UPCOMING TA EVENTS & RESOURCES...
Mark your calendars for the following TA events and resources!

June 2016

This bulletin will provide early warning signs that may indicate that a program graduate is at risk of losing employment.

14th—“Coffey” Break Tips & Strategies Group Call. These 30 minute calls will be featured twice a month where grantees can ask questions, share challenges as well as promising practices, and receive strategies and tips. Topics will include: Job Placement, Employer Partners and Sustainability Strategies as well as Apprenticeship Resources.
**First Topic:** Registered Apprenticeship—“Resources, Tips, and Strategies to develop your program.”

21st—(Virtual Chat): Strategies and Tips to Re-engage Graduates who are Dis-Engaged—This chat will provide grantees with several strategies that can be used to locate and reengage participants who are no longer in contact with their program.


TELL US YOUR BEST PROGRAM STORY!

Last month we held a contest and challenged our grantees to write their best “Program Story” that described and highlighted their program’s accomplishments. We received 11 Technical Skills Training (TST) and 3 Jobs Accelerator (JA) “Program Stories.”

And The Winners Are!!!

**TST:** Arkansas Workforce Investment Board-Department of Workforce Services
**JA:** Rochester Institute of Technology

Thanks to all the grantees who participated, it was a very hard decision because all of your submissions were great. The winning “Program Stories” will also be featured in the *Quarterly Workforce Systems Results Report* which is shared with members of Congress. Other submissions will be featured in our upcoming *SkillsAccelerator* Newsletters.

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TELL US YOUR BEST PROGRAM STORY! CONTINUED

TST

Arkansas Workforce Investment Board/Department of Workforce Services
Arkansas Partnership for Nursing Future Changes Learning and Changes Lives

In 2012, the State of Arkansas faced a multifaceted labor-force issue: a rapidly expanding need for healthcare professionals contrasted with the severely limited capacity for training those professionals. The Arkansas Department of Workforce Services partnered with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Arkansas Community Colleges and local healthcare providers to establish the Arkansas Partnership for Nursing’s Future (APNF), specifically designed to broaden training availability, increase gender and ethnic diversity in healthcare fields and establish a statewide Preceptor program. APNF has provided grant-sponsored services to more than 2,800 unemployed, underemployed, and displaced Arkansans (186.8% of initial goal) and placed 927 participants in unsubsidized employment (134% of initial goal). APNF’s success is partially due to the implementation of innovative training strategies such as distance-education technology to deliver the didactic portion of the program digitally, thus more efficiently allocating scarce faculty resources. Some of the initiative’s greatest impact was felt in the Arkansas Delta, one of the poorest regions in the country. Regarding the program, one student said:

“I wanted to take the time to let you know how much it has meant to me to be a recipient of the APNF Grant to continue my educational quest to become a better nurse...After my last child graduated from high school, I decided to return to school to improve my life. My youngest child was so proud of me and loved to help me study and improve myself that she too decided to go to nursing school, graduating last month with her RN degree also. Without programs and grants such as this one, I would not be able to continue my education. I am very thankful for the chance to further my nursing career and to be given the chance to help many others through nursing.”

JA

Rochester Institute of Technology
Cluster Initiative Advances Workforce for the Food Industry

We have achieved success well beyond the expectations. With an initial goal of training 190 people, the Initiative has reached nearly 500 individuals across the 9-County Finger Lakes Region and helped people both begin and advance in careers in the food processing industry. Much of this success is attributable to the establishment of open and productive forums of communication that facilitated the precise identification of industry needs. Matching participants directly with employers at the conclusion of these programs led to 40% job placement within two weeks of completion. Similarly, programs designed specifically for Veterans of the United States Armed Forces have achieved a 60% success rate in post-training job placement. Rochester Institute of Technology stated that they were not aiming for top-down infiltration of the food processing industry with a prescribed set of strategies, they focused on working closely with their partners to identify and define exactly what industry needed and exactly what both existing and displaced workforces had to offer.
MEETING THE PROGRAMMATIC CHALLENGES DURING THE FINAL STAGE OF YOUR GRANT

As you enter the final stages of your project, there are many programmatic challenges to consider. These include documenting employment placements and job retention, seeking ways to sustain the benefits of your initiative, and creating a lasting legacy for your project. All of this is happening at a time when experienced staff members may leave for new employment opportunities and remaining staff see increased workloads. This article will look at these programmatic challenges from the perspective of several grantees and explore what can be done to meet them and ensure that your project ends on a high note.

Plan Ahead and “Kick it Up a Notch”

Although planning for the end of the grant period of performance usually receives less attention than start-up planning, it is an important part of project management and provides an opportunity to maximize outcomes and shape your initiative’s legacy. Meeting your project’s placement and employment retention objectives will probably require the most attention. If the loss of staff is anticipated, it will be necessary to consider how the workload will be handled. This might involve cross-training and re-assigning a staff member or hiring part-time staff to perform duties that require the most attention in the final stages of a project. It might be possible for a departing staff member to work on a part-time basis, especially if the work of gathering employment and job retention verification involves evening hours. If the project is based in a community college or large nonprofit organization, temporarily assigning a worker from another part of the parent organization can also be considered.

Space Florida Steps Up Its Employment Placement Efforts:
The challenges associated with meeting a project’s objectives during its final phase are being met by CareerSource Brevard in several ways. Valerie Carothers, a Business Liaison for CareerSource Brevard, reports that they have stepped up their efforts with participants who have not secured work. According to Ms. Carothers, they have re-evaluated their individual employment plans to incorporate more intensive services such as their Five Steps Workshops which are designed to accelerate the participant’s road back to work.

Five steps is a three-week program that participants attend Monday through Thursday. The workshops help participants develop a job campaign, self-marketing tools, an action plan, a values-based resume and an employment portfolio. Staffing specialists meet with each of their non-exited participants and have increased job assistance efforts. To ensure that the project’s placement and employment retention objectives are met, staff members now meet on a monthly basis to track progress with exiting participants.

Manchester Community College Facilitates the Gathering of Employment Verification:
Lorraine K. Hobausz, the H1B-ICU Healthcare Project Manager at Manchester Community College, emphasizes the need to support a grant’s sub-recipients during the process of collecting and verifying all of the data needed to document performance. To that end, they created a spreadsheet with formulas

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contained in locked cells that are being used by their partners to collect and report data. Training in the use of the spreadsheet was provided to ensure that it was used correctly. Ms. Hobausz said it was important for them to ensure that the spreadsheet was “error-proof” to facilitate the process of gathering data.

Keep Everyone Apprised
As a training project nears its conclusion, staff, partners, and stakeholders are likely to have many questions. Staff members will want to know whether or not the project will be sustained by new funding sources. Your employer partners and target population will want to know what other resources will be available to meet their needs. Your community stakeholders — local legislators and government officials, social service agencies, and the general public — will want to know what other training and job placement resources will be available going forward. While you may not have the answer to all of these questions, it’s important to keep everyone apprised of what you know. This may generate new opportunities to identify sources of support for your work and determine if any of your partners can pick up elements of your project.

Plan your Communication Strategy
It is not uncommon for a project to issue a press release upon receiving a government grant or develop multiple outreach methods for recruiting training participants. Similarly, you would want to have a communication strategy for sharing your project’s accomplishments and establishing its legacy. Determine what your key message will be and how you will share it. Regardless of your project’s outcomes, you’ll want to be sure to share what you have learned. This could be done through an article in a business publication or, perhaps, presentations at public events. Consider placing this information on your agency’s website or WorkforceGPS. Valerie Carothers reports that CareerSource Brevard will be writing a white paper upon conclusion of the grant that summarizes the activities of the grant and highlights best practices.

Ask for Guidance
Given all that needs to be done and the possibility of not seeing the bigger picture amid all the details, it can be useful to get some guidance from someone “sitting in an orchestra seat.” This does not necessarily have to be someone who is an expert in employment and training, but may be a person with good organizational management experience who you trust.

Support your Staff
Project staff will be concerned about losing their jobs and what the future might hold for them. Providing them with one-on-one support in their search of employment will ease their concerns and improve their job prospects as well as their performance. Ms. Carothers reports that CareerSource Brevard has transferred a staffing specialist to another position unrelated to the grant and tasked that person with training and supporting project staff during the close-out period. At the end of the grant, they will consider project staff for positions within the organization and if no positions are available, they will provide the support needed to secure new employment.
GETTING TO KNOW YOUR FPO — REGION 5
MICHAEL TUKES

Your Present Role at DOL:
Michael Tukes joined the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration in 2015. Currently, he is a Federal Project Officer (FPO) overseeing discretionary grants in Region 5. Mr. Tukes manages Youth Build, Youth Career Connect, Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Training, Apprenticeship, and H-1B Technical Skills Training grants. His responsibilities includes but are not limited to the monitoring of DOL funded grants, providing authoritative advice and consultation to grantees, and serving as a regional lead on specified program activities.

Prior to joining DOL:
Mr. Tukes worked as a contractor (representing Booz Allen Hamilton) for the Department of Health and Human Services serving as a Fiscal Grant Specialist for the Head Start program. He also worked as a Program Manager with the Illinois Department of Human Services. Mr. Tukes earned his Master’s Degree in Public Administration from the University of Illinois-at Chicago. He also earned his certification in the Grants Management program through Management Concepts.

Your Hobbies and Interests or something you would like the Grantees to know about you.
Mr. Tukes enjoys playing sports, running, and lifting weights. He also loves mentoring and tutoring young men in the City of Chicago and directing them to the right path. Mr. Tukes is also an avid Chicago sports and Notre Dame football fanatic.

Don’t Forget to Celebrate!
Although the close-out of a grant is usually not perceived as a celebratory event, it’s important to celebrate the accomplishments that were achieved with your staff and partners. This will boost the morale of staff members, leave a positive impression upon your partners and stakeholders, and keep the door open for future collaborations.

Ashley McGuffie, the Director of the Health CareRx Academy at The Workplace in Bridgeport, Connecticut believes very strongly that it’s important to acknowledge all the good work done by staff, training providers, community partners, employers, and students. To that end, her organization held a “Celebration of Success,” rather than a graduation to provide students with the opportunity to share their stories with their fellow students, their families, the organization’s chief operating officer, a dean of a community college partner, and others. The students also wrote thank-you notes to a teacher, case manager, or someone in their family to acknowledge relationships that were instrumental in their success.
**SKILLS ACCELERATOR**

The Performance Reporting Deadline for the Quarter Ending 3/31/16 Has Passed

This is a gentle reminder that the reporting deadline for the performance quarter ending on March 31, 2016 was on Friday, May 13th.

We want to thank all the grantees who have uploaded and certified their performance data, and remind any grantees with outstanding performance reporting data for the quarter ending 3/31/16 to submit and certify your data as soon as possible in order to avoid being considered late.

If you have any outstanding performance questions or are experiencing any technical difficulties in HUB please send an e-mail with your grant name and grant number to businessrelations@dol.gov with a cc to your FPO. And please do not hesitate to reach out if you require any individual performance-related technical assistance.

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**COMMON ACRONYMS**

CoP – Community of Practice  
DSI – Division of Strategic Investments  
DOL – U.S. Department of Labor  
ETA – Employment and Training Administration  
FPO – Federal Project Officer  
H-1B JA – Jobs Accelerator Grantees  
H-1B TST – Technical Skills Training Grantees  
OWI – Office of Workforce Investments  
PII – Personally Identifiable Information  
QNR – Quarterly Narrative Report  
QPR – Quarterly Performance Report  
WF3One — Workforce3One (Online Resource)

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**ETA GRANTEES’ COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE/RESOURCE PAGE**

Be sure to visit the ETA Grantees’ Community of Practice/Resource Page for updated forms, tip sheets, interim reporting guidance, webinar recordings and other useful technical assistance materials. This site is designed to support your efforts in getting participants trained and moving along career pathways. It’s also a place to learn and share, and we’ll be posting training materials and grant resources for your use during your grant’s period of performance.

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**REGIONAL OFFICES**

REGION 1 — Boston — 617-788-0170  
REGION 2 — Philadelphia — 215-861-5200  
REGION 3 — Atlanta — 404-302-5300  
REGION 4 — Dallas — 972-850-4600  
REGION 5 — Chicago — 312-596-5400  
REGION 6 — San Francisco — 415-625-7900

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The DSI Team encourages you to write us with any questions, concerns, and topics of interest for TA activities to the dsi@dol.gov mailbox.