**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Adult Learning Strategies at Community Colleges**

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JENNIFER JACOBS: Now, without further ado, I'd like to turn things over to our moderator today, Cheryl Martin, TAACCCT program manager, division of strategic investments at the U.S. Department Employment and Training Administration. Cheryl?

CHERYL MARTIN: Thank you, Jen. This is Cheryl Martin. Before I start, I want to acknowledge that we're getting a lot of comments saying that the audio is very chopping and difficult. We are working on that.

Not sure what's going on, but we'll try to figure that out. Sorry about that. Meanwhile, I will try to talk a little more slowly. I am happy to be here today and we're very delighted that you all are here today.

It looks like about 42 percent of you were from colleges and everybody else from the other organizations who were there, so that's terrific. I'm Cheryl Martin from the U.S. Department of Labor and I'd like to introduce my colleague and co-moderator for this series, Erin Berg, who is the community college specialist at the U.S. Department of Education.

We'll hear from Erin in a moment. Now I'm hearing that the sound is much better. Thank you to whoever fixed that. All right. Our presenters today were involved with a U.S. Department of Labor grant called TAACCCT, or T-A-A-C-C-C-T.

Lots of letters. For those not familiar with that, very briefly it was a $2 billion seven year grant that wrapped up in September, just this last September of 2018 and it provided funds to increase the ability of community colleges to address the challenges of today's workforce, particularly dislocated workers like TAA workers.

That's TAA of the title, and other adults. So that's why we're talking about adult learning strategies today, because so many of those are the kinds of things that were done by these grantees.

While Congress authorized TAACCCT for four rounds, the impact is expected to last much longer because of the things that colleges did, like developing the adult learning strategies you will hear about today.

So I'm going to turn it over to Erin now, to Erin Berg, from Department of Ed, to tell us a little bit about this webinar and the series that it's a part of. And I'm going to do that with a big thank you to Erin for joining us. Erin?

ERIN BERG: Thanks, Cheryl. As she mentioned, my name is Erin Berg, community college program specialist in the office of career, technical and adult education. In my role, I'm privileged to assist the nation's community colleges, students and related stakeholders.

I get to hear a lot about all the amazing things colleges are doing as well as when they have challenges and are looking for resources. So I particularly liked working with my colleagues at Labor on the skills commons and on the series because it's highlighting incredible models, case studies, templates, processes, lessons learned and they're all waiting for colleges and education stakeholders to find them and to make them their own.

Today's webinar will showcase really exciting, adult focused strategies, including contextualized learning in Mississippi, work based learning, credit for prior learning and support services at South Central College and hands on instruction, which is so important for adult learners who may be years out of traditional lecture based schooling and not exactly eager to restart such a program.

That's at Chaffey College, so thank you to our three presenters for joining us today and going over these exciting models. Today's webinar is part of a series and sadly, wiping my tears over here, this is the last one for at least the time being.

The past webinars are all recorded, though, and available on WorkforceGPS through the link here. You can also sign up for updates to learn if there's any future opportunities showcasing skill commons or any additional shared resources that could be beneficial to community college or workforce development stakeholders.

With that, I want to thank my colleagues at the Department of Labor for allowing me to be a part of this series and really looking forward to hearing from our presenters today. Thanks, Cheryl. Turn it back over to you.

MS. MARTIN: Thank you, Erin. Before it introduce the presenters, I just want to say that from the poll that you responded to at the beginning about what kinds of – the most common ways you're serving adults or changing things to serve adults better, that kind of thing, it looks like the navigators clearly came at the top of the list.

Navigators, career coaches, that kind of thing. Then from what I saw, the wrap around supports was next and competency based education was the next one after that, which was pretty interesting.

Then all the other things that were listed definitely had a good showing there as well. So that's just kind of interesting as context for today's presentation. We are very happy to welcome three presenters today.

Sandy Crist, the state director for adult education and high school equivalency at Mississippi Community College Board. Rebecca Elmore, from Chaffey College in California, where she is the InTech center manager and Anne Willaert from South Central College in Minnesota where she is the director of grants and special projects.

So welcome to all three of you. Sandy, I'll turn it over to you now.

SANDY CRIST: Thank you, Cheryl, I appreciate that. Good afternoon. I'm so pleased to be here today to represent Mississippi and the community college board and the things that we're doing in our state. We have 15 community colleges, all of whom receive federal funding to operate adult education programs. The TAACCCT grant was implemented in 2013 and seven of our community colleges participated in this grant opportunity. TAACCCT had significant impact on the programming in Mississippi.

One of the biggest advantages of being a part of TAACCCT for us was it started the process of defining and implementing the integrated education and training pathways which we are now branded as MIBEST, which is Mississippi Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training.

One of the significant impacts that we experience from this – excuse me, it's in the next slide. One of the significant impacts of the TAACCCT-related grant was the significant policy changes for our community colleges.

They really had to sit back and reevaluate the admission policies to allow students without a high school diploma to be enrolled in college level courses. This was a huge shift for our community colleges and our CTE programs, but we identified programs that allow students without a diploma to be enrolled in college level classes or workforce training.

In the policy review, the Mississippi community college board set new policies that allow colleges to be reimbursed through FTE funding for these students without a diploma to be enrolled. So this was a big shift, because the programs, the colleges could now claim funding or receive funding for these students without a high school diploma. One of the most significant impacts in TAACCCT was determining the importance of the navigator or the transition specialist.

This role of the navigator has really been crucial to the success of our programs and continues to be a crucial part of what we do every day in adult education and MIBEST. Adult education students truly need that intrusive counseling and support, the wrap around services in order to be successful in the pathway.

We always say, in adult education, our students are one flat tire from quitting class or doing something different. We felt that expanding this role in adult education and continuing that process through MIBEST is really a core component of what we do. The navigator's role is very significant, because they're working with our core partners under WIOA who also – that includes the human services, employment services, rehab services, to provide those support services like childcare or transportation, food, the SNAP benefits.

A lot of our students may or may not be working, but in order to take time out for class they need these other supports in order to be successful in class. The navigator transition specialist also helps the students make sure that they're going through that transition process.

Going from taking adult ed classes to now being a college level student. Whether that might be filling out FASFA forms. Anything that would be considered a barrier are things that our navigators truly work with one on one with our students. So I think if you talk about adult learning strategies, we found that this was really one of the biggest and the most important role that we had to add in adult education.

When we did our RSP under WIOA, we required all of our programs to include a transition specialist navigator in their adult education funding, because we feel like this has really been a vital part of helping our students complete this program. The other impact that we have seen is that we've been able to develop pathways across the state based on our employment data, based on our sector strategy needs.

We have four workforce areas, so we looked at each workforce area to determine what jobs are available, what training is available and how could we serve our students by putting them through that pipeline, through that pathway so that they can get their high school equivalency diploma as well as get the skills they need to go to work.

MIBEST was created out of the TAACCCT grant, because this funding has been very important to what we've done in Mississippi. MIBEST is, and I'll give you a description of that. That is the Mississippi Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training.

We had some private funding that helped us set these pathways and these, again, were based on sector strategies. So we have career technical pathways. We also have workforce development pathways.

The last thing that's been significant for us is it also allowed us to create a competency based high school equivalency diploma. What this diploma does – we currently have approved tests of GED – (inaudible) – for high school equivalency completion. But we looked at and developed a competency based high school equivalency diploma to support the integrated education and training pathway. I think this has been a vital part of or will be a vital part of our programming in Mississippi.

For those completions, the student must meet the minimum requirements set forth by the office of adult education. They must be enrolled in adult education. They must obtain at least a minimum level of a 9-12 grade reading, math and language level on the TABE test, which is, for those of you not in adult ed, is the Test of Adult Basic Education.

They must complete our smart start credential and in Mississippi, that's our employability skills requirement. They must also score silver on the national career readiness certificate, complete 15 hours of college credit at no lower than 2.0 GPA, and these are not developmental courses.

These must be regular courses. And they have to obtain an industry recognized credential. When they do that, they will have a completion or earn a high school equivalency diploma. So we feel like the program has – we've really looked at all different aspects of how to support the student and how to move them through the process.

Now, the next few slides are just a quick overview of MIBEST in Mississippi and then I will turn it over to the next presenter. But we use – Mississippi gets dropout recovery funds legislated from the governor's office and each college gets about $200,000 per year.

In the TAACCCT grant, we had seven community colleges participate and that was part of what we made changes to in our board policies. Currently, all 15 community colleges offer integrated education through skills training for students who are concurrently enrolled in adult education programs as well as a CTE program and/or a workforce program.

These students are provided with intensive counseling, support and basically anything that we can do to remove any barriers that we also require that 25 percent of overlap in adult ed and CTE instruction and the planning process is included.

This is just some of the student benefits that we have for our students. There's no cost to the student, so a student can enroll in adult ed. The services are free. They can also be dually enrolled concurrently in the CTE program or workforce program at no cost.

We really feel like this is a win-win for the student. Those who earn their high school equivalency diploma also receive a $200 completion incentive. They have a student navigator who is actually working with them one on one and they are – (inaudible) – in the contextualized and – (inaudible) – classes.

For the workforce programs, we give credit for prior learning and there are also work based learning opportunities in the program. This is just a list of some of the programs offered at some of our different community colleges.

And again, we tried to – when these programs were set up through the community colleges, they really looked at sector strategies. What had we identified in our program of WIOA to make sure that we were training students in jobs that would be available once they finished their pathway.

What I would say is I really think, and what we've learned from the TAACCCT grant, what we're continuing to learn from adult education and MIBEST is that our students need the support services in place that were identified through these grants and we see a true pathway and success rate for our students so that they can complete in a faster time frame and become employed and – (inaudible) – jobs.

So I think it's been a huge impact. I think that WIOA has been very good for Mississippi and MIBEST is probably, I feel like, one of the best programs we have out there and is the future for adult education in our state.

So I'm going to turn that back over to Cheryl and I think we'll have some questions and answers soon.

MS. BERG: Thanks, Sandy. This is actually Erin. I'll ask some questions that have come in from the audience. One is asking how many students did the navigator serve per year?

MS. CRIST: And that varies. We have some of our navigators who are working with 25 students at a time. If they're on the adult ed side, they may be working with more students than that. I think that we really need to look at what is the best ratio for that and we're in the process of doing that now.

MS. BERG: Great, thank you. Do you have a sense of how common it is to do what you're doing specifically related to high school equivalencies using a CB approach?

MS. CRIST: I will tell you, you're seeing more states do that. Illinois, Arizona both have a competency based pathway since we included ours in 2017. I think if you look at the research, you're seeing more and more options for students to go to work, because ultimately the goal is to provide that student with credentials and skills so that they can obtain a family sustained job.

Not every student is going to fit in that same pathway and we have to have a variety of ways for our students to complete and go to work.

MS. BERG: Thanks. Can you talk a little bit about any childcare that you're providing or assisting with?

MS. CRIST: Childcare is provided through the department of human services. That part of the core partner responsibilities. We provide – they provide childcare stipends. Sometimes programs have childcare on site and it just depends on the community college and the systems available in that area on what type of childcare would be available.

MS. BERG: Thank you. Quick question, what does BOT stand for on the list of pathway programs?

MS. CRIST: Let me go back one. BOT, business office technology. I'm sorry.

MS. BERG: OK. Business office technology. Thanks. Do you know what your completion and persistence rates are?

MS. CRIST: I know that completion rates for our adult ed students have been – well, we've looked at our first employment quarter, second quarter data, fourth quarter data and our students in adult ed have come out at 46 percent being employed afterwards.

We have pulled the data to see how many of those were IET, but we are still waiting on the results from our longitudinal institution in Mississippi, so I don't have that.

MS. BERG: No worries. Thanks. Someone has asked about how grassroots organizations can connect with opportunities like this. Can you describe how students are referred? Do you work with community based organizations?

MS. CRIST: We don't have any community based organizations specifically funded through adult ed. We do have a multitude of resources. We have some homeless chapters we're trying to work with in our Jackson area.

But all students are referred to adult education through any core partner office that they can attend. That's part of our wrap around services, that there's no wrong door. If they walk into department of human services, they go through a referral process.

The first question on that referral is do you have a high school diploma or its equivalent? And if they say no, they get an automatic referral to the nearest adult education program.

Once they are in adult education program, they are assessed and they work with a career counselor to determine are they eligible to enter into a MIBEST program or do we need to increase their basic functioning skills before they're ready to be in that contextualized program.

MS. BERG: All right, thank you very much. We're going to conclude this question and answer period just to be able to stay on track for time. If we have more time at the end of the session, we'll try to get back to any unanswered questions.

With that, I'll go ahead and turn it over to our next presenter who is Rebecca Elmore from Chaffey College. Rebecca?

REBECCA ELMORE: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak to you today. I'm here talking about the Chaffey College InTech Center or Industrial Technical Learning Center.

We're located in Fontana, California and we are a round four TAACCCT grantee, just finishing up our round four TAACCCT grant. We were able to stand – (inaudible) – center and purchase all of the equipment for our training programs through our TAACCCT fund. We're going to go ahead and start out by looking at a little bit of background information about our consortium. The name of our consortium is the Inland Empire regional training consortium. Our total award was about $14.9 million. We have a lot of subrecipients and so if I have any TAACCCT grant lead colleges on the line now, on this webinar, you'll understand how difficult having 12 subs was, but it was wonderful.

The Inland Empire, just in case you're not familiar with it, is a very large community in San Bernardino and Riverside counties in southern California. It comprises about 27,000 square miles and has a population of 4.3 million people.

Just to kind of contextualize that for you a little bit, if we were a state, we would be the 25th largest state in terms of population in the entire nation. So that just gives you a real good picture of just how large our region is in terms of population.

In our area, we have over – just in San Bernardino Riverside county alone, we have over 4000 manufacturers and our TAACCCT project focused on training in advanced manufacturing. We'll talk a little bit more about that when we get to the employer piece.

The population that we served in our grant were, of course, our TAA eligible workers. We have long term and unemployed individuals, our veteran population and then also we do incumbent worker training to upskill individuals so that they can move up within their company.

This just gives a little bit of a snapshot of our current regional metrics. One thing I want to point out as a caveat before we talk about some of these numbers is that if you look at the job placements and the wage increases and you think, boy, that's really low, we still have numbers coming in from all of our subrecipients across the consortium up until the final year four annual performance report or APR.

We'd be happy to share those numbers with everybody once they’ve been finalized and that year four APR has been submitted. We'll also post it to our skilled commons repository as well. As you can see, across our consortium we have 5602 students that we've served.

This is just so exciting to think about the impact that this project has had on the Inland Empire region, because we are so very much diverse and spread out.

So some of other metrics that we were held accountable to under our grant were our job placements, the number of completers, the number of incumbent workers whom we served and then wage increases. I want to walk you through a little bit about how a student comes to access the services here at the InTech Center for Chaffey College. One of the things that I think really speaks closely to those who work with adult learners is that coming to college is scary for them.

It's mystifying. Trying to navigate the matriculation process can be something that's very difficult for them and especially in our area, just to speak about the Chaffey Community College district.

Our main campus has about 20,000 students. It can take you up to 45 minutes to find a parking spot. So I can't think of a bigger way to really sort of make a student feel like, oh, man, I don't think college is for me. Or maybe we have a lot of our adult learners, as we do here at InTech, who have been told their entire life, oh, you're not college material. I believe that everybody is college material, but not everybody will access the college the same way.

We love to see ourselves here at InTech as a less intimidating way for individuals to come to the college and to access training programs. All of our training programs here at InTech are on the not for credit side of the house and they result in industry recognized certifications.

We have a lot of employer advisory boards that we hold and we go to the employers. We show them our curriculum. We say, here's the certifications. Here's the curriculum. What do you think? And they says, yes, we like this, we don't like that, and then we adjust our curriculum accordingly.

It gives us, on the not for credit side of things, a way to very quickly respond to industry, which is super important in our region because industry doesn’t have a year to wait for something to go through the shared governance process and up through the chapter's office.

They need it yesterday. They need it two weeks ago. So it enables us to respond to them very quickly. Because we're on the not for credit side, students don't have to go through the college's matriculation process.

What happens is that they either get referred to the program from one of our partner agencies such as an AJCC or Goodwill or EDD or any of the other agencies we work with and then we also do active recruitment. Then what happens is that a student attends an info session. They get a program overview. We do a pre-assessment and we do the – (inaudible) – workplace assessment in reading and in mathematics.

They have to score at at least a seventh grade level for them to come into our program. Then they do a one on one interview with the individual to gauge what their interests are, if they have any barriers currently going on right now like court dates and transportation and childcare and other things so that we can work out with our coordinating agencies the best way to provide those wrap around supportive services.

Really, the big question that we ask them during the interview, and this is something that's important for an adult learner, is, is there anybody in your life who doesn’t want you to go to work? Because oftentimes, you had mentioned about – the previous presenter had mentioned about how a flat tire can cause someone to drop out of a training program. Well, so can someone in their life who's close to them who maybe doesn’t want to see them go to work and doesn’t want to see them succeed.

And so it's important to have those conversations very early on. Then the individual selects the program and then they begin training. Once they begin the training, it's not just being in the classroom that's a part of our program.

They meet with what we call our career hub team. Our work skills navigators throughout the program. We embed soft skills classes and supportive services into their programs so we have a component called Tools for Success where they learn all of those soft skills that employers desire.

Then we focus on what we call job matching and sometimes folks will say, oh, we placed our students, and their idea of placement is to put job leads up on the wall and say good luck. No, actually here at the InTech Center, we job match.

So we want to be seen as the premier source of skilled labor in the Inland Empire, so we cultivate relationships with employers so that they come to us, to our – (inaudible) – and say I have five open positions, who do you have for me? And then we know our students so well, we can recommend, oh, here are the five students, and it's like a warm handoff. So that has really been very successful in our students being placed.

We also do paid internships and work based learning and to add to that, we also have two registered apprenticeship programs that have been approved by the Department of Apprenticeship Standards in the state of California and we will be starting our first apprenticeship programs in January of 2019, which we are very excited about.

Then lastly, just consistent case management, attendance tracking and contact. So when we have students that don't come to class, we don't say, okay, well, too bad, they're dropped. We pick up the phone and we call them.

We say, we care about you. How come you're not here today? Sometimes even after we call them, they say, you know what? That really wasn’t a good excuse for me to not come to class and they'll get in their car and they'll drive to class.

We find with that, we have excellent attendance and the reason for that is not only teaching them those really good work habits that's going to make them desirable to an employer, but it's also producing candidates to our employers who we know came to class every single day, didn’t have odd excuses for missing class.

Really, the classroom environment is like a work environment. So we tell them their instructor is like their supervisor and they have to be expected to come every single day just like they would if they were going to work.

So next, I want to talk about just the relationship building that happens. It's a beautiful blend of our employer relations, how we select our students, the case management that we do and then the job placement. So the employer relations are key and we're in constant communication with our employers. We have manufacturers walking through the InTech Center meeting, touring, presenting to our students every single day of the week.

We get employment training panel funds from the state of California to provide training to their employees free of charge. They do site tours here. We do site tours at their sites. We have great, very strong employer relations.

In terms of selecting our students, we just work through a number of different partners and outreach methods to recruit students into our program. Case management, it really is a matter of constant touches.

We do the job matching. We have an open door policy. We use every method of communication to stay in touch with the student and sometimes that's a text message. They won't return a phone call or check a voice mail, but they'll reply to a text. And then finally, in terms of job placement, it's just that engagement. You know, the ongoing follow up, the touches with the student and employer start on day one and really this is not a job that is just an 8:00 to 5:00 job.

It's before, during, after hours, whenever the student requires and whenever the employer is available, we make it happen. So lastly, just a few things about placement success that we've found to be important. The first one is just your staff. Hiring that dedicated staff who just remember the whys. There's going to be lots of ups and downs with the students as they go through the program and sometimes if you don't have people that have that passion and that heart and that dedication for helping others, it's not the best fit.

Next is to understand each student, company, culture and program curriculum and then take the time to match all three. It's really listening to the students. Providing them career and life skills counseling.

Next is to just go above and beyond. I would say here at the InTech Center, we have such a dynamic and passionate team. Everybody is going above and beyond for the students. That's why we get out of bed every single day.

Then lastly, just as workforce development professionals, we just need to stay up to date on workforce development, labor laws, hiring practices, all the trends and industry needs so that we're making sure that we're not just on the leading edge, but the bleeding edge of what industry is looking for.

OK. That's it for me.

MS. BERG: Thanks, Rebecca. Go ahead and type your questions in the box for Rebecca if you have any. We do have one here ready to go and that's asking do your credit and non-credit program coordinators work together to determine what will be credit or non-credit or how things will transfer?

MS. ELMORE: Yes. That is a wonderful question. Some of the other TAACCCT grantees here in California who are community colleges, who work with faculty and offer not for credit programs, there's a perception out there that there is some type of competition or animosity between not for credit and credit programs.

What we've done here at Chaffey College and at the InTech Center is we've brought the faculty here. We show them what we do. We show them how it's different than what's happening on the credit or non-credit side and then we let them know that really we see ourselves as a feeder to the college.

A student starts out with us, they get their certificate, they go into employment and then they may come back to the college later on to take credit classes, maybe get their associate's degree of even transfer.

We find that that's very helpful in having those open relationships with faculty up on campus. In fact, we have written some of our not for credit curriculum for non-credit and credit as well with an eye towards sustainability in terms of eventually offering those things on the credit side.

MS. BERG: Great. Thank you. There's a question about life skills and I think maybe they're asking about the soft skills courses. Can you go into a little bit more depth about that?

MS. ELMORE: Absolutely. So our tools for success soft skills curriculum is something that can be just as basic as show up to work on time, don't call off three days your first week of work and just that kind of responsibility.

But then it goes beyond that. It talks about things like how do you communicate professionally? How do you talk to your supervisor? How do you have interpersonal relationships with your peers?

How do you show initiative in the workplace? These are all skills that employers have told us they are looking for. In fact, I was talking with a major, major employer, national employer last week, and something that he said stood out to me.

He said, we look for attitude over aptitude and he said if I have somebody who has a positive attitude, I can teach them the technical skills, but I can't teach them to have a positive attitude. So those are some of the things that we cover in that tools for success.

We also do all of their resumes, mock interviews and their cover letters, all of that stuff we help them with.

MS. BERG: Great. Well, thank you very much and we'll go ahead and end this Q&A to move on to the next presenter, which is Anne Willaert from South Central College. Anne, are you ready?

MS. WILLAERT: Good afternoon. I am. Good afternoon and thank you for allowing us to share our story here at South Central College in Minnesota. We too were a round four TAACCCT grantee.

We had 12 community and technical colleges in our consortium and two universities. During the TAACCCT grant time, I was the director of that consortium.

Today I'm going to share with you the guided and career pathways we developed under the grant, the bridges that we created for a number of different types of students to come into our programs and the tools that we created that were sustained from the work that we did.

First, I wanted to just give you a little information. South Central College is part of the Minnesota state system. Under our system, you can see it's statewide. We have 37 colleges and universities. Seven of those being universities and 30 of them being two year institutions.

SCC is located in south central Minnesota, just south of the Minneapolis, Twin Cities area. We have two college campuses, one in Mankato and one in Faribault, Minnesota. We serve approximately 2700 students.

Of those 2700 students, 41 of them are Pell eligible and 66 percent of them are part time. It's also important to note that our median age at this point is 29.1. I'm telling you this story or this information, because as we went through our TAACCCT grant, our median age from the first year we received our funding went from a median age of 30 to 34.5.

It's also important to note that during that time of our serving our students, and we served a total of 3184, 75 percent of them were incumbent workers. So a little bit different than what we had thought we would serve when we received the grant, because of the change in the economy.

We quickly had to develop strategies to work with our adult learners who most of them were working. One of the strategies I would like to share with you today is our apprenticeships.

Under the TAACCCT grant, we were able to develop a number of registered and non-registered apprenticeship models within the state of Minnesota. Three models that we created, we called it – our project was called Learn – (inaudible) – or what we termed as Louie.

We watched a lot of other colleges who had done a wonderful job in apprenticeship. Harper in particular, where they established the academic programs where we aligned our related instruction with a three two model, meaning that our students went to school three days a week and they worked two days a week.

We found that it was a hardship for them to go to school all day and then go work an eight hour shift and then they start their day over and many times work Saturday. We worked really hard to meet our students where they were at.

We also created what we would call non-credit related instruction to our customized trading inside of the colleges. They built the apprenticeships that aligned with industry credentials.

It was a wonderful opportunity for us to work with our businesses to meet our businesses where they were at and the skills that they needed to reduce that skills gap.

Lastly, we created an online – excuse my, my voice is a little weird here, called Plus Connect. Plus Connect is an online education platform that features live course instruction through virtual classroom technology.

The wonderful thing about our Plus Connect program is our students, while working, could walk off the line, go into a classroom, get on a computer and attend class with a live instruction two hours a week, eight weeks at a time and receive an academic and/or industry credential.

One of the other wonderful benefits we had in Minnesota was the ability to provide funding streams through a number of programs to support the related instruction and the cost of the apprenticeships with our industry partners.

Our industry partners had the ability to apply for grants. One grant was under the Minnesota Apprenticeship Initiative, which is listed under our Department of Labor and Industry. Our colleges were able to work with the industry, assist them in writing the grants that the industry received and then could pay for the tuition and other cost for those students.

We also had some state legislative funding through our pipeline project, which we called dual training, and again, it was the same concept where we could assist them in writing grants to help pay the cost.

We were able to serve or create 321 apprenticeships serving 48 industry partners with our apprenticeship model and on our online Plus Connect hybrid model, we actually serve 600 incumbent workers and 65 employers. It continues to be a great program.

Other strategies that we were able to create and maintain that really had to do with retention and completion of our students, and I want to talk about a couple of them. The first one, you see the road on the left side.

On the bottom, it talks about a program called Minnesota Reconnect. Minnesota Reconnect, there were four colleges in the state that received funding where we are working with students who received at least up to 15 credits, but dropped out of their program and never completed.

We are now – we hired a navigator to help us reach those students, bring them back to the college and work one on one with them to reduce their barriers and help them succeed in receiving that credential.

We're also part of a program that's called Degrees When Due. This program is a national program through the Institute for Higher Education policy and it's the same concept with Minnesota Reconnect.

It's really about reaching out to those students, most of them adults, who started and never completed their degrees. So through work with partnerships with our foundation, who is able to offer scholarships to these students, we're able to reach out and assist them and help pay for some of those barriers that might be in the way for completion.

We also created, in that second area, many career and guided pathways. The goal under our TAACCCT grant was to create a manufacturing core curriculum that all 12 colleges were to implement.

The beauty of that was that core curriculum fed into the other manufacturing programs and it was also portable and transferable between our 12 colleges. It also allowed us to create a bridge program between our academic side of the college and our non-academic side of the college, because other than just creating the core, we also aligned our manufacturing programs with industry credentials.

Students who are incumbent workers and could take training at their place of work, we asked our non-credit sides of the college to align their trainings with industry credentials.

Many of those students who now – who were taking trainings, but didn’t really align to anything, they now align to industry credentials, which give them a direct pathway – (inaudible) – academic programs.

I'll demonstrate that to you on a further slide. I also wanted to talk about – we created credit for prior learning, which I'll talk about in a little bit, but also another partnership called Pathways to Prosperity.

This is a partnership between our workforce centers and our adult basic education programs where we create integrated classrooms for our students that come in through a lower bridge program. Those would be students that were underemployed or unemployed, new Americans.

So the integrated classrooms really are taking the time, having an AB instructor and tutor for their students to be successful. We had a couple of colleges that worked with our new American programs and put them in math and English courses to measure the success and they found 100 percent completion for their students having an ABE integrated classroom structure.

We saw a lot of success in that area. Lastly, I want to talk about advising and coaching and navigation. Like our other presenters today, that's extremely important. Having those students being able to connect with one individual to help them meet their needs.

We did a survey with our students and we found that 80 percent of our students were somehow experienced in some kind of food insecurity, so we applied for a life saver grant – well, we applied for emergency funding and created a life saver grant program where we can give grants to students to help them overcome barriers that might cause them to drop out of programs.

This slide demonstrates to you our guided pathway or our career pathway in manufacturing. On the lower left side, you see adult number one. That's our bridge program working with our ABE, our district and our workforce center to address the needs of those students such as our integrated classroom.

Adult two is our – what we would term traditional students who come in and you can see that everybody, at one point, meets up with the core curriculum. In adult three, at the top of the screen, demonstrates to you our incumbent workers and how we can grant them credit for prior learning or they can test out on industry credentials, which then align with our credit for prior learning and puts them right into the pathway to be able to achieve a degree, a diploma or a certificate.

I just wanted to visit a little bit about our Credit for Prior Learning program. Because we aligned our programs with our industry credentials, students could test out of those credentials. They could take the courses that align with them and take the test during it.

They could take non-credit courses, all of them granting the ability for us to create a credit for prior learning process. Under our grant, we did create a credit for prior learning process as it relates to industry credentials and it is up on the skills commons site.

The other thing that we were able to create for Credit for Prior Learning, because we found it to be extremely important and data demonstrates to us that a student that comes in with CPL are two and a half times more likely to complete.

We created a public interface or web based platform where students can upload their information or transfer specialists can work with that student and then everybody works on the database online to help an easy transfer of the management of those credits for those students.

So again, just trying to meet our students where their needs are and make things simple for them. Lastly, we asked – Minnesota has a program called Veterans Education Transfer System. We call it VETS for short.

This is where our veterans can upload information as far as their branch, their occupation, their training dates and they push a button and it actually pops up for them credits that they can get through Credit for Prior Learning for the training they did in the military and the colleges that they can work with to receive an academic credential in those fields.

We work very hard with our faculty to align their programs in manufacturing with the VETS system.

That's all I have to say today other than I just want – our adult learners are important and we had to change the way we do things that make it more flexible, be more innovative and supportive to meet the needs of where our students are at. Thank you.

MS. MARTIN: And thank you, Anne. Appreciate that. It was really interesting to me to hear every single one of you say, to talk about all the different obstacles that there are for people to complete, whether it's somebody else in the family who doesn’t want them to actually get a job or food insecurities or the flat tire and dozens of other variations on those themes.

Interesting, great to hear all the different things that you're doing to respond to that. I have a question for Anne and if folks have other questions, please type those in yet. We will get to those, as many of those as we can in a couple minutes here.

Anne, somebody asked, are your Plus Connect courses credit or non-credit and are the sessions recorded for students to come back to and repeat the portions that they didn’t understand?

ANNE WILLAERT: Excellent question. They're actually both. We can run what we call closed credit courses through our non-credit side of the college, we just have to meet the qualifications of faculty.

So we have students that are enrolled in our courses that are both credit and non-credit. So there might be a fee difference, depending on the college, but the great thing about it is we can enroll students from a number of different colleges into one course as long as that course aligns with that other college.

The ability to have shared courses really benefits our students within the Minnesota state system.

MS. MARTIN: Interesting, thank you. Another question about what application software programs you use to create the VETS system.

MS. WILLAERT: The VETS system was made at the state office and I do not know the answer to that question, but I'm happy to get that information or link you to the person that oversees that program.

I know that we are one of the few in the nation that have it and I know the person that created it is happy to share it with other states. I'm happy to get that and send it back to you.

MS. MARTIN: OK. You can send that question to – maybe the easiest way to do this, and we'll connect it to Anne, is send it to the TAACCCT's mailbox, which is TAACCCT@dol.gov. The person who asked that question, you can send your question to that mailbox.

If anybody else has any other follow up questions, you can do that as well too. We had a couple of other questions that I think probably were during Rebecca's time, so let me go back to those, because we want to give you as many answers as we can today.

The first question was, and they're kind of related, so we'll maybe take them together. Do you have a regionally recognized credential that suffices for soft skills? And then more broadly, but somewhat related, do you have a certain curriculum that you use?

Going back to the program at Chaffey, Rebecca, do you have thoughts on that?

MS. ELMORE: I do, and those are great questions. To answer the first question regarding the soft skills credential, we do. We currently have a nationally recognized certification through an entity called NCCER for Tools for Success.

That has been widely recognized by employers. I did want to share, though, that something that the California Community College Foundation is working on for all of the community colleges in the state is something that is called the new world of work.

What they term it as is it's 21st century skills badging and individuals undergo training and receive digital badging in the following topics such as adaptability, solution mindset, collaboration, communication, digital fluency, empathy, resilience, self awareness and social and diversity awareness.

We're actually looking at embedding or kind of adopting some of those 21st century skills into our soft skills certifications. So that answers the piece about that.

In terms of our curriculum, we use a variety of different curriculum. As I stated earlier, all of our curriculum is vetted by industry and we actually have a little tag line that we use here at InTech, which is by industry, designed by industry for industry.

We started out here in our programs. We've been open for about two and a half years utilizing that NCCER curriculum that I mentioned earlier and in that curriculum, the students have to pass an online test for each module and in addition, for those modules requiring a demonstration of skill, they have to do a performance verification where they demonstrate the acquisition of the hands on learning so that the instructor can say, yes, the student knows the hands on as well as the theory.

And so it's a combination of both of those things and I think that's why employers like that. In addition, we've used a curriculum called Amatrol for our mechatronics program, which is an industrial automation.

That's an online curriculum, so it's a hybrid curriculum where students – and this is really good, especially for incumbent workers where they can do the online theory at home, come here to InTech to do the hands on a couple nights a week and in addition to that, our instructors have developed their own curriculum and especially for our apprenticeship program.

The instructors have developed their own curriculum for Chaffey College, not for credit. The apprenticeship committee reviews, approves the curriculum and then it results in Chaffey College certificate at the conclusion of the program.

It's a variety of different curriculums to meet the various needs depending upon what pathway the student is doing.

MS. MARTIN: All right, thank you.

MS. ELMORE: You're welcome.

MS. MARTIN: One last question with a quick answer, I hope, from Anne. Do you have a pipeline partnership with four year institutions?

MS. WILLAERT: So pipeline comes through our Department of Labor and it was a legislative funded project who became a program. Funds are available not to the institutions. They're available to our industry partners who have to partner with an industry institution to do the related instruction for a dual training apprenticeship program.

Dual training is very similar to a registered apprenticeship program other than it's not registered with the Department of Labor. You don't have to have the number of hours or a mentor program, but students do have to be paid and they do have to receive a type of academic or industry credential at the end of their training.

MS. MARTIN: OK, great. Thank you so much. I see that we are right bumping up against the end here. I have a couple more quick things I wanted to say. I first of all wanted to thank our presenters today for cramming a whole lot into a short amount of time.

I also wanted to say, and I'm going to jump to the next slide here, that what each of them said is available or more information about what each of our presenters said is available at these links if you want to download the slides from that file share there, you can grab those.

That's all part of a website called SkillsCommons, which is a place where all of the curriculum developed by the TAACCCT grantees as well as this additional kind of learning that you were hearing about today, like these adult learning strategies and things like that are there.

For instance, there's a SkillsCommons field guide, the gallery edition. A link will take you there. That's one of the things that tells you about a lot of the different things that grantees learned and did as a great resource.

The kinds of comments that you heard today from people about adult learning strategies specifically are being developed into a written piece that is going to be made available through all of these same venues that you’ve been connecting with us on and so we'll let you know about that, as soon as that's available.

So check out SkillsCommons, not just for adult learning strategies, but also for curriculum. I don't even have time to get into that, but it's all there and here's information from these three. If you want to jump back into any of the webinars that we did earlier, here is information about those and we thank you so much for joining us here today.

Thank you Sandy and Rebecca and Anne and everybody else who helped make this possible. Turning it back over to you, Jen, now.

MS. BERG: Well, this is Erin. Let me interrupt. Thank you so much, Cheryl and your team, for such a wonderful series. This is Erin from Ed. We've been really grateful to be a part of this with you, so round of applause for you as well.

MS. MARTIN: Oh, thank you, Erin. I meant to say that, I mean, to call on you, so thanks for jumping in. Appreciate that and thank you for your participation in this as well.