

# **Workforce<sup>3</sup>One**

## **Transcript of Conference Call**

### **States Advancing Sector Approaches and Capitalizing On WIOA**

**Friday, November 13, 2015**

*Transcript by  
Noble Transcription Services  
Murrieta, CA*

MARTIN SIMON: (In progress) – session is part of a four-part series on states advancing sector approaches and capitalizing on WIOA. I'm Martin Simon with the National Governors Association's Center for Best Practices where I'm the director of Economic, Workforce, and Human Services Division. If you haven't muted –

Hello?

OK. Thank you. I apologize for the difficulties on my end here, but again, good afternoon and welcome. This session is part of a four-part series on state advancing sector approaches and capitalizing on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. This is Martin Simon.

I'm with the National Governor's Association's Center for Best Practices where I'm director of Economic, Workforce, and Human Services Division. This discussion is part of a larger Employment and Training Administration initiative called the sector strategies TA initiative. It's a national effort to increase the number of states and regions who have actively engaged in sector strategies. The initiative will, for the first time, create a networked national sector strategies movement of workforce systems that are sharing and supporting each other by leveraging the large body of sector strategy knowledge that's already out in the workforce community.

We know many of you aren't new to sector strategies and may have participated in some of these calls last year, but we're finding that there is still a large hunger for information on how to fully implement sector strategies. So these calls called peer learning groups are designed to give you some practical assistance on how to carry out the sector strategies. These are discussion calls. Your participation is an important part of the success of these calls. We'll present you with some best practices information to start, and then we'll like to have an open discussion with you about how you might adopt these practices in your state and regions.

The Employment and Training Administration staff are not planning to be on these calls. So we hope that this will help you feel more comfortable in sharing some of your strengths as well as your weaknesses. This is the first in a series of calls on this topic, and we hope that we'll be able to build a strong community here and then a place for you to come and share and get innovative updates. So for this topic today we're going to be focusing on embedding sector approaches into state WIOA plans.

What we're going to do is present you with a couple of state examples, and then we will pose some questions to you. I ask that you feel very free to speak up after the initial discussion for a facilitated conversation. If you have something you'd like to share, just make it known, and we'll make sure you get an opportunity to share it. So that's what we have planned for today.

I want to introduce our opening speakers. First, Beth Brinly who's the deputy secretary with the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet. And then following Beth will be Carolyn McKinnon who's a policy advisor for external relations with the Washington State Department of Commerce. So, Beth, you want to start the conversation?

BETH BRINLY: Absolutely. Thank you, Martin. I'm so glad to be a part of a discussion about advancing state sector strategy work and really embedding that in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act planning process that we're engaged in. And Kentucky has been working in regards to sector work for dating back to 2004 or '5 with Kentucky community and technical college system and has really worked to try to create an opportunity where our sector work is really system-focused as opposed to project-focused. And I think that that really is a value add for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is the opportunity that it gives us.

To share a little bit about where Kentucky has been so that you can understand about how we're – would be moving it forward in the development of our state plan currently is sector strategies was part of a work smart Kentucky plan adopted by the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board after Governor Beshear reconstituted the board in 2009 and put key sector leaders in place.

We went through a very robust process of identifying state level sectors and supporting the regions of the state in identifying regional sectors that were important to their ongoing work. We did this in a very collaborative way with all of our partners along the education continuum, economic development, workforce development, our labor partners, and others through Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board.

So as we're preparing now to take our next step with the strategic plan under WIOA, Kentucky is intending to do a combined plan. Sector strategies really is one of the foundational building blocks for us. We are in the process of refreshing our state and regional sector analysis.

So that will be a big component of our strategic planning elements of the WIOA combined plan, and our focus on workforce analysis and economic analysis will be grounded within those state sectors. We have been this sector work since 2011, and therefore as we – last year the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board –

Q: Excuse me, Beth.

MS. BRINLY: – undertook what was called a career center customer flow analysis to see how our state level policies that are supporting sector strategies have been playing out operationally in our career centers. So I think as you'll see a lot of reflection from that customer flow analysis report in the strength and weaknesses section of our strategic plan, the strategic planning elements of the WIOA combined plan.

Sectors will definitely be embedded in our vision goals, performance goals, and assessment. And then as we're looking at state strategies, we see sector strategies as the what, and we see career pathways as the how from a state planning effort that we have underway.

It really is – for us sector strategies work provides a nice platform for aligning the core programs, and we have utilized sectors both on the individual customer side and the employer customer side and had – are in the process of rolling out our key-based case management approach. And then what we have in place on the business side is our Kentucky Skills Network, and I can talk more about that if we have an opportunity.

As we take a look at the operational elements of the WIOA combined plan, what you're going to see is that we have embedded our sector work in both our strategies and our policies, and I'll touch a little bit about that. First of all, the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board and now the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board has – we have overhauled our high impact WIB standards to be WIOA compliant, if you will, or supportive. And sectors were already a big part.

We had three components of that is conducting the work of the board, aligning resources, and which sectors played a big part of that. We also, from an operational standpoint, have built sectors into our Kentucky career center certification standards. And so the certification standards for our full service and affiliates are anchored in sectors with expectations both on the individual side and the employer side.

And to give you a good example, some of our local workforce investment boards are now – are – our Kentucky career centers – excuse me – are actually doing orientations by sector for customers that come into the center, that there is a support network for both the individuals and the employer customers that are served by one sector lead, if you will.

We have overhauled our eligible training provider list and policies to support our state and regional sectors. We have created a whole education and training arm called the Workforce Academy, and our foundations for the future was a massive training effort of all of our employees around sectors and understanding how sectors guide our operational work that we've been undertaking.

And now, we're continuing to deepen that. For example, we're talking about how we're currently have training going on across the state on how to use labor market information with our individual customers as well as our employer customers to help them choose their goals and objectives.

We have undertaken our collaborative effort, Accelerating Opportunity Kentucky, which is one of the things under WIOA provides for work and learn opportunities as well as contextualized learning.

And so accelerating opportunity is a joint collaborative project with the Kentucky community and technical college system, our adult ed providers, and the Kentucky career center system where individuals who are basic skills deficient or lack their GED can enroll in a program that is being taught by an adult ed instructor and a technical instructor and then offer opportunities for those folks to have a success coach that helps them navigate the college campus.

They have a career coach that helps them with internships or job placement when they graduate or taking a look at labor market to see what career pathway efforts they want to pursue going forward. Sectors is embedded, and so Accelerating Opportunity Kentucky only operates – develops programs in those five state sectors or 11 regional sectors.

In our state plan going forward you'll see where to use statewide reserve dollars to support the efforts. Some of the work that we're doing right now is updating our toolkits. Because we've been doing this work since 2011, we're creating learning communities and different

infrastructure base to support the ongoing work of sectors. We're using our WIOA transition money as well.

And so to support the standing up of our new regions, one of the things that we're doing is putting our sector money out there by regions, and there's discussion of everything from sector navigators who are really focused on keeping that labor market information up to date to actually hiring sector-related staff on a region as opposed to each local workforce investment area, if their funding isn't up to the level to support it.

Sector strategies will be a part of both our local plans, which is already a part of our local planning guidance to local areas, as well as the regions. And one of the ways that we encourage that, for example, is for local boards to invest their training dollars based on sectors as part of their considerations, the trying to just give a broad sweep of some of the different efforts.

But we really have taken a systems approach to our sector work as opposed to sectors being a particular project. And we really believe that that's one of the things that the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act presents the support for.

Also, sectors have become embedded in resources outside the workforce investment system. Our economic development partners have built it into incumbent worker skill training and priorities. It's built into our Kentucky community technical college system's trains program, and so one of the things we've done with our Kentucky Skills Network is – (inaudible) – application for employers to get – do incumbent worker training, and then whether it makes sense, they fill out one application and determine which entity should really be paying for it, whether we use community college resources, economic development resources, or the workforce system resources.

And we've also built sectors into our work ready community's effort from the standpoint of having a county be certified as work ready. And so all of those are really some of the key ways which we have embedded it and in turn will be reflected in the strategic planning elements as well as the operational elements of our plan at the state level. And look forward to having a really great discussion with you all about how that's going and to help others who are thinking about how they embed it in their state plan. So with that, Martin, I'll turn it back to you unless you have any questions for me.

MR. SIMON: Great, Beth. Every time I came up with a question, the next segment that you talked about answered that question. So as you can hear, Kentucky has a rich history in advancing sector strategies and has embedded it into many aspects – all aspects of their workforce development education system.

So, Carolyn, I'm going to turn it over to you to talk about how Washington is integrating sector strategies into your WIOA plan and providing some context for that. So, Carolyn?

CAROLYN MCKINNON: You bet. Thanks, Martin. Can you hear me okay?

MR. SIMON: You're coming through loud and clear. Thanks.

MS. MCKINNON: Great. Well, gee. I almost feel like I could say ditto to what Beth and Kentucky are doing. What an outstanding presentation, and I would really like to start out by saying Washington, like Kentucky, has a long running state and local sector approach. I would echo what Beth said about this really being a systems approach to sector strategies rather than discreet projects. And that's really true to our evolving history of doing sector partnerships and strategies across our workforce and economic development system.

I wanted to provide a quick overview of our workforce system just by reminding you that our state workforce board is a tripartite of business, labor, and government with nine voting members, three non-voting members, and a non-voting chair. We have 12 local workforce development councils making up a fairly decentralized system driven by a common vision, strategic plan.

And we have across our workforce development system five shared outcome measures around participants getting the skills they need to get the jobs they want, employment, achieving employment after program completion, earnings outcomes, employer and participant satisfaction, and participant and public return on investment.

So that's just kind of a broad brush. After I tee up our approach, our process around the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act, I'll talk more about our sector strategy and how we're approaching embedding sector strategies into state and local Workforce Act planning.

So by way of an overview, beginning in February of 2015, our state organized itself into an implementation system consisting of a steering committee and four subcommittees to develop implementation strategies and maps for implementing the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act.

All of those committees, the steering committee and those four theme-based subcommittees are co-chaired by business and labor at pretty high levels, the state labor council and the state chamber of commerce. And we've found it to be very useful to have business and labor at the table of course with sector strategies.

Sector strategies are really embedded across our plan, our implementation process. Employer engagement is the top among three areas that we're focusing on for our state's strategic plan, and much like Beth said, I want to kind of highlight that sector strategies area theme that run – we expect to run throughout our plan through youth incumbent worker training, career pathways. Sector strategies are, as Beth said, the what, and the rest of it is the how we go about doing it, if that makes sense.

So of those four subcommittee implementing the new Workforce Act, one of those was local governance and sector strategies, and the sector strategies detail work was done by a taskforce of state and local business services folks, labor, employers, economic development councils, community and technical colleges, and workforce council staff. And I'll even point out our state employment security department hired a sector lead as a point of contact for that entire organization. So that's the overview of how we're approaching implementing the Workforce Act.

I'm going to shift gears and talk about how sector strategies have evolved in Washington in such a way to set up our sector strategy framework for the new Workforce Act.

Washington's culture of sector strategies goes back to around the year 2000 when we had a number of kind of program and project level initiatives. Our community and technical colleges established in the early 2000s 10 centers of excellence that are geared to set up sector strategies for our community and technical college system. So those drive economic development, create a skilled workforce, meet industry needs, and so forth.

At the same time our workforce board and other local partnerships were establishing industry skill panel, which were pulled together partnerships to address key barriers to competitiveness and expansion. We had a number of other kind of program and project level initiatives all around cluster and sector strategies, and at the same time through the mid- to late-2000s there was an evolution of state policies around cluster and sector strategies that really paved the way in statute to where we are today.

I will not go into detail on that history, but I'll just say that we do have an extensive kind of statutory and legislative pattern bringing us to where we are today. And today –

MR. SIMON: Carolyn, can I interject? Carolyn, can I interject here?

MS. MCKINNON: You bet.

MR. SIMON: How important was it having the sector strategies embedded in legislation?

MS. MCKINNON: Well, it was – it's been helpful. For one thing it's tied up some simple things like we have worked over the last 10 years in the state to develop a common set of definitions around coordinating workforce and economic development with a focus on sector strategies so that we're all using the same jargon.

So things that seem like small kind of procedural increments I think have really served to support our state's ability to really springboard ahead with implementing sector strategies. OK.

MR. SIMON: And then you started to talk about the evolution. So I'll let you get back to that.

MS. MCKINNON: Yeah. Well, where we are today is Washington's governor Jay Inslee, as part of his prosperous economy strategy, has established an Office of Economic Development and Competitiveness. And in that office the heart of that team is a team of sector leads charged with carrying out statewide sector strategy.

So those sectors are aerospace, agriculture and food processing, clean tech, life sciences, and global health, information, communication, and technology, maritime, and military and defense. So here we had – going into the whole workforce reauthorization, we had on the commerce side of state government a well-established sector strategy with the sector leads. So that has been very helpful in developing our framework for state and local workforce plans.

So I'm going to transition to talk about the product that we've come out with, that what we have going forward is a sector strategy framework for state and local plans for WIOA. And this work was just adopted at the end of October. The first piece of this work are a set of guiding principles, so a bunch of guideposts focusing on what good sector strategy work looks like, establishing high level expectations for the state.

So this is again, as Beth pointed out, the what, not the how. And we also point out that sector strategies can co-exist with local sector – statewide sector strategies can co-exist with the local ones. So they're not mutually exclusive. So we're looking for some harmonizing and mutually reinforcing dynamics between statewide and local sector strategies.

Another piece of our sector framework for state and local plans is a description of shared criteria for identifying and prioritizing targeted sectors. So this is the labor market information, the quantitative and qualitative processes that we expect every local area and the state to engage in to rigorously evaluate data and qualitative information in identifying and supporting targeted sectors; right?

So same as what Beth was talking about, really focusing our labor market information on that rigorous process. And so we've delineated the expectations and criteria are around identifying targeted sectors. Where I think we might be different from Kentucky in that area is that we are not at this point planning to do a state run process for identifying and targeting sectors. Rather that's going to be a more decentralized process, if that makes sense.

The other piece of our framework are those common definitions for concepts like sector, cluster, high demand programs of study, skill gaps. We have to operationalize all of those definitions and have agreement on what they mean in order to move forward, and then we've developed what we're calling the sector strategy rubric. This is a kind of heart and soul of what we're expecting to see in state to state and regional plans.

The rubric is a tool to track sector partnership implementation and outcomes. So the state and local workforce development councils will complete a rubric for each targeted sector identified in their plans and update their progress every two years as part of regional review. So what this approach is recognizing is that implementations of sectors is a learning opportunity.

When we sat down and tried to develop performance metrics for sector strategies, what we came up with were a bunch of process metrics and that didn't make sense. We want to apply the same outcome measures for sector strategies as for our system as a whole, and those are those five metrics I went over at the beginning of my presentation.

So the workforce board is going to provide some formal training to local practitioners on how to implement sector strategies and use the rubric to increase kind of consistency and develop local expertise as we move forward.

But what I hope you can see or hear from what I'm describing is our value in developing a statewide sector strategy framework is to bring to the same level across Washington the rigor, the

quality, and the look and feel of what sector strategies or sector partnerships are and have a more decentralized process for what exactly or how local areas discover those partnerships.

And the timer I set for myself just beeped. I'm going to pause here for questions.

MR. SIMON: Great, Carolyn. Very good background on how sector strategies have evolved in Washington and how you brought that forward and now it's integrated into your broader workforce planning process as well as your WIOA. It's interesting that both of you stress the importance of data.

Both of you highlighted how you've connected this to your economic competitiveness strategy, and both of you addressed how you're taking this from a state framework to a local process that – and what I – the distinction you made, Carolyn, was yours seems to be a more decentralized approach than Kentucky. But I think people listening to both of your presentations can be overwhelmed by the efforts that you've put in and how you've woven it so well into across your program areas and the various systems.

So let me ask you both a question to start the question – the open discussion is, where do you get started? If you're a state or local area that's just getting started on this and are trying to think of how do I weave this into my WIOA plan, where do I start? What do I get engaged with?

MS. BRINLY: So I'll start, Carolyn, and feel free to elaborate beyond that. But I would say it begins and ends with the employer community. First and foremost, it's the employer community saying what their needs are, validating the real time and the forecasted data in regard to their sectors, apprising the workforce professionals and the other education partners, economic development.

But there is a role for cradle-through-career education folks and our economic development partners and our workforce partners to sit around the table, but it's the employer community that leads the discussion. We can facilitate that discussion as the workforce professionals or others, but that really it's about it being employer-led because, if it's not, then I think that it's something that easily dissolves.

MS. MCKINNON: Absolutely.

MS. BRINLY: The next is – oh, sorry. The next part of that was really that we did a review, if you will, of all the great work from places like Washington state, Colorado, and others and came up with what we thought were key indicators of successful sector partnership work and then seeded that throughout actually regional industry partnership grants and state partnership grants to get conversations started.

So we took not only a state approach but a bottom-up approach, and so I think what we realized was that starting at the state level or starting at the local level, it didn't matter if the employer community was driving the agenda.

MS. MCKINNON: And I would – this is Carolyn. I would say I absolutely agree that employer engagement has been up front for Washington from the beginning, and that conversation was brought – I mean, we were deliberately mindful that when we engage employers, we want their experience to be seamless.

We want their experience to be that there's no wrong door or no wrong portal to workforce development. And behind – and so all – ditto what Beth said about employer engagement and letting that inform – really naturally inform your processes because employers will, I think, when engaged in a seamless way, will take you there.

But behind the scenes I think – I just really want to emphasize how fruitful it's been for our state to maybe outside the view of employers and labor organizations but in the partnerships of state and local partner agencies, developing those common definitions and developing our shared as guiding principles around what is this – what are the key terms and concepts? Do we understand them the same across the state? And then what are the guiding principles about how we go about this work so that it feels – so that it's a collaborative process rather than a prescriptive process?

MS. BRINLY: I totally agree. I totally agree, and the tools that we have that –

MR. SIMON: And having that common understanding.

MS. BRINLY: – state level to support that process included a white paper that talked about those terms. We had a steering committee that was comprised of all the state level stakeholders to do that and then had a toolkit, had an institute where regional teams came together, sat down with their data to identify their regional sectors.

We modeled that behavior at the state level first with one sector so that we could provide kind of that – sometimes it's how you visualize it; right? And so that was the visualization and then was great to see how that locally took a life of its own in each of the regions.

MS. MCKINNON: And this is Carolyn. I want to piggyback on that visual. I really didn't play up the visual tool that we've developed for our sector partnership framework is a six-part kind of phased approach to sector strategies so that any organization that's doing sector strategies, if they're doing it on a different calendar for maritime versus aerospace, they can look at these six phases, figure out where they are.

Are they preparing their team? Are they investigating, inventory and analyzing, convening, acting, or sustaining and evolving? They can jump in and use this framework to kind of sort activities and measures of progress. And I will admit that we were lucky enough to hire or steal a staff person from the state of Oregon in this process and also hire or steal or copy their – the Portland metropolitan area's sector partnership framework for a lot of this work. So they have been wonderful, wonderful sharing neighbors.

MR. SIMON: Well, great. Thank you both for your responses to the question. You both said that you've learned from other states and areas, even going as far as stealing from it, as you said, Carolyn. So let me use that as a segue to open up the discussion. So there's probably folks at the

other states and regions that are also learning from other – each other, and I'm sure you have a wealth of information to share. You might have questions for the two speakers, but we want to hear from you. This is the open discussion part of this session. So if you would just introduce yourselves when you make a comment or a question, and let's get started. And yes. To unmute you have to push \*6. Did I hear someone in the background? Hello?

Q: Why are you doing this?

Q: Yeah. And to remute yourself you can hit \*6 as well. I would ask that when you're not speaking, if you could please hit \*6 to mute your line so we don't hear any background. But please, if you have a question, go ahead and hit \*6 and ask our experts.

Q: Hi. This is Sherrie Taylor [ph] with Career Source Florida. Can you hear me?

MR. SIMON: Yes.

Q: Wonderful. So my question is, how do we get our hands on some of this wonderful material that is proving to be very successful such as the rubric and so forth? Is there a centralized data repository that's being shared across the states?

MS. BRINLY: The materials that Kentucky has developed, which includes our white paper, our assessment on where you are on our seven criteria for successful sector strategies, and actually online tools for each of those seven components, can be found at [kysectorstrategies.com](http://kysectorstrategies.com).

Q: Thank you.

MS. BRINLY: And you can take a look at our original targeted sector work at the state level and each of the regional sector reports that the regions use to identify their sectors as well.

Q: Thank you.

MS. MCKINNON: Martin, this is Carolyn from Washington. Does NGA plan to host any kind of clearinghouse of materials?

MR. SIMON: Well, I was going to ask Layli if, as part of this technical assistance effort, there was going to be any effort at a clearinghouse. At this point NGA did not have any plans for that and – but in the absence of that we will certainly give that some consideration. But I know that I've been able to go on both of your websites and get information. So, Carolyn, is there a place that folks in the meantime could go –

MS. MCKINNON: Yeah.

MR. SIMON: – to find out what Washington's doing?

MS. MCKINNON: You bet. You bet. I'm going to give the website URL, and fortunately it's not too long. So we're going to do [wtb.wa.gov](http://wtb.wa.gov). So that's like workforce training board dot

Washington, WA, dot gov. And then you're going to do a /wioacommittees.asp. But as long as you land on Washington's workforce training board website, on the left-hand side you'll see a red, white, and blue stars and striped WIOA. You click on that little stars and striped WIOA and you will be taken to no shortage of information.

MR. SIMON: Thank you both for that, and we will pick this up and see where – (inaudible) – effort to put together a clearinghouse on this. Other comments or questions? Other states?

Q: Hey, Martin.

MR. SIMON: Yes. Go ahead.

TODD COHEN: Martin, sorry. This is Todd Cohen with Maher & Maher. I just wanted to say there is actually a centralized place here on the Workforce3One site. It's – that site's going through some transition. So it's a little difficult, but we will be sure after this call to let you all know how to access it. And we've got a lot of great stuff up there, but we will continue to pull some of the stuff from Washington, Kentucky. So there is a place, and we'll let you hear about it. So just wanted to make that known. Thanks.

MR. SIMON: Great. Thank you. I'm not surprised that there is, but thank you for sharing that and being – and offering to connect in the Kentucky, Washington information.

Let's go back to our open discussion, and let's hear from folks out there. You can also share what you're doing in your state and how you're bringing your sector work into your WIOA plan. Questions? Comments? Just unmute, \*6.

MR. COHEN: Martin, this is Todd Cohen again, and I'm going to speak on behalf of the couple states that may not be here I've talked to recently that have this question. So getting to the idea of that Washington has these sort of common definitions, that's very helpful. But their interest was around then how do you – once you've done that, how did you both take that information and really get buy in at the state level from the community college system, basically all the other players that really need to be on board?

Was it – it's probably more than just sort of sending them the information, but you probably did some sort of – I don't know if it's case management or some other type of buy in at that level. I wonder if one of you or both of you can sort of take us through that process a little bit.

MS. MCKINNON: Sure. This is Carolyn. I would take you back to this implementation process or system that our state developed. I mean, the second that we had an understanding of Workforce Act reauthorization, our business and labor leadership in the state established, with the support of the state workforce board, this steering committee and subcommittee kind of system.

And so it was really through that system of having a steering committee made up of pretty high level decision leaders across the state, across stakeholder organizations, and then the work groups or subcommittees doing the detailed work. And we moved recommendations in a pretty

formal process up that chain of command and then from the steering committee to the workforce board.

So by the time that all the partners at the high level of decision making saw the recommendations, each stakeholder kind of constituent had worked with their leadership on feedback and recommendations. So yeah. I mean, it was very, very labor and time intensive from March until October this year, but the payoff has been that we've had very consistent and high levels of buy in from all stakeholders until we got to the regions conversation. That's the one place where we struggled.

MS. BRINLY: And then this is Beth. I think the approach that we have taken towards all of our – (inaudible) – Kentucky strategic guidance is that we have a board champion. So there's a business sector champion that oversees each of the projects, and they get involved to the level they want. Some are very hands on. Some just want overview.

Major initiatives like sector strategies have a stakeholder group, and for us, from the beginning of our workforce efforts, we have included all of our partners at the table. So in the identification of sectors, as we've talked about roles and responsibilities, as we released industry partnership grant money out of the governor's discretionary funds over the last five years, all of our partners have been at the table and, A, approving those applications as well as screening and supporting those.

As we did our sector institute it was a collaborative planning process of our partners. We provided facilitators from all the partners to work with the regions. We worked collaboratively on the invitation list for those things.

The tools that talked about the roles of economic development and the community college system and the workforce system, those were all worked together through our steering committee. And so that has – it's really been a collaborative effort which then has played itself out for that systemic perspective as opposed to a project.

MR. SIMON: Thank you on that. Again, it's open discussion. If you want to join, just push \*6. As we wait for comments or questions, let me raise a question. A lot of times the questions that come up are around funding. You both touched down a bit, but how do you move – you also both said you move from a project focus to becoming – it becomes systemic.

And I know in a lot of states they have used seed funding to get sector strategies started at the regional level. So could you talk about the funding aspects of it, and then how, within your WIOA planning, you're seeing how sector strategies will be supported through the funding that's available?

MS. BRINLY: This is Beth. I'll start off. We from the beginning have taken a very collaborative approach to our sector funding. Early on we used the governor's discretionary funds and have over a number of years to support first the creation of industry partnerships in those state and regional sectors, as identified.

We then looked at resources like incumbent worker resources that are available through education, economic development, and workforce development and retooled those to support the priority on those state and regional sectors so those resources are targeted to those sectors, and made the application process a unified process so that employers or other partners don't have to apply for – in four different directions to get those resources.

I think the next is that we've worked with local workforce investment boards to help them think about how they could make their commitments regarding ITAs around sectors. We have shared best practices across local workforce investment areas so that, for example, our Northern Kentucky career center system really embraced this model of sector orientations and those sorts of things.

So some of it has just been retooling those administrative and program dollars, whether it's at the state level or the regional level, to support sectors as well as those initiatives where there are additional resources available at the federal or the state or the regional level, building that sector platform into those funding streams. So I'll give you an example.

We recently received a SNAP Employment and Training demonstration grant, and so our Accelerating Opportunity Kentucky model and our sector work was built into that. Our KCC Go, which is our long-term unemployed national emergency grant, supported that effort. We recently received some power grants for coal-distressed communities, and so we've built on that coal area, which is in Eastern Kentucky, very rural, had done some sector work and so had analyzed how they could diversify their economy, given the collapse of coal.

And so we went after federal resources in partnership with that local area and built it on our sector platform. So it's so embedded at this point. It just naturally happens with not only us but our partners in education and economic development.

MS. MCKINNON: And this is Carolyn. I'll tag on. I mean, frankly – I mean, kind of again ditto a little bit what Beth said. It's not fair for us to – it's not too instructive for us to say, well, we've just got a lot of practice at figuring out how to get the money and put it in the right place. But that's been the history. I'll tell you I think we have some work to do now in that we lost a lot of ground during the great recession and in the jobless or job loss recovery. We are not back on our feet entirely with funding some of the programs and strategies we know have been very effective.

But our lawmakers seem to get that when we look at the labor market and the gross state product data, they seem to get that doing sector strategies gets a higher return on growing our gross state business income and employment. And so we're able to express that return on the investment, but I'll be honest. From where I sit – and I'll be clear. I'm in the state Department of Commerce. So we're not a core workforce program operator. I'm actually substituting for somebody else today, but from where I sit I think we've got some ground to make up after the recession.

I think we'll have to – we're having conversations with our governor's office about how to prioritize those discretionary funds but – and we've got a long history of the state funding things

like industry skill panels and the state community and technical colleges funding the 10 centers of excellence that are also statewide sector strategies.

MR. SIMON: Thank you again. Funding continues to be one of those challenges, and having sustainability strategies that actually have funding strategies are an important part of that. So thank you for addressing that question. We have five minutes remaining in this call. We're still open for any open discussion aspect of the call.

So let's hear from some of you out there that are participating in this call. You can talk about your funding strategies, any challenges you are encountering in trying – as you're thinking about embedding sector strategies into your WIOA plans. All you have to do is open your line by pushing \*6. So it would be great to hear from other folks out from other states and regions.

Well, we have a shy group today. So we have about four minutes left. So I'm going to ask kind of a closing question for Beth and Carolyn. Again, it will be around the topic of discussion today, embedding sector approaches into state WIOA plans. What would be your, I'll say, advice to other states as they're putting together their plans?

What would be kind of your top three suggestions for how to approach this as they're putting together their plans, whether they're more advanced or this will be kind of a – they're at an early stages of implementing sector strategies? So it would be a good way to wrap up the call with your kind of advice to states as they're taking this on. Either one of you want to start that?

MS. MCKINNON: This is Carolyn. I'll start. Am I unmuted?

MR. SIMON: You're fine. We're – you're coming through.

MS. MCKINNON: OK. I'm going to go back to the themes we've touched on. So I think it's important to let sector strategies be a theme that runs throughout plans and throughout the programs and services that we offer, youth, dislocated workers, incumbent worker training, career pathways. See what it looks like to kind of turn things on their side and let sector strategies be that theme or a thread rather than a line item project or initiative.

I'm going to echo what we've already talked about that at a higher level sector strategies are really about employer engagement, and it's really critical to have business and labor at the table. And by now, you all should know my third one, which is common definitions, common guiding principles. If you do the hard work around finding the common agreement around those key concepts and guideposts, then the work will unfold more easily.

MR. SIMON: Thank you, Carolyn. And you don't have to start from scratch on that because of the work that both Kentucky and Washington have done on these common definitions, these common rubrics. So, Beth, any thoughts you want to share on advice to other states and regions?

MS. BRINLY: Absolutely. I think one of the most important things is that this isn't a piece of work that can be done singularly by the workforce system. So it's a collective impact piece of

work that requires education, economic development, and workforce development, and it is what I consider the synergy sweet spot for those three entities to really work together collaboratively.

I think the second is to help people understand the picture of what it can be and the power of it, and that plays itself out in your guidance on local and regional planning and the opportunity around setting your board certification standards and your One-Stop or American Job Center standards.

And then the third is accountability and transparency around it. I think that there's so much that's already probably going on in your state that you may not even know about, and so just starting off – I remember we started off with a showcase on what was going on. And then from that it just really blossomed. It was easy to see where the gaps and the overlaps were and how we could create learning communities and do institutes around sectors.

And ours was to really frame it out but then to let it grow organically at the local and regional level or support where that work is already going on. So giving a platform to show what the outcomes of that are because I think Carolyn was right in – from the standpoint of, when you look at the data around the impacts of the sector approach, it garners the attention of legislators. It garners the attention of the various partners, and there's a natural tendency to want to invest in things that get a return on investment.

So I think thinking about those accountability mechanisms and outcomes that could be captured either at the state level or the local board level around sectors. And I really can't – (inaudible) – the rubric stuff from Washington state so – on that regard too.

MR. SIMON: Thank you. Thank you both, Beth and Carolyn, for sharing such a wealth of knowledge with the folks on the call today. I would appreciate if you could send those links to me that you had described so that we can get those out to folks and so they can get access to the information that is available so they don't have to start from scratch.

This call has been the first one in the series that's focusing on state advancing state – state advancing sector approaches and capitalizing on WIOA. The second topic in this series is going to be on integrating sector strategies and career pathways, and when that's scheduled, you'll be getting information on that.

Thanks again, Beth and Carolyn, and that wraps up the call for today. Have a great weekend –

MS. MCKINNON: Thank you.

MR. SIMON: – all of you.

MS. BRINLY: Thanks, Martin.