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## DISCUSSION GUIDE: STATE APPRENTICESHIP EXPANSION GRANTEES

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**State Name:**

**State Agency:**

**SAA or OA:**

**Grant Amount:**

**Baseline Apprentice Target:**

**Baseline Employer Target:**

### Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is XX and I work for XX. As I explained in my email, I am part of a research team documenting the implementation of the U.S. Department of Labor's State Apprenticeship Expansion grants. This conversation is part of a series of discussions we are having with the state grantees to understand the approaches being used to expand apprenticeship and increase diversity within apprenticeship programs, as well as the progress that has been made toward the grant program's goals.

Our conversation today should take between 1.5 hours and 2 hours. I want to let you know that all the interview data will be reported in the aggregate and your name will never be mentioned in any report that we write, though we might use quotes to illustrate findings without using your name. I would also like to record our conversation just to make sure my notes are complete; the recording will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team. Being part of this discussion is voluntary and you may choose not to answer a question if you wish or stop the recording at any time. Do you have any objections to being part of the interview or to my recording our discussion? Do you have any questions before we begin?

Just to give you a preview of our conversation, we would like to start by talking about how registered apprenticeship is structured in the state and how this particular grant was managed within that structure. Then we will talk about the main activities under your grant, the partnerships that have supported it, and your approaches to outreach and registration. Then we will end with a discussion of the lessons learned from this experience.

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## I. Respondent/state background

*I would like to ask some questions to understand your work and the structure of the registered apprenticeship system in your state.*

1. First about you: What is your official title? The agency you work for? And your role in your agency, as well as your role on the State Apprenticeship Expansion grant?
2. Please briefly describe how registered apprenticeships are organized in the state.
  - a. What is the role of your agency?
  - b. What other agencies are key partners? What are their roles?
  - c. How many state employees across these agencies work on apprenticeship now? An estimate is fine.
3. Which individuals at which agencies were involved in planning and writing the original State Apprenticeship Expansion grant application? Were you involved in drafting the application?
4. How did your agency's previous work in apprenticeship (before grant award in November 2016) inform your initial plan?
  - a. How did work under the state accelerator grant (*\$500K provided to almost all states*) inform your efforts?
  - b. Was the strategy modeled after other states' apprenticeship expansion efforts? If so, which state(s)? How did your state learn about the strategies used by other states?
  - c. What other factors have informed or influenced your efforts under the State Apprenticeship Expansion grant?
5. How is the current State Apprenticeship Expansion grant managed?
  - a. What are your agency's responsibilities?
  - b. What are other state agencies' responsibilities?
  - c. Are these roles under the State Apprenticeship Expansion grant different for the state accelerator grant?
6. Of the **XX** state personnel working on apprenticeships (see Q 2c), how many FTEs are being funded by the grant, and what positions?
  - a. Are these personnel new or were they supported by other funding sources before the grant? (*Ask what other sources if not new*)

## II. Grant goals and activities

*I would like to ask you some questions about your goals for the State Apprenticeship Expansion grant, as well as the specific activities included in the grant. We also will explore how your work has changed since grant award in November 2016.*

7. What are the state's current primary goals for the grant?  
*Probe below if not mentioned in initial answer:*

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- a. What is your goal for increasing the number of registered apprentices through the grant? How many apprentices have you registered so far through the grant?
  - b. Are you targeting specific industries or occupations? If so, which industries and occupations?
  - c. How many new employers are you hoping to engage in registered apprenticeship programs through the grant? How many new employers have registered programs so far through the grant?
  - d. Have you or anyone else contracted under the grant created standards for new apprenticeable occupations? Which occupations, and what led to these standards being created?
  - e. Are you planning to undertake any policy reforms or regulatory changes in the apprenticeship system? *If yes, probe for details.*
8. How have these goals changed since the grant was first awarded? To what extent has your overall approach to grant efforts changed with the continuation of your grant?
  9. What are the main activities of your base grant? How have these changed since the extension of your grant?  
*Prompts: capacity building activities, direct funding of training, marketing or outreach to employers, marketing or outreach to apprentices, developing skills frameworks, providing subsidies to employers, providing subsidies to apprentices*
  10. What grant activities, if any, are directed at improving diversity and inclusion?
  11. What is the rough allocation of grant funds across these main activities? These can be reported in dollars or percentages.  
*Prompts: capacity building activities, direct funding of training, marketing or outreach to employers, marketing or outreach to apprentices, developing skills frameworks, providing subsidies to employers, providing subsidies to apprentices*
  12. Are you also receiving “cap breakers?” (*additional funding within the SAE grant for specific purposes of either expanding access to underrepresented groups or increasing demand in new industries*) If so, what types of cap breakers – expanding access and/or increasing industry demand? How have these changed over time or since the extension of your grant?
    - a. Expand access: What equity goals are you trying to achieve? What activities are you engaging in, in addition to the base grant activities?
    - b. Increase industry demand: What industries/occupations are you targeting? What activities are you engaging in, in addition to the base grant activities?
  13. Are other sources of funding being leveraged towards the grant’s efforts? If so, what are these other funding sources? About how much is being leveraged from each source?
  14. What activities or aspects of this grant has been the most innovative and promising for expanding apprenticeship?
    15. What are the most significant barriers in your state for improving diversity and inclusion in apprenticeship? What lessons have you learned about increasing access to diverse populations?
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- a. What types of barriers are there in recruiting people with disabilities?

### III. Critical grant partnerships

*I would like to ask a few questions about your most critical grant partnerships. We would like to understand how these partners contribute to the grant effort.*

16. Other than your agency (and the state agencies you have already named), what are the main entities or partners that have supported the grant's efforts to expand apprenticeships? How has the mix of partners changed since November 2016?  
*Prompt: Employers? Employer associations? The community college system? Non-profits? Other state agencies? National organizations?*
  17. Which two partners specifically have been the most critical for successful implementation of the grant?
  18. For the first critical partner:
    - a. What type of partner are they?  
*Prompts: Employers? Employer associations? The community college system? Non-profits? Other state agencies? National organizations?*
    - b. Are they directly funded by the grant? If so, how much funding do they receive?
    - c. When and how did they become involved in the current grant effort? Were they identified in the proposal or subsequently identified through an RFP or other mechanism? Were they involved in the planning for the current grant?
    - d. What has made them critical? What are their key contributions to the grant efforts? Describe their roles in management and ongoing implementation efforts.
    - e. How were they involved in the work of the state accelerator grant?
    - f. What non-grant resources from the partner have been leveraged to support grant activities? What do those resources support?
  19. For the second critical partner [*Ask if partner is similar to first partner discussed. If so, ask for the next critical partner with different roles.*]
    - a. What type of partner are they?  
*Prompts: Employers? Employer associations? The community college system? Non-profits? Other state agencies? National organizations?*
    - b. Are they directly funded by the grant? If so, how much funding do they receive?
    - c. How and when did they become involved in the current grant effort? Were they identified in the proposal or subsequently identified through an RFP or other mechanism? Were they involved in the planning for the current grant?
    - d. What has made them critical? What are their key contributions to the grant efforts? Describe their roles in management and ongoing implementation efforts.
    - e. How were they involved in the work of the state accelerator grant?
    - f. What non-grant resources from the partner has been leveraged to support grant activities? What do those resources support?
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20. To what extent has the state government—governor’s office and legislature—been an important partner in apprenticeship expansion efforts? What supports have they provided (in addition to any funding mentioned in Q 12)? How has their support changed?

*Prompts: Regulatory changes? Coordination between agencies?*

21. What lessons have been learned about developing successful registered apprenticeship partnerships?

#### IV. Marketing activities

*I would now like to ask you a few questions about your marketing activities.*

22. What kinds of marketing activities are conducted under your grant? *[If none, skip section]*

*Prompts: attracting potential apprentices; marketing to community or career college instructors, workforce boards; networking using staff connections; cold calling employers; in-person visits (to where? to whom?); advertising, marketing through an industry association partner*

23. Are different types or teams of staff reaching out to different groups, such as employers and potential apprentices?

a. What kind of skills are required for staff members conducting these marketing/outreach activities? How do the skills required to market to employers differ from the skills required to market to potential apprentices?

b. What kind of training do marketing and recruitment staff members receive? How does the training require for employer recruitment differ from apprentice recruitment/marketing?

24. Which staff conduct marketing and recruitment?

25. Do staff members working on marketing and recruitment as part of this grant have performance based incentives? If so, please describe.

#### V. Employers

26. How do staff identify employers who might establish or support an apprenticeship program?

27. How has your outreach to employers changed as a result of the grant?

28. What are some of the challenges associated with recruiting employers?

29. What grant activities are making the biggest difference in overcoming the challenges and successfully engaging employers?

30. For employers who are interested in registered apprenticeship, in what areas do they need the most help in setting up a program?

31. How would you describe the receptivity of employers to your efforts to expand apprenticeship?

32. What lessons have been learned about expanding apprenticeships to new industries and occupations?

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## VI. Registration Process

### [SAA States]

33. Please briefly describe the apprentice sponsor registration process for the state.
  - a. What is the role of your agency in helping sponsors register their programs and prepare work process schedules and standards?
  - b. Who besides your agency helps sponsors register their program?
  - c. How often does the apprenticeship agency or committee meet to approve proposals?
  - d. How long does the registration process typically take?
  - e. Is there information online to help sponsors with tracking or completing the process?
34. What barriers, if any, has your agency encountered in helping employers or other apprenticeship sponsors register programs?  
*Prompts: delays in meetings of approval councils; proposals not accepted because of disagreements over standards, related instruction, or ratio requirements; or administrative or regulatory delays*
35. How has the apprentice and sponsor registration process affected how the state was able to implement the expansion grant? Has the registration process changed because of grant efforts? How?

### [OA States]

36. What is the role of your agency in helping sponsors register their programs with the Office of Apprenticeship?
37. Who besides your agency helps sponsors register their program with OA?
38. What is your relationship between the OA federal representative(s) and your agency?
  - a. How many federal representatives are working in your state?
  - b. What kind of assistance do they provide in the state?
39. What barriers, if any, has your agency encountered in helping employers or other apprenticeship sponsors register programs?  
*Prompts: delays in meetings of approval councils; proposals not accepted because of disagreements over standards, related instruction, or ratio requirements; or administrative or regulatory delays*
40. Has your work in relation to registration changed under the grant?
  41. How has the apprentice and sponsor registration process affected how the state was able to implement the expansion grant?

## VII. Pre-apprenticeships and high school engagement

42. Are you developing or operating one or more pre-apprenticeship programs as a part of the grant? If yes, please describe them.
    - a. What types of skills are developed in the pre-apprenticeship programs?
    - b. How specific are they to an occupation or industry, or to a target population?
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- c. Do the pre-apprenticeship programs feed directly into an apprenticeship program?
  - d. How long are the pre-apprenticeship programs?
43. What kind of assistance do you provide in matching high school students to apprenticeship programs?
- a. What efforts do you make to conduct outreach to high schools?
  - b. Do you target specific underrepresented groups in that outreach, such as women or people of color?

#### VIII. WIOA alignment

44. Has the state—through the State Apprenticeship Expansion grant—reached out to local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) to support and engage in apprenticeships?
- a. Through what activities has the grant engaged local WDBs in this effort?  
*Prompt: webinars, state-issued guidance, on-site meetings*
  - b. Which staff are involved in these efforts?
45. What is the state’s focus in working with WDBs on apprenticeship?
- a. Is the state encouraging WDBs to have clients apply for apprenticeships?
  - b. Is the state encouraging WDBs to use ITAs for apprenticeships?  
*Prompts: how much per apprentice do ITAs provide? Has the amount changed recently? Are the funds only for related training?*
  - c. Is the state encouraging WDB business engagement staff to work with employers to start apprenticeships?
  - d. Is the state working with WDBs to place registered apprenticeship sponsors on the eligible training provider list?
46. What have you found to be successful in your work with WDBs to increase registered apprenticeships?
47. What have been the challenges in working with local WDBs on these efforts? How have you worked to overcome them?

#### IX. Other partners

*I would now like to ask a few questions about your other partners besides the ones we have already discussed.*

48. What other types of partners besides those discussed already is the grant engaging?
- a. Are you engaging partners, such as state education agencies, non-profits, community colleges, other public agencies, employers, or industry associations?
  - b. What are their roles?
  - c. What have been the challenges in engaging these other partners?
  - d. How has the mix of types of partners changed over time?

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49. How did you recruit or identify these partners for the grant effort?

- a. Did you have existing relationships with these partners?
- b. Did these partners have prior experience with registered apprenticeship?
- c. Did any of these partners help to plan the grant activities?

50. How have you approached maintaining the partnerships over time? What infrastructure have you put in place to make sure they are effective and sustainable?

#### X. Barriers, lessons learned and next steps

*I'd like to step back and talk about overall lessons from the grant at this stage.*

51. What have been the main challenges you have faced in working towards the goals of the grant, and how?

*Prompts: The apprentice sponsor registration process? Employer reluctance?*

52. What would you describe as your most important successes for this grant?

53. Will you continue any aspects of your work after the end of your contract? Which activities do you expect to continue and which will be discontinued? Which staff positions will be sustained?

- a. Do you envision a state agency taking responsibility for the grant activities after the end of the grant? If so, which agency? How do you expect their work to be funded?

54. Have you conducted your own studies or research regarding registered apprenticeships and apprenticeships expansion? If so, what research questions were you addressing? What did you learn?

- a. May we have a copy?
- b. Are there other materials and/or documents that you've developed as part of this grant? May we have a copy of those?

Is there anything else you would like to mention beyond what we have discussed?

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us on this important topic.