

Housing + Employment Works: Building System Capacity to Employ People Experiencing Homelessness Webinar Transcript

4/21/2016

Katrina (operator): Good afternoon and welcome to today's webinar. I would now like to turn the call over to Mr. George Martin. Sir, you may begin.

George Martin: Thank you, Katrina. Hi everyone. My name is George Martin. I work for TDA. We are a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) technical assistance provider, and I am happy to welcome everyone to today's Housing + Employment Works webinar, *Building System Capacity to Employ People Experiencing Homelessness*. I am on the call today to provide technical support, so I am going to introduce today's hosts and presenters in just a minute, but before that I am going to go over some technical instructions.

I want to start by reminding everyone to clear away distractions such as cell phones and other programs on your computer and give your undivided attention to the presentation today. Today's presentation will last approximately 90 minutes, and this session is being recorded and the recording will be placed online at a later date. If you have technical problems with today's webinar or conference call, you can send a chat or a Q & A in the right hand side of your screen. You should see those panels up, and you can send those in, and we will try to resolve your issue as quickly as possible.

Everyone on the phone has been muted for today's call, but we're hoping that we should have the opportunity to answer some questions over the phone at the end of the call, and also you'll be able to ask questions throughout the session using the Q and A tool in the WebEx webinar software. So right now, I'm going to go over both of those ways that you will be able to ask questions.

Throughout today's session, you will be able to ask questions using the Q & A tool on the webinar software. If you look on the right hand side of the screen, you should see a number of panels and one of them says "Q & A." You can simply type a question into the field, and make sure that you are sending the questions to all panelists, and then click "Send." The panelists will get your question, and we will answer it as quickly as possible. At the end of today's session, time permitting, we will allow some folks to ask questions over the phone. When our operator, Katrina, who began the call, when she indicates that it's time to start a queue for questions over the phone, you can get in that queue by pressing star 1 (*1) on your telephone keypad. When your turn comes in the queue, Katrina will introduce you and you will be able to ask your question over the phone to everyone who's joined the meeting today. If you've decided that you no longer want to ask a question after you've joined the queue, you can press *2 to be removed from the queue.

Written questions will be answered in writing through the Q & A tool throughout today's session. As I said before, time permitting, panelists may answer some questions verbally at the end of the meeting. Please keep in mind that we may not be able to answer all questions and we will try to answer the most common questions first. If we are not able to answer your question today, you can follow-up by emailing Kate Rio at krio@ahpnet.com. And with that being said, I'd like to turn it over to Kevin Kissinger from HUD.

Kevin? [George is asked to introduce Brent Parton.]

Sure. I'm sorry about that. I would like to introduce Brent Parton from the U. S. Department of Labor (DOL). Brent?

Brent Parton: Thank you. Greetings everyone. We appreciate you being on this webinar, and I just want to thank our colleagues at HUD for working with us to pull this together. My name is Brent Parton. I'm a senior policy advisor here in the Employment and Training Administration, and it's exciting to see these types of cross-agency, cross-sector discussions going on, and we are really happy to be a part of it. I'm going to speak at a very high-level about some of the principles around the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and how that relates to building system capacity to employ people experiencing homelessness. At the end of the day, this work happens at the local level, and I know that people out there have a lot more experience and see things on the ground and how this plays out. We've got some great examples of how those partnerships can come together, and I am going to let them speak to that. But I would just like to mention here at the get-go that WIOA really does, also known as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which is probably what I will be saying the rest of the time, really does present an opportunity to put a focus on populations that experience barriers to employment. And, of course, that includes people who are experiencing or are at-risk of homelessness.

I'll just say from the get-go, like the predecessor of WIOA, that WIOA, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, does specifically recognize that people experiencing homelessness under the definition of people who face barriers to employment. People facing homelessness are not a homogenous population, and they can encounter a number of individual circumstances to employment in terms of their access to employment. I think it's important to note that when you experience multiple barriers or different types of barriers, at the core of addressing that is the idea of partnership, and partnership is really a key principle within the vision of WIOA. That's really what it's about. When we talk about WIOA asks to states, as well as local areas, the planning process, as well as joining us in terms of breaking down barriers across different programs, to provide numerous types of supports that individuals might face, things from the lack of transportation, child care, getting basic education and adult education skills, as well as specific types of training that people might need to connect with the labor market. Partnership is something that we really want to underscore here at the Department of Labor and our partner agencies at the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services, who have been working on this journey with us through the implementation of WIOA. We are really excited to see now a lot of this coming to fruition in the form of state plans and really something that is going to create what we believe is a reduction in the administrative costs and streamlining requirements in breaking down silos that will cascade down to the state as well to the local level where you do your work.

So, it presents an exciting opportunity for local workforce boards to really think about integration of service delivery, particularly for those in most need, and that includes people who face barriers to employment. Of course, homeless individuals fall into that category. We're seeing a lot of exciting partnerships come together in the state planning process that includes TANF, of course, people who are engaged in receiving public assistance. WIOA really does create a new emphasis on this idea of priority of service to these individuals. Naturally, it creates some incentives to serve the hardest to serve through the approaches of reporting on performance metrics. We're really excited to see how so many different agencies are building bridges to create supportive structures that can provide them with different types of services that individuals will need. We hope that everyone on this call will be working closely with their state and local officials to ensure the implementation of that priority of service to these individuals.

Outside of the planning and the priority of service piece, another part that we'd like to highlight that WIOA presents an opportunity for people who are working with individuals who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless, is the new provisions related to youth. As you saw from the law, WIOA really orients the workforce system in a new way toward serving or emphasizing the service to youth that are

out-of-school, individuals who are disconnected from the labor market, as well as the education system. These, in many of our communities, are really the most at-risk people out there, and WIOA seeks to emphasize services to those individuals and expand the age band of individuals that fall into that category of out-of-school youth, expand it to ages 16 to 24 to ensure that we can serve that population broadly, and try to give them the supports they need to get them onto a track to success early in their lives, and, hopefully, create a sustainable path forward.

Another area that I would like to cite, that is something in terms of emphasis of WIOA that is pertinent to this discussion, is the focus on earn and learn. Earn and learn strategies that allow individuals to both acquire skills while earning an income are especially important for individuals who are homeless or facing low income situations. WIOA places a new emphasis and creates new incentives on the importance on integrating programs like apprenticeship and on-the-job training into the programming that we do and we deliver in our communities, and that is something to think about that is so important in terms of how do you provide someone with the training and skills they need to connect with a future, but at the same time, allow them to earn the supports that they need to keep their loved ones around them going, but at the same time, move them towards a more sustainable housing situation.

Last, but not least, is the importance in terms of how we think about our strategies to execute in our communities by WIOA implementation. It's really important, again, to underscore the concept of partnerships and WIOA emphasizes sector partnerships as one of the key things that workforce boards are engaging at a strategic level. When we think about serving the multitude of individuals in our communities, it's important to think broadly about who can be at the table, particularly when you are talking to the industry about building a talent pipeline, really thinking about the tremendous amount of assets that are in our communities, people that can be engaged with the system and then be connected with the labor market and think broadly about talent opportunities. The Secretary here at the Department of Labor likes to say "there is no spare American in this economy," and that is something that we know that people have taken to heart and is creating examples across this country of that. So we should be thinking about that in terms of how we are creating the talent pipelines for the growth industries, as well as the high-demand industries in our communities.

Last, but not least, WIOA emphasizes the concept of career pathways, and that is such an important piece when we think about low income and homeless populations, as well. It's not just showing someone that they have a path forward, and it's not just getting them that one job, but trying to show them that there are opportunities to move up and, most importantly, the idea of linking education experiences should be coupled with linking the supportive services that individuals need. And, for individuals that face high barriers, like homeless individuals, that is something to think about as well. And, we really hope that WIOA provides the policy framework and the guidance that make those partnerships easier to come together.

So, all-in-all, that is a kind of quick and dirty but high-level view of what we see as the principles of WIOA that pertain to this conversation and, most importantly, the important work that we're doing with this population. So, again, I want to thank everybody for giving us a few minutes to talk about that, and I am really looking forward to hearing more of the rest of the conversation. At this point, I am going to hand it over to Pat Tucker, and thank you everyone, again, for letting us join.

Pat Tucker: Hi everybody. This is Pat Tucker. I am the moderator for this session and, just to give you a little bit of background about me, I've worked in the housing industry for over 20-something years and, because I was working in housing, I saw that there was a need to have employment at the table. The employment really helped our building that we had people living in, who came from all sorts of backgrounds, mostly what they all had in common was that they had, at some point, been homeless.

Employment helped them to actually get on their feet, more so than along with the housing. The employment made a big difference in people's lives and, actually, we had people who moved on and the housing went to somebody else who was in need. So, I think if you do housing, you have to do employment. So that's a little bit about my background and where I come from.

We're going to move forward [a moment of technical difficulty; requested help with the slides]. So, I was going to start by doing an overview of what the objectives of this session are going to be, and I am not going to read off all of them. We're trying to get you very familiar with WIOA, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; we also want to help you to develop a collaboration between the Continuum of Care and the workforce boards; we want you to be able to identify the advantages of system partnerships and be aware of what is out there as far as training and technical assistance (TA) materials are concerned. (Next slide, please.)

So, I am going to do a brief overview of some of the services that are a part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA, so I am going to do a brief overview of the services, and then we are going to keep moving, so let's go to the next slide, please.

So, the one thing that you get from WIOA is to improve the American Job Center system. And, one of the things that is done is to make sure that the workforce and the people that are looking for work or looking for training, and the employers who are looking for workers, can easily find the American Job Center so, if everybody is going to the same place, there can be this matching that's happening. Where we can also determine what people's skill sets are and what employers are looking for, making sure there is a good fit. The state and the local areas are also encouraged to improve the customer service and program management by integrating the intake and the case management in the reporting system. So, making sure everybody's talking to each other—that is very key. (Next slide, please.)

WIOA provides access to high-quality training. The training has to lead to some industry-recognized post-secondary credentials. That is going to be emphasized. So making sure the people are being put in the training programs, that they can actually get to a job and not just training in basket-weaving and the likes. Making sure the state and local areas are using career pathways to provide the education and employment and training assistance. So, looking at a path to higher-paying jobs instead of just a dead-end job; looking at career paths. The local areas also have additional vehicles to get training and increasing customer choice and quality. So, making sure . . . one of the things we know is that, if people get a job they like, they are more likely to go to the job and stay at the job. So, trying to make sure that people have choice, and that it's a quality job, that there is a good connection there. (Next slide, please.)

The other thing, one of the other services is to promote the work-based training. So, the idea is to use the industry and the sector partnerships to address the workforce needs of multiple employers within an industry. So looking at the industry and deciding what areas need help and where can we use that training to help those areas. Also, giving employers incentives to meet the workforce need and offer opportunities for workers who want to learn and want to get on-the-job training. So, employers are given incentives to do that so that they can work with people. (Next slide, please.)

WIOA enhances the workforce services for the unemployed and other job seekers. Some of the ways that that is done is by looking at categories of core and intensive services and collapsing those into career services, and not having requirements in the sequencing of those services but, basically, enabling those job seekers to access training immediately. You got somebody who is looking for work, and they want training, and they are ready to go; you don't want to have them sit back and wait or make them jump through twenty hoops to get to the training. The local areas also have the flexibility to serve job seekers with the greatest need by transferring up to 100% of the funds between the Adult and

Dislocated Work programs. So, basically, people with the most need can get the services quicker. So, it's really looking at the hard-to-serve people and trying to get them into the system as quickly as possible. The job seekers who have basic skills deficits and those who are low-income individuals will have priority for the Adult program. Unemployment insurance claimants can receive eligibility assessments and referral to any array of training and educational resources. So, trying to help people get back into the workforce as soon as possible is important. (Next slide, please.)

Another service that is provided is trying to help people with disabilities have access to higher quality workforce services and get them ready for competitive integrated employment. The one thing you want to do is to make sure the American Job Center is providing physical and programmatic accessibility to employment and training services for people with disabilities. Youth with disabilities can also receive extensive free employment transition services so that they can successfully obtain competitive, integrated employment as well. And, also, the state vocational rehabilitation agencies will set aside at least 15% of their funding to provide transitional services to youth with disabilities. So, youth with disabilities is another priority area for WIOA. (Next slide, please.)

The last point that I wanted to make about the services is that WIOA will make key investments in serving the disconnected youth and other vulnerable populations. So, making sure that the local areas increase the funds used to serve out-of-school youth, that's important; also having the money being spent on getting young people work experience; and having activities such as summer jobs, the pre-apprenticeship programs, the on-the-job training and internships. YouthBuild is another way of getting the young people some type of pre-employment work skills. And so there is a lot of different programs and services that are being offered.

There are also services for farm workers, seasonal farm workers, Native Americans, and migrants. So, there are a lot of services that are being provided through WIOA, and one of the things we agreed to do on these webinars was to, every time we have a webinar, was to give you more information about WIOA so you really are keyed in to what the services are that are out there.

I'm going to stop talking because we have a lot to get through. I just wanted to give you a quick overview of some of the services, and I am going to pass this over to Mike Temple, who is going to be talking to you, and then we will keep going. Mike?

Mike Temple: Thank you so much. I appreciate it, and welcome to everybody. I am Mike Temple, I'm the director for the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and Workforce Solutions. We are the regional workforce board in the 13-county area of southeast Texas that includes the city of Houston. We have about 120,000 businesses and six and a half million people. And, lately, we have about fifteen inches more of rain than we really, really want to have. Our regional workforce system touches more than 26,000 employers and 350,000 people every year. And, as we like to say, we help employers meet their human resource needs and individuals build careers.

Workforce boards in Texas are a little unique in that, under state legislation that was actually passed back in 1995, Texas workforce boards have almost all of the workforce dollars that are available through almost every federal source. So we not only have all of the WIOA funds, we have Wagner-Peyser funds, we have child care and development block grant dollars, we have dollars from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP), the Adult Basic Education and literacy funds, and, coming soon, we will have the vocational rehabilitation money and services. So, we are quite a big bunch when it comes to putting everything together here.

The relationship between the workforce system here in this region and the homeless services system is not something that just went from one way to being another way. For many years, the workforce board

had a contract with a local homeless service provider, funding essentially a career office location inside the homeless service provider. After that relationship ended, several of our local offices (we have 24) had relationships here and there with different homeless service providers, depending on a particular need.

About 2 years ago, the Coalition for the Homeless in Houston and Harris County approached us here at the workforce board and said we would really like to have you all join the Continuum of Care and see how we can work together better so that we use the strengths of each of our systems. It's not about the homeless service provider system offering employment services and about the workforce system trying to offer services to individuals experiencing homelessness; it's about each of us doing what we do best together.

So, we did join the Continuum of Care and are still an active member of that, and, in addition, we started working together—the Coalition, several of the service providers, and the workforce system—in a project we call “Income Now.” And, basically, Income Now is the two of us learning to dance together, or get married, so that we knit together, or braid together, the services that we offer in a way that it immediately benefits the individuals experiencing homelessness. Where we've started with this is workforce staff in homeless coordinated intake points and homeless service provider staff in workforce offices.

The Income Now project started off with an emphasis on rapid rehousing so that we were working with individuals who were appropriate for, kind of, an immediate help. We've got, in addition to the staff located in each other's physical locations, we've got navigators who are going to be walking between each of our systems, between the workforce system and between the homeless service provider system to help us understand each other and also to work out any kinks so that, when we've got a customer that needs something, we can get that customer to where he or she needs to be so he can get what he needs when he needs it.

The future for us in the Income Now project includes building supported employment efforts and focusing on other employment strategies for the individuals in permanently supported housing or individuals who maybe require a higher level of service to go to work or to go back to work. Our relationship, we think, strengthens the both of us because we are doing, each of us, what we're best at. Together, we are going to do really well, and we're not trying to each other's jobs. The workforce system, in particular, benefits from an increased integration with our community, access to an additional source of talent and workers, and, of course, better understanding of the wants and the needs of our customers, who may be individuals experiencing homelessness. It always helps when you're working together because each of you can help the other with any kind of wraparound service that the one of you may not have. So, from our point, we see this relationship with the homeless service provider system being very beneficial when we need to get a wraparound service over there.

My contact information is there on the screen if you are interested, and we always invite y'all to give us a call, send us an email, and, if you're in Houston, please drop by. If you're coming soon, you might want to bring your canoe. And I am going to hand off the presentation now to Patrick Gihring and Jennifer Chang.

Patrick Gihring: Thanks, Mike. So, this is the Portland team. I am Patrick Gihring and I am joined by Jennifer Chang. I am from the workforce board called Worksystems, here, and Jennifer is from Portland Housing Bureau. So, we are going to go through the agenda here. I'll talk a little bit about the workforce side of things and how the relationship evolved, and Jennifer will talk from the standpoint of the

Continuum of Care and also about the governance in the background of it. I will be focused more on how the relationship came together.

It was really interesting to hear Mike, and Mike—hi, I think we presented together in D.C. a few months ago. What you are doing there is remarkably similar to what we're doing here in Portland. I think it positions us really well for these kind of partnerships. I'd say the same thing that Mike said in terms of the development of these relationships—that it is an iterative process. It's not that there is one kind of program or practice that is going to get you there. It's something, for us, it's taken 8 or 9 years to get to the place where we're at. So, because of that relationship building and program infrastructure building and so forth, it's good to give the background and context.

About 8 years ago, in 2008, in our local workforce system, we implemented something called Integrated Service Delivery. I think the values behind integrated service delivery, really, were ahead of the time of Workforce Investment Act (WIA). This was during the WIA period. And, you know, the points that Pat brought up about the changes under WIOA, we were starting to focus on priority populations in the integrated service delivery model. We had pulled back as much as we could from the notion of sequence of services. So, Pat mentioned that there were lots of hoops that people would need to get into, for example, before getting into training. And that had the effect of making it harder to partner and creating a service environment where it may not have been the tent of the one-stop system, but when we tried to engage with partners, it was more difficult because there was bureaucracy and process in the way in terms of what's called "core, intensive, and training." These different phases that you have to go through before getting into training services. And we also started working on agency-to-agency-level partnerships, and that's a really core strain within WIOA, is the expectation that the funding streams and programs work together. We were starting this effort in a more serious way in 2008. For us, that was called integrated service delivery. It was really starting with two key DOL programs and that is Workforce Investment Act (it was WIA back then) and then what's called Wagner-Peyser, which is, really, the state employment agencies.

And what we did is we colocated and integrated both of those programs in one-stop centers so that we would work together in the same location. In addition to working together in the same location, we designed a program based around the notion of "common customer model," meaning instead of just two programs housed under one roof, we really organized our staff and our services around the customer. So, we became a seamless team between the employment department and the WIA providers that worked around the customers instead of two programs that the customers would have to navigate. So, the notion of common customer model has been really useful to us in expanding our partnerships. And I will touch on how that relates to our partnerships with housing and Continuum of Care further on in the presentation. In terms of integrated service delivery, the change really prioritized an open-door, high-volume, high-quality model of services. As you recall, 2008 was really the onset of the recession. Prior to this change, we served around 3,000 people in the Portland metro area a year, and that shot up to about 80,000 people in that same period. So, we're currently hovering around the 100,000 mark in terms of people using one-stop services in the Portland area. I've got to say, one of the real benefits of that was that, in the context of a huge community problem like the recession and the amount of people needing retraining and jobs, a program that serves 3,000 people is just a boutique program that doesn't have the relevance. So, it was a good timing for the change, although, having that kind of pressure when you're doing deep systems change, it can make things more challenging, but we were able to respond to the community in a way that was right-sized for the problem of the recession. I say this because the reason we have a system that serves 80,000 people is because we have just an open door. There isn't a screening process. We don't want you to go through core and intensive services. We want you to come in, and we provide the services that are right for you, and if that's just a

couple of workshops, that's great. If you need retraining that lasts a year, that's great, too. And so there is a priority on just getting people in and serving them without the kind of hoops that are often part of the historical WIA screening process.

The way we were able to serve more people, also, was to convert into a sort of "menu of services" format, rather than a case management format. Though most WIA programs had case managers that would carry a caseload, maybe 40/50 people, and they would develop a service plan and navigate them through services. And we removed case management; we redirected those resources into providing preparatory training and employment services. So stuff like vocational, English as a second language courses, social media courses, training in healthcare occupations. All of those kinds of services is where we placed our resources and moved away from case management, which is, in a mainstream historical WIA program, that's the highest item of cost. So that was what allowed us to serve so many more people, including working with another major department, which is the employment department.

Along with that change in the format of services to being just sort of open-menu, one of the challenges that we found was that, often for high-barrier populations, they need long-term relationship-based coaching and support to be successful. It might be harder for a person who has multiple barriers to success to go in and say "here's what I need to be successful" and to self-navigate those services.

So, one way we could have looked at that was "oh, well, this system serves a lot of people but it's just not all that good. It's serving people that need one-on-one long-term coaching and support. But another way to look at it, and I will touch back on the common customer model, is that we don't feel that one program has to provide all of the services in order to make the service mix for serving a population. We weren't doing it in our one-stop centers. We had WIA providers. We had the employment department wrapping themselves around the customer. We saw ourselves as a team, serving the customer. It meant for us, we need to partner to develop the solution, rather than think of it as an absent service in our system.

So, we took that notion of common customer model and, working as a team, an interagency team, an inter-organizational team around a customer, and we reached out to community-based organizations and a lot of Continuum of Care organizations to work together where they share the common interests of helping their residents or the people that they serve become self-sufficient through employment. And, as Pat said in her introduction, employment is really one of the areas of focus that's important in the housing world. So, within the housing context, we found partners, and I'll talk about a couple of the early pilot partners who shared that interest in helping job-seekers become self-sufficient through employment, and who had the staff, who knew the populations, were working with the populations already, and could work with us to help move their job seekers into training and employment activities.

Generally speaking, the way the partnership worked is that the one-stop system provides the preparatory training and employment services and the career coaches, the folks with the relationships with the job-seekers, who come from homeless and housing partners provide the career coaching, the long-term relationships, the development of a career plan, and navigation through the employment services offered through WorkSource. We call those roles career coaches, and we use a process of career planning called career mapping that was developed maybe a decade ago through a pilot Department of Labor grant. It was actually a model that was designed to help improve access of people with disabilities to one-stop services, but we found that it helped broadly in terms of serving barriered populations. And another aspect of having that career mapping process is that we are really working in partnership with agencies that are principally focused on issues like housing or social services, even domestic violence. We work with different kinds of partners, and so having a highly structured way of helping their staff become career coaches and move their clients into employment goals and services,

that's something that the structure is really helpful with, in terms of that kind of culture change and systems change.

Here's an illustration of how that works. So, the career coach would be a Continuum of Care staff person. This might be a housing authority case manager, for example. And so we teach them and train them in career mapping, which is a model of career planning, developing an action plan, and following it through until you reach your career goal. And the people that we serve are people within the partner organization who want to reach self-sufficiency through employment. And we share that goal with our partners in housing, and so we provide the WorkSource services. And there is a whole menu, as I mentioned. We redirected our resources into an open menu of services, so things like English as a Second Language, training computer literacy, job readiness, resume, interview, all of those things, social media. All of those things that you would think of that would be typically available through a one-stop center. And then we also developed some specialized services to support these relationships, specifically. So we found that there are some services that would be even more beneficial. There were target placement services for people with criminal records. For example, the rolodex and group of employers that you work with can be fairly specific when you are placing people who have a felony background. And so that's an example. We developed an internship program for paid internships for three months. And a lot of people that we served in these partnerships hadn't worked before or hadn't worked in a decade or more and really benefitted from being in an environment where they could get back to work, get some supervisory experience, learn on the job, and, in some cases, even be hired by the worksite where we placed them at. So we didn't have a subsidized internship program for adults before that. We developed one because it was a valuable tool. We also organized trainings, cohort trainings, or set aside scholarships for trainings for our partners because, when we're working with them over time, we want to make sure that the services are in place, that they're putting the investment of their staff time, their customers into going through these services to reach a career plan. We want to make sure that the training resources, the internship resources, and so forth are available for them as they navigate their customers through to reach their career goals.

So, in terms of the initial pilots that I wanted to mention, the first, and this is, again, maybe 2009, was with Multnomah County. That's one of the two counties that we serve in the Portland metro area. And so, at the time, there was an influx of stimulus package funding. We received some, and the county did also. They approached us and said, hey, let's do something together that focuses on employment. The interesting timing was with the job loss that was happening at the levels it was during that period were good because it gave people the time to go into training and really focus on their skills when the economy was taking a downturn, too.

So, the conversation was let's do something that really pulls what you do, which is household, family stabilization, which is the focus of that program, anti-poverty, and we were doing employment and training services, and we connected the two. They worked with a continuum of community-based providers, including, I'd say, mostly Continuum of Care providers. You can see the names of the providers here on this slide. And, we provided the preparatory training and employment services through WorkSource. So what we did was develop an environment where the county providers did the career coaching and case management and were trained in workforce services, and we developed and provided those services to the job-seekers through the workforce system. In that initial pilot, there were 281 participants served. One hundred and twenty-nine, I think, I didn't calculate that out, but maybe 40 or so %, 45%, maybe, of the people actually completed occupational training, so that was really high. A lot of people, as you know, in deep poverty are desperate for employment first, so sometimes having people go through training is a challenge because of the pressure to bring in income. We were really glad to see that level of training because it means higher wages. Fifty-three completed the subsidized

internships. That's where we put them at an employer in their career interest and paid their wages so that they could have that experience and, in some cases, be hired. And sixty-one percent were employed at the point of exit from the pilot.

The other pilot was with Home Forward, which, Home Forward is our local housing authority. And they received a grant through the Paul Allen Family Foundation, and they approached us and said, hey, let's do something together. So it was a lot like the initial pilot with the county, where there was a little seed money that encouraged us to work together in ways that were different. And so we implemented this in the same model of their staff providing career coaching for public housing residents that wanted to engage in employment and training activities, and us providing the training and employment services through the one-stop system. Home Forward is designated as a Moving to Work Program through HUD, meaning that they have some special ability to provide employment services. So they had staff, called Moving to Work Staff, they called them Goals Program Staff locally, who work with their residents on employment services. Both those staff that were serving as the career coaches that we trained in the services available through WorkSource and we trained in the career mapping process that we gave access to the target resources in WorkSource, and they worked with a group of 33 housing residents in the pilot. It was about a yearlong pilot. Nineteen of those, so almost two-thirds, completed occupational training. The focus of training was in healthcare and clerical office occupations. Thirteen did subsidized internships. And, again, we developed the work experience program for adults to support these relationships specifically. We didn't have them before, but we could see that they were really important to have that kind of service in place to serve this population successfully, because many hadn't had recent work experience. So there's a variety of different services that we built out to support our partnerships and the populations they serve. Twenty-two were employed, so about two-thirds employed, with an average, the measures are a little different than we use, typically, because of the way the Paul Allen grant was and the way they measured at the housing authorities, but the annual income increased by 112%, so it was around a little under \$15,000, I think, for average household income, and it raised to close to \$30,000. Four of the housing residents ended, you know, moved into employment and ended housing subsidies altogether. So to Pat's point, you know, it's a really important linkage between employment and housing because it's important in terms of the aspirations and the interests of the residents for their own lives, but, also, in order to free up space, when that's possible, for other folks that can benefit from housing support.

Another major area, and, again, just to just kind of re-context this a bit—this is iterative, this is building programs and relationships and initiatives over time. All of these things we've sustained in one way or another, but this is maybe 3 years after the initial pilots that I mentioned. The Portland Housing Bureau funds what's called an Economic Opportunity Program. And we reorganized this program to create systemic ties between the one-stop system and the network of community-based providers that serve the populations, provide the outreach, and provide the employment services. So the program is funded through CDBG (Community Development Block Grants funded through HUD) and the City of Portland General Funds. WorkSystems also contributed to the funding for this program. There are 8 community-based providers, including Continuum of Care providers. They are all community-based organizations. Many are focused on serving homeless populations. The program, all together, serves about 700 participants on an ongoing basis. I think the average duration is a little over a year in terms of how long people are in services.

The program has a population focus on people in public housing or who are homeless, ex-offenders, and immigrants. And there are strong overlaps, in particular, between folks that are ex-offenders and homeless or in public housing. The program links the culturally specific and population-specific providers, and what I mean by population specific is maybe they focus on reentry and serving people

who have prior criminal records. And it ties those to services available through the one-stop system. So all of those organizations have career coaches, they are trained in career mapping, and we put the services offered through the one-stop system, the menu of services, into their hands, like a tool box that they can use to help their clients get where they need to go. The program demographics, overall, is 53% male; 47% female. Fifty-five percent are people of color. Eighty-eight percent are below 30% of Median Family Income (MFI). And on an ongoing basis, 71% of people who exit the program exit with an average wage of \$13.03 an hour.

Just a few more offshoots since that program, so in the last few years, WorkSystems received from the Department of Labor with grant workforce incentive funds and innovation funds, what we call, locally, Housing Works. It was replicating the Paul Allen pilot I mentioned earlier on a larger scale, including three workforce areas and four housing authorities around the Portland Metro area. So it's a 3-year, 5-million-dollar grant, and we're just wrapping up now. So it's really been a build-out of the relationship between housing and workforce, there. As we come into our final year, here, the folks enrolled in this program year, it's about 60% are entering employment at the point of program exit.

We also have a grant recently awarded from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) called Healthcare . . . we use a local name . . . I'll just use the local name. There is a federal name for this grant, but we call it Health Careers Northwest. And it's a 12-million-dollar grant to serve low-income job seekers; this is folks on food stamps, TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), with training and placement in healthcare occupations. And we work with a lot of those same partners in the Continuum of Care: Housing Authority; Washington County; Community Action; Central City Concern, which is a major homeless provider in the region; Human Solutions, a major housing provider; and International Refugee Community Organization. So this will serve 1,350 people over the 5-year duration of the grant with a very strong focus and linkage to folks in Continuum of Care programs.

And then the last thing is that we have launched a satellite of one of our one-stop centers. So, Central City Concern is a downtown, Old Town/Chinatown-located homeless service organization, and they partner with us on a lot of the fronts, including some of the grants and programs that I've talked about. And we are stationing a satellite of the one-stop center in Central City Concern to provide more convenient access for some of the services. We just had a ribbon cutting last week. And so that'll be a more convenient site for people to access one-stop services, both from Central City Concern and other homeless serving partners in the downtown area. We're projecting that that site will serve between two and four thousand people a year. So, those are the kind of projects we have going on now.

I am going to turn it over to Jennifer Chang from Portland Housing Bureau and she will talk about the perspective from the Housing Bureau perspective.

Jennifer Chang: Hi everyone. My name is Jennifer as Patrick mentioned. I am the CoC Coordinator for the Portland region that is comprised of three jurisdictions, the Cities of Portland and Gresham, and then, Multnomah County. Patrick's discussed some of the effective programs that we built in our community and I am going to cover some of the recent actions we've taken over the past two years that's moving us from program-level partnerships to more system-level collaborative planning. However, I would like to give some brief background on our CoC itself and how it's governed, which provides some helpful; context on how we working to improve our community.

Our CoC brings in approximately \$15.3 million annually and this is based on the last fiscal year. It supports forty-four different projects that serves families, adults and youth that are experiencing homelessness. The CoC funding to our community is essential to our ending homelessness effort. It accounts for approximately a quarter of our community's focused investment on ending homelessness

programming. The vast majority of our CoC funding is focused on permanent housing. Eighty-three percent of our CoC projects are permanent housing programs. We definitely use our CoC funding to leverage resources from other systems, including employment, health, and affordable housing.

One great example that our community had back in 2003 is when our CoC was awarded a multi-year grant through a DOL/HUD initiative that focused on ending chronic homelessness through employment and housing. These funds were available for multiple years. I think the grant ran from 2003 to 2009, or so, and it helped us to jumpstart several really effective strategies that support chronically homeless individuals and families. This included forming Assertive Community Treatment teams, or ACT teams, and Individualized Placement and Supportive Employment programming. Over the years, our CoC has used these strategies, and built upon them, to better integrate them into our homeless services.

Our CoC is really based on a planning document, a framework, called “A Home for Everyone.” This was formed in 2014, which has a vision to ensure that everyone should have a safe, stable place to call home. The plan was, essentially, a refresh of our previous ten-year plan to end homelessness which had originally formed in 2004. As you can see on this slide, it has our vision and it has some guiding values. I just want to focus on some of the key focus areas that the plan targets, the second one and number six, which are, income and benefits and systems coordination, which have been very intentional areas for our community that we’ve identified as needing to focus investment and effort to achieve the goal to really end homelessness in our community.

Our CoC Board is called the Home for Everyone Board. It was also established in 2014 and serves as our CoC governing board. It meets monthly and is comprised of an Executive Committee, which is the top bar that you see on this slide. This is a group of about seven or eight individuals who are the local jurisdiction or elected officials. It also includes our housing authority and representatives from philanthropy, business and faith-based communities. The Executive Committee is a subset, or part of, the Coordinating Board, which is our larger, broader based community board that consists of twenty-eight members who are appointed by the Executive Committee members and include community members with lived experience of homelessness, our employment providers, health, domestic violence, education and many other partners. Over the last couple of years of our board operating, we have found an effective way to move forward, work and policy and planning has been through forming subgroups or subcommittees that are focused on certain topics or populations focuses that then report back to the Coordinating Board membership around specific work. One example is we have a Data and Evaluation subcommittee. We also have a forum, a community forum, that is comprised mainly of individuals with lived experience of homelessness and direct agency staff. A year ago, our Executive Committee charged, chartered, I suppose, of five specific work groups focusing on developing action plans in five areas, one of them including employment.

Strengthening our CoC’s partnership with our WIB (Workforce Investment Board) required attention as both Mike and Patrick mentioned before. The collaboration in Portland didn’t just happen overnight or by itself but required relationship building over time. A motivation to do so is an understanding that an individual’s service needs are varied, and often complex, and they aren’t isolated to a single service or a system. So building collaboration across systems will benefit the individual systems of service delivery but, more importantly, or equally importantly, help to improve the outcomes for people being served in our community. So, I want to highlight three steps our CoC took and then I will say a few words about each of them. One is we invited representation and participation of the WIB on our CoC Board. Second, CoC partners worked together with the WIB to co-facilitate and develop an action plan that was focused on improving housing and employment alignment. Third, we collaborated in the past, but we continued to, on opportunities to secure funding and resources.

With the first item, intentionally inviting representation of our WIB occurred in a few ways. We wanted to insure that as a CoC we had the WIB at the table, the CoC planning table, so even before we developed our CoC Board, several of the staff, CoC staff, who were working on developing the CoC Board and designing it, reached out to Patrick and other colleagues at WorkSystems to learn about how our local WIB governing structure was formed. There were several really important elements of that local WIB Board that we actually used to base and design our current CoC Board. Also, the CoC invited the Executive Director of our WIB to be an appointed and voting member of our CoC Board. As we have been moving forward on different work and planning, with the creation of the work group around employment and housing, our WIB leadership have been able to co-lead and co-facilitate that process to do collaborative planning.

Talking more specifically of the work of this work group, it had a charge to develop an action plan within a very aggressive timeline of three months, to look at if we had additional resources, or when, we identified additional resources, what could we do immediately and effectively to make big impact and outcomes for people experiencing homelessness around employment and housing. We formed this work group based with that goal and were able to, through that three-month process, to convene a larger network of about twenty-five or twenty-eight employment and housing and governmental partners and consumers to meet on a regular basis. Through that process several valuable things occurred. One was that the group was able to articulate and communicate back to the CoC Board the importance and community priority of using employment and economic opportunity as a key strategy or key strategies to end homelessness. And, then, we were able to focus our efforts on looking at aligning the resources we currently have in our community. We developed this phrase around bringing workforce to housing and bringing housing to workforce so the diagram you see on the slide there is overly simplified to communicate the point systems themselves are serving individuals that are accessing services in both and that we can better integrate the services provided by housing and homeless providers, as well as workforce and employment providers to create efficiencies, effectiveness and better outcomes for people that are common customers. This is just an example of the agency partners that were part of the work group and include our state partners, the Department of Human Services, as well as, local governmental representatives and several community-based and culturally specific agencies.

At the conclusion of our planning work, we were able to develop six key investment priorities. I won't go through all of them here, you'll have the slides and can look at them later. These investment priorities included recommendations to expand the capacity of existing effective programs and networks, such as the Economic Opportunity Program that we highlighted earlier. It also proposes funding for new initiatives aimed at, responding to current needs or opportunities and, also, disparities in our community. One I'd like to highlight, the third one down, *Housing & Workforce Alignment for TANF Families*, is a recommendation that came up to connect to state-funded self-sufficiency programs with our local WIB resources and community-based housing support to really provide that wraparound employment and housing and community-based support for a cohort of families receiving TANF and were experiencing homelessness or imminently about to lose their housing.

Due to the collaborated planning we took, our CoC was and has been positioned, better positioned, to have some strategies on hand when new resources and opportunities become available. Fortunately, we've had some opportunities over the last year and we've been able to benefit from using the collaborative planning we've done to be able to support some of the efforts identified. One is that through partnership with our housing authority, they were able to direct some funds for rent assistance and housing assistance directly connected to some in our employment network, which had been identified as a need because people were engaged in going through several of our employment

programs and services during that process becoming at risk of losing their housing or were, maybe even, homeless at the start. So this rent assistance has played a really key role in providing the housing and stability for people to successfully continue through and complete employment or career training.

Also, we've, through our WIB and CoC partners, applied for a grant through one of our local foundations that was doing an effort around increasing alignment to housing. One of their key areas of system alignment was employment so we were able to secure, and be awarded, a smaller grant that will pay for some staffing capacity to look at how to better align programmatic employment and housing efforts and, also, look at some of the resources in our community and available at the state and federal level where we can better integrate, or tap into, other opportunities.

Finally, late last year, the mayor of Portland declared a state of housing emergency in Portland and so together with our county leadership and leadership from our Home for Everyone, or CoC Board, the City and the County committed to additional new local funding to address and end homelessness for the upcoming year. Because of this commitment and the commitment of new funding, we now have some priorities that specifically speak to the housing and employment connection that will definitely be considered in the decisions around where these new funds get allocated.

So, there are some great things happening in our community. We're experiencing increased momentum to move forward to create better alignment with employment and housing systems. Although we definitely have untapped opportunities or challenges that stand in the way of making progress, or making progress as quickly as we would like to. One is around better coordination of the local WIOA planning efforts and policy with our CoC Board, directly with our CoC Board and CoC funded programs. We, also, through many conversations through our CoC, as well as over the past years, have a need to identify and support more strategies that engage more employers and also bring income and employment opportunities to homeless individuals, outside of, or in coordination with, the public workforce system. These include things such as earned income opportunities and social enterprises. We really are interested in exploring how to expand resources in this area and bring more programming to there.

Also, there is a continued need for advocacy and communication with our federal partners to improve the coordination with DOL, HHS, HUD and some examples to work together and to have better coordination around the outcome-focused measures for the programs, TANF and WIOA, that really promote the long-term employment and housing stability goals that we all want to see the family and individuals in our communities achieve.

So, more to come and I think at this time I will turn it back to Pat to field some questions.

Pat Tucker: Alright, everybody. Well, the questions have been coming in hot and heavy so let's jump in the questions. We have a question for Mike, but, I think, we are going to ask Mike to give a short answer and then I would like to hear Patrick and Jennifer's take on it.

The question is: "we have connected to the workforce board. Some get back to us; some don't even get back to us. The one that do get back to us pretty much refer us to their contracted agency and don't feel they can help homeless people, especially those who have high barriers. Has that been an issue for you? Is that something you've had to deal with?"

Mike Temple: That has not been an issue for us because, as Patrick said a little earlier, Houston and Portland are very much alike in this respect. On the workforce side, we see a customer as a customer as a customer. It really doesn't matter who you are. If you come to us for our services, we are going to try to find a way to do what we can for you.

Pat Tucker: Patrick and Jennifer, anything different?

Patrick Gihring: Yeah, I'm sure that is something, that issue, is region-by-region. Over an arch of a long time there has been a steady improvement. If you rewound a decade, I think you would see that feeling. That is part of the building process to, is improving those relationships. It's something you need to be really deliberate about. We don't experience that now but I think it was a factor in our community in the past.

Pat Tucker: One of the things that I will just jump in there and say is that one of the things I learned the hard way was sometimes the phone is not always the best way to start a relationship. I try to set up meetings and go in and talk with people face-to-face because I think that goes a lot longer and a lot further than making a phone call and hoping they will call you back.

Jennifer Chang: Yeah and I will say, also, that I think it occurs on multiple levels. Our community has had programs and partnerships that have built and developed, increased trust where people are seeing the mutual benefits. They've had the time to be able to see the programs and partnerships and say, hey, this actually really benefits multiple parties and that is why we should continue doing this. As a funder with the city, that is one way in which you can think about creating those partnerships through funding which brings people to the table in a different way than trying to make the one-on-one connections. One area that I think we still need work on is looking at the staff level, the direct staff level, individuals, I think, there are still a lot of differences in terms of how the different systems kind of view the service delivery model. I think, we have been able to work on that through some of these partnerships but still need to do some cross-training or opportunities for housing providers to meet employment providers and, kind of, understand how the system works and vice versa. This is more of an organic way to build those connections.

Pat Tucker: Thank you. Another question is how long are the training programs? How did you work with the coordinated intake systems? The reason they're asking is because their rapid rehousing (RRH) program in their county is four months so the families need to be self-sufficient in a short period of time.

Patrick Gihring: Sure, Jennifer and I will divide and conquer and I will take the part about the training. The program model and one of the changes in it from the program I called Economic Opportunity which is probably the largest piece of the different partnerships. We changed it from a specific amount of time in program services to really be focused on what the customer needs. The service duration starts with the customer's goals. If they want to be a pharmacy tech, then it really just depends on where they are at the time. We have people come in and they just want a job and the service duration could be three months in that situation or less, or just a referral. But on the other hand if they want to go through training, those trainings could last a quarter to over a year. The answer there is it really depends on the customer, the job seekers, interest and needs in terms of reaching their career goal.

Jennifer Chang: In terms of the coordinated part of that question, our community currently has some coordinated entry processes in place. One that is across all populations and services. It's something that we are definitely now, and continuing to develop. Now, as we look to broaden coordinated entry as a system and across populations for CoC funded projects, we now have our workforce partners at the table to determine how best to use them as an access point into coordinated entry ideally. We are still working on that and we will need to develop that.

Pat Tucker: Okay. Another question, did the work group bring in the child care system/voucher system into the fold? With a strong county government there seems to be this silo thinking and lack of coordination with job and family services. Any thoughts about the childcare system/voucher system? That could be either Patrick and Jennifer or Mike.

Mike Temple: This is Mike. We already have the childcare funds in the workforce system. So, again I'm sounding like a broken record here, but like Patrick said, it all depends on the customer. When we're working with a customer, either through one of our offices or through the coordinated access point or any way we touch a customer, if it's an individual experiencing homelessness, and they express to us a need for help with childcare expenses then we see how we can do that using the funds and resources we have.

Patrick Gihring: In the Portland area, it's a need, of course, but it's not as well connected. We see that as one of the legs of the stool that is really critical, especially when you start to talk about TANF and barrier populations, and has been a challenge in terms of getting people through training programs into employment. We had an environment where people were sleeping in cars and truck stops while they are going through training and, as Jennifer mentioned, we tied housing to that to make it more successful, to reach better outcomes, and to move people through services faster and free up housing opportunities. But, we don't have that kind of system alignment around the childcare.

Pat Tucker: Thank you. I am going to ask the operator to open up the floor before I keep asking questions, to give people a chance to ask their questions.

Katrina (operator): As a reminder, if you would like to participate in the questions and answers session, please press star then the number one on your keypad. You will hear a tone acknowledging your request and a prompt to record your name. We will pause for a second to compile the Q & A roster.

There are no questions at this time.

Pat Tucker: There are no questions. Okay. I know I had some more questions. I am going through my notes that I've been writing down. Alright, one of the questions, how long did it take to get through this process or to get to this point? How long have you been working in this system to get to this point where you feel you have some decent collaboration going on?

Patrick Gihring: I would say from the Portland standpoint, and Jennifer will chime in, that it's really been about eight years. The starting point from our perspective was the reorganization of the one-stop system. That really created the framework and opportunity for us to partner more and it took three or four years to get to any scale. It feels like now we really have solid connections in place and we're just really growing what we see as a really strong partnership at this point.

Pat Tucker: Okay.

Katrina (operator): We did have a question come in over the phone. If you would like to accept that. It's from Delores Hiller. Go ahead with your question.

Delores Hiller: Good afternoon. I would like to know how will a new organization partner with this program in order to integrate it into our housing program?

Jennifer Chang: Which program?

Delores Hiller: The WIA program. The WIOA program.

Pat Tucker: The WIOA?

Delores Hiller: Yes, WIOA.

Pat Tucker: Would you repeat the question? I had a hard time hearing the question

Delores Hiller: How would new organizations, housing organizations, be able to partner with the program in order to integrate it into their housing program?

Pat Tucker: Ah! So, the housing people what to know how would they get a seat at the table?

Delores Hiller: Correct.

Pat Tucker: any thoughts about that from Mike or Patrick or Jennifer?

Mike Temple: This is Mike. I will say that where we are presently in Houston, the relationship is through the Coalition for the Homeless. It's kind of happening through that Continuum of Care process so new interests come in that way.

Jennifer Chang: I agree. We have our Continuum of Care, of course, called A Home for Everyone, and participation in that, and, I believe that, as well as, reaching out to your local workforce investment board partners, that could be ways that new agencies can be involved. Depending on how both of those are set-up in your community or if you have each of those in your community.

Delores Hiller: Okay, thank you.

Pat Tucker: Are there any more telephone questions?

Katrina (operator): There is another question. The line was inaudible but caller go ahead with your question.

You may go ahead with your question, caller.

There are no further questions.

Pat Tucker: Okay. Well, let me thank all of our speakers. Let me thank Kevin, Mike, Patrick, Jennifer. This has been, I don't know about anybody else, but this has been great. It's great hearing about the programs. It's great hearing about what is going on. The information about the presenters and the information about their contact information is on the slide.

It's helpful to know that with all of the work you're doing that you're starting to see some of the results of it. Thank you for sharing that with us.

I want to remind people that we have another webinar coming up. Our next webinar is going to be about *Housing + Employment Works: Employment Assessment in Coordinated Entry Systems* on Thursday, June sixteenth at 1 eastern. Would love to have all of you there. And, I would like to just finish up by asking Kevin if he would like to close us out.

Kevin Kissinger: Hi everyone. This is Kevin Kissinger from HUD. I wasn't able to join earlier. I just want to echo what Pat said and thank all of our panelist. This is really an exciting new ground for most of us who are used to work with the homeless organizations that serve the homeless and I would say also for workforce investment boards. I'd say for many of us this is new territory. On behalf of the U. S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Department of Labor, and the Department of HUD thank you everyone for participating.

Pat Tucker: And thank you for participating and have a great day.

Katrina (operator): This concludes today's conference call. You may disconnect.

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