

NWX-DOC-NTIA-OTIA

**Moderator: Emy Tseng
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1:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Good afternoon and thank you all for holding. Your lines will remain on a listen only mode for the duration of today's conference. I would like to remind all parties, the call is now being recorded. If you have any objections, please disconnect at this time. I would now like to turn the call over to Emy Tseng. Thank you. You may begin.

Emy Tseng: Hello. Thank you. Welcome to the Broadband USA monthly technical assistance webinar series - out how digital training enhances workforce development efforts across the country. I am Emy Tseng, Senior Program Specialist at the National Telecommunications and Information Administration at the Department of Commerce. And I'd also like to introduce my colleague, Elaine Sloan, who manages this webinar series. She'll be behind the scenes, running the webinar, as we go.

So before I actually introduce all of the participants, I'd like to give you a little bit of a background on the Broadband USA initiative, which this webinar is part of. The Broadband USA's program supports communities in their work to expand broadband access adoption and digital skills, to insure that all residents have the opportunities that come with using broadband. We sort of

act as strategic advisors to a number of communities across the country to expand broadband access as well as digital inclusion programs.

We offer direct technical assistance advising communities on planning implementation and sustainability. We also present webinars such as these events and workshops. And we also publish a number of resource guides and toolkits. Also, I'd like to start with some housekeeping.

I think the operator explained that the phone is in listen only mode so that if you have questions, you just submit those in the question section of the webinar platform and you can type them in and we'll address those questions at the end of the session. So we'll let all of the speakers speak and then we'll go into the Q&A afterwards. Also, to let you know, the presentation, PDF of the presentation, a transcript and recording of the webinar, will be available on the www.BroadbandUSA.com Web site.

It usually takes about a week to post. So I'll go ahead and start the program. I'm really excited to welcome these esteemed experts and practitioners who have achieved experience in the field of workforce development and digital skills training. First to speak will be Patrick Graham who is the President and CEO of Charlotte Works. Then we'll have Jacob Martinez who is the Founder and Executive Director of Digital NEST. And then Debra Hansen who is the Director of Washington State University's Stevens County Extension Program. Next slide.

So first off, I'd like to introduce Dr. Patrick Graham, who is the President and CEO of Charlotte Works in Charlotte, North Carolina. Charlotte Works is the Workforce Development Board for Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Patrick has more than 20 years of nonprofit experience spanning workforce development, education and social service programs. Previous to Charlotte

Works, Dr. Graham served as President and CEO of the Urban League of the Central Carolinas, where he spearheaded a number of innovative technology training programs. Next slide. And Patrick, please take it away.

Dr. Patrick Graham: Thank you and good afternoon. When I think about what we're going to discuss today, this really comes full circle for me. When I was President of the Urban League of the Central Carolinas back in 2009, we wanted to start an initiative around digital inclusion as well as access to individuals that have jobs in infrastructure builds, particularly around broadband technology.

And so what's interesting about that is that the very agency that started out as my first primary fund at Charlotte Works, is not an agency that I work for. So I've wanted to sort of put that out there so you can see why this is so important to me personally, but why I believe it's also important for our future. Next slide.

So I wanted to start the conversation by first thinking a little bit about the shift that Workforce Boards applied in the last few years. Workforce boards were first operating under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and then the Workforce Adjustment Act in 1998. The federal government wanted local municipalities and the Workforce Boards to focus on social policy, partnership and direct service. However, in 2014 we had another amendment to the Rehabilitation Act, which is the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act.

And there the focus has now become economic policy, leadership - so working with various workforce partners, including community based organizations as well as government, to convene them and align the workforce system. Next slide. So based on that, Charlotte Works actually changed its mission and vision. And that mission became to convene and lead an

integrated workforce system, through partnerships, policies and career pathways in a market driven economy.

Our vision was to make Charlotte the home to the nation's most integrated workforce system, providing the most highly skilled workforce for a global economy. So what we do now, the Workforce Board, is geared around partnerships and creating a lineup with those partnerships, policies that help make it easier for our career seekers to enter the workforce and pathways.

So we actually are the local entity that helps convene and design career pathways and certified pathways, for our region and for industry. Next slide. I'm clearly not going to read all through this, but you can see with our mission - you can see how some of the services that we provide in our operations, lend to those partnerships, policies and pathways.

And so if you look at the bottom rings, you'll notice those are the types of services that we provide, both in the areas of business services, partner services, labor intelligence, contracted services or direct service delivery to residents and across technical assistance in advocacy. And advocacy has been one of the largest changes because we're now much more engaged in policy debates that lend to creating environments for our job seekers, to actually live and thrive in. Next slide please.

Just to give you a quick idea about some of our impacts, the number of people that we serve in our career centers, are 31,708 individuals, this past fiscal year. The number of those career visits are 62,979. And what's interesting is that our career seeker visits are slightly down by a couple of thousand from the previous year. However, we're seeing an increase in the number of visits that we have. And that means that we're actually seeing more and more individuals who are harder to serve.

As the unemployment rate dips, we're starting to see more people who need longer term assistance to gain employment. The other thing that you'll notice is that last year we placed about 65 individuals into work. Those were both adults and what we call dislocated workers. These are individuals who recently lost employment.

And they earn a total of \$103 million in salaries. So that means that for every dollar we invested into this system, \$30.68 went back out into the community through the salaries earned by those participants. Next slide please. Just a quick overview of what we look at as a workforce system - we include economic development; education entities, so that's K-12 all the way through higher ed; workforce developments, so agencies like ourselves are community based organizations that are involved in workforce development, including community colleges.

And then we look at community and social development. So we look at neighborhoods, infrastructure, policies that also affect potential workers. And we really look at all of that as being part of the workforce system. Next slide.

So as a start of the conversation about why broadband access, particularly in Charlotte, North Carolina, is so important, what I want to point out is the unemployment clusters that we now see in Charlotte. If you look at them you can see both red, orange and yellow, maybe a little difficult for you. But the red are higher - really have higher unemployment rates. Those are getting close to 30%, between 25% and 30%.

If you look at those in orange, they are - well excuse me, the ones in red are actually about getting close to 30% or more. And if you look at the ones in orange they're about 20% to 29%. And then the ones in yellow, around 12%

to 19%. And the reason that's important is because Charlotte actually, like much of the country, is below a 5% unemployment rate. And so these communities are experiencing very high unemployment rates. And much of that is due to gentrification and other structural issues that now are placing more people in poverty further out into the community and less in the center of Charlotte. Next slide.

So here I have a map also of what we call free wi-fi and broadband access. And when you look at that - you see in the green where you have higher density of free broadband access and yellow meaning moderate forms of it. But if you look at the previous map that we had earlier and you look at this one, you can clearly see that a lot of free broadband access is clustered almost in the middle. So I'm going up Highway 77 into the suburbs, but you can see that it's not necessarily correlating with where a lot of the high unemployment and poverty is. Next slide.

So looking at that we realize there's very important that we focus on access, but also how do we also focus on infrastructure building and make those communities part of that, so that we can also not just stimulate their access to the internet, but also stimulate job growth for them. So if you look at job postings for broadband information technology and infrastructure, you can see that communications being very much related to it, in North Carolina a little over 10,000 jobs, 11,000; 63% of them requiring a Bachelors. And you can see the United States statistics.

You see the construction, information technology, as well as energy. And all of these are related to broadband infrastructure. And so what's important to note there is that without access first to technology, without access to broadband, very difficult for some of these communities to actually reach the skills needed for these, let alone to apply for them. The other is that we

realize that there are a lot of opportunities for this population in terms of being able to work to build infrastructure for these sectors, that all involve some form of broadband. Next slide.

So what happened on our journey? Back in 2009 when I was at the Urban League, there was also the American Recovery Reinvestment Act. And at the time, the Administration had proposed to invest about \$7.2 billion into broadband (internet). So we began to look at programs and we looked at a summer youth employment program for that year and it served 16 to 24 year-olds. But many of these young people were placed into work experiences that were paid, but actually were in more of the service sector. And so it didn't necessarily give them a lot of skills.

It helped them with some soft, but not necessarily the types of skills they would need to move forward in their lives, towards living wage jobs. The other thing that was important about that too, is that we realized that many of these young people had what I would call adult issues. For example, 50% of the participants who were female, were actually mothers already. And many of the young men, already fathers. And they also had other issues such as they were co-supporters of their families. So they really needed more help in terms of their own economic development and career development.

So we came up with the concept of working with the fiber optic association as well as the local workforce for Charlotte Works, to try to create broadband certifications - national ones that were through the fiber optic association, they would allow young people to get involved in infrastructure building for broadband as well as teaching them digital literacy. And so we actually focused on those two certifications - digital device usage such as computers and handhelds. We became a Microsoft site so we began to do Microsoft certifications and coding and so it made this part of a broad curriculum, to get

them both engaged in not only device usage and access, but also into jobs that will build the infrastructure itself. Next slide please.

So in that collaboration there was Charlotte Works, there's the Workforce Board, the fiber optic association, which was the national or international partner really. Later on came Digital Charlotte which actually (fought) and gave us help in focusing in access. Obviously the Urban Leagues itself - we engaged many employers such as AT&T, Time Warner Cable, Strata Solar, Duke Energy. All of these were part of - and then we began to see a lot more foundation support come in - so the Leon Levine Foundation, the Foundation for the Carolinas and others, joined the effort. Next slide.

So we launched this fiber optic school in 2009. We started off with 80 out of school youth who all had barriers to employment. We became in 2010, through this initiative, school number 325 of the fiber optic association. And currently that is the only fiber optic association school now, in the region.

In 2011 we lost the Microsoft specialist site and in 2014 as part of this initiative, we also became a Google Digital Literacy Outreach site. So today starting off with those 80 young people, over 300 low income residents received their national certifications in fiber optic and premise cabling and they had a 69% job placement rate. Next slide.

Some statistics about those initial groups is gender - male spreads in 57%, female is 43%. As you can see, the breakdown in race and ethnicity, income levels, 69% so well below poverty. In education we had less than high school diploma 2% and actually many had high school diplomas or equivalent of 82%. And even some college and post-secondary. And I believe that you see a higher amount of those college and post-secondary, because we were also at the time, going through the economic recovery. Next slide.

So for us, ultimately what we'd like to see in our workforce system including initiative like this, by having those various partners at the table, is centralized job coordination. So that means we want our workforce system, those community based organizations, government to actually coordinate job coordination together, so that we can be more stronger in terms of meeting industry demands, shared database, which we are currently working on now and seems will come to fruition, where we actually share data, particularly job training tools, as well as the job coordination having a shared database, to allow us to share information on where customers are but where also opportunities are.

Shared impact and metrics are very important to us. And then obviously shared portals of entry, meaning that customers can come in and there's no bad place for them to walk in, that they will get the same levels of service and assistance, no matter where they go. So next slide. So with that, I thank you. There's our Web site. And I look forward to questions after.

Emy Tseng: Thank you so much Patrick. That was a great overview of the perspective technology training from a more traditional Workforce Development Board and how Workforce Development Boards can innovate. Next up we have Jacob Martinez who is the Founder and Executive Director of Digital NEST which is a nonprofit. And NEST stands for nurturing entrepreneurial skills with technology. Jacob is a social entrepreneur, tech educator, keynote speaker and cutting edge community collaborator. His inspiration for Digital NEST came from over a dozen years of experience and research in teaching technology as a way to overcome economic disparities and achieve equity, especially for Latinos and girls.

In fact, Jacob was named by Tech Crunch, as one of 2014's Top Ten Men in the Country Supporting Women in Technology. Next slide. So thanks and take it away Jacob.

Jacob Martinez: Great. Thank you for that introduction. Good afternoon everybody. I am - over the course of the next slides I'm going to kind of share our model that is focused in on rural communities and agricultural communities. Currently we are in two communities, one in Watsonville and the other one in Salinas, which are both in the State of California. To give you a little geographical reference to where those locations are, we are south of Silicon Valley and about two hours south of San Francisco, in the Monterrey Bay region.

Our model started - I launched this organization less than three years ago, so we're still relatively new, but growing incredibly fast. And we're focused on youth, ages from high school all the way to 24 year-olds. Next slide please. This work was built upon eight years of work that was planned by the National Science Foundation on how do we diversify the tech workforce, specifically how do we get more Latinos and women involved in tech? Our work was focused in on - in rural communities, so we were working in Watsonville. And this is all work I was doing with prior nonprofit ETR Associates and then I launched Digital NEST back in 2014.

The focus on rural communities is - was our primary work, because what we saw was an abundance of untapped talent in these communities. There was a lot of youth, a lot of diversity and a lack of opportunities for these youth. These lack of opportunities to prepare for workforce and to be prepared for the higher paying jobs in and around their community, caused a lot of poverty, which led to a lot of negative social indicated health indicators, such as we had high teen pregnancy rates, high rates of diabetes, high high school dropout

rates and definitely some gang involvement in communities like Watsonville and Salinas. Next slide please.

So in 2013 I had this idea after visiting a lot of tech companies, you know, being that we're about an hour and a half south of Silicon Valley, we had access to a lot of companies like Google and Apple and Facebook. And we would take kids to these environments and these youth would be really excited and inspired to be in these spaces.

But yet, we were bringing them back home into communities where their computer labs were designed - were really outdated, where there were predominantly stationary desktop machines, where kids were being shuffled into the classrooms and asked to sit at their station and do work. So a lot of the school computer labs were designed in the complete opposite of how innovative tech spaces were being created.

So based on that model, we had this idea of what if we took that workplace environment model and applied it to technology centers? And what if we were open every day of the week? We're open Monday through Friday so that if a kid got out of school - for example, like today, on a Wednesday and wanted to stay engaged and learn and build their skills, chances are in rural communities and agricultural communities, there wasn't going to be a place for them to go, until the NEST. So we are open every day of the week.

That picture on the screen is actually the space of one of the rooms in the space, so we took that workplace model to create really innovative spaces. To get our youth skills and to build a local skilled workforce so that this workforce could be in communities and there could be a community full of self-starters, really innovative youth, are not - that are technology empowered and ready to tackle challenges in their community. At the same time we - and

I'll talk about it a little bit later, but we provide technology consulting for local businesses, so how do we get our youth and this talent to support local business? And then third, how do we now get these youth employed into these entry level jobs that have - that are career tracks and higher paying than traditionally the youth are going to in these communities. Next slide please.

So we're really looking at how do we prepare our youth for workforce? We do encourage our youth to pursue higher education, but we are also of the mindset that college prep is not necessarily career prep, but career prep is college prep. So we're very career focused and career front and center. We have three career focus areas. The first is digital arts and technology, so it's all the graphic design, videography and photography.

The second is a Web and IT work, so the coding, the Web design, the programming, the data science and security stuff that we teach. And the third really emerged from a lot of youth that were coming into our space but were not technology motivated. And were - and at the same time, companies coming to us and telling us that they needed people to come work for them in various departments that were not traditionally techy, but nowadays all companies are tech companies. And so we are preparing our youth to be technology empowered and really tackle things like marketing, project management and communications.

The fourth career focus area that's not on this list, but that's quickly emerging as ag technology, the agricultural community with the struggle that they're having with the labor and the labor shortage, the lack of land and the increased reduction of farmable land and the challenge here in California we have with water, is really forcing the agricultural community into looking at how do we infuse technology to do - be more efficient?

And then how do we build a workforce that is able to drive that innovation? It's a really unique challenge, because not only does the workforce need to have the skills, but they also need to have an openness to being out in the fields, working, getting their boots dirty, collecting data, working with harvesters which are traditionally bilingual or Spanish speakers. So it's an innovative and challenging workforce that we need to build, but it's something that we're looking at. Next slide please.

Our youth goes through three levels of training - beginner, intermediate and advanced. And then they feed into what we call our (Biz) NEST consultancy, which we now bring our youth onto our payroll and they provide technology consulting for businesses and companies. Those images there - one of the - a Web site we built for a nonprofit and then the other one is a series of videos that we produced for (Guy Kawasaki) who is a pioneer in the tech world. He launched a series on Facebook and so that's in partnership with him. These are all paid clients, so we charge our clients a consulting fee, but we charge 60% of market rate and then most of that pay goes back into the youth salaries and pay. Next slide please.

So the idea with our model is if we can provide access to technology space, mentorship and all the technology tools that they need, we have all the latest tech here including drones and VR headsets and all kinds of cool stuff, so giving them the access to the opportunities, layering on training and education to prepare them for local jobs primarily and then secondarily, jobs in Silicon Valley. Third, we provide technical support for businesses, so that therefore, we're getting our youth to enter into the workforce to support workforce, sparking entrepreneurship and then also getting our youth competitive and getting into higher education programs.

That we can see - what we will see is more money in the pockets of our youth and into our families, more - the businesses being more successful and having - and generating more revenue, so in turn creating more tax base and pushing on some of these negative health indicators associated with poverty and creating more - creating healthier communities in communities that have typically been struggling because of the lack of career opportunities. Next slide please. Those are some early results. Again, we're less than three years old.

Our membership has surpassed 1200 members now, across both sites. We're actually a little higher than that and we're about 36% female, which is a good number for tech programs, but a number that we're not happy with, so we're looking at how we can improve that. In terms of our future, we're looking at how do we develop - really get our solid program model, understand what it takes to grow these and build these out in communities. And then our long term vision and hope is to scale this model into other rural communities across the state and country. Next slide please.

There's my info. I'm happy to take questions after this call and - or follow up with me via email or just visit us on our Web site as well. Thank you very much.

Emy Tseng: Thank you Jacob. Thanks for giving that perspective of an innovative local program. Next we have Debra Hansen who will be giving us a perspective on some statewide initiatives that seeks to link a lot of local workforce development and entrepreneurial efforts together. Debra is an Associate Professor and County Extension Director with the Washington - with Washington State University Extension Program. And her focus is on community and economic development, particularly in rural Stevens County.

She has worked on improving broadband in Stevens County and other rural areas throughout the state, for 18 years. Debra Chairs the statewide Washington Rural Pathways to Prosperity conference and also does some marketing for the statewide Women and Agriculture Conference, both of which deploy training to multiple sites, using technology and locally facilitated discussions. So next slide. And Debra, I'll let you take it.

Debra Hansen: Great. Well thank you very much. And it's great to follow such great programs that Patrick and Jacob highlighted. Our project demonstrates how you actually use broadband to offer statewide programs that affect rural and regional communities. It helps to mobilize communities both large and small, to learn about and solve their local issues. And I'm going to talk about a workshop that we did earlier this year that employed work on workforce development. Next slide please.

So our traditional model in Washington State is we had two day conferences on economic development topics in the middle of the state and Washington is a big state. I live way up in the corner of the Northeast corner on the opposite side from Seattle. And it's a long way to get to conferences no matter where you live in the state. So we've typically had conferences in Moses Lake, right where that star is. And we try to bring community leaders and members, together to learn new skills and knowledge. The last conference we held there around this topic, for rural communities, had about 150 attendees.

But when we started talking to communities and leaders some clear participation issues bubbled up. Next slide please. So like I mentioned, it's a long way away from anywhere in Washington, to get anywhere in Washington. When you think about rural community leaders like mayors and business leaders, they often have two different hats that they wear in the community, so their time is limited on how to take days off to get to a

conference. And then in rural Washington, you know, budgets are tight, resources are thin and so it's difficult to send a lot of people to those conferences, so only a few go at a time. These are all barriers that keep people from participating and learning new skills. Next slide please.

So we've created an innovative model called Pathways to Prosperity, and it actually uses broadband to connect experts to multiple sites. Part of it is it also engages communities to move beyond just participating in a webinar into action through facilitated activities that we designed prior to the workshop. Next slide please.

So let me explain a little bit how this works. This is one of our workshops that we did on entrepreneur. And this is our speaker, (Eric Pages) who is sitting in his house in West Virginia, or I'm sorry, in Virginia. And then at the bottom, you can see a conference site that we have at one of our sites across the state. So we've got a small group of people that are watching the webinar with (Eric) and then learning about information from him about entrepreneurship.

And look the top bullet that he points out is that we need talented workforce. So even entrepreneurs care about workforce. So you don't have to travel to get to a central located event and you're also not sitting alone at your desk, watching a webinar or a pre-recorded video presentation. Next slide please.

So after you watch that webinar, that's when we break into small groups at the sites, and work on exercises. The site facilitators are trained on a local engagement and action planning. So not only does WSU develop these activities, but we work to train the facilitators on how to use those activities during the day.

So we are actually increasing their leadership capacity, without having them to be content experts. So (Eric) is the content expert; we give them exercises to engage their local facility. So here they're in (Yale), Washington, which is a small town, talking about what they can do locally, around entrepreneurship. We also make sure and manage the technology and make sure that everybody is connected prior to and during the event, so there's a seamless flow for the whole, entire workshop. Next slide please.

So we've used this method or this model on entrepreneurial ecosystems. We had rural Pathways to Prosperity twice in Washington and then they also did it twice in South Dakota. The last time we did it in 2015, we had 18 sites across the state with over 300 participants. Next slide please. It's also used and started with women in agriculture, which is an individual skills building, so 650 women farmers get together across these four states - Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington; watch a speaker; and then work on improving their individual skills.

So it can be used in a couple of different ways. But let's start talking about workforce development. Next slide please. So when we started thinking about workforce development as a topic, we started talking to the Workforce Development Board and they were engaged in a Governor's summit that they got funding for from the Governors' Association.

So we partnered with the Governor's office, Workforce Board, office of Superintendent of Public Construction and Washington (STEM), to think about how to use this Pathways to Prosperity model, to connect to this government summit, so that it could be a wider event than all having to go to Seattle, to learn about career connected learning. Next slide please.

So we rallied and got 855 attendees across the state at 26 locations that connected with the central site at Microsoft campus that had 344 attendees. All of those 855 people did not have to drive to Seattle across the state to learn about this topic. We were able to bridge out to them and create some activity at the different locations.

So let me highlight -look at that little city named Okanogan, right there in the middle. It's a town of 2500 people and it's a long way away from Seattle. It doesn't look that big, but Washington's a big state. They had over 35 attendees at that summit, from a town of 2500. And they've already met to engage on another workshop where they had 82 participants. So that's big, big local engagement. Next slide please.

They're all watching the seminar, watching the event and then afterwards getting together and talking about the event. (Kristi O'Neill), right here, got so excited that she's actually developed a new position within her job, to work on workforce development, because we've given her tools and information on how to do this. So Pathways to Prosperity not only creates an event where you're locally strengthening your skills, but you also feel part of a statewide effort to move forward on solving problems. And so you can connect with other like sized communities and likeminded people, as you work towards your projects.

It creates an environment of local problem solving and networking. This is a picture of (Bob Stevens), who connected during the conference, with an Innovate Washington foundation and has had five meetings talking about talent development within his business and how to change his environment for workforce development. Next slide please. So here is my information. What I will tell you is that on that Web site, you can find all of the documents that

we shared with our regional site facilitators, on how to work the agenda, what details they needed, their job descriptions prior to the event.

We also included on that Web site, what's happened since the conference, what kind of reports have we gotten, evaluation and numbers and things like that. I encourage you to visit the site if you're interested in this type of event. It takes a lot of prior planning; it takes a lot of coordination; but the impact is huge. And rural communities and small towns, really appreciate being able to pull together and try to solve these problems and figure out where their gaps and opportunities are. So thanks for letting me share how broadband has affected our community engagement around workforce development. Thanks Emy.

Emy Tseng: Great. Thanks so much. That's a great example of how we can - how states and other - rural regions can participate in these workforce development planning and development by using broadband. So as I mentioned earlier, during our - if you'd like to ask a question, please type it into the chat box or into the questions box, and I will be asking the questions of the panelists. We have a couple already. One is for Patrick. And the question is, is the Charlotte program still running and of the 69% for job placement, is there any tracking of job retention and advancement over the longer term?

Dr. Patrick Graham: Yes. Good question. So the answer to the first question is yes. So that program has actually expanded. The City of Charlotte has also gotten involved with that program, with the Urban League. It has expanded the number of participants; it's lasted close to 30%. And so what's great about that is that you now have more continued interest in that and they brought a lot more employers to the table. And so now that Urban League is starting to actually train the employees of existing companies with those two certifications. So that's a great thing.

The other is that we have tracked them over a 12 month period and so the retention rate was close to 81%. Now as far as long term tracking, what we are working on now, is that Charlotte Works has access to what we call the NC Work System. And so when we enroll applicants into the NC Work System we're actually able to trace them through the state's wage data system.

So we can track them out five, ten years from now, as long as they were enrolled. And so we're working with the Urban League and other actual community based organizations, to sort of I guess I would say, co-enroll them, so that we can help those agencies track them better. So that's one of the things that we're working on now, with those organizations.

Emy Tseng: Okay, great. I'll go to Jacob next. Let's see. There's a question about what's the latest status and progress in (NOW) and also a question about engaging employers. What specific recruitment tools are you using to attract employers? How would you describe your outreach and communication efforts? And I assume that with the - both for employers but also in terms of getting people in the door into your program.

Jacob Martinez: Yes. Thank you. So regarding the first question and in terms of our latest progress for 2017, we launched our second location in Salinas, this past April, so most of the work that we're doing right now is growing that center out. Ain terms of enrollment there we're actually outpacing our growth in Watsonville. So we're growing quickly. What we have in store for this year, is definitely shifting a lot of our programming into the ag tech realm. And we're piloting a program, a hydroponics program that's being funded by OpTerra Energy, to kind of kick off our ad tech career pathway.

So in terms of what we have in store for this year, it's mostly around building out that center and really building out our ag tech kind of career pathway and getting our numbers up out on that location. Our Watsonville site has pretty much stabilized in terms of enrollment. We're seeing about 75 - between 50 and 75 kids a day, depending on the time of the year. So that's what we're doing there. In terms of recruitment of employers, I'm pretty active in the community. We have a pretty active Board, which is really requiring us to be out in different parts in the region and attending different meetings.

We're part of a collaborative called the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership, MBEP, which brings all the local employers in the region, together to talk about workforce development and other issues like housing, the tech infrastructure. So just being a member of an association like that opens the doors to all of the local industry. And they were one of the main drivers, actually having a scale regionally. And in terms of recruiting youth, we've been fortunate. We haven't had to. We do very little recruitment in the schools.

Most of it's word of mouth and through the use of social media. With just those two things, it's - we have - it's a really cool place here, just the design of it and, you know, we offer free food. We actually have a chef that preps meals once a week for us. We have all the technology; we have drones; we've got VR things. So youth want to be here.

Emy Tseng: Great. So actually the next question was for you as well. Are there specific standardized computer applications that go with your - the curriculum for the youth, like Office or certain programming languages? Or how do you decide what gets taught?

Jacob Martinez: Yes. We have a pretty innovative staff. Our staff really stays cutting edge in terms of all of the technology. And so most of the digital arts and tech stuff that we do - we do use Adobe products and that's - we have a partnership with them, so we get all of their creative suite. So we teach mainly Adobe products for all the digital art stuff. Regarding the programming, we teach, you know, everything from C++ to Java to Python. What we're really trying to do is teach our youth how to be technology empowered and not specifically tied to one set of software, because tech changes so quickly that we really need youth that are comfortable navigating various platforms and having that comfort and confidence to do so.

Emy Tseng: Okay. The next question is for Patrick. Actually, I'd love for you to follow on, on the question of how do you engage employer, but also in addition to Digital Charlotte, are there examples of smaller community based organizations of nonprofit in your community, that make a contribution to the skills training and the skills pathway? So there are two questions there.

Dr. Patrick Graham: Okay. Let me have those one more time.

Emy Tseng: Okay. So how do you engage employers? And then the other is building partnerships with smaller community based organizations and nonprofits and how do they contribute the skills training and the skill pathways program? So there are two separate questions.

Dr. Patrick Graham: Okay. Good. The first question - one of the ways that we engage employers is that we actually have a business services division, whose primary function is to make outreach to business, but also to work with economic development entities in Charlotte, such as our Charlotte Regional Partnership, the Charlotte Chamber, as they are actually recruiting companies

to the area. So we really get out in front. We're involved very early on in the engagement process with companies.

The other is that we actually also use our board itself. Our Workforce Board, well over 50% of it, is made up of industry representation. So we really use them to also push engagement of employers, to bring them to the table. And what we found is that a lot of employers are in need of a talented workforce and this is a - particularly in the infrastructure building and broadband certifications, this is a very niche market in which there's not a lot of individuals with that skill set. And so they really at times, also seek us out once they're made aware that those types of services and actual graduates are available.

Related to other smaller organizations, there are many organizations out there in the Charlotte area that do everything from refurbishing hardware and computers to actually teaching digital literacy in libraries and other places. So there are numerous ones. Actually there are so many that I'm actually not bringing any to mind right now, because there are that many. But a lot of them actually fall under the digital umbrella, led by a gentleman, Bruce Clark, who actually coordinates the efforts of many of those entities in our community.

Emy Tseng: Okay. Great. So next question is for Debra and the question is access to information is clearly a barrier. So how do you overcome this barrier of perceived lack of relevance, fear, lack of privacy and lack of knowledge about the benefits of broadband amongst rural populations? How did your model address some of these issues?

Debra Hansen: Well we've used this particular model on training and education around economic development issues. And we have not used it around broadband

access and deployment. But the other part of my job is working on broadband, so I'm thinking that we may use this model to help communities understand what they can do as a community, to kind of look at where they have gaps and barriers in their broadband access.

We are part of the beta test for NTIA's BCAT which is a community driven online tool. And I think marrying both of those together would be great, because, you know, federal mapping is not as great as what we know as a local community. So I think that the internet and access to broadband, is getting more and more acceptable. And people can choose to engage as they want.

But I think we're going to be using this Pathways to Prosperity model, to also help figure out how to do some broadband access because, you know, rural communities need to have broadband for so many reasons. And, you know, we can't even go into those too much. It's not just economic development, telehealth and education and everything. So anyway, thank you.

Emy Tseng: Great. This is a question probably for Patrick, but I'll expand it a little bit. There's a specific question about funding sources and if WIOA and/or TANF funds are good sources to tap into, to pay for these classes and workshops. But I'll actually expand that into like what are some good funding strategies for these types of programs. So maybe Patrick, if you could address the government funding questions first and then we can expand it to more general funding and sustainability.

Dr. Patrick Graham: Sure. So yes, the workforce individual opportunity act funding, we are able to use that for the types of certification I discussed, normally requires the process where we register those certifications and the actual organization that's certifying it, through our what we call NC Work System. And so you

have to be registered in there. You have to be approved. We actually send that through committee now, through a board committee that approves those types of certifying bodies. And we do that because that board is comprised of business and industry.

And so that's one of the ways that you can access that. But more important, is that those dollars don't fund agencies. They actually fund the individuals themselves. So those dollars are geared much more towards the individual under what they called Title I of (WIOA). And that allows that individual if we develop a career path model for that individual through the case plan, then we will fund that type of training. In addition, one of the things that we did with that broadband school is that it actually is funded almost 90% and I'm looking at some old data 90% are private.

So though we started it off with government funding, we actually then began to expand that with foundations and mostly foundations from corporations, that actually began to fund it. Their funding priorities expanded that, so now you had a program that wasn't just tied to the government funding of individuals but layering now a community program that was funded primarily by the private sector that allowed us to be even more creative with it.

Emy Tseng: Okay. One last question because we're nearing the top of the hour. And I think this - hello? This is - and I hope you don't mind if we run over a couple of minutes, but this is about - several people have asked about how you partner or compete with other institutions. So for example, employment centers at local libraries or community colleges or technical colleges. How do you work with or do you, you know is there a competition with these types of institutions? And maybe Jacob, you could start.

Jacob Martinez: Actually we are - our first Watsonville center is technically on the community college extension campus in the downtown Watsonville area. And our second location is actually on site at the public library in Salinas. So we work really closely. The reality is these institutions are struggling to provide us services among all of the other things that they've got to do. So we've, from the very beginning, have talked - when we go into communities, we talk with institutions that are in place and figure out where we can fill a gap. And they're often really thankful to be there - for us to be, you know, on their site.

Within the community college, one thing we're doing is we now have our staff becoming adjunct faculty, so that we can actually co-teach some classes that they don't have the - they're having trouble getting instructors for, so a lot of their technology things that they're struggling to get instructors. So we're actually going to be co-teaching some classes with them, so our students can get college course credit.

Emy Tseng: Okay, great. There are more questions and there are more questions particularly for Debra, but we are very much nearing the end of this. So what we'll do is we will send the panelists a list of the questions and hopefully they can answer them directly with you. So we'll go to the next slide. Okay. I just wanted to put in a plug for our next webinar.

Hopefully you found this useful and our next webinar is How Broadband Enhances Economic Development happening on the 18th. So it takes a slightly wider view for the course development part of this, but this is more about economic development strategies with broadband. And next slide.

Okay, and I just wanted to highlight some additional resources and services that we offer. So as I mentioned, we have a number of different publications and primers and documents that are really based on implementations and our

experience with communities across the country. So it's really a hands on type guide. And also if you seek more information from our team or technical assistance, please do contact us, you know, our phone contact is listed here and we're here to help. So thank you again and thank you to our great panelists. This has been really interesting, at least for me. And hopefully we will hear or you'll be able to participate in our next webinar. Thank you all.

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