

# H-1B TECHHIRE



## H-1B TechHire Peer Learning Group Call Summary: Navigating the Pandemic Part 2: Remote Participant Supports

Recently, the TechHire technical assistance (TA) team hosted a second Peer Learning Group (PLG) call in the “Navigating the Pandemic” series, called Remote Participant Supports. The call provided grantees with an opportunity to hear from peers who have quickly and successfully transitioned to providing participant supports remotely. About 45 grantee representatives, TA coaches, and U.S. Department of Labor staff participated in the call.

A TechHire TA coach began the call by sharing information about metacognitive strategies to support blended and online learning. Metacognition is awareness of one’s personal learning process, and this is an important topic for reflection and coaching as TechHire participants shift into online learning, which is more self-directed. Strategies [recommended](#) by the Center for Teaching at Vanderbilt University include promoting metacognitive awareness, maintaining a social presence during online classes, and promoting active learning.

Next, the TechHire project manager for Ivy Tech Community College spoke about a tutoring and virtual test-prep strategy for the CompTIA A+ exam the college has implemented due to the stay-at-home orders during the pandemic. Their support for students taking exams involves three components: virtual tutoring / test-prep by TechHire graduates; faculty-led virtual test-prep workshops; and [InsideTrack](#) coaching. The Ivy Tech team determined that online tutoring is a cost-effective way to help participants prepare for the exam. The tutoring offered by TechHire graduates (who are paid by the program) is offered via Zoom and is available to students taking the exam for the first time or retaking the exam. The faculty-led virtual workshops are designed as two-hour study sessions, and participating students can request that faculty focus on specific topics when they register. The Ivy Tech team is also providing TA to students on how to complete the CompTIA A+ certification via virtual testing. A PLG call participant asked the project manager which types of TA she was finding to be most effective for the CompTIA A+ testing, to which she replied that she expects that the faculty test-prep workshops will be the most effective intervention, once they take place.

The program director for *TechHire New Mexico*, administered by The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico, shared that, prior to the pandemic stay-at-home restrictions, they had developed a policy to provide payments for basic living needs (rent, mortgage, utilities) for TechHire program participants. They realized that they had money available in their budget to do this, and that it would allow participants to engage in longer-term (12-week) trainings without having to work at the same time. A PLG call participant asked if WCCNM’s program had transitioned to virtual training because of COVID-19, and the program director affirmed that it has.