**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Best Practices in Supportive Services for Women in Apprenticeship and Employment**

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LAURA CASERTANO: Again, I want to welcome everyone to today's webinar, and if you haven't done so already or if you're joining a little bit late, make sure you introduce yourself in that chat in the bottom left-hand corner of your screen.

And now I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Donna Lenhoff. She's a senior advisor for the Office of Apprenticeship with the Employment and Training Administration. Donna?

DONNA LENHOFF: Thanks so much, Laura, and welcome, everybody. It's so great to see such a diverse group of industry and opportunity partners joining the webinar.

We're going to try to move through things quickly so that we can go to questions, but I wanted to just start with making sure that you're all aware this is a webinar that is brought to you by the WANTO grantees. WANTO is the pronunciation for the acronym for the Women in Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Occupations Act of 1992 and the grants to community-based organizations that the Department of Labor has awarded under this program.

The purpose is to assist employers and labor unions in promoting, recruitment, training, employment, and retention of women in apprenticeship and nontraditional occupations. And right now we are working on a two-year grant for almost $2 million to help women particularly in high-skill occupations, in advanced manufacturing, transportation, energy, construction, information technology, and other industries where there are either a lot of apprenticeship programs or where there are growing numbers of apprenticeship programs.

So under WANTO we are funding the regional technical assistance centers that you see on this slide. In New York there is – Nontraditional Employment for Women is the name of the group in New York City, and it is the regional technical assistance center for New England. Chicago Women in Trades has the middle of the county, and their main office is in Chicago; they have an office in Ohio as well. And then the western WANTO consortium, which consists of Oregon Tradeswomen, Tradeswomen Inc., and ANEW – Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Employment for Women – make up the western consortium.

So if you are interested in technical assistance about best practices for increasing the participation of women in your programs, that's who you can contact. And if you just go to any of these groups' websites you'll be able to find their contact information. Plus we have people from the groups who are going to be presenters today.

First, though, we have a survey question. Here's the poll, so please let us know what type of industry stakeholder you are. As you can see, right at the moment the majority seems to be American Job Centers or WIOA programs. OK. Let's end the poll. Thank you. This is helpful information for us to know who's participating today.

Here is today's agenda. We are going to be having three different presentations, and each of them hopefully is going to take about 10 minutes, and that should leave us about 25 minutes for Q&A, which will be moderated by the Office of Apprenticeship's Chad Aleshire. Next slide, you can see the presenters.

So you see our first presenter is Maura Kelly, and I'm just going to turn it over to Maura so she can introduce herself, give just a little background, and go into the research work that she has done. Maura?

MAURA KELLY: Fantastic. Thanks. Next slide.

Thanks for inviting me to participate in this webinar. My name is Maura Kelly. I'm an associate professor of sociology at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. Since 2011 my colleague and I, Lindsey Wilkinson, have been working on research related to recruitment and retention of apprentices in the construction trades in Oregon, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of women and people of color.

Part of our ongoing research is evaluation of Oregon's highway construction workforce development program. This program and our research are funded by the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries and the Oregon Department of Transportation. Today I'm going to present findings from our 2016 report. The data comes from the Oregon apprenticeship system database, which includes all registered construction apprentices in Oregon; as well as a telephone survey of apprentices that we conducted in 2016.

The goal of this program is to improve the stability and diversity of the construction highway workforce by promoting recruitment and retention of apprentices. The program has funded a variety of initiatives related to improving the diversity of the construction workforce. In our 2016 evaluation we focused on two elements, pre-apprenticeship and supportive services.

Pre-apprentices are an important mechanism for increasing diversity in the construction trades. Pre-apprenticeships assist marginalized workers in entering into apprenticeships. They also improve retention by providing ongoing support for their graduates and others. Our evaluation focused on programs run by Oregon Tradeswomen Inc., which serves women; and Constructing Hope, which serves women and men. Both programs serve racial/ethnic minorities and a number of disadvantaged groups.

The program provides supportive services to apprentices in the highway construction trades. These services are designed to help apprentices overcome financial challenges and stay on track in their apprenticeships. The supportive services aim to target the financial challenges that would prevent apprentices from being able to work.

The non-financial services include one-on-one counseling or mentoring as well as group support. These non-financial services are provided by the organizations distributing the financial support as well as through pre-apprenticeship programs.

As this program is funded jointly by BODI and ODOT, services are available to apprentices in the trades most central to ODOT projects as well as individuals who are working on highway or bridge projects. Next slide.

Now, taking a step back to look at the big picture. About 8 percent of apprentices in Oregon were women in 2015. We've seen some progress in recruitment of women into the trades. However, these numbers are still low.

We also see issues with retention of female apprentices. White women and women of color were less likely to complete an apprenticeship compared to their male counterparts during our study period. In our research we've documented a range of challenges that female apprentices face. These include harassment on job sites, a lack of access to mentoring and training, a lack of access to networks, being out of work too much, and other financial challenges.

Now, putting those trends for recruitment and retention together, we see a slow increase in the percentage of women and people of color who are completing apprenticeships. We can make faster progress by investing in diversifying the construction workforce, and this is the goal of the BOLI/ODOT highway construction workforce development program.

This figure shows apprentices who are being served by the program during the study period. The program does not include gender or race/ethnicity as criteria for receiving services. However, through targeted outreach the program is reaching needed marginalized workers. I want to point out here that among apprentices active during the study period, a quarter of white women and over a third of women of color were graduates of pre-apprenticeship.

Looking at the same data from a slightly different angle, here are the total number of pre-apprenticeship graduates who were active in an apprenticeship during the study period. Just a reminder, these are folks who likely would not have found an alternate pathway into construction. Pre-apprenticeships are making a big difference in increasing the recruitment of women into construction.

The key question our evaluation of the program is whether or not receiving supportive services makes a difference in apprentices' completion. The answer is, it does. Apprentices who receive supportive services are more likely to complete than those who don't. There's a positive effect for all race/gender groups, but the effect is particularly large for women of color. Only about a quarter of women of color who did not receive supportive services completed their apprenticeship. In contrast, over half of women of color who did receive services completed.

However, it is important to note that women of color make up a small group in the trades in Oregon. Next slide.

This figure shows the size of the effect of receiving supportive services. Bars to the right show a positive effect on completion and the further to the right the larger the effect. One notable finding was that non-financial services or social support had a larger positive effect than financial services. In our follow-up research we will aim to determine why this might be.

Financial services generally have a positive effect on completion, as shown in the previous slide. The one exception is white women who receive childcare subsidies are less likely to complete than white women who are parents who do not receive childcare subsidies. We know that there are a variety of challenges related to work-life balance in the construction trades and we'll be looking at this more in future research.

We also see that pre-apprenticeship graduates are less likely to complete than those who did not complete a pre-apprenticeship. While this may initially seem surprising, it does make sense, as pre-apprenticeships generally serve disadvantaged workers who have a variety of ongoing challenges during apprenticeship.

Finally, we looked at how supportive services relate to promoting a strong construction workforce pipeline. We found that among those who successfully completed an apprenticeship, individuals who received services were more likely to be working in construction after apprenticeship.

I don't have an explanation for why this positive effect persists even after apprentices journey out and stop receiving services. It may be that apprentices perceive that the industry is investing in them, which may promote long-term retention. We will continue to track the longer-term effects of the program in our research going forward.

We're excited to be engaged in ongoing evaluation of the BOLI/ODOT highway construction workforce development program, and we're encouraged by the progress in the recruitment and retention of women in apprenticeship in Oregon.

Please feel free to contact me via phone or email. Also, all of our research reports are available at my website, including the 2016 report that was the basis for this presentation. That 2016 report is also available to download as a part of this webinar. Thank you.

MS. LENHOFF: OK. Thank you so much, Maura. We're going to just do all the presentations and then do the questions at the end, so next comes – next up is Linda Young from Nontraditional Employment for Women.

LINDA YOUNG: Good morning, everybody, and thank you for allowing me to contribute to this important forum.

NEW – a little bit about NEW. Nontraditional Employment for Women was founded in 1978, and we provide free day and evening pre-apprenticeship training, preparing women and placing women in the construction trades; a diverse grouping, primarily women of color age 18 and over in careers in the building and construction trade.

Both our training completion rate and job placement rates are approximately 75 percent.

I joined the staff of NEW in 2000. I'm a licensed social worker and the director of social services here at NEW. I'm going to speak a bit about what we see as the best practices in providing support services to training participants and tradeswomen.

Having a social service department, first of all, within this workforce development agency is essential since many of the women we serve and train they're in need of various supports to ensure their success in training and employment.

We provide social service support before, during, and after training, and we found this to be a best model. When I first joined NEW we had a social worker available to provide assistance and case management if the person approached us and needed help or requested help.

We discovered that it really made a difference to begin at the beginning of the process. So when candidates pass their entrance interview for training with NEW, that's when my department begins to engage with each individual.

So we engage them at the beginning with an intake assessment – a very thorough assessment that takes a look at who the person is and what their needs are, what they need in order to prepare for training; and to identify potential barriers to success in the training and readiness for work.

One of the largest issues is childcare. We help to ensure that the candidate has adequate childcare in place, including backup childcare, by connecting them to organizations and agencies that can provide not just childcare providers or day cares but also funding to help them to pay for the childcare.

Another big issue here in New York is housing. During that intake we ask questions about the participant's current housing situation and begin to assist them if there's unstable housing.

I'll just say that – I have to underscore – this intake assessment is very important because not only does it help us to identify needs and begin working with the person to mitigate these barriers. It also creates a connection which is very nice. The women – each individual realizes, OK, this is a person I can come back to once I'm in the training, or even once they're graduated, placed, and in the field. So that's an important part of the process.

We also connect them with necessary resources like cash benefits or food stamps or SNAP; health insurance; again, housing – sometimes people are in need of emergency housing; childcare; mental health counseling; and unemployment benefits. Next slide, please.

During training we provide ongoing supports. Those include workshops – we provide wellness workshops which helps the person to become aware of the fact that are many aspects of wellness; and to be at their strongest and their best in the trades we can help them attend to what are the physical needs, emotional, social, environmental, etc.

During that workshop we look at also relationship issues and family issues; every aspect of wellness. Self-esteem is another workshop that we provide. This empowers the candidate with self-awareness and strategies toward self-care and building self-esteem.

Sexual harassment identification and management is another workshop that we provide. This educates the candidate on the types of harassment that can occur in the nontraditional workplace, and specifically construction-related work; how to write a complaint or a report if it comes to that; how to use informal and formal strategies to deal with these kinds of situations.

The social service staff members also attend – there are two big conferences that participants got through when they're in the training program, and we attend those conferences if needed and we follow up with any issues or concerns that come up during the course of the training. Next slide, please.

So again, ongoing throughout the training programs, we run seven- and eight-week training programs, day and evening. Perhaps a childcare need comes up while the person is in training. Although they had a good plan when we did the intake, we're there to assist them to connect to services – medical benefits, healthcare, housing, public assistance; again, unemployment insurance. And we provide ongoing counseling and referrals.

Sometimes – we have a very diverse grouping, although primarily women of color. And gender issues sometimes come up and we need to connect people with services provide some counseling here. Crisis intervention is available as well, and referrals for domestic violence, conflict resolution, financial literacy; legal issues.

Partnerships are critical in providing these services, so we bring community partners in as well – experts in different fields to present and work with our participants; in particular, domestic violence. We have this Sanctuary for Families organization here in New York that comes in and provides a workshop on that. We see a fairly high incidence of domestic abuse and domestic violence.

Conflict resolution. We have a community partner that comes in and works with the women on how to deal with conflict in the workplace.

In addition, financial literacy. Even after the graduates move on into the field – they're placed and working in the field – we have financial literacy programs that help them to learn how to save, manage their money, and also deal with debt management as well.

And lastly, I wanted to say that a team approach is really important to providing support services. A team approach in terms of new staff working together to support the women through the program and into employment and helping them to retain that employment, that's key, as well as partnerships with community agencies, all in the service of helping women to attain their career goals in the trades.

So it's been my pleasure speaking with you briefly. I look forward to answering questions. You can reach me at the phone number and email address that's shown; as well I have listed our website. Thank you.

MS. LENHOFF: Thank you so much, Linda. Next slide, please. So that – go ahead, Julie. Sorry.

JULIE KUKLINSKI: So my name is Julie Kuklinski and I am the director of the women in construction program at Moore Community House in Biloxi, Mississippi.

I am a tradeswoman. I came down to Mississippi Gulf Coast and learned my trade through rebuilding homes after Hurricane Katrina, and I grew very passionate about the work and very passionate about women in this community.

So the context for our work is that in Mississippi women are at the bottom in the entire country for both health and poverty measures, and single mother head of households are segregated into low-wage, low-quality work. You can see in this slide that women make up half of the workers in Mississippi and about two-thirds of those minimum wage jobs. And wages for all workers are very low in Mississippi; however, way lower for women than men and especially lower for women of color.

These high-poverty rates are largely attributed to the continued segregation of women in the workplace and women working in low-paying, low-quality jobs. Mississippi women on average earn less than men on every level of educational attainment throughout almost every single industry. And actually, one of the only industries that that is not the case is construction.

Women are constantly steered into low-wage fields such as retail, cosmetology, and low-wage medical jobs. We know there's nothing wrong with these jobs; however, they do not pay a living wage for a woman, especially when she's paying for the needs of her family.

And you can see this figure on the bottom half of the slide, points that out. You can see that the minimum wage leaves the family well below the federal poverty line and it makes it very difficult for families and single moms to earn their way out of poverty through work. And Mississippi has the highest rate of single mother-headed families – mothers who too often bear the financial responsibility for their children.

OK. You see in this pie chart here that the majority of single mothers work, and they work a lot. Oftentimes women [will ?] work two to three jobs; however, they're working a low-wage job and they're struggling. And because single mother-headed families only have one wage earner whose earnings are thwarted by both race and gender inequities, their efforts to work their way to economic security are nearly impossible compared to those of single dads.

So in Mississippi we have a huge middle skills gap, and I know that everyone hears this nationally, and also a low workforce participation rate. Single moms in Mississippi participate in the labor rate at a higher rate than the population overall, and many are second and low-wage jobs and need childcare and training for higher-paying work.

We believe that the priorities of childcare for moms is essential but not enough. To disrupt occupational segregation and gender wage disparity, higher-paying work for women in the realm of male skill jobs, we must focus on apprenticeship in nontraditional occupations where women are drastically underrepresented but much better paid.

And it is a win-win situation, as women must be trained to increase their earning power to support their families, and we must prepare them to compete – (inaudible) – apprenticeship programs that pay high wages and good benefits. Next slide.

You know, so as discussed before, lack of affordable childcare is a major barrier. When we did our state WIOA plan that was cited as a constant thing that was a major barrier for women, especially to get out of poverty. So through our Moore Community House Women In Construction program we're working to address this challenge with a very, very innovative approach. We were awarded a Department of Labor Strengthening Working Families initiative grant.

And also we're working with our Mississippi department of human services through TANF funding to provide supportive services. I'm going to talk a bit about that more. We see this as a potential best practice for other locations, and nationally, to incorporate both training and childcare services as a model.

So Moore Community House was founded in 1924, and the Women in Construction program began after Hurricane Katrina. We responded to the economic needs of women and also the need to rebuild the Mississippi Gulf Coast after the storm. We are one of the only career apprenticeship job training programs in the region and in the state, and we're designed to train women in careers in apprenticeship and nontraditional occupations, and make sure that industry gets qualified and skilled workers.

And while we provide technical training and recognized credentials in both the skills, craft trades, and advanced manufacturing, we also are a great resource for our registered apprenticeship program to meet their diversity goals. We really look at doing that through supporting our students through training and childcare.

We recruit, assess, train, and support women through the entire process. We see the support as happening from the second we meet a woman. We run six classes a year with about 30 women each course. Classes are eight weeks long and they're 40 hours a week. We build our curriculum on what apprenticeship employers say they want and need, and we also build our program around what women say they want and need.

So everything we've done from the beginning has been through formal and informal feedback from women in our program. So if there's a suggestion a woman has around hours, around her childcare needs, we will always listen to that.

And we provide technical assistance to apprenticeship programs locally and regionally to increase the amount of women in apprenticeship programs.

And one of the things – and this is of course the topic of the discussion today – for women it's critical that they have support beyond skill training, and that really starts throughout that whole process. I'm going to touch a lot about childcare and supportive services; in addition I'm going to go into peer support and mentorship, too.

So these are women in our program and I love these two images because these are women who have graduated from our program and they have their children with them. And actually the woman on the left, during her graduation speech she spoke about how childcare was critical in her finishing the program, and she couldn't have done it. The woman on the right spoke a lot in her graduation and advocates for other women to get into the trades at her childcare center. So these are women who are out there advocating for childcare in job training, which is amazing.

And as I mentioned earlier, we were awarded a Department of Labor Strengthening Working Families grant, and we're able to pay for childcare for every single participant who goes through our program, and also for a duration after they're done to help support them to get into an apprenticeship program.

So this grant has already really allowed us to look at the workforce delivery system and the childcare delivery system and make sure that those two are speaking together, and we can really start using this as a model, as I said earlier, regionally and nationally.

And under the file share section you'll see that there are documents for you to download, and there is a document that we actually just published yesterday. It's a policy brief that's written by one of our partners, the Mississippi Low-Income Childcare Initiative. We're working with them to address the challenge of the lack of affordable childcare in our state and making the program design accordingly.

This policy brief is called, "Coupling Childcare with Pathways to Nontraditional Higher-Paying Work." It's all about bridging Mississippi's skills and wage gap. It really will give us – one of the things that it does is it really lets us rethink workforce training for low-income moms. I highly recommend that you read it. We will, in the future, be putting another piece that spells out best practices for training practitioners, so that's something that you can all hopefully use, as I see there's many training practitioners on the webinar.

So as far as providing support with childcare, we do something very similar with our assessment. We have both a regular case manager that's a general case manager and a childcare case manager on staff.

Our general case manager will dig into a lot of the transportation, housing, healthcare needs, those kinds of issues in their assessment before a woman is enrolled. And our childcare case manager will look into the childcare needs. This case manager has visited all of our childcare centers in our region, has met them, has explained how this is going to work; has (traded ?) parent-consumer tools for parents to choose their childcare centers; and has really worked through some of the concerns and questions of women who are going to be putting their children in childcare for the first time. It's been amazing to see how big of an impact this has had on our classes.

So when we look at all these different case management issues we address these challenges and we embed these challenges into our curriculum. There's a lot of students who have issues with housing and healthcare. We make sure that we address these very topics in our curriculum, and that all of our peer support groups have these kind of topics in our curriculum. Again, we do a lot of this in-house; the childcare piece we do in-house, but we also partner with agencies who help with these issues and – (inaudible) – where needed.

Again, our partners are very critical in this. We have a huge list of resources that will meet the needs of families and will help navigate that system.

OK. I'm going to talk about peer support just a bit. Peer support especially for mothers has been really helpful. We have found that – we have monthly meetings. We have, like, graduate social hours. This is a great environmental and we try to do this as informally as possible because at the end of the day people are working and they're tired, but we really let our graduates spell out and make this – the shape of this structure for these mentorship programs and for these graduate meetings.

We'll actually get childcare at these meetings for women so they can come. One thing they suggested is they actually want to build together, so we're starting an event where monthly we build together. This is a place for moms to talk about the issues they're having in the workplace; to talk about how they're handling work-life balance. It's just a way for them to support one another through their trade, and it has been very, very helpful for us.

And as far as mentorship we provide informal peer mentorship through mostly graduate meetings. I know I just stated that, but one thing that's really great is we have women hear directly from other women who have been in industry for a while and how they fought through; how they were able to get through their apprenticeship program, how they were able to journey out, what made it possible; what kind of resources they needed. And that's been very successful.

Since we began our program we have graduated 340 women – that number has actually gone up a bit – in 30 classes, and our employment rate is at 70 percent. And to us, not only the numbers are important but the qualitative information is really important. Many of our students get out of an abusive relationship with their high school equivalency. They get housing and transportation, and those are extremely critical for us to see that kind of change, when someone comes back and has keys to their car, keys to their house, security, a safe place for their family to live. Those are the kind of things that make it successful for us.

I love this image because this was a student that was in our very first class and she is a carpenter. I just like to share this quote. She brings her daughters by her job sites and it's amazing to see the kind of impact it has for her as a mom to show her daughters they can do it. And so I just captured a quote from her. "I would like tomorrow to be a place where my daughters won't have to be afraid, hold back, or settle for less."

And I highly suggest that you get involved with your regional WANTO technical assistance centers and please, if there are resources you'd like to learn more about, reach out to us on this webinar and the other technical assistance centers, because they're here to help you and support you in whatever way you see fit.

So that's my presentation and I look forward to any questions you may have.

MS. LENHOFF: Thank you all three very much. What really excellent presentations.

We have a lot of questions on the chat, and I think we can just jump right into them. Chad, do you want to take some and start asking people to respond to them?

CHAD ALESHIRE: Absolutely. Thank you, Donna, and thanks again to Maura and Linda and Julie.

So we are going to dive right into the Q&A, so keep them coming. We will jump right in. Maura, I believe this question was for you. Can you talk about what kind of things you do around the social support services that you mentioned?

MS. KELLY: Yeah, absolutely. This was one of our more surprising findings, that the social support actually had an even bigger effect on promoting retention all the way to completion than the financial services.

I don't have – we're going to do some follow-up work to sort of figure out what's happening there. But basically what that social support looks like, most commonly it looks like meeting with a staff member of the organizations that are providing the financial support. So you come in to get some fuel assistance or help with childcare, and while you're there you also get some coaching, some mentoring, help with budgeting, help with talking through challenges on the job site. That happens through the organizations that are providing the financial services.

The social support is also provided by pre-apprenticeship programs. I also think of – Oregon Tradeswoman Inc. has, for example, happy hours, social hours where tradeswomen come together, talk about challenges that they're having, work together to develop solutions.

And so I think this is a really interesting finding that we haven't quite put our finger on what it is about this that seems to help so much, but I think it is a really interesting finding in this initial report here, that we're seeing that providing that sort of personal connection, that personal support to individuals is really helpful in promoting retention.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thank you much, Maura. I appreciate it.

All right. We're going to keep rolling down the questions. Again, if you have questions, continue to submit them through the chat, please.

This one could be for Linda and/or Julie, and it's pretty straightforward but I think it's a really great question. "How did you get women interested in fields like these?"

MS. YOUNG: OK. Was there more to the question?

MR. ALESHIRE: It's pretty straightforward. Just getting women interested in fields like these; what's the approach?

MS. YOUNG: Yes. One thing I wanted to share that we've been doing is we go out to the technical high schools and we – (inaudible) – programs for middle school, beginning to introduce these career fields to young women so that they know that this is something that's available to them; because culturally women are often discouraged from even considering these career fields. So that's something that we found very helpful, and young women are coming from those programs.

In addition to that we work with community partners from different agencies and the department of labor and other agencies; the human resource administration, department of social services. In addition that, churches and other community networks. Word of mouth actually is the largest – the biggest way that women hear about our programs, but we outreach to these different services as well.

And partnerships with the apprenticeship programs as well has been a way that more women are hearing about our programs.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thanks, Linda. Thank you. As you know, and relating to that recruitment, I just want to remind folks – and I believe you can find this webinar on WorkforceGPS, the archived recording of that webinar – but in March of this year I know Kelly Kupchak and her group, the WANTO team, did a recruitment and outreach webinar. I believe it was – I think that was the actual title, "WANTO recruitment and outreach," or something to that effect, in March of 2017. So you can also use that as an option for getting more information.

All right. Next question. I believe I have another question for you, Maura. "Who provides the funding for the support services to the highway apprentices? Are there any eligibility criteria in order to qualify for those services? And how long can they receive the services?"

MS. KELLY: Yeah. Great question. So here in Oregon the specific program that we're looking at, this is funding from the state of Oregon coming from the legislature. It's administered by the Bureau of Labor and Industries and the Oregon Department of Transportation.

I also just wanted to mention while my evaluation looked specifically at Oregon there are also federal highway funds for on-the-job training and supportive services that are available in each state through their state department of transportation.

But as far as Oregon goes, it's run by BOLI and ODOT, so the eligibility criteria primarily relate to providing services to folks that are most likely to working on highway and bridge projects. So they've specifically identified trades that are most relevant to highway and bridge projects as well as any individual who's working on a highway or bridge project can receive these services.

The other eligibility requirements are specific to the services. For example, to get fuel assistance you need to be working more than 60 miles away, and there's some other criteria specific to each service.

And then the last question, how long do they receive support services, there's a dollar cap for each of the kinds of services like childcare, fuel assistance, tools and protective equipment, overnight travel. I don't have those numbers in front of me, but generally the focus is on helping apprentices get through their early stages of apprenticeship when their wages are lower, as well as to provide occasional support, for example, when apprentices are coming back to work after a period of unemployment.

This does not provide continuous support for the three to five years that it takes an apprentice to complete, but rather, it's designed to help apprentices particularly at the beginning as well as being sort of a safety net for folks that are coming out, for example, long periods of unemployment and need a little help getting back to work.

MR. ALESHIRE: Great. Thank you. Thank you much.

All right. I'm watching the clock, so we're going to keep right on moving here. Linda, one of our participants was asking if you would be willing to share more specifics on your intake assessment.

MS. YOUNG: Sure. I'd be glad to.

I will just go over some of the areas that we cover in that assessment. It's pretty extensive; about eight pages long. We cover – after all the basic information, demographic information – educational background; the employment history; the last several jobs that the person has had and how those jobs ended. It gives us an opportunity to talk about that.

We identify things like whether they've been in the military or not; what their family composition. And we gather that information and then begin to talk about childcare needs or other family issues; how family members perhaps feel about the woman choosing this particular career choice.

Housing is another area that we cover. We get a snapshot of what the person's current housing situation is. Are they the primary tenant where they live or deed holder, or do they live with someone else? What's the arrangement? And there we find out whether the person has stable housing or not and we being working with them to obtain that housing.

We take a look at income and benefits, so we take information about the person's sources of income and whether or not they're eligible for receiving any benefits. We have a nice screening tool that sometimes we get online with the person and go through the screening tool, and then we can identify what services, what income supports would be available and help them through that process of applying.

We look at any contact with the criminal justice system. We address issues of mental health; substance use – any history with substance use. Currently – are people prepared to take a drug test, so that we'll know? And we plan with them in the event that they're unable or do have some issues with using substances. We can support them with getting prepared, again, for training.

And lastly, we look at what support systems the person has. We find that that's key, whether the person has support at home; again, if they're a parent or not a parent, what kind of resources they have available, and formal resources outside of the program.

So this is a little bit of what we do with the intake assessment. So it's conversational. While we're gathering information it's also conversation and we're beginning to work with the person to mitigate any barriers. Hope that's helpful.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thanks, Linda. Very helpful. We appreciate it.

Let's see here. There's a great question, I think – and we'll open it up to our panel and see who feels best to answer it. "What has been your experience working with women veterans in your programs? Have you had any success recruiting veterans into your programs, recruiting and/or retaining veterans in your program?"

MS. KELLY: This is Maura. We haven't actually looked at veteran status in our research. That's actually a really interesting question. Sort of anecdotally I think there's a perception that veterans make great tradespeople, but it's something I definitely think we could look at in our research, for sure.

MR. ALESHIRE: OK. Great.

MS. KUKLINSKI: And this is Julie. So we're located right by Keesler Air Force Base and we have – (inaudible) – base really close to us in Biloxi, so we do a lot of recruitment events there and we get quite a few veterans and it's a great place to recruit if you have that. You do both recruiting of the spouses and the actual people in the service (sic). So it's been very successful for us, and they actually want to be more involved. The more we go there, the more they want us to be involved on those bases. So it works very well.

MR. ALESHIRE: OK. Great. Thanks, Julie. Julie, I've got another question coming from one of the participants to you. Again, I think it speaks to that retention and sustainability. "Do you continue to provide childcare assistance once the trainee has been placed into employment? If so, how long is that assistance provided?"

MS. KUKLINSKI: OK. So we actually do, and the current way that the structure of our funding is set up is that we have funding until the end of the year. So everyone who enrolls will get funding to the end of the year. So our goal is to actually have everyone have funding for nine months after they're done with the training program. We're hoping to be able to do that once funding is more secure.

But for us, the post-funding – the funding of the childcare after graduation is just as important as it is during, because it does take a period of time for people to get the placement, and I think the childcare services are critical at that point.

MR. ALESHIRE: OK. Great. Thank you. Appreciate it, Julie.

Someone is asking a quick question on the name of the Mississippi issue paper on childcare and pathways to higher paying jobs, or is there a link we could provide? I'm not sure if that's listed in our resource room or not.

MS. CASERTANO: Yep. It's under the file share documents. It's called "Coupling Childcare with Pathways to Nontraditional Higher-Paying Work." That's just the beginning of the title; it's a bit longer. You can download it if you just click on "Childcare." You'll see it says "Childcare and Work Training Final." You click on that, upload that file (sic), and you can find it. And if you have any troubles you can contact me directly, if you have any trouble.

MR. ALESHIRE: OK. Great. Thank you. And I know we've seen a couple different questions about preparing women for these apprenticeships. Just want to remind our participants that there was a previous webinar on pre-apprenticeship through WANTO grantees, and that is also available on WorkforceGPS.

And additional resources on pre-apprenticeship training are also available at www.womensequitycenter.org. Again, that's www.womensequitycenter.org, where you can find additional resources on pre-apprenticeship training. And again, point you back to the previous webinar on WorkforceGPS around pre-apprenticeship training through our WANTO grantees.

Also we're going to continue. I'm looking, we've got just a few more minutes, but keep the questions coming.

One was, "You mentioned 340 graduates with 70 percent employed. Wondering if you knew what their starting wage was."

MS. KUKLINSKI: So for apprenticeship the starting wage is about $20 here in Mississippi. The average wage I don't have off the top right now, but generally they start – for general laborers around here – at about $12 an hour. But for apprenticeship they start at $20 an hour.

MR. ALESHIRE: OK. Great, great. Thank you.

Another question coming in, let's see. And again, this is to any of our panelists here. "Do you track women after they graduate?" And then we talked about providing the childcare services after employment. "Just wondering; do you track their progress beyond the apprenticeship program once they've been employed? And any additional services you might provide after employment?"

MS. KUKLINSKI: This is Julie. We absolutely do. We track the students regularly. The majority of our students – actually, it's like 95 percent – keep in touch with us after because it was really – (inaudible) – for them to come. So we track how they're doing with employment, what their wages are, the kind of services they've received; if they got into housing, transportation, anything that helps improve their lives, essentially. So not just the economic data but also the qualitative data post-graduation.

MS. YOUNG: Linda here. Yes. I was going to address that as well.

We have a retention coordinator who does track the women's progress once they graduate from the apprenticeship programs and keeps in touch with them.

We also host women's committee meetings of the various unions. We've done this in the past and I'm hoping we'll get back to it – we had monthly gatherings, coffee houses. We'd bring in speakers or it would just be a time for tradeswomen to come together. We've tried it both ways, just general and then specific to various trades.

But yes, we stay in touch and we provide ongoing assistance even once the person has graduated from the apprenticeship programs.

MR. ALESHIRE: OK. Great. Thank you very much, Linda. I appreciate it.

I'm looking at the hour; I know we're bumping right up on the hour here. I'm scrolling through; I would like to get to one more question. Let's see. Bear with me here. OK. Yeah. I think this is a great question to end on because obviously end game here, we are targeting employers and apprenticeship programs to place individuals.

"Can you share a little bit" – and this again is to any of our panelists – "how do you work the local apprenticeship programs to partner with you?"

MS. KUKLINSKI: So this is Julie. We actually have a lot of employers that come to us, but we also pursue a lot of employers if they have apprenticeship programs.

The majority of our apprenticeship programs in the Mississippi Gulf Coast are in the shipbuilding industry – (inaudible) – shipbuilding. We have 14 registered apprenticeship programs right there. But a lot of it for us is getting both formal and informal feedback from employers about what they say they want and need; making sure that we're responding to those needs of employers and our apprenticeship programs directly.

So one of the big things a lot of our apprenticeship programs say is we don't want the burden of dealing with supportive services; we don't know how to do it; we want your help. So those are the kind of things that we help them with and provide assistance with to make sure that the women who are going through those programs have the support.

Or if there's something that they give feedback about – you know, we're getting a lot of people in this workforce area that don't know how to – they can weld but they don't know how to talk about it, for example. That's something that we'll take that direct feedback and put it into our training programs.

But for us it's really just dialogue and making sure we're a resource, making sure we're accessible. If there's roundtables with employers, that we're there, that we're bringing employers to where students are; bringing our students to where employers are; that they're seen getting a tour of the apprenticeship programs, that they're getting realistic views on tours; getting their hands on the tools for the different trades, that kind of thing. So that's been very effective for us.

MS. LENHOFF: OK. This is Donna again, and I just want to thank your presenters again.

We will be putting this presentation online, on the WorkforceGPS site. So while we don't have a formal best practices report that you can have access to, you can get the access to this PowerPoint and the presentation around the PowerPoint that way and gather some of the best practices that way.

Also, a little bit of a plug for future webinars. As part of this program we anticipate that we will be doing one on the Office of Apprenticeship's revised equal employment opportunity regulations that are going into effect. They're being phased in, really, as we speak. There are a number of requirements for sponsors that become effective on July 17th of this year, and both the Office of Apprenticeship and the WANTO grantees will be doing webinars for people on that, including on specific provisions for sponsors to provide anti-harassment training to apprentices and other employees. So that might address some of the questions that we weren't able to get to today about sexual harassment.

We also anticipate that we will be doing another WANTO webinar in 2018, probably, on women with disabilities, so stay tuned for that. And there are already some materials on inclusion of women with disabilities in nontraditional jobs for women on www.womensequitycenter.org. So I urge you if you're interested in that topic before 2018 to take a look at that.

With that, I don't think I have any further – anything else to say except once again thank you all for your attention and your interest in this topic, and thank our presenters for their thoughtful presentation.

(END)