**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Success Factors for America's Promise Grantees**

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LAURA CASERTANO: With that, I'm going to move us right into today's webinar. I want to welcome everyone to today's America's Promise Success Factors webinar and I'm going to ask you if you haven't done so already to introduce yourself in the chat. If you joined a little bit late, make sure to introduce yourself.

But with that, I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Cheryl Martin. She's a program manager with the competitive grants. Cheryl, take it away.

CHERYL MARTIN: Thanks, Laura. And thank you for you all, for those of you who showed up on a Friday afternoon before the holidays. I know this is a really tough time to do a webinar and we really do appreciate you joining us, and we apologize for having to reschedule from what would have been I'm sure a much better time. But we are here, so thanks.

Heidi and I will be your presenters today and we've also asked three of the coaches to join us to make our topic today more real. And then, you know, we're a really small group. We can really make this real today and have more conversation with all of us.

So anyway, for the coaches, welcome to Mike Blaylock (sp), Bruce Franken (sp) and Amanda Cosby (sp) who have joined us here today. And thank you and welcome to Brooklyn (sp) and Rene (sp) and Roberto (sp) and Amy (sp) and Aletta (sp). I really appreciate you coming today. We're going to share some information about and examples of what we call the success factors for AP grantees. So Heidi, will you kick us off?

HEIDI SHEPPARD: Sure. Thanks, Cheryl. Just a moment. So hello, everyone. This is Heidi Sheppard and I'm with the Hi Impact Partners and also the lead on America's Promise here at DOL.

This webinar will introduce you to grant success factors developed with input from the Department of Labor's Office of Strategic Investment and the America's Promise coaches. It's been reviewed by the federal program officers and it is in alignment with the federal opportunity announcement and the core monitoring guide. The objective of this webinar is to help you understand how the success factors can benefit your America's Promise program.

So the success factors we will discuss today I guess apply to key focus areas that you may want to consider in order to achieve success for your program. DSI and HIP – Hi Impact Partners – together determined that finding such success factors could be helpful to you as a way to provide clarity and specificity around how you can create a successful program. Additionally, these factors will be used to help inform relevant technical assistance products and services leading to successful program implementation.

You can download a copy of the success factors with a few more details from the webinar file share and it is also posted on the CoP page. I'll now turn it over back to Cheryl, who was involved in helping to develop the success factors to describe them in more detail. If you have questions along the way, please enter them in the chat box.

MS. MARTIN: Great. If you move that, I will talk. Thank you, Heidi. Which one? OK. OK. But I thought I did. It's Friday today, isn't it? When we did the map, I decided to put myself in Mozambique, I mean in Madagascar because that just sounded like more fun, you know, and kind of maybe I feel like I am there right now.

So yeah. Thank you, Heidi. You know, there are probably a lot of ways to describe what it takes to be successful as an AP grantee and so, in our conversation over the past few months, we had a bunch of different ways of organizing these and finally ended up with these six and it's really designed to be articulating areas of focus that can be conversation starters, right?

So I just wanted to start out by saying there's no reporting on any of these other than, you know, the self-reporting or conversations that you might do with your coach. There's no requirements here that you do something differently than what you've been doing. Well, I might take that back because if you notice something, it's like well, huh. We should pay more attention to that.

That's the kind of conversation that we're talking about having here, but it's not a requirement. It's a conversation. It's things that you, I'm sure, have been doing all along and in fact, we would really like to get your feedback and input on this as well. Do you think, does this capture what you think you have to do to be successful?

So we realize that these are coming in the middle of your grant just as you're, but you know, I'll just say about that that just as your process has evolved, our process for technical assistance has evolved also. So we'll call doing this now, we'll just call it continuous improvement, right? And like I said, we're really interested in hearing your feedback. Do think back to the last month that you've been working on the grant and as you think forward, do these accurately reflect? Is there anything that's missing?

And are they helpful to use as conversation starters, whether it's sort of a self-assessment thing with your team or maybe with your partners or conversations with your coaches or that kind of thing? So you can, you know, you can put your thoughts in the chat. You can, over time, you can, you know, talk to your coach. You can talk to Heidi. You know, send an e-mail to the America's Promise mailbox if you think of something like, hey, here's a thought.

The other preliminary that I wanted to say before we do a little bit of a deeper dive is that the order doesn't indicate priority. We just arranged them in an order that we thought made sense from a process point of view. So the first three are sequestered because they're organizational and instructional kinds of things, the foundation that would underpin the grant's activities that you said you would do and then the second three are really the heart of the grant activities.

So we're going to go through each one and our coaches on the call, Mike and Bruce and Amanda will add some examples for each of them. And then after that, we'll be asking for some feedback from you and, you know, where you feel your strengths are and that kind of thing.

So let's get started. First thing, strong organizational management. So you might be thinking that all of these things on here, getting your staff onboard, you know, your communication channel, talking to your partners and getting your team going and, you know, getting your project management going, that these are things that you would normally work on the first weeks and months of the grant and they are indeed.

But as we all know, sometimes they sort of fall apart in the middle, especially if there's a significant leadership change, in which case these kinds of systems would need to be reestablished in order to get things back up and going. And, you know, as with any of these success factors, there's always room for improvement in any of these areas. So as I said before, the idea is to have a conversation about it, whether it's a self-assessment or whatever and to be intentional about OK, we're good on this; let's keep going.

Mike, can you get us an example of perhaps either what it looks like when this is really successful or even when it's really not successful?

MIKE BLAYLOCK: Sure. Thanks, Cheryl. One good example is United Way of Central Iowa. They're a grantee in Des Moines, Iowa and the – I'm not sure if we realized just how important it is to have strong organizational management. When a grant gets started and involved, the grant doesn't actually exist in isolation. It's part of an organization.

In United Way, the grant is part of the United Way system and so what United Way of Central Iowa did is they looked at United Way's goals and objectives and how this grant actually sees into those goals and objectives. This way, the grant and United Way are both moving in the same direction.

One critical thing that United Way did is that they translated the federal goals and expectations that would be real and practical in its applications and how it impacts not just United Way, but the central Iowa community. United Way ensured that each partner knew what the key performance indicators were, the individual roles and responsibilities and how it would also be measured within the organization and how those outcomes would result on impact on the workforce gap and raise the participant income and change the overall community. These are all similar to United Way organization, so there's a concurrency with, you know, the grant and the overall organization which actually exists.

Another thing that United Way did was it's, United Way and its partners also reviewed together the notice of awards and then signed individuals within the grant to ensure that the requirements don't actually adversely impact the organization's goals and objectives or the policies of the organization in which they exist, and so that was really great early on.

And I don't want you guys to think that just because you may not have done some of these things that we're as far in to do in the strong organizational management that you can't actually do it now. There's still an opportunity to continue to establish that foundation and make sure you have strong organizational management.

The other component – so that's strong organizational management. The other thing, the other success factor is operations and we can move to the next slide please, strong operational systems.

MS. MARTIN: OK. We'll talk about that a little bit and then I'll ask you for your example.

MR. BLAYLOCK: OK.

MS. MARTIN: So, you know, very related to having an organizational management set up is kind of like operationalizing that, right? So in fact, in some ways, this is a continuation of the first one, but here's where we're talking about a really key thing about employing data-driven decision making. So it's kind of drilling down a little bit more on you got those things in place, but now we're actually using these structures to manage our day-to-day operations, so data-driven is a really good one of that, point of that.

Of course, the program evaluation and implementing continuous improvement. And here, yes. I know there's a national evaluation and that kind of thing, but here we're talking about sort of small p small e program evaluation like doing your own like taking a look and saying how are we doing and where do we need to do improvement? And that's one of the things of these success factors that we're hoping can be helpful for.

And then, you know, the data collection. So from the start understanding the reporting requirements, dedicating some resources in a reliable data system and having people who are going to do that. And then, you know, and then doing that and testing it and again implementing improvement if need be. So Mike, do you have an example there?

MR. BLAYLOCK: Yes. Data-driven decision – I'm going to speak on data-driven decision making. Data-driven decision making is not just a new fad. It is changing the way every sector does business and one of my grantees, one thing that they have to do is they use data to anticipate the behaviors based on the data they captured during the eligibility processes and the onboarding of each client.

This went a long way not only in just stating and providing the participants with the support systems that they need, but also had a positive impact on the high retention rate. They also surveyed the participants, made phone calls, and they shared the information that they received with all the partners, which was critical in impacting the partners' decisions to modify their actions or accommodate some of the changes that created the new and additional courses, the course location or the course time based on the feedback they were getting from participants who may not have completed some of the training.

Again, this went a long way in making sure that the next cohort was more successful. So they were using the data that they received from the past cohorts to make sure that they implemented the changes that were going to ensure success.

Another thing that they actually did was they used the data to determine if they should request an official modification from DSI that will support the direction in which they want to move. So again, you can use this for day-to-day operations and also to make changes that's going to impact the overall grant and the grant direction.

MS. MARTIN: Great. Those are some good examples. Thank you. So our third area is sustainability thinking and we coupled this with the other three. This is one that we probably changed the order of like five times. At one point we had it at the beginning and another time we put it at the end and then we were like, no. Let's put it up here with the organizational aspects of this.

But and it's key that we call this sustainability thinking. Yeah. I guess we need to do some sustainability doing, but it's really more like having a thought process that is thinking towards sustainability. So you know, a really key part of that is to understand the current and emerging goals of your own organization and your key partners because of course these grants, as you well know, do not come in isolation.

There's all kinds of other things that your organization is doing and there's all kinds of things that your partners are doing, but the thought here is to the extent that you're, that we're aware of the goals of partner organizations and our own organizations, we can do what Mike was talking about there about aligning when he was talking about United Way, that they translated the goals and objectives of this grant into being relevant for, you know, what was going on in Central Iowa. And then you can think about, oh, how are the pieces of what some pieces of what we're doing continue.

And of course, you know, recruiting your champions from those organizations and informing them all along the way as you were just talking about there, it really ties into this because if they're aware of what you're doing and, you know, I feel like I'm sort of preaching to the choir. You all know a lot of these things, but it's stopping and thinking about it some days when we're always busy, right? Anyway, thinking that through, having, knowing what the plans and the goals are and moving it forward by linking to what else is going on.

And you know, what I always say about sustainability is we don't expect people to sustain the whole entire training program because of course that takes resources. But what are some key components of what you're doing, whether it's employer partnerships or whether it's a different way of doing things or a way of adding navigators into your process or, you know, whatever it may be. Those are the kinds of things that we think about sustaining going forward. So Bruce, do you have any examples of this to share?

BRUCE FRANKEN: Sure. Sure. So more general thoughts, but sort of a philosophical note to start this off, I had a mentor early in my career and sort of working around this world and his comment or his thought on this was that sustainability thinks right after the ink dries.

So it's something that's always on. You're always thinking about sustainability. It's not – I guess another way to put it is if you start thinking about sustainability in the last few months of your grant, program, initiative, whatever it is, it just makes it that much more difficult.

And so, when I think about sustainability, it's looking at the big picture. These grants are all built around sector strategies and partnerships, things Mike talked about and I get to mention another example in the next slide. But it's something that's always on. It's always in the background looking at how your program is operating, how you're working with employers, community-based organizations, the workforce system and so on.

And the example that I had, which is again sort of a composite, but many of these programs and especially around in-demand and high growth occupations where grantees find that they have more people than they can serve and rather than seeing that as a challenge and sort of use that as ammunition if you will to go back to the partners, build on the relationships that Cheryl was just describing and use that as the foundation for looking at other funding streams.

We're not always going to be fortunate enough to have things like H-1B funding. Start early on, anticipate those opportunities, work with the partners and see what other opportunities are out there to sustain the initiative. But that, the one example of turning if you will the challenge of unserved participants into an opportunity, use that to build interest and support for sustaining the program through another channel.

MS. MARTIN: OK. So you know. Let us know if these are making sense and if they, you know, hit you the wrong way and you're like, no, you guys have this all wrong. You know, let us know that too.

So we're going to move into the next three, the aspect of doing the work. So the first three were sort of the foundational things that if you have those in place, it's going to make doing the work easier as you can see right there. And the next three are essential elements to developing sector strategies and training participants in jobs that will move them along a strong career path, which of course is our goal with the America's Promise Grant.

So you know, none of this is new to you so I'm not going to read the things on here about effective employer engagement, but again, the ideas to ask ourselves, you know, are there areas here that we could strengthen that would be helpful right now? And you know, maybe like if you listed your top three employer partners, who would they be? Is there anything you can do to strengthen one or more of those partnerships right now?

And or is there, you know, even though I know I have those top three, is there some pieces missing out of those and so there's somebody that I need to sort of bring in more to help me fill a missing gap? So Bruce, do you have –

MR. FRANKEN: Sure. Yeah. Yeah. A couple words or general thoughts. You know, when I think about the successful grantees that I've worked with, these relationships aren't one-offs. They tend to be preexisting to the grants and they continue afterwards, and I think that's probably the best evidence that these are real working relationships. The other thing that stands out is the groups that I've worked with really do communicate and engage their employers.

They have regularly scheduled meetings and have them closely involved in the development of the programs. And in some cases, some of these industries, IT in particular, when things change so quickly, it's really critical to have the employers onboard explaining what their needs are, how the demands of the industry are changing and that the training programs reflect those needs. And so, those are pretty straightforward.

The other thing I have seen recently is great examples. Some of the grants that I'm working with are conducting if you will things like job pairs, career pairs, but they bring together both the training providers, the employers with the participants and coming out of those engagements will build interest in entering the programs, but also creates opportunities for work-based learning and in some cases where apprenticeships are offered, a channel for folks to be introduced to those programs.

But I think the bottom line, and I'm sure everybody on the call realizes this, that they're critical to these programs and the important thing is to pay attention and to keep those folks engaged.

MS. MARTIN: Great. Thank you, Bruce. So you know, we've got effective employer engagement and that, of course, is one of your partners, but then there's other partners as well. So this just expands what we're doing with the employer partners there, the regular communication leveraging and, you know, like I said before, it may be recruiting a new partner sometimes as needed as part of this. And then systemizing and coordinating those activities so that everybody's onboard with what's going on and that kind of thing.

You know, so here it's like if you had to name right now your three most important partners that aren't employers, the ones that are most critical for your success, who would they be? And that's the kind of, you know, the self-conversation we're hoping that this would encourage. Are there any partnerships that need some extra attention and love right now, you know, to help them out, to help them help you? So do you have any thoughts about that, Amanda?

AMANDA COSBY: Yes. Good afternoon everyone. So one of the things I've seen working with my grantees is a couple of things. One, with the success factors and I just want to note this really quickly, a lot of them have a little bit of overlap.

So as we talk about effective partner engagement, one of the other things I wanted to note that was earlier was about operational systems and making sure that you adapt as needed. One of the grantees I've been working with has been very good about identifying when a partner relationship is working or is not working. So for example, one of the grantees had an apprenticeship partner that they were working with.

They found out through, you know, a series of evaluations that they conducted internally that this partner was not providing the level of training necessarily that they had hoped for. So they immediately, you know, sat down with the partner and made sure that everyone was on the same page and were able to reengage with that partner in a new way, but have also been willing to walk away from external partnerships that may not be holding up their end of the bargain or working as cohesively as they would like.

In this particular, with this particular grantee, they've really built a consortium so one of the really positive things that has come out of that grant was also the ability to expand partnerships. So working with one partner on a regional level and being able to how take that partner from their first city and expand it across the consortium and say hey, this model has worked really well in city A.

Why don't we see if this partner, since they're a national or regional partner, is willing to also partner with city B or city C and see if we can pilot this and keep expanding beyond the consortium? So one of the great things that has come out of America's Promise for this grantee is this system building aspect and the ability to share those partners, not just within their own community, but also to other communities as well within the consortium and within the grant.

MS. MARTIN: That's great and that relates to the sustainability thinking, right? You know, you have to have internetworking to continue. So this last one, number six, is really, you know, all of the other efforts and supports. All of the other effort you're doing supports your success in doing this one, right? Engaging participants effectively and making progress toward a good job or a better job on their career pathway. I'm going to venture out on a limb here and say that really all the other success factors are there to help you with this one, right, in terms of the grant.

And it's probably true that if you can be successful here, you wouldn't necessarily have to be completely successful in all the other areas, but this is probably the only one that works that way because, you know, I guess this is the one where your effectiveness is really measured, right, where the rubber hits the road. So let me know if that makes sense or not when we're talking about this later.

But the idea, this is just trying to list some of the different aspects of how we talk about effective participation, or I'm sorry, effective participant engagement. You know, there's outreach, there's onboarding, your case management, the training itself, evaluating that and then of course the job piece of matching participants to jobs and supportive services and all of that. So Amanda, do you have an example here?

MS. COSBY: I do and I will call out because I think I have some representatives from New River Mount Rogers on the line. In October, we had actually – they were one of our multiple grantee speakers on innovative supportive services and I think they've done a great job and I'm sure Jenny (sp) is always happy to share with others what is going on in their group. But they've done really great at their case management and developed a lot of data-driven decision making processes.

So again, back to kind of overlapping success factors. They've done really great about making sure they have a cohesive tracking system amongst their pathway navigators and also amongst their internal team to make sure that they know when a participant needs engagement, needs extra attachment, needs the extra hand-hold, hand held to get them through the next steps.

So developing those kind of systems of checks and balances along the participant experience pathway I think has really helped them to keep their participants engaged but also have a pretty solid retention rate for their participants in their programs as well.

So I think that case management approach that's listed on the slide is really a huge component of it is what systems can you develop in place? So even if you have a really successful participant retention right now and you have really strong case management, what are additional points of contact you can make? What are other services? How can you loop this all into one system?

So you don't have to reinvent the wheel, but also look into what evaluative components can you add into this, especially as it relates to your training and design and services and especially with this grant, our goals is to get folks, you know, a family sustaining wage job.

So how can we make sure that this case management doesn't necessarily stop the second they finish the program and that we're following through to make sure we get all of the evaluative data and the participant job information we need to make sure that our grant is fulfilling its mission?

MS. MARTIN: Great. Yeah. That's a great example. So I'm going to turn it back over to Heidi at this point and we are definitely going to get some feedback and input from you all, so I'll hand it over to Heidi to do that.

MS. SHEPPARD: Thank you. So you might be asking yourself why are we doing this now? And here's the answer to that. So in January 2019, we are going to offer a self-assessment exercise at the midpoint of your program and it will be based on these success factors. Bruce Franken will present the tools on an upcoming webinar entitled Preparing for Year Three, Self-Assessing your Progress at the Mid-Point of your America's Promise Grant. This is a two-part webinar program, again January and February, so stay tuned for that. So this is a way to introduce you to the success factors prior to that two-part webinar program.

Also, it's timely because we recently released the TA effectiveness impact feedback tool in November. And the grantees provided feedback on previous TA and going forward, we're going to use that information along with the success factors to determine future TA that will hopefully be even more effective and beneficial for you.

And so, the next question you might be asking yourself is how is this going to help me, the grantee? So the idea is that these success factors can help you have a more thorough and deeper understanding of what we, DSI and coaches, consider success for the America's Promise programs.

And of course, we want to reiterate that we're open to your input into what you think makes for a successful program. So we're hoping that you will provide us with that feedback at your leisure. It also, we're hoping, will help you guide you in decision making actions and conversations about implementing your grant activities.

In addition, the coaches will use these success factors sort of guiding them to determine again future TA products and we will balance the TA products offered so that they're addressing each success factor fully and by ensuring that the technical assistance product is representing all the factors. And the coaches may refer to success factors during monthly coaching calls and may incorporate them into the discussions that you have.

And now, we want to go to another poll and we would like to find out from you of these success factors, where do you feel your grant program is strong? So please choose all that apply and we'll take a look here and see which ones people are the most successful at. It looks like – all right. Information is coming in. OK. I think that's it. That's great. It looks like –

MS. MARTIN: You can keep voting if you want, well if you're still thinking, but –

MS. SHEPPARD: So it looks like we've got a lot of folks who show strong operational systems, that they're doing well in that regard. And it looks like – well you can see for yourself that sustainability thinking is not up there. It says zero so that's a very, that's like a green flag for us to go ahead and use that information in terms of designing some future TA products and services that will help you along that line.

MS. MARTIN: Which you are going to be doing anyway I think, right? So yeah. So it's again, it's that kind of thinking, so even before that TA starts, if you, you know, if you have a few minutes somewhere in there or you want to work with your partners on just sort of asking some of those questions about, you know, what are the goals and priorities of each of our organizations and how does what we're doing here relate to that so that we can? And again, it's not so much – I mean sustaining the training might be happening like Bruce said, like oh, we've got more people to train than we can do through this program, so how can we do that in other ways?

So definitely that can be sustained, but I think a lot of times what I experienced when I was working with the TAACCCT program when we talked about sustainability, the people were like well, I can't sustain it because I don't have that money. It's going to go away. And it's like well, don't think about it that way. Think about it's not the whole thing, right? It's like what's a piece of this that we are doing differently and is that valuable and effective to our organization or a partner organization?

And so, is that a piece that we can continue doing even without the resources, you know, say the employer partnership or something? Or now that we have this strong relationship, where can we, you know, get some more resources based on that and leveraging that? So back to you, Heidi.

MS. SHEPPARD: Great. Thanks. Thank you for that information and here is our second poll. Choose the success factors for which technical assistance would be most valuable. My guess is sustainability thinking is going to be high on this list.

MS. MARTIN: But you know, I mean I'd say be honest. You know, if you don’t feel like something on here is useful in terms of a TA thing, you know let us know that. But so far –

MS. SHEPPARD: And choose all that apply.

MS. MARTIN: That's right.

MS. SHEPPARD: This is not just singular. Again, choose all that apply. So keep clicking.

MS. MARTIN: We'll give you a minute to think and maybe talk amongst yourselves.

MS. SHEPPARD: OK? OK. It looks like sustainability thinking wins out and effective participant engagement along a career pathway comes in second, but that's good information and thank you for that. We will use that information going forward and thank you.

MS. MARTIN: Yeah. So we wanted to, we really did want to see what your thoughts were about this. Now that you've heard this, is it kind of like yawn, what's new? Is it like huh, that was some, you know, there were some thoughts there that you could use? Are there ways that you can see yourself using this? So Laura, can you tell people – and we've got such a small group here today. Maybe we just unmute everybody and if people have thoughts, please feel free to speak out or you can put something into the chat.

MS. CASERTANO: Sure. Anyone who is on the line, I'm going to unmute your lines now, so if you have anything to say, you can let us know.

MS. MARTIN: Great. OK. And you know, for the coaches who are on the line, if you have some questions for – that relate to, you know, your experience with them, that's another way we can do this too.

MR. FRANKEN: Cheryl, it's Bruce and I'll just throw this out sort of along those lines, but I know we have a small group here, but it seems like sustainability is a topic of interest. If anybody that did identify the scenario where they could use some help, that's the point of this whole process is for us to be of most help to you folks. If anybody's willing either to type it in or maybe just pipe up and share with us what some of your concerns or where you think you could use some help, that would be really valuable to us in terms of shaping the TA that we deliver.

MS. MARTIN: And I just realized, Laura let us know that only a few people actually dialed in on the phone so people are actually going to, you know, be doing this through the chat. So you know, I don't know. Are there emojis on this? You can give a thumbs up. You can give. But seriously, do you have – if you are willing to, would you be willing to put something in the chat that just says yeah, this sounds useful or mm, you know, I think you guys are repeating things that you've already told us or you know. Let us know your honest thoughts about it.

MS. COSBY: Cheryl, this is Amanda again. If you guys, and this is a question for the whole group, for our grantees specifically. I'm curious on the same thread of sustainability planning. For those who feel like they've already begun that process, what are some of the first steps that might be advisory to some of the other groups or something you all did?

MS. MARTIN: On sustainability planning?

MS. COSBY: Yes.

MS. MARTIN: Yeah. So we had a conversation about sustainability. We didn't just do a webinar. We had sort of a process where there was some presentation about sustainability principles and we had a sustainability toolkit with TAACCCT, which I know we've shared with Heidi and folks and, you know, can be easily reused I think for other grants.

And so, we started out with a conversation about that or like what are the things to think about. And that whole question about what are the, who are your partners and what are their primary goals and what they, you know, what's going on for them bigger than this grant that connects to what's going on with this grant? That was a starting point and then, you know, who are the people who need to be in the conversation about sustainability and so forth? There was sort of a series of six questions there.

So we did that and then the coaches talked with grantees on more, you know, individually one by one and had group conversations and the nice thing about that was that people could include a number of people in those conversations that wouldn't have normally, you know, come to a meeting or be on this webinar, something like that.

And so, then there was conversations within each, you know, within each grantee group of partners and then we came together sort of at a midpoint and talked about sort of where people were and ideas that had come up. And then they went back and did some more work on their own with their coaches and then at the end came back.

And we had this really quick, we sort of called it speed, you know, speed not dating but presenting I guess about what were some of the primary goals of your program and what are some of the things that you're sustaining?

And you know, some of a lot of it I think was just helping people articulate because like I said, we've found a number of grantees who are like well, I'm not sustaining anything because I'm not, you know, keeping this whole program going or something and we're like wait. You know, the coaches were able to help people go, but wait. You're doing this thing and you're doing that thing and it was like oh, yeah, I am sustaining things. OK. That's great. So some of it was really just that how you think about it and start articulating it.

MR. BLAYLOCK: Hi, Cheryl. It's Mike. I don't want any grantee to think they're not actually moving towards sustainability because if they're doing three to four of these success factors just satisfactorily, they're actually making progress towards sustainability because if they have effective employer engagement, they're establishing these long-term relationships with partners and they have sort of a congruency with the goals and objectives of the organization that they're actually, that's hosting them or that they're working with.

Those things are all going to impact sustainability. It may not be in a nicely packaged process, but they're already making a lot of headway towards sustaining the program.

MS. MARTIN: Yeah. Exactly. Exactly. And that's partly, you know, the success factors that are here. All of those things help, you know, move you towards sustainability too just because, you know, if you do really well at something then it's more likely that you can, and if you documented it and you have those numbers and you know like you said, those effective partnerships and everything.

So partly I feel like we're probably talking out loud about something that grantees are feeling like yep, yep, yep. You know, I'm right on top of that. I know, you know, we could have taught this webinar, right? So if that is where you're coming from and you think that there's room for improvement because, you know, we're working on these as success factors that ideally we would've started with this at the beginning of the grant, but we didn't and that's fine.

But we are looking at them as things that we could possibly use for other grants as well, so we'd really appreciate your input and feedback on that so that we can improve these as we go along.

So yeah. Why don't we – I'm not seeing questions or comments or I think probably the questions or comments will come at the level of the individual conversations of the coaches with the grantees. So but, if you have thoughts along the way, please let us know. Back to you, Heidi.

MS. SHEPPARD: Thank you. So just wanted to let you know about a couple of upcoming TA activities. Again, the two-part series of assessing your progress at the midpoint of your America's Promise grant. We've got the dates for that, January 24th and February 28th, so you can put that on your calendars. Both of those will be I believe from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

And then we are currently working on releasing a grantee infographic template hopefully in January, so stay tuned for that and that will be an infographic that you will be able to basically plug and play. You'll plug in your information to the various sections and be able to use it as a communication tool with partners, employers, possible participants, etc.

And then of course, I want to remind you about community of practice. All of our resources and the webinar recordings etc. are posted there, so please join and feel free to go there as often as you like.

MS. SHEPPARD: Finally, contact information. America's Promise phone and mailbox is listed here. Feel free to reach out through that means and we will get back to you as soon as we can. And thank you.

MS. MARTIN: Yeah. Thank you for joining us here today. Thank you in advance for whatever thinking you do about this and the feedback that you offer and that is helpful. So we'll give you back a few minutes today.

MS. SHEPPARD: Thanks. Have a good holiday, everybody.

MS. MARTIN: Back to you, Laura.

(END)