

H-1B TECHHIRE



H-1B TechHire Peer Learning Group Call Summary Navigating the Pandemic Part 3: Job-Placement Promising Practices and Planning for the Future

Recently, the TechHire technical assistance team hosted the third and final call as part of the “Navigating the Pandemic” Peer Learning Group (PLG) call series. This call, Job-Placement Promising Practices and Planning for the Future, aimed to provide grantees with tips and strategies for continued employer engagement, updates on current labor market information (LMI) trends in IT and advanced manufacturing fields, and an opportunity to hear from other TechHire grantees on how they are navigating their job-placement practices amid COVID-19.

TRIED AND TRUE METHODS FOR CONTINUED EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND JOB PLACEMENT

A JFF senior director and subject matter expert (SME) began the call with examples of strategies grantees can use to pivot at this time and continue their employer engagement. Grantees were encouraged to consider asking themselves the following:

- How have employers made shifts during this time? What virtual learning platforms are they using and how can grantees train participants on the use of those platforms?
- What are local employers’ recovery plans and how can grantees align their training to have mutual goals? How can participants understand how to work in a remote environment or a social distancing environment, and how can grantees best prepare them?
- What learning curves are employers experiencing at this time and how can grantees help them?

The SME also discussed the importance of incorporating online skills into core competencies that participants are learning in their training. [Grads of Life](#) was a resource recommended for grantees. They are currently utilizing seven-second resumes that allow participants to virtually demonstrate who they are and the value they can bring to a worksite.

Objectives of the PLG Call

- Discuss the ways in which current TechHire grantees are approaching job placement to support both participants and employers amid COVID-19.
- Learn about current needs and shifts related to job placement.
- Learn about LMI trends in the tech industry happening nationwide, as well as how to connect with local resources to gather localized LMI.
- Provide discussion space for TechHire grantees to connect with one another, troubleshoot problems, and disclose other success strategies related to job placement.
- Discuss the tech industry and its current employer needs / job openings related to COVID-19.

NATIONWIDE LMI TRENDS AND CONNECTING TO LOCAL LMI

Next, the lead labor economist for ICF International presented updates on national LMI trends within the IT and advanced manufacturing industries. The SME shared that the IT sector has been growing in the last few years and will likely be less hard-hit than other industries during the pandemic. Advanced manufacturing fields are expected to remain mostly steady, with the exception of CNC operator positions (many of which have been moved overseas). The speaker also provided grantees with useful sources for local LMI, so that grantees can begin to understand what's shifting in their local areas and understand shifting industry needs and demands. Major sources include: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupation Employment Statistics, BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, BLS Employment Projections, and O*NET OnLine (a great source of LMI for workforce training providers). As grantees continue to pivot to meet the needs of both employers and participants, accessing current LMI trends will be vital in better understanding industry needs and preparing participants for job placement in a rapidly evolving economy.

LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE WORKFORCE TRAINING JOB-PLACEMENT PRACTICES

Finally, grantees heard from the program manager with Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC) Workforce Training (as part of TechHire grantee UAW-Labor Employment and Training Corporation). The program manager began by providing background information on his work with LAVC Workforce Training and then went into detail as to how his programming has shifted amid COVID-19. For their advanced manufacturing training, they have been able to transfer training online and plan to resume in-person instruction when possible, with strict social distancing measures in place. Advanced manufacturing is a big part of their training; therefore, they have, for now, transitioned to working with manufacturers outside of aerospace and defense, which typically make up the bulk of LAVC's employer partnerships.

To best support and prepare their TechHire participants, LAVC Workforce Training has been working to incorporate virtual interview prep into their job-readiness training. LAVC has also been able to provide Chromebooks to students to help fill a technology gap some students may face in light of social distancing and stay-at-home orders. It was mentioned that local internet service providers are boosting internet speeds, and some are offering discounted or, in some cases, free access. Additionally, LAVC Workforce Training was able to provide Gene Haas Foundation stipends to students who completed the training but were unable to find employment or were displaced due to COVID-19. Their biotech training was moved to an online format, and they are looking to focus on recruitment for this training track since the content can easily be conveyed online. Biotech students were able to interview with the Grifols CEO virtually and recently participated in their first virtual graduation.

CONCLUSION

The PLG ended with an open Q&A discussion for each of the panelists. Grantees asked questions related to job-readiness support and workforce-training shifts, as well as deeper dives into how the advanced manufacturing fields are handling social distancing.