**WorkforceGPS**

**Career Pathways Drives Inclusive Apprenticeship**

**Aligning Apprenticeship Ecosystems with the Association of University Centers on Disabilities**

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JON VEHLOW: Welcome to "Career Pathways Drives Inclusive Apprenticeship, Aligning Apprenticeship Ecosystems with the Association of University Centers on Disabilities."

Without further ado, I'd like to kick things off to our moderator today, Carolyn Jones, Senior Policy Advisor, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy Youth Policy Team. Carolyn?

CAROLYN JONES: Thanks, Jon. Hello, everyone, and welcome to today's webinar. My name is Carolyn Jones. As mentioned, I am the Senior Policy Advisor on the Youth Team at the Office of Disability Employment Policy, or ODEP, here at Labor. I'm moderating today's event alongside Angela McDaniel, Diversity and Inclusion Lead at the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship.

I'm excited to be cohosting the discussion today and pleased to introduce today's speakers, all with deep knowledge and experience in work-based learning, apprenticeship, and disability employment policy. From the Office of Disability Employment Policy, or ODEP, we have the chief of staff, Patrick Mannix; and the deputy administrator, Mike Qualter, from the Office of Apprenticeship. We also have the division chief, Megan Baird, and program analyst Gaby Aponte-Henkel, both with the Office of Apprenticeship. Rounding out today's speakers is policy advisor Dr. Scott Michael Robertson with ODEP.

Today we're going to discuss and provide an overview of the Department of Labor's inclusive workplace learning investments and define ODEP's mission and vision around employment policies and practices. We will also discuss ODEP's apprenticeship inclusion models initiative and the role of inclusive apprenticeship and the future of work and workplace.

Now that we have established the framework for today's webinar, here now is Angela McDaniel who will moderate the remainder of the discussion. Angela?

ANGELA MCDANIEL: So happy to be here today and connect with the Office of Disability Employment Policy. We have been working on many projects together and look forward to working on more projects in the near future. Right now we're going to have Patrick Mannix, Chief of Staff from ODEP, explain a little bit and give a little preview of our webinar today.

PATRICK MANNIX: Thank you, Angela, very much. Welcome, everyone. Thank you so much for joining us on this WorkforceGPS webinar on Career Pathways Drives Inclusive Apprenticeship, Aligning Apprenticeship Ecosystems with the Association of University Centers on Disabilities. We are partnering on this webinar with our colleagues at the Employment and Training Administration's Office of Apprenticeship.

As Angela said, my name is Patrick Mannix. I'm chief of staff at the Office of Disability Employment Policy, also known as ODEP, here at the U.S. Department of Labor. Before coming to the Department of Labor, as part of President Trump's inaugural landing team, I spent part of my career helping people with disabilities, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities attain competitive integrated employment. I'm delighted to speak on today's webinar.

As you may know, ODEP is a non-regulatory federal agency within the U.S. Department of Labor that focuses on developing and influencing policies and practices to that increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

We do this by collaborating with many stakeholder organizations, including employers, all levels of government, and service providers. ODEP especially values our collaboration with national nonprofit organizations, such as the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, AUCD. Through our alliance with AUCD we share resources and information on enhanced policy and promising in best practices, driving gainful employment for people with disabilities, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

October is – (inaudible) – time for these types of collaborations, and ODEP's – (inaudible) – as we observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month, also known as NDEAM. All of us that ODEP are excited that President Trump has recently issued a proclamation for NDEAM. We are also delighted that Secretary Scalia, one of his first e-mails to everyone here at the Department of Labor, was about NDEAM.

Each year NDEAM has a different theme. This year for 2019 it is the right talent right now. I love that because it encapsulates what we're talking about today, how inclusive apprenticeship opportunities pull on the talented skills of youths and adults with disabilities to support access to employment. We strongly believe that inclusive apprenticeship and related work-based learning can expand career pathways in information technology, healthcare,– (inaudible) – manufacturing, and other growing sectors of the American economy for people with disabilities.

I'm happy to share that today's WorkforceGPS webinar will highlight how our apprenticeship inclusion model, also known as AIM, this initiative supports pilot projects in these three sectors which receive intensive technical assistance. Our AIM initiative at ODEP represents a partnership between two policy teams at ODEP, the Youth Policy Team and the Employment-Related Support Policy Team.

ODEP's Senior Policy Advisor, Carolyn Jones, who we heard from, shared how this partnership on AIM brings complementary expertise to drive policy and practices fostering access to inclusive apprenticeship opportunities. For instance, it ensures that the AIM initiative emphasizes both pre-apprenticeship and postsecondary transition to apprenticeship, as well as employment-related support, such as acceptable work like technology.

The ERS team, or employment-related support team, at ODEP is funded in Partnership for Employment and Acceptable Technology, or PEAT for short and in ODEP's technical assistance center for several years.

Later in this webinar, ODEP Policy Advisor, Dr. Scott Michael Robertson, will discuss how ODEP and PEAT promote efforts to enhance accessible workplace technology, including for apprentices with disabilities. Dr. Robertson will describe how ODEP collaborates with our federal partners and stakeholder organizations to increase access to gainful employment opportunities for people on the autism spectrum. He will also highlight how two AIM pilot sites seek to advance access to inclusive apprenticeship opportunities for youth and adults on the autism spectrum.

Recently, Congress passed legislation to reauthorize the central Autism CARES Act with unanimous votes in both the House and Senate, and we're very happy that President Trump signed this critical bill into law on Monday afternoon. The Autism CARES Act of 2019 focuses federal autism activities on increasing support for people on the autism spectrum throughout the– (inaudible) – and the life course, which, of course, includes someone's career. It also adds representation from the Department of Labor to membership on the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee, a federal advisory committee which is a very positive step.

Now, I would like to turn it over to the Office of Apprenticeship's Deputy Administrator, Mike Qualter, who he's the – (inaudible) – for some time to doing great things. He's former division director of investment and recently took on this new role.

MIKE QUALTER: Thank you so much, Patrick and Carolyn and the ODEP team. It's really great to have this partnership and collaboration and we are appreciative of the leadership and the time – (inaudible) – together this information today.

It is really an exciting time for apprenticeship and this notion of apprenticeship expansion is really a workforce development tool we have, and as Patrick referenced, the 2017 Executive Order on expanding apprenticeships in America. That really became this landmark policy, became the policy of the United States to expand apprenticeship opportunities broadly in thinking through the strategies that would best enable us to do that.

With the platform and this additional attention, we also have appropriated funding that Megan will talk about in a little while that is allowing us to do some new and innovative things around apprenticeship expansion, including how we bring in an underrepresented population and creating those – (inaudible) – into apprenticeship opportunities. We're going to be happy to share some of those investments that we've made so that folks and partners can be able to connect to those.

We have a very ambitious agency priority grow enrolling a million new apprentices into the system by 2021. We're at about 583 since the January of 2017, so we're about halfway through our goal and making really steady progress. It's due in large part to the great relationships we have with state, community colleges, CBOs, and of course, employers because industry really is the driver of these apprenticeship programs.

Maybe just a quick note; we can stay on this slide. Just a quick review of what are apprenticeships and how does that distinguishes from other work-based learning programs? I think that might be helpful just as a review for the audience. But apprenticeships are distinguished in the sense that they are jobs. Apprentices are employed, so it's not like a typical classroom training where you might be enrolled at a community college, where you may or may not be employed. A requirement of an apprenticeship in a hallmark is that you are actually in a job and being paid.

Apprenticeships also kind of take a dual approach to training where they offer both on-the-job learning and job-related classroom instruction. That's a really critical kind of element where the participant is receiving both types of training services. Of course, the training always results in an industry recognized nationally credible credential.

Right now, one of the big approaches – and if we can move to the next slide – is these milestones around what does apprenticeship look like in the modern day. Traditionally, apprenticeships have been in the skill trades and obviously well-utilized in construction. But we want to promote and expand apprenticeship as a new model of training in new sectors, so we have new relationships with employers in healthcare, cyber security, information technology, transportation, financial services, hospitality, engineering, and energy to name a bunch. But this is creating new opportunities to really now have to align our net in terms of including more underrepresented populations in these job training opportunities, so we're really glad about this kind of industry expansion.

Another key, in addition to expanding into new sectors, is modernizing apprenticeship processes to make it easier for partners to participate in the system and to develop and design and have programs improved, and expanding access to youth apprenticeships. Our average age of an apprentice right now is about 30 years of age and so we're trying to get even further down into the high schools and capturing youth sooner and putting people onto on-ramps for these opportunities, particularly maybe where college is not going to be the primary choice of education where apprenticeship can really fill that important task.

Then another key goal of what we're trying to do is align better with federal and state workforce development, education, commerce and economic development systems, and making sure that those are well integrated with the work of apprenticeship and being able to leverage that as a tool in their toolkit of training resources.

If we could move to the next slide, one of the things we want to be able to do is promote apprenticeship broadly because we still feel like there's a lot we can do to educate the public and potential partners about the value of apprenticeship. So we want to give a plug that one of the big things we're doing in November, starting on the 11th through the 17th is National Apprenticeship Week. We're creating opportunities for folks who want to learn more about it. In your local areas there will be events put on by colleges, workforce, development partners, employers, and other organizations who are involved in apprenticeships, to elevate and educate other organizations or individuals about what apprenticeship looks like.

This is a really great opportunity. It's our fifth year now. I think last year we had over a thousand events, and so this is easily accessible to anybody who wants to be able to participate. If you are someone who is involved in apprenticeship now, we would encourage you to get on to apprenticeship.gov and register an event, be a willing host to help spread the word about apprenticeship; but also for those who are interested in learning more about apprenticeship and getting more of a hands-on feel for it, finding events in your local area during that week to get plugged in a little bit better.

We're really excited about all of these opportunities and, again, we're really encouraged by the work around what we're trying to do to be more inclusive of underrepresented populations in apprenticeship and this partnership will ODEP is really critical, and with all of the folks who are listening in now and to the recording in the future, we want to be able to make sure that you understand how to connect better with apprenticeship resources.

Apprenticeship.gov is one resource. We also have a list of contacts in every state across the country where you can get with a state apprenticeship director who can facilitate conversations about learning more about apprenticeship. There's also a connection to the national office here Washington D.C. where we can be responsive to both e-mails and phone calls that you may have to answer the questions on apprenticeship that you might have.

With that said, I'm going to turn it back over to Angela and I thank everybody for their time.

MS. MCDANIEL: Thank you, Mike. I just want everyone to know that Mike is committed to increasing the number of persons with disabilities that participate in our apprenticeship program. Moving forward, the ODEP office and the Office of Apprenticeship will be working together to plan future – (inaudible) – for the events and collaborations for National Apprenticeship Week and throughout the year.

Right now we're going to have Megan, who is the Division Chief for Investments. As she talks about the different many, many grants and contracts that we have here at the Department of Labor through the Office of Apprenticeship, please be thinking about how you can be included in these opportunities and how we can add diversity networks into, again, increasing apprenticeships for persons with disabilities.

At this time we're going to have Megan Baird talk about investment contracts and grants.

MEGAN BAIRD: Thank you, Angela. I think to reiterate Angela's point, we're going to talk about a lot of things that we funded and things that we hope to fund, and diversity and inclusion is a theme that crosses across all of our investments. It's not just a schedule [??], but it's something that we are trying to interweave into everything that we're doing. Again, Mike just touched on some of the agency goals around apprenticeship and I wanted to spend a little bit of time talking about how we use apprenticeship funds to support these agency goals of expansion.

On this slide, this slide really depicts a framework that we are using to identify the four key areas that we are targeting for apprenticeship expansion with our investments. It kind of puts into focus for you all what we're thinking when we're thinking about what to do with our available funding. It starts with the core element of apprenticeship.

These are things like on-the-job learning, class instruction, credentials. Employer and industry outreach is obviously a huge part of our apprentice efforts, and this we do through our intermediary partners or sometimes it's direct industry engagements from us. Also the national infrastructure, so that's IT, like systems, webpages, and also marketing. And last, but certainly not least, are the grants and investments.

At the center of all of these investment efforts, I hope that you can see on this slide we have our partners listed, employers and industry, and, of course, the apprentices. Those are really the key players that we thought of when we were thinking through our investment framework.

I also wanted to point out that DOL's efforts to expand apprenticeship are broader than just some money that is appropriated for apprenticeship, and it's also not just grants but contracts as well. If you're looking for funding opportunities, keep this in mind. Again, grants, contracts, it could be partnering with someone that already has a grant or contract to do this apprenticeship expansion work. I know Angela, I think, is going to touch on this a little bit more later on.

Then these next few slides we'll go through quickly. These are to give you an example of what falls in each of these quadrants. These are what we consider some of the core elements and also what falls under the framework of employer and industry outreach. Next slide.

Under the grants and investments and national infrastructure, I mentioned we're going to cover some grants to states later on to give you some great examples. This will include efforts outside of the apprenticeship funding exchange to give you an idea of how much investments the Department is putting into apprenticeship expansion, and also has apprenticeship.gov in there that Mike mentioned is really what we consider the one-stop shop for apprenticeship information; some great resources on there and other types of events and marketing that we hope to continue to be rolling out. So, just a lot of opportunity for you to be involved to also receive lots of information.

What have we done recently? We were given $145 million in this past year, fiscal year '18 which just ended; $145 million specifically up for bid for funds for registered apprenticeships. On the screen there are some of examples of what we did with that funding. The state apprenticeship grants, that was $75 million. We've also given out previous rounds of state apprenticeship grants; Gaby is going to touch on some of them. Several other grantees are working with individuals that have disabilities as part of the target population.

We've also invested and used apprenticeship contracts, again, that align with our goal of trying to expand – (inaudible) – to the youth population. We are also working with community college apprenticeships and really using that as a vehicle to expand apprenticeship; expansion and modernization efforts, Mike covered some of these as well; in there is included some contracts that were awarded to our industry and equity partners, and our equity partners are the ones that are also helping to expand apprenticeship to underrepresented populations. Some of them might be joining us today and I think the leader on one of our contracts, H-CAP – (inaudible) – talking about a little bit later specifically for their AIM projects.

But while the information that you knew that there are a lot of resources out there and some of these funding opportunities, like the industry and equity contracts, they are there to help partner and work with the system and anybody interested in expanding apprenticeship, so they were also a great resource.

Then as I mentioned, other money too. There are other apprenticeship efforts that were funded, not with the $145 million but with additional department money, and there are two examples on the screen, the Scaling Apprenticeship grants, that was expanding apprenticeship, and the women and nontraditional occupation grants, those as well come from an additional funding source that help add to that larger framework that I mentioned.

Where we going next? Exciting FY '19, we don't have anything to announce yet, but just know that we did get $160 million in appropriated funds. We are excited to use that money. Again, we're going to be looking at that investment framework to really see how we can support our expansion efforts, looking at all of our target goals. We just started the fiscal year and that money will be rolled out throughout the next 11, 12 months. We also have already started to announce our apprenticeship expansion efforts through other funding sources. There was $100 million in apprenticeship grants called Closing the Skills Gap that was announced and closed recently.

We definitely encourage you to check out our apprenticeship page on the Department of Labor's website that's on this link. That's where you can find information about all of the investments that were awarded that I just talked about. You'll also find out information about new opportunities when they come out and information notices as well not specific to our grants, though, and Angela later on will cover some ways that you can find out when there are contract opportunities available to you.

With that, I think I will turn it over to Carolyn.

MS. JONES: Thanks. Thanks, Megan. Now we will shift the discussion to career pathways and inclusive apprenticeships. I think it's important for me to define the term career pathways. We use the definition cited in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA, section 3. As defined, career pathways is the combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that aligns with the skill needs of industry and the economy of the state or region. It also prepares an individual to be successful in secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships are a customizable, flexible, and proven business-driven model for developing workers. By using an apprenticeship approach, businesses with skill gaps can take steps to ensure workers are trained to employer specifications and gain the value of apprentices' work during their training.

Mike briefly spoke about the five apprenticeship components and I'll briefly go through them. First and foremost, an apprenticeship is a job. An apprenticeship combines paid on-the-job training with related technical classroom instruction. Apprentices learn alongside a mentor in the workplace and apprentices are a national industry recognized portable credential upon successful completion of the program.

In 2018, ODEP launched the Apprenticeship Inclusion Models, or AIM. This two-year $2 million initiative will develop pilot projects within existing apprenticeship programs to expand access to occupational skills training, credential attainment, job placement, and retention for approximately 500 youth and adults with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64.

The AIM pilots will have a regional approach to support apprentices in high-growth, high demand, IT, healthcare fields, and advanced manufacturing industries and occupations. Also, providing and connecting apprentices to support its services within local communities is built into this model. Other activities to be conducted include training, research, analysis, knowledge transfer, and dissemination.

ODEP has partnered with four partner organizations to pilot the AIM initiatives. Each pilot is paired with a workforce intermediary that will assist in the recruitment effort of using young adults with disabilities. They will also partner with local workforce and community-based organizations and provide disability-focused technical assistance to all the pilot sites. All pilots will target people with disabilities. Roughly 75 percent of the pilots will focus on a specific disability population.

Amazon, for instance, their information technology registered apprenticeship pilot will target disabled vets. The industry manufacturing technician program, or MIT pre-apprenticeship pilot, will target all disability populations.

Both Microsoft and Healthcare Career Advancement Programs, or H-CAP, will target job seekers on the autism spectrum. Microsoft-registered apprenticeship pilot will focus on information technology and H-CAP career apprenticeship pilot will focus on healthcare pathways, such as sterilization and medical technicians.

I won't read the site locations, but you can see them on your screen. We have a number of cities in which we're going to target for this pilot project.

With that I will turn it over to Gabby.

GABRIELLE APONTE-HENKEL: Thank you. Welcome everybody to our presentation today. Today I'll be talking about three discussion programs that employ apprenticeships with disabilities. I'll also address promising practices for recruiting such individuals and encouraging apprenticeships who are disabled to self-identify. Next slide, please.

Shenandoah Valley Workforce Investment Board has a manufactured and technician pre-apprenticeship training program for people with disabilities. Over the course of 16 weeks they learn entry-level manufacturing skills and workplace behavior skills. Next slide, please.

MCS offers special programs and services for several underrepresented populations you can see listed here, including persons with disabilities, and provides auxiliary aids to help meet individuals' with disabilities workforce needs. Next please.

Abled-Disabled Advocacy assists with recruiting qualified applicants who want to work. They have free technical assistance regarding accommodations, information on tax credits, and employer incentives for on-the-job training.

We've talked about three apprentice programs that work with people with disabilities, so let's dive a bit more deeply into apprenticeship and people with disabilities. Apprenticeship programs should strive to have 7 percent of their workforce consist of people with disabilities. If a program is unable to reach the 7 percent aspirational goal, it should review its outreach and recruitment efforts to determine if they impede equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

Now let's look at some promising practices for recruiting people with disabilities. There are many activities that apprenticeship programs can engage in to recruit people with disabilities. An apprenticeship program can connect with a business service representative at the local CareerOneStop, reach out to local Workforce Board via, again, the CareerOneStop. Next slide please.

Get in touch with local organizations to recruit qualified people, such as state vocational rehabilitation agencies; connect with the governor's committee on employment of people with disabilities; and collaborate with local school boards and vocational education systems to develop apprenticeship programs. Next slide please.

We've addressed some promising practices for recruiting people with disabilities for apprenticeship. It's also very important for partnership programs to encourage people with disabilities to self-identify. Research regarding self-identification has shown that many individuals with disabilities experience fear about self-identifying. This fear can be based on previous negative experiences and may include concerns that the employer will choose not to hire him or her, focus on his or her disability rather than actual work performance, limit opportunities for advancement, and/or terminate him or her.

It's vital that apprenticeship programs post positions online with disability-affiliated jobs or partner with local agencies, tap into colleges and universities, and include an invitation to individuals with disabilities to apply as part of the standard equal opportunity statements in recruitment materials. Next slide.

Additionally, they can– (inaudible) – through recruitment material a willingness to provide accommodation, evaluate your screening process, ensure hiring specs [??] or aware of appropriate and legal interview practices.

DOL also believes that self-identifying plays an integral role in equal employment opportunities. The DOL disclosure form that you see here provides a starting point for important, helpful, and needed conversations about disability status and accommodations. It's important to note that self-identification benefit those with disabilities. If one does not disclose a disability, it's impossible for the apprenticeship program to make any accommodations that can benefit productivity and/or comfort.

Of course, the apprenticeship program benefits as well by helping to obtain valuable apprentices improve in productivity and morale, reducing Worker's Compensation costs, and improving apprenticeship diversity. Next slide.

Finally, here's a link to DOL's voluntary disability disclosure form and a link to a video that talks about self-identifying if they have a disability.

I'm now going to hand it over to Scott.

SCOTT MICHAEL ROBERTSON: Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to collaborate on this webinar and speak about the focal topic of accessible technology and how that is critically important for individuals to be able to participate actively in inclusive apprenticeship opportunities.

It is a very major facet of our work on inclusive apprenticeship at ODEP and our sister agencies here at the U.S. Department of Labor, and ensuring we give full access for youth and adults with disabilities, as well as the accessible technology is also a key focus for the employment whether it supports policy team at ODEP which also handles transportation, healthcare, and other related activities needed to obtain and maintain and exceed in competitive integrated employment opportunities. Can we flip to the next slide?

As you can see, we have a definition here of accessible technology. We define accessible technology differently than a system technology. Accessible technology is technology that can be used successfully by people with a wide range of functional abilities. Accessible technology is either directly accessible or usable without any additional devices or inaccessible in concert with a physical technology.

They can go ahead and handle it. It can be very complementary to each other and we prefer to see that for apprenticeship opportunities and other aspects of where we are using technology in the workplace and on-the-job training and in related classroom instruction, that the technology is already made accessible on the forefronts; that it is more cost-effective than to be – accessibility right at the get go rather than to having to make adjustments on the fly to ensure that the technology is fully accessible to people with disabilities. Can we flip to the next slide?

The modern workplace means that most job surveying occupations are posted online. Here we have the job applicants with disabilities that reported sets of barriers to applying for these jobs online because the applications are timing out or they're not supporting access, for instance, by screen readers or zoom magnification software that, again, increases the size of the context seen on webpages, and, for instance, if you have slower processing speed.

And, for instance, you have perhaps the cognitive developmental disability or intellectual disability, being able to apply for jobs online can also be challenging. Perhaps it's the language that's used on job applications may not always be accessible because it may be overly complex and not written in plain language, that can also present a major accessibility barrier to people applying for jobs, inclusive for apprenticeship opportunities. Can we flip to the next slide?

The partnership for employment and accessible technology that Patrick and others have mentioned earlier in this webinar presentation is a national technical system center that is funded by us at ODEP, the Office of Disability Employment Policy. It collaborates with technology companies, as well as employers – (inaudible) – companies, the big ones – Microsoft, Facebook, IBM, etc., Google – to ensure that policy and practices are enhanced to support full access to technology.

PEAT also operates a website portal at PEATworks.org. This includes different podcasts, webinars, articles, different resources, video interviews with employers and technology companies, as well as key tools that you can see mentioned here on this slide, such as TalenWorks, which supports accessible eRecruiting for being able to obtain employment opportunities; TechCheck where you can benchmark where you are currently on your current, say, accessible technology in your business; as well as, for instance, Buy IT, which is ensuring that the technology is accessible across your whole procurement cycle, which I know has many steps and phases, especially for us in government, and additional for folks in the private sector to make sure that they're having a major focus on the accessibility to technology when they're purchasing the technology and considering all aspects that can be required to purchase it.

Then Future Trends, the trends in social recruiting, live videos, and wearables, and other advancements – (inaudible) – in artificial intelligence that have been coming for the future workplace, and the emerging workplace and how that's impacting what – (inaudible) – like as if your place changes and how apprenticeship, for instance, can fit into that as the workplace evolves. You can see also on this slide that there's a quick snapshot of the PEAT website at, again, PEATworks.org on the site. I would encourage you access webinars to visit that portal to explore more about– (inaudible) – technology. Can we flip to the next slide?

I want to stress the major importance of ensuring that when we're thinking about accessibility of technology, that we think about all facets and all settings of what it means to be accessible for technology. As we have shared and highlighted already on this webinar, the apprenticeship opportunities include both on-the-job training and then related instruction that typically happens in the classroom. That means that you're fostering accessibility and technology to ensure apprentices with disabilities can access that technology, as well as apprentices without disabilities.

You want to be supporting, for instance, principles of universal design for learning in the classroom and universal design in the workplace, and then ensuring all of your systems and software and hardware, including, for instance, the job training systems in the workplace and the learning management systems in the classroom, are fully accessible to people with disabilities; and then that cuts across many different types of software, office software, spreadsheets, etc.

It's having a paradigm, if you will, on supporting accessibility, and PEAT has many great tools for going about how you can approach that in your organization and employers and in related service providers that support inquisitive apprenticeship opportunities. Can we flip to the next slide?

In concert with this, we should also be thinking strongly about – and our other presenters have highlighted how technology is one of the growing industry sectors for apprenticeship. By 2020, as one estimate has, more than a million new computing jobs having more quite a lot of applicants to be able to attain good jobs in the technology sector, and accessible technology skills are going to be a very major part of that, so having jobs that can support accessible technology filled by people with and without disabilities can be the pipeline for that, can be enhanced through inquisitive apprenticeship opportunities to get to that point that we can have strong applicants entering those jobs and leveraging the top talent and skills to fill those positions. Can we flip to the next slide?

PEAT's work in apprenticeship emphasizes these two main focuses: that you should be including people with disabilities in inclusive apprenticeships in the technology sector, as well as foster professional development in accessible technology skills for all technology professionals, including those in an apprenticeship and then in persons with other forms of post-secondary education and training, and ensure those opportunities are available to people with and without different types of disabilities.

These are a focal point of the recommendations that came out from PEAT on its Think Tank in 2017 that was held nationally here in D.C. with technology companies, employer service providers, government agencies, and other stakeholders in this space, as well as PEAT is also collaborative with national apprenticeship intermediary organization to support these goals, including Apprenti, which is an initiative of the Washington Technology Industry Association. Can we flip to the next slide?

I want to highlight very briefly that in July ODEP, Office of Disability Employment Policy, has awarded the FutureWorks Initiative as an outgrowth of PEAT, and expanded upon the work we're already doing in accessible technology. It includes what we're doing in PEAT, but it also incorporates autonomous vehicles or automated vehicles and transportation technology.

We expect many new jobs, including registered apprenticeships to be growing in that sector that is going to be a multi-trillion dollar industry eventually, and it's highlighted in many things that are going across the board in government policy, including from the U.S. Department of Transportation, our federal partners in that agency.

We are actively collaborous in that space, so that's why all the automated vehicles are a major facet of FutureWorks in addition to PEAT, the partnership for employment and accessible technology, and as well as growing emerging technology focuses that are going to be a part of the apprenticeship opportunities in technology as we go forward the next three years, including artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, expanded augmented reality, and many other growing facets of technology emersions that are going to be impacting, and including automation of tasks that will affect the workplace in the next 5 or 10 years, and lead to new, strong jobs that require growing technology, skills, and top talent.

This aligns with ODEP's existing engagement in efforts to enhance inclusive apprenticeship opportunities and connects with other priorities of the Administration, for instance, the Executive Order from the president a few months ago that talked about artificial intelligence and the impact on work and the economy. Can we flip to the next slide?

I also just want to mention – this is the last slide of this section – is the cross connection on this space that many information technology companies and other employers, including in the financial and business consulting industry and manufacturing and other growing sectors of the economy, also have growing hiring recruitment efforts for autism and other forms of neurodiversions, which is a subset of neurodiversity.

Autistic people, for instance – and I am an autistic person myself – as a policy advisor of the Office of Disability Employment Policy, autism is one of the most common kinds of disability in America, 1 percent to 2 percent among all children youth and adults.

As Patrick highlighted earlier in this webinar presentation, the Autism CARES Act of 2019 was recently signed by the president and that expands the prioritization on lifespan focuses for autistic people in the legislation in research and supports and services, and adds the U.S. Department of Labor to the federal Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee so that employment is becoming a much critical space of the – when we're zoning in on opportunities for autistic youth and adults growing up.

I want to emphasize that the inclusive apprenticeship opportunities offer a natural fit, further realistic on-the-job training, and related classroom instruction that fits with the focal interest of many autistic people and the barriers that folks face who are on the autism spectrum to being able to pursue, for instance, a four-year school, and so in many cases apprenticeship opportunities may be a better fit for their experiences in high school and middle school, and to help them have a better opportunity of being able to attain competitive in their related employments.

Prior funding through U.S. Department of Labor from the Employment and Training Administration, there's a couple of grants that were funded by ETA a few years ago, including managing the talent pipeline and help information, which is an American apprenticeship program funded grant that's about $4 million and has an awesome track for autistic people in medical coding. The Next Step Job Training and Employment partnership, which was funded for the Tech Hire program to the Exceptional Family Center, which has an anticipated goal 450 people on the autism spectrum being able to participate in healthcare and IT fields for stronger support in on-the-job training.

Again, if you have any other questions in this autism space or technology space, my contact information is at the end of the slide, along with other folks' contact information.

Next I would like to shift it over to Angela who'll be speaking on our next steps in this webinar presentation and where we are going on the road for inclusive apprenticeship opportunities.

MS. MCDANIEL: Thank you so much, Scott; great presentation. Moving forward, let's first – I want to bring to your attention there's a chat on your screen. If you have any questions, please feel free to start asking the questions and as soon as I finish these last few slides, I and our panelists will start answering your questions to the extent we can.

Moving forward with next steps, clearly, if you are on this webinar you're interested in increasing opportunities for persons with disabilities in the arena of apprenticeship. These are just some ideas for you to move forward in getting more information.

Go on to fedbizopps.gov. There is a listing of contracts every day, every week, and you have two avenues. You could, of course, every week go on for new opportunities, or as with grants.gov, you can go onto the website and list specific areas that you're interested in and they will send you a listing of the information per the specific information that you have listed.

Also, you can go onto apprenticeship.gov. Apprenceship.gov is for our stakeholders and it will provide information to you on a regular basis if you sign up for that website. Also, continue to communicate with the Office of Disability Employment and Policy and the Office of Apprenticeship.

At the back of this slide deck we have all of our panelists today, their contact information. For the project AIM, Carolyn Jones, is going to be your contact; for investments, the contact is Gabby; for the contracts you can be sure to contact myself.

I also want to mention that when you – going back to the specific opportunities for apprenticeship, as Megan mentioned, the Office of Apprenticeship gives out lots of money each year, but there's also other offices within the Department of Labor, such as the Women's Bureau who gave out the WANTO grant that Megan mentioned, and our Office of Workforce Investment gave out H-1B expansion grants.

My main point is when you're looking at fedbizopps.gov and grants.gov you're going to see many opportunities, along with apprenticeship.gov, that are from other offices other than just straight through the Apprenticeship office.

Carolyn brought to my attention for resources that there is a new free tool – emphasizing the word free – where if an employer has an application and they want to make sure that it's accessible, you can go on to PEATWorks.org, which is on a slide previous that Scott mentioned, and they can have that application embedded and make sure that it is accessible to all persons. In the near future we will also do a demo of that particular tool also.

You have your resource lists in the next two or three slides. We're not going to go through each of them individually, but please be sure to read through those. You have your contact information.

Now let's see if we have any questions. I know there was a question about the PowerPoint and, Jon, if you can explain where they can get their PowerPoint.

MR. VEHLOW: Yes. No problem. If you see that file share window on the bottom right-hand side of your screen and kind of move it around a little bit, just click today's PPT and then click download at the bottom right-hand side and you can get that PowerPoint with all of the links and contact information for our presenters today.

If you do have any additional questions right now, please put them in that main chat on the left-hand side of your screen. We're – (inaudible) – and ready to go to answer some questions here.

Just to remind everyone, on the webinar right now, while we wait for the question to kind of come in, again, the reporting, the transcript, the executive summary will be posted on WorkforceGPS in about three business days. That's going to be on that main event page that you used to register for this webinar. You can also use that. We'll have that information and that recording posted to that page in about three days. We just want to remind you.

I see a couple of people writing into the chat right now. Just waiting for that question.

MS. MCDANIEL: Scott had an additional point that he wanted to make about how you can connect to what we're doing here at the Department of Labor. Scott, take it away.

DR. ROBERTSON: We emphasized earlier that the Association of University Center on Disabilities is a – we have an alliance with them at the Office of Disability Employment Policy. We just wanted to throw out to the audience in case any folks are joining from University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities – and I know there is a national network of them across the country, as well – the LEND, the Leadership for Education Neurodevelopmental Disabilities that is funded for the Autism CARES Act.

I know that some of those University Centers for Excellence in Development Disabilities have been focusing actively on employment and we wanted to know if any of them have previously already explored the apprenticeship space or have looked at related opportunities in current pathways for employment for folks of intellectual or development disabilities and what we can offer on additional information or resources to help cross-connect to what you may already be doing in your work and employment at your individual University Center for Excellence on Development Disabilities.

MS. MCDANIEL: It seems like one of our – here it is now. Okay. So, Mr. Gregory [ph] is asking, "Are you doing any follow-up webinars in the future; if so, when?" We thank you for your enthusiasm. ODEP and OA has a continuous relationship. In fact, before this webinar started we were in the room trying to discuss some new ideas and avenues on how we want to move forward.

We cannot announce at this time specific webinars, but the good thing is Carolyn Jones and ODEP has all of your contact information. The same way they notified you about this webinar, we will let you know about other, not just webinars but resources, events, blogs coming up, and don't forget about National Apprenticeship Week. We hope to try to elaborate collaborate on some efforts across the country, so stay tuned. We do have your contact information.

DR. ROBERTSON: Two –

MS. MCDANIEL: Go ahead, Scott.

DR. ROBERTSON: One thing to add to that too is I would also encourage folks to actively follow the websites and the resources that we mentioned, for instance, PEAT, the Partnership for Employment and Accessible Technology that I highlighted, so PEATworks.org. For the Apprenticeship Inclusion Models initiative spra.com/AIM, and we have that in the resource section as well.

If you actively follow the website for AIM – again, spra.com/AIM – it's now displayed on the slide in front of you all right now – you can go there and follow this information that is happening with AIM and any events that we have coming up in the future.

There's the opportunity on that site as well to sign up for the interest list or – (inaudible) – to learn about opportunities that may happen in the pipeline and participate in the community of practice that we have for AIM for folks that are interested in this space of inclusive apprenticeship opportunities, whether you're a service provider, for instance the University Centers for Excellence on Development of Disabilities, of individual in post-secondary education, higher education, disability office, or any other professional that is actively very interested in inclusive apprenticeship opportunities, including service providers and employers can sign up for that community of practice on that AIM website, again, spra.com/AIM that's displayed right now on the PowerPoint slide right now in front of you. Keep abreast of those opportunities.

The one thing we can promise is there will be a lot of great opportunities coming down the pipe for November, even if we haven't announced many of them yet. We usually have a busy time of the year. Related to that for us, also now for October the National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we have many events that are starting to roll out here, both here in Washington D.C. and around the country.

If you go to ODEP's website at www.dol.gov/odep, you can download that poster that you saw on the earlier – one of the first slides in this webinar presentation, as well as find other resources to learn about how you can support access to opportunities for folks that have disabilities in the workplace, including through inclusive apprenticeship opportunities. I do encourage you all to cross-connect, inclusive apprenticeship to opportunities that are – and events that you're hosting now throughout the month of October, for National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Again, ODEP's website has many resources on there for learning about and exploring how you can highlight the theme of the right talent right now for National Disability Employment Awareness Month through the month of October.

MS. MCDANIEL: Thank you. Great wrap-up, Scott. Again, don't forget about apprenticeship.gov. When you click onto that link, go all the way to the bottom and you can sign up for the e-mail list. We designed this specifically for stakeholders to provide regular information for you. Yes. It's easier if you sign up for the list. Thank you, Mr. Gregory, for your enthusiasm and wanting to join this journey for us.

It's time pretty much to wrap up. It appears that we don't have any more questions. Again, look through the slides again. They are available for you. We have all our contact information on there. Moving forward, this is just the start of our continuing relationship with ODEP between ODEP and the Office of Apprenticeship.

I want to really thank our speakers. I know they're really, really busy, but they are really excited about increasing the number of apprenticeships specifically for persons of diverse background and persons with disabilities. I want to thank you all for attending this PowerPoint presentation today and that this is a very – we know that you all hold a very vital role and we cannot do this work without you, and without you we can't reach that 1 million goal that we have of increasing the number of apprenticeship opportunities.

Thank you so much and have a good evening.

MR. VEHLOW: Thank you, Angela. I just want to thank, again – second that and thank all of our participants and presenters today. If you could just please stay logged into the room for just a minute longer and provide us just some feedback. You see that feedback window where you can let us know what you thought of today's webinar. Please, just take a second now and share with us your thoughts. Let us know what you like or what we can improve on. There's also an additional topics window where you can let us know what you'd like to hear in future webinars.

Again, a recording of today's webinar as well as a transcript and executive summary will be made available on WorkforceGPS in about three business days.

You'll also see six polling questions there. If you can just take a second and answer those too, it gives us a better idea of how to better serve you guys in the future for these webinars as well.

Also to better connect with your WorkforceGPS colleagues, please take a few minutes and sign up for the member directory on WorkforceGPS. Again, that link is located at the top of the feedback window.

Again, we want to thank everyone for joining us today. With that, have a wonderful day, everybody.

(END)