Our H-1B Ready to Work (RTW) Technical Assistance (TA) Team recently moderated a Peer-to-Peer Exchange on *Sharing Job Placement, Credential Attainment and Partnership Strategies during the Period of Performance Extension*. The WebEx meeting provided a platform for grantees to interact directly with their RTW colleagues as well as engage in dynamic conversations. Grantee presenters included: Capital Workforce Partners, Florida State College at Jacksonville, Jewish Vocational Service, RochesterWorks, and Denver City & County of. Grantees shared strategies used to increase job placement and credential attainment for participants during the Period of Performance Extension. Grantees also shared how they cultivated and sustained program partners.

### Job Placement Strategies

**Jewish Vocational Service (JVS)**

- **Strategy:** As JVS reviewed their strategies for the final year, they conducted an evaluation, where they identified remaining resources in the grant. They scaled back in other training programs, in order to redirect those resources to other programs that yielded more results for participants.
- **Strategy:** Specifically to placement, for participants who finish their tech program, employers acknowledge completion, but desire the work experience as well. JVS’s response was to leverage their Paid Work Experience (PWE). Through PWE, participants complete short 80 to 120-hour projects, which demonstrate their skills and discuss during their interviews. JVS has one employee, who fosters those work-experience projects and converts them into full-time employment or a 6-month extension.

**Capital Workforce Partners (CWP)**

- **Strategy:** Found more success with small to medium employers versus large size employers. With the smaller sized employers, CWP works directly with the owner, whom at times serves as the CEO and the Human Resource representative. Smaller and medium sized employers were very receptive to give an opportunity to participants who had the academic credentials, but not the work experience. Once CWP met the goal for the IT placements, in the Period of Performance Extension, they began to focus on the hospitals. It is extremely beneficial since healthcare is a focus sector within their region.
Employer Engagement Strategies

Jewish Vocational Service (JVS)

- **Strategy:** JVS is leveraging every staff members’ employer relationship on the team and they are counting on every team member to monitor every client’s job goals. The second piece is to reengage with clients that have not been as active previously. JVS invites previous clients to come in and meet the new team, ramp up their job search goals, and reconnect to services. JVS also has the Job Search accelerator program and welcomes in about 15 new clients monthly.

Capital Workforce Partners (CWP)

- **Strategy:** To increase employer engagement during this Period of Performance Extension, CWP increased outreach efforts and marketing material distribution. It was beneficial to include testimonials from employers whom had used the long-term unemployed program, because it attracted other businesses through showing that business had actually used the program and provided opportunities for the long-term unemployed and long-term underemployed population.
- **Strategy:** Created a promotional video with one of the employers that used the program and filmed it in an operational room at a hospital. This invited more hospitals to join. Once other hospitals saw that their competition was using the program, they desired to be included.
- **Strategy:** CWP is able to capture more long-term unemployed adults/workers who have completed certifications and funnel them into the pipeline of employers, through being co-located with the American Job Centers. The piloted efforts of co-sharing space within the Community Colleges of Connecticut, has yielded some positive results in accessing the target population.

Credentialing and Certification Strategies

Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ)

- **Strategy:** Paid for test prep for participants. With their first cohort, FSCJ found that the moment the participant started a new position, the lure of a credential went out the window, so they modified their training model for the next set of cohorts. FSCJ also changed the timeline to include study time and preparation for the credential during the 9-week trial period with the employer. In addition, FSCJ embedded specific training modules within the classes, to further support participants.
- **Strategy:** At least once a month all previous participants receive an email from program staff.
- **Strategy:** Smaller and mid-sized companies were honest and revealed that they were not concerned about the industry certification, but were more concerned if the worker could actually do the job. FSCJ employer partners got on board through supporting participants in the internship and they encouraged the participant to complete the credential.
Strategy: Expanded the certifications offered. FSCJ sent a survey to all participants asking, “Which top 5 certifications would they like to obtain if offered?” Took the top three ranked certifications and honed in on the bootcamp model that is 8 weeks and is offered at night, to accommodate those that are working.

RochesterWorks

- **Strategy:** Trained more people than originally projected.
- **Strategy:** Types of training funded. Of the credentials, 50% (100) were in healthcare occupations (LPNs, RNS, and CNAs) the state requires certifications/license to get the job.
- **Strategy:** Most impactful is the partnership with the community colleges.

Partnership Strategies

Denver City & County of

- **Strategy:** Colorado has been invested in the sector partnership model. TechP took what was Denver City & County of’s employer advisory council and shifted it into a sector partnership, which is a group of employers that come together quarterly and discuss hiring challenges. Denver City & County of, have not only TechP at the table but a lot of their workforce development, education, and economic development partnerships.
- **Strategy:** Training for staff. Denver City & County of identified a need to ensure industry specific knowledge stays in this area. They developed a desk aid for job coaches to learn about the tech sector, local resources to point folks to assist in job search and all the resources learned throughout the RTW grant program.