**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**TAACCCT Partnerships: Registered Apprenticeship (RA) and Registered Apprenticeship-College Consortium (RACC)**

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*Transcript by*

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BRIAN KEATING: That window. All right. Well, to kick thing off I want to turn things over to Samantha Brown. Samantha is a workforce analyst TAACCCT grants with U.S. Department of Labor. Samantha?

SAMANTHA BROWN: Hi, Brian. Thanks so much. It's a pleasure to be talking with all of you today. But first I want to introduce this webinar and get things going, and then I will be handing it off to my colleagues in the Office of Apprenticeship and our presenters.

First, I want to mention the TAACCCT Learning Network. You can see the structure on the slide. We have a lot of different sources of technical assistance for you through TAACCCT, which is represented by all the boxes here. And today's webinar is being presented by the Department of Labor national office in collaboration with the Office of Apprenticeship who will be sharing a lot of great information and resources with you today.

I also wanted to draw your attention to the file share box. It is right below the slide. There's a resource called TAACCCT TA Resources which is a document that you can download to find contact information for all of the different places that you can access technical assistance and other resources for TAACCCT.

So next, I would like to introduce today's presenters. First we have Laura Ginsburg, the team leader in the Office of Apprenticeship at the U.S. Department of Labor, Dr. Vikki Gordon, apprenticeship coordinator at Macomb Community College; and Heather Weber, dean of occupational education at Estrella Mountain Community College. So welcome to our presenters and thank you all for speaking with us today.

And so next, we have another polling question for you, and this one is, how familiar are you with registered apprenticeship? And your options are very familiar, familiar, somewhat familiar, or not familiar. So we'll take just a couple of seconds and let everyone weigh in on that.

MR. KEATING: All right. Looks like most of you found what to do there, but if you could just go ahead and select the radio button next to one of those choices, that would be great. Again, your choices are very familiar, familiar, somewhat familiar, or not familiar. If you haven't already voted, go ahead and do that now. It will be just a few more seconds before we move on, and, Samantha, I'll go ahead and pass it back to you.

MS. BROWN: OK. All right. So looks like most of you have selected your option. So next, we have one more question, and that question is, are you a member of the Registered Apprenticeship-College Consortium, also known as RACC? And your options are yes or no. It's looking like we have a mix of both today, which is really good. All right. Thank you for your responses on those questions, and now I would like to turn things over to my colleague Laura Ginsburg in the Office of Apprenticeship.

LAURA GINSBURG: OK. Thanks, Samantha, and hello everyone. Welcome to this webinar. Thanks so much for joining us. It is really heartening that almost half of you are members of the RACC already. So we're really thrilled that you have joined, and I hope that you're taking advantage of it. We have a lot of new efforts that we're doing this year. So want to get you all engaged. And for those colleges that are not yet members of the RACC, we hope we – we hope that we can convince you today to join because I really think that it's a great resource for the TAACCCT grantees.

So I wanted to talk a little bit about what has been going on over these last few years in registered apprenticeship and then kind of, for those of you who are not familiar, give you just a really quick explanation of what registered apprenticeship is. So about two and a half years ago the Obama administration kind of honed in on registered apprenticeship as a really great training model that was underutilized in the United States.

And many of you are probably somewhat familiar, have heard about the great apprenticeship programs that they have in Europe, for example, in Switzerland, in Germany, Austria, and the UK. So this whole model is really kind of taking fire across the globe because they see that – many countries that don't have a history of strong apprenticeship really see that it's this really great model that combines work-based learning with related instruction, and it really is a great way for companies to produce workers that will be productive and do what they want.

And at the same time, for the individual who goes through an apprenticeship, you're basically unskilled when you start, and then when you finish an apprenticeship you are a skilled worker and are able to earn a very good wage and can be on a career pathway in your field of choice.

So the administration has really lifted apprenticeship up, focusing on apprenticeship, wanting to do more. We had a grant solicitation last year unprecedented, very first that we've ever had in our history. It was $175 million that went to 46 grantees to work on apprenticeship. I know that there's some TAACCCT grants that also applied and received the American apprenticeship grant. So we're thrilled that we're able to kind of build on all of that great work that the TAACCCT grantees have done in the past to kind of continue what we're doing.

Part of our challenge from the administration was to double the number of apprentices in a five-year period. So we started at our baseline of 375,000, and that was in FY '14. So by 2019 we hope to have 750,000 apprentices in the United States. So right now today we're at that middle mark, that 451,000-plus. Our goal for this year is to try and reach 500,000, and really the partnerships that we've created with community colleges is really crucial in helping us get to that mark. Let me move this forward.

So I have gone over our initiative with the grants. We're doing a lot to launch apprenticeships in a lot of new fields. We are targeting about eight fields right now. I think all of them you're working in, but when you think of apprenticeship, you're probably thinking of construction, and it has to be a union program.

Well, whatever notions that you had of apprenticeship, just kind of take them out of your head and think of it in this way. It is a training model that can be used in almost every industry in just about every occupation. So we are going into healthcare, IT, transportation and logistics. We've got a new one in financial services. This is an insurance and banking. Unprecedented. We've got energy and then of course advanced manufacturing in addition to construction.

So apprenticeship is basically you have a job. You're employed with an employer, but you're unskilled when you start out. You're not earning a full salary. That is part of the learning curve. The employer is taking the apprentice on board with no skills. So while you're going – while you're working and you're getting a lot of on-the-job learning and training, you're also going to school.

So we have a number of different models of who can provide that instruction. It can be a community college. It might be a training center, but that learning and earning is going on at the same time. So you go through an apprenticeship. It can generally be anywhere between one and four years.

A lot of the new apprenticeships that we're doing in these new occupations are generally about two years long, and then at the end you're going to get a certificate of completion from the Department of Labor. You're many times are going to get an associate's degree. You may get an industry certificate. As you go through the apprenticeship, you're going to get an incremental wage increase so by the time you finish the apprenticeship, you are going to get a full salary.

So this can work very, very well with a lot of the TAACCCT grants where you have that employer engagement. You've got the curriculum, but now you're really helping to make those students that are going through your programs, they can be apprentices with many of the employers that you're working with.

Another aspect of what we're doing, we also have a fund this year, again unprecedented. It's in the Congressional budget. $90 million for American apprenticeship. It's going to be a little bit different than the $175 million round that we did. We want to really create some capacity among states, among colleges, among industries to really have a much more robust apprenticeship program. So the $90 million is primarily going to go to the states to build state capacity to administer registered apprenticeship.

We're going to put some money out to industries so that they can really build up their sectors. We want to make sure that we have underrepresented populations as part of the apprenticeship population and then we're going to a number of national activities and that will primarily be technical assistance to various organizations, partners that work with apprenticeship. And this would be organizations like community colleges.

I also want to talk today about the RACC, the Registered Apprenticeship-College Consortium. Many of you are members of the consortium. The primary reason for developing the consortium was to be able to articulate credit from registered apprenticeship programs to colleges. And we have a very robust RACC right now. We've got about 240 colleges that are members, and when you join the RACC, you basically agree that you are going to take credit from registered apprenticeship programs that they can use to apply towards their degree so that they are not starting from ground zero.

This is my slide that shows the number of apprentice – or number of colleges. We also have about 956 training centers, and then we've got 14 national, regional, and state organizations.

So I'd like to do a polling question right now, and let me go through this. How important is the role of registered apprenticeship in your TAACCCT grant? Very important, important, somewhat important, or not important at all?

OK. So to sum, I would say about 33 percent, a third, maybe a little bit more it's important or very important. But I guess to the majority you're really not doing registered apprenticeship. So shall we go on to the next slide?

And I think we really want to talk to those who are not using registered apprenticeship, how it might enhance what you're doing. And I think perhaps by joining the RACC, by really participating in this network of colleges that we're creating you might be able to do a bit more with apprenticeship. What I'd like to do, we wanted to do a web tour, but getting on the internet is a little bit dicey. But I just want to urge you to go to our website, and the address is right here.

But basically, we have a screenshot, and what you can do is you can look on this. We have our pathways to success and we have an educators' block, sponsors and organizations. So since you're community colleges, you would go to the educators, and you would click on the application download. That's what you would use to apply to the RACC.

But also we have these dials up at the top. We've got FAQs, the framework, standards of good practice. Those are kind of our bylaws. And then if you click on the dials below, college members, apprenticeship members, you will get a map, and you will see the list of all of the sponsors and the college membership by state. So we urge you to go there, and of course we'd love you to join, if you haven't.

I talked about some of the innovations that we're doing with – primarily with our RACC members but with colleges in general, and one of them is looking at colleges as a registered apprenticeship sponsor. I'm just going to do a really quick overview here, but I wanted to let you know that we're having a webinar on March 31st where we're going to do a much deeper dive with three community colleges that are registered apprenticeship sponsors. And basically what they're doing is they are the organization that's doing all of the paperwork.

A lot of employers don't want to be bothered with the paperwork. They'd rather have an intermediary do that. The sponsor works with the students. They do a lot of the coordination. So would love to have you join that webinar if you're interested in possibly moving ahead and looking at your college becoming a sponsor and in that way getting a little bit more involved with registered apprenticeship.

Some other innovations, we've got federal student aid to support registered apprenticeship programs. Pell grants can be used for apprentices who are eligible, and federal work study funds can also be used to either subsidize the wages of apprentices or it could be used to fund an apprenticeship coordinator in your college to support your work if you decide to become a sponsor or if you want to work a little bit more robustly with apprenticeship.

Another innovation we have is we're doing a lot of work with high schools and a youth focus. In our registered apprenticeships that are working on the high school level, there is that link with the local community college. A lot of the colleges provide instruction for high school students while they're going through a registered apprenticeship program.

And in many of our programs that apprenticeship continues after the high school student gets the high school degree, and then they will continue and most of the time finish it with their associate's degree. And we're also going to be having some webinars on this to show a little bit more depth on how these work.

So I'd like to do a polling question again. What kinds of technical assistance about registered apprenticeship or the RACC would you be interested in? And these are open comments. So whatever sort of assistance you think would be helpful, we would love to hear back from you.

MR. KEATING: All right. Great. And like we said, if you can go ahead and type in those now, it looks like many of you are typing. So go ahead and type it right into the chat window on your screen right now, and a few of you have already submitted your questions. So thanks for that. You can go ahead and add questions or comments at any point, but for now, go ahead and answer the question on your screen. Give you a minute or so to do that. So go ahead and type in now. Many of you are already typing. Thanks for that.

MS. GINSBURG: OK. Shall we go on to the next slide?

MR. KEATING: Sure. So if you're typing, just go ahead and finish up what you're typing, and we can even bring that back once we transition back to the slides here too. Hold the phone here for a sec while we go ahead and transition back to the full screen slides, but we can bring back that open chat if you'd like to finish up what you were saying. So we'll bring that up here for a moment, and then we'll go back to the main chat where you can ask questions or make comments. All right. Back to the team.

MS. GINSBURG: OK. And for my final slide, this is a list of some resources that we have. All of these are on our website. As Brian said, this slide deck is available to you after our presentation. So I urge you to visit these websites if you're interested in further information. And then again, we will invite you to those upcoming webinars so you can get more information about those areas that we've been speaking about.

So another question. Are you interested in learning more about how your institution could become a member of RACC? Yes, maybe, no, already a member. OK. So we have about 40 percent that are already a member, and of those that aren't members there does seem to be interest. So we will definitely follow up with you after this webinar. OK. Thank you, Brian.

OK. So I would like to turn it over now to Vikki Gordon. She's the apprenticeship director at Macomb Community College in Michigan, and she is going to talk about how registered apprenticeship works at her college with the TAACCCT grant. Vikki?

VIKKI GORDON: Hi, Laura. Thank you, and hello to everyone. I'm happy to have the opportunity to speak to you today regarding Macomb Community College's involvement with apprenticeship, TAACCCT, and the RACC. So I'll begin by giving you a brief overview of the program I oversee here at Macomb Community College in Warren, Michigan. And just to give you a point of reference, I know everything is near Detroit. We are – we border the city of Detroit in Warren. So just to give you an idea of geographically where we're located.

In the Department of Applied Technology and Apprenticeship at Macomb Community College has about a 60-year history of providing local industry with education in the skilled trades. I often hear of stories when back in the day we had apprentices attending here around the clock, practically thousands of them that we were training for GM and Chrysler and Ford. And as many of you know, that sort of took a dive with the economy, but now, it's exciting to see the renewed interest in apprenticeship as a very viable workforce development strategy.

So as the apprenticeship coordinator I work directly with companies who are setting up an apprenticeship program and want to utilize Macomb Community College for the educational component of their program. So here I'd like to just stress that, like Laura mentioned, community colleges as registered apprenticeship program sponsors is something that they're starting to discuss and talk about. That's something that we are looking into possibly doing, but currently we are a U.S. DOL authorized RTI provider, I should say.

So I provide the employers with a baseline curriculum based on the trade or trades in which they are training apprentices, and then I work with those employers to customize the curriculum to meet their exact needs.

So, for example, our baseline curriculum for CNC would have some EDM classes in there, and maybe the company that I'm working with today doesn't run any EDM processes. So we would take those courses out and add some courses in that were more viable or more relative to their needs there at their company. So the employer then submits the completed curriculum with the rest of the paperwork required by the DOL to register their program.

So here in Warren I'm currently working with approximately 70 companies that send more than 400 apprentices overall to Macomb Community College for training, and while the great majority of students taking our classes – and these are credit programs. The great majority of students taking our classes are employer-sponsored students, being apprentices.

We offer these same classes to non-employer-sponsored students who wish to learn a trade, many of whom are hoping to get into an employer's apprenticeship program as they're going through the classes, which does happen pretty frequently. Probably not frequently enough for employers but frequently.

So also to give you an overview, a brief summary of the current TAACCCT award that Macomb is involved in, in the fall of 2013 Macomb Community College, on behalf of the Michigan Coalition for Advanced Manufacturing or MCAM, was awarded a $24.9 million U.S. DOL TAACCCT grant. The funding supports the efforts of eight Michigan community colleges, which are listed on this slide, and I noticed – I noticed Schoolcraft logged in. I'm not sure who else is out there from the consortium, but hello to everybody.

And to leverage growing opportunities in advanced manufacturing directly responding to employer needs and preparing individuals for jobs in computer control – computer numerical control or NCN machining, welding/fabrication, multi-skilled technician, and production operations are the four areas that we concentrate here at Macomb. Targeted populations for this training include displaced workers, employed workers who require skills upgraded – upgrading and veterans.

So TAACCCT with apprenticeship, I don't think the TAACCCT grant at Macomb necessarily set out to be related to apprenticeship, but it has fallen into a nice alignment or a nice relationship with a lot of the programs that we're running under TAACCCT and how they flow into registered apprenticeship. So the training has resulted in reciprocal benefits between Macomb Community College's M-CAM or – (inaudible) – committees and involvement with apprenticeship.

Employers in the Southeast Michigan region have been more than vocal, to say the least, about their needs for employees with skills in many advanced manufacturing areas. Our TAACCCT-funded M-CAM programs, particularly the CNC machining and welding/fabrication programs, have consistently provided employers with numerous viable candidates with entry-level advanced manufacturing skills.

Articulations between non-credits, our M-CAM or our TAACCCT-funded programs and credits or our apprenticeship programs are an attractive feature to employees – employers who are hiring out of the CNC machining and welding/fabrication completer pools. On completion of one of these M-CAM programs, they usually have a miniature job fair where employers come in and hire.

So this has been employers chomping at the bit to come and interview these graduates. So it's been attractive particularly to those who are putting new hires directly into their apprenticeship programs.

These articulations are also attractive to students who are considering applying for entry into an M-CAM program. Students have to apply to get into one of these four training programs. So whether those students are hoping for an apprenticeship or hire upon completion of the program, most do plan on enrolling in our credit program once they're done with the non-credit M-CAM program.

And we have quite a few students who have taken advantage of that articulation and then some that have gone directly into apprenticeship programs, which I'll share some brief success stories at the end of my part of the presentation here. And I should mention too one of the things that makes the credits, non-credits particularly seamless here at Macomb Community College is that both of those departments are under the same dean. So once you get the faculty to agree on it, it's pretty seamless from there. There's not a lot of passing around of paperwork that needs to go on.

Next, so just to talk about our M-CAM, the computer numerical control CNC machining program aligns with our apprenticeship and certificate programs in several advanced manufacturing sectors. So students who transition from one of these M-CAM program once they've completed it, they would be able to receive nine community college credits here at Macomb, which translates to 160 hours of RTI for those employers who are looking at utilizing that training toward the apprenticeship program they're going to put that student in.

So it would be employers, apprenticeship program, and CNC machining, tool and die, mold making. There's quite a few areas in which these classes and hours can fit. And then for non-employer-sponsored students who are coming through, it also aligns with several of our certificate programs, just our general certificates that students can follow, CNC machinist, CAM technologist, industrial maintenance, machine repair, even millwright. So these classes can fold into quite a few different programs here at the college.

Then there's also additional steps available to students who desire to pursue additional or advanced certificates, associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees. We have a couple different pathways where they can stack certificates into their associate's degree, whether they get an associate of pipe science or associate general studies.

And then, better for those applied science students transitioning into a bachelor's degree, we have a really exciting transfer agreement right now with Wayne State University for mechanical engineering technology. So a lot of apprentices are really excited about that.

So this is just a quick flow chart to give you a visualization kind of what I just covered. So our TAACCCT-funded CNC machining program or non-credit program translates to nine credits or 160 hours of RTI, and I just don't want to use specific names of companies.

So I just made up ABC Tool and Die because I'm feeling really creative today. Goes toward their machinist apprenticeship program, and so they would complete 26 additional credits or 400 – and 416 hours of RTI to complete that program. And then those 35 credits then can be put towards an associate's of applied science in manufacturing technology or general studies, if the student wants to do a general studies degree instead.

So our welding/fabrication articulation aligns with lots of our apprenticeship and certificate programs in many manufacturing sectors as well. And students who transition from this program receive 11 college credits, 192 hours of RTI. And for those of you that don't know, I probably should have explained. RTI is required technical instruction. This is the educational component of a registered apprenticeship.

So in terms of – a lot of apprenticeships the general model is an 8,000-hour apprenticeship. When you look at those full hours, the 576 minimum of RTI is a small component. So as you can see, a lot of that happens on the job. Not to say the educational component isn't important but just to give you kind of an overview there.

So these credits can go toward an employer's apprenticeship program in welding, weld maintenance, machine repair, pipe fitting, millwright. They align with quite a few different programs, and then they also would go toward many MCC certificate programs, basic welding, millwright, industrial maintenance, machine repair, a lot of different programs.

And again, additional steps, same as I mentioned in the previous articulation, are available for these students who want to pursue additional or stackable certificates, associate's degrees, and bachelor's degrees. And again, a little visualization for you to show how that – that credit transition. So the TAACCCT-funded program 11 credits goes toward the employer's apprenticeship program, 192 hours of RTI, and then that can fold into our associate of applied science degree and again can go on toward a bachelor's degree, if the student so chooses.

So many career pathways are available for TAACCCT grant beneficiaries. So from entry-level skills that are gained with those basic certificates that they have earned through the M-CAM program they can transition to apprentice and then into an engineering technology field, industrial management supervision, tool design.

There's a lot of pathways available for these students, and I always stress this when I speak with young people about apprenticeship. It's built as being great for the student who really isn't cut out for college in a lot of instances, but a lot of these students that I work with that think they weren't cut out for college, once they start taking these classes, they realize they're pretty good at this. It's not as difficult as they thought, and then they can usually ease into more of the academic classes to earn their associate's degree.

So I've seen a lot of students come in saying, oh, this is perfect for me because it's just I'm a hands-on kind of guy. And then when they get into it, they realize, hey, I got the hang of this college thing. So they go on from there. Again, additional education may be required, but articulations and transfer agreements definitely ease the way. And more and more of those are becoming available, and the RACC also is a great example of that.

So just to share a couple of quick success stories and student success stories, I had a young lady who went through the welding program that we have in the TAACCCT grant. So she went through the M-CAM TAACCCT-funded welding program, and she was hired by a local company here in manufacturing. And she actually incentivized or got that company interested in apprenticeship and sent them to me to discuss setting up an apprenticeship program. So I'm currently working with that company, and they're a bigger company.

So there's a lot of different people that need to sort of salute this plan before they can actually start the apprenticeship program, but she's an excellent example of someone that already has those – some of those RTI hours completed and OJT hours as well as she's been working there. So she is an excellent example, and also I like to use her as an example because she's – I'd like to see more women, but she's one of the few women I've seen come through the program and been so successful at it.

I have another young man who went through the CNC program as well, the non-credit program, and was hired by another firm that I work with here in the area. And one of the great things about hiring him or hiring out of those pools, again these employers are looking at, hey, this guy's got a great entry-level skillset and he's got RTI completed and credits completed. So we're already ahead of the game hiring him.

And employer success stories, we've had a lot of employers that have hired students out of these areas, these M-CAM non-credit program areas and have learned about other things available through the college as a result of that. So sending – whether they're sending their employees here for a full apprenticeship program or sending them here just for some skills upgrades and some different classes, the TAACCCT grant has really generated a lot of positive activity around skilled trade training and apprenticeship.

That's all I've got for you guys. So I will turn it over to Heather who is at Estrella Mountain Community in Arizona, I believe.

MR. KEATING: All right. Heather, you should be unmuted now. Go ahead and let us know if you're on the line.

HEATHER WEBER: Hi. This is Heather Weber from Estrella Mountain Community College, and Estrella Mountain Community College is one of the 10 Maricopa community colleges. We are located in west Phoenix, and we serve approximately 15,000 students annually.

And I'm here to talk to you today a little bit about our TAACCCT program. Estrella Mountain was part of a round two TAACCCT grant. We're also currently a member of a round four consortium. I'm going to share a little bit about our experiences with TAACCCT and how it has benefited us being a member of the RACC program.

Estrella Mountain is a member of the Arizona Sun Corridor-Get Into Energy Consortium. The consortium is comprised of five community colleges and several industry partners who worked together towards a comprehensive strategic approach to strengthen and broaden the region's talent pipeline. Ultimately the consortium aimed to address the skills and needs of a growing energy and mining industry.

These industries which will face up to 50 percent attrition rates over the next few years were looking for a supply pipeline into their professions. As a round two recipient the colleges received $13.5 million from the Department of Labor to address these needs. Estrella Mountain Community College was the lead college.

As I noted, there were several industry partners associated with this round two TAACCCT grant. It's important to note that all the consortium colleges, which are located within the state of Arizona, each had a strong relationship with an industry partner prior to applying and being awarded the TAACCCT two funds.

As you know, the round twos are coming to a conclusion, and the consortium is proud to highlight that we've achieved 97 percent of our action items. From our grant we've established not only programs in the energy and mining industry, but we also were able to develop an IT and power systems security degree, which received the Center for Academic Excellence designation for two-year institutions. So we're quite proud of that accomplishment. But I think what's important to note about the consortium and how it really applies to the RACC is there were several best practices that were established during our work as a grant consortium, and some of these included the diversity and outreach symposium.

And one of the things we heard from employers were the need to diversify their workforce, and this included the apprenticeship programs and how do we do that. How do we reach into our communities that feed into the community college system to make them aware of these opportunities in apprenticeship? And how do we develop that pipeline from the community college system into the apprenticeship program?

The other thing that was critically important was pathway mapping for employers and students, really increasing an awareness for students of what it meant to enter into these career pathways. A lot of students in high school aren't aware of the opportunity and just how beneficial an apprenticeship program can be for them as a student. And we didn't have the mechanism to actually communicate that. So it was really critical as we worked – did this grant work on developing those tools on how do we communicate that these are viable career pathways for students?

The other thing that was really critically important that impacts apprenticeship was really the prior learning assessment. So many of our apprenticeship programs rely on the awarding of college credit for training that happened within the workforce.

And so developing that mechanism, again that communication tool between the community colleges and the employers and the students on how to obtain prior learning assessment credit, what does that mean, what is the process, and what does that look like? And as a consortium the five colleges really worked hard to try to streamline that process, come to a common agreement on what it would look like for a student and for an employer.

The other aspect, which is also viably important to both TAACCCT and RACC was the outreach to veterans in our service area. We really wanted to make sure that we had a methodology to reach out to veterans to make sure that we made them aware of these opportunities to enter into these programs. And that not only benefits the students but also the employers.

As a consortium winding down, I think it's important to note the impact that we've been able to have for our state. We've had over 1700 official participants that have been served as a result of our program. We experienced 124 percent participant growth from year one to two and 149 percent from year two to three.

As you can see, our target populations did impact the veterans as well as TAA-eligible workers. I think the important note is throughout our work we were able to award almost 2,000 industry credentials to students in the Arizona area, and of those students, 182 were actually hired by industry and this includes students that were hired directly into apprenticeship programs.

I want to talk a little bit about Estrella Mountain Community College specifically, as our college is a member of the RACC and we have a special relationship with APS Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station that does utilize an apprenticeship program. As part of the TAACCCT program, we were able to serve 569 students just form our local college. Our degree program embedded several certificates, and this included the National Career Readiness Certificate and the Energy Industry Fundamentals.

And I want to highlight these specifically because, through our work with the round two TAACCCT, we have been able to utilize those two certificates as a pathway for students into an intern apprenticeship program with Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station. Those two certificates are a key for students to become aware of the programs and to get into the process to be hired by the plant.

As I mentioned, Estrella Mountain has a unique relationship with APS Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station. Palo Verde is the largest nuclear power plant in the United States by net generation. We've had a long-standing partnership with Palo Verde, and that started in 1986 when Palo Verde expanded their apprenticeship program, particularly in the maintenance area, to include an internship component.

In 2001 Estrella, after consultation with the plant, we launched a power plant technology degree that would have credit-bearing courses for the registered apprenticeship program. What this allows us to do is to award credit for training for apprentices that were receiving the training out at the plant. In 2008 we noticed that we were awarding credit, but students weren't really – it wasn't a requirement for the students to come to the college, apply for the paperwork, and make sure that the credit was being awarded.

And this is where the relationship with the industry partner is very vital to the success of these programs. In 2008 Palo Verde added the completion of the power plant degree as a requirement for the maintenance apprenticeship program, and we had anticipated in 2008 to really see a spike in our completion rates as a result of this initiative. However, students once again were earning the college credits, but they weren't following through on that last step of actually applying for graduation.

So we were proud with the implementation of the round two grant. That was the next step that we implemented is really working with the apprentices who were going through this program out at the power plant and making sure that they went the extra step to actually apply for graduation, that they viewed the value of obtaining that certificate or degree as part of – as a critical part of their development in the apprenticeship program.

And as a result, since the round two grant we've been able to award 55 AES degrees to registered apprentices out at Palo Verde. So that's something we're very proud of. However, since the implementation of the program, we are aware that we have awarded college credits to over 300 students in these programs. So it's really closing that loop and making sure you have that message out to students who are participating in this program how important it is to actually fulfill all the way through the requirements and actually get their degrees.

And as I talked about, a unique aspect to ours is with the implementation of the round two grant, we started awarding credentials the work keys, NCRC, and the EIF certifications. And what this has done is the plant has decided to use these as kind of a golden ticket for part of their application process into their internship program.

And the internship program is a one-year program that involves taking seven courses at Estrella Mountain and working at Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station 30 hours per week. The interns attend college on Monday and Tuesdays to complete the maintenance apprenticeship prerequisites and then work 10-hour shifts at the plant through Friday. At the end of the one-year program all interns have a chance to bid for an apprenticeship position. So this program really is a pre-apprenticeship program.

It's what gets students prepared, and students who have completed the NCRC and the EIF automatically get to test and sit for these positions. They – when the plant gets their resume, it's automatic bypass into the application process where they actually get to sit and test for these positions. So that's a critical aspect that has really come into play through our partnership, through the round two TAACCCT grant, and through this RACC partnership. And that concludes my portion of the presentation. So I will pass it back.

MS. BROWN: OK. Thank you so much. So we've got some great questions here, and so we are going to go ahead and get started on the questions. So the first one is, "When will the apprenticeship grants mentioned for fiscal year 2016 be announced?" And that question's for Laura.

MS. GINSBURG: We don't have an exact date, but it will be sometime this spring. So if you have a grants.gov account, you will get that notice.

MS. BROWN: OK. And the next question is, "What is a training center?" Also for Laura. Laura, did you hear that second question? Are you on mute?

MR. KEATING: I think we may have lost Laura. So we'll invite Laura to dial back in, and meanwhile, move on to the next question for now.

MS. BROWN: OK. The third question is for Vikki and, "What are the key talking points when discussing registered apprenticeships with businesses?

DR. GORDON: That's a great question. A lot of businesses, as was mentioned earlier in the presentation, when we talk about registered apprenticeship, they shy away because they don't want to deal with all the paperwork. The important things to stress to businesses when you're discussing registered apprenticeships are the tried and true – how it's a tried and true model for successfully bringing employees up the way that you want them to be trained, the specific skills that are relative to your business in particular.

Other key talking points – because a lot of times employers want to know, well, what's in it for me? Why can't I just have my – do my training and go on my merry way? Letting them know about different incentives that are available. A lot of the grants and different funding streams that are coming from the government and other areas now that are available for businesses relative to registered apprenticeship.

It's sometimes difficult to – especially when you're dealing with smaller companies that don't maybe have the manpower to deal with the paperwork of registering the program and tracking all that. And I think that's where becoming – having the community college become a registered apprenticeship sponsor is going to be a good thing for the Department of Labor and for registered apprenticeship as a whole.

MS. BROWN: OK. Thank you. All right. We'll go back to question two for Laura, and this says, "What is a training center?" And that was relative to RACC I believe.

MS. GINSBURG: OK. Sorry I didn't explain that better. So the registered apprenticeship programs that are in the RACC have training centers. They are traditionally in the construction trades. They're kind of our legacy programs, and these are the training centers that offer the related instruction. They offer the on-the-job learning.

So they go through a rigorous evaluation by either the American Council on Education or the National College Credit Recommendation Service to have their program evaluated for the value of college credit. So, as I mentioned, there are about 950 of those training centers across the country that are members of the RACC.

MS. BROWN: OK. And, Laura, "Is there a cost associated with RACC membership?"

MS. GINSBURG: No. It's completely free and voluntary.

MS. BROWN: OK. Great. The next question is, "Must a TAACCCT participant be exited from the TAACCCT program of study before he or she is eligible to be a participant in RACC? Can they overlap if we have a participant in our program of study and we are able to place them in an apprenticeship?" So this is for either Laura or Vikki.

DR. GORDON: I can answer that one.

MS. BROWN: OK.

DR. GORDON: The TAACCCT participant himself – or herself, anyway – wouldn't be a direct participant in the RACC. A participant in the RACC would be somebody that went through their training through a training center, like Laura mentioned. We have different local training centers in our area that do everything, all the training there on site themselves, and place the apprentices with different employers around the area. Once those students are done, they can then go through the RACC to get credit from their local community college for the training that they did.

In response to the second part of that question, "Can they overlap if we have a participant in our program of study and we're able to place them in an apprenticeship?" Yes. The students that are in a non-credit program that get placed into an apprenticeship, those students can certainly overlap from the non-credit to the credit program.

And if you're asking specifically about if that student is in a credit program of study already, for example, if I had a student coming here to pursue CNC machining on his own in a credit program and then was placed into an apprenticeship, those credits – those RTI hours could certainly be used toward his employer's apprenticeship program. I think I answered what that person was asking, but if you need more information, just let me know.

MS. BROWN: OK. Thank you. Next question, "What is the difference between a college sponsor and a member of RACC?" And that is for Laura.

MS. GINSBURG: OK. Sure. So a member of RACC is you are part of this network of colleges and registered apprenticeship programs and you agree to take college credit from the RACC – from the registered apprenticeship programs that are members of the RACC. So that's the network.

If you're a college sponsor, that means that you have registered a registered apprenticeship program with the U.S. Department of Labor or with the state and you are doing that administrative work to kind of keep the program going and in good compliance. We're going to have a webinar on March 31st that does a very deep dive into what it means to be a sponsor. So we will make sure to invite everybody who's on this webinar to that one, which will be taking place, as I mentioned, March 31st.

MS. BROWN: OK. And, Laura, "Do you have any PowerPoints that can be used for high school students?"

MS. GINSBURG: We do have some from other states, from North Carolina and I believe South Carolina that we've used. We also have some material that can be used for parents.

MS. BROWN: OK. Thank you. So the remaining questions are all for Heather. So the first one is, "Is it possible to get a copy of the pathway mapping for employers and students?"

MS. WEBER: Absolutely. I just not sure the best way to share that with folks.

MS. BROWN: OK. And can you also share the Veteran Guide?

MS. WEBER: Absolutely.

MS. BROWN: So we can coordinate a way to get these materials out, if you can share them with us.

MS. WEBER: Absolutely.

MS. BROWN: Thank you. OK. And can you go into depth on how you reached out to veterans?

MS. WEBER: Sure. A lot of our work was done through – especially in our northern regions were done through veteran centers. We had career coaches that worked very closely and would go out to veteran centers, especially on the college campuses but out in the community. And one of our career coaches is the individual who developed this resource guide on how colleges can work more closely with the veteran population, and that's the document that we'll – I'll be sure to share with the Department of Labor.

MS. BROWN: OK. Thank you. And these extra materials will be added to the webinar recording site. And so whenever the recording is posted, those materials will be on that site, just to clarify how you can receive those things.

All right. "Heather, do you have a description of the credit-bearing courses you offer for the RA program?"

MS. WEBER: Absolutely. When we developed our power plant technology degree, it was done in partnership with Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station. So our faculty got – worked very closely with their training department and looked at all the outcomes and all their curriculum on competencies of what they were requiring for their state apprenticeship. And we aligned them into our courses. So we actually built a degree that would award credit for their training program.

So it was very intentional. That program started out as a closed program to where we were just awarding credit for training that was happening at the plant, but we've since opened that degree and now offer those classes for the general population as well. So that degree now allows a general population student to get the same type of training and learning outcomes that they're teaching a first-year and second-year apprentices out at the plant.

So it was a degree that was built with the plant and through guidance of the plant. We meet every quarter to discuss the degree, if anything needs to be changed. We do mutual observations to make sure that we're meeting the competencies here at the college and the plant's also meeting them because we have to fulfill our accreditation requirements.

So it's a very close relationship, but it was one that was built with the intention of being able to award college credit for those type of classes. And there are classes in electrical, instrumentation technician, machinist, powerhouse mechanic, maintenance mechanic, welding. So they're very more the technical classes that you would see out at the plant.

MS. BROWN: OK. And final question and we're down to the final minute. So just a few seconds to answer this one. "What resources did you use to reach out to TAA-eligible students?"

MS. WEBER: We worked really closely with our One-Stops – that's our county workforce system – to make sure that we were getting the materials to them so we could reach that population.

Great. Thank you. I would like to thank all of our presenters today. I think this has been a really wonderful webinar. I've certainly learned a lot, and I will now turn things over to Brian to wrap us up.

(END)