

Building Relationships with Adult Education and Workforce Training Programs

Brandi Black Thacker: My name is Brandi Black Thacker, and I want to welcome you guys to our Building Relationships with Adult Education and Workforce Training Program session. This is I believe the sixth already in our webinar series on Building Foundations for Economic Mobility. I'm so happy to be with you guys today. Already as I scroll through the chat, not only do I see a lot of familiar names of folks that I've been with us this journey over the months, I believe we began in February, but certainly new names and friends that we're so thrilled to welcome today, and a couple of blasts from the past. But with all of that fanfare, I would like to turn over the official and very illustrious welcome to one of my favorite folks and yours, Kiersten Beigel from the Office of Head Start. Welcome, KB!

Kiersten Beigel: Good afternoon. This is Kiersten, my name is Kiersten Beigel, and I'm glad y'all are joining us. And maybe some of you are new, some of you are back for this conversation that we've been having monthly, titled Head Start Building Foundation for Economic Mobility Series. And in the past couple of webinars what we've done is focused on building community partnerships to help families strengthen their financial capabilities and access safe financial products and services and protect their savings. And so that's kind of where our partnership focus has been. Now we're going to turn our partnership focus to a different theme, and that is to think about economic mobility. Specifically how Head Start grantees can partner with organizations that can help families access education, training, and support, so they can find employment and increase their income, move up the economic ladder.

So if you were back with us in February, you may remember that Julie Strong was one of our presenters. That was the week we did our kickoff on building foundations. And she's an adult education and training expert at ABT Associates. And she shared with us a few things, if you remember. She talked about some of the challenges that families face and the opportunities that are available for them to overcome some of those challenges and obstacles. She said specifically that skills and credentials matter as gatekeepers to higher paid jobs in today's economy, but that it's hard to get there with only a high school diploma. And it's nearly impossible without a high school diploma. We know that working parents are particularly challenged to access and complete employment and training opportunities that lead to better paying jobs. And so in thinking kind of about the steps that need to be built into this process of getting increased income and better paying jobs over time, we think Head Start can play a really important role in partnering with families here. So we're glad we're here to help.

Today we're going to be joined by a partner from a program, area Head Start program in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She's going to share with us her program's successes and some lessons learned from some different innovative efforts that she and her colleagues have going on. And before we get to her though, I want to turn it over, back over, I should say to our moderator, Brandi, who you've already been hearing from. She is going to give us a quick overview of this landscape of employment and training partners and the different services that exist in communities across the country. That'll kind of get us grounded in thinking about what the options are. So, Brandi, over to you.

Brandi: Thank you so much, Kiersten, and thanks to you guys. As I'm looking in chat, I see so many familiar faces and names. I'm starting to feel like old home week over here. But my name is Brandi Black Thacker, and I have the true honor and pleasure to direct the training, technical assistance, and collaboration effort for the National Center on Parent Family Community Engagement. And what I hope to get to do together today is pull apart so many of the wonderful opportunities we already have, know, and do, to partner beside families as it relates to adult education and workforce training programs. I'm

really excited to make some connections for not only what we already do beside families, but hopefully inspire some exciting enhancements for what you might be considering. I'm guessing that that's why we are all here together. So as for where we're going today, we want to go back to where we started, sort of that ground level of how we engage families in the positive goal-oriented relationship. And I would humbly submit to you guys that we really do this better than anybody else. How we get beside families to understand their hopes, their dreams, their goals; not only for themselves but their family as a whole. And here's the other thing that's so important about the work that we do.

We don't assume what families need. Right? We really get beside them and asked them to share with us what their hopes, their dreams are, and what their expertise already is, so that we can figure out how to partner beside them in super meaningful ways that are real and relevant for right now. With that, I want to take you to one of my favorite graphics and yours. When I'm in person, I usually say, you know it, you love it, you live it, you have it memorized, the PFCE framework. And of course, the way that we want to connect our conversation today, if you've been with us since February in this dialogue, you know that we usually [inaudible] into that blue column and family well-being. But because we define that as families being safe, healthy, and financially secure, and certainly a lot of our economic mobility work could be captured under that overall umbrella, however, today I think we're going to straddle a couple of the outcomes. I think that perhaps we could stick a toe in the water as families of learners and certainly families as lifelong educators because here's what we know.

When families increase their skills and their education and their financial stability, it absolutely has an impact on the growth and the trajectory of their child. That's why we were designed way back over 50 years ago to be a two-generation program. So let's start getting into some of these details. To move beyond minimum wage jobs in today's economy, individuals not only have to have beyond a high school degree or diploma, they have to have at least some college level education. So let's think about this together. These are things that are not surprises to us. Right?

But let's get grounded here in the same platform. Did you know that of the new jobs created since the Great Recession, 99 percent of those require more than a high school diploma. Ninety percent of those require more than a high school diploma. I think it bears repeating. Only one percent of jobs are accessible to workers without a high school diploma. One percent. That's 80,000 jobs.

So here's what it means. The recession is still very real for many families and specifically for many of our Head Start families in particular. Also, many of today's low-wage jobs are clearly, these are things that we know, part-time, may not offer any benefits, and if they are, it's few. The work schedules and shifts are unpredictable. Families have to take on multiple jobs to make ends meet. So all of these factors, all this foundational information, allows us the opportunity to get beside families in a way that can really, if this is a goal and a dream of theirs, help enhance or catapult, if you will, their trajectory into a place that they've been hoping to go.

So for many Head Start families, a chance to step off the low-wage roller coaster into a stable higher-paid job is all they need to get that solid footing, toward the upward mobility that many of them and many of us crave. But the challenges, you guys know what they, they're real, juggling children and jobs and life responsibilities. That's where we come in. Listen, not only from our own insight and expertise entirely to the program, but here's something else that we know that we do better than anybody else, we reach out. We reach out into our community and we know where to look for help, support, and enhancement, to get families services that they need and deserve. So let's look at a couple things here.

What services are already out there? I want to offer a couple of these things for you guys to consider. I mean, so many of us in Head Start programs, we update that catalog, right, that parent handbook, at the beginning of the year, where we offer things, resources, ideas, for families to consider that are already out there in our community. But how many of you really get down into that and look to make sure the services are still active, that phone numbers haven't changed, that the criteria is still current? I wanted to just touch base on a couple of these opportunities to make sure that you are able to access everything that might be helpful for your families.

Okay, let's look at the top of the list here, the legal services and supports to access benefits. As you're going to hear firsthand from Ms. Sheila a little later, our invited guest today, an important step in supporting parents to pursue education and training, is to make sure that they have help accessing any benefits that are already available to them and for which they're eligible. There's so much out there that can really help our families into that sort of catapult position. These services can help maximize all available sources of income and support so that parents can focus on pursuing their education and employment goals. So that's a foundational piece.

When we look at the second part around adult basic education, certainly many of your already holding hands with these folks in your community. But some families may need some help acquiring skills and knowledge that they need to complete their high school equivalency degree or even pass entrance exams for post-secondary certificates or degrees. Other folks, and we hear this a lot, specifically in our family partnership agreement process; other families may even want support in acquiring English as a second or third or fourth language. The Federal Department of Education funds adult education basic grants to states that support more than 2500 programs across the country to deliver adult education and literacy service.

Here are a couple of pieces I think we should find intriguing because of our own regulatory body in Head Start, for instance. The things that this kind of service could include workplace literacy services, family literacy services. Secret side note, not so secret side note, that part's in the Head Start Act, right. We have to get beside families and offer those topics in particular. GED preparation, English literacy programs, and integrated English literacy civics education programs, specifically for immigrants who might be seeking citizenship. All of those things considered, we certainly have the opportunity, and probably many of you already have been in partnership with folks who offer job skills, coaching [audio skips]. These I know in Head Start that we get beside a lot of the Department of Labor. They have formula grants to states for employment and training services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. And many of you I know on the line that I recognize, even were engaged in an apprenticeship model that also lives under the Department of Labor umbrella. There are also other programs potentially in your community that offer support for developing things like the soft skills, quote unquote, like how to write a resume, how to prepare for a job interview, how to find appropriate work attire. And others even may offer job search and career coaching opportunities, skills assessments, and other services that help match jobseekers to hiring employers.

Let's look at the fourth one here, certificate programs and apprenticeships, certainly an overlap for the Department of Labor from the last one. But some industries, and specifically like health services, I know a lot of you at the beginning said that you wanted to be when you grew up doctors and nurses. But these kinds of services have entry-level positions that may or may not require a high school diploma, but they have specific training or skill requirements. These kinds of certificate programs are certainly shorter

in duration usually than the traditional associate's or bachelor's degree programs. And certainly for a lot of our families, offer that foot in the door and an easier entry into postsecondary education. The apprenticeships that I mentioned a little bit ago are not only a path for parents certainly to learn skills on the job, but again, to gain that entry into higher-paid employment opportunities. So any kind of those career technical education programs offered by high schools, community colleges, regional technical centers, all of these things are available in support of not only where we hope to partner beside our families, but where they are certainly telling us that they would like to go.

Last and not least for this slide, we certainly have that associate's and the bachelor's degree. And a lot of us, just within the proper course of our partnership with community, have connections to, for instance, our community colleges. But we know that when parents set goals for themselves and their families, there are a number of ways that we can jump in beside them. Not only reaching out to those community colleges and four-year institutions about enrollment or prerequisites, the pre-requirements, placement exams, course offerings, schedules, all those things that come along, tuitions and fees, financial aid, all of those places. I know that many of you even on the line have worked with community colleges and four-year universities to even offer college courses on-site for families who may not be able to travel far distances if, you know, if you're in a rural community. Where we can partner alongside of our families at different points along this continuum and see what is most meaningful for them based on the trajectory that they choose.

Here's the great news. Anything that you do to support the families to move toward those long-term goals has value. So many of us always talk about in Head Start, we may plant the seed, and we may not get to see the full bloom of the work that we get to do beside families, but we know that something is being nurtured and something is growing. And that not only impacts the family as a whole, but as I mentioned before, their child and children as well.

So let me check in with you guys. I see a lot of chat here going. And I want to ask you all a question. You see all of these things on the screen. Did we miss out on any? Which things would you add to this list in terms of services that are out there to support your families in their trajectory toward any adult education or workforce training? Veteran services, GI Bills, I saw support of adult education, job fairs, resource fairs. I'm seeing mental health services. English as a second language, vocational rehabilitation services. Financial planning. So we can see and certainly a lot of these we could perhaps collapse into some of these overarching categories on the screen, and some certainly stand on their own. Free GED programs, I'm seeing. So clearly, there's housing, offer childcare assistance, says Darnell. Bachelor's degrees. Online learning opportunities.

[Inaudible] boot camp. Oh Yolanda, career readiness boot camp, that sounds intriguing. So clearly, all kinds of wonderful opportunities that not only we've found and built alongside of our families, but certainly that we continue to think about as our population grows and changes.

So, Tina says resources for families impacted by incarceration. There was a wondering from me about even with the online nod that you guys gave a little bit ago, we hear more and more that we're serving more teen families than ever before. What kinds of things get exciting, you know, depending on the families that we are walking beside right now. And often our younger families get really tickled about being able to use technology in ways that, you know, feed their own career trajectories. So I love what you guys are saying. Charmain's putting in a vote for the boot camp idea. On-the-job training. All right,

so a lot of creativity here in the room certainly. But with all of that creativity, I can't lose out on the opportunity to, on this next slide, ask one more question.

So I want to transition. I see some of you are still typing, feel free to keep going. I want to see, when you partner with folks in your community based on all that insight you just shared, who is it? Who are you working with? Just type in general, if you don't mind, about who you're working with. If you're working with folks for on-the-job training, Melissa, hi, good to see you again, who is it? Who are you partnering beside in your community to make sure families have that opportunity? Angelique, I see that big -- local colleges, adult education. Charmain is offering some partnership opportunities. Love it. Community centers. Goodwill. Beth, thank you for that. The Impact Institute. The Virginia Department of Social Services. One of the colleges. Some migrant and seasonal. Let me scroll back up. Oh, migrant legal services. Career center. Libraries. Workforce centers. Oh, see, I just need to turn over the mic to you guys right away because you're hitting on almost every single one that I'm going to unveil here in just a minute. Adult education. Local colleges. Teacher volunteers. The American Job Center.

So many of these things. Well, let me show you what I think that, you know, we have here for you to consider, which may be confirmation for many of the things you've already said, and maybe a couple new ones. Let's see here with my bubble. We have top left-hand bubble. So much of what you guys have already offered. That local workforce investment board. You guys know this. Every state has a regionally-defined local workforce investment board that are responsible for developing and implementing a collaborative plan to use federal funds from that Workforce Investment Opportunity Act to make sure that the workforce training and employment support services are supported. And back in 2014, there was a law passed where local boards have to prioritize low income and vulnerable families for many of those services. And here is good news. Those boards are just now at the implementation stage of their new plans. So if you're looking at the top left-hand bubble, that Local Workforce Investment Board Act, and you're not the board and you're not already engaged with them, it sounds like based on that 2014 law that it's a really great time to jump in beside them to see how you can support your families, if that's something that feels right. They're a great source of information. They had a lot of contact in their community. And they can certainly find out where and who to go to if you need any support in extending for your families. And there's a resource they have called Career One Stop. It's a website and we're going to put that link up for you here, actually it's going to be highlighted on the slide that comes later.

The American Job Centers that you see in that top center bubble, that gold bubble, are often known as One Stop Centers, also designed to provide a full range of assistance to jobseekers all under one roof. They also are recently reauthorized under that same 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act. And they offer training, referrals, career counseling, job listing, and similar employment-related services. Folks can go right on in and visit in person, or they can access all this great information online or even through a kiosk and remote access.

So again, we're going to give you the Career One Stop website so you can have that for your tool belt, if you don't already. And then on the right bubble, the green one that says "community providers," these are folks so many of which you guys have already offered. There's local nonprofit organizations that may partner with us to provide employment and training, like Goodwill, you guys called this out. United Way. Catholic Charities. Career training contractors. And many of us work with churches or faith-based organizations, too. We can't forget one of my favorite community places to run even with my own

family, the library, in that bottom right-hand blue bubble. Of course, we know delivers their own adult education opportunities. They are a hub for job search options or even other direct services, like making space available in the community right there at the library, because it's usually accessible, centrally located. Families feel comfortable there because perhaps through the Head Start program we're already going there in connection with their littlest one. So it can be not only a great hub of information, but also what else might be available in the community as well.

Last but not least, this last bubble, bottom left, the community college, we already talked about. Where we get the opportunity to maybe even invite them to our Head Start site to deliver course work. Where we can work on career pathways and programs or other initiatives that specifically are based or built for our families that lead to that real credential or degree that are in high-demand professions. So we're going to go in a little more depth about that last part on our conversation next month in August.

Now, I know couple of you are still typing, but I want to hear your virtual voices again. We're going to switch over to a couple of polls. And you still have your general chat down here at the bottom. But we want to hear from you. This is your chance to weigh in. So the question at the top, as you can see, you're already jumping in, does your program offer any of the following services onsite? Here's my caveat, scroll down, there's more for you to see. So check all that apply. You can check more than one on both the questions. If you want to scroll down and you discover that something you're doing is not on the list, click other, type it right on in the general chat. We want to see and hear about that too.

Lisa, we see in chat you're saying that you guys have partnerships in the community. Let me scroll back up so I don't miss it. Partnerships in your community with local community organizations that offer those educational programs. This is great. Volunteer experiences, Georganne says. Parenting skills. Early childhood education. This is great. So let's look at the poll results so you guys can see here what came out on top.

It looks like for what your program offers on-site, the number one result was job skills workshop. Resume help with interviewing skills, computer skills. It looks like that comes in first for the first question. And a very close second, the percentages are still coming in; job search assistance. It looks like those are the top two for what you do onsite. And then down at the bottom, for the second question, whom does your program partner with to provide those services? It looks like, oh my, there are some close ones here. Top of the heap, the GED, the General Education Development. And a close second are a couple that are tied, adult basic education and again those job skill workshops. So it looks like a lot of us are having the great minds think alike and support in partnership beside of our families in what we already offer here. Okay, [inaudible] food bank, she offers. And Pat is saying literacy and language, CPR, basic first aid, all kinds of great training. I don't know, Pat, if that's early childhood health training. Trying to get my alphabet soup back here. But great, thank you guys so much for participating in the poll, and please continue to share all of your good thinking in general chat. That box is always going to be there for you to keep your dialogue going so that we each learn from each other.

Now I'm excited to hurry and get over to Sheila. She is here to talk to -- before we get over to Sheila's wonderfulness, I want to offer to you, if there's one thing you take away today, it's this website that I was telling you about a little bit ago. This is where it's sort of that one-stop shop. You guys probably already have access to it. But if it's new for you, I want to make sure that you have it so that you can locate any new, for instance, adult education opportunities, any employment or training that might be out there in your community, and even taking a minute, of course, after this webinar, poke around and

see what's out there. There's just a ton of information and resources, not only for you but your community partners, and most importantly, our Head Start families.

Well, with all that, I want to get over to Ms. Sheila. She is our special and illustrious guest today. I want to make sure that we have the opportunity to honor her appropriately. Because listen to this, she's a family community development coordinator for the Capital area Head Start program in Keystone Human Services in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. We were teasing before you guys signed on, I too grew up in region three and am familiar with certainly the program in Pennsylvania and the great work that they're doing. So we're so excited to have Sheila here. She's going to tell you a little bit about her story and her journey from being a Head Start parent herself, to being a leader in her program and in her community, working tirelessly to build partnerships and grow more opportunities for families in the Capital area program. Hey, Sheila, welcome, we're so happy you're here. How are you?

Sheila Forrester: Hi, thank you so much for having me. I really look forward to sharing some information and getting some information.

Brandi: All right, well, Ms Sheila, let's jump right on in. Take us back, take us back to the beginning. Tell us about how you got started on your path and specifically to your current role in the work that you do today. Tell us where you started.

Sheila: I actually started as a Head Start parent more than 20 years ago. When people say how long have I been with Head Start, I'm like paid or unpaid, because it was a long time that I wasn't paid. Because as a parent, I felt that I was very valued in everything that I was doing. We had a lot of workshops that came into our center. And one of those workshops, I was very fortunate to meet an attorney from legal services. And it was Peter Zurflieh, he's now with Community Justice Project. When we met, I was really struggling with the Department of Public Welfare, because I wasn't getting the services I needed to continue my education.

And I kind of -- it was hit or miss, whether I got what I needed or not. I didn't really know the system very well. So being able to partner with legal services personally, Peter helped me through a lot of the barriers that I was facing. And through that, we formed a really unique partnership. Because I could then help him with what he needed. He might have had the technical, the law, and a general understanding of what someone that was low income might need to get through, but, you know, I'm living it. And the people that are around me are living it. So I could bring that to the table. So we formed that really great bond of give-and-take. And we started then presenting some of the issues with what I was facing and other families were facing with moving forward with their education. And some strategies on how families could access childcare and transportation, books, and tuition, and anything they would need to go to school or help them in the workforce.

So through this work, we met Dr. Virginia Schein. At the time she was a professor at Gettysburg area or Gettysburg College, and she had written a book, "Living in the Margin: Voices of Mothers in Poverty." And from this book, and meeting with her, we adopted some of her philosophies. And one of her philosophies was to move someone out of poverty it was like a three-legged stool. And if any one of these three legs were damaged in any way or not supported, you know, the stool would fall. And those areas were economic opportunity. You know, what jobs are hiring. And not just jobs, where can we go for careers, and what training needs to happen to get those careers and well-paying jobs. Another area was supportive services, public benefits, making sure we maintain public benefits in order to access

childcare, or get basic needs, and, you know, transportation. And one thing that really came out of the third leg was the help in healing. And we've really experienced that quite a bit in our Head Start program, because I would have monthly meetings with families.

It was open to anyone that wanted to come. And as we got together, we really thought, you know, Peter, being the attorney, we're going to talk about the law, and we're going to make everything, you know, everything is going to be, you know, by the law. And what we really found was people needed support, so that help in healing piece was really important. Because so many of the families, it never failed, any meeting that we ever had, we ended up talking about abuse issues, family of origin or current abuse, and even system abuse. And how someone felt when they had to go into the welfare office. Or you know, they kind of felt beat up by their circumstances. So we didn't provide counseling or anything like that, because we're not, you know, certified to do that, but we were able to help people connect with other people in their same situation, to be able to support each other and move forward.

Then connect some of the services that might be available in that area. So we kind of started -- I say everything that I've ever done in advocacy has become very selfish, because it usually came out of a need that I had. And we just, you know, a situation that came up that impacted me, and we figured out how to go about it. And if I was experiencing it, it seemed like the next time I would have a meeting or talk to a parent, there would be similar circumstances. So we knew we were on the right path of trying to improve circumstances for families. And we really, you know, we really just connected and then started reaching out. Because we realized that, you know, we couldn't provide those three legs. We felt really comfortable in the supportive services area, because that's really where the law takes the most impact. You know, any public benefit, Head Start, or cash assistance, medical, anything, relates back to legislation and law.

So we felt really comfortable in that area and providing advocacy and support. And through the Head Start program, helping families find the help in healing piece. But where we really felt that we weren't doing the best work was in the economic opportunities. So that's where we really started reaching out and figuring out who are the partners in this area and who do we collaborate with to get that. Because we knew we weren't going to take the time to be able to learn all that. People who have full-time jobs, just looking at where opportunities are, where the jobs are, and, you know, resume writing and things. So we knew we couldn't do that. So we partnered a lot with our local career links, which is the Labor and Industry Office in Pennsylvania. Partnered with them. We also partnered with Probe, which is a national program. It's a single parent displaced homemaker network, which I was very fortunate enough to go through before I came to -- my child came to Head Start. It's kind of how I found out about Head Start. They referred me over. And we really looked at, you know, different family circumstances. We had a lot of families that were experiencing homelessness, a lot of families with incarceration in their background. So how were we going to be able to provide them with what they needed? And we couldn't, so we found the ex-offenders support groups and mentoring groups and really partnered with shelters and helped support their case management staff in learning how to navigate through the public assistance to get families education and employment services.

So a really -- another big part of this was, you know, we're always looking at what career families are going to be most successful in, but what we found is most of our people that were receiving cash assistance, well, 45 percent of people receiving cash assistance didn't have a GED. So that was a big partnership that we really had to really tackle. Because we found that there were waiting lists in our

area. So we had to figure out how we can work with the Department of Education to provide more funding for GED services and how we could break down some barriers for families that were like, you know, I couldn't make it through high school, so there's no way I'm going to get my GED. And I could be quite honest; I didn't do that a lot. It was other people who got their GEDs, other families, or parents. When someone would say, I can't get my GED, you know, I'll never be able to do it, they're the ones that spoke up and said, I thought the same thing; I have a GED.

So it was offering that help in healing and support. So, you know, we really needed to reach out there. And that when I first started in Head Start, I started as a parent involvement coordinator. So I was kind of taking that position to a different place. And it really took the leadership to be very open to allowing me to partner with other people, to not even partner, but just to take the time away from the tasks that are directly Head Start to go to community meetings. You know, go to poverty forums and ex-offender meetings and go to the city council meetings. And when we have local management committee meetings, being on that committee and partnering with them, and just going to advisory committees for the state as far as income maintenance or employment and training services. So it really took, you know, coming away from my position as parent involvement coordinator to be able to step out and be really in the community. And one of the things that came out of that was to be able to do a resource guide that we update on a regular basis. Every year it's updated.

And we have over 600 agencies in categories from housing to employment, domestic violence, support groups, you know, a whole variety of things. But a few years ago, had this idea of, let's bring the resource guide to life. So started a little bit small, but we've had -- we cover a three-county area. And we were able to provide what I call a resource expo in Dauphin County, which is our largest county. And we had over almost 60 agencies come out to present what they did. We had the intermediate unit, we had mental health providers, employers, hospitals, our local health center, you know, they all came out, and it was just so exciting. It really was like the pages of that resource guide coming to life. And our families and our staff could go through and actually talk to people and put a face to maybe a voice that they had talked to on the phone when they were doing referrals for a family. So it was really exciting to get that connection and collaboration going. And it's really important in our program because, you know, the polls you just did, we don't do a lot of the direct service. We don't have a GED program. We don't do resume writing and everything.

We are purely a referral. We refer out for those services, because we are fortunate enough, especially in our larger two counties, to have those services available and we partner with them so that our families could get what they want. And sometimes they're not getting the services that they need, so we partner and help advocate for them. And let the program know what the family might need and intervene. So and a lot of this resource comes from our teachers. Because the way our -- and our home visitors. Because the way our program is structured, it is our teachers are our front-line. They do the home visits. We don't have family services workers. Our teachers teach for part of the day and they do their home visits and family work the rest of the time.

So our teachers really need a lot of support. Because, yes, their primary function is teaching, they're also responsible for health and special services and social services. And you know, in the area of employment and training, we really needed to give them very concrete steps because not everybody gravitates to adult education. So what I did is I created some letters that a teacher could take or a home visitor could take. The steps that I have on here and just put them right into the family partnership agreement when

a parent wants to work on a certain goal. Like I have employment packets. I have a GED/ESL combination packet. And I have a postsecondary or community college packet. And just for an example, in the cover letter for the employment, they basically all say that we are here as a team, your teacher, your family support specialist, and myself, are here to support your education or employment goals. And these are some of the resources we can use to do that. You know, having monthly meetings, providing information. We provide hands-on training for people that want to come in to early childhood education. And we do a lot of referrals.

So then like in employment, it'll talk about the importance of finding those high-priority occupations. And that's kind of what Brandi was talking about with the One Stop. It's all connected in Labor and Industry, where you really you don't want someone to go to school or receive training in a job or a career that really isn't hiring. So really to look at that and, you know, evaluate what the parent wants to do.

Brandi: Ms. Sheila, I don't know if you see what kind of excitement you are inspiring in the chat box. And you're making my job so easy. It's so seamless how you're offering sort of this story of not only your trajectory but certainly how you partner beside families and community. You have so many incredible nuggets. And people in the chat box are clamoring, I want to see a sample of that, that's such an amazing idea, where do I get started with this. So there's so many things that I think we could keep you on the line all day. But I know there are two things that could also be helpful here, and I'm wondering if you would gift us with the knowledge of -- tell us more about the outcomes you feel like your families are achieving. I mean, you told us all about how you built it and where you went and how you're connecting with community and alongside your families. So what kinds of things are happening? What are you seeing as a result of all this good work?

Sheila: It's really hard to gauge because we've embedded the employment training so deeply into everyone's job, that it's really hard to figure out where the outcomes actually are. You know, does it come from the letters? Does it come from the support group? Does it come to, you know, referrals to the Keys program? So we really don't have the best data. I have a lot of anecdotes and a lot of stories of parents. I have parents that have gone to get their -- they have started with I'm thinking of this one in particular. She lived in a very rural area. She had some physical limitations from a car accident that she was in. She did have a high school diploma. But she decided she really wanted to go back to school. And she had so many barriers, with a child with special needs, an older, not a Head Start child. So focusing on, you know, that child, and trying to get her education. She actually went, she was a top honors through the community college here in the area.

She then went on to Lebanon Valley for a four-year degree, and she graduated with top honors from Lebanon Valley College. She then chose to go to work in a Head Start program as a special needs coordinator. So to see a parent go from, you know, she really had a lot of struggles and issues, that -- you know, it took many years to get her where she was going. But it was great to see that you can actually get, even in today's environment with welfare reform, you can get a parent through a four-year degree. You can, you know, again, the parents that support each other and actually achieve their GED. I think this coming year, we will be much better with our outcomes, now that the PIR is asking more specific data. Because, you know, everything is driven by data. So we will be monitoring a lot better. So next time we have a conversation, I'll probably have much harder outcomes. But it mostly at this point

is, you know, we have seen increases in our employment and GED services numbers for PIR. But anecdotally what they said is just fabulous.

Brandi: Yes, and that part, I think we're all getting a bit better. Sheila, don't you tease us and tell us we can call you back, because you know we're going to want to hear all about the continued incredible things that are happening. And I want to save some time to make sure that all of our colleagues in general chat, who, I mean, there's incredible sharing happening here, not only just insight and expertise and gifts here around our own journeys, but links and resources, all inspired, Sheila, by what you're telling us. So I'm wondering, there are a couple things. What would you contribute those keys, your success? Like what are the things along that journey that you say, gosh, if you guys are thinking about this and you're building it, go here and [inaudible] take the shortcut.

Sheila: Definitely. Well, number one, find your partner in legal services. You need to know the laws. Just because, if you don't know the laws, parents can get sidetracked, or you know, get misinformation. The other thing is leadership really needs to embrace it. Like I said, they really needed to be able to say to me, okay, we're trusting you to go out and be a voice for us and bring this information back. I mean, that took a lot on, you know, Joe Pepper's part, my executive director, to say, okay, we're going to step out here. And it is so important for the adults in our program to get what they need. You know, so that was I think is really buy-in from every part of your program, from, you know, leadership to our front-line staff, is probably the key. And just be out there listening, because you never know what program is going to just evolve or come about. I feel like sometimes I'm just someplace and all of a sudden, the program that I needed for that family I just found out about because I attended a community meeting. So really keep your own education going.

Have your resource expos. Really talk to people. And, you know, help; it's odd partners. I really have found a lot of partnership in the health field. Just today, I emailed someone at our local health agency or clinic because we were having a problem with emergency medical for one of our families. And he instantly connected us with a doctor, which, had I called, the doctor probably wouldn't have responded. So knowing who your partners are and really, you know, giving that give-and-take with them I think is a big key.

Brandi: Well, Sheila, there are a couple of things here too that you mentioned and that folks in the chat are mentioning. I wanted to give a nod, and then I'm going to open it up for questions to you. So everybody in general chat, if you want to ask Sheila anything, certainly going to offer the last few minutes for that. But, you guys may remember based on our format that we stick around for about 15 minutes after and talk in chat together. So if there's anything additional that is lingering that you want to talk about, kick around, offer for future webinar topics, things that we can share when we put this up on ECLKC, definitely get ready because we want to hear from you.

But before we open it up to that place, if you look at the resource box on your left, you'll notice that when you hover your mouse over each of those resources, it turns blue. That's a hyperlink. It's going to take you to all of these great resources we've been talking about. So it's right there at your fingertips where you can go and open them up on your web browser and save them for later. So if you have any issue with that, let us not know. But you should be able click one, like right now. I'm not going to do it because I think if I do it's going to take you all out of here. But you can click on Career One Stop, and I think there's a button that goes live on the bottom that says browse to, it'll pop you right out and you'll have it for your viewing pleasure. But I know you guys may want to talk to Sheila. And I know that along

with all the incredible insight she's already offered, there may be a few pearls of wisdom left. So, Sheila, anything else that you want to make sure to get out to the group while they are thinking of questions for you or for each other?

Sheila: Right now I just wanted to let you know, I did actually forward the letters and packets not, unfortunately, in time for this webinar, but hopefully they'll be available for a resource later that you can take the information on there and modify it however you need to. Use it as a jump-off point. That's the thing I love about Head Start. We borrow from each other. It's fabulous. So please take it and use it however you need.

Brandi: We ought not be reinventing the wheel, you're exactly right. And Sheila, please extend our thank you, I mean, certainly to yourself but you also mentioned your leaders there at the program. We're so grateful for your time today. And there's a couple of things we're asking. Where will we be able to access the packets? I'm going to look to a couple of my colleagues to tell us here. I believe that we'll be able to put these up on the ECLKC. As you guys may know from our work since February, we archive all these things. So this is going to be recorded. We'll be able to put it up on the website. So if you find any of these topics, resources, content useful, for instance, for like preservice, we know that's coming up for you all, and in-service, even parent meetings, you can go get it and use it as your time allows. I'm seeing that a couple of you are having some hiccups or issues with some of the website. So we'll see what we can look at and figure out about those and make sure our links are all properly represented here and certainly can put those back on the ECLKC for you too. Let's see, any questions?

We're going to go ahead and put up this slide for you here. It's your turn. We want to see what questions you have for Sheila, anything that could be helpful in terms of what you'd like to talk about either today or in the future. We're going to turn off the audio and go silent on the out-loud conversation, but certainly we want to keep talking in chat. So hang out with us, we're going to keep the room open for at least 15 more minutes so that we can continue the dialogue. I'll also have a resource slide that actually represents graphically the things that you already see over here on the left-hand side.

So you can click the links under that resource box, too. But with that, I want to have sort of pause and thank very much the National Center, my National Center colleagues, specifically our partners from the Center of the Study of Social Policy who had the insight and connection to bring in Ms. Sheila. And we thank you so much, Sheila, for being with and sharing all the gifts that you gave us today. I do see a couple of questions that we have in chat over here on our presenters side, so we'll see if we can bring some of those answers right out into the general chat. Thank you guys so much for your time and the gifts you gave us in chat today. There's so many of you that already we've got our eye on you, you might be getting a phone call soon to join us on one of these webinars your very own self. So be ready. Thank you guys so much. Come back and see us next month. And again, thank you for your time and wonderful to be with you guys.

Thanks so much.

[End video]