**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Placement and Follow-Up: Aligning Participants & Partners for Career Pathways Success**

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GRACE MCCALL: And welcome to "Placement and Follow-Up for YouthBuild Participants – Aligning Participants and Partners for Career Pathway Success." Without further ado, I'm going to turn things over to our moderator for today, Stephanie Peña, workforce analyst, United States Department of Labor/ETA/OWI. Take it away, Stephanie.

STEPHANIE PEÑA: Thank you so much, Grace. I appreciate it. Welcome, everyone. Good afternoon or good morning, depending on where you are. We're happy to have everyone here today. My name is Stephanie Peña. I'm a program analyst on the YouthBuild team at the Department of Labor. I started with the YouthBuild team in August. And I'm excited to get to know you all more as time goes on. And I'd just like to say thank you so much for joining us today.

As mentioned, today's webinar is going to be about placement and follow-up for YouthBuild participants in really focusing on aligning participants with career pathways. Our presenters today are Phoebe Reeves, associate director of technical assistance at YouthBuild USA, and Laurel Tustison, DOL YouthBuild technical assistance coach. Thank you both for being here today. We're very excited to have everyone here. We're going to start off with a question. And just so you all know, we are going to be covering questions throughout the webinar today.

So the very first question is, what are your greatest successes and challenges with follow-up?

And if you all could, please put those in the main chat for everyone to see. While everyone is putting that in the chat, I'm going to forward and read today's learning objectives. First, we're going to be going over creating a shared understanding of the role of follow-up in long-term participant success; then demonstrating how to use the placement scaffold tool; and third, illustrating promising follow-up practices from the field from the participant perspective and the partner perspective. All right. Has anybody put anything into the chat? Here we go. We've got some challenges.

Students disappearing – successes – students in college and keeping in touch. That's great. Something from James. I've got placing youth in good construction positions. Eleanor Coleman – a challenge – loss of contact, frequent phone number changes, and moving.

All right. And we've got a couple more. The greatest success is when the youth is engaged and you're able to really work with the youth as far as interviews go, etc. Great. Thank you all so much. These are great. Wonderful. Phoebe or Laurel, if you would like, please feel free to jump in. But thank you, everyone. At this point, I am going to turn it over to Laurel.

LAUREL TUSTISON: Thanks so much, Stephanie. I was an executive director for 11 years before I became a coach four years ago. And I'm very passionate about helping young people get on the pathway to success. Many of you involved in active programming I'm sure spend a lot of time on career readiness and hands-on vocational training within the program.

And then of course, everyone's goal is to try and get a work experience for each of the young people before they exit. We're really going to be focusing today a little bit on placement but mostly on follow-up, with placement being entering into a job, apprenticeship service, or college. And then follow-up really focusing on that full year after exit.

And I know young people – my own daughter included is 19. She's had five different employers in the three years that she's been working since she turned 16. So follow-up really needs to be more than just trying to get in touch with young people. It also needs to include things like support services, upskilling, and helping them manage the transition. That's really where we're going to be focusing our webinar for today.

In order to get us all in the mindset of what young people go through when they're entering into placement and follow-up as part of their YouthBuild experience, we wanted to use an analogy so that all of us could kind of get into the mood. The analogy that we're using is being placed and going into follow-up is like a site-seeing journey to a foreign country. When you're in the active program stage, you figure out where you want to go, you might learn the language, you plan the trip.

Your work experience is more like trying traveling here domestically here in the U.S., maybe eating at a restaurant where you can try speaking the language. And then placement is really like packing your bag and getting on the flight. And follow-up can go one of two ways. It can either be a supportive follow-up period where you're meeting your tour guide at the airport and beginning a guided tour. Or it could be arriving on your own and trying to figure out all the things you need to do to navigate the foreign country.

And our goal is really to help highlight practices from the field that are more like that first idea of having a tour guide meeting you at the airport and getting your guided tour of that foreign country, staying with our participants all throughout the follow-up period. Many of you have probably seen this slide before. This is the vision for long-term YouthBuild graduate success pursuing all of these different items to build a successful pathway moving forward. Again, this doesn't all happen by the time they're exited from your program, but our goal is to help them get started on all of these different paths to success during active programming.

And on the flip side, we have to look at what our employer partners are looking for, what their long-term goals are for success. And of course, they're looking for hiring skilled, diverse workforce – (inaudible) – that will help them reduce turnover and retain talent, folks who are going to fit into their organizational culture. And long-term, most employers are looking for improved profitability, which happens through reducing turnover.

And of course, with YouthBuild staff, we're often in the middle preparing participants on one side and trying to meet the needs of our employers on the other side, so helping participants build their knowledge and be ready to take that trip, if you will. And on the other side, making sure that employers aren't alone on that trip in the follow-up period by supporting them and helping make sure that our participants can grow within their organization. Now I'm going to hand it back over to Stephanie. And she's going to ask another question in the chat.

MS. PEÑA: Thank you. All right. Is it easier to prepare participants, or to meet the needs of employer partners? And while you all answer that, we will stop at a couple slides to read some of the responses. But until then, I'm going to pass it over to Phoebe.

PHOEBE REEVES: Thank you, Stephanie. Good afternoon, good morning, everyone. Like Laurel, I was previously a YouthBuild director and a YouthBuild education instructor, so I'm very big – just as Laurel is – on really giving staff some grounding tools to help you map out all of these different directions and elements that we're talking about that are involved in the complexity of placement and follow-up.

Here we're giving you an overview of the grant timeline for the 19 grantees as an example of the full-scope programming based on an active programming period of 10 months per cohort with two cohorts, and of course, a standard follow-up of four quarters for each cohort. Obviously, individual youth may have different exit dates. But you always are having this four quarters of follow-up for a young person regardless. Types of YouthBuild placements include four main categories. You'll see here apprenticeship, nonsubsidized employment, military or other form of service, and postsecondary education.

We've also broken these down into some color-coded examples for each category, offering you a graphic that helps to map out the different directions that you're going to be considering in planning for each of your participants. In quarter 2 of this year, Laurel and I developed a placement scaffold tool to help you map the placement and follow-up connections between your participants and partners, because we think it's really important that both of those audiences are aligned. And before I get into that, Stephanie, do you want to take us through a roundup of what folks are naming in the chat?

MS. PEÑA: Sure. We've had a couple of responses. And it seems to say that everyone thinks that both are difficult. And I want to remind everyone that we do encourage for questions to be asked in the chat. We want to encourage peer sharing throughout this, so don't be shy.

MS. REEVES: Terrific. Thanks, Stephanie. Thank you everyone who is putting your feedback in the chat. Whether a participant exits simultaneously with the rest of their cohort or separately, obviously, each of those participants is going to exit at a different level of readiness. And sometimes we may think about that readiness as just sort of including education or academic testing levels. But there are also training, support needed, contacts, maturity, and life circumstances that can really affect where a young person exits at and what they're going to need in their follow-up year.

This placement scaffold is something that can be used as a working plan with your young people, and should be shared with them. You can also develop a specific stages, requirements, competency list to help them to map out their own work. And while obviously this is a tool to help you in your planning, this should also be something that you can use to help your case conferencing sessions and your job development sessions with your young people.

In this example, you can see how these different considerations come into play for the sample participants. We've included things like what we like, maybe some support services that they don't have in place yet but they need in order to be able to do placement that they want to enter into. And then we also have got aspects in here, such as personal life circumstances in the case of the participants who have, for instance, a health issue.

Just as you would map considerations for participants, you also want to be sure that you're mapping the expectations that your partners have. You want to look at ways that you can use some variation of this tool with your partners for planning well before follow-up. I mean, all of these things are not to just put the onus of everything on you, but for you to be sort of the coordinator, the facilitator, the ultimate think tank that helps to guide both of these groups of folks that you're working with in the program.

Here you can see how to align industry and sectors based on levels of placement with different partners. And then whether in the case of a union apprenticeship pathway – or really any pathway – you always want to make it a priority to align the work experience, the placement, and the next level of placement. Note that this is not just a list of standard requirements and certifications. But we've also involved here participant needs, strengths, and challenges that you want to keep in mind in mapping this pathway to placement and creating your follow-up year plan.

So follow-up is really the full story of the post exit four quarters of which placement is only one element. We've seen in the chat that people are talking about MIA young people, how to stay in touch with participants after they have exited, how to really align the needs of the partners and the participants, that you want to be keeping an eye on support services needs and checking in. And these things, of course, will evolve and change over the course of that four quarters.

And what Laurel had mentioned earlier about upskilling is super important. So if you want to have a core to your follow-up year that in certain ways is going to mirror what you have done in active programming, that core can be upskilling and professional development. That is something that is going to really connect your young people and partners. And it's also going to help them to get that career pathway established and the steps in that career pathway moving in a way where they can see immediate and also anticipate some future progress.

Based on a participant's goal, you also want to create this career pathway plan for follow-up that involves all the components of the YouthBuild model – life skills, leadership, training, education, counseling, and support. So anywhere that you look on this sample 3-month, 6-month, 12-month, and long-term schedule that we've provided you here, you can see elements that will fall into one or more of those essential YouthBuild program model elements, remembering that the career pathway that YouthBuild offers is a unique one.

This is not just a standard traditional sort of hop into some training because you're going to move immediately into a placement that you plan on staying in a long time. Remembering that youth and human development is at the heart of this model, and we want to see that reflected in this plan. And you want to make sure to involve young people as a very active driver and decision maker in putting this plan together. And I'm now going to turn it back over to Stephanie to take us through our next question for you.

MS. PEÑA: Thanks, Phoebe. I really appreciate it. Thanks. Do you all have success stories about follow-up? We would love to hear about them if you all could put them in the chat. I'm going to turn it over to Laurel. And then I will be reading out your success stories in just a little bit.

MS. TUSTISON: Thank you, Stephanie. As we researched to prepare for this webinar, we talked to program teams from across the country to get input on promising practices for follow-up. And since this webinar platform doesn't allow us to have you unmute yourself and share, I am going to ask the folks who are willing to from the programs to representatives of promising practices if you're comfortable and you're willing to take calls or emails from the other participants on the webinar today. When we're doing your slide and talking about your practices, if you could share your name, contact information into the chat, that would be terrific as well.

We're going to start off just reminding everyone that follow-up is really a critical time period for performance measures. Depending on your grant year, you may have four or five of your performance measures that are actually happening during the follow-up period those four quarters or year after your participants are exiting. So this is a really critical time period for us to stay engaged with young people. And I read through the chat. I know staying engaged is a challenge. And we're going to share with you some of the practices that we're hearing help you stay engaged with young people during those four quarters.

First up, we're going to talk about an example from YouthBuild Compton. And this is also from the WorkforceGPS. You'll see the link down at the bottom. They achieved an 80 percent placement rate within 30 days of exit. If there's anybody from YouthBuild Compton on the line today and you want to put your contact information in, we would love to let people reach out to you directly to hear your story. But as I understand it, they had an 80 percent placement rate in 30 days. Who wouldn't love that kind of outcome?

They did it by connecting young people and employers during active programming. They didn't wait until placement or follow-up. They started it in active programming. And one of their solutions was creating an employer advisory board. They had professional Thursdays where professionals interacted with young people and discussed career options. And, Compton, I'd be curious if you did this in a virtual setting as well in person? I know a lot of YouthBuilds are starting to engage employers with mock interviews, tool talks, speaker series, resume workshops online.

There's Anthony joining us from YouthBuild Compton, so watch the chat for any more advice from him. Anthony, thanks for jumping in there. And their story is on WorkforceGPS in addition to what we've shared here. One of the things that they did was that best practice with weekly engagement. I did have a picture from YouthBuild Compton. So this is from my old YouthBuild, YouthBuild Lake County. And we tried to do the same thing. This is a pre-COVID photo, as a disclaimer. This was when we were doing mock interviews and resume workshops in person. But that weekly follow-up, that weekly engagement with employers is critical.

The other thing that a lot of programs are doing, including Compton, is starting an employer advisory council. It needs to be mutually beneficial – beneficial to the participants in the program and also beneficial to employer partners. For them to stay engaged, they're going to want to have a reason to stay engaged. It's a low-risk way for them to get involved in the community. They can get recognition from your program for participating. It feels good to help other people. And it's an opportunity for them to find and hire and a more diverse workforce, which a lot of companies are looking for right now.

In my experience both personally and watching this as a coach from my teams doing this, it can lead to work experiences, job shadows, placements, and even sources of funding. And I wanted to just give a shout out to two of my programs – Richmond Works and Learning Works both have started employer advisory councils. And if anybody from there is on the call, if you want to throw your name and information into the chat and share some of your advice from creating your employer advisory councils, that would be awesome.

The other thing that can be used flexibly with an employer advisory council is you can do it once. I know Learning Works did that early on to try to get a summer jobs program going. They got the summer employers participating in a one-time meeting. When we were starting a manufacturing program at YouthBuild Lake County, we did a series of four meetings with manufacturers to help get that new career pathway off the ground. And I think the most promising practice is having an ongoing often quarterly employer advisory council to keep those employers engaged.

I see in the chat Anthony saying he had had their EAGs this morning. So obviously, that's a strategy that must be happening virtually, I assume, Anthony? And you can create the advisory council to meet the needs of your program. Just to keep in mind you also need to meet the long-term goals of your employers. I have a lot of questions about how do you explain YouthBuild to employers? And on Workforce GPS, there's a great example from Mile High YouthBuild. I see Aliska (sp), who used to be the program director there.

I don't know if Amber or anybody else from the Mile High team is on, but this is on Workforce GPS. And it's a great example of a brochure you can use to expand your connections with employers and explain what your YouthBuild does and how it would work to hire your participants. The other thing – and this is critical I think particularly since we can't do a lot of face-to-face work – I know there was a question about how do you stay engaged? Social media has been used as both a placement and a follow-up tool with both participants and employers. So I'm sure most programs have a Facebook page.

There are some great resources on Workforce GPS that were put together by YouthBuild Philly about how they use social media in their program in many different aspects. Placement is certainly one of those. I don't know if anybody from Philly is on the call and can put their information in here. I know Scott and his team do a lot of great work. But just having a Facebook page isn't sufficient. There are some more advanced practices you can put into place to help with following up both with employers and with participants.

One of those more advanced Facebook strategies is to create a private Facebook group. And I know Jo Anna James from Project Rebuild shared with me that she does this with her team and her participants. I know YouthBuild Philly does this. This has also become a critical strategy that's being used for recruiting and retention with colleges. And that is starting a private Facebook group that would be either just for one class – one cohort of students – or just for your students and staff only.

It's important to set expectations and have it be monitored. It can't be a free-for-all. But this helps get announcements out to young people about job opportunities, career fairs, your job club meetings, etc. So that private Facebook group can be a really good strategy to stay engaged with young, particularly during the pandemic. And then even more advanced strategies – keeping engaged with your employer partners using social media. So YouthBuild Philly gives shout-outs to their employer partners. They document partnership events. They listen for other partnership views.

I am not a technology person, so I can't answer any questions about what TweetDeck is. But the folks from YouthBuild Philly could help you with that potentially. And I know my program in Queens just did an employer community event where they're building a food pantry. It's going to be out in the community. And they did that with a construction partner in Queens. That's a great kind of example of how to highlight employer partners and social media. So they're getting some positive PR from participating with your Youth Build.

I see from Michelle saying, the young people use Instagram more than Facebook. And that's absolutely true. But I think if there's a reason, they will also use Facebook. I think Instagram really is critical for recruiting. But once you get them into the program, Facebook and those private Facebook groups can be used with good effect. It's looks like Tony's doing that. I'm not sure which program Tony is from. But it looks like he's started a Facebook group for each cohort. And they're still going after four to five years. I think that's awesome. Thank you for sharing that.

And then I talked to Belinda Vega. I know, Belinda, I see you on this webinar. And I don't know if you're doing your job virtually. But I know Belinda was doing a job club every Tuesday and Thursday. I thought this was a great practice.

It's open to both current participants and participants who are in that follow-up stage. She leverages My Next Move and the Metrix curriculum, which Phoebe's going to talk about a little bit further to continually offer workforce preparedness training, both to her existing participants in active programming and the participants who are coming back to get a lot of support afterwards.

The other thing that Belinda shared with me, and I thought this is particularly important for those of you who mentioned it's difficult to keep in touch with students and to maintain that follow-up and the paper trail, if you will, to make sure you get your performance outcomes accurately measured.

One of Belinda's strategies starts with the young person providing a release of confidential information that's on the left-hand side so that you're allowed to go to an employer and verify their income and their times that they were hired. Thanks, Belinda, for jumping in there. On the right-hand side is an example of what her organization sends to verify employment directly with the employer.

So if you're having a tough time finding students, one of the strategies could be to get them to sign a release of information. Explain that and let them sign that so if you have an opportunity to follow up with their employer – and I'll talk about another follow-up strategy that requires this kind of a release in just a couple of minutes. And, Phoebe or Stephanie, do you want to jump in here and help me with any of the things in the chat that I shouldn't miss before I move forward?

MS. PEÑA: Yeah. We had a question. Do you start with the HR department when engaging new employer partners?

MS. TUSTISON: That's a great question. I think it depends on if you're cold-calling or if you have a connection. I always think it's better to have a warm connection through a board member, through staff, through a community partner. I like to use LinkedIn when I'm trying to hunt someone down and see if I can find somebody who's connected to me through LinkedIn who knows someone from that organization so I'm one degree of separation. That often helps.

But if you're going in with no connections, I think HR is a fine place to start. And I'd be curious to hear what other folks say in the chat about how they get started with connecting with employer partners. I also think going through your American Job Center to ask for a connection or your local chamber, those types of networking opportunities can also come through those types of partners. Anything else that I should see, Stephanie, before I go on?

MS. PEÑA: I think you can go on. Thank you.

MS. TUSTISON: Thanks.

MS. REEVES: Laurel, I've actually got one thought. One of the things that we've been doing this year in group TA – and we're going to be expanding this over the beginning of the next year – is that we have been encouraging more and more programs to come together in a group TA setting and have some shared experience and knowledge exchange between those programs and not just between their staff, but between their staff and their young people. So I'm curious in the chat, how many people have either thought about or actually reached out to a colleague program.

I know there's been lots of opportunities to talk with other programs over the course of this year, particularly virtually, where you might have that kind of participant-to-participant, staff-to-staff exchange in a group setting around some of these challenges and suggestions for things like job clubs or what would be a most successful social media platform to use. I think we don't want to sell ourselves short in terms of partnering with young people in the program around structure and what makes something work or not work as opposed to feeling like, well, we have to do all the work.

I mean, this is something where part of really modeling good maturity skills is involving them actively in how to make things function in the program so that it's not where they're coming in and waiting for you to do something. So I'm just curious whether folks have had that kind of change, or Laurel, whether you've seen that in your TA experience this year.

MS. TUSTISON: I know I do think we've been setting up more this year than in prior years small groups to share experiences. We've done that around Penn Foster and NCCER. And then in my coaching practice, my programs have been getting together and doing – we call it – the career team meeting once a month. And last month we talked about WEX and internship. The month before that two programs presented on – Richmond and Learning Works both presented on creating employer advisory councils.

And then in January, we're going to focus on construction or union jobs. And it's more of an experience sharing. Like, here's what I did. Here's the tools that I used. And I see Natalie's asking, what would a successful job club look like? What would an agenda look like? And maybe, Belinda – you're kind of my go-to expert on this – if you would throw your information in the chat and maybe folks could reach out to you so that they can learn directly from you on what you're doing with your job club. I know you've been doing it both virtually and in person. So thank you.

And Michelle Sanchez mentioned if it's a small business, you're better off going directly to the owner to try and find opportunities. And, Michelle, you're absolutely right. I would second that it's a whole lot easier to find work experiences for young people in small-to-medium-sized businesses as opposed to big corporate businesses, because if you have any young people that have any kind of background, that could be prohibitive from a large company with lots of HR policies essentially that the local folks may not be able to change or get waivers for.

I'm going to move us forward here. So on the left-hand side is the release of information that Belinda and her team ask the participants to sign. And on the right is the employer verification form that they ask employers to verify participant employment during the follow-up phase. This promising practice was from Lenore De Jesus (sp) from Riverside YouthBuild. And this was terrific too. She kind of framed it as, placement and follow-up are the same thing.

So when you place someone, you're immediately following up. She makes phone calls the first day, the third day, the fifth day to the participant right as they're starting that new position. And then she calls at least twice a week for the first four weeks. This has helped her to spot and troubleshoot challenges early on. And if the participant isn't liking the job or isn't liking the work, she can then help them troubleshoot and remind them that it's easier to find a job when you already have a job and help them look more into other positions without quitting in frustration early on.

And she also talked about following up with the employers, trying to find someone who could mentor the student that's not necessarily their supervisor, letting the employer know why you're following up with them and that you're going to be there to help spot and troubleshoot any challenges. From my notes, she was calling twice in the first week and then weekly for the first four weeks. So again, follow-up starts right at placement. This is a slide that we created based on talking to lots of different programs.

And if we go back to the very first question that Stephanie asked – which is, what are some of the challenges that the field experiences during follow-up? – staying in touch with participants and getting documentation can be one of the bigger challenges. And I think that was clear from the chat. So some promising practices are to start talking about mental toughness. We want to know if you're successful. This is a two-year commitment. I think Belinda talked to me about that when we spoke on the phone as we were doing this research.

Tying the follow-up to their placement plan, offering incentives, engaging multiple staff – not just whoever's responsible for the day-to-day follow-up – engaging the participant, having that employer verification form. And you can see kind of thinking about this as a funnel – if at first you don't succeed, try a different strategy – have a different staff member call, try reaching among social media, try contacting their friends from the program, try contacting their family.

And if you can't reach them despite all of your best efforts, there's a new promising practice that one of my programs talked to me about. I think Belinda also has access to this. But Kristin Hoyle (sp) at Goodwill Easter Seals Minnesota is starting to use Equifax Work Number. So Equifax is a big credit reporting company, but they also have a service called Work Number that allows you, if you have permission, that releases information to potentially gain access to the recorded earnings and employer for a participant based on their Social Security number.

So this was a new practice to use. You'd need to have something like a release of information to be able to use a service like this Equifax prescription-based service. It's not free. It is a subscription-based service your organization would have to pay for. But it does give you access to information as a last resort if you have not been able to contact the participant or the employer. And with that, I'm going to hand this back over to Stephanie for our next question for the chat.

MS. PEÑA: Thanks, Laurel. Our next question is, does anyone have any other great strategies for follow-up? And we'll allow you all just a couple minutes to answer that. And I'm going to hand it over to Phoebe.

MS. REEVES: Thanks, Stephanie. One of the other great examples that has been used by YouthBuild Osceola, has to do with the Metrix Learning. And you can learn Metrix Learning at metrixlearning.com. And they offer skillup trainings ranging from everything from QuickBooks and Microsoft Word and Excel, all the way up to Comp TIA, A+, 901 and 902 certificates in project management. I mean, it's really quite a range of trainings and offerings that they have. Their focus is on for youth, career services, skills assessments. And they're very big on making what they offer part of a blended learning instruction and training with you.

They are also a place that you can contact about setting up a custom curriculum for you based on their offerings. And I'm sure that YouthBuild Osceola can tell us a little bit more maybe about some of their favorite things about Metrix, and also maybe some of the challenges there or things that they wish that Metrix had that maybe are not there yet. So we definitely encourage you to check out the metrixlearning.com as a possible option for those kinds of offerings.

The important thing here with taking advantage of an education and training tool like this – and I mean, this is only one of a number – is that it can go back to that core focus for the follow-up year as being about professional development and opportunities for young people. And then you obviously weave the support services and wrap-around around that core.

Because despite follow-up sounding like it's just a check-in, remember, follow-up is actually the journey into that new land and the new experiences. So part of what you're doing here by employing a tool like this is really giving young people still more training opportunities, more certification opportunities before they complete the full two years of YouthBuild.

Here we have another example of an online course offering, which is Coursera, which you can find at coursera.org. Upskilling here. You have credentials that range from Google IT support to contact tracing. We have free courses and certificates. There are also courses that are there for a fee. You can take things like AI for Everyone. You can do online degree programs. It's just a really expansive, global network that you have here that has more offerings than you could possibly desire.

I think the big thing with either of these, or any other options similar to this that you would be exploring, would be you as a staff need to sit down and really parse through this and spend some time focusing on it. So don't try to do this when you're multitasking and doing other things. You want to be doing it as something that you can provide support to a young person who would be doing it. You want to make sure that it's aligned with things that they're interested in.

And finally, keeping in mind your other main audience with the partners, the encouraging which of these things can help support immediate contacts along their career pathway choices. Stephanie, I'm going to turn it back over to you for our next question and to do a roundup from the chat.

MS. PEÑA: Yeah. Sure. No problem. Before I asked the question, we were asked about incentives. And there have been a couple of ideas that have come in. It seems as though there are several people that say gift cards, which definitely can be used as incentives. And then we've got a couple people that say, prizes are still king. And a couple ideas for raffling, which would seem like a lot of fun, I'm sure, for a lot of participants.

So that being said, I'm going to ask the next question. What other upskilling options do you offer? Laurel, or Phoebe, if you guys would like to add onto the incentive idea, please feel free to do so. If not, then I'm going to hand it over to Phoebe. And I'm also going to add real quick – there was a question that was posed, what is the name of the release information form, and can it be download?

MS. TUSTISON: I'll answer that. That release of information form is a sample that I got from Belinda at Osceola YouthBuild. And it will be in the PowerPoint. But I think you probably need to put it on your own letterhead and so forth and run it past your program leadership to make sure it's a fit for what you're doing. Your laws in your state may be a little different than the laws in Florida. But it will be in the PowerPoint as a picture so you can use that as a starting point for developing your own release information form.

MS. REEVES: I like that folks are naming about people like to win and having raffles and prizes, because I think, just like Christmas or with a birthday, you want to make sure that incentives you give are an acceptable – meaning within compliance – offering mix of things that are going to be important to their budding career pathway, but also things that are fun and enjoyable for them. So try to keep that balance in mind as to what you would want to offer so that's it's a mix of work and play, as it were.

Remember that young people are interested in making this journey fun, making it interesting, and making it not about something that they are – how do I put this delicately? – having to do because we need to meet certain outcomes. It's how do we make them actively involved? How are we listening to them in a way that brings them into this whole process and this whole pathway? So I just wanted to add that.

MS. PEÑA: Thanks, Phoebe. All right.

MS. REEVES: Making time and space for participants during follow-up – we've certainly been talking about that. And that was evident in those first few challenge questions around what to do about young people who disappear. And I think that this time and space with these different types of support, these different types of professional upskilling and planning – as we've said many times before this – this is something that you want to establish as part of the whole program right from the get-go. This is not something that you want to wait towards near the end right before exit to implement.

Young people need that structure. They need that consistency. And they need to know what to expect, what the benchmarks are that they want to be shooting for here. And I think that any time that you can use these opportunities to case conference with them and make that case conferencing something that balances out in formal discussion with them about how things are going with some new content and practice that you want them to give a try, and keep the support contacts more frequent and shorter if we're continuing in this virtual space so that you establish a regular pattern with them.

YouthBuild Osceola highly recommends updating resumes throughout follow-up. And these are going to include things like first jobs. It should include the kinds of work that they did in their work experiences. You want to make sure you include all the different professional certifications and any other professional development opportunities that you have given them during the follow-up period. So likewise, updating career plans as your participant's plans change is important.

I think one of the big advisories that we would give you on this is if someone starts off in a health care pathway and they've done a significant amount of requirement and benchmark work in that and then find suddenly they don't want to do it – and let's say they want to switch to IT – it's important to help them be aware of where they may need to go back to some foundational training and foundational certifications so that they can't just stop midstream and enter this new pathway midstream; that they need to be aware of what is transferable and what is essential and important for that particular pathway that is, in fact, not transferable.

Staying on top of progress with trackers and sharing a version of this with participants to use at your case conferencing so that you can involve them in leading the discussion and decision making, and also so that you can be doing roundups with them on the nature and consistency of their staying in touch with you and why they are staying in touch with you and need to stay in touch with you. The engagements that we list here for follow-up – workshops, resumes, skill development, one-on-ones – involving alumni mentors in the program, that was something that we had alumni grads talking about this past summer in the webinar that they gave.

They felt it was very important to be able to hear from peers who were further along in the process. Networking events with employers, community service events, having the alumni council – all of these things ought to be essential components that you build into follow-up. So follow-up ought to have a schedule just as active programming does. It's just it's a different kind of schedule. And you may be meeting with different young people at different times doing different things. A terrific advanced strategy – yes.

MS. TUSTISON: I just wanted to jump in because there were some good things in the chat to add to that last slide. I'm sorry to interrupt you. There were a few things that we hadn't thought of that the folks have put in the chat on the additional ways to engage participants. Monique mentioned she's consistent in doing house calls. And that helps her stay consistent with students because she's demonstrating her consistency, which you just mentioned. Earlier on, Brandy Stewart (sp) talked about building long-term relationships with the participants.

And Brandy, if you want to maybe put some of your ideas about how to do that effectively during the program cycle to maintain those long-term relationships, that would be terrific. Denora (sp) – I hope I'm saying your name right – had two great suggestions. One is she uses Google Voice. And, Denora, it'd be great if you could put in the chat how you're using Google Voice and how that helps with follow-up. And she also mentioned creating a peer-to-peer buddy system, which I think would be interesting to hear more about.

So, Denora, Brandy, if you could add more on those ideas you put into the chat earlier. And, Monique, thank you very much for mentioning the house calls. Those were some more ideas that we did not capture when we were doing the initial research for this webinar. But I'm sure there's a lot of great ideas out there. We'd love to get them all into this presentation for when it goes up on WorkforceGPS. And, yeah, there's Ayleah (sp) in the top right picture, one of my former students, now a staff member at YouthBuild Lake County. So nice job! She's an alumni coordinator now. Sorry, Phoebe. I didn't mean to interrupt too much. I just wanted to –

MS. REEVES: No. Not at all. I think those were really important additions. I think we're going to have to do a second version of this, Laurel, and add in all these great ideas that are coming in in these great practices that everyone's doing.

MS. TUSTISON: Thank you.

MS. REEVES: I'm assuming we're back okay on sound? I see a lot of folks are saying that they couldn't hear. And now I'm seeing sound is back. So I'm assuming that's all back too. Project Rebuild has created a two-year program design, which I highly, highly urge everyone to do. And it's funny to call it an advanced strategy because I think it really is a foundational strategy. And, again, YouthBuild is a two-year program. And they divide up the two years into these different phases. And each phase has got a focus.

And if you'll note that in phase two – which happens in the first three months – there's career exploration and preparation because in month 4-6, you're working on preparing for job shadows in up to three fields. So already anticipating plan A, plan B, plan C so that by the time then you get to the end of that typical nine-month active programming period, you've got job shadowing opportunities, transition planning. And of course, in and amongst there would be the work experience with, say, five, in month 10-24, so going through the end of that second year transitioning to the Facebook group for alumni that will include scholarships.

And I noticed that scholarships have been mentioned earlier in the chat. That's a great thing to be able to offer young people. Trainings, resources, that there is an alumni after-hours event every other Wednesday. And that members are invited to join annual camping trips, holiday events, and other special events. And I know that Rebuild also has a special event that they do, which may be coming back to do a full-on day job where folks will come in and be working on, let's say, a particular construction build-out. So that's another great way to be able to bring back your youth who have exited into that second year piece.

So part of their advance strategy was also to create an LLC where there are graduates who had successfully completed certain requirements would be employed by that LLC. And they employ for their own construction projects to complete projects as a contractor. And then they employ by acting as the employer of record for other work experiences. So work experience providers would pay the LLC for services there. Stephanie, I will turn it back over to you.

MS. PEÑA: Thanks, Phoebe. All right. Final question of the day is asking you all if y'all have any final questions or suggestions. And if you all do, please put them in the chat. I would like to ask a question that was posed earlier on in the webinar. Do you have a placement scaffold tool specific for technology? This particular program offers construction, health care, and technology.

MS. TUSTISON: And I think the short answer is that the scaffold tool is evolving. And we do have some information specifically to IT in the employer portion of the scaffold. Hopefully, that will be in the tool that Lisa, Phoebe, and I are trying to work on of updating the tool that was already in WorkforceGPS. And I think that was Sheila Count (sp). If you can throw your email in the chat again, I would be happy to make sure that that gets sent to you. We've got the (ITP ?) Build.

MS. REEVES: We can also, Laurel, do a mini TA session with any grantees who are interested in how to put together a particular pathway for this scaffold. So if you have some special elements in your program or requirements of your partner and you're wanting to be able to kind of hash out, how would I lay this out? That's something that we could definitely set up a time to meet with you and help guide you through it. Just thinking of that, Laurel, and that whole having everyone be able to be part of the putting together process.

MS. TUSTISON: Yeah. I would love to do that. There's also a 20-minute webinar that Phoebe and I did back in the spring on creating a placement scaffold. So that would be a good place to start before we might be able to pull together a TA session. So that is on WorkforceGPS as well – the 20-minute webinar and the introduction to the scaffold. And then this is kind of part 2 with the focus more on follow-up with scaffold.

MS. PEÑA: Great. And I would also like to just say that if you didn't get a chance to ask a question or you want to reach out to anyone directly, we will be showing our contact information in just a couple slides.

But I do want to thank everyone for engaging in this conversation today and all the additions in the chat. There have been some really great questions and a lot of idea sharing. It's been wonderful. I would like to share with you all a couple of resources. This webinar is being recorded, so all of this will be posted. And these resources will be readily available along with all the information that we've shared today. Phoebe or Laurel, do you all have anything else before I start closing up?

MS. TUSTISON: I was just going to refer folks. I had asked Brandy to put in how her program builds long-term relationships, since that's really the key to maintaining that close relationship both through active programming and follow-up. And I think the highlights from what she put in were if we struggle to reach a student with our traditional follow-up team, we go to our team members to discuss who might be the most likely person to get a response with on open door policy when they are welcome during office hours. And the participants can tell if staff truly wants to help us the number one reason they come back for long-term follow-up.

So thank you, Brandy. And then Denora talked about her buddy system. She said she hasn't implemented it. It's an idea that she has and she'd like to talk about how to get that going. And I think, Denora, maybe hopefully, you can put your information in the chat and maybe some other folks might jump in with you and try and figure out that peer-to-peer. I do think, based on my experience both at home and at work, most young people don't like to do anything by themselves. They like to have a friend to do it with. And I think keeping engaged and in touch with a buddy system is a great idea.

And Lisa put in there the link to the webinar. And we got some other great things. Sandra mentioned that she's having a tough time downloading the PowerPoint. It is huge. It will be on the community of practice. And that will be out in a few days when we've got it fully loaded onto the community of practice. Phoebe, anything we're missing here?

MS. REEVES: I think I just want to echo, Laurel, what you were saying about relationship throughout this, that this is challenging work. Young people do want a teacher. They want someone that they can count on to help them to navigate these very complex things. There can be setbacks. There are successes. But if they run into a roadblock, they really need somebody there to be able to process that out so that they can keep going and either jump over it or go around it or smash it down.

And as we all know with relationship-building, you can't do it in the last five minutes of an hour, right? It's got to be something that you start out working on and keep going with. And that relationship develops best with having that consistent contact that it's clear what you need to do, where it's clear that there are new things that you learn out of this that are going to benefit you, and that that's going to be one of the big recipe ingredients for making your follow-up year successful. Thanks, Laurel.

MS. PEÑA: Great. Thank you both, Laurel and Phoebe. We would like to remind everyone that we've got the OSHA 510 and OSHA 500 training in February. Please note that trainers do have to take the OSHA 510 as a prerequisite for OSHA 500. This training allows trainers to be certified to teach OSHA 10 and OSHA 30 to participants. Finally, these are Phoebe's and Laurel's contacts. Here's mine. And I'd just like to say thank you to everybody who joined us.

(END)