INVESTING in High Skills

TECHNICAL SKILLS TRAINING
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

Skills*Accelerator*

Preparing Tomorrow's Workforce with 21st Century Technical Skills

H-1B: Technical Skills Training and Jobs Accelerator Grants
Employment & Training Administration, Office of Workforce Investment
Division of Strategic Investments

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UPCOMING TA EVENTS & RESOURCES...

Mark your calendars for the following TA events and resources!

September 2016

8th — (Coffey Break Virtual Chat): *Moving to Work - What a Participant Needs to be Successful*. This 30 min. Virtual Chat will explore what participants need to know moving from grantees' training to employment (examples include: practice scenarios after you have been hired, discussions on having a network in place, tips to settling into your new work environment, developing a portfolio, etc.). A Tip Sheet focusing on "written scenarios and what will you do responses" will be sent out after the Chat.

22nd — (Virtual Chat): *How to Summarize the Work You've Done*- This virtual chat will explore the steps that grantees can take to create a legacy for their program through reports, Internet repositories for lessons learned, program achievements, press-releases, opinion editorials, and celebrations. A Tip Sheet on "*How to get an opinion editorial published*" will be sent out after the Chat.

6 WAYS TO INCREASE GRADUATE ENGAGEMENT AND MAXIMIZE LONG-TERM SUCCESS

As you enter the final phase of your project, you'll be shifting your focus from placing graduates into jobs to helping graduates keep their jobs. Every graduate placed into employment will face challenges of one sort or another as they begin a new career. They may have difficulty meeting the expectations of a younger supervisor or may be stressed by the demands of their new work environment. Whatever the challenge, they need your guidance and support which is only possible if you maintain an ongoing relationship with them.

While the challenges associated with maintaining an ongoing relationship with your program's graduates are considerable, the benefits of doing so make it well worth the effort. Engaging your graduates for the long term not only gives you an opportunity to

address any problems that might arise during their first months on the job, but can provide you with feedback for improving your program's services. It also allows you to provide them with career advancement services which are the key to a graduate's long-term success. Additionally, long-term relationships with your program's graduates help develop a cadre of advocates who can add credibility to your efforts and speak to the need for employer-driven training initiatives.

This article will provide you with a variety of ways to engage your graduates and create long-term relationships with them. You shouldn't wait until graduation day to talk to your participants about staying connected with each other and your training initiative. The best way to create these relationships is encourage a pay-it-forward spirit at the earliest possible time in their involvement with your project. Provide them with an e-mail list of program participants at the beginning of the training and encourage them to form study groups as they prepare for course and credentialing exams. By planting the seeds of mutual support early in the process, you'll pave the way for their continuing engagement with each other and your initiative in the post-graduation phase of your project. Here are ten ideas you can use at any point in your involvement with participants and graduates to get you started:

1. **Establish a graduate advisory committee –** Engaging graduates as volunteers is a win-win for you and your participants. A graduate advisory committee can provide you with feedback that can be used for continuous quality improvement and act as a sounding board for new initiatives. Graduates who serve on an advisory board benefit by having the opportunity to expand their professional network and learn about new training opportunities. It also provides them with a career-building volunteer opportunity that can be included on their resume.

2. **Build a network of graduates who can mentor students –** This is a great way to stay in touch with graduates and provide help to students who may be struggling with their course work or need career guidance. When you recruit graduates to serve as mentors, you'll want to provide them with a concise description of a mentor's role, including tasks and time commitments.

3. **Create a speaker's bureau –** Nothing is more powerful than a personal story, especially when it is delivered with passion and enthusiasm. A speaker's bureau is an excellent way to engage graduates and promote the brand of your training initiative. Volunteer speakers can help with participant recruitment, serve as a role model for students and assist with your employer engagement efforts.

4. **Use Technology to Stay in Touch –** Social media has changed the way we connect and engage with people in professional communities and is an excellent way to stay in touch and provide career advancement support. An invitation-only LinkedIn group can be set up at no cost and is easy to maintain. It can be used to share industry news, post career opportunities, and give graduates an opportunity to provide mutual support. A Facebook page can do likewise and also provides opportunities for sharing news on a more personal level. If your organization has the capacity to host a webinar, you might want to consider holding a virtual event to bring graduates together.

5. **Provide advancement planning services –** Advancement planning services can contribute to a graduate's long-term success by helping them clarify their career objectives and chart out a pathway for reaching their goals. Provide each student with a copy of the Individual Career Plan for Advancement Template that can be found on WorkforceGPS and set a date for a follow-up call in three months to monitor their progress.

6. **Use an existing alumni network or create one for your project** – If your project is affiliated with a college or university and your graduates qualify as alumni of the school, you want to encourage them to join the alumni association and take advantage of the benefits offered to members. Membership in a college alumni association can greatly expand a graduate's professional contacts and usually provides access to professional career services and other related resources. If your project is not affiliated with a college and you intend to continue providing training and placement services, you may want to consider establishing your own alumni network. Keep in mind that people join alumni association for two reasons: networking and prestige. While an alumni association for a training program may not rank high for its prestige value, you want to highlight its benefits and values to increase the attractiveness of membership.

Helping your graduates make a successful transition from student to worker is no easy task and requires a commitment of time and effort. But staying in touch need not be expensive, especially if you engage successful graduates in your follow-up efforts and use social media for outreach and support. You'll find that a small investment in post-graduate services will yield handsome dividends. It will help you build trusting relationships with your participants and employers and, in the long run, strengthen your program's capacity to achieve its objectives and sustain its initiatives.

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT – DISTRICT 1199C

District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund, based in Philadelphia, is a highly successful uniquely designed labor management partnership focusing on health care needs throughout the greater Philadelphia region. Over the last four decades the Training Fund has served more than 100,000 Delaware Valley students. The Training Fund's student-centered approach to education and training incorporates individualized career coaching and case management to help individuals succeed.

An H-1B TST grantee, the Training Fund utilizes many of the "Six Ways to Increase Graduate Engagement" featured above. For example, the Training Fund established a group of mentors that are available to assist those considering a career in health care. Additionally, the program utilizes a Speakers Bureau. During the US Department of Labor's National Apprenticeship Week last November, an apprentice graduate spoke at the Career Pulse Check Apprentices in Healthcare, sharing her experience with Philadelphia FIGHT, an affiliated comprehensive health services organization.

The use of Technology is another key component of graduate engagement with the Training Fund utilizing a Facebook page, Greater Philadelphia Healthcare Partnership, and a dedicated web page, http://www.greaterphilahealthcare.org/, to address the needs of employers and students. The role of technology will continue to expand as the program matures. Alumni and their continued success are also important to the Training Fund. As part of keeping in touch and engaging alumni, many services are available to graduates for a lifetime to maintain and enhance their skills while being a part of the District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund family.

CELEBRATING A GRANTEE'S JOB PLACEMENT EFFORTS
Moving People to Employment

South Central CT's Workforce Alliance made its efforts payoff when it comes to placing people into employment with the Technical Skills Training Initiative. The grantee placed an emphasis from the beginning of the grant on the long-term unemployed. Workforce Alliance and its partner, Eastern (CT) Workforce Investment Board, knew that it had to identify potential clients who would benefit from skills enhancement through on-the-job training (OJT), so it contracted with Monster.com and its Power Resume service to identify individuals within a 100-mile radius, many of whom normally would not typically seek services through the American Job Centers. Secondly, Workforce Alliance assessed the region's skill needs in the Engineering, IT and Advanced Manufacturing fields, and aligned with employer needs by working closely with sector groups, including the New Haven Manufacturers Association, economic development officials, and chambers of commerce. As a result of all these efforts, 361 participants were hired as full-time employees by companies either directly or using the OJT incentive, earning the standard wage for workers of their class and experience at the company. The average wage of hires was more than $21 per hour. In addition, participants were offered supportive services to help them succeed in their new employment. Workforce Alliance president, Bill Villano, says their overall success is attributable to focusing on employers in sectors with a clear need for talent, while providing the incentive to train on-the-job to close skills and knowledge gaps. To date they have been able to serve 430 long-term unemployed. With 361 placements, Workforce Alliance met its four-year goals in less than two years. A job well done, and worth celebrating.

A personal success worth celebrating involves Gerald Cap, who was hired and trained on-the-job by Rowland Technologies in Wallingford, CT. as a computer and network administrator after having been unemployed for more than six months.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES
Just in Case You Missed It...

- **Tips for Accelerating your Job Placement Efforts -** If you're seeking ways to accelerate your job placement efforts, check out this tip sheet. https://h1bskillstraining.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/07/18/22/17/Resource
- **Job Interview Checklist -** This checklist provides a structure for identifying and addressing job interview strengths and weaknesses. It can be used prior to your participants' first job interview or following the interview in those cases where the candidate failed to secure employment. You can download it by clicking on this link: https://h1bskillstraining.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/08/04/12/44/Job-Interview-Checklist
- **Job Development and Placement Services Assessment Instrument -** The purpose of this instrument is to provide a structure for H-1B training initiatives to assess job development and placement practices and develop a plan for improving placement and retention outcomes. https://h1bskillstraining.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/05/11/14/11/Job-Placement-Assessment
- **Predictive Indicators of Job Loss -** This Bulletin includes several indicators of job loss, pertinent questions to ask your employed graduates and their supervisors, tips for responding to these warning signs, and strategies to maximize employment retention rates. You can download it by clicking on this link: https://h1bskillstraining.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/06/23/14/50/Predictive-Indicators-of-Job-Loss

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR FPO—EDGAR GARCIA, REGION 4

Edgar Garcia is a Federal Project Officer and Program Analyst at the U.S. Department of Labor. Prior to joining the U.S. Department of Labor, he is a retiree from the Air Force where he served as the superintendent of Aerial Operations in Altus Oklahoma during his last tour of duty. Outside of working with the Department of Labor he likes to travel and meet people, he is a data enthusiast and loves to play with databases to see how current programs can be improved. Mr. Garcia has four College and University Degrees in Logistics, Accounting, Management and Economics as well as certificates in computer programing and program management.

APPROVAL FOR EXTENSION OF H-1B TST, JA, AND MIIA OMB-APPROVED PERFORMANCE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

PERFORMANCE CORNER

This serves as notification to all H-1B TST, JA, and MIIA grantees that the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) received a three-(3) year extension of its current H-1B performance reporting package with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This approval extends the performance reporting requirements for grantees through June 30, 2019 and does not change the current reporting requirements for TST, JA, or MIIA grantees.

All OMB-approved performance reporting materials have been updated to reflect the new expiration date and can be access on the H-1B grantee Community of Practice (CoP) on WorkforceGPS at:

A big "Thank You!" to all the grantees who submitted and certified performance reporting data for the most recent quarter ending on June 30th, 2016. If you have not certified your data yet, please to do so ASAP!

And just a reminder to all TST and JA grantees: if you have any performance-related questions at all as you are coming to the end of your period of performance, please do not hesitate to contact the national office at dsi@dol.gov. We will work with you to make sure your performance data is submitted accurately and on time.

- QPR Form: https://h1bskillstraining.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/03/29/11/38/H-1B_Standard_QPR_Form_OMB_1205-0507_Exp_03-31-2016_vJan2014
- Performance Reporting Handbook: https://h1bskillstraining.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/03/14/14/42/H-1B-Performance-Reporting-Handbook

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at dsi@dol.gov.

COMMON ACRONYMS
CoP – *Community of Practice*
DSI – *Division of Strategic Investments*
DOL – *U.S. Department of Labor*
ETA – *Employment and Training Administration*
FPO – *Federal Project Officer*
H-1B JA – *Jobs Accelerator Grantees*
H-1B TST – *Technical Skills Training Grantees*
OWI – *Office of Workforce Investments*
PII – *Personally Identifiable Information*
QNR – *Quarterly Narrative Report*
QPR – *Quarterly Performance Report*
WF3One — *Workforce3One (Online Resource)*

ETA GRANTEES' COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE/RESOURCE PAGE

Be sure to visit the ETA Grantees' Community of Practice/Resource Page for updated forms, tip sheets, interim reporting guidance, webinar recordings and other useful technical assistance materials. This site is designed to support your efforts in getting participants trained and moving along career pathways. It's also a place to learn and share, and we'll be posting training materials and grant resources for your use during your grant's period of performance.
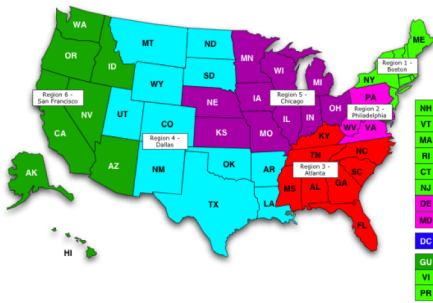
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REGION 5 — Chicago — 312-596-5400
REGION 6 — San Francisco — 415-625-7900

*The DSI Team encourages you to write us with any questions, concerns, and topics of interest for TA activities to the **dsi@dol.gov** mailbox.*