employment for Women; Chicago Women in Trades; and a consortium of tradeswomen and organizations led by the Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc., which includes Tradeswomen, Inc. in California and ANEW in Washington state. Each of the grantees has launched regional technical assistance centers under this grant to provide technical support in their service areas, which are identified on the map.

Also too, the technical assistance resource centers will also be launched on the OA website. And I will let you know when that comes available.

Before we get started with the presentations, let's take a moment to find out who our audience are.

MR. KEATING: All right. Some of you have already voted in this poll because we had this up before we got started a few minutes ago. But again, if you haven't already voted, go ahead and vote now with the polling window that's on your screen.

And again, the question that we're asking today is, "What type of industry stakeholder are you?" Your choices are: registered apprenticeship program, employer, WIOA or American Job Center, community college, community-based service program, government, or something else. And if you choose something else – like, it looks like some of you did – please make sure you go ahead in the chat window and let us know what that something else is.

Again, you're going to just choose a radio button your screen to let us know which organization or industry stakeholder group you're representing today.

And to comment on what we're seeing I'm going to turn things back over to Felecia.

MS. HART: Thank you. Today's presentation is on best practices and retention of women for construction industry. We have several industry experts with us today who will provide information and resources that can help woman achieve success in registered apprenticeship and nontraditional employment.

I'd like to welcome Jessica Suarez, who is the director of strategic initiatives for Nontraditional Employment for Women. And then we have Linda Young, director of social services with NEW. And we'll have Meg Vasey, who is the executive director for Tradeswomen, Inc., and Linda Hannah, who is director of programs for Chicago Women in Trades.

And Meg Vasey of Tradeswomen in California and Linda Hannah of Chicago and Kelly Cruickshank (sp) of Tradeswomen will provide us with a brief overview of why retention matters. And I will now turn it over to Kelly.

KELLY CRUICKSHANK: Thank you so much, Felecia. Today's presentation on retention resources for the construction industry is not just an issue for tradeswomen and their allies; it's an important issue for registered apprenticeship sponsors and employers, as it represents significant cost to the industry when the investments in training do not result in a skilled worker remaining in the workforce pipeline.

According to a 2013 report by the Aspen Institute's Workforce Strategies Initiative, not only do women cancel out of construction apprenticeships at a higher rate than their male counterparts, minority men do as well. With more than half of apprentices overall canceling within the first two years, the construction industry needs to take a look at new and innovative ways to ensure return on investment in our workforce.

Many of the issues around retention affect both men and women; however, there are some barriers that impact women more significantly. They include: isolation on the job, lack of work due to misconceptions about women's capabilities, disparate on-the-job training, sexual harassment, discrimination, and unique health and safety issues.

While today's webinar is not going to focus on all of these barriers, we thought it was important, however, to highlight the significant issues around health and safety in today's discussion, as they have an impact on retention of quality, skilled women in our construction workforce.

In a landmark report by the U.S. Department of Labor's OSHA Advisory Committee on Construction Safety and Health, it found that in addition to the primary health and safety hazards faced by all construction workforce, there are health and safety issues specific to female construction workers. They include sanitary facilities, personal protective equipment not fitting, ergonomic tools and equipment not fitting women's bodies, workplace culture, reproductive hazards, and lack of health and safety training.

The small percentage of females that exist in our construction trades, and the serious health and safety problems that are unique to our female construction workforce, have a circular effect and continue to remain a barrier to women remaining in our field. In turn, the small numbers of women workers on a construction worksite fosters an environment in which these health and safety problems arise and continue.

Today's industry experts will provide you with some terrific resources on how to reduce and eliminate the barriers to retention of women, and improve outcomes for all our workforce and our industry overall.

It's my pleasure to introduce Jessica Suarez, director of strategic initiatives, and Linda Young, director of social services, at Nontraditional Employment for Women in New York City.

JESSICA SUAREZ: Thank you, Kelly. For those in the audience that aren't as familiar with Nontraditional Employment for Women – or NEW – NEW is a free pre-apprenticeship training program located in New York City that places women in apprenticeship programs with the building and construction trades, and other careers still considered nontraditional for a woman.

Retention is important to us on two fronts: one, that we are successful in graduating strong women from our training program; and two, that they are successful in graduating from their apprenticeship programs.

At NEW, each candidate undergoes an intake assessment with our social services department prior to enrolling as a pre-apprentice. But our strategy really begins with the entrance interview for our program.

We are a competitive program. And while we train 400 a year, we get about eight times that amount in applications. So knowing our industry and knowing our resources, we only accept candidates that we feel we can provide support to and that we feel will be successful in this industry after such a short seven-week training program.

In saying that, we want to make sure that we are accepting people into our program that we think we can set up for success in the construction industry. And so some of the screening questions that we ask in our interview are meant to not only receive information from the candidate, but to get them seriously considering what it means to be a woman in this industry.

Some examples are, how would you feel if you were the only woman on your jobsite? Do you have other career goals? Meaning, is this something that you're really invested in? What do you expect your day to be like as a tradeswoman?

We also set up a few scenarios, such as, you're faced with a foreman that is giving instruction in a manner that might sound offensive to you; how do you react? We don't expect someone to have all the answers, but we try to get a sense as to whether this is a person that is serious about a career and wants to learn more about becoming a good apprentice.

Following the interview, our candidates move on to what we call our intake assessment, which is the final step before beginning training. And our candidates are very lucky to be able to cross that bridge with the support of our director of social services, Linda Young.

Linda has been with NEW for 16 years and has seen almost everything when it comes to supporting women in construction. And I'm going to turn it over to her to share some ways in which we screen and support our women. Linda?

LINDA YOUNG: Hello, everyone. Yes, as Jessica said, I've been here for 16 years. It's been my pleasure to support these smart, strong women to get into – get through pre-apprenticeship and get on with their careers in construction.

So the social services department – (audio break) – our work with participants once they have passed the entrance interview that Jessica mentioned. Our first contact is called the intake assessment, and that's conducted by myself – director of social services – or one of the five social service interns.

We partner with Fordham University Graduate School of Social Services and Lehman College School of Social Work at this time. I'm sure we'll work with other schools, but the internship program has been a great boost to our support network for the women at NEW.

So the purpose of the intake assessment is to get to know each participant and help them resolve any barriers they might have to success in the training program or in their careers. So the assessment gathers information about demographics, educational and employment histories, potential barriers to success, and also to identify the strengths and supports that each woman comes with.

I'll briefly discuss four categories that can have an impact on attendance and performance in the training and at work.

So firstly, family information. We gather information on each person's family composition and whether they have adequate childcare for the training hours. Where there's a childcare need, we partner with a local childcare referral agency and refer parents for daycare, schools, after-schools, camps, whatever childcare setting they need.

It's particularly challenging for – actually, both day and evening students. We have both. We have women coming after work and so there's evening and weekend care that they're looking for. And for the daytime students, they require care at 6:00 in the morning – 5:30, 6:00, depending on where they're coming from. So this can be quite a challenge. So that's what we're focusing on as far as family. Really, childcare is the biggest issue.

Housing status is another area that we look at. Big issue in New York City, housing. And in this assessment we collect information on what type of housing the person lives in; whether they're the primary tenant or live with someone else; if there are any problems with the housing, such as family discord, rental arears, impending eviction, risk of homelessness.

And when there are housing issues, we refer participants to a number of community agencies. So partnerships are very important to us for all of these referrals. And with housing, it's homeless prevention services. They have – the homeless service system here has homeless prevention.

And then there are private agencies as well. New Destiny Housing Corporation, they serve domestic violence survivors and their families. Ali Forney Center services LGBT youth. The Door serves youth 18 to 24. And this just gives you an idea some of the places that we refer people to.

Source of income and benefits. Many of our participants face financial hardships. And in our assessment we ask questions about income from employment, cash or food stamp benefits from the New York City Human Resource Department, child support payments, and other public benefits.

We refer participants to income support agencies when they're in need of benefits, and we also do a good amount of counseling. When people are receiving benefits, there are many requirements that they have to satisfy, and we have to juggle attendance at the pre-apprenticeship with those requirements.

Health information is the last category that I'll focus on. Very important, whether there are any medical or physical disabilities that would limit their performance in the training. They have to push, pull, lift and carry up to 63 pounds in our training, so we have to make sure that they're able to handle that.

We also ask about alcohol and substance use issues and whether the participant is ready to pass a drug test at the time of intake. Our program is very – is short and so we have to prepare them for that as well. We often refer for treatment or support services with recovery as well.

So then we focus on that brief counseling and referrals to supportive services. And basically we want to determine if they're ready for training and what an appropriate start date would be.

Back to Jessica.

MS. SUAREZ: Thanks, Linda. And then just to give a couple of examples of the way that we support our women in training, once Linda and her team determine a candidate is ready to begin our pre-apprenticeship training, they hand the baton over to our program coordinators and assume the role of providing support and advocacy throughout training and beyond. This includes facilitating workshops themselves and bringing in partnering organizations to present on important material, some of which is outlined here.

During week one, we tend to see the highest withdraw rate of the training, which is healthy for the program because it means we're quickly establishing a strong group of women. But we also want to retain the women that are serious.

And two components that we find helpful in keeping good candidates is, one, getting the women down into our workshop during that first week, which is in the basement of an old firehouse but has produced decades of (trailman blazers ?) and really has an electric energy; and two, introducing resources that may not have been covered in their intake assessment, or just reinforcing the supports that exist.

And we do this in week one through our wellness workshop that speaks to taking care of yourself both physically and mentally, and through our sexual harassment identification and management curriculum. Our sexual harassment identification and management training is taught through two two-hour workshops that first define sexual harassment and then provides tools for individuals to determine their own personal threshold and how to strategize and seek resolutions.

It's truly a course that has evolved over our 38 years as an organization, as the industry has changed so much during that time and it isn't uncommon anymore to have another woman working on your jobsite.

In weeks two through four we bring in several partnering organizations, such as the Center for Anti-Violence Education that provides a conflict resolution workshop, which covers anything from dealing with tough foremen to self-defense techniques, should that type of situation arise.

We also bring in an organization called Sanctuary for Families that provide a domestic violence workshop, since we find that, unfortunately, that is something that many of our women have experienced and can absolutely present a barrier to success.

It is also during that halfway mark of the training that our staff meets with each student in a sort of panel setting to evaluate performance, provide feedback, and provide additional social service support. A member of our social services staff is always present at those meetings and will schedule follow-up appointments if necessary.

Finally, in the last few weeks of training we continue to provide additional individual case management, as well as additional supportive workshops, such as financial literacy since, for many of our women, this is the first time in their life that they're making a living wage. And it can be tough to establish savings and prepare for those layoff periods. Or buying a house and hopefully planning for retirement.

And then throughout training it's crucial to many of our women that we provide carfare to get to our training program and be able to take advantage of our training and support. This is one of the most important pieces of the support that we offer our women and we're fortunate to live in a city that has public transportation that we can subsidize for them. However, we have women coming from Upstate New York, Long Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, and we'll provide funds for whichever mode of transportation they're using to get here.

It is something that we find many of our funding organizations are interested in providing, whether it's funding for subway cards or driver's ed classes for our women to get their license. And it might be something that you can replicate as an incentive or just a way to support recruiting and retaining women in your program.

And with that I'm going to turn it back over to Linda to highlight our services for women once they complete our training program and move into your apprenticeship programs. Linda?

MS. YOUNG: Thank you. Once graduates are placed and working, we track their progress in employment at three months, six months, nine months and 12-month milestones. We hold networking events as well, where the tradeswomen can come together. And also, we will have tradeswomen to be able to meet with employers in different industries.

Advanced skills training, that's something that we've done over the years. During the recession, when grads were out of work, we provided opportunities for third and fourth year carpenter apprentices, for example, to work on their skills and their job readiness.

And union dues and financial assistance is always available to graduates. Many have – are facing financial hardships and also have to play a lot of catch-up once they're making gainful – gainfully employed and making good wages. Aside from that, many times there are family tragedies and other things that happen and we provide that assistance.

NEW's Signature Projects Program is a very special program through which we have employers give information about the needs for workers on their worksites. And Jessica does a lot of that work. And gets the graduates that are employed – the tradeswomen – connected with the employers and get them on those jobs.

House and – we house and support the union women's committees at NEW as well. And that's on a regular basis.

MS. SUAREZ: And with that, we're excited to introduce Meg Vasey, the executive director of Tradeswomen, Inc.

MS. VASEY: Thank you, Linda and Jessica very much, and the program at NEW. You can see that we represent – my name is Meg Vasey and I represent Tradeswomen, Inc. We're located here in California and our mission is outreach, recruitment, retention and leadership development for women in the trades. And you can get more information about our program by visiting our website or contacting us via email.

I'm here today to talk about networking strategies as a tool for retention. We find that building community among tradeswomen is a very important component of retaining women in the trades, helping them through their apprenticeship, and helping them maintain their careers.

Women in construction are usually isolated in their day-to-day workplace. Many women have no other women on their jobsites, so they can go a whole week without even seeing another woman. Being in such a minority on the worksite and also in their apprenticeship classes, if they're apprentices, they are subject to bullying and harassment at a higher rate than others. And they're often culturally isolated at home as well and may face opposition from their base of family and community, who may be uncomfortable with a woman in construction.

And this isolation is one of the many barriers to retention and success that Kelly touched on earlier. But it is one we are today hoping to present some strategies for success in breaking it down.

Women break into construction from the outside and not from an existing network of family and friends, in most cases. They need to build a network to sustain themselves through the apprenticeship. Having a safe space for women to share their challenges and triumphs helps a woman keep her spirits and determination intact.

We find that training and workforce and apprenticeship programs can improve retention by fostering that work through conferences, social venues and related activities; and that tradeswomen from the early '70s, when they started breaking into the trades in numbers, have created their own networks to support themselves.

There are more reasons than just the social aspect of networking that are important to retention. Many of the crafts are hunt trades or shaper trades or employer right-to-hire, often both for apprenticeship and for journey level dispatch, so you get your job through connections. Sometimes those connections are through your union brothers, but often times an informal network will help you find out who's hiring, who's a good company to work for, et cetera.

For these trades, having a buddy system to track work opportunities means that you work, that you're able to pay your bills, and you get your hours during apprenticeship to advance and get your next raise.

Even in the list trades, which don't have a right-to-hire and where the dispatch process takes place on a more formalized level, it is good to know when a job is ramping up or what company is a good trade to try to get – is a good employer to try to get on with. And certainly, developing that network when you're an apprentice will help you at your journey level to increase your work opportunities.

So we'll highlight some strategies for building a tradeswomen community and we'll go back a little bit over the history here in the world before Facebook and social media, when we – early tradeswomen depended on word of mouth and got together in social events like poker nights or potlucks or informal women's groups that rose up by craft.

On, quote, "big job" meetups where you would have 2 (thousand) or 3,000 folks on a job, in some cases, in metropolitan areas. These big jobs are available in my area. We have big high-rises or transportation jobs or the refinery jobs. There you would have a few women across multiple crafts and they would offer opportunities for connecting.

We also had Tradeswomen Quarterly, which was for 17 years a major media outlet and a lot of women – an address to write to to get in touch with women in their area. It's important to note that many of the early tradeswomen conferences were sponsored by the Department of Labor, particularly the Women's Bureau, and that these were both regional and national.

Later, in the 1980s and 1990s, craft unions recognized the importance of women's conferences. And in 1987 the IBEW sponsored regional conferences based upon a directive from their national headquarters, and they had their first national women's conference in 1997. And the carpenters, according to what I know, had their first national conference in 2002.

I want to highlight a successful strategy that has become the major event for tradeswomen in the country and in the world, and that is the Women Building California conferences that were sponsored with Tradeswomen, Inc. and the California State Building Trades, who played a major role in establishing the annual nature of this conference from the beginning. Women came from all over. This was really the only multi-craft conference setting for tradeswomen. We also had women coming from the beginning from Canada and as far as away as Australia.

In 2012, the conference became recognized by the National Building Trades and IBEW President Hill came and addressed the conference with Liz Schuler from – the number two in the AFL-CIO. Many other international presidents have followed and they have followed President Hill's example of both speaking at the conference but participating and listening, participating in their craft caucus and having a full dialogue with the tradeswomen from their crafts that are present.

And I also want to recognize the role of the National Building Trades Women's Committee in keeping these conferences going.

The 2016 conference just concluded in Chicago. For the first time it was outside of California. And over 1,500 women participated, including many women from other countries, including Nigeria; I think we had a representative from the Philippines; we've had representatives from Ireland, including – as well as our stalwarts from Canada and Australia.

We have moved on to another component of a networking strategy, and that is a smaller or regional conference. From the beginning, some of the Women's Bureau supported conferences for smaller. We at Tradeswomen, Inc. are working in a smaller network on Sisters-to-Sisters conferences, which really are a set of kind of micro-conferences that will help maintain our local network of journey level tradeswomen to support and help them mentor incoming and new apprentices. They can make presentations, sponsor workshops.

We partner with the apprenticeship coordinators and our union reps to share substantive information. And we have these events on the weekend to allow working tradeswomen to participate in a meaningful way. Often times when you hold the events during the week to do outreach and networking, working tradeswomen, who are the best spokespeople for the opportunities in the trade and the best mentors for incoming apprentices, are not able to participate.

We've also been able – as I know other tradeswomen organizations have been able to do – to work with our apprenticeship coordinators on a Women Can Build hands-on career fairs. And this again allows tradeswomen to be the presenters, volunteers, the speakers. We are lucky in our region to have many female apprenticeship coordinators, and as well to have male apprenticeship coordinators who work with us to include tradeswomen at these events.

And these are really valuable events which give incoming apprentices the chance to try different crafts. But it really is also important as a networking event for the journey level tradeswomen who are proud of their craft to pass it on.

I want to touch briefly on internet and social media. That is certainly worth of a whole networking presentation in and of itself. But the WANTO partners – the Women in Nontraditional Occupations – have a web presence and I think those contacts will be included at the end of this webinar.

The tradeswomen have established chatrooms on Facebook. "Pride in a Paycheck" is a magazine that has gone online, is also something that tradeswomen advocates should direct tradeswomen to checking – to looking up. The regional technical assistance websites for WANTO have a profile called "tradeswomen Tuesdays," which is a really great resource that profiles tradeswomen from all regions, all crafts, and just also builds solidarity.

There are single-craft online groups, and I just want to make one pitch, which is social media still requires face-to-face follow-up, face-to-face events to help the tradeswoman understand and feel the support that they need.

So in conclusion I'll look at best practices. One of the best practices that's been really important in these tradeswoman conferences and in social events is that women lead. Women organize the event, women choose the agenda, women dominate the podium; the faces on the workshops are women without – you use inclusion and balance. In putting on the conference we include men. They're welcome to participate. It's important to have male allies present and included but not to dominate the discussion.

Also in many of the events independent tradewomen and union-identified tradewomen are both welcome, but that intercraft disputes are not allowed on the floor. There's often jurisdictional disputes but they're not allowed to take place in the organization or on the agenda of these events.

And, that general union priorities are appropriate but they're presented through an agenda lens if it's a union-sponsored event.

And finally I want to remind everyone to put on an organized event. Be respectful of your presenters and participants by setting an agenda. Feed your people if they're there for a long period of time. Plan well. Force time constraints. Remember that follow-up and continuing the connections is important. Allow – distribute email addresses and contact information with the permission of the participants, because you want as many informal as well as formal follow-up opportunities.

And with that I'd like to turn the presentation over to Linda with Chicago Women in Trades, who'll talk about mentoring.

LINDA HANNAH: Thank you, Meg. Excellent, excellent report. My name is Linda Hannah and I am the program director for Chicago Women in Trades.

Chicago Women in Trades was founded in 1981, 35 years ago. Our mission at that time was to improve women's economic equity by increasing their participation in high-wage blue collar occupations. We began the operation of technical opportunities program, which we call TOP.

TOP is a pre-apprenticeship program which we run three times a year. It's a 12-week program. We serve an average of 75 women per year; 75 percent graduation rate; and a 75 percent placement rate. The economy is improving last year and this year, and we are proud to say that last year we had 70 placements. In this last class we just graduated in January, 80 percent of those individuals are now apprentices.

Our program is about sisters helping sisters. It's about building a community and a place for women really to help and serve each other. The mentoring is an excellent retention tool. We have found out that, number one, we are preparing women to go into union apprenticeship programs. And while I know that around the country there's many different versions of how women go to work in construction, here in Chicago we're preparing women to go into union apprenticeship programs.

The model that I'm going to talk about today is going to be around our plumbing. I just want to give these numbers. The last year and a half we've had 15 women who are now apprentices with Local 130. It's really exciting because that number absolutely doubles the previous number from 2015 in the entire program.

So what we do initially is our women complete our technical opportunities program and apply to apprenticeship programs. Once they get accepted into an apprenticeship program – for example, last November we had eight women. They get introduced into the apprenticeship program. We bring them together here at Chicago Women in Trades. We talk about what they expect and then we begin to – have the mentor established.

Number one, what is the best way to be reached? Should you get a phone call? Do you want an email? Do you want to text? Of course we go for texting and email. The goal is to meet with each one of our new apprentices once a week, so that could be many different aspects. But we want this to be a program where the apprentices take advantage and responsibility as well as the mentor, so definitely not a one-way street.

This program can be modeled and tailored to meet the needs of whatever the union is. Some programs are pre-apprenticeship programs; some programs go straight into apprentices. But we just want to make sure that the mentor and the mentee share the responsibility of having a successful program.

So doing this week we check in, each mentee can identify they've had a challenging time in terms of skill; there were many other challenges through the week. Or perhaps it's simply based on needing help with their math and the academic piece of it. We want to make sure that there is rapid and practical skill development.

The other thing that happens with the group that's really very exciting is that they go to union meetings together. They meet up and then they walk into the union meetings, sit together, and perhaps not say one word but their presence is very empowering, and each one of those apprentices get a chance to sit there with this smile on their face as they sit there in unison with their peers.

So CWIT wants to make sure that we establish those roles and responsibilities that mentoring is not a one-way street; and that we help the mentees identify their own weaknesses, their needs in terms of skills, and how do they communicate. There's many, many different issues that come up, and communication seems to be one of the most common threads that go throughout becoming an apprentice and moving through that process, because that's what we want folks to get through.

So the meetings are scheduled as needed, and what the challenges are are identified, and they change from week to week.

Skills and strategies during this development. We talk about productivity and safety practices. They get all of this in their apprenticeship program, but this is talked about in a very useful and practical manner.

Technical training. So let's say, for example, the plumbers. They are learning different aspects because they're all working for different contractors. They come to Chicago Women in Trades and as a group they identify what the needs are, and the mentor and mentor training then assist the various apprentices in whatever it is that they need.

And again, we keep getting back to this self-evaluation so that they can understand who and what they are and what they need to become excellent in moving along, because the goal is to keep moving. We want them to be able to look at the individual program.

Sustaining the program is really important because we know that every apprentice cannot be a mentee, and everyone who is successful as an apprentice is not necessarily a good mentor. So as we bring in the group on a Tuesday night we automatically identify that someone who's been in that program for six months is excellent to talk to a particular mentee that's only been in it for two weeks. Those people may need to move and meet individually. Or it may be really good to keep group meetings so that they can hear from each other.

We want to make sure that we are developing the next generation of mentors because we don't want people to get burned out, and we want to keep them advancing in their skills so that they are getting new mentors as the world changes for them. It's very different being an apprentice for one week and then moving through six months.

One of the really important goals is to make sure we're getting our students from pre-apprenticeship into the apprenticeship program; that they're getting in, they're moving up, and they're giving back. In that moving up piece we want to make sure that people are able not to be disappointed, not to be unable to figure out what they're missing, but an excellent opportunity to immediately train and talk about their progression.

Chicago Women in Trades is very proud to say that our program can be replicated. We recently – as we said in the beginning – we're renewed for our contracts and we have two more years with the WANTO grant. And one of the things that we're able to do for the Department of Labor region five is that we can help other organizations develop a mentorship program. We'd love and encourage anyone to invite us and communicate about how they can start their own mentorship program, or if they have one, different ideas to talk about.

So that's what we are available to do and we're excited about being able to have the ability to replicate; and also, not just replicate but give some ideas about how to expand programs that individuals.

It really makes a difference when someone is able to go in, get support, be not embarrassed about it, and have a strong sense of we want to sustain ourselves; we want to get through this so that we can get women to complete the apprenticeship program and become journey-level tradeswomen. We're excited about – this is our 35th year and we're so excited about being part of the next two-year grant.

Again, my name is Linda Hannah from Chicago Women in Trades and I'd like to turn this back to Felecia Hart. Thank you.

MS. HART: Thank you, Linda and all of our presenters today.

Before we open up the chat, after each presentation there was contact information for the presenters. If you'd like to have more information from them, just send a comment and we will get that to you.

And now we're going to turn – open up the chat room for questions for our panel – if you have any questions.

MR. KEATING: And we've already gotten several good questions, so I think we're going to start with the ones that we have. But obviously if you've got questions that you haven't typed in yet we want to encourage you to go ahead and ask those questions using that chat window.

And I'm seeing one question, "Can I get a copy of the slides?" Actually you can download the slides right from the file share window in this webinar room. You'll notice that's at the bottom left-hand corner of your screen, Lisa. So go ahead and click where it says "today's presentation," go ahead and click "download these files," and then you should be able to download it right from your browser to your desktop. Feel free to do that if you haven't already done so.

I'll turn things back to the team to go ahead and address some of the questions that we've seen come in.

CHAD ALESHIRE: Thanks, Brian. This is Chad Aleshire here in the national office. We've been monitoring the questions coming in. We've had several questions related to recruitment. Let's take the first question on recruitment and I'm going to toss it over to Jessica, I believe.

The question, Jessica, is, "Where is the best place to advertise for women applicants?" But again, we've had several recruitment questions so we thought maybe you could address, give folks a great resource to learn more about recruitment in general.

MS. SUAREZ: Sure. Thanks, Chad.

So what we have found in New York City is our best and by far our most effective resource was advertising in the subways and the bus shelters. We've partnered with the Metropolitan Transit Authority and we were able to get that space donated for much of our campaign, which was incredible. And of course, using women in the images is paramount, but that is our top way to recruit.

We also work with elected officials and job fairs and community-based organizations. We advertise in free newspapers, and of course we also flyer on the street. But then we also want to direct you – we did a previous webinar on recruitment specifically, and so we're going to get that link up there so that the audience can check out some best practices with recruiting tradeswomen. Thank you.

MR. ALESHIRE: Great. Thank you very much. Let's see.

Again, we've had a few more recruitment questions. I believe this question would be for Kelly. Kelly, a question came in, "Is there a way to access the sexual harassment program that was identified – is there a way to access that online?"

KELLY CRUICKSHANK: Thanks, Chad. Absolutely.

Many of the grantees and presenters on today's webinar do have online resources available, and Chicago Women in Trades does have a free downloadable curriculum for sexual harassment prevention training. I believe the link is going to be posted.

But if you just go to our website at ChicagoWomeninTrades2.org/MTAC (ed. Note, no www) you will find that downloadable curriculum for sexual harassment prevention. Or you can give Linda Hannah a call with her contact information on the webinar and we can get that information to you. Thanks, Chad.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thank you, Kelly. Appreciate it.

We had another question come in, I believe, for Jessica – and if it wasn't Jessica, speak up, speakers. The question was, "How did you develop good relationships with the unions that you were working with?"

MS. SUAREZ: Thank you, Chad. This is Jessica, and it's been a long haul. But in 2006 the mayor's commission on construction opportunity happened in New York City, and that was with some of our board members and people from labor and management coming together and establishing that our organization as well as two other pre-apprenticeship organizations – one for high school students called Construction Skills, another for veterans called Helmets to Hardhats – had opportunity for direct entry or direct opportunity into the building and construction trades in New York City.

And so for us, 10 percent of each new apprentice class, those slots are reserved for our graduates. But it's really just been about establishing a partnership. We invite our apprentice directors regularly to come see our training programs, see our women in action, see them going up and down the flights of stairs of our old fire house, going out on the block; lifting and carrying the 63-pound compound buckets so that they can see for themselves that these are women that are ready to enter their programs.

And then after that, after they become part of their apprenticeship programs, we're also a resource to apprentice directors ongoing. So if they have an issue, they want to refer someone to our social services department for additional support – maybe she's having a housing issue, any other crisis – we're there to provide additional support so it's not an automatic dismissal from her apprenticeship program.

MR. ALESHIRE: Great. Thank you, Jessica.

We've got a lot of great questions coming in, folks. Bear with us here. We are just trying to get to the next. I think the next questions we had coming in would be for Linda.

Linda, "Do any of the programs featured use prior women graduates – past success stories, past graduates of the program – to serve as a mentor to current participants to provide them some of that experience and support needed?"

MS. HANNAH: That is an excellent question. Yes.

Once the women become apprentices and move through their training they are the best support system and mentors. It really depends on which trade they're in as far as there availability. But we absolutely think that their recent going-through is the best representation for new apprentices.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thank you very much, Linda. I appreciate that, and huge shout-out to all of our participants today because the questions coming in are just great.

I've got another one here, I believe it'd be for Meg. Meg, the question is asked, "How can programs such as YouthBuild subscribe to Tradeswoman Quarterly to share with our female participants?" I know you've got some updated information for folks you'd like to share.

(Cross talk.)

MS. VASEY: Thank you for your patience. This is Meg Vasey from Tradeswoman Inc. Tradeswoman Quarterly is no longer being published. It was published by a solid group of volunteers for 17 years.

But I want to recommend a couple updated versions as well as a place where you can get the archived copies of Tradeswoman Quarterly, as many of the issues and concerns that were dealt with in that magazine are still germane.

First of all I'd like to recommend that YouthBuild and other organizations subscribe to Pride and a Paycheck. This is a free online magazine; they do accept donations. It's a great forum for tradeswomen issues and for tradeswomen to link up and connect.

I also want to refer folks to the Tradeswomen archives that are being held in Dominguez Hills College in Southern California. They have a wide and wonderful set of digital reproductions, including a complete set of the Tradeswoman Quarterly.

If you would like a CD version of the Tradeswoman quarterly we have those available at Tradeswoman Inc. as well.

These are just great resources that are available to link up together. The state building and construction trades website of California has links to photos and information from prior tradeswomen conferences. I believe Chicago Women in Trades has a link with information from the 2016 Women Building Nations conference as well. These can all be really important connections for YouthBuild and others who are trying to expose and encourage their women in construction programs.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thank you so much. And I hate to say it but we are running out of time here. We've got so many great questions coming in.

One last one that would be here for the national office, was asked, "Do you anticipate a WANTO service area in Texas or somewhere in the southern region area in the near future?"

The current grant I don't believe actually cover the Texas region, per se; but I would encourage you to reach out to your apprenticeship offices within Texas. And if you reach out to us here in the national office we can get you some information – to provide contact information on that.

And also if you've got additional questions for our speakers – again, we don't want these great questions to go unanswered. So we encourage you to use the contact information on your slides to reach out to our presenters directly and they'll be able to answer your questions.

And again, feel free to reach out to us here in the national office and we're glad to give you state contact information for our offices of apprenticeship.

I'm looking at the clock now, we are over time. I want to thank our speakers one more time. I want to thank you in the audience. You guys were great. Your questions show how engaged you've been and we just can't thank you enough.

I'm going to turn it back over to Brian, I believe, to sign us off.

MR. KEATING: Absolutely. Thanks, Chad.

(END)