**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Pre-Apprenticeship Programs: Creating Successful Paths for Future Apprentices**

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LAURA CASERTANO: With that, I'm going to get myself right out of the way. I want to welcome everyone to today's "Pre-Apprenticeship Programs: Creating Successful Paths for Future Apprentices" webinar.

I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Zodie Makonnen. She's the grant lead of the Scaling Apprenticeships Through Sector-Based Strategies, the Division of Strategic Investments, with the Employment and Training Administration. Zodie, take it away.

ZODIE MAKONNEN: Thank you so much, Laura. I appreciate it. And good afternoon, everyone. And welcome to our pre-apprenticeship webinar. My name again is Zodie Makonnen. I work in the Division of Strategic Investments. And as Laura mentioned, I'm the grant lead for the Scaling Apprenticeship grants. We appreciate you taking the time to join us today. And we hope you find this session informative and engaging. I want to introduce Wanda Monthey, who serves as our facilitator today. Wanda is a technical assistance coach from the Manhattan Strategy Group. Wanda? Are you there, Wanda?

WANDA MONTHEY: Sorry. This is Wanda. And thank you, Zodie, for passing that on. I still had my phone on mute. I'm sorry. I have the great opportunity to introduce our presenters today that represent four institutions since they're grantees. The first two that you will hear from today – and we are going to be scrambling this up. So they will start it out, and then we will have each of the others also in a different order. So today from Pennsylvania College of Technology – which is a public college in Williamsport, Pennsylvania – representing that institution is Shannon Munro, who is the vice president of Workforce Development; and Beth Bittenbender, who is the director of operations for Workforce Development.

Representing San Jacinto College in the Greater Houston area – which also has campuses in Pasadena and Houston, Texas – are Janell Hills, who is the project director for Apprenticeship Training; and Stephen Dodd, who works with IBM and is a certified project executive. Our next college representative is the Community College of Baltimore County. And we have Diane Targarona, who is the director of Allied Health Apprenticeships. And finally, but not least, we have Dave Cofer from Columbus State Community College, which is a community college in Columbus, Ohio. He is the project manager for Employer Engagement and Experiential Learning. And I will turn it back to Zodie now.

MS. MAKONNEN: Sure. Thank you, Wanda. And with us today, we also have Michelle Mills. She's a project lead managing the education office youth portfolio in the Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship. We're happy to have all of you. Today we want to give you a foundational knowledge of pre-apprenticeship that is specific to scaling apprenticeship grants. We'll share about elements of high-quality pre-apprenticeship programs, both from a DOL perspective and also based on other available resources. And then we'll share from four of our scaling apprenticeship grantees about how they are implementing pre-apprenticeships and addressing common challenges.

As you'll see from the presentation, there's a lot of variety and room for innovation here. Before we get started, we have our first poll. And the question is, does your scaling apprenticeship grant currently include a pre-apprenticeship component? If you could put in your answers and we'll give it a minute. That's great. It looks like about 82 percent of you – 24, 25 – are thinking about including a pre-apprenticeship component with several of you not yet, but are considering adding one. So this is a great time to be part of this webinar.

What is a pre-apprenticeship? A pre-apprenticeship is particularly under the scaling apprenticeship grant funding opportunity announcement. A grant-funded pre-apprenticeship must prepare participants for specific apprenticeship programs. It was never the intention of the grant program to do pre-apprenticeships as a standalone activity. Note that it really doesn't make sense to spend grant funds on pre-apprenticeships that don't meet the grant-funded apprenticeships, because the only performance metric you'll get with pre-apprenticeship is participants served. As I trust you all know by now, pre-apprentices cannot be counted in any of the scaling apprenticeship performance metrics for individuals except for participants served.

The TEN 13-12 is a good document to review for quality pre-apprenticeship programs. As you can see, we've provided the link on the slide. I do want to point out that much of the discussion about pre-apprenticeships you will encounter, and many of the models or case studies available, point to pre-apprenticeships for high school students. That aspect of pre-apprenticeship is not what we're talking about scaling apprenticeship grants, because you cannot serve high school students with H-1b grants. Here we're focused on getting participants an on-ramp onto apprenticeships for those who might not be ready for an apprenticeship without the extra support.

I'll also point out that many of the resources available assume a pre-apprenticeship leads to a RAP, or a Registered Apprenticeship Program. For scaling apprenticeship grants, this is not the case because it can lead to a RAP, an IRAP, or unregistered program that meets the five hallmarks as indicated in the FOA. I'll now turn it over to my colleague Michelle to talk about the benefits of the apprenticeship program and the elements of a quality pre-apprenticeship program. Michelle?

MICHELLE MILLS: Thank you, Zodie. Hi, everyone. It's such a pleasure to be here with you all today to talk about the value, the benefit, and the impact of pre-apprenticeship programs. As Zodie mentioned earlier, I'm with the Office of Apprenticeship. And we support pre-apprenticeships as she defined it as an on-ramp to apprenticeship opportunities, including registered apprenticeship and now our new model of industry-recognized apprenticeship programs. I just want to highlight some of the benefits. You see them on the screen here about providing opportunities to individuals, right?

We typically see pre-apprenticeships in the registered space used to promote adding young people into registered apprenticeship programs. So we see them in the youth space specifically quite often utilized. And later I will talk about a JFF, Jobs For the Future model, and elements on apprenticeships that is also widely used in the field. But as you can see here, the point of pre-apprenticeship is to help develop those basic skills, expose them to experiential learning, some type of hands-on training, help to develop relationship with employers, and really open up that talent pipeline. From employees, we've heard from them that the benefits include saving time and money.

Pre-apprenticeships provide that prescreening, of course. The ready to work employees – (inaudible) – to really pick from and to evaluate whether those candidates are ready to enter into a full-time apprenticeship program. On the educator side of the house – whether it's high school or community colleges – they love the pre-apprenticeship model, because it, again, exposes their students to some form of experiential learning. Usually, this is also on a timeline and can be incorporated with the curriculum and educational career pathway. For career seekers, especially those who are up scaling and thinking through changing their job, pre-apprenticeship really helps give them a taste of sort into a new career path before they take that route.

I just want to quickly tout apprenticeship.gov. I'm sure I'll mention it again. It is one of our resources that was launched in 2018. Apprenticeship.gov has a pre-apprenticeship page on there with several resources, including case studies from many employers. We have an employer here who's joined as well, IBM. We have studies on there from CVS, Urban Technical Project, and Chicago Women in Trades in terms of how they have used pre-apprenticeships as a vital on-ramp to apprenticeship programs.

So here again, I just want to emphasize the quality pre-apprenticeship element, as my colleague Zodie mentioned, TEN 13-12. But we just want to pull out these elements here. When we look at approved curriculum, what do we mean? We're seeing basically that this should be based on industry standard and approved by apprenticeship partners. You know, I mention again the benefit to employers. This cannot be emphasized enough, because we really want a curriculum that is going to be in line with industry needs to help prepare those pre-apprentices for apprenticeship opportunities or entry-level job opportunities.

You have also simulated experience. This typically refers to that hands-on experience or training in the workplace. Facilitated entry – this is when we're talking about some type of apprenticeship or a formalized agreement that will help that pre-apprentice get into an apprenticeship program. So it offers some type of advanced credit or placement for skills in an apprenticeship program. Increased diversity – for apprenticeship programs specifically, we have 29 CFR 30. That's the regulation to promote EEO and to increase diversity inclusion. So when we look at a quality pre-apprenticeship program and take that into account as well.

Supportive services – here we're talking about leveraging things like the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, which many of our partners know about and will probably touch on, as well as how that is used to cover costs or just transportation, child care, and so on. Many pre-apprentices – youth as well as adult – have different challenges, so tapping into WIOA really helps to offset some of the costs associated with supportive services. Another important aspect is sustainable partnerships. So again, thinking through the local employers, the workforce system, industry association, the education system in terms of the colleges, in terms of really developing a solid pre-apprenticeship program that can be sustained over time.

Another thing I just want to quickly flag here is the TEN 13-16, which is guidance on how to leverage WIOA to advance apprenticeship. And in that guidance, there is also a snippet on pre-apprenticeship as specifically youth build, which is one of our largest pre-apprenticeship programs, as well as the Department of Labor. Here we just want to reiterate that this is not just for registered apprenticeship, but for all apprenticeship programs, including IRAP. I just want to highlight some of the things that we've noted in terms of creating a quality program.

Not to say that your program and what the elements of it would not necessarily denote quality, but this is what we found from our research, meaning looking at our stakeholders in the field, looking at successful programs that have great placement rates, programs that of course have one or more industry-recognized credential or stackable credentials included in that, and really programs that often include a student apprentice acquiring academic credits, career counseling, and the wrap-around services that we mentioned earlier.

(Crosstalk.)

MS. MONTHEY: Thank you, Zodie and Michelle, for the great overview. And good morning or afternoon, depending on where you are. We're going to hear from four institutions. And we are breaking the presentation into responses that they have given to questions that we asked them to cover.

The great thing about these four institutions is they are all different. They have different components. They've got different designs. So it's a great opportunity for you to see how to do different pre-apprenticeship type programs. At the end of the session, we will have a chance for you to identify which of those types of programs that you would be the most interested in.

And we also would like to remind you to enter your questions in the chat box so that we can respond to those questions at the end of the presentation. We want to make sure that we have a chance to hear from all of the programs. If you have a question for a specific school or DOL person, please make sure you put that in your question. So we are going to start with the question asking each of them to describe their pre-apprenticeship program. And we're going to start with Shannon from PCT. Shannon?

SHANNON MUNRO: Thank you. First, before we get into pre-apprenticeship, I thought it would be important to share information about the apprenticeship component of this so that we have that as a backbone before we get into a discussion about pre-apprenticeship.

The hallmark of a traditional associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree at Pennsylvania College of Technology is the hands-on experience our students receive primarily in the focus areas that most of our students are in – health care, manufacturing, and service degree fields. We build meaningful partnerships with local, national, international, multinational companies. And despite the pandemic, employers continue to place a premium on hiring our graduates.

Employer relationships have been served by Penn College with a pipeline of new graduates to fill their open positions. But we've also been providing workforce training to their incumbent workers. Nearly five years ago, we began offering apprenticeship training as an option to those employers.

Our first apprenticeship program was in Mechatronics in the manufacturing sector, which carried through to our MIDAS grant application, which is focused on advanced manufacturing. MIDAS stands for Modular, Industry-Driven Apprenticeship Strategies. And it was created to allow manufacturers to pick modules that most fit their individual needs while also peppering in other course offerings like Lean Six Sigma and project management.

The Mechatronics example shown here shows the distinct modules for each program area of a four-year registered apprenticeship program. An employer could choose one, two, three, or all four of these components that make up a registered apprenticeship program. And then the lower line shows optional modules. This same concept applies to at least five other apprenticeship program options that range from one to four years in length. MIDAS is a partnership with New Jersey Institute of Technology.

Their apprenticeship programs are focused on light metals and biopharma technicians. Ours are focused on industrial manufacturing technicians, CNC, Mechatronics, and plastics process technicians. We plan to serve 3,200 apprentices and pre-apprentices combined between us.

The foundational information about MIDAS provides a jumping off point to our pre-apprenticeship program and how it sits within the framework of an occupational pathway. Continuing along with the Mechatronics thread, there are many occupations along this pathway. We have used this subway map to show these pathways and subsequent wage increases with additional education and experience for each of our apprenticeship programs.

Typically, our apprentices are people going into an apprentice program that are incumbent workers would start at the third or fourth subway stop from the left. But our pre-apprentices may jump on subway stop 1, 2, or 3 on this pathway after they've gained some basic knowledge about manufacturing through our program. These visuals demonstrate pathways for employers, students, and partners, and will be used with our advanced manufacturing pre-apprenticeship program, also known as AMP.

JANELL HILLS: This is Janell from San Jacinto College. And I'm going to provide a very brief description of the pre-apprenticeship program that is a part of our project. And it is offered through IBM, who will take a deeper dive later on in the presentation. The pre-apprenticeship program is in the area of IT.

It's both a technical foundation and soft skills in demand. It provides an online module of assessment, self-paced curated learning, and skills lab. It is providing some digital badges for soft skills – teamwork, communication, and problem solving. And it's agile in design thinking methodology. The participants will receive a certificate of completion. And they will have an opportunity to apply for IBM apprenticeship job openings.

The benefits of the pre-apprenticeship program – there are several, but some of the ones that we have discussed and come up with as they offer pathways to apprenticeship program providing the foundational knowledge that a pre-apprentice may need to be successful in a registered apprenticeship program. It also increases the success rate for those who complete apprenticeship program providing a very diverse workforce pool for candidates at entry level positions. This was a good fit for those individuals who are disadvantaged or from low-skilled populations because it also allows them to take an assessment to identify the best occupational fit for them to be successful in the program.

DIANE TARGARONA: Hi, this is Diane Targarona, from CCBC. At CCBC, we are heavily focused in on health care. And we offer two pre-apprenticeship programs. One is the central service technician. And you may ask, well what in the world is that? You probably know it as a sterile processing technician. Those individuals essentially work in the bowels of a hospital. They handle all the surgical material from procedures throughout the hospital, as well as outpatient sessions. We also offer a medical administrative assistant pre-apprenticeship, which is sort of the polar opposite of the sterile processing. That particular role is one that is patient facing and is really focused more on the business side of health care.

Now, even though those two pre-apprenticeships are very different, we had sort of a general strategy or principles in mind when we designed them and when we designed the pathway to apprenticeship. Number one, we wanted to be sure that individuals coming out of those pre-apprenticeships would have the national certification. So in fact, both of those pre-apprenticeships prepare individuals for certifications in their field of study. But secondarily, we have embedded in both of those pre-apprenticeships a set of what we would call core health care courses – so something like medical terminology, for example, or anatomy and physiology.

Now, it's a ton of fun to take those classes because we get to learn everything and understand everything they're saying on Grey's Anatomy. But I have to say that there really is a purpose further than that. We're including those. Those courses are embedded in both the pre-apprenticeship, but the apprenticeships as well. So if a student follows a straight path through to the apprenticeship, they will have reduced instructional time. And I'm sure all of us on the call here, as well as the presenters, are very aware of the amount of juggling that the students have to do. When they're in the apprenticeship, they are juggling on-the-job training.

In the case of our apprenticeship program, which is a medical assisting program, they are taking more advanced medical coursework. So this is a strategy to help alleviate that stress and that pressure associated with that instructional coursework and to give them improved chance at success. Now, that is the most linear path that we design for. However, there are certainly situations where individuals come out of those pre-apprenticeships and they just say, you know what? I am either not interested in going into the apprenticeship, or perhaps do not get approved or are not accepted into the apprenticeship, because the apprenticeship is a competitive structure. Our employers make the final decision.

And one of our key players, Johns Hopkins, certainly has a lot of expectations associated with individuals coming into their apprenticeship. So an alternate path for individuals is to say, hey, I want to be placed in a job because I have this national certification. I have gotten the training that I need. So that individual gets to work with our job developer who trains them to develop a resume, to coach them for interviews, to help them connect with other employers. So that's a potential for them should they not choose the linear approach to the apprenticeship.

Additionally, we have seen individuals who, for example let's say, come out of the medical administrative assistant program. And they really enjoy working in health care. They like the business side of health care. But they don't want to be patient facing. So maybe they really want to pursue something like billing and coding and get national certification for that. So certainly an individual can choose to pursue that and get credit for the courses that they have completed in the pre-apprenticeship. So I think I've already gone through all of this. We have these benefits built into our development. And certainly all of these programs give the student an opportunity for an entry point into the health care field.

DAVE COFER: This is Dave Cofer from Columbus State. And as the name would suggest, our IT flexible apprenticeship program was designed to meet the needs of our local IT employer community, specifically as it relates to their entry-level software development and cybersecurity roles.

The program does consist of a formal application separate from the application to the college. And it's leveraging a cohorted model. So our cohorted programmatic model, folks come in in the autumn. In fact, we were conducting online summer orientation today for the 16 newest members of our incoming cohort.

And as part of their involvement in the program, they're going to pursue an associates and/or for-credit certificate in either cybersecurity or software development. That's really the backbone, if you will, of the technical skill building and technical instruction that they gain access to.

Complemented to that is the career ready process, a process that they engage in simultaneously while also gaining the necessary and prerequisite technical skills. Career ready process includes aspects that you might expect. It involves resume preparation, mock interviews, other professional skills, introduction to networking, etc. And to be able to be deemed interview eligible, one must achieve career ready status.

And that is done by both completing a set of prerequisite technical classes, as well as successfully completing that career ready process. We administer a centralized hiring process. To that end, we compile a resume book that includes the resumes of all the candidates that have achieved career ready status. We send that to the participating employers. They review, select the individuals that they want to interview. We also administer and schedule the interview process to ensure that we eliminate any scheduling issues, things of that nature. Just this past May, in fact, we conducted 90-some-odd, or I should say we facilitated and helped to administer 90-some-odd interviews that occurred online with our participating employer partners.

Not unlike our colleagues from Baltimore County, it is a competitive interview process. Just because you enter as a pre-apprentice and achieve career ready status and are invited to interview, it does not mean that you are guaranteed an apprenticeship. The employers make those selections.

And really if the interview is in post interview is when the communication and interaction becomes directly between the employer and the student. Of course, again, not unlike our colleagues from Baltimore County, we do have students that are not selected for apprenticeships. And in those examples, we provide other career guidance to ensure that they make their way to the next steps that they want to achieve.

So benefits – really, the pre-apprenticeship program is essential to the overall success of the apprenticeship program. It very much establishes the foundation for success as an apprentice. It's that period of preparation. For both our pre-apprentices and our employers, we stay in constant communication with our employer partners during the pre-apprentice phase to ensure that we continue to infuse into the pre-apprentice experience expectations from our employer partners, whether it be about their technical skills and/or their professional skills.

And it really is about that equipping of the pre-apprentices – those classic KSAs – the knowledge, skills, and abilities that they need; both the prerequisite technical skills, as well as those professional and workplace skills. And with that, I think I'll turn it back to Wanda.

MS. MONTHEY: Thank you, all. That was a good description of the work that you've done and the work that you're moving into. Next step is, of course, how do you design it? And then how do you implement a pre-apprenticeship program that is effective and efficient at the same time, especially in these times? So we are going to start this time with our representative from industry. Stephen, from IBM, is going to give us an idea of how they're designing and implementing their program.

STEPHEN DODD: Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. It's a pleasure to be here this afternoon. Before I talk a little detail about how we designed the pre-apprenticeship program, I just want to level set where we are in IBM's apprenticeship program. So we started back in October 2017 with our first cohort of apprentice in software engineering. There were 7 at the time. And since that time, we've grown from 7 to over 500 today. We're in 19 states. We have 25 apprenticeship roles. All our apprenticeship programs are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeships. And we have 25 apprenticeship roles.

Now, the reason we decided the apprenticeship program why we needed them was to address the skills gap that we're all very knowledgeable about what's going on in IT. And we were looking at a way to open that talent pipeline aperture in order to find skills of jobs that don't necessarily need a four-year degree.

So our apprenticeship program is designed around individuals who – we're not looking for someone with a four-year degree. We're looking to increase our diversity and opportunities for individuals coming in. And we're starting to see that after two and a half years in the program. Our apprentices range from 15 to 59. We've had two patents filed on ideas from our apprentices.

And we continue to grow in given the challenges of the second quarter COVID-19. So that is the premise of our program. When I partnered with San Jacinto just getting an apprenticeship proposal and we talked with the consortium partners and employee partners, we talked about how in IT even though we're doing apprenticeship opportunities and the work-based learning and they're structured in RTI and all that, it still can be very challenging, some of the job roles that we have. And so what we came up with San Jacinto, let's design a pre-apprenticeship program not just for IBM, but for everybody.

Like everybody on this call, it's an opportunity to take the pre-apprenticeship program is that what we want to do is make sure that that population we're looking to serve – the disadvantaged, dislocated, displaced population – is that we didn't bypass some of them because they didn't have the foundational skills to take apprenticeship program. So our pre-apprenticeship, as Dr. Hills has laid out and talks about briefly, is a training program designed to prepare individuals without any prior knowledge or experience with minimal professional and technical skills needed to be successful in apprenticeship program.

And through an online, self-paced learning journey, our students or pre-apprentices will learn important soft skills like teamwork, communication, problem-solving. Additionally, they'll learn ways of working with agile design thinking. And then building upon that, they'll learn the technical foundational skills. During the course of the program, they will receive IBM badges in design thinking, agile explorer badge, new – (inaudible) – professional badge, and a role-specific skills badge.

Our apprenticeship offerings are in software engineering, which all our apprenticeships programs are self-paced, delivered online. Software engineering program is 87 hours in length. Our second program is cybersecurity, which is 70 hours. And IT support is 80 hours. We have a mainframe system administration program which is 98 hours. And our data science pre-apprenticeship program is 144 hours. And we may continue to move on. Again, we've designed this program so that we can provide the preapprentice participants in the program some fundamental knowledge and skills, allow them to be successful when they step into the apprenticeship program.

The one thing we do not want is to give an opportunity to someone and then they get overwhelmed and they're not successful. And then Dr. Hills can discuss later in her turn about how anyone on this call, and anyone really, can participate in this program because it is opened up to everyone outside the grant and apprenticeship grants.

BETH BITTENBENDER: Hi, this is Beth Bittenbender from Pennsylvania College of Technology. Our MIDAS pre-apprenticeship program is going to serve two populations – in Pennsylvania, the WIOA youth population; and with our partner, NJIT, we're going to serve veterans, spouses, and transitioning military.

So we are focusing on advanced manufacturing pre-apprenticeship. And we did start our pre-apprentice program three years ago with some state funding. That focuses on a high school population. And that's a consortium model as well. So we started with that program. And as we crafted our application and as we're crafting these programs, we have morphed it from what served that population to what's going to work for those other populations.

That is a mix of in-person instructor training and online, depending on the WIOA population. The WIOA population tends to need more in-person training. They can't just do online. It's not the best for them. And what we've found is that the fundamentals of the program – such as we always do a preassessment before we get to the end and we do a credential assessment – the credential itself will apply to most of our populations. But what differs is the logistics. We found that we really have to approach each population. Sometimes the geography of the population changes how we're going to be able to deliver those programs. So for us, that has been huge in terms of designing and implementing our program.

And what we've found is that when it comes to implementing, we really have to do a lot of presentations about what pre-apprenticeship is, what it isn't. The knowledge many of you have found probably in a lot of areas of apprenticeship is low, whether it's the potential participants. It might be family who would be enforcing those participants.

It might be counselors, employers, anyone that's kind of in that partnership sphere. Most of them don't understand apprenticeship well. And they certainly don't understand pre-apprenticeship. So we spend an enormous amount of time educating. And we've found that we have to make this as visual as possible. What is a pre-apprenticeship? It's for a future career. Apprenticeship is for the job you have.

The pre-apprenticeship is an industry general, typically – so advanced manufacturing. And then an apprenticeship is for, let's say, a Mechatronics engineer. So we've learned to make it as visual as possible. We also have learned to talk about the pathways that this might lead to. Pre-apprenticeship, again in our case, starting with the high school – but this would apply to any population – could lead into an apprenticeship. It could lead into employment without an apprenticeship. But ideally, we'd like them to be an apprentice. It could also lead to a two- or a four-year degree down line as a working learner because we do have pathways to our credit academic side.

We've also developed – Shannon showed you a segment of our subway map, but we show this subway map to everybody. And this is when everybody pulls out their cameras and takes pictures, because for us this really helps to identify many, many – this is not all of them, but many, many of the apprenticeships that they might be able to take advantage of with us. So of course, if you're in your pre-apprenticeship program, we are going to try and match you up with an employer that you could then be enrolled directly into an apprenticeship program. And this tends to sell them on the idea a lot faster than just talking to them.

MS. TARGARONA: Hi, this is Diane again. We serve a number of different populations as well. I think individuals have mentioned veterans, spouses. We also work with the International Rescue Committee, as well as individuals who are already in health care.

In particular, we find that there's a lot of demand for pre-apprentice programs for people who actually are already, let's say, a certified nursing assistant and they want to move up and get into another area within health care. We also see a lot of response from people who are incumbents in various health care systems that, let's say, work in food service and they're looking to get into more of the clinical side of health care as well. So that's sort of our target population.

But implementation itself is a multistep process. You know, it's not like if you build it, they will come. What we have found is that we have placed a lot of emphasis on digital advertising. We use social media quite extensively, as well as search engine optimization. And when we ask people, and we do, we capture the information about where did they find out about our information sessions? Where did they hear about this? It is hands down social media. So I would encourage anyone if they're looking to expand this, to really use a lot of that advertising power.

What we typically get from the advertising is about 4- or 500 people that are registered or are information sessions. And information sessions had been originally face to face. And there were a lot of presentations as was alluded to. However, COVID-19 kind of shut that all down. And we were in a position where we had to make things more virtual. I'm kind of a big believer in personalizing everything and really making things as easy for the student or the potential student as possible, making it available for when they are ready to listen to a lot of the information.

Therefore, when we capture their personal email address, we actually send them out the personalized email that has links to recorded videos that I have done, that my colleagues have done, coordinators that speak to the specifics of our programs and what it takes to be successful. In addition, we offer things like a preliminary schedule so you can see what you're going to put into your life. Here's links for online applications. Typically, once we get those applications in electronically, we will take a look and do some screening against them, asking them what area they're interested in based upon the information that we have sent them.

That's kind of a tough nut to crack. Again, our original intent was to bring people and do some hands-on testing, which we were not able to do because of COVID-19. As a result, we had to make a change in the way we were assessing criteria in looking at some indicators for student success in the data elements that we had captured on the application.

That is something that is kind of a work in progress right now, and we are trying to track the results of some of the parameters that we've used to see if we can use that as a stand-in for the hands-on assessment that we had originally anticipated. Unfortunately, we were not able to do a remote online testing scenario since we use an organization that does not allow that sort of outside proctor.

As a result, the last step is certainly the typical online registration with call center support, which I'm sure all or most of you have in place. But again, I'm a big fan of when we have an opportunity here so that individuals who, for example, may be interested in sterile processing and we have a very limited number of slots because that program is tied to 400 hours of clinical.

We therefore cannot take that many students. As a result of that, some people are disappointed that they can't get in. But we attempt to cross sell them into the other pre-apprenticeship program. That has also been successful as well. To us it is all about cross communication and personalized communication in terms of implementation.

MR. COFER: This is Dave Cofer from Columbus State again. I just want to highlight a couple things as it relates to design. The initial design was very much informed by a program we already had in place meeting the needs of our manufacturing and – (inaudible). That program as well required a lot of collaboration with our college partners. I think I want to highlight how design is really an ongoing phase. And you really need to be committed to innovation and continuous improvement. And for us that means really being committed to the voice of the customer.

You can't be committed to the voice of customer unless you first spend some time defining who your customer is. And for us at a minimum, that's our students, our employer partners, our on-campus partners. And a really good example of how the voice of the customer informed design is really what we are hearing back from our employers. So we have a very front-loaded technical curriculum. And the courses that are required to be interview-eligible are directly informed by feedback we receive from employers. So that's really key.

Also, from an implementation standpoint, get comfortable with the word, pilot. Later in the recommendations if we get to it, you're going to hear me talk about start fast to go slow. And really what we're talking about is starting slow to go fast, because you have to get out of the gate with some early wins. We are five times the size we were just two years ago. Also, our recruitment process has evolved. In the initial pilot, we were recruiting exclusively out of the ranks of current college students. We have now established relationships into the K-12 community where we are recruiting high school graduates into the program. That's a lot different than all of just 18, 20 months ago.

From an employer partner standpoint, you need to ask yourself who and why? Just because an employer raises their hand and expresses interest in participating in your program does not necessarily qualify them as a good employer partner. So be selective as it relates to who you invite to the table.

And don't underestimate the need to invest in program infrastructure. And it's grants like those that all of us have received that really ensure we have that adequate resourcing to deliver these programs with the level of operational excellence we're all striving for. I think we have a poll up next.

MS. MONTHEY: We certainly do. We are interested in learning from you which of the models that you are interested in learning more about. And as a result, which ones of those that you would see yourselves implementing possibly as part of the project or outside of this project. So if you could let us know that, we would really appreciate it. Thank you.

It's looking like it keeps moving, but the Pennsylvania College of Technology, it looks like most of you are interested in that and also the San Jacinto and Baltimore and the Columbus State. Actually, other than the one outlier, it looks like it's pretty well balanced across the three. So we will look at those and see what we can do to help everybody do that.

We are getting some questions. So we're going to focus on the questions right now. We've tried to answer as many as we could in the chat box. What we'll do now is that when you have access to the entire Power Point, you will see what the challenges and the recommendations are from each of our institutions.

But we only have about 7 minutes left. And we want to give you a chance to ask what questions you have that will help you move forward. We have one question that's going to be a pretty easy one, I think. And that is, when you say approved curriculum, what is the approving body for a pre-apprenticeship curriculum? Michelle, I'm going to let you take that one.

MICHELLE MILLS: Sure. Great question. Quick answer for you. This is really referring to approved by the RAP funder, because we emphasize a lot the facilitated entry or what we call our – (inaudible) – agreement formalized agreement where pre-apprenticeship program is working already with a RAP sponsor employer. And so you're working with that employer to kind of develop that curriculum to say, hey, if these students do this secretary work, will it kind of help them to get into your program? That's what we mean when we're talking about that approved curriculum is really working with that employer.

MS. MONTHEY: Are there other questions that you have? This question is for Stephen. Since the pre-apprenticeship programs have been going on for a few years, what results have you found with the program? And do you see difference between the apprentices that you have been having?

MR. DODD: Well, actually, we've just developed a pre-apprenticeship program on the apprenticeship grant in concept with San Jacinto. The reason we developed it, like I said, we wanted to make sure that individuals that we hired and other employers hire, is that the apprentices become successful when they start an apprenticeship role. So what we have found out in the last two and a half years of our apprenticeship programs is that those 500 apprentices that we've hired, some of them are technically even those work-based learning we're providing the mentoring and the RTI.

What we found is it does help to develop a program that gives them foundational knowledge, foundational skills, and even some soft skills to participants to kind of give them a step up to be successful when they enter the apprenticeship program. And that goes for IBM or any other employers doing this. These pre-apprenticeship programs that I mentioned are specifically to help in an IT role. They don't have to be data science. It doesn't have to be mainframe or cyber security.

We focus the roles on that, but we've developed a program on those provisions that Michelle talked about on page 15 that it's structured. It's got some soft skills. It's got delivery of education. We've got some badges, certifications so that it provides someone the skills to be successful. And that's where the program came from.

MS. MONTHEY: Thank you. I want to highlight that over in the main chat box, there is a message from Cheryl Barton from the U.S. Department of Labor that you can download the Power Point right now from the file share box under the slides if you want them right now. So if you do look at those and you have questions, we have a couple more minutes before I will turn it over to Zodie.

And I want to also encourage you to contact any of our presenters today if you have direct questions that you want to ask them. I know that for my preparation for this program that all of them were very receptive in describing their programs to me. I think that every single one of them is a real model that everybody can learn from. So, Zodie, I think with a couple minutes left, I'll turn it over to you.

MS. MAKONNEN: I'm sorry. I was on mute. Thanks, Wanda.

MS. MONTHEY: Thank you.

MS. MAKONNEN: Thank you for such a great job facilitating this. And thank you to our presenters for taking the time to share their experiences and expertise with us. I hope you found this engaging and interesting and something that you'll be interested in doing moving forward.

As mentioned before, please make sure you send your questions to: scalingapprenticeship@dol.gov, and we will be sure to answer your questions or forward your questions to any of the presenters that were on our webinar today. We look forward to speaking to you again soon. Have a great rest of the afternoon. Thank you so much.

(END)