

## **Apprenticeships: An Alternative Workforce Development Strategy**

Lucy Tomar: Hello, everyone. I would like to welcome you to our second webinar in the "Spotlight on Innovative Practices" series. My name is Lucy Tomar with the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, or also known as NCECDTL, and I am your host for today. So, today's webinar will be on apprenticeship programs, an alternative approach to workforce credential attainment. We are so happy that you all are able to join us today for this webinar, and we know that with everything going on, many of you are under a lot of stress and have been affected on some level.

So, before we start, I want to lead us in a short exercise to help you relax and also quiet your mind. So, let's take a moment sitting down. Start by taking a deep breath and close your eyes if you would like to. So, breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, and as you breathe, as you breathe in, feeling your lungs expand, and as you breathe out, feel that sense of letting go of any stress in your body, in your mind, and just relax. So, let's do it one more time. Breathe in deeply through your nose and out through your mouth and take a moment to pause and allow your thoughts to come and go. So, if your mind wanders, that's OK. Just bring back your attention to the rise and fall of your breath. One more time. OK, and as we come to the end of this, gently open your eyes again and smile, and let's enjoy the rest of the presentation. OK?

So, for today's agenda, we will be introducing the speakers and the presenters for today's session. We will be going into why apprenticeships and why now. We'll talk about the five key components of apprentice, and we will be hearing about Pennsylvania's apprenticeship [Inaudible]. We'll have a Q&A session. Again, any questions that you do have, please be sure to enter it into the Q&A widget, and lastly, we will be sharing some resources with you throughout the webinar but also at the end, and then we will wrap up and end for the day. So, today's objectives ... At the end of the presentation, you'll be able to describe the current early childhood landscape. You will be able to identify the key components of apprenticeships, and you'll also be able to explain the benefits of the Pennsylvania apprenticeship module. OK, next. You will all be introduced to your speakers and presenters for today's session, so, I will be passing this on to Michelle Adkins, who will introduce the speakers. Michelle?

Michelle Adkins: Thanks. So, Lucy, we're all very glad to be here today. We have some special people with us today to welcome you. We have Miss Paula Bendl Smith, who will be with us in just a minute to welcome everyone to the webinar. I am Michelle Adkins. I'm a program manager with the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness. We have with us also Brandi King, the deputy chief of programs at DTL, the center that Lucy is with, and we also have Tara Dwyer with us. She is the – let's see, want to make sure I get this right – the director of workforce development at the Office of Child Development and Early Learning in Pennsylvania, so, OCDEL for short. I would like now to take a moment to introduce Paula to you. Miss Bendl Smith is the contract officer's representative for the National Center for Preschool Development's Birth to Five, which provides technical assistance to state PDG birth

through 5 grantees. She also managed the development of the federally operated Early Educator Central website. If that is not a website you're familiar with, I strongly encourage you to look it up. It's a one-stop portal for accessing federally funded courses that lead to degrees and credentials for infant-toddler teachers. So, that again is the Early Educator Central website. She also managed the development of [childcare.gov](http://childcare.gov), which is a national website that was mandated by CCDBG, or the Child Care Developmental Block Grant, to connect families to their state's child care consumer education websites. Although earlier in her career, Paula also worked with NACCRRA, which is the precursor of Child Care Aware of America, as the director of training and partnerships. We are thrilled that she has taken the time to be with us today, and I'm going to hand it over to you now, Paula.

Paula Bendl Smith: Thank you so much. It's great to be with you today, and I just want to – on behalf of the Office of Child Care – give a huge thank you not only to the National Center, that's part of our technical assistance group, but also to our friends in Pennsylvania for sharing this innovative and effective way to ensure that child care providers, Head Start providers, and others have access to high-quality training and coaching and support while they are still learning on the job. Now, we know that this is a very – very trying time for all of us, and we have seen that during this trying time, when many centers are closed, that there has been a huge spike in online training usage. So, we know that folks who want to work with children, want to do the best, and want to be well-informed in what they do. We know that many centers are closed now, and we also know that child care is like a road. You can't get back to work without it. So, it's very important right now for us to be strategically supporting providers and centers as they rebound with the economy. You may have heard about the CARES Act, which was passed by the Congress, and provides funding for child care as well. Just today, \$3.5 billion from the CARES Act was sent to states and territories. Now, this is in addition to the \$8.5 billion that were sent in regular funding for the year. This new funding can be used to help child care centers and homes remain open or to help reopen child care as we begin to get back to work, and while in the meantime, those dollars can be used to support subsidies for essential workers regardless of their income. There are other things that these funds can be used for as well to support quality and professional development. So, I'd really encourage you, as you listen to the presentation from Pennsylvania, not to get discouraged, but to have those conversations about how this might support you in your work today and the work that you will be doing as our country comes back together after this COVID-19 crisis. Remember that there's also other federal and state resources that can be used for programs like this. So, I encourage you to reach out not only to your child care state administrator about ways that you can partner to support centers, homes, child care providers, and of course the parents and children that we work for, but also reach out to other federal and state agencies that may also have resources available for child care and for professional development. And so, with that, I'll say, thank you again. Enjoy the webinar, and I'll be here until the end if there are any questions. Michelle, back to you.

Michelle: Thank you so much, Paula. We really appreciate you being here, and what a great welcome for everyone. I'm going to talk real briefly about some of the early childhood education environment, sort of what we're seeing in the landscape, and then I'm going to give

an overview of what an apprenticeship program is, what the five key components are, and I'm going to go through that fairly quickly because Tara is going to get into much deeper content and into much more in-depth information about what all those different components look like in real life. So, feel free to ask a question if I say something that you don't understand, and someone will interrupt me, and I will answer it for you, I promise. So, the early childhood education landscape is even more complex than it was when this PowerPoint was developed because it was developed prior to COVID-19, but there were a lot of things that came together that were, I think, that led to some states looking at some novel approaches to workforce development. So, there was the IOM report, "Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through 8," that spawned "Power to the Profession," which was looking at defining the early childhood profession and creating some kind of unifying framework for the different career pathways. Quality rating and improvement systems have been around for a while. Most of the states now have some kind of QRAS system. We all know that workforce recruitment and retention challenges continue to plague the field, and I know that many states are worrying and trying to plan for what happens when the pandemic is finished and how can we make sure that we enough folks out there to come back into the child care community and help take care of all the children we know as people move from home back to their offices. And we know that there's a growing recognition that compensation is an issue, and that if we're going to ask early childhood education providers to do all the incredible things that they do on a daily basis, that they deserve to be compensated for it.

So, apprenticeships is one way that some states and some communities are thinking about dealing with those kinds of – that situation that I just talked about in the early childhood landscape. So, there's five key components of any kind of apprenticeship program, whether it be in early childhood education or in electrical engineering or in plumbing. So, there are five things that complete or make up an apprenticeship program: employer involvement, structured on-the-job learning, related instruction or related coursework, rewards for skill gains – so some kind of reward for moving and progressing on in your competency and your ability and your skills – and some kind of recognized credential.

So, real quickly, employer involvement means that your employer is willing to sponsor you as an apprenticeship. They're willing to give you paid release time to take those courses that you need to take. They're also willing to provide on-site mentoring and coaching time so that you can have specific time while your mentor is in the class with you and supporting you and putting into practice the kinds of things you're learning in the classroom. They also agree to salary increases along the way as you build your skills. Structured on-the-job learning is pretty much what it sounds. It is while you are in the classroom, still caring for children on the job. It allows you to be guided by a more experienced peer. Typically, these mentors or coaches are trained in how to best support an adult as they're learning new skills, [Clears throat] excuse me, and time is provided for both the mentor to prepare, and for the mentee to practice these new skills. You'll see it as also aligned with the coursework, and you're going to see that very familiar phrase under related instruction. So, the ... Not only is the structured on-the-job learning aligned with the coursework, the coursework is also aligned with on-the-job learning. So, there is a symbiosis, or there is a connection, between what's happening in the classroom and what's

happening in the early childhood classroom. The states typically partner with institutions of higher education. There is some kind of a degree attainment included, either a bachelor's degree, a CDA. Some even go onto master's degrees, and in some cases, the instructors in the, excuse me, in the institutes of higher education are also involved in designing the instruction or on-the-job training really to make sure that they are really fully and completely aligned. Rewards for skill gains is exactly that. Employers commit to raise wages, and it's typically two or three times during the apprenticeship program, and pay increases can be either based on coursework attainment, educational attainment, or on the demonstration of competencies. And the fifth and final characteristic of apprenticeships are recognized credentials. So, some kind of recognized credential through either a degree or a CDA, or sometimes, it's a state-specific credential that the apprentices gain at the end of their program. I'm now going to turn it over to Tara Dwyer. She is the director of workforce development at the Office of Child Development and Early Learning in Pennsylvania. Tara's current mission exemplifies her long-term commitment to strengthening early education. She seeks to build partnerships between Pennsylvania's Office of Child Development and Early Learning, or OCDEL, and higher learning institutes across the Commonwealth. I'm going to turn it over to you, now, Tara. Thank you much for being with us.

Tara Dwyer: Sure. Thank you. Michelle. Hi, everyone. So, I'm really excited to talk to you today about my favorite subject: apprenticeship. Apprenticeship has been one of the projects that I've been working on over the past few years, but it's certainly a project that I think has immense potential, not just here in PA, but across the country, as our profession seeks unity and cohesion. The PA EC apprenticeship program has expanded opportunities for Pennsylvania's early childhood educator workforce, nurtured relationships and collaborative approaches amongst our professional development organizations and employers. Through apprenticeship, our state has transformed approaches to degree attainment, grown capacity of leaders to attract, retain, and compensate their educators, as well as enhanced collaboration of agencies and offices at the state level. Overall, apprenticeship has expanded supportive practices that have the potential to lead higher-quality programs, better-prepared educators, and offer the skills to employers and leaders so that once credentialed, the educator chooses to remain in their program. So, these might sound like bold claims, and they are, but so far, in our short term, these are the outcomes that we are seeing with our apprenticeship program. At this point, I just want to be clear that we are just getting started in Pennsylvania, but we have enrolled over 130 apprentices that are supported by over 65 employers across the Commonwealth. We're leveraging the experience and expertise of 17 institutes of higher education to ensure that our apprenticeship, sorry, leads to a degree that carries meaning not just in Pennsylvania, but in other states. Portability has been an essential driver in this work from the beginning. Through this collective approach, we have incorporated the needs of our employers, the experience of our workforce organizations, the early childhood expertise of professional learning orgs and institutes of higher ed, and we were able to design a pathway for our early childhood workforce that addresses the whole system and includes the voices of each and every partner. Oh, I forgot to do the slide, hold on.

OK, so an overarching goal. So, I want to start with a little bit of context in our state so that I can highlight how the goal of apprenticeship and how it fits into our larger early-learning system. I will also talk through the rationale that started with apprenticeship and what went into expanding the approach across the state. Of course, the basic design of our model and considerations for next steps for apprenticeship will also be talked about. When I was asked to do this slideshow, I said, "How long should I talk for?" Because when it comes to apprenticeship, I can talk for 10 minutes or 4 hours. There's a lot to cover, but I'm going to do a basic overview, and I will be sure to save plenty of time for questions at the end. Pennsylvania has been working on apprenticeship for just over 6 years. While this is a new endeavor, Pennsylvania had a strong foundation in place, and these factors have aligned to allow a degree-based apprenticeship to really take off. Thanks to the many leaders that have helped to lay a foundation years before, our apprenticeship is what it is today. Historically speaking, Pennsylvania has always set a high bar for the early childhood workforce. Our QRIS was amongst the first in the nation, and degrees have always been a strong focus in our CQI work. Pennsylvania used state funds to become a "teach state" back in 1999. Our investments in the early childhood workforce and their degree attainment was further supported by writing articulation agreements that created pathways for affordable, time-saving degrees for the early childhood workforce. Still, despite all these assets, our achievements were lagging. Without additional investments, our degreed teachers were continuing to be undervalued. While our policies and systems were well-established to accept degree attainment as a pathway for the early childhood workforce, there were still inequities in our early childhood profession.

Due to the ongoing underfunding and undervaluing of the early childhood workforce, this has led to inconsistent practices at the higher ed level, loss of qualified educators working with our youngest children, and even more disparities in our zero to five settings, depending upon their funding stream. However, apprenticeship has been a response to these inequities. In Pennsylvania, the southeast region was in-tuned to the inequities that were happening, and they began to have early childhood experts partner with a workforce organization. Cheryl Feldman from 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund has really been the leader in a lot of this design and the implementation of this across the state. Her expertise in workforce development has lent a new perspective and additional funding streams to how to support our workforce and has really helped to make sure that our apprenticeship is evidence-based and able to be sustainable over time. While each area of our state may have unique challenges, what we found through the expansion of apprenticeship was that the unique challenges actually had a lot of similarities. So, our new model is now embraced by higher eds across the state, employers, and apprentices. We're running apprenticeship in rural settings, suburban areas, and cities. Our apprentices work in infant and toddler and preschool classrooms, including Head Start, child care, and publicly funded pre-K settings.

So, what began as a grassroots endeavor in the Philadelphia area has now grown into a collective approach that includes partnerships, energy, and know-how from many different entities, agencies, and individuals across the Commonwealth. Our apprenticeship is unified but flexible enough to be individualized, which our partners love, and this allows us to all seek the same goals. The idea of an achievable pathway is really grounded in the idea that it's one thing

to go all-in for degrees, but it's another thing to ensure that those degrees have lowered barriers for our early childhood workforce. Some of those barriers are different according to where we are talking in the state, but the other thing to remember is that many of our workforce have had years of specialized training, years of experience, and they aren't starting from scratch, and the apprenticeship really has allowed us an opportunity to explore how to support degree attainment while also acknowledging those strengths. So, the concept of building one registered apprenticeship for the whole state really came out of the idea to ease the stress and the administrative burden on employers. By having one sponsorship who really helps to facilitate that and creates the tools and resources that our employers need to register themselves, that means that – that situation is a one-stop shop for our employers, and it kind of streamlines the process and makes it a lot easier. At the same time, our regional responses to the workforce needs have really highlighted different ways that our IAGs are able to respond to the workforce, and an example of this would be, we were working with a higher ed who had an apprentice that was in a program in the Philadelphia area, and the class was math, and on-the-job competencies that were being assigned, the apprentice would say she was unable to do them in her classrooms because she lacked the materials. Because of the ability to do regional responses and to be able to pull in funding from different areas and resources, the higher ed worked with partners in order to be sure that this program, not just her classroom, but the whole program, had the materials that were needed in order for the apprentice to implement the on-the-job and the practices she was learning about in her classes.

Additionally, we have another area of the state where English is a second language, is something to be navigated in the higher ed system. There's lots of communities that speak Spanish, and the idea of an associate's degree is really far-fetched for some of the workforce in that area. What we've been able to do there is create a 18-credit CDA course which is really beefed-up. The idea of having it be 18 credits instead of what our state usually recognizes as six or nine, is it draws out additional time for that student to become more comfortable and ready to earn grades in their coursework. If the CDA is transferable in, and the student has additional time to get to a place where she can ensure her GPA will align to what is needed for transfer, this has meant that she is more likely to be successful and to transfer into that associate's program rather than feeling like the challenge of improving a GPA after scoring low is too large of a feat. So, developing a shared vision. Developing a shared vision for the ECE apprenticeship has been made easier by the recent release of the Power to the Profession Unifying framework. Here in PA, we have used the decision cycles to help inform our work and to answer questions such as, who are we? What do we do? What do we call this apprenticeship? Where are the important benchmarks to include along the way? What competencies should we use? How do we hold IAGs accountable? And most importantly, what is our North Star? Developing a shared vision wasn't an easy task, but it did result in many interesting conversations and often resulted in the idea that important players were missing from the conversations we were having.

Finally, in January, we had a 3-day retreat with leaders from across the state. 53 participants came together in this retreat to develop a shared vision and a road map for each region to create a pathway to get to the end vision. Various voices were represented in this meeting, including apprentices, employers, advocates, and IAG partners. Also, during this meeting, it was

determined that we were really missing other important voices, and that we would need to expand our circle. OK. So, a lot has happened in-place – to lead to this place in time, but there are still more to come and to refine. But for now, apprenticeship is up and running across the Commonwealth. I'm going to shift a little bit away from our strategy and go a little bit more into the basic design of our model. Here you can see that there are three levels. We start at the CDA. We have an AA and a BA that's offered. The CDA is really seen as our recruitment strategy. It's the CDA which we call the pre-apprenticeship, and in that process, it allows us the opportunity to identify apprentices who may be willing to move on to their associate as well as apprentices that are working at an employer who might be able to support their apprentice in the process. Additionally, at the CDA level, we can offer bridge coursework. This is coursework that helps to improve confidence levels and readiness for the college experience. After the CDA level is completed, somebody can transfer into the AA level and then the BA. College preparation is really important to a lot of this work and is embedded in all steps along the way but most often in the CDA. Our registered apprenticeship is registered with the Department of Labor, and in our state, we call it Labor and Industry, L&I, and it is registered as a hybrid apprenticeship, which means it's a combination of hours worked and competencies developed. So, when Michelle is talking about accumulating wages along the way, in Pennsylvania, as folks hit different benchmarks with the number of hours they've been with an employer, they can see an increase in their pay.

Employer-led, as I stated earlier, is really an important part of apprenticeship, and this might be one of the things that makes apprenticeship really essential, I think, for the early childhood workforce. Employer-led means that the employer has to buy in. This is really crucial for us to consider when we're thinking about our early childhood workforce because a lot of times, what we find is individuals seek degrees because they are also seeking to improve their workspace, their employment, and what they're currently doing. This is an approach. Apprenticeship is an approach to do all of that but while maintaining retention at the actual program. So, getting employers who are interested in considering not just what would benefit their apprenticeship – their apprentice – I'm sorry – but also their program overall is really crucial to this. And then last but not least, what has been great about apprenticeship and our design here in Pennsylvania is that with the inclusion of higher ed being our related technical instruction partners, they are really looking to include more authentic assessments in their degree programs. Many of them are using video to review circle times or learning circles that might be happening on a child care program. They are using photography to have students reflect on different setups in classrooms or activities that might be available. They are leaning more into portfolio reviews and reflection as a way to gather assessment of learning. The dynamic of the apprenticeship has helped to align for seamless articulation strategies across the state. For example, our community colleges and bachelor programs are working closely to ensure that the same benefits are awarded to – I'm sorry – the same benefits of articulation are awarded to our apprentices as they would be during our traditional pathway. In some parts of the state, the role of the BA partner has been solely to meet this need, so they have agreed to fully accept the entire associate-level apprenticeship as a junior transfer student, but in other parts of the state our 4-year partners and our bachelor degree program partners have really leaned into using apprenticeship as a way to address some of the inequities that they see impacting working adults with families that

are required to do student teaching, experiences that might limit their ability to also collect wages during that time. We have on-site coaching and leadership development. So, Michelle called the "Every apprentice has a coach." Some folks call them mentors, and that's the case also here in Pennsylvania, but the way we have designed our model is that every apprentice has a on-site coach, and then that on-site coach gets a mentor. We saw this as an opportunity to really develop the leadership at programs, and sometimes, the on-site coach is a lead teacher in the classroom that the apprentice might be working in. Sometimes it is the director of a program. Sometimes it's the lead teacher of a classroom down the hall. However, you know, that structure looks, it may need to be different depending upon the size of the program or the availability of a qualified individual. Whatever the role of that coach, we always see this as an opportunity for leadership development for that individual. We see this as an opportunity for us to consider how to develop a pipeline as well.

We've also really been able to leverage specialized supports to increase success in degree attainment as well as accessibility. Some examples of this would be how our rural programs found online programming not to be sufficient enough. There is a lack of reliable data. So, what they are starting to explore is the concept of tele-broadcasting lectures and learning opportunities, and then having local facilitators to help coordinate the effort and bring people together. This would cut down on the amount of travel of having to go to programs, but it would also make it cost-effective for our higher eds who could have multiple facilitators in different regions of the state all coming together and tele-broadcasting into one event. Additionally speaking, in some of our more populated areas of the state and actually across the state, we've heard about this many times, that students were submitting written papers for their coursework through their phones, which basically meant they were writing and proofreading and researching simply with the data and the tools that they were able to have on their phone. I think this is something that we all probably recognize as a really creative solution to a problem, but what our IHEs and our apprenticeship partners as well as local business partners have been able to do is to help support the need to get those folks the hardware that they need in order to be successful in their college experience. And then community and regional assets, so, really taking our apprenticeship model and thinking about how it can build upon what's already happening in a region, what a community might have that is really working for them. And that kind of goes back to the example I used before about having a, you know, a Spanish-speaking community that didn't see associate degrees as a viable option for them until their community college really worked with them to figure out a creative pathway to make sure that their confidence was there and that their GPAs wouldn't struggle as they got to that place where they felt comfortable moving forward in an AA program.

And then last but not least, of course, we all know compensation. Compensation is a huge factor, and I think it is probably one of the best pieces this apprenticeship model. We all know that early childhood educators, or anybody going through an educator prep pipeline, doesn't graduate and then all of a sudden has all the wisdom inside their heads the next day. In fact, we know that that happens over time. It happens through experience. And so, somebody who is working a child care program is very valuable while they're enrolled and while they're moving forward, and this model of apprenticeship really allows us to reinforce that. It also allows us to



work with our apprentices to consider the long-term impact of having those wage increases along the way and not just banking in on a once and done stipend or education or retention award, which here in Pennsylvania we offer both. We do have completion stipends, and we do have education or retention awards, but we see those as layering, and really, the wage increases along the way have the biggest impact. In Pennsylvania, we have found that our apprentices make about \$2,000 more at the end of their AA program than what they did before, and I just want to point out that that's ongoing, and that's not a once and done kind of a bump. That is a continuous pay that would be there forever. OK. So, here is our early childhood apprenticeship partners, and I just want to pause for a minute and see if there's any questions around what I've talked about so far that I should pause for.

Michelle: Yeah, Tara, we've got lots of questions. Let me just ask a couple that I think will resonate universally, and then at the end, maybe we can catch some more. There was a question about can they choose the CBA that they want, or is it just for preschool CBA's?

Tara: Oh, sure. Yeah, no. Our apprenticeship model is inclusive of infants and toddlers as well as preschoolers. We are working to iron out some of the details that are included with family child care apprentices. One of the challenges that we've been facing is that in order to be an apprentice, it has to be employer-led, and technically family child care providers are their own employer, so there is a little challenge there, but we have some really brilliant folks in the state working on that, and I'm sure we'll come to some kind of a solution in the near future.

Michelle: OK. We have another question. How are special populations addressed in the apprenticeship program or in the model in Pennsylvania?

Tara: Sure. So, special populations are addressed through regional approaches. They are specifically, you know, sought out in recruitment strategies. A lot of our effort for apprenticeship has been in response to the idea that accessibility to tuition assistance programs just hasn't met their full needs, and what we're finding is it's not just about the content that's being offered at Higher Ed, but it's also about the funding that's attached. And so, when we're thinking about our apprenticeship processes, we're definitely equity-based, and we're thinking about getting the resources to those who need them the most, and really differentiating what that looks like.

Michelle: Perfect. We have a couple of questions about working with institutes of higher education, and one person specifically says they had to pass on some grants because they didn't have a partnership with a 4-year institution. Can you give some insight into how you built those relationships so strong in Pennsylvania?

Tara: Yeah, that's a great question. I think some of that goes back to the foundation that we have here in Pennsylvania. We have a shared 4-year final destination in the career pathway. Technically, it is a pre-K to 4 certification, which I know is a challenge for many states because of the idea that this leads to a certification that earns specific wages not only makes it an appealing program for higher eds to buy into and to support, including the 4-year, but it also means we get additional funding through labor and industry. So, that's the first challenge, I

think, is really making sure that the 4-year programs are interested in what the degree ends in, and that's where it gets a little challenging, I think, for many. The other thing to consider is we have spent a lot of time really – our articulation agreements and our pre-K to 4 certification track is grounded in the national standards and professional, well, the NACE professional prep standards and competencies. And so, we aligned to those when we built this apprenticeship model, which then made it all a little bit more streamlined for our higher eds not only at the AA level but at the BA level too, so it is definitely an asset that Pennsylvania has that some other states might have the challenge of figuring out is, "What do you when those – there are competing competencies there?" But we also ... One of the first ways we started to really get buy-in and to support our higher eds in adapting the apprenticeship program was we started a higher ed consortium, which was really just a community of practice amongst both 2 and 4-year partners across the state that were willing to sit in and come together and think about what apprenticeship could look like for them.

So, in Pennsylvania, this is a degree-based apprenticeship, and it is the first that is registered in the state. So, if you are from another state that already has a degree-based apprenticeship, regardless of whether it's in early childhood education or another field, I think that's worth looking into, but in Pennsylvania, we didn't have a model to look after, so that meant our higher eds really didn't have any, you know, ideas out there already floating around. Luckily, our higher eds in Pennsylvania seem to be really innovative and are already pretty cutting-edge in a lot of their practices, so basically, they learned from one another about what prior learning assessments could look like, what on-the-job learning could look be, what would be the challenges of giving grades to on-the-job-learning, and how would we have to from that relationship between our higher eds as well as between the employers, and that has also been a huge benefit to the workforce. So, this is my sweet spot, and I could talk about the relationships between higher ed and really thinking about how we can better include the voices of the early childhood workforce in what higher ed is doing, but also the relationship building that is required at the state level in order to really make sure we are sitting down as partners with our higher ed folks rather than saying, "Hey, go ahead and do this," but really sitting down and saying, "What are the challenges in this? How would we be able to work this? What would be supportive?" That is really one of the major aspects of this work. So, I could talk forever about that, but I think this is a strong start. We also used a lot of our preschool development grant dollars as well as "Race to the Top" dollars to support higher ed in not only adapting to the transforming the workforce recommendations and the national competencies, but also in thinking about innovative pathways for our workforce. So, they're pretty primed and ready to go. I think they really respected the idea that there was such support from our state to move forward. I think that there was a lot of buy in because they did feel that support. So, I'm going to move on for the sake of time if that's OK, and then we can kind of come back. So, here ...

Michelle: Perfect.

Tara: OK, thanks. Here is a list of our partners. We have some state partnerships at the state level with other agencies, including the Pennsylvania Department of Ed and labor and industry. It is also meant that our early childhood workforce has benefited from dollars from the

Community and Economic Development office, as well as really starting to embed the early childhood work force in the larger state workforce initiatives. In the past 2 years, we have gotten over \$3 million from outside of anything through CCDF or, you know, what would have come in through early childhood dollars anyway, in order to support apprenticeship and adaptation for our systems to be ready to support apprenticeship. We have an apprenticeship sponsor. So, in our state, we have partnered with 1199SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund, which is a workforce organization in the Southeast, and they have really been essential in helping to ensure compliance, ensuring our data gets into the rapids system as needed, and to really get the startup up and ready to go. Higher Ed, you just heard me talk a lot about them. We have 17 partners across the state, both associate awarding and bachelor awarding programs. Intermediaries really serve as the workforce support side of the house. Our industry partners, I'm going to talk a little bit more about in the next slide, and of course employers, we know is a heavy lift for our employer folks.

So, this is a slide I like to talk about right after partners because there's a lot of partners, and they all have a huge piece of this puzzle that's essential to everything coming together. But here in the dark blue, you can see the direct, you know, what I like to call the folks who are in direct service to the children and families that are out there. We have the employer, the apprentice and the on-the-site coach, and then underneath that you can see who their helper organization is, which is the easiest way, I think, to describe it. So, our employers really lean heavily into the intermediaries, and then our intermediaries, you can see what their tasks are with the gray line, right? So, their opportunities to support the employer is offering technical assistance and financial support, helping the employer to consider ways for staffing because we know there's a lot to consider with an apprentice, an on-the-site coach, not just getting them time together but also getting release time for the apprentice to attend coursework. And then, of course, when we're talking about retention being a driving force in all of this, there's plenty of technical assistance that is needed for the employer to consider ways of keeping staff employed. And then our second person is the apprentice, and this is the actual person who would be directly impacted by our IHEs. The IHEs are where the apprentice enrolls in to get that degree program, and then, of course, the IHEs have really been tasked from the state to – You know, the state has funded their transformation, whether it was through a grant opportunity or through incentivizing them for some tuition assistance programs, but we also offer a solid tuition assistance program through a couple of different options depending upon the employer and eligibility. And then our IHEs are also amendable to honoring and affirming competencies of this apprentice who's been in the profession for a while. And then, of course, the on-site coach. So, sometimes the on-site coach is also the director. Sometimes it is the lead teacher, just as I spoke about before. But this person's role is really important, and we wanted to match her or this role with another support as well. In some models, the mentor that supports the coach is from a professional learning org, whether that would be an institute of higher education, or it could be an industry recognized organization in the area. It can even be an AUIC affiliate or chapter depending on where we are in the state. They really support the coach in thinking about competency development, ensuring that they are having reflective conversations with their apprentice and really just the day-to-day experience of what's needed from them in order

to support the on-the-job learning that is needed for the IHEs to track as well as the sponsor to track.

So, to think that three years ago this apprenticeship was just rolling out in first cohort of 33 students, and to compare it to where we are today is super humbling for me. In fact, three years ago just last week was the very first coaching clinic we ever had in Philadelphia, and I happen to know that because I was doing it at the time. What has caught the attention of our state leaders is the promise that apprenticeship offers. It is also the idea of legitimizing the profession that I think is worth leaning in to. While we have for so long ached to be valued as educators here in PA, the apprenticeship signals that statewide, our offices, businesses, and agencies are now seeing the importance of having a qualified workforce for their youngest children. This is huge. Even if it isn't exactly how we hoped it would be – we would be recognized, it is certainly a first encouraging step. So, as apprenticeship is embraced and supported, I wanted to point out that here in PA, we are still looking for a reliable funding for development, administration of the apprenticeship and, of course, an evaluation. We would love to have a predictable funding stream that isn't grant-based for our apprenticeship and that can grow roots and become firmly established at the state level. The infrastructure that is needed to maintain apprenticeship won't be cheap, but there is so much promise in this investment, and at this point, I just want to also point out that there has been a House bill, actually, a bill that was introduced that would help to fund this in a more traditional, in a more stabilized way. I'll be sure to get that information out to Alison so that we can share that all with you as well. And I'm noting the time.

So, the last thing I just want to say, this is quote that I have pulled out from a leadership book that I have relied heavily on for the past few years. I really use this book to remind myself of the healing that can occur in systems. This book brings me great hope for our future, and it helps to keep me optimistic, but I think this specific quote really speaks to the work that we have done here on apprenticeship in the past few years. I leave this with you, and it can be incredibly tempting to think through workforce solutions with only like-minded individuals, but I do not think that is actually what is best at this point in time, and if there is one thing that PA has gained from the experience of building apprenticeship, it is the idea that our system really needs the various skills and contributions from many to ensure the greater good for all. So, call your friends, make new ones, and stay open-minded, flexible, and ready for your mindset to expand because I think apprenticeship might really be a promising endeavor for many states to consider. Thank you. And I – we might have a few minutes for questions, but if not, I know we talked about getting them out so we can respond over time.

Michelle: Yes. Thank you so much, Tara. You gave such incredible information, and we have about 51 questions that, unfortunately, we did not have a chance to get to, but fear not, we will get the questions to Tara, and together, we will get them all answered and get them soon as we get the recording out. And Lucy, I'm going to let you wrap up.

Lucy: Thank you, Michelle. All right. So, like Michelle mentioned, we will – all of the questions that we were not able to get to – we will be sending those by e-mail. So, if your question was

not answered, do not worry. We will be able to get those to you by e-mail. And to close this out, I just wanted to share the resources that we have with you. In the green resource widget, you are able to access all of these resources on the screen, so, download those. You can click to download them, and we, you know, hope that you will take a look at those resources and use them to your advantage. And also, just sharing with you the references. You should be able to also access those. You can download the entire webinar itself in the green resource widget as well. And here I have the contact information for the presenters. You have Michelle, Brandi, and Tara's e-mail. All right. Last, we would like to thank you all, but thank you all so much for joining. We hope that you have a great evening.