LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA:	--for the Manufacturing Workforce Peer-to-Peer Webchat Number Three-- Managing Your Partnership Tensions.

[INDICATOR SOUND]

So we'd like to know first-- who do we have with us today, and how do you assess your partnership implementation? We have four choices here-- fully implemented, almost there, just starting, or looking to start. So if you will, go to the chat box, enter your name, and answer in that chat window by clicking on the dropbox and selecting "All Participants." And we look forward to your responses there.

Again, who do we have with us today, and how do you assess your partnership implementation with the four choices listed?

If it helps any of you with your response, usually what we see is "just starting" or "almost there," but we have Melissa here who says she is fully implemented but just always improving. Melissa, that is awesome.

Carol Perry says, "almost there." Anybody else? It gives us a great beginning on how to gauge our conversation today.

Thank you, Angel, for your response. And there's a lot of truth in that "almost there." We think we're almost there, and sometimes the game shifts, doesn't it? All the rest of you are giving us some more of your responses there. And it looks like we're establishing a pattern. Let's review today's agenda.

We're going to have a "Welcome" and a couple of introductions here. I'm going to give you a little bit of information about "Why are we here, anyway, on this Monday?" We're going to introduce our peer presenters and get ready with our discussion.

But first, for our "Welcome" an introduction-- first up, I would love to introduce Greg Henschel, US Department of Education with the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, here to share a few words with us. Good morning, Greg!

GREG HENSCHEL:	Thanks, Libby. And thanks everyone for joining us for our third of four peer-to-peer conversations, this one, "Managing Your Partnership Tensions."

Last week we had, I thought, an informative conversation with our leaders from Milwaukee, in southeast Michigan. And they set up a pretty engaging and valuable discussion on how we can best tell the stories of our partnerships. I appreciated the discussion, and I think many of you did too.

Today we're going to talk about a pretty big topic, one that makes the world go round-- that is relationships. And for mature relationships, it's always a mistake to think that we can just set it and forget it. But how do we resolve tensions that can arise when dynamic change starts taking place and things begin to shift? How do we rebalance our partnerships, managing these shifting burdens, and to assure that our partnerships remain vital?

In this, our third of four peer-to-peer conversations, we hope to continue to build our connections with all of you as a community of practitioners and learners. Thank you for being part of this effort. And with that, I'll turn it back to our moderator, Libby Livings-Eassa. Thank you.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Thank you, Greg! And thank you for the word that-- I know that there are often a lot of times I wish I could just forget what I had said--

[CONTINUED REPETITION OF THE WORD "SAID"]

[ALARM-LIKE SOUND]

I think, perhaps, maybe we've had an opportunity to take care of that little technical snafu there, and so we will continue on. You will let me know-- just to double check our tech-- if everyone can hear me, just give me a thumbs up or a "gotcha" in the chat box, so we can continue.

We have had some awesome conversations that Greg has already shared with you today; and for those of you who are joining us for the first time, a little bit about this conversational approach, and your participation.

As your moderator today, I'm going to introduce and define each topic for us, and our conversation today will be driven by sub-topics and the co-presenters that I'm going to introduce in just a minute. We'd like to reiterate-- this is a conversation, and we hope all of you are going to capitalize on this opportunity to engage and freely inquire.

Like our presenters today, you are all colleagues that have traveled this road, and this is your best opportunity to network with those colleagues here today. Again, this is your official invite to participate and engage.

Your participation will be facilitated via the chat function as already demonstrated, and I am quite excited that it looks like we've got a great group that knows how to fully utilized that chat function. And I am looking forward to the engagement that we're going to have today.

So why are we here? We've heard a little bit about that already from Greg. And also, if you are joining us, you know this is part of a TA series from OCTAE, entitled "Strengthening Partnerships for the Manufacturing Workforce." And we're going to have conversations today based on topics from conversations we have held for several months across the nation with experts, partnership representatives, partners in industry, education, state and local governments. And we're providing these chats, again, as an opportunity for you to come face-to-face with your colleagues across the nation and to identify those potential strategies, and how some people have addressed them, and to hear from you and how you've also addressed them.

Again, we're going to use that chat box to collect your questions and thoughts. For those of you who have not quite activated your chat window yet, it is on the lower right of your screen. And on that dropbox you're going to go to "All Participants."

We want to invite you to continue the conversation. We don't just talk today and that's the end of it. You can continue your conversation as a member of the LINCS community, as a member of Strengthening Manufacturing Partnership Group. And today's thread will be posted as "Managing Your Partnership Tensions."

Here we will also respond to any questions or comments that are posed during the course of today's conversation that we may not have an opportunity to get to-- thus that important chat box. We will collect and capture everything there-- any resources or questions we want to repost-- there in the LINCS group. So please enroll there at the link that you see here on this slide. And we will repost that in the chat box for you also.

So to introduce today's presenters, I am so delighted to have here colleagues. First we have Dion Jackson, who is a Program Director for the USC Center for Economic Development. Greetings, Dion!

DION JACKSON: Greetings! Glad to be here.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Delighted to have you with us. And you're so generous to dedicate your time today and to be at my mercy during this conversation. We're glad [CHUCKLES] to have you.

And we also have with us Susan Schowen, the Director of Workforce Initiative with the Louisiana Economic Development. Greetings, Susan!

SUSAN SCHOWEN: Hello! Glad to be here.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Ah, glad to have you with us today. Again, your colleagues today are going to share real-life examples of challenges they have identified and that were also identified by manufacturing communities as related to workforce education, centered around our conversation topic for today. We invite y'all, again, to please provide comments, ask questions, provide additional strategies, whatever comes to mind, relative to the conversation topic in that chat box as our co-presenters are sharing their real-life challenges and their strategies with you.

Again, for those questions or strategies that we may not be able to target or to be able to respond to, we will capture and post those at the lincs.ed.gov, another great reason why you want to enroll in that group.

Today's conversation is scheduled to end at 12:45. However, we plan to stay online with you an additional 15 minutes to provide further opportunities for conversation. So let's go to our conversation topics now.

They are Establishing a Common Vernacular, Developing Common Mission and Vision, and Assessing and Adapting Your Partnership Structure. So these are the overarching conversation topics. We're going to further define, again, each of those. And as prompted, Dion and Susan will provide briefs. And as they share, again, please pose your questions and comments in that chat box.

For those of you that may have joined us for earlier conversations-- and I see some of our family there-- you may notice some common bullet points across our conversations. That's because as we completed those national conversations, there were amazing parallels across the broader topic such as today's "Managing Your Partnership Tensions" and the critical and-- [AUDIO OUT] during a common baseline as pertaining to being on that same page, whether it

was vernacular, vision, or mission.

So let's continue on now to our first one-- Establishing a Common Vernacular. As you can see, that has to do with everything from taxonomy to those data standards, having those granular conversations that have to happen-- or we might say authentic conversations-- as well as being able to leverage and optimize any type of agreement or articulation. And with that, I want to go to our co-presenters today.

Suzie, I'd like to start with you. You shared with us in our conversation that we had, that at your first meeting of your workforce development subcommittee, that y'all had agreed on a set of definitions. Could you explain a little bit more about that to our colleagues today?

SUSAN SCHOWEN: Absolutely. We did feel that the very first definition that we needed didn't nail down-- was exactly what we mean by workforce development. And everybody, I think, has their own answer for that, and we wanted to make sure we were working up a common definition. And we defined it as broadly as possible, including, of course, the training for skilled crafts that people often associate it with, but all the way up to the need for engineers and research scientists, et cetera. So we really encompassed the entire workforce development system.

We also felt it was extremely important to accurately define specifically which occupations we were preparing people to work in. And one of the interesting things we found there was that our chemical manufacturing industry, which was the focus of our institute, really was more concerned with the construction workforce than they were with their own workforce.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Yeah, and Suzie, thank you so much for that. It is amazing, sometimes, the assumptions that we make. And we'll end with that there. But those assumptions that we make is something that can seem so simple as far as defining and making sure that we're all on the same page. But as you've already expressed, once we have that conversation, we can discover other items that we're not quite on the same page with. So, thanks so much for that.

Dion, let's go to you. As I recall, that second bullet up there was one that really hit home for you. Could you revisit your conversation that we had that regarded that establishing common vernacular, that pertained to your data collection efforts?

DION JACKSON: Sure. So for us, we used the standard metrics that are collected by training providers who have either state or federal funding. For example, how many starts did they have in each quarter? How many completions-- and then whether those trainees were incumbent workers

or new students. And then if they were new students, how many were placed in jobs at the end of the program?

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Yeah, and something again, just quite as simple-- but if we're not on the same page there as pertains to that, then we're off to a rocky start already.

So I'm looking here for any comments or questions, any sticking points for any of you-- if you just want to give us a couple of phrases or share with us before we move on or as move on to our next topic here. I'll continue to look for those as we move right along.

So Developing a Common Mission and Vision-- when we look at this, again, there have been some similarities across our broad topics, but it really has to do here with those shared expectations, and roles, and responsibilities, and mapping efforts. And it just seems to go on and on that something as simple as a common mission of vision really wrapped itself up around quite a lot more than that, even the memorandums of understanding, and how do we formalize, and the revisiting and revisioning all of that.

And Dion, I remember-- I loved your example of how you all started with an aspirational state. Now, can you share with our colleagues a little bit more about that?

DION JACKSON: Sure. So because we developed our work product based on a flawed analysis, using that we came up with an aspirational statement of where we wanted to get. So ours was to build upon the region's education and training strengths and capitalize on opportunities while addressing its weaknesses through the following actions-- expand the workforce pipeline by informing youth veterans and the unemployed and underemployed about manufacturing careers through our workforce investment board and government partners; and leverage the capacity of our consortium to build ladders of opportunity in our education system; developing stackable certificates that address the need for portable curriculums aligned with industry-recognized certification standards; and teach individuals the design skills necessary to make our region's businesses more competitively.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: And you have great stuff. And I love that reference to how you called it "building those ladders opportunity." That's a beautiful-- that's beautiful phraseology. So thanks for sharing that with us, Dion.

Suzie, I warned y'all about how I love to tell on y'all in these conversations, and some of those true confessions. So you confessed that your, Elsie, and my group-- you surveyed them to

death. Do you want to confess to your colleagues that they don't find themselves with this problem? But share a little bit more about your experience.

SUSAN SCHOWEN: Well, the truth is the chemical manufacturing industry is Louisiana's [STATIC] crop industry. It is, obviously, a workforce intensive one, and therefore, it is often at the top of the list for any workforce development group. And it wasn't just us that surveyed everybody to death. This was really the problem-- was that there were so many other groups out there working, trying to solve the same problem, that we had to rein everybody in and try to organize everybody together. So a lot of what we were doing was trying to make sure that we captured the information that had already been developed by other groups and to organize our mission around that, rather than trying to develop our own information in a vacuum without recognizing what had already happened. So lesson learned.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: [LAUGHS]

Lesson learned, yes. I'm just interested. Has anyone else experienced something like this out there? Again, you can just say, "Oh, yes, we have," or maybe just a couple of words you might share with us there in the chat box. I'm going to be looking for that. We want to hear from all of you too and find commonalities here. And maybe some of you might have had a different strategy. So, feel free to share that there. We love to hear that type of thing from you.

So I want to follow up on-- I've heard y'all talk about funding was a major challenge, and Suzie, you talked about establishing a process to identify opportunities and to choose partners' best position for that. And I think that comes-- again, being on the same page and really understanding that common mission and vision. Can you talk a little bit more? Just give us a couple of brief points about that.

SUSAN SCHOWEN: Absolutely. So, one of the misperceptions that we struggled against when first announcing the Louisiana Chemical Manufacturing Institute, was the assumption that it came with a big pot of money that people could reach in and grab for. So we had to set that aside, but it became rapidly extremely clear that there was a good sense out in our community of what needed to be done to address the workforce development challenges, but we didn't have the money to do it.

So we organized our mission around identifying funding opportunities through private

enterprise and through federal grants, through state grants, and so on, and developing a menu of options of priority projects that we wanted to do. And then as these opportunities came up, we were able to identify those people who were best able to operationalize what that funding could do for us, and those people who could best act as the fiscal agent-- those two things not always being the same entity. And that actually proved very successful for us.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Well-- and kudos to you for that. It's some great insights there for our colleagues out there. I do have one more extra question-- again, I encourage all of y'all-- any comments or a question that you might like to pose, take the opportunity for our co-presenters here today. Again, click on that box that says "All Participants," and any type of question, we would love to capture that. This is your opportunity today.

And while waiting on that, an extra question for either one of you-- how are y'all able to bring people to the table-- not necessarily the subject matter, but how did you lure 'em there? What was it? Donuts? Pizza? I mean, how did you get 'em? What was the return on investment?

SUSAN SCHOWEN: Personally, I think they we had to fight them off. It really wasn't a question of motivation. It was a question of selecting those who would contribute the most and bringing them to the table.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Excellent. And Heidi, welcome back to the conversation-- so delighted as always to see you. Heidi poses a question for us. "Have you all ever had to eliminate a partner?" Very important. Suzie? Dion? Either one of you ever had to eliminate or maybe bump onto the back corner?

SUSAN SCHOWEN: We had to do exactly that. We did have a partner who was incredibly admirable in his enthusiasm, but he really just wanted to promote the priorities of his small section of the state and his clients. He was in a consulting role. And we did need to talk to him offline and just make sure that he understood that we had a statewide mission-- and in fact, a broader than statewide mission-- and that we needed to be pretty selective with the projects that we looked up.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Yeah. Great. Anything anyone else would like to share out there, or any other questions, or to add to the conversation here?

What a great question. 'Cause I know that sometimes we can find ourselves here that people just aren't on the same page. If we're looking at the converse of this issue, they're not on the same page. They don't have the same purpose. And they're certainly not sharing our expectations-- much less are willing to take on roles and responsibilities.

I think many times I'm going to look out here for an "amen" from the crowd. I'm being a good Alabama girl. That's just going to be my response. But how many of you are looking or have had the experience that you have these partners, and they are oh, so willing to sign on that grant line that they're going to participate, and they're going to support you, but dag gonnit, when it gets down to it, and the rubber hits the road, they ain't there?

Aw, Leticia is saying, "Yup, so true!" How many of the rest of you have experienced this? Because we find this to be common in our conversations. Everybody's willing to line up for the money, but when sometimes, again, it gets to saddling up, they're not quite there.

So here's another great question. And this does segue us beautifully, Jean, into the next one. Well, why don't we go ahead and answer this with Susan or Dion, either one of you? How do you handle turnover of partner reps? How do you handle that turnover?

DION JACKSON: Well, I can speak to that. This is Dion. We did experience that a number of times throughout the last four years. And what we did is we instituted a system of elections on the one half. So we have an executive council which is made up of representatives from our committees and our counties. And we did start seeing some drop-off in participation.

So the first step we took was to have two representatives from each of those entities. One was the chair or the main representative, and the other was an alternative. That way we at least had some voice from those different constituencies. And then we would have annual elections, and staff would assist in recruiting the active members to run, so that we could hopefully get a broader participation and also have that set turnover with two people representing. Then, usually only one quits at a time if there is that kind of turnover.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: No, and thanks so much for that. We've had two great feedbacks and two great commentaries here. One-- Geryln has talked about tensions between short-term need versus long-term development. And you're right, that is something, Geryln. We agree that you have to have vision and clarification with this. But, yeah, sometimes that does lead into a setback situation.

And Melissa, we would love to go ahead and address this, because I know that this is one of those critical considerations that we talk about. When we talk about those nontraditional partners and covering non-cognitive workforce skills, and she's talking about growing that workforce pipeline-- single moms, students with disabilities, et cetera-- we really don't-- she says, "We found that our education system is meeting the needs to their traditional methods,

but for understanding employers' needs to the education partners with technical and cognitive skills, do they have discussions or include partners, then, for what our employers find the most important-- the non-cognitive skills?"

And I'm going to give just a moment for that-- a lot there, Melissa, for us to unpack. But it's great stuff, and this is written exactly-- what we want shared here. How do we have these discussions to include partner events to find, or to discover, or to identify those important non-cognitive fields? Susan, Dion, anybody?

DION JACKSON: Well, in my case, our community colleges have begun to recognize the importance. It's been drummed into their heads by so many of their industry support groups, or rather, advisory groups. And as we've developed new programs, we've insisted on having an industry advisory group for each one. And they make all the difference.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Yeah. I completely agree there. And Leticia has added here. Great comments always from you, Leticia. Thank you.

"The key is to have an established strategy and goals we've selected of each partner organization-- agreed upon outcomes." And you know what? Great point. I can see that. And that covers some of that, then-- those discussions-- so we've got to include all partners. I would say, then, we have to make sure all partners are represented, then. Great stuff. Y'all are really getting into this one today, and we appreciate it. This is exactly why we're here.

So let's go on and make a total segue, then, into that piece. It is final, and we call it the Big One-- "Assessing and Adapting Your Partnership Structure." There are so many questions here that we have to consider-- who's going to lead or facilitate that sub-step? Who's knowledgeable? Who has the connections? Who's going to drive it?

What about that operational structure, and is it going to work? And should it be teams? Should it be decentralized? There's just so much here when we start talking about assessing and adapting, because we've already seen here from comments from y'all and questions, that it requires constant adaptation, constant revisiting. So let's get a little bit into this, then, and let's start with you, Dion. As I recall-- again, I'm exposing y'all. I'm just pulling your secrets out of the closet here.

Dion, you talked about your founding group struggled with defining a structure of a partnership. But somehow y'all got that ball rolling. And as I recall, you proposed a simple

structure, provided broad representation across the membership-- to key off of Leticia's point. Leticia, I could have just fed you this question-- it couldn't be anymore perfect. Dion, can you expand on that a little bit more?

I think now that Dion has dropped off-- and she's going to have to rejoin us in just a moment. She's lost her audio. So Suzie, let's go to you. We're going to take Dion off the hot seat for a moment. You had to address partnership overlap, as I recall. And it had to do with-- I believe as I recall-- something about geography. And then there's that skills, again-- required. Can you address that for us?

SUSAN SCHOWEN: Yes, and I think, actually, what I was really trying to get out there was what I was mentioning a few minutes ago-- that we just had so many people working on this project, and we needed to-- or the central issue of the chemical manufacturing workforce-- but we really had to work very hard to organize everybody and get everybody aligned in the same direction.

There were a couple of things, I think, that really helped us to do that, one of which-- and I am an economic developer, so I'm going to put a plug in here for the role of economic development in this sort of question. Because we can really serve as a bridge between industry and education, so that we don't have a stake, really, in either of those other than wanting to see both of them be successful. So we were able to really serve as the bridge there.

And then we also developed a core group of individuals and state agencies in our educational system, and regional representatives around the state, who participated in as many of these different entities as possible to try to give a common voice to them. And I realize that's a work-intensive solution that I think most good solutions tend to be. And they worked for us.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Right, and again, it takes us back. It doesn't matter what that overarching topic is, the being on the same page and having that common mission and vision plays into almost every single aspect of that.

All right. I think Dion is back with us. And Dion, I could giggle here and say you were running from the hot seat, because I was getting ready to put you there, but I'm going to put you on it anyway, girl.

So as I recall, your founding group struggled, then, with the defining a structure for the partnership. But y'all got that ball rolling anyway with proposing a simple structure that had to

do with broad representation. Can you give us a couple of bullet points or just some brief on that, please?

DION JACKSON: Certainly. So, we started out with four counties. We actually expanded to 10. And so we wanted to make sure that they were all represented, and asked each one to identify somebody to begin that, and eventually expanded it to two people, because not everybody's schedule always works out.

We also had the different committees based on the different elements of the industrial ecosystem as defined by US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration. So that was workforce in training, international investment, and trade, et cetera. And within that, we ended up merging two of those committees over time, because their area overlapped a lot. And that was the Supplier Network and Operational Improvement and Capital Access, which really is only two committees-- although it sounds like three.

And then we bring those people together once a month. We started out with in-person meetings in order to establish relationships. And then when we had felt that we'd gotten a good, strong partnership going, then we made those to monthly phone calls in order to facilitate continued participation.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Well, that's a lot. But I know that when you shared with us, with that structure, that you had great success.

So I'm going to pause here just a moment before we move into our second-- our final group of questions and answers, because we are at that 30-minute mark. It gets here way too soon.

But again, we are staying online with anyone who would like to continue the conversation for another 15 minutes. We're going to stay on again. For those of you that have to jump off, please catch us at lincs.ed.gov for the continuing of the conversation, and any follow-up questions, and resources.

And before we go into those final questions, I do want to tell you about two great resources-- 'cause we don't believe in reinventing the wheel-- at cte.ed.gov. And the first one of those is the OCTAE's framework of supporting elements. And that framework contains 10 supporting elements that are viewed by practitioners, such as yourselves, that are instrumental in creating and implementing high quality, though comprehensive, pathways, with aligning programs of study. And as you might guess, one of those 10 supporting elements is indeed partnerships.

So you will want to go to cte.ed.gov and explore that framework some more with particular reference to partnerships.

Also at cte.ed.gov you can find information about six key elements of career pathways that was originated from the Department of Labor-- some great information there also. And it talks about building cross-agency partnerships and clarifying those roles-- we've been talking about that today; and engaging employers, designing those programs, identifying funding needs-- we've heard about that also-- as well as aligning policy in programs-- so great stuff there for you at cte.ed.gov.

So as I look now for more comments or questions for our final 15 minutes we've got together here, we want to make the most of this. So you are welcome to post any comments or questions on any of these overarching topics as well as something that's just burning and you've got to know about it. And we will do our best to answer it.

And while we're waiting for those, Dion, if I can go back to you-- I can remember in our conversation something that was so interesting to me-- that you said y'all had to address a common complaint that you had heard about new hires within your partnership. And that's one of the things we have to go back on though and re-evaluate partnerships. But could you just quickly address that for us or give us a little bit more information about that situation?

DION JACKSON: Sure. One of the issues that our industry partners expressed when it comes to workforce is that when they hire new people, they have a large turnover. People don't stick. There is-- either because they didn't realize what it was really like to work in industry, or although they have gotten their certificate and know how to be a machinist, they don't understand how it fits into the bigger picture.

So we created a boot camp that would prepare people to be employed in an entry level manufacturing job and would address those two issues. So the boot camp was actually eight hours a day, five days a week, so that they would know what it was like to go to a job. We were recruiting people from the unemployed side of things who didn't have a lot of experience working. This gave them the experience of what it was like to work-- and a supportive environment to do that-- so that when they got to their first job, they were ready.

And they also were given all that information about not just the role that they were going to have, but how does the whole operation work? Because what those employers would tell us is either they asked too many questions or not enough. Either way, they don't fit. They need to

have the awareness that they ask the questions that need to be answered so that their job gets done properly.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Yes. I'm completely-- thank you, Dion. That is some great insight there.

And Suzie, going to you-- again, we're looking for questions and comments from all of my colleagues out there. I want to encourage you. This is your optimal opportunity here to network with colleagues. And we can gather responses, not just from our co-presenters, but from your other colleagues. We've got a tremendous group. We have great representation online. So let's take an opportunity to pose questions and get feedback here.

But Suzie, I'm going to go to you right now while we're waiting. And as I recall, you had established a process to identify opportunities and choosing partners best positioned to be the lead applicant, if you will-- a little bit more about that.

SUSAN SCHOWEN: So, I think the important thing there was really accurately identifying who could best serve us-- the fiscal agent for grant opportunities. We had a lot of people that had no experience with federal grants in particular, showing a great deal of eagerness to apply for those grants. And often the programs that they were running were really ideal in terms of their match to the priorities listed in the grant. But without any experience in administering those grants and following the compliance requirements, we were really concerned about their ability to effectively deploy those funds and then be eligible for more funding in the future.

And so what we did was encourage partnerships between, particularly our community and technical college system, which had a great deal of experience with federal grants, and then some of the other workforce delivery partners who might be a little more flexible in what they could do.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Yeah, and I have to say-- here, I'm going to show my background being a coach's daughter. But it's all about positioning and putting your key players in optimal positions, isn't it?

SUSAN SCHOWEN: Exactly.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Yeah, you're misplacing or you're putting your quarterback where your center needs to be. It's all about positioning. And so that again, it's being on the same page, knowing your players,

and getting them out there.

So we have a question here from Melissa, and I'd like to take a pause and go to that. And it's "How do students afford the boot camps? Do they have to pay for the camps? Do employers? Or is there a grant for this? And if you have the diverse and nontraditional--" if you can see the question here. "Pipeline accessing-- is that part of the credit?"

It's always Melissa has got some great questions for us. I'm going to give you just a minute, Susan and Dion, maybe to process. Do you have any answer for this about those boot camps?

DION JACKSON: Yes, I do. The boot camp that we put together, we did have some grant funding that had come from the state for these kinds of programs-- or not specifically this kind of program-- but we were able to utilize it for this program-- both to design the curriculum and then to offer it. It was non-credit. We are working on getting it into the adult education side of the community college, because then it would be funded. The tuition would be funded through the state. That's still in process.

The other piece of that is that we are-- because we partnered with a community college and the University of California, at Los Angeles, with their extension program. Their long-term goal is to get college credit for this program through some articulation. But that's still in process.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: OK, and thank you so much-- because-- great information.

And Melissa, I'm hoping that that satisfies your question. Or do you have another follow-up? I'm going to watch for that here.

Great questions here. Again, this is what we're here for today, and we're going to capture what we can't respond to. And again, go to that lincs.ed.gov for more information and follow-up later.

Melissa, I hope that helps you out, there, friend.

So here's an extra question also. How do y'all respectively-- and you may have already approached this a little bit-- but define and document-- I think document is key here-- those industry workforce needs?

SUSAN SCHOWEN: I'm going to dive in on that. This is Suzie. That was a very high priority of ours. And part of the challenge was to accurately document-- as I think I did mention earlier-- the occupations that were the highest priority for our industry partners. But then we also needed to be very clear about the right kind of preparation for those.

And we have a lot of programs in the state at various levels of the educational system that purport to prepare people for process technology jobs, but there is a particular program called P-Tech that our chemical industry put together themselves. And they've got a P-Tech advisory board that oversees it. And that is the program that we really needed to focus on. So I think really identifying that level of detail and making sure that that's properly communicated to all of the partners is incredibly important to success.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: If I can just springboard a little bit more off that-- and I love that phrase that you just used-- "properly communicated." What does that mean for us?

SUSAN SCHOWEN: And in our case, it really meant marshalling all those myriad workforce development initiatives that were out there and speaking directly to them, and then making sure that they were speaking to their constituents as well. And we did put together a series of documents that outlined the priorities pretty clearly. And we did circulate those, not only with those partners, but also to our K-12 and post-secondary education partners. So we were attempting to make things as crystal clear as possible.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: And again, so important to be all be on that same page in that mission and vision, and also formalizing that process. I love that we're hearing-- document, document, document-- from you, that that's critical too, particularly where we are receiving this type of funding.

I wanted to point out to y'all also that Susan and Dion have so graciously relented, if you will, to providing their email addresses-- which we will post to you in just a moment-- in case you have any follow-up questions. Or you might say, "Hey, can you share some of those documents? It sounds like something that we need to have for clarification to make sure that we've got everything on the right page."

DION JACKSON: Libby?

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Yes, mam.

DION JACKSON: I wanted to add something-- where we found a gap in this documentation. And it was actually

on the employer side. We have a lot of small manufacturers-- anywhere from 10 to 50 employees. And what our MEP center discovered is that their job descriptions were really, really out of date, and it was impeding their ability to get good candidates.

So one of the things that they've put together is a program where they will help the manufacturer rewrite their job description to reflect what they're really looking for.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Oh, wow. Yeah.

SUSAN SCHOWEN: That's the wonderful point, we've seen that too.

LIBBY LIVINGS-EASSA: Yeah, absolutely incredible. And again, looking for it out there-- has anyone else utilized this strategy or anything else related to all of this? Thank you , Vinayak, for to go ahead and supplying before we get to that last slide-- Susan's and Dion's email addresses. Again, they have so generously provided those for us so that you may reach out to ask any one-on-one questions you would like to have.

I'm going to pose this to both of y'all again. We're coming in the homestretch here. We've got a last call out for questions and comments. We really would love to go to your question and comment first. I'm never short of questions on my side of the fence. So I'm going to look for an extra one from you.

But till we get there, perhaps y'all could respond quickly. How can the workforce development system-- how have you found a response to dynamic change? I mean, we know that, dag gonnit, shift happens all the time-- S-H-I-F-T-- probably the other one too-- but it happens all the time. How do y'all respond to that?

SUSAN SCHOWEN: I think that is absolutely the question of our time. But I do think that the answer to it is really the topic of today's presentation-- and that is relationships. Unless our employers and our workforce developers are talking to each other every day about those shifts and demands, and what they need, we will never achieve that ideal, balanced market in workforce development. And it is those communications and those really deep relationships that, to me, is the only answer.

LIBBY LIVINGS- Absolutely. And I love this topic, simple because there's so much relevance here. It's almost

EASSA: like it's taking everything-- what we learned in the sandbox and applying it out here in the professional world. It's all so true.

And for a current analogy, I'm going to have to say that on Facebook, or whatever your social media might be, by the time you post a status, what is it? Well, it's outdated. I mean, it's old news on today's fast Twittering, Facebook, Snapchat world it is. So we really have to be ready for all of these shifts and all of these dynamic changes. And because daggumit since they do happen quite suddenly. And we have to be ready for those. And that's why we have to be continually evaluating and reevaluating.

So as we get ready to close out, please don't stop adding your comments and questions. We will capture those until the last second to post in the lincs.ed.gov. And we want to continue that conversation again there. And any resources that we have mentioned here today we will capture and also include within today's thread for each of you.

And again, if you have more questions, please feel free to send those either to me, or either to Susan, or Dion, and we will capture those, and respond to you again.

We thank you for joining us, and we thank the department for this incredible opportunity to network with our colleagues across the country. And we hope that you're going to plan for our next chat titled "Keeping Your Partners Engaged." It's one thing to get them to the table. It's one thing to have a common mission and vision. But how do we keep them at the table?

So we hope you're going to join us on March 19th. Please register. We look forward to joining you then. And again, I hope you will join us on lincs.ed.gov. Y'all have a fabulous week!