**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Eligible Training Provider (ETP) Webinar Series**

**Part 1: Eligibility and TEGL 08-19**

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JON VEHLOW: Welcome to "Eligible Training Provider, ETP webinar series, Part 1." So without further ado, I'd like to kick things off to our moderator today, Heather Fleck, unit chief, governance unit, division of adult services and governance office of workforce investment with the employment and training administration with the U.S. Department of Labor. Heather?

HEATHER FLECK: Thanks, Jon and hello everyone. Thanks for joining us this afternoon. This is the employment and training administration's first of two webinars, so – (inaudible) – on the workforce innovation – (inaudible) – eligible training providers.

This first session, today's session, is going to focus on the policy requirements around eligibility and additionally ways that states can more strategically use their eligible training provider list.

Next month they're going to be the second part of the webinar that will focus more on the training provider performance and reporting requirements.

Our agenda today – (inaudible) – yep, will cover some of the nuts and bolts of the eligibility requirements for training providers and we're going to spend the first part of the presentation kind of focused on our ETA's of guidance, guidance 8-19 on this.

That came out this January, January 2020. It's fairly dense so we're going to just share a little bit about that, but there are webcasts available that walk through it in much more detail.

Then we're going to go through some of the observations that ETA staff had when they were reviewing the eligibility policies and the state plans and provide information about challenges and solutions that they should consider.

Then we're going to turn it over to our guest today, Nick Moore, from Alabama who is going to walk through their strategic approach to their eligible training provider list and how they're aligned it with the initiatives in their state.

So today, you're going to hear from Kellen Grode. He works for ETA. Stacy O'Keefe, she's in our Chicago regional office for ETA and as I mentioned, Nick Moore, he's the director in the governor's office of education and workforce transformation in Alabama.

After today, we're hoping what you get out of this webinar as a better understanding of the ETP list requirements and responsibilities, what some of the challenges states are having as well as probably some of the local areas and implementing the requirements as well as some solutions, discuss practices that you can adopt that will provide greater informed consumer choice to your job seeking customers and then finally, it's not on the slide, but what we're most excited about is providing information to you on the strategic approach for using the eligible training provider list.

Next up we have a poll. This is just so we can have a sense before we start talking about what your familiarity is with our guidance that we published, TEGL 08-19 and the accompanying webcast series that's been made available.

We'll give about 30 seconds here. OK. All right, it seems like we might have about 40 or so folks who've become pretty familiar with the materials. About half of you have read the TEGL, which is great.

We are happy about that. And then many of you, this might be your first – You might be aware of ETP and requirements or be curious about them, but not as familiar. So we'll try to strike a balance there.

I do greatly encourage you all, though, to particularly if you're in charge of policy making in the state, check out all of the resources that are available.

OK, we're going to dive into the content now and go into the structure and contents of the training provider requirements. I'm going to turn this over to Kellen and Stacy.

KELLEN GRODE: Thanks, Heather. Yeah, so to get things started, and it looked like, as Heather mentioned in looking at the poll results that there's a pretty good number of folks that have read the TEGL, but there's also a pretty good amount of folks who maybe haven't seen the TEGL or haven't seen some of our materials that we've already published in relation to what the contents of the TEGL are.

So I just want to flag for you guys some sort of important things to keep in mind that might help your review of the information in there. There is a lot in there, so I encourage you all to go out and check that out.

So the structure is maybe a little different than some of the other TEGLs that some of you may be used to coming from us, if you've seen them before, but in terms of how it's laid out, so we first – we start with the body of the TEGL.

It's really just a very high-level overview in this case whereas most of the bulk of the content is actually in the attachments in this one. So if you look at attachment one, for example, that's where you'll see a lot of the high-level requirements in the guidance.

So you'll see things like an explanation of how training is provided and what types of trainings are provided under WIOA. You'll learn some about the ETP list requirements and responsibilities.

You'll see like a comparison of the eligibility requirements for ETP compared with the performance reporting requirements for ETP. There's a discussion of waivers in there. There's some information about ETP list discrimination and consumer information.

There's also a chart at the end that dives into some common challenges and potential solutions. Then if you look to attachment two in the TEGL, this is where there is a big, long list of all of the ETP list requirements that are in WIOA and it breaks them out by the responsible entities.

So this includes tables for states, locals and for training providers and it outlines which of these WIOA required responsibilities are either required or optional things and so it sort of tells you where your responsibilities lie in terms of what is required by the law.

Attachment three is a useful attachment in terms of figuring out sort of what needs to be in an eligibility policy in terms of criteria. So WIOA outlines a long list of different items that have to be included in a state's ETP eligibility criteria and so that attachment is really designed to help walk you through what those criteria have to be.

There's a part of it that tells you what has to be in an initial eligibility criteria policy and then there's another part that tells you what has to be in your subsequent eligibility criteria.

Attachment four is a bit shorter and basically what it is, is a list of the information that can be requested of a registered apprenticeship program that's requesting to be added to the state ETP list because there are special requirements about apprenticeship, which we'll talk a little bit more about later.

Then finally, the fifth attachment is simply a references attachment.

The other thing that we want to make you all aware of with this is that we have started and will continue to produce a few more even later on down the road, a webcast series introducing some key topics relating to this guidance.

So and you'll see on the slide deck here that there's a link to the page that has these webcasts as well as some related resources. So for those of you that maybe have read the TEGL, but you hadn't seen these webcasts, it looked like there was a pretty good number of folks that were in that situation.

These webcasts might be helpful to you in diving deeper into a few of the topics relating to the TEGL. Whether it's a more in depth explanation of the attachment three and it's relationship with state plans or there's one on registered apprenticeship programs and ETP eligibility requirements as well as some other useful resources on that page.

There are more that we're planning for this series, but I think those two, the webcast series and the TEGL itself are important things for folks to look at. As those of you that have been working on this are probably aware, there are a lot of requirements that WIOA imposes on ETP.

So to get into all of those, it really takes looking through those lists of requirements. It would be a very long webinar if we tried to go through each and every one, so instead we're going to try to focus on some big ticket items that we have noticed and in particular, ones that we observed in our review of the state plans that were recently submitted earlier this year.

So we're going to jump to those now. We're going to walk through a few of them and talk through them and I'm going to bring in throughout this discussion Stacy O'Keefe from our regional office in Chicago and she'll bring some regional perspective to some of these as well.

So the first area that we wanted to talk about is probably one of the bigger areas in terms of how the law looks at the ETP eligibility, which is the required initial and continued eligibility criteria.

As I mentioned, there's a lot of items that the law requires be included and when we looked at the state plans and the ETP policies that were included, it was pretty common for some of these criteria to be missing from those policies. So we wanted to flag that for folks and we wanted to also make you aware of a tool that we have.

You can use attachment three of the TEGL, but we also have a tool and I want to show you real quick, but if Jon, if you could get the screen share up and running, I will share my screen and I will show folks this tool that we have, which is also the one that you can download from the webinar or you can find it on our WorkforceGPS page.

So when you download this tool, really it is just a converted version of that attachment, but what – the nice thing about it is that it allows you to sort of check these boxes as you're going through.

So if you're a state and you're drafting or updating your eligibility criteria for ETP, you may say, OK, let's look at our initial eligibility. Do we require that they have a description of the program? Yes. OK.

Do we have information addressing a factor relating to the WIOA performance indicators? Yes. Do we require that they provide information about whether a provider's in a partnership with business? Oh, no, we don't, OK, so we know we need to fix that.

That's sort of how you can use this and you can use it for both the initial and continued eligibility. These are all the requirements taken straight from the law. So we're hoping that that will make it easier for you to sort of know whether or not your policy is in full compliance with everything required by the law.

So with that, I'm going to stop sharing my screen and we will jump back to the slides. OK. So and I see in the chat request to send out the tool.

Again, we'll make sure that that gets posted to the page when this webinar is updated on the page, but you can also download it from the file share right now if you want or you can find it on WorkforceGPS as well at the link in the slide deck.

A few more notes about initial and continued eligibility criteria, in addition to policies that might have been missing some of the criteria, another area where we wanted to flag for folks that it may be worth working on in order to improve these criteria is that a lot of times what we saw is that these policies would maybe say we're going to use performance as a criteria, but not tell how they were going to use that criteria, as an example.

So there just wasn't enough detail in those policies in order to ensure that there was a fair and consistent application of the criteria. Really making sure that you get some of those details into the policies and procedures, it can be a useful way to ensure that those criteria are applied consistently across the state.

So I think one of the – there's a lot of different ways that you could approach that. An example of how you might do so is maybe you set a rubric where each criteria is worth a certain number of points and a program has to get a certain number of points in order to be eligible for the list.

I've seen states do that. I've seen states approach the criteria as more of a yes or no scenario where they say, OK, they have to meet this level for this criteria or they can't be on the list. So that's another way that you could do that. That's pretty common with performance where states maybe set a minimum performance level for different measures.

Let's now go to another topic that is worth talking about that we saw quite a bit in the state plans, which was the registered apprenticeship program policies in your ETP policies. Now, I think folks are probably aware that there are some exceptions built into the law for registered apprenticeship programs.

And so in your policies, you should make sure that you're addressing those things and in a lot of cases, they weren't maybe fully addressed in the policies that we saw in the state plans and so it may be worth taking a closer look in a lot of cases to see how you're handling it.

Just to talk about some of these special conditions for the RAPs, as we like to call them. One, and this is one of the bigger ones, there's automatic eligibility for RAPs to be added to an ETP list.

So this means that they are exempt from the application process and so this is why we have attachment four of the TEGL, which identifies what information you can request of a registered apprenticeship program, because the law basically says that you can only request basic information from these programs in order to have them added to the list.

A second topic relating to RAPs is that the states are required to notify the RAPs of their eligibility as an eligible training provider. The reason why this is important is because the RAPs must be given an opportunity to opt into the list through a minimally burdensome process.

So one thing that we see occasionally is policies that require them to opt out of the ETP list and automatically add them and that is something that is actually not allowable. So you have to set up a process where you notify the RAPs that they're eligible and allow them to opt in easily.

Now, if you're wondering, like OK, well, how do I do that? On that resource page, where we have the webcasts and additional resources, we actually have some sample RAP ETP policies as well as notification letters that are available on our ETP resource page. So the link here, we've included that as well and it'll be later on in the slide deck for folks to take a look at. Another area that we wanted to talk about, just real briefly, is defining timely and accurate reporting.

One of the requirements in the law is that the state ETP policy needs to define what it considers to be a substantial violation of the requirement to timely and accurately submit all required information for both performance and eligibility purposes.

This doesn't always occur in the plans that we've reviewed and I just want to flag for folks why we think this is important, aside from the fact that it's a requirement, and that's because unclear standards of what's considered timely or accurate can make it really difficult to remove a program that is actually failing by these metrics if you don't have it clearly defined in your policy.

So in examples where we've seen it done well, we've seen states that they've both set standards and then established processes for enforcing those standards. Examples are like sending notifications to those that miss the reporting deadline, initiating the removal process starting 30 days after that notification was sent if the issues weren't resolved.

There's a lot of different ways you can go with that. We don't mandate that you do it a specific way, but it is something that we recommend that is required that you have some sort of policy established.

Related to that topic is the topic of the process for removing a program from the ETP list. There was a pretty common thing in the state plans that this was missing from the policy and it really needs to be established in there, because if you don't have a process established in policy, it's going to be difficult for you to remove a program that is failing to meet the standards established by the state.

So we've flagged some questions to consider. I think there's a lot of flexibility in terms of how you approach this, but so some of these questions that you might want to ask yourself as a state when establishing this process are things like what are the conditions for removing a program?

Who has the authority to remove a program? How often are we reviewing the list and identifying programs for removal? How are we initiating this process? What's the appeals process? Who is reviewing the appeals? How long does it take?

If a program is removed, when can it reapply? Does this process differ between providers and individual programs? So are you removing an individual program or are you removing the whole provider?

So those are some of the questions, but I actually want to bring in Stacy now to get her thoughts from a regional perspective. Are there other – Stacy, are there other questions worth considering or any of these that you want to flag as especially important?

STACY O'KEEFE: Sure. Thanks, Kellen. Hi everyone, this is Stacy O'Keefe from Chicago, the regional office. I think, Kellen, I would flag for sure who has the authority to remove a program. We have seen at times where programs have been or providers have been removed from a list maybe locally.

The local area was not using that provider for one reason or another, but did not realize that they did not have the authority to actually remove that program. So that is a really important question to answer in both state and local policy.

I think really, a good policy will answer all of the questions that Kellen has posed here on this slide and a few others that I have seen in policy, is there a process for ensuring a smooth transition to another provider or program for any participants that might be in the midst of their training when a provider is removed?

I know there are typically time frames for certain things, but with removal of a provider, you never know when that might have to occur and you do want something in writing that addresses transitioning of participants.

Another question to answer or for the state really to answer is, is the state going to allow for any exceptions around removal from the list? For example, if a certain provider's program is going to be removed, but the local area, the local board, really believes that there are extenuating circumstances.

Maybe economic conditions are really tough, kind of like they are right now, or the demographic characteristics of the folks that are being served through a given provider's program. So I think you want to really be able to answer that question through policy in terms of are there going to be any exceptions allowed.

Then another good practice that I saw in some of our state policies here in region five, some policies actually included certain conditions under which a provider might need to repay WIOA training funds that have already been – costs that have already been incurred.

Maybe there's some sort of substantial violation by the provider or through the program and a good idea to identify when that might occur.

MR. GRODE: Great. Thanks, Stacy. Let's move now to another topic real quick, which is delegating state responsibilities to local areas. This is one where it's a common area of confusion and hopefully some of the materials we've provided today will help you to better delineate who's responsible for what.

But a lot of times what we saw in state plans is that there was ETP policies describing the state assigning responsibilities to the local boards that are actually supposed to be the primary responsibility of the state.

This is not always necessarily a problem, but what you need to keep in mind when you're doing that is if a state is delegating those responsibilities, they must ensure that they're establishing clear policies and procedures so that those responsibilities are being consistently applied across the state and not varying from local area to local area.

So an example that's related to something we talked about earlier, if a state chooses to have local boards review applications for initial provider eligibility, they must make sure that they're being reviewed according to the same state established criteria by all local boards.

Whether the program is determined to be eligible for the state ETP list should not be varying by local area. We have a little diagram here, which is actually from the guidance which demonstrates that the local ETP list should be a subset of the state ETP list, if you have a local ETP list at all.

In a lot of states, you just use the state list and the local doesn't want to put any more restrictions or higher standards than the state already has and that's fine. But in circumstances where the local does want to add additional requirements or make their performance standards higher, then they can narrow down the list, but they have to be providers that are already on the state list.

I know Stacy, you had a few things that you wanted to add relating to this topic as well.

MS. O'KEEFE: Yes. Thanks, Kellen. I have a couple questions for you too, but I just want to mention that this is really an area where your policy needs to be clear in terms of who is assigned to do what.

And in region five, our state policies sort of run the gamut from delegating everything that can be allowably delegated to the local boards, delegating all of that, to like Kellen mentioned, centralizing every step in the process with the state workforce agency in the hopes of ensuring some consistency in the treatment of providers across the entire state.

I think regardless of how much or how little you're going to delegate, it's important that the policy is clear around each of those steps and we have – we did have one policy that I just wanted to mention, that did a really good job of sort of delineating who was going to do what.

That policy includes a chart that lists all of the process tasks from the beginning of the ETP process all the way through to the end and then it indicates where each of those tasks is assigned. So is it assigned to the system?

Like maybe the system is going to automatically generate something. Is it assigned to the state or is it assigned to the local board or some other configuration of one or more of those key players?

So I thought that was a really good way of illustrating that. Then, Kellen, I think you touched on an area where delegation, at least for me, gets a little bit confusing when I start to look at state ETP lists and the local ETP lists.

So just wanted to ask a couple of questions. So if I'm a state that has delegated review and approval to my local boards and I've set some minimum criteria, the required criteria at the state level –

MR. VEHLOW: (Inaudible) – shows somebody who's done that and then next week we're going to show you how we're giving people access to that –

MS. O'KEEFE: Please mute your phone. So if I'm a state that's delegated everything to my local in terms of review and approval, can I also allow the local boards to set higher levels of performance like you were talking about?

More strict criteria to be placed on or remain on the state list? So not the local list, but the state list. Can I do that at the local level?

MR. GRODE: It's a good question, Stacy, and the answer – the simple answer is no. There is a slightly more complex answer, but basically when you're talking about reviewing the eligibility of a program to be on the state list, you have to be following the state criteria.

Now, once it's on the state lists, locals can narrow that list down by adding their own hire criteria or different criteria, but in order to be put on the state list, they have to be following the state criteria, that way you don't have the state list having higher standards in one area versus another.

MS. O'KEEFE: Great. Thanks for clarifying that, Kellen. And then sort of on the opposite end of the spectrum, again, if I'm a local – a state that has delegated review and approval to the local boards, can a state policy allow local boards the discretion to consider approving a provider who didn't meet the state minimum standards, but provided some sort of justification to the local board indicating why they think they should be allowed?

Is that allowable? For me to bring somebody else, to bring a provider on who did not meet the state standards?

MR. GRODE: I think if you were going to go down that road, you'd have to have some sort of policy built into the state policy around possible reasons for exceptions to the criteria. So I think you wouldn't be able to do it without it being somehow described in the state's policy like with the examples that you gave or maybe it's a more rural area and so it's harder to get [inaudible].

MS. O'KEEFE: Right. Right.

MR. GRODE: That sort of information would need to be built into the state policy.

MS. O'KEEFE: OK.

MR. GRODE: Yeah, so I think there's probably plenty more questions that we could get to. I know we're already probably running a little behind our planned timeline for this, so I'm going to keep us moving.

I know as folks have questions, especially if they have more questions about that, we'll talk about them hopefully towards the end of today's webinar. I want to talk real quick about a few notable ETP list practices that we saw in the state plans, in the reviewing of the state plans.

One of which is that we saw some folks doing some creative leveraging of existing reciprocal agreements or even creating new ones. An example that we saw was using the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements, or NCSARA.

There's also, on our ETP resource page, we included some sample reciprocity agreement language, but leveraging reciprocity agreements to add programs to the list, especially now in a world where we're trying to get more online providers added to the list can be a very useful thing.

We also wanted to note that there was a really good example in Louisiana's policy of comprehensive and thoughtful ETP data collection practices and then we also thought that looking at consumer friendly training provider websites, there was a really good example in Colorado.

Stacy, what about you? Are there examples from your own region that you've seen that are pretty noteworthy that you want to point to?

Yeah, I would just point to, as you're talking about user friendly, I would point to Michigan's Talent Connect website. User friendly for the provider, for the participant and you all can check it out. It's got a lot of great features.

MR. GRODE: Awesome. So yeah, so those are just a few examples. I think there's a lot of good ones, so when those state plans go online, it might be worth checking those out. But there's plenty of other good examples in there as well.

Then with that, I know we've probably already started to cut into his time, but I want to hand it to Heather real quick to introduce our special guest.

MS. FLECK: Thanks, Kellen and Stacy. I'm thrilled to introduce Nick Moore. Again, he's joining us from the governor's office in Alabama where he's the director of education and workforce transformation.

There he's worked to maximize the alignment of the states ETPO to the state's strategic focus on their in demand occupations and to better integrate it overall and their approach on credentials and career pathways. So, Nick, take it away.

NICK MOORE: Well, thank you so much. I want to first fess up and admit that was me that made the noise there a second ago, so apologize to you, Stacy, for that.

It is a pleasure to be with you today and to speak on behalf of Governor Ivey to share a little bit about how Alabama is using our state's eligible training provider list not just as a compliance document or as a way for us to check the box to make sure that the programs we're putting on the list are compliant with WIOA, but to set a vision for our entire state for developing a currency of credentials and a currency of career pathways that lead to self sufficiency.

I want to start by saying that it's incumbent on governors and states to go beyond the guidance and to go beyond the statute and to operationalize what the vision for a system and the public workforce system that leads to self-sufficiency for the citizens of your state.

So we'll go ahead and move to the first slide and we can move to the second slide. So there's three specific things that Governor Ivey has done in our state's 2020 plan and the eligible training provider list is at the center of that.

First, we're providing a no wrong door approach to the public workforce system by eliminating silos and eliminating the barriers between the six programs and the four titles. It really takes the governor and the governor's leadership to make that happen.

Secondly, we are focusing on reducing the cliff effect or marginal tax rate increases on Alabamians who are transitioning into the workforce.

So we're trying to make sure that the short term barriers of what many people call benefits cliffs that people are facing, whether it's loss of TANF or SNAP or a childcare subsidy, we want to make sure that we're holding people harmless into that transition and to pay the employment and the eligible training provider list is one of the strongest tools that a state has to do that.

Third, it can really provide a system of competency based career pathways and a talent driven ecosystem in the state and also, because the governor has a little bit more direct and statutorily clear authority to provide additional direction on the eligible training provider list, it's an excellent way to begin the conversation of aligning your states VA program approval, private school licensure, occupational licensure and things like prior learning assessment and the ability to benefit program that can extend and democratize access to post-secondary learning in your state.

Next slide, please. So as I said, the ETP is – the list is one of the best ways that the governor can align all of the programs that are offered by your public workforce system to labor market data and also to provide a pathway to self-sufficiency.

It's important, obviously, to become familiar with the actual language and WIOA itself and particular section 122, also the regulation that 20 CFR part 680 and the two primary TEGL 3-18 and 8-19 and I know they're going to be talking about compliance a lot on the second part of this presentation, so what I want to focus on is more about vision setting and about how the governor can go beyond what is in the guidance and what is in the language of the statute to create a strong vision for your state.

Next slide, please. So first, it's very important that we are starting with an equity imperative. So what Governor Ivey did is after we added Perkins 5 to our 2020 combined plan, we broke our state's two big goals out to get our labor force participation rate to surpass the national average and to reach our state's attainment goal by ensuring that we broke those goals down by a year.

Then for each of our populations with a barrier to entering the workforce and then also looking at the interest and aptitudes and aspirations of those individuals and breaking down those into each of our 16 career clusters.

So that way we have a very intentional and focused way for ensuring that each of our regions, each of our one stop centers and every partner to the American Job Center system in Alabama understands what their share of the goal is and how they'll be rewarded for reaching it.

Next slide, please. We also made sure that we are cross training all of our public workforce system on all of the programs covered in the 2020 plan. Not just the core programs, but programs such as those like SNAP and TANF and then also the VA programs and those that are designed to serve seniors and all of the other partners to the 2020 plan.

We developed a workforce eligibility continuum that you may not be able to see very clearly here, but you will when you see the slides later that shows how do you blend and braid and obviously using those terms loosely, but mostly braiding funds so that we can understand how one individual can have an individualized education and training plan.

Also an important part is that for the six performance indicators, we align the state's credentialing quality assurance process.

So Act 2019506 in Alabama developed something called the committee on credentialing and career pathways and it extends the influence of the guidance in the state by allowing employers in sector strategies to validate the equality of credentials and then also to show how they're aligned to labor market value.

It's very important that we're allowing employers and business and industry to lead the discussion about credential validation and then also on the sixth performance indicator, we've added a state determined approach and so as you all know, there's a couple that have been developed by DOL and there's also an opportunity for the state to develop a state-determined approach for the sixth indicator.

What Alabama did was we decided to change the nominator to be all of the Alabama citizens, all of the Alabamians that are eligible for workforce services because they have a barrier to entering education employment.

So now, in Alabama, for the sixth indicator it's not just about how many people happen to have been served as the denominator and the numerator is how many were served well, but the denominator is how many people are out there?

And so that caused us to have a more segmented strategy and a more direct outreach strategy to go out and find folks and meet them where they are so that they can be served. Next slide, please.

I want to show you an example of what our two-pronged career pathway model works and this is important, because what we're doing is for youth and adults. We are giving the same programs of study and the same access to eligible training providers, except in different seasons of life.

So in WIOA, for WIOA youth, for example, we're allowing in-school youth to have access to ITAs and that was a waiver that was approved last year, so that way youth can have a compressed pathway to the workforce.

They can get an apprenticeship, associate degree and industry credentials at the time of graduation and then also, for adults, they have more multiple points of entry and exit in to and out of the workforce and they can modularize degrees and certificates so they can get progressive wage increases along their career pathway from the entry level occupation to middle skill occupation to the destination occupation.

Next slide, please. So I mentioned that the ACCCP is made up of the 16 TACs and has a two-fold mission of first identifying our jobs that are in demand and then creating competency models that are similar to those that have been developed by ETA and then also career pathways and identifying the credentials of value that are linked to our in-demand occupations.

And we are using the ACCCP 16 TACs to provide third party validation of our eligible training provider list on an annual basis and each program on our ETP are reviewed against those in demand occupations and competency models and pathways, because we're not trying to create unicorns in the state.

We want all of our programs to be aligned. We want to use the ETPL as the cornerstone of aligned credential currency so that all of the partners of our public workforce system are recognizing and validating the same list of credentials and competencies based on what industry has told us.

Next slide, please.

This is our five star rubric for first determining our in-demand occupations and I won't say much about this other than we are using labor market information and making sure that there's growth and that it's above the poverty threshold and that there's a credential attached to an occupation for it to be put on our in-demand jobs list so that there is a progression of stackable credentials and occupations that lead to self-sufficiency.

Next slide, please. This is an example of what our in-demand job list would look like for transportation. I'll move on the next slide.

Here's an example of what one of our competency models look like.

I'll only mention that we combine the first four tiers to go beyond just an occupational readiness credential and we're offering a skill that really, it's an occupational readiness credential that's been imbued with industry and sector specific skills that now meets the criteria for a recognized post-secondary credential, but each one of these tiers would be imbued with more than one skill and we've extended the scope and reach of our TACs by surveying all of our employers with the annual survey employer competency so that as our TACs are reviewing the eligible training provider list and our competencies and pathways, that has got a broad based viewpoint from all of our industry partners.

Next slide. I will close by saying that we have developed an Alabama Occupational Ontology that creates an alphanumeric number for all of the competencies and all of the credentials that we have developed through our ACCCP.

Our committee and credentialing career pathways. We're trying to develop the occupational DNA or skill shape so that we can go beyond traditional time-based and seat-based learning to get to a more competency-based system so that we can deliver the asynchronous short term programs that people are really demanding, particularly in the COVID 19 environment that are linked to traditional long term degrees and articulate to traditional two and four year degrees.

And so we are using this system and in a way using that to go beyond traditional occupational classification systems and also using this as a way to link credentials and competencies as part of our credential registry and developing an organic talent exchange so that when someone, an employer can post a job that's skills-based using these competency models, using these credentials, and then an individual through our learning and employment record would be able to hone in on the specific opportunities that they could avail themselves to that would pull in on the competencies and credentials they've already mastered.

So I think I'll go to one final slide here. And so here is the 10 criteria that we are using to – (inaudible) – equality assurance of our credentials. We want to make sure they're stackable, have the wage premium.

They're traceable and trackable and portable. If we had more time, I'd tell you a little bit about our longitudinal data system and learning and employment record and our benefit cliff tool, but I will just mention those by saying we are returning all of this data, including our eligible training provider list, back to the people of Alabama and individuals so they can make use of this information.

We want individuals to be able to respond to the skills-based job descriptions that are generated using our competency models and credentials and we also want education and training providers to be able to align programs that have been offered already and programs that are about to be developed.

Not in a closed loop, but first by listening to business and industry and what the labor market are telling us. So thanks so much and it's been a pleasure to share with you today and always happy to answer any questions that might come up in the chat or later on.

MS. FLECK: OK, thank you so much, Nick. That was really informative and very interesting as well. We're in the home stretch here and then we'll get to as many questions as we can. There are quite a few, so hopefully we can get to them.

Just wanted to give a few quick updates on some topics that we think the system needs to be aware of. The first is on the eligible training provider waiver that waives the reporting requirements for all students that may be in a program of study for a given eligible training provider.

Many, many states have this waiver and we just want to make sure that everyone knows that this waiver will be discontinued June 30, 2021. So please be prepared for that and there'll be more information and technical assistance resources to come, to help you transition.

But it is important that you know that that is not an everlasting waiver. I also want to throw out another reminder that your annual – (inaudible) – reports for WIOA that are due December 1 do require you to discuss, among other things, the outcomes of your approved waivers in that annual report and that includes that particular eligible training provider waiver.

Then finally, we have received, off and on, a lot of questions about the allowability of having training providers on a state's list that may be only virtual training providers or do online training and yes, that's absolutely possible.

It's allowable. There's nothing, at the federal level anyway, that would restrict that and we would definitely encourage, certainly during the pandemic, that if you're not already pursuing online training, that you do so.

There's a lot of good coursework out there that can be taken that's online. And that's not a requirement, here this slide lists some of the myths, I think, that might be around that. So I won't read every single one to you.

So make sure you pay attention there. I just do want to flag, just because it's been a question that we've seen, that there are some intermediaries out there in the world that do have platforms where they're offering training virtually and they have a ton of vendors or training providers that may use their platform.

It's still important for qualifying that training provider as an eligible training provider that you aren't qualifying the intermediary itself, the platform, but you're actually qualifying the program of study that a training provider that may use that virtual platform as the one that you're listing.

So just be mindful about who you're qualifying and what they're offering and make it very specific to the actual provider of the training.

OK. I think we've answered – we're now ready to go into the exciting Q&A section. Unfortunately we only have about five minutes left, so we'll try to get to as many of these as we can.

I know Stacy was going to put into the chat some of these where people asked for like the Michigan example or a chart. So please do look in the chat for some of those.

First off, I'm going to throw a question to Nick. Nick, you mentioned in your presentation that you did cross training for staff. Can you say a little bit more about how you carried that out?

MR. MOORE: Absolutely. So one, we actually wrote that into our plan and it's important to make sure that any of these policy changes that a governor is going to propose are incorporated into the plan and then also the governor's office is leading something we call the talent development capstone course.

It's ongoing right now. It includes staff from all of our title partners and then also all of the partners to the combined plan plus education and training providers that are not part of the public workforce system.

We want to make sure that everyone has not only a survey level understanding of everything everyone else is doing, but also can integrate a no wrong door approach to the workforce system.

So we have developed data sharing agreements that go beyond the training that allow for an individual client to enroll in workforce and human service programs in one place. And so a big problem we had is people being referred to multiple locations and that is not a successful strategy.

So we realized we needed everyone to not only be cross trained, but also to help enroll one individual Alabamian into a plethora of different programs, because the person is not interested in the bureaucracy.

They don't want to hear about all the different rules. They want to just get the training and the services they need and so we're looking at an individual centered strategy.

MS. FLECK: All right. Thank you for that. While I have you, there was a question asked about has anyone at the state or federal level ever published training needs? From my perspective, the answer is yes.

The state plans often include that sort of information, but Nick, do you want to talk a little bit about what you've published in Alabama about your state's training needs?

MR. MOORE: Yes. And so we started this year something called the annual survey of the unemployed and underemployed and it runs not concurrent, but close to our survey of employer competency.

So we're surveying employers about the needs of – their needs as far as the jobs they're not able to fill, those that are most in demand, the most turnover, and then the individuals, we're looking at their interests, aptitudes and aspirations and then trying to come up with a composite that connects those two.

It also informs economic development and planning for the future, but that data, we take an inform the iterative adjustments to our in-demand jobs list, our career pathways and competency models.

So we want that to be as close to real time LMI as possible. It would be great if we could do it quarterly. But an annual survey of all of our employers and those with barriers to education and the workforce is how we then publish and make those adjustments to our ETPL and our in-demand jobs list.

MS. FLECK: Thank you.

MR. MOORE: Yes, ma'am.

MS. FLECK: We do have a few – the presenters, I think, and Nick, if you need to leave we totally understand and thank you for your time. Some of us can stay on for a few more minutes to address some of the questions that remain.

Kellen, there is a question here that relates to the registered apprenticeship and they're asking – is it a quote from the TEGL or something else, like regulations, that registered apprenticeship programs are exempt from the application process?

MR. GRODE: Thanks, Heather. Yeah, so I don't know that that exact phrase is in the TEGL or guidance or whatever, but it is the case that they – that registered apprenticeship programs are automatically eligible to be added to the ETP list.

Basically what that's translated in to in the regulations and the guidance that we've provided is that there are certain things that you can ask them for that are informational only, which we've described in attachment four of the guidance, that allow you enough information to know what the program is, that it's registered, that sort of thing.

But if they request to be added to the list, then they are automatically eligible to be added.

MS. FLECK: Great. Thanks, Kellen, for that clarification. We got another question about registered apprenticeship programs and that question is are they required to comply with equal opportunity policies and therefore submit EO reports to be considered eligible?

I'm going to send a link to the Department of Labor website on the EO requirements for registered apprenticeships, but basically it's part of that registering process for apprenticeship programs.

Separately, it's for the eligibility process for WIOA, there's not a requirement there that you get those reports, because it's included in how those apprenticeships are registered.

I can't find where the chat went, so I'm going to send the link to Jon for him to put in the general chat so that you can look that information up.

OK, Kellen, you may or may not be able to answer this next question, but are you aware of any language in the law or regulations or any of our guidance about – (inaudible) – plans for closed or canceled programs?

Like those that may be – (inaudible) – ETP – (inaudible) – students are enrolled it and then they close? Are you – is that a state level policy that needs to be taken into account?

MR. GRODE: I think so, Heather. We – in terms of what we've published for ETP requirements, we haven't said anything to the extent that programs that are on the list are also under Department of Education.

Maybe they have some requirements that they've established, but in terms of what we require for the ETP list and policies, those types of decisions are up to the states. We don't have any specific requirements.

MS. FLECK: OK, thanks, Kellen. Then I think this is one of the things that was put into the links in the chat, but Stacy, can you let us know for sure? The question is which state's policy – (inaudible) – clear chart and can you share it?

MS. O'KEEFE: Yes. I will check if it's OK to share the state's policy.

MS. FLECK: Great, thank you. There's a question here about whether it's reasonable to assess a financial solvency of a training institution during the initial application process. I'm going to say, Kellen, correct me if I'm wrong here, but that would be up to the state.

Certainly the criteria that's talked about in the legislation is really about the quality of the provider and certainly you'd want to only add providers that you think are going to be around.

So it's really within the state's discretion regarding the criteria that they may apply to adding a provider and I would say yeah, that's reasonable. If you have a concern about anything with a provider, as long as you're clear about what your criteria is, I think it's fine.

OK, Kellen, if a state policy – let's see. I'll read the question as it came in. If a state policy is about WIOA participants, so isn't it true that a local area could establish an ETPL specific to a direct grant?

MR. GRODE: I'm going to give a qualified yes to this question and the reason why I say that is because in the context of this webinar, this TEGL and what we're talking about, we're specifically talking about the WIOA ETP list requirements.

So if you are using the term eligible training provider list in reference to other programs or other grants, these requirements are not applied, at least in terms of how we're concerned, no. A lot of states leverage these lists for other programs and so to the extent that you're doing that, it makes sense to keep the same rules.

But yeah, if you have a grant that's outside the bounds of WIOA that's not provided under WIOA Title I, yeah, you can – you have flexibility. You don't have to be following these same rules.

MS. FLECK: Great. There's a question here that just came in. Do virtual training providers have to be a proprietary school? No, they do not. And I don't know if anyone on the phone – (inaudible) – the presenters can answer this question, so I'll throw it out there.

We focus on Spanish language caregiver training only. Are there any training resources available in Spanish for better comprehension?

I think that would training provider specific, so if – in a given state or local area, that could be a criteria they add on adding a training provider or look to include providers that do have courses available in multiple languages.

I don't know, Stacy or Kellen, you want to say anything more about that.

MR. GRODE: I don't have anything to add. I think what you said [inaudible].

MS. O'KEEFE: Yes. Same here.

MS. FLECK: OK. We are starting to run out of time here, so we may not get to all of these questions. I've skipped around a little bit. Let's see, is there guidance around COVID-19 – (inaudible) – transitional policies for – (inaudible) – ETP?

[inaudible] from ETA. There may be state level guidance, but in terms of federal guidance, there's nothing we've published like in a guidance letter about COVID-19 and eligible training providers.

However, we do have a Q&A available on many COVID topics and I know we did answer at least one or two that related to eligible trainer providers, I just couldn't put my hands on it turn this particular presentation.

But we'll make sure to put a link to those Q&As in the chat so that you can peruse them on your own time. Many of those requirements themselves, again, are state-determined policies about how to adjust to the COVID environment.

I think there is some flexibility available for when you – like if you're continued eligibility timing is up, yeah, there's a little flexibility around there. I just don't want to give the wrong answer that I do believe there's a Q&A out there on it.

MR. GRODE: Yeah. Heather, Jon dropped the link in the chat for folks to review those Q&As for us.

MS. FLECK: Great, thank you. OK, this is going to be the last question. Can the state or the state board rapidly add an eligible training provider to a list circumventing some of it's own eligibility requirements and/or processing times?

MR. GRODE: Heather, I was looking at this question and I think my answer is no, but I think if your concern is the eligibility requirements or processing times being too burdensome, then you might want to revise what they are.

I think that they still need to be determined eligible according to whatever your criteria is, but if it's the criteria being too burdensome for somebody, a provider that needs to be on the list, then maybe it's worth revising what those eligibility requirements or processes are.

MS. FLECK: Thanks, Kellen. I think that's logical. I also want to flag, and we didn't talk about it much in this presentation, but the eligible training provider list is specifically for using individual training accounts.

There are many other ways to provide training, whether it be a cohort of individuals you may have in a local area who can enroll in the class the same course or program of study, that can be done through a contract and not necessarily through an ITA and doesn't have to meet all the ETP requirements.

Also on-the-job training, customized training, incumbent worker training, are all other ways to provide training. So I just want to slide that for folks.

MR. GRODE: Yeah, I was going to say those exceptions are discussed in attachment one of the TEGL, for folks that are interested.

MS. FLECK: Thank you. So I think we have gone over time and we are still continuing to get a lot of really good questions and we'll try to get to these at some point in the future where we can. Thank you everyone. Thank you to Kellen, to Stacy, to Nick for their presentation. Thanks everyone for your active participation and we hope you got a lot out of this training.

Here's the slide to provide some resources that you ought to check out and again, save the date for our next training provider webinar, which is going to be on performance and reporting in the new trendingproviderresults.gov website. Also, next week look for a really good session on effectively leveraging experiences in the pandemic to promote recovery.

Thank you everyone and have a good afternoon.

(END)