Bridge to Employment and Academic Marketplace

Transcript of Webinar

YouthBuild Webinar Series

Meet the Workforce Innovation Fund Round Two Grantees:
Grant Project Presentations

Wednesday, February 24, 2016
MS. MILLER: Very good. Again, my name is Veronica Miller, and I am the project lead for Bridges to Employment and Academic Marketplace. And we are located out of Utica, New York. I am part of the Herkimer, Madison, and Oneida County Workforce Development Board. I have Alice Savino as the HMO executive director, and I also have Wendy Stevens who is our communications coordinator.

I'd like to also mention that we have outreach coordinators on our team. The project is going to allow for seven outreach coordinators. Currently we have five on staff. So each of our regions are represented at this time. I have Annie Guerrero (sp) and Christy Edick (sp) at the Herkimer, Madison, and Oneida offices, Corey Russen (sp) in Broome/Tioga County, Sarah Bonowitz (sp) in Tompkins County, and then I have Alan Sushens (sp) down in Chenango, Delaware, Otsego.

Our grant award was $3 million, and our evaluation type is an implementation study, impact study, or an RCT as well as the cost allocation analysis. We have contracted with our evaluators through Thomas P. Miller Associates or TPMA, and they have subcontracted with Policy and Research Group for the RCTP.

Our project and our innovative strategies are to target young individuals that are economically disadvantaged college dropouts, ages 19 to 30, and we are going to target them through community outreach and social media. We want to try to reengage these individuals to reenroll in postsecondary education and training programs to be able to earn family sustaining wages and be competitive in the local areas. We also intend to strengthen the regional partnerships between workforce, education, and the local labor market.

Our innovation, the new and untested strategy, is that we are going to be developing a new social media platform to include a website that would be designed to allow individuals across the nine-county Ketchum area to go on to that site to be able to identify training opportunities, where would the local support services be available, and financial aid, et cetera so that they can do some independent research to be able to identify and do some career exploration.

The use of the media venues to engage our target population such as Facebook, Twitter. We also have a LinkedIn account and other social media avenues. We do intend to reach out to these individuals through Facebook and texting and calling to provide the intensive case management, and it's going to be an individualized, customized based on the individual needs.

And this is where our development of the individual academic plan comes in so that we can identify the barriers and obstacles that the individuals experience the first time before they stopped out of college so that we can try to identify those barriers and obstacles and put plans in place to remove them so that they are more successful as they reenter training opportunities.

Some of the key components that we have with our program are the academic and career planning supports. We do intend to co-enroll across programs. So we are looking for the common customer, and some of the co-enrollments would be through Job Corps, through YouthBuild, Employment -- I'm sorry -- the educational opportunity centers.
With this intensive case management piece we hope to create those partnerships to work together to best meet the needs of our students. We also intend to braid our funding streams. So we are going to co-enroll with WIOA programs, try to target the Trade Act Adjustment individuals, link them to FAFSA or federal financial aid, perhaps if they have a disability, linking them to ACESS VR, et cetera.

We do intend to collaborate with Department of Labor here in New York State. We have the workforce development boards, Department of Social Services, community-based organizations. We have Disability Employment Initiative as well as other programs. We tend to outreach to these individuals through grassroots outreach and meeting them where they are as well as the social media and using marketing tools.

We also have a piece where we're going to be engaging employers and training providers so that we can help to identify the gaps that employers are experiencing to connect with the training providers to perhaps be able to create some training programs to meet the needs of our local employers.

Some of the key partners that we have are existing career centers, the American job centers as well as the partners. Again, we have partnered with three other workforce development boards. So we have Broome/Tioga, Tompkins, and Chenango, Delaware, Otsego. Within our region we have 11 One-Stop career centers or the American job centers.

We've also partnered with the local community colleges, various BOCES programs, other training programs and providers, community-based organizations for support services, as well as the local businesses. Some of those types include workforce development, education or the New York State SUNY system, local businesses, municipal housing, ACESS VR, libraries, On Point for College, educational opportunity centers, Attain Labs, chambers of commerce, New York State Department of Labor, as well as the various county and employment training offices.

Some of the outcomes that we hope to achieve through our interventions are to be able to recruit 2,000 individuals and enroll 1800. Due to the RTCP or component of the project, only 1440 individuals will receive the intervention, and 360 will be placed into the control group. Our goals are to have 65 percent or 655 individuals to complete their postsecondary education program. We hope to have 70 percent or 1,008 to return to postsecondary training within one year of enrolling into the BEAM program. We also are looking to have 83 percent or 1195 individuals to enter employment within three years of enrolling in training.

So with all of this intervention we hope to improve the employment rates for college dropouts. We want to strengthen the partnerships between the workforce, education, and local labor market to ensure that the training is being delivered in high-demand sectors. We hope to achieve greater efficiency in the delivery of quality of services as well as stronger cooperation across programs and funding streams.

Some of the successes, we have been approved to move into Phase II, and that was effective back in December. All of our outreach coordinators that were on staff have completed the evaluator specific training so that they are able to recruit and enroll customers across the nine-
county Ketchum area, and that was available in January. So we've really only been up and running since January, but I think the biggest success is that we do have a hard working team. It's a small group of people who are working for the same goal, and we're all super enthusiastic to be on this project and targeting our target population.

Some of the challenges that we've experienced as we've been going through now into our second year was that we have initiated a data sharing agreement with the New York State Department of Labor, and that is still pending at this time. It's very close, and we also have the New York State Department of Labor creating specific OSOS or one-stop operating services, activities, services in a guidebook, and we're at the home stretch. That's going to be coming down the pike very soon too.

When we designed the program, I guess we didn't realize that office space is limited in some of our 11 offices. So there has been some difficulty in offices to be able to house our staff as well as getting the staff to provide referrals for us -- in-house referrals. But again, we're very positive. We're brand new, and once we get the word out I think that that would be something that would be minimized. Obviously 19 -- yeah. The 19- to 30-year-olds are a very difficult target population, and so we anticipate challenges in, number one, getting them engaged in the program and then keeping them engaged.

And staff turnover has already been an issue. We've had some staff turnover, but we did just hire a new outreach coordinator this morning. So she just started today. So we're on the upswing. And then identifying that there has been a lack of online tutoring resources that are available across the state. So I thank you for your time.