**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Successful Practices for Sustaining Your America's Promise Grant**

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ERIKA HUMPHREY: As Greg mentioned, I am the technical assistant coach and I also have my co-facilitator partner on this webinar, Lyle Neumann. And I know he wants to say a few words before we get started.

LYLE NEUMANN: Welcome, everyone. I think you'll find this very informative, very interesting, and let's just get at it.

MS. HUMPHREY: Great. Thanks, Lyle. Today, I'd also like to introduce our two grantee presentations that are going to share some great knowledge that they have around sustainability. I have Julie Parks from Grand Rapids Community College. And I have Christina Bakewicz from Monroe Community College. And again, they'll be speaking a little bit later. But I wanted to focus on today's objective.

As Greg mentioned, when he talked about sustainability, this is going to be our first webinar in a series. So we're going to be doing deeper dives, technical assistance events that will focus on planning for sustainability of your America's Promise grant program. So really, the goal is to help you work through the key steps of planning for sustainability by encouraging you to think about which aspects of your program could be sustained and which current resources that you presently have.

So we're going to be providing strategies and tips on assessment, your partnership, on succession planning. And then, also too, aligned with this webinar, we have developed a checklist. So if you haven't done so already, we would like to have you download our sustainability planning checklist. Now, there, too, one is in a PDF form and one is actually in a worksheet, and that's going to be in the Microsoft Word. And so throughout the webinar, we're going to show you how to use an align the checklist as well.

So today's agenda. So we're going to be focusing on four areas to plan for sustainability. We're going to be looking at how you assess your program, how you can develop a succession plan if you haven't done so already. We are moving into year four and that's usually a time where you'll have a lot of your staff start to what we call jump ship. We're also going to be focusing on building and maintaining partnerships. And then, looking at some strategies around developing a funding plan for you. OK?

So what I'd like to have you do once again, if you haven't downloaded that checklist, please, download that checklist. Because I'd like to just share the objective of the checklist. So the checklist provides examples and strategies in four important areas. So it's aligning to those four areas that I just shared with you, but it's also going to look at sustainability and succession planning.

Also, clarifying the vision for your program moving forward. Evaluating current partnerships and developing new ones. And determining which resources are needed to sustain your project and building that funding stability. So that is the introduction of the actual checklist.

So as I mentioned to you before, there are two parts of the checklist. So the first part – and again, we're going to be going over it as we go through the webinar. So the first part are instructions. So what we do is we provide examples. And so we'll have some screenshots and go over those examples.

And then, the second part is an appendix section, and these are worksheets. And what these worksheets will do is allow you and your staff, partners and key stakeholders, to actually work together. And so when we ask you to download, that's the PDF version. But then, the Microsoft Word version allows you to download that, and that's just the appendix. And you're able to write in and type in there. So it's just a way for you just to have your worksheet.

So I'd just like you to take a moment and to look at page 6 of the checklist, and that's the appendix section. So just take a moment. And so again, that's when my – I'm talking about the worksheet, that's where it is.

OK. Great. So as you take a moment to look at that, I want to remind you that we sent out a questionnaire some time ago to the America's Promise grantees. And we were asking you about sustainability planning. You know, where were you in the grant life cycle? And so one of the questions we asked is had you created a timeline to work on sustainability planning with your team?

And so some of the answers that we received, as you can see on the screen here, we'll start in September. Some say we have started, had discussions about sustainability. No. Yes. But in the works. Nothing finalized as of yet. Our team meets on a week basis with our dean to keep this moving in a positive direction. And so it is our hope through this webinar that we give you additional tools to either get started if you haven't gotten started. Or to really – these tools to give you a more focused plan of action.

We also looked at a question that we asked. What staff and/or partners are involved in your sustainability planning? And some said, all of our staff. Some said the economic development boards. Some said the workforce development boards.

So it's really important that when you're planning for sustainability, that these key stakeholders are involved. Reason being that because when you're discussing and talking about leveraging resources even further than what you've leveraged now, when funding dollars become an issue, this is where they had that buy-in, because they were part of that sustainability planning.

We also asked the question how are you using your performance data to identify program components that will lead to future expansion or that need improvement? And so we heard we'll use them to show our college, our workforce board, our employers the value of the work funded through this grant. Some said to inform the supply and demand of each job role. Another said we will identify areas to focus time and resources on. So it's really important to look at your data from the perspective of what areas in the program are working and which ones aren't.

So if there is – using your data in assessing, they really go hand in hand. Because it will really help you to know what's working and what's not working. And so we'll talk about program assessment shortly. And so now, it's your turn. And so I do want to say that this is going to be a very interactive webinar. We don't want you just to sit by and just hear. We want you to participate.

So our first poll, what areas of building a sustainability plan have you and your team completed? Choose all that apply. OK. I see some documenting sustainable successes. Large number there. Assessing what to sustain from the America's Promise grant, 83 percent. Identifying what resources are needed to sustain our project. Good. And identifying key partners who will achieve our project vision. OK. Got 66 percent saying identifying potential funding sources for sustaining our project. That seems – wow. OK.

So right now, it looks like assessing what to sustain is the top. So taking that poll. And we're going to go ahead and move on. And so the whole objective, again, as I mentioned to you before, is, based on the poll that we just talked about, this webinar is going to provide strategies and tips for you. So let's move to our first sustainable strategy, and that's program assessment.

And so when we're looking at that, really look at – begin by identifying the various activities that you have undertaken. And I see that, from that 77 percent, that is exactly what you're doing. So you're looking at the activities that have resulted and yielded successful outcomes. So one of the strategies, to focus on activities that have the greatest impact or are producing desired outcomes for you.

Also, too, review project outcomes to determine what aspects of the program are successful and should be sustained. So really looking at how do your performance outcomes play into this determination? The second strategy is making lists of promising practices that have been successful in the American's Promise grant, especially new practices or protocols that were implemented because of the grant funding.

So it's really important to provide details of how you are documenting and sharing these successes with partners, stakeholders. And if you're not, please plan to do so. As mentioned to you before, again, you want them to buy into the process when you're talking about sustainability planning. And hopefully, that they will be your partners long after this grant has ended.

Another strategy to look at is to review labor market statistics and to determine if any elements of the project need to be modified to meet current industry needs. Now, I know that I've heard from some grantees that in the training, they were focusing on what aspects of IT and, based on – we're now in year three, things have changed, and employers are stating this is what we are asking for. So they had to add that specific training in their programming. So reviewing the labor market statistics is going to be very important.

Also, determine if the program goals need to be updated your vision for sustaining the program. So now, let's look at the checklist. OK? And so in looking at the checklist, what we've done, again, is to give you instructions of how to actually use the checklist. And we've also given examples. And so I just wanted to go over this example. And so in looking at our worksheet, we look at what's the actual promising practice, and you can see here that this particular grantee stated that they partner with the state's department of employment services to track its participants who receive services found a job placement.

Now, the key thing here is this is a promising practice. But what evidence or example that demonstrates that this is actually a promising practice? And the reason why we have this as part of the worksheet, and when you're working with your staff, it's important to have that evidence.

Because when you're going out for new partners or funders or even your current partners, they want to know what is the actual evidence? Not just that it's a promising practice because you stated it's a promising practice. But what is the actual evidence? And that evidence, you'll be able to use when you're doing your reporting or if you're doing any kind of marketing material.

And so the next category says vision. What would it take to continue this promising practice? And so are there any kind of modifications? This grantee said this partnership will continue with future grants. Instead of receiving information every six months, we have asked for them to check their database every quarter. OK?

And so it asks are there resources that are needed based on this vision? And the number of the staff. How many staff? Based on this promising practice, what resources are needed and what staff? What's the role of that staff? Because you're going to need to know later on funding purposes.

So if I'm going to keep these promising practices, what's the actual funding going to – what is it going to really take? And that's when you can go back to your partners and say, hey, we have this promising practice. But remember, we want them to buy into this process. So can we leverage any type of resources? That's why it goes hand in hand. OK?

Great. So now that we've looked at the example and looked at – like I say, we have the checklist. It gives you these examples. But if you go to the appendix, this is where you can write down the information or use our Microsoft Word template and you can just type right in there.

So now, I'd like to introduce Julie Parks. She's executive direction of workforce training of Grand Rapids Community College.

JULIE PARKS: Thank you, Erika.

MS. HUMPHREY: Great. So Julie, how is your organization assessing which parts of the America's Promise program should be sustained?

MS. PARKS: OK. Well, first of all, Erika, let me tell everyone I'm from Michigan. We're from the west side of Michigan. We have 13 counties out of the 83 in Michigan. And we're focused on the healthcare pathway. And sustainability is really important to us in our focus because we made such gains in this project with the America's Promise funding. With our – the participants that we have, we were able to look, really drilling down in the data that we report to the DOL to see what's working and what's not working.

So we really found that we're really assisting Latino and Hispanic individuals in being successful in our program, and we're recruiting them to our program. And so what's working there? And then, our employers. You know, we started with 12 employers. We've tripled the number of employers who are involved. So what are we doing that makes that continue to grow when this funding is gone? And really – (inaudible) –have been a key part of that.

And we're assessing the curriculum and training program to really start to show the college and integrate within our college and our workforce system of why these training programs are so successful, especially when we're comparing them to other training programs.

Really, what the role of that employer has been and what's the value of that. And then, our peripheral thing is we just have a top-notch team of people in the community, in our workforce system, at our community college that have worked together that are doing amazing things. And we don't want to just stop when this grant is over.

And so looking at those and really drilling down to our data has really helped us figure out, hey, here's some things we want to sustain. And then, to have those conversations with what do we need to show you different leadership organizations to prove that these should continue? So on the next slide, so Erika asked what are– go ahead, Erika.

MS. HUMPHREY: What are the strategies your organization is using or will use to sustain these program activities?

MS. PARKS: So we really focused on very hard working with those healthcare employers and the senior citizen organizations, long-term care, to really show them that apprenticeship was a model that would work for them, that we could take individuals of low social-economic areas.

We could give them the correct training while they were working, so they could continue in programs and complete things that we're very concerned about in workforce; right? We want people to be in the programs, to retain the programs, to complete the programs, to be placed, to stay in their jobs, or to grow in their jobs. And we can show that through the apprenticeship model. It's been really successful.

So we were going to leverage some state and federal dollars to do that and really use those employers that have really engaged with us in this apprenticeship to be the spokespeople for it and to talk about the wins that they've had because of apprenticeships.

And then, we've been focusing a lot on our college leadership and our workforce board to show them the amount of money that we've leveraged, the number of employers, the number of people; how we've been exceeding these metrics in the healthcare sector, but how could we apply this in the manufacturing sector, in the IT sector, in the energy sector? We believe that these are transferable techniques. And so maybe the investment should be in what's worked in this program to spread this.

And so we've really been focusing on can they redirect funds? The integration of our different models. And we've – one of the biggest things for us is the shared software system. That we worked out this data agreement between our workforce, our state, the college, and our community partners, that where an individual comes, it doesn't matter where they come in.

We can all help them. We can all assist them. We all understand the practices and the paperwork. And we can share some basic information about them so we don't have to send someone from office to office to office. And that and the community has been a big win and they really see the efficiency of the processes and the investment that's been made in this America's Promise grant.

And then, from the college side, so how are we going to support the staff members that we want to keep? So, yes, completion, retention, job placement. But also, the new programming. So this method of having our employers actually co-teach classes, review curriculum with us, come in, open their doors for work-based learning.

So we're going to continue to build those programs. And the tuition from those programs should support the people who are doing those programs. And so we've created at least four different programs and apprenticeships. And we're going to do a couple more this year. And we think that the method we have is one that the college can continue to adopt into all different areas.

And then, we do have some asks for employers. And you know that that's the hard part because, for three years, they've really benefitted from the America's Promise grant. But we picked some heavy hitters in our area, like Mercy Health and Spectrum Health. And we worked with our HR department to try to show what's the return on our investment as far as retention. Because the retention of people from this program is – really helped. So what's the cost of losing someone? And we've been trying to help them show the ROI for investments in the program. And so they've already started to invest and leverage some of their own funding for apprenticeships. So we're going to continue to work on that this next year.

So I was really happy to see that checklist. I think it really helps with building that argument. And don't be afraid to ask the leadership of your organization what do I have to show you to continue this work? What do I have to prove? And you can do it. I know you can.

MS. HUMPHREY: Thanks, Julie. And as you shared, one key thing as far as what you are looking at, what you assess, and how you assess it, and then, what you plan to continue. And one of the interesting things that came out of that was that you have the employers help co-teach your classes. And so that's that whole buy-in. And so when you're thinking about grantees that are online, when you're thinking about sustainability, really – it really refers to a continuation of these project goals, these principles and efforts to achieve the desired outcome.

So it really – when you're thinking about planning for sustainability, it requires appropriate decisions to be made at each stage of the program development. And so as we're on year three, really thinking about what really worked in year on? What worked in year two? What can I sustain? How do I assess that? And Julie, you really gave us how your organization used that method of looking at your participants when you looked at – to see how they were most successful.

You also focused on how you are tracking those employers. And so that information that you learn in year one, two, I'm sure helps to drive that in the remainder of the year three and four. And then, the whole idea is beyond. So again, sustainability is so key. We also say do it in very – when you first start your grant. But it's never too late to start now. So thank you, Julie. So if there's any questions for Julie, please feel to type those up in the chat box. And then, we will continue to move on. And then, we can answer those as they come in.

And so I want to give you all an opportunity to get interactive with us. And so I have a questions for the grantees on the line. What is one component of your program that you would like to sustain? So I want all participation. So again, in the chat box, if you can just share what is one component of your program that you would like to sustain. OK. Is everyone typing? I guess you guys are still thinking about it. For those who have shared things, we've already been talking with partners and stakeholders, what have you guys discussed?

OK. Linda (ph) said low-cost training. Not having – I can only see the only part of it, not having – let's see. Mike says boot camp courses. OK. Supporting nurses. The workforce system. OK. Great. Anyone else? I can no longer see others. OK. I think we're only seeing half. OK.

Angela: Erika, this is Angela. I'd like to jump in. And while we're waiting for people to respond to that, can you talk a little bit more about why sustainability is so important, especially at this point in the grant cycle?

MS. HUMPHREY: Oh, we actually did. We talked about sustainability, referring to the continuation of the project's goals, principles, and efforts to achieve their desired outcome. And we talked about what they wanted to say in year one and two, and that would bring to year four.

And we also talk about planning for sustainability requires appropriate decisions that must be made at each stage of the program development. And we talked about we're now year three and the things that we want to sustain. And so it's really important that, again, sustainability, looking at what we want to say. And because the whole goal is once funding ends, how can you continue these great projects that you've developed through the America's Promise grant?

ANGELA: Thanks, Erika.

MS. HUMPHREY: OK. Discussed our initiative. I see Marty (ph) answering Greg's question. OK. Great. We're going to go ahead and move on.

The next question we had, "What have you learned from reviewing your program data that's informing your sustainability planning?" So once again, what have you learned from reviewing your program data that's informing your sustainability planning?

And so Julie, she shared that some of the things that she learned from looking at some of their data, looking at their apprenticeship-type programs, looking at those things were very, very successful. So again, looking at what have you learned from reviewing your program data that's informing your sustainability planning? I see some people typing. And so really looking at – I can't stress enough that your program data really does help to inform what things you see working, what things are not working.

OK. Now, we can see each other's comments. That's great. Michael Collins (ph) says the local manufacturers in trade in trade are very interested in hiring our graduates and are bringing on our graduate interns with a chance for full-time employment. Good. And that's really key. Linda says advanced manufacturing businesses in San Diego really struggle with the concept of apprenticeship. And so I wondered, Linda, based on that struggle, are they seeing from data that this is something that they could be – buy into? So I'm wondering.

LINDA: We honestly are still in the process of reviewing but learning from others.

MS. HUMPHREY: Marty says that business engagement is important to understand what the real business talent needs are, and that's key. And like I say, Julie really talked about that because, looking at the data, they were able to see what parts of the curriculum, what parts of the training that participants were completing and what those retention rates were. So they knew that certain parts of – that part of the training, what was really giving the participants those job placements.

Michael Collins says, having the advisory committee driving our curriculum and training allows us to provide them with the best educated and training workforce. And Amy says, our data shows that the supply and demand are both high in healthcare. Lots of people want to train and lots of employers want to hire. So that's real key.

So again, one of the things we're sharing is just, with your data, review that with your staff and your stakeholders and your partners. Thank you all for participating in that chat. And now, I'm going to turn it over to Lyle, who is going to focus on our sustainability strategy number two.

MR. NEUMANN: Thank you, Erika, and I hope everyone can hear me. If you can't just put a note in the chat box and I will try to speak up. It's not uncommon in a grant-funded program where, towards the end of the funding stream, people start looking for other employment, jumping ship, so to speak.

And as workforce development professionals, we know that staff and leadership, changes can happen, especially towards the end of the grant cycle, which as Greg already mentioned, we're already on the down side of the grant. So it's important that – for the participants in this program that we have a continuity of service, and we owe it to them, if there are any staff changes.

As this focus changes from recruitment now towards training completion, certifications, job placements, job advancements, and job retentions, those are the critical areas where you just can't be without the necessary staff to not only assist the participants, but also to track the results so that you can record positive solutions. Next slide.

So we're looking at developing a succession plan, identify other funding streams to help keep staff in place as you look to areas of the grant that you want to sustain. Develop a plan in case staff members leave before the grant is complete. Begin to identify the strengths and challenges of your present team while other team members have the capacity and the will to take on additional work. And consider having multiple staff members trained on job placement strategies.

So first, you have to determine what components of this program are most important to sustain. And when you need to determine those necessary resources to fund – look up the funding for those sources. Those funding sources might include greater partner participation, such as time, talent, and even dollars.

We all fund, city government, county government, state funding, business associations, even foundation funds have been used. The transition plan should include cross-training of existing staff. If your focus has changed from recruitment to, as I mentioned, training completion and so forth, perhaps less staff is a possibility. But it has to be the right staff. Do partners have the staff that could – the partners have the staff that become part-time grant staff?

Perhaps employer associations might be a source of temporary staffing. But then, part of your staff development process, existing staff can be trained to become job developers. However, you can't wait until the opening occurs before you do this. So you need to start planning ahead of time to determine, to the best of your ability, what – the openings you think you might have and then, how are you going to fill them. Next slide.

Referring back to the checklist, if you've had an opportunity to download it and print it, on page 3, you'll find out the value of this tool. There's an example here, a very simple example, how this tool could be used. And the example shown here is to identify the strengths and challenges in your current team. And you assign staff to that. You put a date on that and what resources will you need to accomplish that step. And then, the status over in the far column. And then, the second step is to assess individual and organizational gaps to determine developmental needs. And again, you assign those staff, and so forth.

Step three, identify and train a backup person for each staff function. Again, you decide who's going to work on that, a date; give yourself a goal. There are two more steps to this process, which aren't shown on that slide, and that is to create or update a binder or a digital file that includes key documents.

Again, it's always nice to be able to substantiate and have these documents so that you can advertise your successes and so forth. Very important that you and your partners are able to prove to the community what value this is has had. And by keeping these documents, should be able to do that.

And the fifth step is adding your own. What does your organization need to include to be successful? And again, do a little brainstorming there and print all that out. And in your appendix to that document, you have worksheets that will have – allow you to drop in your own names, figures, and dates, and so forth. Next slide.

So we have another chat box here. Have you developed a transition plan in case staff members leave before they grant is completed? And if so, what does this plan include? And if you have it, you might even let us know when you plan to do this and to what extent. So entertain any answers you might give us now.

MS. HUMPHREY: And so while people are typing, Lyle, when you talk about having the staff having that plan of action is really, really key. I know that I've worked in other grants where individuals left and grantees did not have a plan in action. And so it's really key that you develop that succession plan.

MR. NEUMANN: It's critical because, as I mentioned, the end of the grant is substantiating that people got jobs. They got certifications. They completed training. And if you're short on staff and you can't document all that, that really hurts your performance. And it's crucial that – you don't want to lose one person who's been through this program with a positive outcome.

MS. HUMPHREY: Exactly. And as people are typing, and I see Mike says that as the state of Florida is – we will have to advertise open positions, set up a committee for hire, and conduct interviews, and select a new employee. This can take up to three to six weeks of action. So that is definitely a long time when you need to have individuals going.

But some of the key things that you shared were that, especially because we are in that year three, moving into year four, that – training everyone to be job developers. Because as you look at four, you're focusing a lot on job development. And so making sure that everyone at least knows how to talk to the employers and just know how to make sure that the individual's at play. Rosanna (ph) says that, no. The college leverage full-time staff in critical positions. OK.

MR. NEUMANN: Well, that's an excellent result. Hiring new staff, I think, can be very troublesome. If you only got eight or nine months left in the grant and you're out advertising for new staff and you could only guarantee them a job for six months and they're not trained, I'm not sure how practical that's going to be.

If we're looking at a succession plan of some kind with people who have knowledge of the program, would be your first option. And if you have to go a temporary hiring company or something, it's just very difficult to bring somebody in off the street with no knowledge of the program and get them trained and have any production out of them.

MS. HUMPHREY: Yeah. Mike says it's not very practical at all. I totally agreed with you. So what – others, continue to type. We'll go ahead to move on.

MR. NEUMANN: OK. Be happy to. America's Promise grant program was designed to build on the momentum of the WIOA to develop and expand regional partnerships and training opportunities, particularly for middle to high-skilled H-1B industries and occupations, ensuring that communities fully maximize their federal, state, and local funds to build a competitive workforce.

One of the primary vehicles for driving these strategies is regional workforce partnerships that are, A, creating sector-based career pathways and, B, offering tuition-free training to meet the needs of workers and businesses.

So leading directly from the grant program, America's Promise grant program was designed to build on the momentum and to expand regional partnerships and training opportunities, particularly for the middle and high-skilled H-1B program. One of the primary vehicles for driving those strategies is regional workforce partnerships that are creating sector-based career pathways and offering tuition-free training, as I have mentioned before, to meet the needs of the workers in the business.

The whole focus of this was to find a strategy for your particular grant that these sector partnerships would continue beyond the end of the grant. So hopefully, that you've developed these partnerships, you have a relationship with them, you're bringing on new partners as the grant continues, and you're working and focused on building these partnerships so that'll be a lasting relationship well beyond the seed money that the grant produced to originate them. OK? If you have any questions as we move along here, just put them in the chat box and we'll try to address them as we go here.

Sustainability strategy three is building and maintaining these partnerships. The partners play an important role in sustainability in several ways. Number one, they connect you to a greater resource, such as their particular sector support groups, the community groups, like Rotary Clubs and so forth. They provide services if your program has to cut back. And they advocate on behalf of your cause.

The partners can also help rally the community around your program and its goals. And that's where you just can't be bashful in taking this data that you get every quarter. And, in fact, your own data that you generate probably every month, at least, and touting the impact that you've had on the community. There's many, many ways to do that and we'd be happy to discuss those with you offline here if you'd like to have more information on how to do that.

So as you build these new partnerships, use this data to create attention grabbers to inform the partners, leaders of the city, and public that you serve the impact that the program's had. Form an alumni association who could also advocate for your cause. Speak to local associations, such as the Rotary Clubs.

Provide hand-outs showing solid data to – in simple graphic form, what the impact of the local economy has been and what it can continue to be. Develop a common message that all partners can use with their contacts to spread the word.

Create posters for each of your partners to post in their entrances for claiming that they are a proud member of the program. In other words, create a team approach with a common theme to promote the word of the impact that this has had and could continue to have with continued associations and partnerships.

One of the methods, of course, is to conduct a current partner or stakeholder analysis. Which organizations or individuals will require time and energy to keep involved? Determine if your partners have an interest in sustaining the benefits of the project and are willing to be part of the project.

And create a stakeholder management plan based on the analysis of the way to meet with employer partners to determine if the training provided by this project is still relevant. And if it's not, what does it need to have done to meet the current needs?

Identify organizations and individuals that are not currently involved in the program but are impacted by the program. Determine how they can contribute to and benefit from the work you engaged in in your program. So in other words, align the strategies to the checklist and, once again, share that we provide a worksheet to guide you and that your team, as you think through each step of maintaining this partnership, do an analysis of each partner.

Pick out the ones that are doing a great job and let them be your spokesman and help them bring in the others. Gather ideas from them on the benefit that they've gained. What the return they've got. And use these tools to approach those partners and prospective partners on what's in it for them.

Take your trainers on a tour of several of the employers and ask if the current training is meeting their needs. And give them a first-hand look at what – how that training is being used. There are so many resources available to identify other organizations, individuals, and employers that are impacted by your program and are not currently involved.

And you need to stress that the more, the merrier. Bring them on. And there's programs I work with where it's kind of contagious. They've seen the benefits that the program is making. They see the return that the employers are getting. And they come to the door and knock on it and beg to be part of that. They don't want to miss out.

So I had another grantee who did an analysis of what the grant amount that they got and they took all of the placements they had made. They annualized the wages that these folks were being paid.

And they were able to substantiate that the return on the investment of the – for the first year these people are employed exceeded the grant amount. And that is a very compelling story about the success of this grant. These are the kinds of stories that you really need to be out there telling your public in order to get them behind the project and get stake leaders to take notice. Next slide.

Looking back on the checklist again, that's on page 4, there's another simple example, and it was a partner who – building and maintaining partnerships. What the responsibilities would be. They would continue to be the lead employer partner. The resources that it would take, the human capital. They were going to ask them to serve as a leader advisor. And then, the potential barriers that they could identify. They've got a strong relationship with the current CEO, although he's retiring. They'll need to meet with the new CEO and continue those partnerships.

These are kinds of things that happen all the time, that, as you get a larger and larger employer base, people change. HR offices change. You have to be on top. You have to have the necessary staff to keep on top of that and keep that partnership active and alive. So it takes – it just takes nourishment daily. That's all I have. I'm looking here to see if there's any other questions that has come in and if not, I'll turn it back to Erika.

MS. HUMPHREY: OK. Thank you, Lyle. And so we just want to encourage you to use the checklist. Because, again, the checklist will, again, help to focus your action steps with your staff and with your partners and key stakeholders. So again, which really encourages you. And so just restating. So we gave you some examples and then, in the appendix, that's where you can have – work with your partners and answer those questions as well.

And then, Linda says we had a local WIB that uses one factor in determining WIOA eligibility. It must be shown as being in demand. The programs we have are launch use (ph) and AP grants, have over 90 percent employment rates because of local demand. But for some reason, they don't come up in demand when the WIB does their analysis. So we are rejected for WIOA funding. Very frustrating. Any suggestions?

So we're going to actually come back to that, Linda, where we have questions and answers. So we put that over to the side. And so like I said, we will definitely answer that question. And in the meantime, Greg did ask you how are they determining in demand. OK? So we will continue to move on. And so I'd like to introduce Christina Bakewicz. She's the manager at Monroe Community College. And she's going to be sharing how they have worked with their partners. So Christina?

CHRISTINA BAKEWICZ: Yes. Thank you. Can everybody hear me?

MS. HUMPHREY: Yeah. Can you just give an introduction of who you are and your organization?

MS. BAKEWICZ: Sure. Our organization is Monroe Community College and we are located in upstate New York. And we're one of the largest community colleges in our region, actually, the largest. And we have – so we have the highest population of students.

Our grant focuses on training in IT, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing, which are the – three of the largest H-1B industries here and I'm sure in other regions as well. We focus on providing funding for short-term training, meaning one year or less, in these industries, along with intensive support services to help with program completion.

MS. HUMPHREY: Great. Thank you. So Christina, who are your regional partners? And how does your organization plan to sustain the relationship after the grant has ended?

MS. BAKEWICZ: Yeah. We've kept our partners for this grant – even though it's quite large, we've kept it relatively simple. Funded partners are the three community colleges in our area, Genesee Community College, Finger Lakes Community College, and then, of course, us, and the three corresponding workforce investment boards that go along in those areas. So Rochester Works, Finger Lakes Works, and GLOW Works. Together, all of us cover the nine-county region of upstate New York. Unfunded partners are New York State Department of Labor and a variety of other community-based agencies.

As far as how we plan to sustain after the grant has ended, we really haven't – I mean, we didn't start these relations solely because of this grant. They've been ongoing for a while, and we plan to continue that. I think one of the things that we've implemented that it will be really helpful with this is how closely we've begun to work together with our – each of our corresponding workforce investment boards.

So our WIBs actually do our intake for us. So they meet with each and every one of our students, which opens that student to up a variety of other services and forces us to communicate about how that student is doing.

We've been able to, with the intake the community workforce invest boards – they ask a lot of questions, questions that we wouldn't necessarily ask our students pertaining to disability, need for childcare, all things like that. The intent of that is to give us a better picture of our student so that we can then have them referred either in-house or to other community-based agencies to be able to get the support services that they need. Again, coming back to the retention of these students.

MS. HUMPHREY: Great. Thank you. And I'd like to ask another question. How are the regional partners involved in sustainability planning? And what has been discussed those far in relation to which activities they can help with sustaining?

MS. BAKEWICZ: Great. Yeah. We have developed an interagency referral process, which I think will help a lot. We all agreed on one form that we created and implemented that we use to refer students and clients across our agencies in a process that goes – and we follow up on those students.

And this is outside of just the WIBs. It's those individual community-based organizations that support our students. It's obviously New York State Department of Labor. And all the partners, all the people that sit on the board of the workforce investment board. That's one of the ways. Just being able to make cross referrals because it's so important that we provide all the services available and don't try to do everything on our own by tapping into the expertise of our partners.

And that leads us right to looking for other projects to partner on. We've sat down and had discussions about which – what are the strengths of each of our organizations. And how can we quickly respond to different opportunities knowing what our strengths are?

We can quickly respond to different grant opportunities and different program opportunities that are available because we already know what that partnership will look like and who will do which piece of the required activities on a grant. Even though they vary a little, still, our strengths and what we're good at, those things don't typically tend to change. So we could quickly pull together and respond to any opportunity that comes our way.

And cross-training opportunities, I think, will help us in sustaining these partnerships as well. And so whenever we would hold a training opportunity in-house and offer it only to our staff or the one-stop would or whoever in this – on this committee that we'll still continue to work together as a training opportunity. They invite all of us.

So we just went to a training on how to assist people with criminal records in obtaining employment, which is a huge topic of discussion here in our region. And I'm sure, again, it is in other regions as well. But we wouldn't have necessarily had access to that if we didn't belong to this partnership. And so that will continue as well. There's no – there's nothing – no cost to it for us to be able to share that information and share those resources.

MS. HUMPHREY: Thank you, Christina. And if you have questions for Christina, you can put it in the main chat. I actually had one. In developing that in-agency process referral, did you all come together and say this is what we needed? How did that happen? Because that's really important because everyone seems to be on the same page.

MS. BAKEWICZ: Yes. That's exactly what we did. And it wasn't a quick process. It took probably – we meet – this committee meets four times a year. Probably took us three of those four meetings, if not more. and then, correspondence in between, to come up with that referral form.

And we're still tweaking it as program changes or as different contact people – that's the other important thing. We all have to update our contact information on a regular basis to make sure that when I send my referral form over to John Smith, he's still there with that organization. So yeah, we came together, we revised, we got input to see what other regions were doing; and then, finally came up with this standard referral form.

MS. HUMPHREY: Great. Thank you for sharing. Because I'm sure that'll be helpful to others. I know it took a while, but even if you can do it on the small scale, would definitely be able to sustain and – as you continue to work after the grant ends. That's really great. So now, it's your turn, grantees that are on the line. Which partners are involved right now in your sustainability planning? I see employer partners. OK.

And everyone, please vote. Regional. OK. That's important, to have those regional partners as well, because this is what America's Promise really focused on, these partnerships. The training providers. Education partners. Interesting. Supportive service providers. That's really good, that you're getting them to the table as well. Because you know what? Because those individuals, when – if there is a funding issue after the grant ends, still being able to provide those supportive services, that is very, very key.

All right. Thank you. Thanks, Greg. And so when I talk about – especially when I just gave that example, when I saw the supportive services, especially when the grant ends and we have those services, those placements, or they still need to get – starting to get to employment or still looking for jobs, funding is going to be very, very key. And so our fourth strategy, developing a funding plan.

So planning for stable funding should be a very strategic process that addresses the long-term needs of your program and adjust to changing trends in the economic cycle. So we know that things have changed from in the very beginning of the grant to where we are now. So really key and looking at developing a funding plan to provide safeguards and to ensure that key infrastructures are maintained, including an adequate number of qualified staff. And Lyle mentioned, when we're talking about that succession planning, that's really where, if you notice, when we were going all over all of these four areas, that they all are intertwined.

Another strategy is to determine the availability of other sources of financial support, including local and state government funding, industry funding, and foundation support. And so going back to our worksheet, again, because we really do want you to use the worksheet, on page 5, we just gave an example. So again, the worksheet provides those instructions.

And then, the appendix, that's where you go ahead and work with your team on. And so what's the promising practice? Based on what was stated, remember in that first strategy, a program assessment. So what was actually stated, you're going to take that information. And now, you're going to say, okay. What's the funding strategy? This is the promising practice. How am I going to fund that? What resources are needed and which partner can support? So everything feeds of each other, which is really key.

Is one that you're involved and say – ask you what steps have you taken to secure other funding sources to sustain your promising practices? Choose all that apply. So again, what steps have you taken to secure other funding sources to sustain your promising practices? We have make contact with businesses and foundations.

Great. That can help the organization sustain the project. Leveraging. Introducing resources. Important. I see seeking other community-based organizations with a similar mission and vision. I think that's really, really key. To begin to set up those community-based organizations where you can come together once the grant ends. OK.

We are seeking other federal-funded sources. And then, a large percent are saying we are waiting to hear about the next deal or funding opportunity. But no. We usually get a lot there, but, again, with thinking about other funding sources, we did ask that on the questionnaire to you guys about a month ago.

And some of the feedback we did say here is that foundations, WIOA, employer corporate giving. And I thought that was a real key one that some grantees are looking at. Employer corporate giving. One college said we have alternative streams here at the college, WIOA and other state and local and federal grants. An endowment funding. My colleagues have explored and applied for state funding opportunities. OK?

And so I know a lot of times, we just wait on that deal or funding, but it's a great time right now to begin to start to explore these foundations. One grantee, which I thought was really great from the America's Promise, said that they are starting to look at the Gates Foundation and the – (inaudible) –Foundation as well. And so those are great – (inaudible) –to begin to start looking. And then, talking to your partners as well to see what are the contacts that they have. Thanks, Greg. We're going to move on.

And so now, we've come to the portion of any questions you have for Julie, any questions you have for Christina, Lyle, myself. In the main chat, you might have heard some conversation going on there that you wanted further clarification. I think Greg and Linda, they've been working it out by talking to one another. But if there are any other questions that you may have, it's a great time, again. If for Julie, for Christina, for Lyle, or myself, or even for Greg.

OK. So again, as you think about it and you think about questions you may have, I'd like to just go ahead and just recap some of the things that we actually heard. Keep in mind that it may not be possible for all activities to be sustained and focused. And really focus on the ones that have the greatest impact or are producing desired outcomes.

Review labor market statistics to determine if any elements of the project need to be modified to meet current industry needs. Consider having multiple staff members, this is what I talked about before, trained on job placement strategies. So that – if you just have that one job placement person and they leave, as Lyle mentioned, I heard Mike calling from Florida, it may take three to six weeks to able to bring someone on board. Making sure that everyone is training in job placement.

And then, also, to use the checklist to conduct a current partner or stakeholder analysis. Which partners can really help us move our promising practices we found evidence for. Which ones can really help us and which ones can't? That doesn't mean you have to put them to the wayside, but the ones that really can, they can probably help, too, to maybe develop other partnerships. Making sure that they are at the table is really, really key. And then, Lyle, did you have any recaps that you'd like to make sure that individuals are aware? I do see some people are typing.

MR. NEUMANN: I don't have anything more to add, unless there are questions for me.

MS. HUMPHREY: OK. The – we obviously say thank you very much for the recap. So again, so we do have just a reminder on the America's Promise community of practice. You can actually find the file, the checklist, as well as the version on Microsoft Word, just the appendix, so that you can type in with your tool.

I wanted to make sure that you knew that. And for those of you who have not started or in the process of your sustainability planning, again, it's a really great time to bring those partners in. And I see that a lot of you are doing that already. But to then use these tools to just really help to focus more of your action planning. OK?

I also wanted to share some upcoming technical assistance. In September 2019, which is next month, we're going to do a webinar on change management. Tips to effectively manage the changing life cycle of the grant.

Again, this is just the – this webinar today was just a first a series of focusing on sustainability strategies. And so change management, when you're focusing on what happens when you – like we just talked about staff leave. So we're going to have individuals from this field really share their expertise on how to effectively manage change during the life cycle of the grant, where you guys are now.

Contact information. Again, if you have questions and didn't get the opportunity to put them into the chat box, or something comes up where you thought about, oh, later on this evening or tomorrow, please feel free to put those into the americaspromise@dol.gov and we will make sure that we get an answer for you as well.

Thank you very much for attending. If there are no other questions – I see a little bit of typing, but if there are no other questions, we will turn it back over to Greg.

(END)