

October 26, 2017

Onondaga Pathways to Careers Community of Practice Meeting

Attendees:

Groups: BBI, DEI, LEAD Center, Mohawk Valley Community College, NCWD/Youth, National Disability Institute, Nebraska VR, ODEP, Onondaga Community College, Pellissippi State Community College, Sacramento City College, Schenectady County Community College, WINTAC, Youthworks

Individuals: Abby Johnson, Aimee Navas, Alan Gallagher, Celestia Ohrazda, Charlene Levonski, Dave Mayer, Geri Walsh, Gordon Graff, Janet Brown, Jay Harrison, John Banas, Meera Adya, Michael Morris, Mindy Larson, Miranda Kennedy, Rachel Stewart, Randy Barrett, Rebekah Salon, Sara Harms, Sierra Windman, Sheldon Serkin, Tanisha Taylor, Taryn Williams, Teresa Fava-Schram, Tiziana Rota, Vicki Palas, Stephanie Zumbuhl, Rebecca Salon (LEAD Center), Ebony Johnson, Zach Arter (Nebraska VR), Ned, Lisa Dunaway, Teara Winmond

Meera: Welcome to our meeting. There are a lot of new folks who are going to be joining us today and over the next few months, and we're excited to welcome new participants. Today we will have a presentation from the New York Department of Labor, talking about their DEI program- Disability Employment Initiative work they're doing- and how they're building inclusive career pathways in connection with community colleges in a couple different counties and districts in New York. And Michael and I, as always, will be here to facilitate the discussion and I really hope as well that in discussions we have the rest of the group. So please feel free to join in in the conversation. We recognize, I'd like to say at the outset, we're welcoming so many new members, we recognize that not everybody is in the middle of implementing the full-fledged Career Pathways program. What we hope to hear from new members that are joining us is what you might be doing related to including students with disabilities in your college and in your programs and what your goals are for increasing that inclusion and that involvement and if you're discussing Career Pathways programs and what ---

So I see names, I'll start going through those. I see Charlene Levonski... Okay I see DM (Dave Mayer), if you wouldn't mind introducing yourself.

Dave: Hi there. I am a technical assistance liaison from the National Disability Institute working with Disability Employment Initiative projects throughout the country and I am located in Sacramento, California.

Jay: My name is Jay Harrison, I am the assistant director for the Office of Accessibility Resources at Onondaga Community College.

Meera: And that is, of course, the program that has brought up all together here today that we've spent many months talking about the innovative and interesting elements of your model and the program that you've been putting together and now we're excited to learn from others and continue to share.

Welcome Jay. We have Mindy Larson who is from NCWD, she's also part of a group that's providing technical assistance to many of our programs at large National Council and Workforce and Disability.

And we have Randy Barrett? Welcome Randy, if you'd like to share.

Randy: Randy from Pellissippi State.

Meera: From Pellissippi, great. I think we have a big group from Pellissippi potentially on the line as well. Going back to that list I see Gordon Graff.

Miranda: Gordon Graff is our project leader for our Idaho DEI project and Charlene could be one of our DRC's that's going to be presenting today. She's in the same region as Tanisha.

Charlene: I called back. Can you hear me now? This is Charlene.

Gordon: Hi this is Gordon Graff, thank you so much.

Mindy: Hi Meera, this is Mindy Larson. I'll quickly say hi everyone. I'm based at the Institute for Educational Leadership in D.C.; I represent the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth which is a national technical assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment policy. Happy to be with you.

Meera: Thank you.

Janet: This is Janet Brown from ODEP.

Meera: Hey Janet. And I know Sheldon is with us as well and Taryn is with us.

Taryn: Yes, we're all here.

Sheldon: How many community colleges do we have representing us?

Meera: We're just going through the roll call and we're getting some of that information now. So we have Rebekah Salon from the LEAD center as well and if you want to tell folks what the LEAD Center is.

Rebekah: So the LEAD Center is the national center on leadership for the employment and economic advancement of people with disabilities. We're a national training and technical assistance center that focus on employment and economic advancement and we're very happy to be on the call.

Meera: Thanks, Rebekah. So I think that covers the webinar and now I know we have a lot of folks on the phone, if you guys wouldn't mind introducing yourselves as well. Let us know what institution, organization, or community college you are from.

Teresa: This is Teresa Fava-Schram and I'm coordinator of workforce development for Mohawk Valley Community College in Utica, New York.

Ebony: Hi, my name is Ebony Johnson and I'm calling for Youthworks in Bridgeport, Connecticut it's a training program for youth between the ages of 16 and 24.

Rachel: Hi this is Rachel Stewart with Sacramento City College in California and I am the coordinator and counselor for the workability program which is funded by our VR agency in order to provide transition services for students with disabilities and to employment.

Aimee: Hi this Aimee Navas with Nebraska VR, Vocational Rehabilitation, and I am a career pathways recruiter for our career pathways advancement project.

Geri: Hi this is Geri Walsh from Albany, New York, I'm the disability resource coordinator and part of the Round IV DEI project and I'll be presenting today.

John: And I am John Banas from Rensselaer County and Schenectady County, New York, also a disability resource coordinator, and will be collaborating with Geri Walsh.

Miranda: Hi this is Miranda Kennedy and I'm on the training and technical assistance team supporting the Disability Employment Initiative and I have the pleasure of working with John, Geri and Charlene and Tanisha with our Round IV DEI project, looking forward to that presentation today.

Tiziana: This is Tiziana Rota with Schenectady County Community College and we work very closely with Geri and John so I'll be sharing some of our experience. Thank you.

Sierra: Hello this is Sierra Windman from the state of Maryland DEI and I am the program manager.

Vicki: This is Vicki Palas and I am also with the technical assistance team in national disability institute supporting DEI and also WINTAC

Pellissippi: Hi this is seven staff Pellissippi state college in Knoxville, Tennessee and we're with the pathways to careers, one of the grantees.

Meera: Welcome, we're always glad to have one of our close compatriots. At OCC we are also funded by ODEP per the demonstration, glad to have you aboard. Alright, anyone else? Okay, well I will move ahead then in our discussion, quickly review and remind everyone of our agenda. We've done our welcome and introductions, I just wanted to hint at a tentative approach for our upcoming year. What we are looking forward to is a day like today, a day where we have a lot of new folk joining us and hopefully to grow each month. Previously, we had had bimonthly calls, we are now moving to a monthly format. We will stay with the last Thursday of every month and we are expanding our time to be from 12 to 1:30 because we've often found that the discussion just gets going at the end of our hour and then we have to cut it off. So for those of you who can stay with us we would like to extend the timeframe to allow for that discussion to take place. But, of course, you have received messages from us through the listserv and that is something to which you can all post to so we hope to have a robust discussion that can continue online as useful for everyone involved. So again, we'd like to continue to have these monthly meetings in a format that follows something like today where we introduce ourselves to a new member of the group; we can focus on different topics each time as relevant to the group that's doing the presentation or as part of a follow-up discussion afterwards. I will discuss at the end of our presentation today that we would like to do some outreach with all of you and as efficient and unburdensome an approach as possible because I value that you all are very busy. We'd just like to get some feedback from you about how you would like the rest of this year to unfold, what you are looking for from this group and from our discussion so that we can shape everything to meet everyone's needs. For the rest of today we do have our presentation from New York's DEI project; they will present an overview of what they are doing and how community colleges are factoring into that. That is a big part of what we would like to focus on throughout all of our discussion, is how we can integrate community colleges or if we are a community college, how we are integrating with other partners that are relevant to the work that we do? We are funded by the Department of Labor's Office of Disability and Employment Policy, Onondaga Community College is a grantee and then, as you heard, Pellissippi is a another community college that is a grantee. These projects focus around community colleges

developing career pathways programs, but integrating with other relevant community stakeholders to build these programs. So we hope to learn from you how we can continue to do that and how others may continue to do that.

Sheldon: Meera, would you mind mentioning to the new people that- or where they could find prior presentations to sort of bring them up to speed and give them some rich information that we've shared during the year or so of the community of practice?

Meera: Absolutely. Thank you for reminding us about that. So for everyone who's joined us, I hope that's because you did receive our electronic invitation through the mail, through email, and in that invitation there is a link that will take you to today's presentation. And that website has archived all of our past meetings as well: the PowerPoints and the handouts, there had been resources that speakers have provided and those are all posted there as well, so please do take some time to look through that. As I mentioned in our past year, we actively disseminated many aspects of Onondaga Community College's program and their model to developing a career pathways program. They've set in place many good strategies that have dealt with challenges; they have faced challenges that are known to be out there when putting programs together and a lot of those materials are available as resources that can be useful, so please do check that out. Celestia has also put in our webinar chat window the link [http://bbi.syr.edu/projects/OCC_Pathways/Community-of-Practice.html] , so for those of you that are currently in the webinar you could access it through that link. And let us know if you have any questions or any needs for further information. You can always stay in touch with me and if I don't have the answer I will absolutely find the person who does and make sure I make that connection. Okay, so as I mentioned we will hear from the New York project next and then certainly I'd love to have a discussion with all the rest of you who're on the line about the elements that they've touched upon, and then at the very end I'd love for someone to volunteer to talk to us next month about what you're doing. And again, it doesn't have to be a big initiative, we'd love to hear about how you include disabilities in your programs in an effort to set them on a career pathway and how you either involve or are considering involving community colleges. And with that I will turn it over to Sarah who will talk about the New York Disability Employment Initiative and introduce some of her colleagues to talk about their work.

Sara: Thank you Meera. Meera I was unable to actually log in to the blackboard format so I just had to call in so I'm not sure how you're going to do the slides, but I'm unable to see them. And I know a couple of my DRC's were unable to log in as well just to let you know.

Meera: Okay, well you have your slides and they're all integrated so if you just let us know when you'd like to move to the next slide I will manage that for you. Right now I'm just on the title slide that says New York Disability Employment Initiative. Now I've moved on to the slide that starts DEI Round VI Pathways to Employment.

Sara: Perfect, thank you. Thank you for having us today were very excited to talk about our initiative and our project and how far we've gotten. So I'm the state lead for the DEI Round IV Project, I'm here with my colleague Alan Gallagher. I'm just going to give a brief overview of the initiative and then hand it over to our disabilities resources coordinators who've actually been working with the community colleges and explaining the interconnections they have with them. So in October 2015, the New York State Department of Labor was awarded the sixth round of funding projects and we titled it "Pathways to Employment." We were awarded it in October of 2015 and it's expected to end in March 2019. We were awarded nearly 2.5 million dollars to two pilot site areas Herkimer, Madison, and Oneida and

Capital region, which is Albany, Rensselaer, and Schenectady. We have two DRC's which are the disability resources coordinators per area and its career pathways focused. I'm moving on to the next slide.

Pathways to Employment. We are supposed to, hopefully, serve more than 300 adults with disabilities, improving the job placement outcomes for at least 185 individuals who complete their career pathways training in partnership with credential-based education offered through the community college system. The training's going to include in the high growth areas of health care and technology and manufacturing. So those are two career pathways that we're focusing on. Next slide.

Under WIOA a combination of education, training, and other services will enable individuals to obtain a secondary school diploma or a recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized postsecondary credential. It will align with the needs of local employers, it will include counseling and support, and it will help the individual enter or advance with a specific occupation or occupational cluster. So those are kind of the guidelines under the career pathways system. And then the key elements to the career pathways are building cross-agency partnerships and clarifying the roles, identifying sector or industry and engage employers, design education and training programs, need to identify funding needs and sources, align policies and programs, and measure system change and performance. So the DRCs are focused on all of these key elements to career pathways. And they have been working really hard on finding the career pathways in their specific local area and then connecting with the community colleges in each area. As you guys heard earlier we have representatives from Mohawk Valley Community College, which is in the HMO area, and a representative from Schenectady County Community College in the Capital Region area who are all going to speak about the invaluable partnership that the DRCs have developed. So without further ado I'm going to introduce the DRCs from the Capital Region, Geri Walsh and John Banas and they're going to explain their partnerships with the community colleges, specifically to the career pathways.

Geri: Thank you Sarah. I also want to mention, I know you heard on the line before, but Dr. Tiziana Rota is on the line and in a few minutes she'll be talking about the perspective from the community college about our partnership. So John and I are going to take turns on each slide talking about the different processes that we went through and the strategies that we've used that may be of assistance to those working in career pathways. On the next slide, it's a general guidelines and lessons to share and John's going to start out on the next slide telling us what, in retrospect we both- this is the most important thing. So John, take it away.

John: Thanks Geri. Hi everyone. When Geri and I spoke the other day about gearing up for this, when this project first began, Geri developed a brochure that explained a little bit about career pathways and it was just a little piece that said if you're interested in health care training and you meet the eligibility criteria we can provide the training dollars. So Geri developed a brochure that we were able to hand out to all of our community partners that's very concise; it's just a one page document that explains a little bit about career pathways along with our contact information. And that has been above and beyond the most valuable tool, I think, that we have used so far in this project because of the referrals that have come in as a result of that. We get a significant number of our referrals from that, so again, just developing something that can get the information out to the community at large and our community partners was significant in getting our referrals and getting people in the trainings that we have provided for them.

Geri: And we also do have a copy of that flyer that can be emailed after the presentation. On the next slide, again, some of these things seem pretty basic, but when you're starting out and you don't know really where to start we just want to give you our lookback, our insights, that training providers, really get to know your training providers including the director of the program because you got to start with the decision maker. And you really need to know the admissions staff, the business office, the bookstore, the Office of Disability Services staff because we've had to communicate with all of these people and even more, and you don't know all of these entities until you get to know them. Another basic thing but really important: use your existing professional connections to make the initial contact, we call them the decision makers. So our workforce development board executive director and the principle employment training coordinator in Rensselaer they were key for us because we went to them and said, "Okay, who can we talk to in the community college?" They put us right in contact with Tiziana and Christine Canavan, so those were our connections and that's what we had to do first in order for this program to even get off the ground. After that we had the initial meeting with the provider and we shared our information and to this day keeping in constant contact. And I can't stress enough how accessible Diana and Christine are and all the other folks that we're working with, a phone call away, an email, always responding right away and thank you for being on call as well. Another really important thing is, I mean, I don't want to refer or recommend anyone to our program unless I can see it myself. So request a tour of the program, ask those questions so when people are coming in and interested in different career pathways you know what to offer, what to say, and of course we always recommend that our potential students request a tour as well. Okay the next slide is John's.

John: Yep, I'm here. One of the issues when we get new referrals from wherever they may come, we have to register them at the career center, so again, it's just required paperwork to get people registered with us if they haven't been already. For me, it's a little bit different because I am in two different offices. The paperwork requirements are a little bit different in each county, but again, I make sure that each customer that we are serving knows what we need in order to apply for the funding. And again, those documents when they come in, we ask that we have all of those things on file. We do have discussions with all of the other counselors within each office just to get a sense for the flow of referrals and they come from every direction quite frankly. We get the paperwork in order and we move forward from there. Depending on their needs we do have a cap of three thousand per customer right now and we may bring in other providers and Geri will talk a little bit about that.

Geri: Yes, thanks John. That's the next slide, blending funds. Determine what other sources of funding might be available for the individuals who are seeking training. John and I do work closely with that. If you are we can blend those funds. We do tell individuals that they do need to apply for the state and federal financial aid if they're eligible. We encourage people to look for other sources of funding- scholarships- and people that are looking for different grants, if they're over a certain age, they can have things on their diploma as well. And we always do have that conversation about how are you going to support yourself while you're in training? What is going to be your financial liability and can you afford- is there, in fact, leftover amounts that you need to pay? How are you going to pay, is this feasible right now? We look at all those aspects because we want the person to be in better financial shape in the long run and not be in debt and not have to compromise financially. And then, and so the next slide is basically a title slide and John's going to take that title slide and then the next slide and the one next.

John: So we are partnering with Schenectady County Community College and the Workforce Development Board for the Capital Region. Schenectady County Community College is currently, was

also, a grant recipient of the Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG). That particular grant funds or provides a number of different trainings in health care which was a gift for us because those are the exact trainings that we are using in the career pathways. These specific offerings, well with HPOG, the specific offerings are health care and again they're targeting TANF recipients, low income individuals, or incomes for us – individuals with disabilities. We can provide entry level occupations or training of entry level health care occupations that pay well and are expected to either experience and be in high demand with the career pathways model. We can help them improve their employability and skills over time. And Geri if you want to speak about the partnership with HPOG and SCAP and ACF.

Geri: Yes thank you. And Schenectady County Community College is the lead agency of the HPOG partnership and together with a couple of the community extra programs in Schenectady and Albany along with a couple other community colleges, they've formed this partnership and I think this would be the perfect time for Tiziana, Dr. Rota, to join in and talk to us about the prospects of the community college and our relationship, so Tiziana.

Tiziana: I am so honored and delighted to be part of this group and to share the wonderful experience that we had with our workforce board group and DEI, in particular Geri and John, have been very instrumental in helping some of our participants and we do referral both ways. But back to the HPOG partnership as Geri mentioned, we are the lead of the HPOG grant and we've formed the UPHPD, Upstate Partnership for Health Care Pathways, which relies on community action programs and partnership, both Schenectady and Albany as well as Fulton Montgomery and SUNY Adirondack. The offerings are, as you see: certified nurse's aide, home health aide, personal care aid, we also develop some offerings along the community health workers to try to reach that community of disabled individuals that have needs to receive peer support, and we also provide training in phlebotomy, EKG, and emergency medical technician. One of my colleagues should have been in the call, but neither John nor Geri know this, she is out celebrating with one of the recipients of the DEI grant who has just had completed the EKG technician and we just got word today that she was admitted to nursing school at Adirondack Community College, SUNY Adirondack one of our HPOG group, and so we decided to take her out to lunch. And you see in the next slide that we also have partnered with Maria College and several students have expressed a great deal of interest in completing the prerequisite at our college and then transferring those for the LPN. The collaboration has been absolutely phenomenal, we share information, we provide updates on the status of and the performance of the students while they are studying with us, but also Geri and John have been willing to listen to suggestions on how we can improve the relationship. So it's been, I cannot comment even more positively than saying amazing. Absolutely amazing collaboration.

Geri: Thank you so much Tiziana. That means a lot to us and we're so happy to hear about the success of the student that you were talking about and I know we're going to have many more. And it's just been great, I feel like Schenectady Community College and a workforce in Albany, in the Capital Region, you've been sort of a model for us. We're copying what we've done with you because it's been successful. Thank you so much and thank you for being on the call, we really appreciate.

Tiziana: My pleasure, really.

Geri: In addition, I know John, just kind of may be going to recap how working together, summarizing everything that happened and really was and is as we've followed with other career pathways partners.

John: Yeah, in order for us to have a sense- because when we came in we were kind of like not necessarily fully aware of all of our partners and who we needed to know and where we needed to start. But we were invited to a workforce development board luncheon where we had the opportunity, we were actually introduced to all of the members of the local workforce development board, and it was discussed at that meeting the details of our project and how we were going to move forward. But it also gave Geri and I the opportunity to know who our partners were and them to know us so we got a sense of those higher levels of introduction that helped us. It filters down across agencies, but they knew us and we knew them so that gave us a start. We also met with Schenectady Community College. Geri said we had an understanding of the HPOG program that was going on there. Two local providers, community action providers, were probably serving a number of the same customers. They also are recipients of the HPOG grant so those who are not necessarily able to be served under their wing they would refer to us and similarly we could refer to them. Again, to make the customer flow and the customer experience maximize those things. We always are advertising with other agencies, meeting with them; there is a community meeting, local community meetings, thirty or forty providers attend every quarter. I attend those meetings just to advertise that we have these opportunities. Anyone who may have customers interested in health care, we are able to perhaps fund them if they meet the eligibility criteria. So again, just getting out in the community so they know who we are and what we are doing, the referrals come naturally from that. And I think that's about it for that.

Tiziana: If I can interject, those success stories have been amazing. We've had individuals that have completed the CNA training and individuals that those who completed were employed. And we had people completing the community health worker training, completing a very long hundred and four hours of internship and despite everything this young person stuck with us and she was successful in completing and I believe that she will be shortly employed at a job that is part of an emerging profession.

Sheldon: How many actual employed graduates came out of your program?

Tiziana: At this point I do not have- I was informed of the call about two hours ago, I do not have the information but I'll be delighted to share that.

Sheldon: That's always something that we at ODEP are interested in is the employment outcome, recognizing that moving on to another program is a desired outcome but what is specifically part of our emphasis on these grants is the emphasis of employment outcome.

Tiziana: Absolutely. Would it be acceptable if I shared this information with John and Geri and they forwarded it to the group?

Sheldon: Of course.

Tiziana: Perfect.

Geri: Great, thank you, and then John and I we just wanted to each share one success story, just briefly. So John if you want to go first with the person that you indicated with CNA training.

John: Actually I have a couple. Because I'm split between two offices- and this one isn't in Schenectady Community College it's with another community partner- but there was a customer who came into the one step career center who was eligible for funding under Career Pathways. And although I didn't meet

with her directly one of my surrogates in that office registered her, we approved her for funding for CAN, and by the time I got to make initial contact with her she was already completing the program and the week after she completed the program she was employed as a CNA. Similarly we had another individual come in who was unfortunately mourning the loss of a family member for whom he was providing care. He wasn't even aware that training existed nor would he be eligible for that type of training. He met with just one of the county counselors employment counselors and was referred to me. He successfully completed the CNA training in a relatively short period of time, was immediately employed, and came back to me. He's looking for an upgrade already. And we'll likely do that several months down the road. So with him, he came in with hope and despair and walked out with certification as a nurse's assistant and looking to further his career.

Meera: Great story.

John: Geri has a couple great stories success stories in Albany County as well.

Geri: Yes, a woman that I'm working with who actually assigned her two kids as well to the social security beneficiary and she hasn't worked since 2001. She's been clocking benefits since 2005. She has experience along the way in health care being a home health aide and so she has a propensity for that. And we talked about the community health work certificate and she was very, very interested in that. And that's the problem where she had to build a resume, apply for it, she had to interview, and she got herself into the program. She just recently, I believe in maybe September, ditched that long internship that Tiziana was talking about. She really worked so hard to get the certificate, but as she gained more confidence she didn't want to wait to start working and in July she decided, 'I'm going to apply to a local hospital here, I'm going to get my foot in the door, and I'm going to be in environmental services.' So she's cleaning right now. She is totally thrilled beyond belief, she's bringing home twice as much as what she was collecting. She was collecting about a total of 800 dollars in benefits, now she is bringing home 1500 dollars a month and she is much more confident. And our next step is really, 'Okay let's use this health worker certificate.' Her idea about starting as an entry-level position and thinking once I have six months of the job and have a good history with them I can easily transfer into something like that. So I give her so much credit; she definitely is a success story. And then just briefly, the beginning part of this success story which I think will be a person who is now attending a great college that has that partnership that Schenectady County Community College has, but we'll see what happens with that. But we definitely have success stories that have already happened and future ones I know will happen.

And on the next slide we just wanted to end with resources. When we started out, we started out in April 2016, we used the Career Pathways toolkit as a guideline which was great because we really didn't know where to start, what is this, what is this going to look like, so that was a very good guide for us. And then I feel like now that we went through the process of strategies that we shared with you we're replicating them and using them again for other training providers. And please feel free to contact John or I our information is right there the email address and I don't know, the last slight I said should be questions or comments, I don't know if that's the end. I know HMO is going to speak next so thank you for listening I really appreciate it.

Sara: Thank you Geri and John. And we're going to introduce now the Herkimer-Madison-Oneida DRCs, Tanisha Taylor and Charlene Levonski.

Charlene: Hi everyone this is Charlene, thanks for having us. Tanisha and I were going to both be presenting but Tanisha's not feeling well so I will be presenting today. So we are going to talk about the strategies and best practices with local community colleges in our area. Just to give people an idea, so as was mentioned we're Herkimer-Madison-Oneida County. We have four offices in those three counties: two in Oneida County, one in Madison, one in Herkimer. We work for Workforce Development Board and prior to that Tanisha and I, prior to this grant, Tanisha and I worked under another grant for Workforce Development Board and had worked in the field prior to that. So that's kind of our background we were coming in with just to set that up as far as building partnerships then and where we're at to start.

So we just wanted to start by discussing a little about building partnerships and then we're going to go into the work that we've done. Oh and I want to back up and thank Teresa for joining us today. She's a coordinator for Workforce Development Board at MVCC, Mohawk Valley Community College, and I did tell her that she could either speak up if she wanted to or just listen so I'm not sure what she will choose but she is here joining us. So when we were thinking about this and with our work with the colleges, most of our work that we've done has been with Mohawk Valley Community College. And we've done some work with Herkimer College too which I will kind of touch on at the end. But I guess what we thought was that you need to start where you are and work with what you have. There are already contacts that we had in our community, there were already people that we had been working with, and we went to those people to see how we could expand on that to reach others that we needed to reach. So reaching out to current professional contacts to help us to make other connections. And then sharing information, so we go into our community a lot. So getting out into the community, attending events, going to meetings, sharing information with others and having them share that with you so you all are on the same page so you know how having a partnership will be beneficial to all that's involved, sharing business cards and flyers. We also created a flyer and that has certainly been really helpful for our partners and those that we work with in the community to have a better understanding, but that so they can also share with those people who could benefit from funding. And then just communicate regularly and follow up and provide updates as needed.

So one of the things that we did, someone said to our grant, but pretty early on, was we had a really great contact that we had prior to that who actually, at the time, was in the position that Teresa is in now, coordinator of workforce development board, and her name is Kristen and she's currently the director of community and workforce development at MVCC. We had worked with her previously, we had a really good relationship with her, and we knew that she would be a great person to reach out to. So we reached out to her and communicate and said we'd like to be able to reach other areas of the college so that people are aware of DEI or aware of the funding potential that's available that could assist students. So she worked with us to arrange a meeting that I think was really beneficial with several college department heads that would be related to career pathways or would have day-to-day contact with students that could benefit. And then from that we were able to compile a list of available degree and certificate programs that were offered within healthcare, manufacturing, and technology. We were able to say to them, 'here this who we are, this is what we do' and they were able to share that with us and we could put, in some instances, a face to a name; there were people certainly at the table that we had worked with prior, but there were several people that we hadn't or had never met face to face.

Following that meeting, that same day, one of the things that I know I had expressed prior that meeting to Christian was that I felt like we had a good handle on healthcare in our area, but manufacturing and technology- it was easier for technology to look at the programs that were offered by the program and say, 'yep that's technology'. But at the time we felt like we weren't sure on all of their programs, like what would be considered manufacturing? And it's funny looking back now I feel like I have a really good understanding of that, but at the time I know I didn't. So that's one of the things I said to her is, "I really feel like I want to have a good handle on this. I want to be able to make my own list that as somebody says 'I'm interested in manufacturing' and they're wondering what local training providers offers those opportunities, that I can say 'these are your options at this particular college'". So following that meeting we met with the associate dean of physical sciences, engineering, and applied trade. Tanisha and I sat down with him, it was great. He went through step-by-step all of the programs and how which ones are manufacturing. They do offer a lot in manufacturing, they actually offer- we're a fairly small area- but they offer 8 degree programs and 8 certificate programs in manufacturing. And then they actually have 12 degree programs and 2 certificate programs in technology. So that was a really great thing that came out of that meeting was being able to meet with him afterwards and have that much clearer understanding.

Another thing that we were able to do that day that started out that day was one of the people at the table was Tamara and she's the coordinator of disability services with the offices accessibility resources there at the college. We did meet with her afterwards, talk with her some, and she took us to her office and introduced us to the other staff there. We started talking more and really opened up those lines of communication, exchanging business cards and contact information. And that relationship really built then, it started then, and it has been good. We know that we can reach out back and forth and we've had open ongoing communication. Just recently I was at the college for another event and said, 'You know I think I want to stop over there and reach back out to them.' We had updated a flyer that we had and I wanted to share that and I was really wanting to go around to other departments. At the time that we had that meeting there were a couple of departments that weren't included that I had wished could have been at the table, so I wanted to follow up with those departments too and make sure that they were aware of the funding possibility for students.

The day that I went and met with her and talked with the staff again there, their nature was very clear. At the time there had been a slight change as far as when you took funds through the time frame, so that information was shared, updating as necessary, and then Tamara went around to other college departments with me and we shared information. I gave them our updated flyer, I gave them some business cards, answered any of their questions; we went to admissions, we went to financial aid, and then we went to the student information help desk. That was great because she had said that they've gotten bombarded, now people come to them with everything. I don't remember exactly what she said it started out at as but it's become much more than that and they have a lot of students that are constantly coming there with all kinds of things. And she had- we were talking to her about posting flyers and she had said that we would need approval to do that and so Tamara was kind enough to offer that if I sent her an electronic version of the flyer, so that she had a color copy, she would print those out for me. She would get that permission and she would post those around campus on the bulletin boards which I was very grateful for. They also have a workplace Facebook page, so it's all the staff at the college, and she had said that she would also post the flyer on there. When we were talking with admissions we had talked about the possibility of it getting posted on the MVCC website and I had

actually asked Tamara about whether it could be posted, I was looking at the website and thinking where would it make sense to have it? Under resources, I don't remember all of the tabs, but under resources and services or something like that, I apologize, there is a section that would get to their accessibility office and then they've got a tab that's for other resources and if you click on there that would give information, access VR, and some other things that may be of assistance to people, other resources. So I'm hoping that she's going to put a link there or be able to put our flyer there right after and she said she would put it on the website, so that will be really helpful too.

Another thing is that, and I guess I didn't mention already, is that we are in the career centers. So Tanisha's normally in the Utica office and I'm normally in Oneida County and I'm normally in the Herkimer office and Herkimer County. I also cover Madison County and she covers the second Oneida County office. We each have somebody in our office, a college representative, so that's been a really great person kind of a starting, a front line of contact to go to. So Kevin is from MVCC and he is at the Utica office. He's there every Monday, conducts a weekly workshop, and that's a person that we can go to with questions on the credit side. So there are several people that we go to on the noncredit side with questions and then this would be our first person that we would go to on the credit side. Tanisha said that she has also worked with the director of adult learners services has been a great resource for her that she communicates with regularly also.

And then in the Herkimer office we have somebody from Herkimer College, her name is Karen, and as I said we have not done as much work with Herkimer and really that's by nature of the programs. They have- MVCC is much more vocational in focus; they have a lot of noncredit offerings, they have several certificate programs, and they offer several programs in these three areas of healthcare, manufacturing, and technology. In Herkimer College, they have three technology degree programs, two healthcare degree programs, no manufacturing programs at all, degree or certificate, and two healthcare certificate programs. So pretty limited as far as their offerings in these areas that we're able to provide funding. However, recently Karen and I have been talking more, she certainly is right- she's two desks down from me- so very easy access with any questions, very open to answering them. And also has recently said that she was going to go back to the college and speak with her supervisor to see if she might be able to- how can we do similar things to what we did at MVCC and do it at Herkimer? So she's helping me to coordinate that right now within the college. We talked about what we had done at MVCC and who we've partnered with, so were working on that right now with Herkimer College. And that is pretty much all that I have, does anyone have any questions?

Meera: That was great.

Michael: I have a couple of questions. One is, at what point are employers involved? You have an extraordinary partnership between the agency the community college, I'm curious as to when you might provide a little perspective on how you're engaged with employers.

Charlene: Absolutely, I'm happy to do that. We were told that the focus of today was our work with community colleges so that's what we presented on, but certainly we work with employers also. In Madison County for example. So I guess with our work with employers, first of all, each of the areas we would have business service reps in the career centers which we work closely with. I can say in the Herkimer office and in Madison County I work very closely with both of the business services reps, again, like Herkimer office the business services rep's desk is right next to mine. So I work very closely with both of them. In Madison county we have gone and worked with Oneida health care, the business

services rep and I along with some other people have been part of a couple of meetings there, really talking to them about what their needs are and how can we all work together and partner to be able to address those needs so that we're helping everybody? So that the employers getting the qualified educated staff that they need and so that people are getting those opportunities to be able to get those positions. So we're certainly working with employers too, we do on the job training along with classroom training can also be covered under this grant. So we are part of that too. We work with the business services rep to set up on the job trainings for people where that's a better fit for them than doing classroom training. We are often out at job fairs, talking to employers about what their needs are and getting to know them and sharing our information with them. There's definitely some employers in Madison County that are- I had an employer that wanted to speak with me directly. I had gone to- they were doing this CNC training, this partnership in Madison County, and when I attended this event I met the employers that were involved in that and one of those employers then wanted to speak with me directly afterwards about somebody that she thought might be able to benefit for an on the job training. Through Oneida healthcare we had somebody who was through the youth program. They were doing a job experience, a work experience, at Oneida healthcare and we ended up kind of piggy backing on that to do an OJT, on the job training, on that once they were done with that work experience so they were able to continue and build their skills with the hope that they're going to be able to stay there permanently full time.

Sara: I want to weigh in on that question as well. Under our initiative we created two business counsels, sort of on the higher level of each area and each amount and in the Capital Region, and we've done a really good job with the directors and center managers and business service representatives on the state level connecting with employers specifically to the career pathways in each area. And we have a list of those employers as well if you're interested in that. And if you want to have Geri and John weigh in on the Capital Region as far as how they're connected to employers, but that's more on the state level on how they've done it then it's kind of trickled down into the smaller things like what Charlene was talking about: the recruitments, the specific job fairs, connecting with the business services reps, and bringing those skills and needs and helping them with their resumes and getting them to the employers.

Michael: Great, thank you so much. Are there others who have questions? Comments?

Gordon: I think I heard that examples of flyers would be posted. I just wanted to see if I heard correctly?

Meera: Yes I believe Geri and John, you had mentioned you'd be willing to send around your marketing flyer earlier?

Geri: Yes, we'll connect with Sara and be able to send that out to the group. Sure, no problem.

Sara: I believe Meera said it was going to actually be on the landing page, is that correct Meera?

Meera: Yes, is that the resource you sent earlier? Yes, that's posted. So again if you go back to the email invitation it will link you to today's presentation, that flyer, and then all the rest of our archives and resources as well. And Sarah, you had mentioned you might be able to share some information related to the business counsels that you had put together at the state level and sort of pulling the list of employers related to the career pathways sectors, is that something we could post? Let us know and we'll be sure to place it in the same location.

Okay, well then I'll move on. And as I mentioned again, I actually want to back up and stop and say thank you so much New York for participating in this. Very excited to hear about things that are happening in my backyard and actually the backyard, really, of Onondaga Community College too. Onondaga is the neighboring county to Madison, Oneida, and Herkimer you're right around it. We're all here up in central New York area and then, of course, nice to hear what's happening in our Capital Region as well. So across the state it sounds like there's a lot of opportunities and I don't know that we have everyone from across New York who had previously reached out to me to join our group on this particularly monthly call, hopefully they'll be on the next one, but here are folks from western New York that are looking to join us as well from the Rochester area on to Buffalo with Erie Community College. So I think they'll be very interested to hear what's happening across their state too, certainly the lessons to be learned are for any college across the board. Well thank you so much for sharing and maybe in a future meeting we can learn more in depth about your work related to employers as well because it sounds like you have many good elements happening. Moving forward, again, we wanted to put out there I mentioned this through the listserv and I'll do some personal outreach as well, a very brief input survey. What we are looking for is your information about your interests and how we can help address them. I'd love to get a little more information and background, as you saw if you were in the webinar as we had folks joining us, just to understand what institutions people are joining from whether or not you have existing career pathway programs or looking to implement that so we can make sure that this community of practice meets everyone's needs and then we will finalize a list of topics and structure for how we move forward for the rest of the year. So please when you do get this message take just a few minutes of your time, any information or feedback you can provide us would be incredibly welcome and then it will help us shape what we do so it'll be more tailored for you as well.

Sheldon: I just wanted to put a promotion in here. If you know of other community colleges that might benefit from this type of discussion or participating in some aspect of what we are seeking to do in this community of practice, please either make Meera aware or speak to them and have them contact Meera. We welcome them to this community of practice.

Meera: Absolutely, thank you Sheldon. You just did my next slide for me so I can zip ahead. It's good to reinforce the message on from the top down, new members and resources are always welcome. We are very interested in having other community colleges and other programs that are doing career pathway related work, you may not be a community college but you're connecting with a community college or you see how you can connect with a community college, and we would love to have you join us and learn more about how we're doing what we're doing and then share with us how you plan on doing what you're doing. So please connect them into us, they can always contact me or jump into our listserv or any other person that you hear on the call and we'll all put it together and be happy to them to our group.

Rachel: I just wanted to see if you guys have a description of the group that would be appropriate to forward out because I belong to an association that works primarily with community colleges that are serving students with disabilities and they're a career development interest group that I can forward out this information to.

Meera: Absolutely. I will get you that information and we can put that, again, on our website and send it out through our listserv so that those of you who may know of others that you want to send this on to can use those materials. Alright well that just gets me to signing off with a reminder that, again, we are

meeting monthly and that means out next month's call will be November 30th same channel, same time. I will send out the reminder information in advance but it's always at lunch time. We'll send advance links so you can join the webinar and the call information should remain the same. As I've noted here if there is anyone who right now is super excited and willing to volunteer to introduce themselves I would love that otherwise you do risk yourself being nominated, by me of course, but really if you don't mind telling us anything about what you do to include students of disabilities in your colleges, in your programs, connect them to community colleges and set them on their way to their pathway to a career that's successful we would love to hear about that. Next month we thought we could focus around how one develops and implements the cross-agency partnership model. I mean, certainly we heard about that today and it would be great to talk about that again and how we align the policies and program requirements that these different agencies may have. And then I will also report out the feedback that I received from you and how we'll be integrating that into what we do moving forward. So before I say goodbye is there anyone willing to raise their hand? Okay but I know who you are.

Sheldon: I have a question about the December meeting and there was a possibility that we would not have a call because it would be during the holiday week. Have you made your decision on that yet or would you like to ask the group if they have a preference?

Meera: Well sure, I was going to put that in my little survey, but for the folks that are on the line, December would obviously be the last Thursday of December right during the time when many people, especially in educational institutions, will be on holiday. So are there folks that- let's put it this way- want to join on the last Thursday of December? Okay. It's a rough time: travel, holidays, New Year. I will still include that in my little survey though, Sheldon, because I think there's other members who are hoping to join us in the future who are not on today's call, so we will see if anyone, if we have a critical mass we can still move forward. Alright, thanks everyone for joining us today and we look forward to chatting with you again in the future.