**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

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**Partnerships and Service Delivery, Day 5**

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JON VEHLOW: Without further ado, I'd like to kick things off to our moderator today, Ron Vargas, federal project officer, region four. Ron, take it away.

RONALD VARGAS: Thank you, Jon. I appreciate that. Hello everyone. Good afternoon and good morning depending on what part of the country you're joining us from today. I am Ron Vargas. I will be serving as your moderator for today. And I would like to thank everyone for joining us today. It's our third and final week of our NFJP NGO webinar series. This is the fifth day of our sessions. And today we are going to be focusing on partnerships and service delivery.

So I see that we have quite a few individuals joining us from all over the country. And being that we are going to be talking about partnerships and focusing on that and service delivery, I want to ask – one thing that we like to say is that the knowledge and expertise with NFJP is typically with you all in the field.

So to kick off and just kind of if you feel comfortable, giving a shout out and sharing with us in the chat an organization or particular partnership that you have developed over the years that has been beneficial to your program, to your participants, and really fits the NFJP program model. We really appreciate that.

And as we're doing that, I'm going to go ahead and introduce today's speakers. I want to start with myself. Again I am Ron Vargas, federal project officer out of region four. I operate out of the Dallas regional office. And I am going to be touching on NFJP and business engagement from a very practical level today. I'm going to try to provide some examples, but I also want to touch on some compliance and what that looks like for NFJP.

Joining me with business engagement is going to be Jeff Ryan, our business engagement specialist at the Department of Labor. And Jeff is going to be looking at business engagement from a ground up view, and what that models looks like with NFJP.

Next up we're going to have Francisco Cerda, the state monitor advocate out of Texas here in region four, and Francisco's going to be discussing NFJP as a WIOA partner, and tying everything together, and what some compliance elements look like when it comes to partnering with our WIOA partners.

And last by not least we have Mary Zmudcynski, our ETA accountant, one of our ETA accountants here in region four. And Mary is going to help us try to provide guidance on the operating costs of the One-Stop delivery system associated with being a WIOA partner, a required WIOA partner, and respond to some questions and concerns you may have with the infrastructure cost agreement required as a WIOA partner. I just want to go over the agenda quickly.

So Jon, are we on the agenda slide?

MR. VEHLOW: We are.

MR. VARGAS: OK. Perfect. Sorry. My screen kind of went bonkers there. OK, perfect. All right, so we're going to do a quick recap of day four. I kind of already discussed with everyone what we're going to be going over and discussing today.

However one thing that I didn't touch on is before we wrap everything up, I'm going to go over NFJP service delivery components, including the adult services and youth services, and kind of point out some of the differences involved in that. And we're going to wrap up today with next steps going into day six. Next slide.

OK. As a recap for day four, this is some of the things that we discussed. Of course we went over eligibility criteria, outreach, and recruitment, and enrollment.

And I just want to mention that everything that we discussed on day four, and things that are going to be discussed today, and consequently for day six, and previous material discussed during week one and week two, is going to be or has been recorded and will be recorded, and will be available for everyone on WorkforceGPS.org. So look forward to that. And next slide.

OK. Without further ado, we're going to go ahead and dive into the first part of our presentation. And I am going to turn it over to Francisco to get us started with NFJP as a WIOA partner. So Francisco, if you can take it away.

FRANCISCO CERDA: Thank you, Ron. Good afternoon, everybody. First and foremost I want to thank everybody for allowing me to speak today on the virtual partnerships and service delivery, and hope to provide the NFJP with the best tools necessary. Obviously we have the best talents. We just heard Ron Vargas. And we're going to hear from Jeff Ryan as well as Mary. And I have the privilege of co-presenting today.

I want to kind of also highlight a quote that was mentioned by John Pallasch, one of the assistant secretaries, on the NFJP. Pretty much his words, quote-unquote, was investing in quality career services and training opportunities that lead to industry recognized credentials in agriculture and other sectors, and ultimately better earnings and quality of life. Communities that invest in their farm workers are investing in America's economic strength. It's so true in his quote. Further, I want to applaud you and the work that you do to support sustainably agriculture and providing the best cost service model to farm workers.

We're going to get started with the NFJP as a WIOA partner. What does it mean? How to do it? What resources and tools are available to help? Partnering with the workforce system, what does this mean? When you partner with the workforce system, the MOU outlines a formal agreement in regards to being a required partner and being a model in terms of the workforce delivery.

But behind the scenes you're going to have a multitude of programs and services that correspond to uniquely in how to develop that required partnerships to include referrals through the participant through the NFJP, through the ES component, as well as the outreach, American Job Centers and other service providers that are co-located, and the monitor advocate system.

In Texas we have a very unique relationship with our NFJP and have been for 20-plus years. And hopefully I'll be able to give you some highlighted areas that we have been successful from day one.

How do you partner? The memorandum of understanding, the MOUs, are as I mentioned earlier, a formal agreement through the One-Stops, through the WIBs, the boards, as well as very specifically in the centers, the infrastructure costs. What are the tips and tools? MOU and IFA toolkit, NFJP successful partnerships. I think the NFJP partnerships have a very unique design in terms of providing that uniqueness in terms of understanding farm workers and the farm workers in general regarding their socioeconomics, regarding their history. And they bring a unique caliber partner within the AJCs.

And in Texas we have a total of about 804 co-enrollments that we have for program year 2019. And if you look at it holistically, when we say 804, all of the services that were provided through the NFJP was 119. When you look at the partnership, 98.2 percent of those that were provided service through the NFJP were co-located and co-enrolled with the AJC. That 98.2 percent is extraordinary in terms of co-enrollments. Next.

The physical centers where job seekers and business customers access employment and training services. A basic overview of the AJCs. Services available online. We cannot ignore the current trends of today in terms of pandemic; not just the web-based systems in terms of jobs, but virtual services that we are providing holistically in terms of most, if not all, programs. Eventually we will open pretty much the doors here soon because the work test requirements are lifted. But the virtual services that are provided is a challenge to partnering with the AJC.

However, the 804 co-enrollments were slightly down from PY '18 – (pause) – which includes a wide array of partnering programs and services. We're going to get into later on the slides, the required partners within the AJCs. Offering training referral and career counseling job assistance, access to supportive services and training, and related employment services. The ES component as well as various other partners contain referrals to community networks, as well as boards and the partners that are co-located. Next.

Workforce partnerships. Required partnerships in the AJCs include from DOL WIOA Title I adult, dislocated worker, youth, Job Corps, Indian Native American, and NFJP programs.; Wagner-Peyser employment services; senior Community Service Employment Program; Trade Adjusted Assistance; Jobs for veterans; unemployment compensation; re-entry employment opportunity programs.

From the U.S. Department of Education: Adult, Title III, postsecondary vocational education; VR. WIOA Title IV, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, employment and training programs administered by the department.

Workforce partnerships in the AJCs contain a wide variety of service delivery. The modules that we see in the AJCs and NFJPs co-located allows the referral mechanism to uniquely able to partner within the various required partners within the AJC. As I mentioned earlier, 804 in Texas co-enrolled in two or more programs have a wide variety of other programs that are administering the AJCs. Next.

Providing access to its programs and activities through the AJC in addition to any other appropriate locations. This also may include other centers or an itinerary for satellite offices that are administered through your local AJCs. Oftentimes the WIBs have other centers in nearby towns or areas that can be negotiated usage of centers in areas. The use of portion of funds may be available to NFJP to the extent consistent with federal law authorizing the program, to create and maintain the AJC delivery system, provide the applicable career services, and help pay American Job Centers' infrastructure costs. Enter into memorandum of understanding with local WIB relating to the operation of AJCs.

Texas has 68 different MOUs with different boards. But they have the same required outline, but are catered to specific board areas and social delivery models. Also the purpose of the MOU is to coordinate activities in services between boards and NFJPs to better serve the MSFW population, and to establish a protocol to share information regarding MSFWs. Participate in the operation of the AJC network consistent with the terms of the MOU and the required authorizing laws. Participate in board committees as needed.

State monitor advocates. Most should really pretty much understand that the monitor advocate ensures that the employment and training services provided to the MSFW on a qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to those service that are provided to the non-MSFWs.

So the TEGL 817 that lists the guidance that required of the MOU between the state monitor advocate and NFJP, and references section 20 CFR 653.108, and training guidance letter 1816, it itemizes the content of the MOU for the required areas to be inclusive to the MOU from the state monitor advocate and NFJP.

And I say that in terms of the required content. But uniquely the relationship with the NFJP has gone beyond just the outline. The relationship is so far in a way that in Texas, and it should be known that all the NFJP coordinators, the regional coordinators, you know, it's know them on a first name basis. I consult with them periodically more than once a quarter, with the administrative office.

When I'm visiting onsite or via virtual, I make contact with them, ask them very specifically how can I help; how are things going. It's very unique when you establish that rapport with the NFJP, not just on the local level, but as well as the administrative level. It's unique because those relationships are able to facilitate at the board level, at the CEO level, at the center level, to include various areas that are needed to improve that coordinated co-enrollment, farm workers receiving meaningful access to all programs that are administered.

It's unique because you design that uniqueness in terms of relationships. Very important. When you design that relationship, it goes a long way. It's not just necessarily saying, well we need this, we need that. Usually our NFJP is always cordial. Everything is fine, Mr. Cerda; everything is good, Mr. Cerda – but it's not.

You know, you have to look at it holistically. And you have to look at it, what can I do to find out areas of improvement. Where are we lacking? Why are we not referring farm workers to other required partners? Why are we not referring farm workers to childcare? Why are we not referring farm workers to VR?

There's a lot of questions that remain unanswered because it's just a way to facilitate a very unique process to include -- formally -- to advise the WIBs and the boards and the operators and the centers, listen, we have a required partner that is co-located.

They equally should have meaningful access. How can we improve co-enrollments? How can we include youth programs? Are we working with the youth programs through the NFJPs? If so, why not? How can we do better? There's always substantial room for improvement by looking at the systemic process to which we can make things work smoothly, and effectively, and efficient.

With that said, this is where the monitor advocates, as well as the NFJPs, can be effective by open communication, by various different levels -- at my level, the board level -- and have the monitor advocates there if guidance is needed or if assistance is needed to facilitate a more smoother transition in the AJCs. Please note the MOU can be updated and amended to logistically coordinate current trends, concerns, pandemic, any other concerns to effectively meet the needs of our customers. These updates should be discussed with the FPO or your state monitor advocate or your regional monitor advocate when warranted.

When we look at the WIOA and we look at the NFJP and the SMAs and the monitor advocate, we develop the WIOA AOP plan. And we clearly illustrate the partnership in how we're going to work together with NFJP, and how we're going to meet the needs of the agriculture employer, and the migrant seasonal farm worker.

So we go through great strides to list the contents that are required in the AOP, the agricultural outreach plan. And logistically in my state I share my written content with the NFJP and they're part of the solution with the AOP. I allow them to comment in areas that need improvement, areas that need unique coordination, areas that need to be facilitated by the state, by the state monitor advocate. So they're part of the AOP.

I realize that the NFJP shall be part of the comments once the plan is written. Well we include and encourage the NFJP to be part of the actual writing of the plan. I think this is important, equally important. And not only is the AOP side of things that our NFJP is part of, the same goes with the MSFW annual summary plan. We include statistics. We include co-enrollments. We include youth programs. We include how are we facilitating working very closely with NFJPs within the areas that the NFJP is co-located.

Uniquely when you partner with the monitor advocates, and we partner with the workforce delivery, the boards, it's a systemic side or system side of the effectiveness, and how we coordinate commonality of successful programs within the AJCs.

Cynthia and Stacy on the NFJP side will tell you, I'm constantly calling them, how can we do better, how can we effectively allow meaningful access of all programs administered. What are we doing wrong? What can we do better? And even just a discussion over the phone, oh you know what, we could do this, we could do that. And guess what, we implement it within a week.

So the intervention side of the qualitative ways of working together goes a long way in terms of that open door policy side. The MOU at the local and at the state level is facilitated efficiently and effectively by all levels, because the commonality of we want farm workers to receive meaningful access of all programs. So important. And uniquely it's really – you know when I have a stumbling block, I'll call one of the local regional coordinators. I'll call – (inaudible). I'll call – (inaudible). I'll call Jon – (inaudible).

And Cynthia and the NFJP at the administrative office knows that, you know, our open door policy, that, you know, I'm here at any given point if there's issues that arise at the AJC or what needs to be improved. It's really weird because when I do my monitoring, it's so unique.

Because when I sit down in their centers, they tell me, no, everything – (Spanish) – everything's fine. And I'm like, no, talk to me. But it's not about everything is fine. It's how you evolve yourself in terms of the intake flow, in terms of referrals within the center. So uniquely that's how you open the doors to effectively design the partnership side.

Encourage the state – (inaudible) – to work very closely with the NFJP in terms of planned, projected, and accomplished levels, as we discussed on the AOP in the annual summit. Extremely important. Memorandums of understanding. Next please.

The grantee and the local workforce development board must negotiate the MOU. An MOU is agreed, developed, and executed between the local WIB and the AJC partners relating to the operation of the AJC delivery system in the local area. It establishes what all involved partners are going to contribute to the overall project. An MOU should be signed by all involved parties. As I mentioned earlier, the MOU is a formal agreement, but usually in the significant areas where there's a large number of MSFWs.

Interestingly in Texas, our CEOs are or were an MSFW before or have family members; the operators and the contractors, the same. So you have that unique background in terms of the Wagner-Peyser Act, which says that we shall hire farm workers, or to hire workers for MSFW outreach, that they shall come from an MSFW background. The same that follows the affirmative action plans in these significant areas, or that are deemed 20 percent of the highest centers throughout the nation, that must be farmer worker background. Same applies to the centers, the CEOs, the directors of the One-Stops.

So you have that leveraging background at the management level to effectively coordinate those activities, and be able to have an effective MOU developed and executed by the WIBs and by the center operators. Some WIBs may have more operators or center operations. Some may divide the BSU into different contracts. So you may have one or more.

But interestingly in Texas, our NFJPs got MOUs, if there's several operators, their MOU is developed by the board and the operators. So it covers not just the CEO, but it covers the AJC partners, the center operators, as well as the One-Stop operator. Next.

Memorandums of understanding, the requirements. What must be included in the MOUs, WIOA section 121(c), 20 CFR 658.500. Very uniquely a description of services to be provided by each partner through the AJC delivery system to include the manner to which services will be coordinated and delivered to the system. The agreement on the funding costs of the services and operating costs the system to include infrastructure and certain additional costs. Methods of referring individuals between AJC operators and partners.

Usually in your standard MOU you're going to have a statement of work, you're going to have what the NFJP is going to do, what the operator's going to do, what the board's going to do. So everything is legitimately itemized based on the requirements that are outlined in those sections. The duration of the MOU which is a three-year, and procedures among the MOU, be ensured so that the MOU will be reviewed if substantial changes have occurred, renewed, not less than once every three year period to ensure appropriate funding and delivery of services.

I mentioned earlier about the current trends of how the content of the MOU may change. And it's something to be cognizant of whether or not the MOU needs to be reviewed or to be looked at. And I think that's extremely important. Current pandemic, just a little unsure, unrest, what the future may bring. Next.

This next portion, I think Ron Vargas is going to touch on. In closing, and bear with me, I'm running about 100.8 fever, and I don't have COVID. I've been battling a head cold that's now gone to my chest. So if I sounded a little rusty in the very beginning, there's a reason.

But in closing, I think it is so true when I say in terms of the partnerships that we've had for many years now, the partnership not only just at the WIB level, at the local level, state monitor advocate level, but my agency level.

It's so important to really understand the logistical side of the MOU on the basis of what minimally is required. There's a lot of things in between that can be facilitated to be effective, effective in many ways, and the commonality of a client, on an MSFW. Really unique because when I talk to – when I do my monitoring, I talk to centers, I talk to staff, I must say that the majority of the centers or the staff that I spoke to, they're former NFJP clients. It may be 5 years, 10 years, 7 years, 2 years, 15 years. I've heard some of 30 years, back to the – (inaudible) – days, are former NFJP clients.

Our longstanding history that we have in Texas goes without saying, that we have established and continue will establish ongoing effective coordination of NFJP. I hear success stories, even clients that are from (MET ?), or former MET participants, that my outreach workers placed them in training with MET.

So there's so many success stories within the NFJPs that should be outlined, that should be facilitated. Everybody loves success stories. So important. So important when you effectively change a person's life, through the programs that are administered, through the NFJPs and the AJCs, through the MSFW outreach, enrolled in NFJP and placed in the One-Stops, that have been there for 15, 20 years, and are helping farm workers just as well as what they were helped 15, 20 years ago.

These stories go without being told. And they're so important because farm workers are helping farm workers, as in the – (inaudible) – days, as in the affirmative action plans that are outlined in the Wagner-Peyser Act.

There's much more to discuss in this session. There's much more to discuss in this partnership. And I encourage all of you to work closely with your state monitor advocate, with your AJCs, and be effective. Thank you.

MR. VARGAS: Thank you so much, Francisco. And we all hope that you get better soon. OK. Moving right into the MOU between NFJP and your local workforce development boards. So as Francisco was stating, WIOA section 121 does require that the local workforce boards enter into an agreement, with the agreement of the chief elected officials or CEOs, to develop and enter into an MOU between the local board and the One-Stop partners, all the six required One-Stop partners.

Of course NFJP is a required partner. And that's just to make sure – ensures that we are in consistent with WIOA section 121. And it is concerning the operation of the One-Stop delivery system in your local areas and basically developing a funding mechanism.

So the funding arrangement should be incorporated within your MOU. And that's what we want to discuss here on this slide. That funding arrangement is known as the infrastructure funding agreement, or also the infrastructure cost agreement. And here on this slide you see 20 CFR 678.755, also TEGL 17-16.

And one thing that's interesting about TEGL 17-16 is it does mirror WIOA section 121 in stating that the Department of Labor, alongside the Department of Education, consider it essential that the IFA, or the infrastructure funding agreement, include the signatures of individuals with authority to buying the signatories to the IFA, including all the One-Stop partners. So all your chief elected officials, your local workforce development boards, and everyone participating in the IFA.

So I want to pose this question to everyone, each and every one of you. And I want you to think about this as we are moving through this particular part of the presentation. And I'm just going to ask this question, how are One-Stop infrastructure costs funded and the local funding mechanism? And I can make it a lot simpler by asking you, how is the WIOA operating system, how are those operating costs funded? So let's back up a little bit and start off by asking what are operating costs and what is the One-Stop delivery system.

So I know that many of you have been operating NFJP grants for a long time. There's a lot of experience here on the webinar today. But just to go over really quickly, the operating costs of the One-Stop delivery system are basically comprised of what we call infrastructure costs and other additional costs. And these include career services, and shared operating costs, and shared services. So how are they paid for? And this kind of basically outlines what infrastructure costs are, and why it's important to basically understand it, and what resources and tools you can use to be able to understand it.

So the infrastructure costs are funded through cash and fairly evaluated non-cash and third party in-kind partner contributions. And they include any funding from philanthropic organizations, to private entities, or through other financing options. And they provide a stable and equitable funding stream for ongoing One-Stop delivery systems operations. Contributions, they must be negotiated between the One-Stop partners. As mentioned before, this includes your CEOs, your local workforce development boards; and the amount that's contributed, it must be included in the MOU.

And speaking back, and going into the space about the MOU, the costs that are being contributed for – in other words, the partners' programs' proportionate share of the funding, what you're being charged as an NFJP grantee, NFJP required partner, that share of the funding it must be calculated in accordance with the uniform guidance, or with the uniform administrative requirements, the cost principles in all the audit requirements. And based upon reasonable cost allocation, a reasonable cost allocation methodology whereby the infrastructure costs are charged to each partner in proportion to its use of the One-Stop center. It's relative to the benefits received.

So on the slide we point out that all infrastructure costs are charged to each partner in proportion to its use of the One-Stop center and its relative benefits received. And that's very important. Because when you go into your negotiations and you're discussing costs that are being charged, you have to keep in mind the benefits that are going to be received to your NFJP program as a whole. All costs should and must be allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable.

And to finalize, wrap up here with infrastructure cost agreement, all One-Stop partner programs, they must contribute to the infrastructure cost. And certain additional costs on the One-Stop delivery system, they're based on the proportionate use. Before we wrap up and go to the next slide, actually we can go ahead to the next slide, I'm going to invite Mary to add some additional comments.

And I'm also going to invite you all to enter some questions or challenges that you've experienced with the infrastructure cost agreement or even negotiations when it comes to the MOU, particularly when it comes to the infrastructure cost agreement. If you can enter those into the chat. And at this time I'm going to turn it over to Mary to provide some additional comments and respond to any questions or concerns that come up in the chat. So Mary?

MARY ZMUDCYNSKI: Thank you, Ron. And good afternoon, everyone. Just want to say a couple of things, because Francisco touched on the MOU, and the IFA, and shared services, or co-enrollment between NFJP grantees and the AJCs. Ron did a good job talking about the actual regulations regarding the IFA.

A couple things to point out, so when we talk about infrastructure funding costs, these are not personnel costs. So these are the costs for like running the actual AJC locations. Could be a share of rent expense, utilities, internet, etc. It also can include other shared costs.

So a couple of things, again TEGL 17-16 gives you a lot of information on the infrastructure funding agreement, so if you're new to them. The IFA portion of MOU is fluid. These costs, these agreements should be reviewed periodically. Up front if you're a new grantee and you're just a first time reaching out to the AJCs in your delivery area, you may not be familiar with these. When they start looking at what they think your proportionate share might be, these can be estimates up front. But on a periodic basis they do have to go back and base these costs on actual costs. So they have to look at them and we want to say like shore them up, or periodically look at them to ensure that in the end they're based on actual usage.

And again, any – whatever means that they put into the MOU that they're going to utilize to charge you or invoice you for your share, should include supporting documentation that shows how they came up with the amount that they're charging you. So that's important to get that information so that you're aware and you have input. A couple of pros and cons that we've seen in the field is I've been on a few monitoring for NFJP where we go in the field, or actually for other discretionary grants as well, where there are no MOUs, IFAs in place. And so this could lead to a finding in the monitoring review. Because it is required for you to be a partner, as a required partner to enter – be part of the MOU and the IFA.

What we say initially, and we've also had some areas where it is important for you to reach out to the AJCs. Because a lot of times they're not aware when new grants are awarded in their service area. So it's important for you to reach out to them and document that you've reached out to them. Because we have had some instances where they don't contact you back or they don't include you as part of the negotiations, then what happens. I think if you do your part in making that initial contact or a couple contacts, and keeping documentation to show that you did make that contact, whether they contact you back or not, then you are supporting yourself and the activities that you took.

On the opposite end, I had one review where an NFJP grantee entered into MOUs. He had IFAs with all the AJCs in his area. But then there were some areas where they didn't feel like they were receiving the benefit. They had some areas that weren't maybe giving them referrals. And so why should they be paying some of these costs when they weren't receiving the benefit. Maybe the partner there just wasn't going as well as some other AJCs.

So that's another where you really need to become a partner, attend the meetings, be part of the negotiations. Because these documents and the funding agreements need to be looked at periodically. They may find there's some periods of time where your payments are going to change, they're going to fluctuate based on benefit received. So it's very important that you do – make sure that you are a part of these meetings of the negotiations.

And again, as you work through this, we know we're kind of putting you on the spot if you don't have any questions right now. As you work through this, if you find that you do have questions, definitely you can reach out to your FPOs. We definitely want to ensure that you do get help when and if you need it around this area. OK, Ron, I don't see any questions in the chat. So I'll turn it back over to you.

MR. VARGAS: Awesome. Thank you so much, Mary. And we appreciate you for adding additional comments. And at this moment we're going to go ahead and go to the next slide. And this gives us a great opportunity to pivot into business engagement. We're wrapping and bringing everything together.

We're partnering with our AJCs, with our local boards. We talked about what that looks like formalized in an MOU. Now we're going to reach out into our local areas and touch some of our local industries, our local employers, and specifically our agricultural industry. So I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Jeff at this moment to go ahead and introduce us into business engagement. So Jeff, if you take it away.

JEFF RYAN: Thank you, Ron. Good afternoon slash morning to everyone. Before we get into some specific examples of business engagement activities, I wanted to do a quick sort of global view of what business engagement is, why we think it's so important, how it operates, who participates in it, things like that.

Because we really believe that engaging with business is a critical sort of central activity and focus for all of our programs across the workforce system. And so what we're going to try to do here is just do a little bit of context setting for the – where those specific kinds of activities can take place. So this will be sort of a bit of a high level conceptual segment of the presentation, and then we'll get into some more specifics about examples, resources, tools, etc., after that point.

So what we'll start with is what is business engagement? How would we define it? So as I mentioned, this is sort of a high level global perspective in this definition. So you'll see it might be a little more broad than what your specific programs work on, but we want to try to set that in context with how it relates to all the other activities that are happening across our system. So we believe that business engagement is a comprehensive value added set of strategies, activities, and partnerships, that are designed to support and promote economic prosperity by providing valuable solutions to address the needs of business.

So there's some key words in there that I wanted to sort of stress. We look at value, we're delivering value to our business customer. We're providing them solutions. We're not asking them to pick from a menu of services. We're looking at what their needs are and we're addressing them. And the reason it's comprehensive is because none of our programs by themselves can meet all of the needs of the business. And we'll talk about why that's important as well.

But the purpose, the reason we do these programs is to promote long term economic stability, competitiveness, and growth. Again you'll see that this definition is not referring to workforce training activities or even a skilled workforce, but a bigger concept of economic prosperity. As I mentioned, business engagement is bigger than our programs, even bigger than the public workforce system as a whole. It's about looking at the whole of the needs of business and finding ways to provide solutions to that. Many of those solutions are workforce related and that's the roll we play. But we need to be part of a bigger picture when we are engaging with the business community.

So why is it important that we do this? Beyond just our program needs, there's this idea of economic prosperity is really important. It's the successful thriving business drive economic prosperity in our country. And we can help them achieve that goal. Because when business is successful, then our workforce is successful, our communities can thrive. And that's really what we're trying to do. And when I say we, I'm thinking of this more coordinated broad team approach that includes, yes, our workforce development programs, but also economic development, education, all sorts of other programs. We can kind of go through some examples of that in a few slides.

But I just want you to get the picture that when I'm talking about business engagement, I'm talking about a coordinated strategic team approach that looks at a broad swath of resources and tools to bring to bear on a whole bunch of potential challenges that our business community is facing at any time.

So one of the things that we really have to try to avoid, however, when we're thinking about business engagement, is why – is sort of the normal approach, which is every program kind of interacting with business on their own without thinking about how there could be a more strategic, or comprehensive, or coordinated way to do that. So this graphic here is sort of just showing you there's a number of programs out there. And there's plenty more than fit on this slide. But when everybody is taking it upon themselves to interact with business, I've called it the go it alone or go your own way approach, what we're doing here is we're making decisions for our own program without thinking about any kind of other coordination or more strategic approach.

And as I say, this is fairly common. And understandably so, because every program has requirements, has expectations, has job seekers who need to be employed, all kinds of different reasons why you would want to engage with business. But when we do this, we can cause a number of challenges that would be better to avoid if we could. So let's talk a little bit about why this sort of on your own approach can be problematic.

The first one I'm talking about is a concept called engagement fatigue. What we see a lot of times as a business, particularly a business that shows an interest or a willingness to be a partner or to work with one or more of our programs, is they become kind of a go to business for everybody to try to reach out to, to get placements, to get training, to have them be a customer in a number of different ways; and that can really cause problems because a business is trying to operate their business. They're trying to do what they exist to do.

And spending a lot of time interfacing with our system and all of our different programs, first of all it's confusing, but also it can cause frustration in-kind of a best case scenario. In a worst case scenario it's kind of a disengagement, a refusal to participate; and that doesn't help anybody.

We also when we do this, we tend to confuse the concept of engaging with a business to expecting something from a business. For example, when we reach out to a business, we generally want them to accept placements from our program, or to train – to do an incumbent worker training program, or to do any number of things that are specific to our program, rather than looking at what the need of the business is. It doesn't treat them as a customer. It treats them – it essentially puts an obligation on that business to do something for you when what we should be thinking of is how can we look at what their needs are and start to address them.

And that tends to prioritize the programmatic goals over the success of the business. And that's problematic because what we're trying to do is create a long term relationship with the company, where we provide solutions to their problems, not put expectations on them to do something that benefits us.

So when we're doing this, it's basically a lose-lose scenario, where we're less likely to meet a business' needs because we're only focusing on what they can do for us and not what their broader challenges might be. It also is less likely to meet the programmatic goals. Because if we're not meeting their goals, are they going to work with us. And in that case we're just beating our head against the wall trying to get someone to work with us when we're not necessarily thinking about working with them.

And it also creates a competition amongst all of these different federal, state, local programs, nonprofit programs, all sorts of entities out there who are trying to work with the business for their own specific needs, essentially would come to compete against each other. What we want to encourage is working together in a coordinated fashion so that we maximize our collective success and not focus on our individual outcomes. Individual outcomes can come with a collective success.

So let's think about slightly differently. This is what I'm talking about when I have this idea of comprehensive, collaborative, continuous approach, that we're working to build an approach that focuses on a distinct, coordinated, ongoing effort. We want to build these relationships with the businesses and other community stakeholders. We want this effort to be based on an in depth knowledge of their labor market trends and economic forecast, not just calling a business cold, or walking into their front door and asking them questions. But really understanding what's going on in that business, in that industry, in your community.

It requires strategic planning, data gathering, analysis. So you're looking at how the economy is transitioning. And you're able to stay abreast of that transition to sort of ride the wave and be ahead of the need, but not following the needs, or not oblivious to those needs as the economy changes; and one that requires you to demonstrate your understanding of the business' workforce assets.

Like when we look at from a workforce specific perspective, you want to be looking at what's going on in your community, in the workforce, in the industry need. It's looking at that from a more strategic level, not just saying we trained a bunch of people to be plumbers. But we don't actually have that need in this community. Or the need for a different industry is growing and you need to be adaptable.

And then finally, an approach that convenes and maintains a comprehensive network of partners to ensure that your team and deliver the necessary solutions that you're identifying with your business customers based on specific needs that you identify.

So there's a lot here. I understand there's a lot of words. So we thought maybe if we drew a picture of how these words could theoretically look in practice, maybe that would be a little easier to follow. Now I also understand that this graphic looks a little bit chaotic when you kind of look at it, there's a lot going on. This is essentially a conceptual model. It's an idealized process.

What I want to stress is, we do not push any kind of specific – (inaudible) – or approaches, or partnerships in the business engagement model. Like that's not what at DOL what we do. Because we recognize that it's contextual. It requires your community, your partners, and your businesses, to work together in ways that meet your needs, that address the political climate, the structures, the resources you have.

But there are some things that we think remain true. One is all businesses have needs. And those needs are varied. Some of them are workforce related. Sometimes it's infrastructure-related. Sometimes it's market-related. Sometimes it's customer-related. Sometimes it's process improvement. Whatever it is, they've got all these needs.

The business engagement strategy model that we think works the best is when you have a mechanism in place to identify those needs, whatever they are, from your businesses, bring them into your partnership, taking all of the different resources and programs that are at your disposal, which is that top white section, there are some examples, and applying those to the needs that you've identified from those business, creating a customized solution to specifically address their needs, so that the outcomes are the success of the business. In some cases that's retention of talent. Sometimes it's they will hire more people.

But it's also that they're competitive, that they improve production, that they grow, or in some cases don't go out of business or don't shrink. All of those are valuable outcomes that we want you to – really want you to think about when you're determining how to design and partner with a broader business engagement approach. And again, when you're delivering success, delivering solutions that lead to success, you become of value, deliver a value to that business. And when you do that, that's when they look at you as a true trusted partner.

One way I've thought of it in the past is if a business can't – if they can't imagine doing business without you as a partner, then you've really succeeded. And that's going to benefit the entire partnership over the long term, when everybody is seen as value added and not a burden on the business. So really quickly, I know we're running short on time, so I'm going to jump through these last two couple slides real quick.

Why is it preferable to have this more strategic model? For one, it limits the number of interactions a business needs to have with our workforce system and other agencies, which the less time we bother them essentially, the more time they can focus on doing what they need to do.

And that's why we need to deliver strategic customized solutions so we're not just bombarding them with a number of different approaches. So trying to be less burdensome, providing a single point of contact, where whatever issue they have, they can call one person or one entity, and get solutions that cross the scope of what could be possibly needed.

And when we think about this is really focusing on solutions for businesses rather than your individual program needs, building that long term relationship by delivering those solutions. But over time when we're doing this with a number of businesses, we are sort of – this gets to the kind of rising tide lifts all boats idea. That when all of our programs are part of something, eventually we're all going to start to benefit.

One thing that I always think of is there's far more businesses out there that we can all reach. And also not all businesses are a logical partner for all of our programs. So we need to think about it more strategically. We need to think about how we can maximize the reach of our somewhat limited resources through our workforce system and our partners. And identifying those things that we can do that truly deliver success as an outcome.

It's a lot. I understand. On top of doing all the other work we do, this is something that it's hugely important, but it's also hugely time consuming, which is also another reason why I always say, don't do this by yourself. Work with as many partners as possible. Because nobody has the time to be calling every business, or stopping in on every business, or trying to identify every need that every business has. Thinking about doing it more together, sharing that workload, sharing the burden, but sharing the outcomes and the success is really the reason why we sort of think about business engagement through this model.

I'm just going to skip through these next three slides because they're just sort of some examples of who you could have on your team. So when you download the slide presentation, you'll have this. But these are just ideas of the types of entities, programs, partners, that you might want to think about from a number of different parts of your economy. You may have some of these partners, you may not. And you may have others. There's tons more out there.

But in the meantime I'm going to switch it back to Ron. And I don't know if we're going to skip the break here and jump right into what's next. But I'm going to turn it to you.

MR. VARGAS: Yeah, Jeff. I think we're going to go ahead and skip through this break. We're going to try to push through. We're coming to the final part of the presentation. So we can go ahead to the next slide. And thank you so much, Jeff. Next slide. OK. Perfect.

So before we dive into some of the surface level examples of business engagement, I want to take a step back for just a second and touch on a compliance element of business engagement. So obviously this is a discretionary program, NFJP. And we were required to apply, or you became aware of the NFJP funding through the funding opportunity announcement.

And in the funding opportunity announcement, it specifically states – I'm actually going to go ahead and read it here – that grantees must develop partnerships with at least three or more employers, and three or more training providers, to create higher pay, more stable employment for migrant and seasonal farm workers, and address the business needs of the employers of the local communities.

So right from the beginning, applying for the specific program and really understanding the program model of NFJP, it's really highlighting the fact that it's driven and strategically designed to include partnerships with local employers. And basically to provide opportunities for higher paying, more stable employment, but specifically to address the business needs of the employers within the local communities that you're serving. And specifically to address the needs of our MSFW communities. And that does include the local industries surrounding and supporting our MSFW communities, our growers, and other communities within the higher scope of that.

So how do we do that? What do we do? What does that entail? What does that look like? And I know, I stated before, that many of you have been doing this for a long time, reaching out into your local areas throughout your state and your region, and trying to touch many different industries including the agricultural industry, the growers, the ag employers, to try to create partnerships and businesses. So it's not always easy.

But one of the most important things that you have to do is do your homework. Partnerships are employer driven. And one tool and resource that we always kind of recommend that you use is labor market information, LMI. What do you know about your employers? What do you know about the local industries in your areas, in your region, even in other regions? And conduct targeted interviews with businesses. That's also very important. And then the other important thing before you even get started is to understand and know your value. What can you offer to the employer?

One quote that I like to use is, if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there. And it's really important to understand that. Basically you need to know what you can offer. We discussed the importance of effective engagement. But I want to point out on a very practical level, this is kind of on a very – a large scale, on a global scale – but a few things that you can use LMI with. Research has shown that as many as 375 million workers globally might have to change occupations in the next decade just to meet companies' needs. And automation could free employees to spend as much as 30 percent of their time on new work.

In a recent McKinsey global study on future workforce needs, nearly 9 in 10 executives and managers say their organizations either face skill gaps already or expect to develop them within the next five years. So this is where you come in. And this is where you can use LMI information. This is where you can really use information or this is how you conduct research. Few of these organizations say that they understand how to equip themselves with the workforce skills that they need the most. And only one third of the respondents say that their companies are prepared to actually cope with the workforce disruptions resulting from technology and the local market trends.

So how do you use that information? And how do you approach employers and say we can actually provide solutions to this? What have you found employers need from you? What are they most interested in? Throughout your experience managing NFJP grants or coming from an MSFW community, what have you said or done or experienced that has been effective, and that really engages employers.

One important thing obviously is actively listening to the employer, is the first and most important essential step in the process. Again, Jeff kind of highlighted this and really used a great example. But I really want to foot-stomp it. When you initially go out and reach – do outreach with employers, it's not recommended that you show up with like a football team. You don't want to bombard them. One or two people usually suffice. You're usually there to actively listen, take back what you heard, compare notes with the research that you've already done, and get the work.

Also try to stay away from making any promises during that initial employer engagement and outreach. You definitely don't want to – you want to inform them of what services you're currently providing. However your goal is to understand employer needs from their perspective, and then build that relationship, build that engagement, do what you need to do. Do not overpromise and don't under deliver.

And you really want to review also where your participants are currently working. Because that sometimes can be an untapped resource for employer engagement and employer outreach. Another thing that's important is showcasing employer job openings, but also showcasing training and upgrade skills available for employers, and assistance via training providers who understand the employer needs, the curriculum that's required, the credentialing, and the LMI trends. Next slide.

Questions that you might want to consider. So I'm going to start off with this statement. Regional and industry focused approaches to building skilled workforces, it's like one of the most effective ways to align public and private resources to address the talent needs of employers.

But what does that look like? Consider how employers, how can they assist you. But it really falls under this format of building regional talent pipelines, addressing skill gaps, creating meaningful career pathways. Again, what are your goals? What are the goals of your organization? What is the mission? And what is the purpose? Back to that quote, if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.

Start by asking yourself the question, what can we do to go beyond just placing workers in jobs and arranging training for them? How can we focus ourselves on the business? And how can we focus our employers and make them – or how can we focus on our employers and make them the focus of our service strategies? Like Jeff was stating earlier, how can we make the employer our customer as well as our partner. Planning efforts connect our job seekers and business service efforts. And when we align those efforts with LMI information, it really serves to provide the backbone for an effective approach to serving our state and regional communities. Next slide.

So the visual aids and shareable materials slide, I have this slide, and it probably goes without saying, but you want to make sure when you are engaging employers face to face or even virtually, most of us are doing this virtually now, that we have visual displays or dashboards, that you have a format to share your information. And consider highlighting several times the incentives, whether they be financial or nonfinancial, partnering with you, and becoming a partner or your customer.

Highlight how you've helped specific employers in the past. It's important to understand that services to an employer basically translate as money and time. When you can do that, when you can basically save an employer money or time, that's what translates to services. Give examples of money and time saved, like OJT and work experience. Because OJT and work experience is basically funds used to recover the cost of training. The important aspect is of course the capability to openly and effectively communicate what you've done in the past, what you're capable of doing. But you also want to remember you don't want to overpromise and under deliver.

Another important aspect is as you're building your relationship, you also want to be able to communicate those sometimes difficult messages to employers. We work in workforce development as workforce development professionals in the MSFW community, in the agricultural communities, and the industries surrounding it. A lot of times we see this trend of high turnover, we do interviews with the employees, we see low wages, lack of training opportunities. And that sometimes can contribute to high turnover and obviously the low wages as well. So sometimes it's hard – that can be a hard hit, a hard blow for the local industry and specifically for the employer.

So it's very important to be able to effectively engage them, and communicate to them, and provide solutions, specifically when you are there to provide training and skills upgrades that may be able to really mitigate some of those issues. You have to be able to explain to employers the solutions of how a partnership with your organization can help get rid of some of those issues. Because at the end of the day, the average turnover cost for an employee or an employer that an employer faces is usually about double that of the employee's salary, when you take everything into consideration.

So as you're developing that relationship, that employee employer partnership, not informing the employer of those issues and assisting them to provide those solutions, including the training upgrades that I've mentioned through your organization, through access to higher wages, and partnerships with some of your service providers, that would be a disservice not only to the employer, but also to the industry. Next slide.

So business engagement, some more examples. In this climate that we're currently in, I know that we've mentioned several times we are facing right now a global pandemic, and our nation is in a difficult situation right now. So I know many of you are doing virtual outreach with your participants and you are considering developing virtual opportunities and virtual approaches with your employers as well. So this is also an opportunity to kind of create alternatives where those face to face meetings are no longer the norm. It's important too in this climate to really check sources where employers are trying to reach out. The job titles, responsibilities, phone numbers, those can sometimes change. And you really want to stay on top of this.

An individual should not have to go through five or six different websites, or pages, or even talk to four or five people, before they get to someone who is responsible for employer engagement. You really want to make sure that you are as service friendly as possible when it comes to employer engagement.

Another tip is don't ignore the struggling industries like hotels, and restaurants, and retail industry. An employer partnership, it's mutual. It's a two way benefit. And that's the key. It should be bringing training and employment opportunities to your participants, and in turn send highly qualified job candidates back to those same industries, back to those same businesses. Next slide.

So here you want to ensure that you're using additional business services. Engage through other intermediaries like business improvement districts, of course the famous chamber of commerce, trade associations.

Strong business partnerships, they are crucial for achieving all of your program goals. They will assist your organization to create networks that leads to employment for participants and further training opportunities. So conversations with your local, regional, and national employee partners, they're going to help ensure that focus remains on training programs. And they're going to help participants return to the workforce as fast as possible.

So next slide, the business versus government workforce language. Now this is just a tool for you to use, just so you can see the difference between some of the language that is used in the business world versus the workforce development world, and be cognizant of that. And the next slide, I just wanted to share some tools with you. Let's see, I think we may have already shared them.

So before we wrap up today, I'm going to touch on NFJP service delivery. We're going to switch gears here really quickly and go into career and development services, or career and training services, I'm sorry. So the NFJP program provides grants to community based organizations and public agencies that assist MSFWs and their families to help them attain greater economic stability. And the program helps farm workers acquire the skills they need to retain agricultural jobs and start new careers. So if we can go to the next slide.

OK, so touching on the adult services. I know that we discussed during open session on day one. We focused on this particular funding – this funding cycle. We had nine housing grantees, 53 career service and training grantees. And the top industries were manufacturing, transportation, construction, healthcare, IT, welding, and of course the agricultural trades. So that is a lot that you guys wrote in your applications, your statement of works, and your program plans.

So here in the adult service components, they're kind of broken up into career services as you can see, what entails career services, what entails the training services. But also the NFJP model focuses on supportive services, related assistance, and of course adult co-enrollment. I also recall one thing that we did on day one where we basically put up a poll and we asked, what does NFJP mean to you?

So as we move through this portion of the presentation, I want you to keep in mind how you responded. And I want you to kind of think if your definition of NFJP or your understanding of NFJP has expanded based off of what we have been discussing over these past couple of weeks in these past sessions.

Of course when we discuss training and career services, we describe them as training services, including occupational and job training, they combine workplace training with related instruction, skills upgrade, and retraining, entrepreneurial training, and other training activities. And career services of course include outreach, skills assessment, LMI, job search, program eligibility.

Now one thing that I want you to keep in mind when it comes to the NFJP model, is that four-letter word or the four-letter acronym that we use often in our services, is WIOA, or the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act. Because that's basically the act that assists job seekers in assessing employment, education, training, and support. And it is the act that authorizes NFJP funding, and in turn NFJP helps fulfill the purpose of the act within the MSFW community.

So NFJP grantees should design their enrollment assessments to determine whether participants might qualify for and benefit from other WIOA funded programs. That's what we call co-enrollment. And that applies to both adult and youth. Some programs that are most likely to intersect with the unique needs of our MSFWs are programs like the WIOA adult and dislocated worker programs, Indian and Native American programs, vocational rehab programs, Head Start, and jobs for veterans. Next slide.

OK. So youth services, what's really unique about youth is there are some differences when it comes to the eligibility requirements. But when it comes to the career and training services, they're basically the same for adult – (inaudible).

But when the eligibility comes into play, there are going to be some differences. The eligibility for MSFW youth means an eligible MSFW age 14 to 24 who is individually eligible or a dependent of an eligible MSFW. Grantees may enroll participants aged 18 to 24 as either an MSFW adult or an MSFW youth participant, but not in both categories. And that's very important to understand. So it's important for you to understand the MSFW youth eligibility requirements. They cannot be enrolled as an adult and youth at the same time.

So it's important that you, again, when you're doing your enrollment assessments, that you kind of decide what is going to be the best fit for that participant to attain the career and training service goals, and what's going to be a best fit for them to meet those goals within a timely manner. Also it's important to be aware of some of those other youth partners. Again the youth can be co-enrolled as well with programs like Title I adult programs, Title 2 adult education, the voc rehab, again the TANF programs, and technical educational programs under WIOA.

Many organizations in the workforce system, they are also serving youth. So it's possible to do partner referrals, co-enrollment of MSFW youth, and go – you can start with going to your local workforce development board to determine whether they have what's termed as a standing youth committee. Standing youth committees will be familiar with the local organizations who are serving youth.

And the one last thing that I want to point out on this before we move and wrap up here, is that youth services they must be offered the following 14 WIOA program elements. You can find those elements – I'm not going to go over them here for lack of time – but in 20 CFR Part 681, it's very important that you understand them. Of course all youth may not require every program element, all 14 of them.

But they must be offered them. Participants must have access to a seamless system of high quality services through the coordination of the programs and services that govern – that are under – (inaudible). These tie directly into the goal of WIOA in the corresponding youth serving organizations. Next slide.

OK. Next steps, we can move to the next slide. Just to go over, week one, week two, and we are now finally again wrapping up here in week three. We're finishing day five. We are going to go into day six on Thursday. And that's going to be grant reporting requirements. On the next slide I think we have some pre-work for you.

So if you can review this material here on financial reporting, WIOA performance reporting, and performance accountability. We also have two TEGLs that you may want to familiarize yourself with. So that way you'll be ready and prepared for day six on grant reporting requirements.

And the next slide, and here we have all the grant resources that we have been mentioning throughout the presentation today. And the next slide, so you should be seeing polling questions coming up. We do ask that you respond to those before ending the presentation today or leaving the webinar.

And we just want to thank everyone for joining us today. I know we kind of got short on time here towards the end. I do want to mention one last time that this session will be – is being recorded and will be available on WorkforceGPS.org. Thank you everyone one last time for joining. And we will hope to see you all on day six. And with that being said, we'll go ahead and end. Thank you.

MR. VEHLOW: Thank you, Ron.

(END)