

CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY
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OPERATOR: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to today's presentation. For the duration of the conference call your lines will be on a listen-only mode. At this time it is my pleasure to turn the floor over to your host for today, Evelyn Ganzglass. Please go ahead, ma'am.

EVELYN GANZGLASS: Thank you. Welcome to the CLASP Call on Workforce Development: New Opportunities for Creating Pathways to Good Jobs and Sustainable Employment. Our speakers today are Sandi Vito, who is acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Carrie Thomas; Associate Director of the Chicago Jobs Counsel and Jason Walsh, who is National Policy Director for Green for All.

As the moderator or the operator told you, I believe, the phones are muted for the entire call. But as the instructions that you received yesterday indicated you are able to ask questions anytime during the call; just send your questions in by e-mail. And we will pose those questions to the speakers at the end of the presentations, at the end of the conversation we have.

Just to remind you, the e-mail address is audioconference@clasp.org. So much for housekeeping, hopefully, so let's move on to the discussion because I think there are some really interesting issues that we want to bring out during this call. And my first question is really a question to all three of our speakers.

And it goes to the multiple expectations that the Recovery Act has placed on the workforce system. It's a great deal of money for a chronically under-funded system. There is tremendous demand for services, people coming into OneStops way beyond the usual level of activity.

There are tremendous demands from the president, from the Congress, expectations for using the money very quickly for immediate economic stimulus and as well as long-term economic recovery for helping those who have been long-term unemployed, youth and dislocated workers, those hardest hit by the recession, and also spending the money with very high levels of accountability and transparency.

One might suggest that there are some inherent tensions among all of these demands; for example, getting the money out quickly and really changing the way services are being delivered. I'd like to ask each of you just as an opening shot: what do you think the ultimate measures of success for the workforce system should be under the Recovery Act? And why don't we start with Sandi.

SANDI VITO: I think that the ultimate measures of success will be sort of a two-fold set of goals. One: do we put people to work? It seems simple but in this economy it's challenging. But two how transformational is the new money in building, improving, a system that works to build the skills of people who could take advantage of job opportunities when the economy does recover.

So that means that the system is going to be judged by how much of the funds actually go into training, how much of it serves people who are not just recently unemployed but who have been outside of the labor market, and how much of it is targeted to real skill development and career pathways.

GANZGLASS: Sounds like a challenge to me, Carrie, what do you think the ultimate goals should be?

CARRIE THOMAS: Well similar to Sandi I think an ultimate measure of success is whether we've used this opportunity to build skills in the workforce, specifically whether we've helped people who've languished in low wage, low skill jobs or people who haven't had the marketable skills to get or keep a decent job.

But I also think another measure of success should be the extent to which the workforce education and training that gets paid for is connected to the industries that other parts of the recovery package are intended to create jobs in. So [another measure of success is] whether we really are linking our workforce and economic development strategies.

GANZGLASS: OK, Jason?

JASON WALSH: Yes, I mean I would agree with what both Sandi and Carrie said. All I would add is that I think they're going to be both programmatic measures of success and then larger measures of success with respect to the legislation itself and then political measures of success, if I can use that term.

So I mean to be clear there are – there is particular language within the recovery act that is specific to particular pots of money. So under the Workforce Investment Act Adult Program the Recovery Act specifies that priority be given for both intensive and training services to public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals.

So obviously a programmatic measure of success is the degree to which local workforce investment boards can actually serve those populations. There is a larger I think measure of success with – success with respect to Recovery Act which really speaks to its purposes. The Recovery Act lists five overall purposes which I won't go through. I won't go through all five but the first is helping those most impacted by the recession which I think speaks directly to being able to serve effectively both the recently dislocated and the long-term unemployed.

You know also I'll echo what Carrie said in that I think Congress, in particular, is going to be looking closely at the extent to which and the effectiveness with which the local workforce system can train workers for the jobs created by the Recovery Act.

And then just a final point which you know and maybe this is stating the obvious but I'll state it anyway. I mean I think folks within the workforce education system need to recognize, I think most of them do, that the Recovery Act is deeply politicized and its implementation will be closely watched.

And many of those watching aren't particularly interested in seeing it succeed. In fact, they want to see it fail because if it is implemented well and effectively and if the narrative that develops around that implementation tells a story about the effectiveness of public programs obviously that has enormous consequences for our future ability to reinvest in the public workforce system or any of our public systems that have been disinvested in over the last 8 years and plus in many cases.

The converse, of course, is that if implementation is perceived to have failed then there is no way in Hell we're going to be able to make a case that there be future investments in these programs, whether in a stimulus part two or in the appropriations process. So I mean I really do think this is going to be a referendum on the effectiveness of activist government and I think the key take away for those of us who care about this system is that we are going to face a level of scrutiny far above and beyond you know a DOL audit.

There is a lot on the line here and I think policy makers and opinion makers and the public are going to be watching closely to see whether these new funds are being used to do work in new and innovated and, as Sandi said, transformative ways.

GANZGLASS: And that's exactly what we want to highlight in this call, some ideas, some lessons that have been learned from exemplary kinds of programs to provide some guidance to the field as people start thinking about how to deliver services to populations that have really been underserved in recent years through the workforce system.

Carrie, what advice would you give local workforce boards regarding the kinds of training and service delivery models that work best for low income, low skill populations? And how could they use their broader contracting authority that's come through the Recovery Act to procure those services?

THOMAS: Well one thing I would like to say is a piece of advice that I heard last week that I actually think is something maybe some of us haven't thought of. And I know the workforce system works very differently in different parts of the country and even in different parts of each state.

But in some places the Workforce Investment Act Services have not been that accessible to the lowest income people or the most disadvantaged people who are trying to get into the labor market. So it might be important simply to get the word out that there are increases in services and there is more money.

And I don't think we should assume that because the Recovery Act has gotten so much press and there has been so much discussion in our worlds about it that everybody knows that. And I think one of the ways to do that is to look to some of the social service and community based organizations that are seeing increases of numbers of people looking for services, like food shelves and community action programs and housing providers.

So I would just say that as a threshold is that getting the word out that there is more services is going to make a difference about whether you can serve the people the act was intended to and whether you can do that quickly. But second I think in terms of program models, I think to the extent allowed under the Work Force Investment Act, I think that we should be looking at ways to combine paid work with skills training.

So for example, this is a good opportunity to figure out how to build off the many pilots and demonstration projects around transitional jobs for hard-to-employ people. And thinking about how this funding and these new resources could help build skill building components into those could connect to transitional job programs, to maybe bridge program, and to other occupational skills training models.

And it isn't just increase funding that creates this opportunity but this is it's sort of the economic situation that we're in. This is really a good approach because it's a way to provide paid employment when unemployment is high.

So it puts money in people's pockets that they are likely to spend. And in addition, it's thinking about skill building in relation to work. So you know work based learning is really more effective for a lot of people who haven't succeeded in traditional education settings.

And it's not just transitional jobs as the model. I mean there are other types of models that use paid employment on the job training, paid internships, work-study pens, partially subsidizing jobs that can be tailored to different populations.

So I think the point is to give people paid work experience and skill building at the same time. I think also that this allowance for contracting for training might be an opportunity for community colleges and other training providers to customize a course of study or a credential program to the needs of maybe a cohort of lower-income people.

So customize both in when it's offered or how the you know how the hours go so that it kind of accommodates people's family care or maybe if they have part time work, also thinking about support services and other things that go along with that.

GANZGLASS: That's really interesting; you've talked about combining work and education in a variety of ways to allow us to do much more cohort training than before. Support services- one of the program elements that was mentioned in the Recovery Act in the colloquy between Senator Harkin and Murray was also needs-related payments.

Do you – what role do you see for needs related payments in the system? It's something that really hasn't been used very much at all in recent years.

VITO: Well I think that people are really attuned to that because it was pointed out in the legislation. And they haven't – what we have heard locally is that yes nobody has been able to stand up to use that opportunity in the Workforce Investment Act because there hasn't been enough money. And because of the charge that we as services should be universally accessible, people have worried more about that.

So I think the role that it plays is really thinking about this population that really struggles to stay in training programs and often you know is going from one economic crisis to another. So [people should be] really thinking about having these needs-related payments as part of this sort of support services tools that you might have.

People need income support at times when you don't expect it and these related payments would be one way to do that.

GANZGLASS: Sandi, what is it that the state could be doing or states could be doing to promote greater attention to low income, low skill, populations, and to help the local delivery areas actually structure programs that are likely to succeed with this population?

VITO: I think a lot. So let me just be brief on each of them and then allow for questions later if anybody wants expanded explanation. First the Workforce Investment Act itself says that in prioritizing services for low income and individuals receiving public assistance the state or the Governor can put out guidance. So [people should be] taking advantage of that opportunity to put out guidance and be very clear about priorities.

Second: looking at what I'm going to call triple enrollment. So that we're specifically looking at TANF clients, people who may be receiving food stamps but not receiving TANF, and how can we enroll – have folks enrolled in TANF and WIA and in literacy programs. So that's another way that the state can sort of breakdown barriers to provide seamless services to individuals in communities.

Again, just want to support the notion of transitional work or paid work. The needs related payments I think will help create more transitional work opportunities. Obviously, combining education and literacy training – occupational and literacy training [will help].

I also want to mention that taking advantage of apprenticeship programs and building strong pre-apprenticeship programs will be significant for folks currently outside of the workforce – the labor force.

One of the things that we're looking at is linking on the job creation side. So [look at] any of the road money that will be let out through RFP putting specific languages that gives preference to people who hire from among the unemployed, from at risk youth populations, and from folks who have traditionally are either low income or receiving assistance.

GANZGLASS: That's great, you know there's been very little co-enrollment let's say between Title I, Title II of WIA or TANF recipients being served. What is it that has been the problem up until now? And ...

VITO: It's the ...

GANZGLASS: ... at the state and local level what can be done to really facilitate the linkage between these programs?

VITO: It really is the reporting guidelines on the TANF side that I think are among the biggest barriers. What we hear from the locals and the community colleges is they don't track time and attendance of their enrollees.

So that's the barrier that has to be overcome and one of the things that we're looking at. How can we ensure that TANF clients have the same opportunities as other clients but still meet those federal guidelines? And you know we're hopeful that perhaps there might be some relaxing of those rules down the line.

GANZGLASS: Carrie, do you have any thoughts about that from the local perspective?

THOMAS: Again it will differ in different parts of the country. But I know locally we're actually hoping that we do something that might be kind of obvious which is to look at the vendors and contractors and see if there are any that have contracts in both systems.

Maybe thinking about ways that we already should be coordinated locally and we just haven't thought about that as a system, especially between the Title 1 and the Title 2 contractors.

I think the other thing is just you know to figure out ways to incent that or require some kind of partnership if contracts increase with increased funding or if there is new RFP that goes out with increased funding.

I also think that it's time to build on from what works well. So a lot of innovation has happened in this time of limited funding. Where people have put together different pieces. So I think looking at this increase funding in the Workforce Investment Act and all the ways that it could have possibly been used and can be now and thinking about where the gaps have been in some initiatives.

So if you've had sector or career pathway initiatives that have really focused on people who could already – who have some basic skills, maybe now it's time to build the basic skills piece on to it. So like a bridge program or even a pre-bridge program in some cases.

I also think you know supporting people who haven't been able to participate in some of those sector projects or pathway projects because they have very low-incomes. So thinking about the support services that are needed not just in terms of academic support but in terms of income support- thinking more broadly about support services.

So people on the workforce investment side or the TANF side think about support as income support or child care or transportation, whereas people in education often think of support services as support students that students need- how about thinking about those together in one package and sort of making sure that all of those things can be funded.

GANZGLASS: And Carrie, you mentioned, you know innovative programs- one of the innovations that I think that we're learning really works well is to not think of basic skills and occupational training in a sequential way where first you go through basic skills remediation or English language instruction and then at a later point you really start the occupational training that helps you get the job, but really to integrate those in a concurrent way either in the same classroom or at least not in a sequential way that just takes much longer. The success has been much higher with those kinds of programs and people are able to get to credentials that really have value in the labor market, Because so often people just drop out of programs when it just takes too long to go one-step at a time. Maybe we can get back to that later on.

I'd like to turn to Jason, you know there's been a lot more money put up through the system through the formula funding streams but there's also been increased funding for discretionary programs both in the dislocated workers national reserve, as well as training programs and high growth emerging industry sectors such as, energy efficiency and renewable energy and healthcare.

While the Secretary is not obligated as I understand it to implement all the provisions of the Green Jobs Act, it is highly likely given her support for the Green Jobs Act when it was first introduced that much of the Green Jobs Act would be included in DOL guidance and implementation of this component of the program.

Jason, I know you've been involved in this since the beginning. What is your understanding of where DOL might be going with implementation of the – I'll label them Green Jobs Provisions- and what are some of the opportunities that provides?

WALSH: Yes, well the obvious caveat is that I won't claim to speak for DOL but it is worth noting that the now confirmed Secretary after a ridiculously long process was actually the chief sponsor [of the Green Jobs Act] in the House.

So I think it is safe to assume that she will want to see this grant program implemented in the spirit of that legislation. There were some reasons why this grant program was not run through the statute, through the authorized program. Mostly because when that legislation was developed it was not intended to move \$500 million very, very, quickly.

And it actually sets up four separate competitive grant programs. This language in the Recovery Act gives the Secretary broad discretion on doing a whole bunch of different competitive grant programs, which I suspect she will, not given the urgency here or even one that seeks to fund a range of the projects specified under the Green Jobs Act- ranging from research, deliver exchange, to actual job training projects.

It's worth noting a few things. Even though it doesn't run through the statute it does target populations that are identified as priority – as target populations through the Green Jobs Act, and so that includes unemployed

individuals, at risk youth, ex-offenders. And it specifies that the industries that are identified in the Green Jobs Act are a range of renewable energy and energy efficiency industries.

You know it's also worth noting I think that the Green Jobs Act relies heavily on partnerships at the local level. And so as folks prepare for this money they should start thinking about what kind of partnerships are going to be in a position to draw down this money.

Those partnerships should include both industry and organized labor, where it is appropriate they should include the workforce system, educational institutions, and community organizations. There is a very strong emphasis within the Green Jobs Act and thus I think it will be there within this new grant program on pathways out of poverty.

And it could not only be directed at jobs but careers in renewable energy and energy efficiency industries. I think it's worth noting given the mention of career pathways that the language within the Green Jobs Act is very much consistent with the career pathways model on the pathways out of poverty piece.

It's looking for training partnerships that integrate basic and occupational – basic education and occupation training that incorporate training and wrap around support services that deliver their programs in formats and at places and at times that are accessible to working adults.

So I think a very good way to prepare for this grant program is to look closely at the Green Jobs Act because I think it will give us a pretty good indication of how this is going to be rolled out.

GANZGLASS: That's great, what kinds of jobs are actually going to be created? What kinds of green jobs are actually going to be created? Which agencies are going to be responsible for doing that? And how might the work force system connect to at both the state and the local level to the various decision makers on the job creation side?

WALSH: Yes, it's a good question. Well I mean actually I think the Recovery Act provides the – with the opportunity to spell some misconceptions about green jobs.

The first is that as green jobs are out there somewhere in the sci-fi future when in fact mostly right in front of us. You know building a green economy will require some brand new industries and some brand new occupations. But for the most part it will require transforming the industries and occupations we all ready have.

I think the second very related misconception is that it will only be a handful of scientists and engineers who build this. And those are going to be the green jobs when in fact most of the work is going to be done by pipe fitters and electricians, and carpenters, and mechanics, and welders, and technicians. Folks in a range of middle skill jobs that require more than a high school education but less than a four year college degree.

And these are most of the jobs that are going to be created by the Recovery Act funds. There is an enormous amount of investment in clean energy programs within the recovery act to the tune of about \$71 billion. There is also an additional \$20 billion in clean energy tax incentives.

Most of the renewable jobs will be in manufacturing and in installation and maintenance. Most of the energy efficiency jobs created will be in the building trades and then a subsector of that will be in occupations that are very specific to energy efficiency, like energy auditors.

I think in preparing for these jobs and in the responsible local systems you know it's worth recognizing that particular industries are going to be stimulated more so than others by Recovery Act funds.

And I think local leaders are really going to need to identify those sectors and identify the strategies that are going to be necessary so that the people that most need work in communities are prepared to do this work, and prepared for the jobs that are created by the Recovery Act.

I also think there's a danger here of siloing them, both at the local and state level. It's going to be particularly important for local leaders, state leaders to put in place mechanisms that ensure the linkage between programs that create jobs and those that train people for jobs.

It's going to be I think particularly important because a lot of the job creation is going to run through programs -and this varies of course from state to state- but programs that are administered by Department of Transportation and Departments of Energy.

The extent to which those departments at the state level talk to and work with state Departments of Labor is inconsistent across the country and so given that these agencies are not working together as a matter of course that's going to need to change.

In the local level you know I mean I think this is a moment that is tailor-made for sectoral employment strategies. And Pennsylvania has been one of the local leaders in that regard. So I'll let Sandi talk more about that.

GANZGLASS: Thank you, you just did my segue. That's exactly how I wanted to do that. Sandi, really you have - Pennsylvania's known as one of the states that has really done the most in this sector- work in a sector strategy arena.

Can you talk a little bit about the lessons that you've learned from that sector approach? And how that has prepared you to take on this challenge of linking to job creation in the green jobs energy sector but manufacturing and construction and other sectors as well?

VITO: You know the lessons that we learn in large part follow the outline of the Green Jobs Act. The first piece that I want to really put a lot of emphasis on is by bringing together the employers and the unions- we have a real time data on what the jobs are. Where there are actual job shortages in energy, as well as in healthcare. So it makes the labor market more transparent. I can't underscore strongly enough how important that piece of it.

The second piece is that these partnerships have become expert really in creating the career pathways that we all seek to create. What our experience was before we had our industry partnership is that folks talked about career pathways but they talked about it on the education side. So there was a clear educational pathway that did not match the actual industry pathway.

So let me just kind of give you an example in our energy – in one of our energy partnerships they are in the process of developing a career pathway that works on weatherization and energy auditing in the residential area but then looks at up scaling those folks to get them into the commercial area where the jobs pay more, etc. etc.

It also has made – we just put out and this refers back to an earlier question you asked. How can states use their discretionary money? We're using our existing discretionary money for re-employment grants that will focus on cohort training.

That cohort training makes more sense because the industry partnerships can tell us well we need lots of folks to do weatherization and solar and insulation right now before even the stimulus money comes out. We need respiratory therapist in healthcare. So it's very much linked to getting folks into the labor market who had been out longer.

The other thing I just want to talk about that relates to the partnerships and the career pathway strategies within the partnership is that we've also found that career coaching is an important element and the success of helping people move along the career pathway. So it's an important piece that we – that people can use some of the supportive services just to help folks particularly those who may not have been in the labor market most recently.

Third point: the creation of these has required a lot of technical assistance and peer learning. So one of the roles that the state and local areas can play is working with each other to understand what changes in the industry have happened and also what strategies have worked.

And then finally, I think it's very important that the partnerships also look at the question of sustainability. So for instance, I just want to give you one notion of success. We had a healthcare partnership for direct care workers where the wages were able to be negotiated in such a way that after the training individuals got more money and then in addition to that the union and the employer created a job training program. That was part of the contract negotiation and that started because we were able to create that partnership.

That's crucial because as we're learning more and more about this economic climate the job quality issue is going to become I think more central to the discussion. Yes we need to up skill and get more folks into those middle field jobs but there are jobs at the lower end of the labor market where the job quality needs to be improved and the partnerships provide the opportunity to create both a career pathways but also to improve the human resource practices within the industry.

GANZGLASS: Sandi you talked about weatherization and using weatherization as a starting point and then helping people move on to residential construction where wages are higher. There is a lot of discussion about poor job quality on the weatherization side. Jason do you have any thoughts about what can be done in that area since it's such a big chunk of the recovery activity?

WALSH: Yes (INAUDIBLE) describing exactly what can be done. And I hope more states and local areas imitate that. I mean folks need to recognize that and this is a larger point that there are resources for training beyond the Workforce Investment Act funds that flow down.

So within the weatherization assistance program, which by the way has been running as more or less a \$220/\$230 million program for the last several years. It now has \$5 billion. And up to 20 percent of that is for training – so I think \$1 billion – just to put that in perspective. Double the adult funding stream under WIA and the Recovery Act can be allocated for training and technical assistance, which is going to be really crucial.

But a number of questions need to be asked and need to be answered. Will the expansion of the program be used to connect what is typically shorter-term training necessary for residential weatherization to a true career pathway that leads to high level of communion job in the more skill intensive commercial building (INAUDIBLE) industry.

Will the dramatic increase of funds for the program be used to increase the quality and pay of the jobs within the residential weatherization industry? And to catalyze the participation of contractors that pay family (INAUDIBLE) wages and benefits?

I think this is going to be one of the key implementation questions to address here over the next few months. And it's going to require community action agencies, which are typically the recipients of these funds, and the building trades and the public system and employers to work together in the way they haven't before.

VITO: Can I just add something to that.

GANZGLASS: Sure, go ahead.

VITO: One of the things that we did- and this is pre getting the stimulus money- we're in the process of with our weatherization unit and our discretionary WIA dollars putting out and again it doesn't have to be this much- remembers Pennsylvania a big state. But we're just starting right now with a \$2 million pot of money for weatherization training hoping that pot will obviously grow with additional weatherization training.

But that – the point of that was to link those two sources of money so that we could build in the career pathways that Jason and I both talked about. And also work with the weatherization folks that are doing weatherization to get their workforce needs met but link in around the job quality issue again.

So it's leveraging those resources that I think is going to be really useful and a lot of leadership that needs to come from the states on that.

GANZGLASS: And there have been some local workforce investment boards that even before the Recovery Act money have really tried to use training and employment services to work with "high road employers," and to try to really become a part of a good jobs strategy.

So I think it's building on those successes. Let me before I open it up to other questions I just wanted to ask a pretty mundane question. But given the sectoral partnerships that have existed, given all the work that's been done in the green jobs arena, are there curricular and programs available that other communities that really haven't gotten into this as much as some could use quickly? Is there a way of sharing among communities this information?

I'm opening it up to any of you on that.

VITO: My emphasis is, I would not if I were a local area, I would not right now pay for any curriculum development until I did some research about what was out there. So for instance, in Pennsylvania we do have curriculum developed in all the programs – in all the energy areas and in the healthcare areas we just discussed.

It's an information asymmetry; it's not a lack of existing curriculum.

GANZGLASS: This curriculum is being delivered through whom? Through community colleges, community based organizations, variety of organizations, how is this working in Pennsylvania?

VITO: Some combination in some cases its community colleges; in energy for instance we have what's called the energy-coordinating agency in South East Pennsylvania. And they have very, very, good curricula to the weatherization standards. And the energy auditing standards that are required in the industry. That's a community-based organization.

GANZGLASS: Let me go back to a point that came up earlier. And that was about cohort training. One of the issues that I have heard talk about is lack of recent experience in the whole procurement process because of the use of ITA's and this inexperience and really negotiating for contract training. Have any of you been involved with this carry it out at the local level or Sandi at the state do you have any guidance or suggestions for other communities or states on this whole question of contracting and procurement, especially given the speed with which everything has to happen?

THOMAS: I don't. Locally, ITAs are the way that it has happened for the most part, and I think the procurement issues differ so I don't have any advice at this point.

GANZGLASS: Sandi, you've done, you've talked about really trying to promote cohort training which does include, clearly, procurement. Is that an issue that you have had to deal with in Pennsylvania or do you think that that's really not as big a problem as some had suggested?

VITO: What we're doing is an expedited competitive grant making process so it's not necessarily the contracting process, which is as you know in state and procurement speak a longer process, but it is a competitive grant making process. And I think the importance of that is not only to meet whatever procurement codes exist within the local areas and the states but also to make sure that you're getting what you pay for.

You know all cohort training will not be you know equal. Some is, some, for instance, community colleges, and we've challenged our community colleges, are starting enrollment you know not just by semester and in emerging occupations. That's clearly the kind of cohort training we want. We don't just want some training for the sake of it.

We want to look at the strong outcomes in the occupations so that competitive process gives you the opportunity [to target]. Without knowing what the barriers are on the procurement side, I'm not sure I can address the specific questions, but maybe people will have questions.

GANZGLASS: Well, let's, I know a number of questions have come in so let's turn to some of the questions that have, that we've received so far. Matt do you want to tell us what those are?

MALE: Sure. Well, the first question probably applies to WIA reauthorization as well as the Recovery Act, and it's will WIA be rewritten so that it allows new models for training with contracts and cohort group training?

GANZGLASS: And the answer to that is that ...

VITO: I don't think we know.

GANZGLASS: ... that we will try out hardest to make that happen in the WIA reauthorization process.

WALSH: I think clearly there is going to be an opportunity to increase within WIA the capacity that does not exist there now unless state and local leaders, as in Pennsylvania, use their money creatively and actually use state money as well that there will be some added, hopefully, capacity for sectoral approaches to some of this work.

And you know we've got legislation out there from Senator Snowe and Senator Brown that I think lays this out in a pretty explicit way, but there will be a, it's hard to talk about WIA reauthorization and to take that seriously given how long it hasn't been reauthorized. But I suspect we'll have an actual shot at it this year.

THOMAS: I think it's a good sign what happened in the Recovery Act that it will be taken seriously.

GANZGLASS: And the Recovery Act really does provide an opportunity to test out some of these strategies at a larger scale throughout the system and to make use of the tools that are available. Matt, was there another question as well?

MALE: Yes. This is the last one, but this person was concerned that service providers are going to focus on job placement outcomes while the job creation efforts are being kicked into gear. So how can we create interim benchmarks like attaining skill credentials while we're waiting for sufficient jobs to be created? Does that make sense?

GANZGLASS: Are there any thoughts about that, how one can measure movement towards employment, attainment of credentials within the system?

THOMAS: I think it does make sense. I think the question is since the Workforce Investment Act performance measures didn't change at all, the question is how are, you know will there be anything from DOL about how to look at that and whether that will change.

GANZGLASS: Well, let me ask Sandi in particular but others as well. Have you given thought to the whole issue of transparency throughout the Recovery Act but particularly for the workforce programs and whether it makes sense even outside the performance standards process and measures that we have for individual states or perhaps nationally if that couldn't be arranged to develop some other measures or other benchmarks that could be used to communicate success of the system- going right back to the first question about expectations and the tremendous transparency that's being expected of the system.

VITO: Evelyn, let me say two things. Let me answer the last question first. I think the expectation among members of Congress is that this money will be used for training so credentials will matter.

I think the second question is the transparency and given the performance measures, how do we report that. But you know it's the credential and then the job afterwards so given the opportunity we have in that so many people have longer unemployment benefits I think that this money can be directed by both states and local areas to training or at least a large portion of it without really jeopardizing the performance measures even as they're written.

On the transparency issue, well, I'll say this, we've thought about it. The state is going to have its own website which then, I think, will somehow link or link that information to the federal website. We haven't gotten through all of what that means yet, but a couple of key things we do know, there is a real call for public input so we recently had a state workforce investment board meeting.

We're encouraging and I think going to require all of our local investment boards to hold a public meeting asking for input about the job training money. I think that's a very important public engagement piece.

And then we are in the process of developing a system that would track this information independently and produce it and put it on the state website and then make it available to the Federal Government. I don't think we've worked out all those details nor do I believe that DOL, just based on a phone call I had, has figured out exactly how they want us to track it either.

WALSH: The only thing I would add to that you know is I think it's particularly important to note for advocates of low income folks that you know the, and again, also the obvious part, because the majority of Recovery Act dollars

are (INAUDIBLE) really, really quickly you know there is significant danger of pet project funding deal cutting that is not going to benefit communities most in need and that advocates really should be pushing for public hearings.

So there are (INAUDIBLE) other mechanisms to make decision-making transparent and to create forums where democratic voices can be heard. I think that's going to be really key. There are examples of coalitions that have formed in different parts of the country to make sure that happens.

I think we also have the ability to point directly at the legislation itself that is, with respect to WIA, prioritizing that these funds be used to target low-income individuals. And, of course, one of the stories of WIA over the last many years is that we have seen a shift away from serving those most in need as the system has to shift to a more universal customer.

Obviously, we need to still serve that universal customer, but there is particular attention within this legislation to serving those who are low income and on public assistance. And advocates where policy makers are not as progressive as we would like, unlike in Pennsylvania, that advocates and practitioners for that matter really need to hold folks accountable.

GANZGLASS: I would just add, this is Evelyn, that prior to the call we sent out principles for state implementation of the Recovery Act that the Working Poorest Family Project and a whole group of organizations, including CLASP developed that talk specifically about transparency, that talk about targeting those most in need investing in services.

So I urge you to look at those principles and to really use them in your work whether you're within the system or outside as an advocate to guide some of the decision making and to share with people at the levels at which you are working because I think they very much reflect the best thinking about expectations for the system and the outcomes we're trying to achieve.

I believe another question has come in?

MALE: Yes. The question is about how to connect formerly incarcerated individuals with the programs that are being funded with the Recovery Act. Is there any interaction with the new programs the Second Chance Act has created and is the DOL releasing any information for how to bridge those programs?

And is there, I guess, is just there, if you could just speak, generally, about how formerly incarcerated people could be connected with job opportunities and skills training.

WALSH: Well, I mean, let's keep in mind that the DOL just got a secretary confirmed last week so you know there's a bunch of guidance that has not come out yet that will come out. The Second Chance Act was not funded within the Recovery Act.

The green jobs, the \$500 million for green jobs training as I mentioned before does target populations that are identified and specified within the Green Jobs Act. Ex offenders are one of those so that's a part of money that folks looking to target ex offender populations should be looking at particularly closely.

GANZGLASS: Any other thoughts about that? Let me just add that Carrie mentioned early on in the call transitional jobs, and transitional jobs have been used quite extensively with the re-entry population and are the kind of model that combines work and skill enhancement in basically paid work, it's more than paid work experience.

It's actually paid employment but on a transitional basis. So that is a model that very much fits this population and can be used as in the early stages of helping people transition into unsubsidized paid employment.

WALSH: And it's the strategy that's identified in the Green Jobs Act. And although it's not running through the statute per se, as I said earlier, I think we should look at that legislation to get a good sense of what DOL will be looking for.

VITO: The only thing I would add it that there are particular industries in which ex offenders fare better, and building and construction is one of them so I think that there will, because of the job creation activities in the

Recovery Act be more opportunities for those clients of ours. Health care, for instance, is not a great area. Ex offenders tend not to do very well in that sector of the economy.

GANZGLASS: Leslie, we are just about out of time. Let me just mention that we have a number of calls coming up, and one of the ones coming up is actually on transitional jobs. That one is – that audio call is scheduled for March 18. There's also one on rebuilding the safety net that is scheduled for March 11 and then on March 25 one on new opportunities for serving older youth.

CLASP is a founding member of the National Transitional Jobs Network, and for the person who asked about models for serving people coming out of prisons, we'd be happy to follow up with you and give you some examples and some contacts on transitional jobs in that population.

So thank you all for participating. I urge you to take part in additional audio calls that we've set up and to look at the CLASP Web site, www.clasp.org, for background material on a lot of the points that we've been discussing on the call. Thank you, Sandi, Carrie and Jason.

WALSH: Thanks, Evelyn.

GANZGLASS: Bye everybody.

END