



Virtual information session transcript

October 15, 2020

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. ET

About the virtual information session

The Rethink Adult Ed Challenge team hosted a virtual information session on October 15, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. ET. During this session, Scott Stump, U.S. Department of Education Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical, and Adult Education, and Cheryl Keenan, Director, Division of Adult Education and Literacy spoke about the role pre-apprenticeships play in breaking down access barriers to apprenticeships and other industry roles. The Rethink Adult Ed Challenge team also presented an overview of the challenge, including the submission process and selection criteria, and answered questions from attendees.

Transcript

Eden Baker: Thank you for joining the information session for the Rethink Adult Ed Challenge, a national \$750,000 competition to advance pre-apprenticeships. My name is Eden Baker and I am a senior associate at Luminary Labs, a strategy and innovation consulting firm based New York. Luminary Labs has been engaged by the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education to run this challenge.

Eden Baker: We are so excited to see you all here today. The purpose of today's session is to provide an overview of the Rethink Adult Ed Challenge and then answer any questions you may have. Staff from the Department of Education will start by providing some background on the challenge and then I will jump back in and walk through the challenge structure in a little bit more detail — including things like key dates, how to enter and the selection criteria.

Eden Baker: We will then have a Q&A session at the end. I am hoping that we'll answer many of your questions as we go through the presentation, but please share any additional questions in the Q&A window in Zoom and we'll get back to these during that segment. Given timing, we unfortunately won't be able to answer every question today but we will publish FAQs on the challenge website in the coming weeks.

Eden Baker: So today we are really pleased to be joined by the team from the Department of Education that spearheaded this initiative. I will begin introductions with Assistant Secretary Scott Stump.

Scott Stump: Thank you, Eden, it is a pleasure to be here and represent the Department of Education and also our Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education. And you know, our office exists to fulfill the vision of providing all learners or learners of all ages access and ability to acquire the right knowledge and skills at the right time for the right next step in life. And pre-apprenticeship is exactly that, preparing an individual for that next into a full apprenticeship program and we just see huge amounts of potential in the space of adult education programs to take integrated education and training and combine that with the academic skills to be the perfect fit for a pre-apprenticeship challenge. And so excited to be here for the launch of this today.

Scott Stump: I'm also excited to have with me our director of our Division of Adult Education and Literacy, Cheryl Keenan. So, we'll move to Cheryl to let her introduce herself as well. And we'll need Cheryl to take the mute off. So, click that one more button, there we go.

Cheryl Keenan: I always miss that one. Hello everybody, welcome to our virtual information session today. I am thrilled to be here with you and with Assistant Secretary Stump. And I echo his message about the importance of Adult Education's participation in the whole national movement towards apprenticeship programs. I think this webinar today will be full of great information from you, for you, and I'm really interested in the mix of people we have in the audience. So again, thank you and you'll hear a little bit from me later. Thank you.

Eden Baker: Great, thank you Cheryl. I should note as well, we are also joined by Christopher Coro, Travis Combs, and Carolyn Lampila from the Department of Education who will also be available to answer any questions at the end. Just to clarify too, I know Zoom can be confusing, we've got both a Q&A and chat down the bottom. We do ask that you put any questions in the Q&A rather than the chat and we'll be following along during the session.

Eden Baker: So, I'm now going to hand it back to Assistant Secretary Scott Stump who will share some background on the challenge.

Scott Stump: Wonderful, thank you Eden. And so excited, and participants if you haven't seen the participant numbers, we're right at over 540, approaching 550 participants in today's launch of the pre-apprenticeship challenge of Rethink Adult Education. The Office of Career, Technical Education or OCTAE, we administer and coordinate all of the programs that are related to adult education and literacy, career and technical education and community colleges and correctional education. And within OCTAE it is our division of adult education and literacy that is responsible for helping adults acquire challenging academic and technical skills that prepare them for high skill or high wage or high demand occupations in the 21st century global economy.

Scott Stump: OCTAE also provides national leadership to strengthen the role of community colleges and expand access to post-secondary education for youth and adults and advancing workforce development. And that's where we're excited to enter into an Ed Prize — Ed Prizes are a series of competitions run by the US Department of Education in partnership with America's innovators. These challenges increase access to and expand the capacity of career and technical education and adult education to prepare learners for the workforce.

Scott Stump: We recently launched two other competitions under the Ed Prizes banner. The first of those was CTE Mission: CubeSat which is a national challenge to build technical skills to prepare high school students for careers in the space industry or aeronautics industry. I will tell you that competition closes tomorrow. So, if you're a grant writer who does dual duty please make sure to do a web search for CTE Mission: CubeSat and put proposals in that space. The Rural Tech Project, that challenge finished last week, so we've got 63 proposals from all over the country, 33 states represented. For a national challenge to advance world technology education, using distance learning and competency-based education. So, we've got lots of good challenges underway.

Scott Stump: But that brings me to our most recent launch which is the Rethink Adult Ed Challenge. A national three quarters of a million-dollar challenge to advance pre-apprenticeships, specifically in the space of adult education. And this is a chance for adult ed providers to design programs that better prepare adults for apprenticeships and ultimately their careers. We invite Adult Education and Family Literacy Act funded educators to share their preliminary ideas for programs that lead into apprenticeships in any industry anyway in the United States.

Scott Stump: One of the things we often get asked is what is a pre-apprenticeship and how is it different from other job readiness programs? Well, a pre-apprenticeship is specifically designed to prepare individuals for an apprenticeship program. We know apprenticeships expand career opportunities but many adult learners face barriers to accessing them, pre-apprenticeships break down these barriers by helping adults prepare for and enter apprenticeships and other industry roles.

Scott Stump: They're often described as a stepping stone and are particularly important for those that are under-represented in apprenticeship programs, such as women or people who are formerly incarcerated. These programs vary in structure, some are delivered full-time and others are run in the evenings or on weekends. Some are designed to mimic workforce, for example, a construction pre-apprenticeship program may start early in the morning and finish midafternoon. The model of delivery often depends on the needs of the learners and the expectations of the relevant industry.

Scott Stump: Programs are typically delivered in person but there is a growing interest in blended or full virtual pre-apprenticeship models as well. And indeed, we've seen many of these programs move towards online delivery over the past 6 to 7 months. pre-apprenticeships have many benefits for adult learners, for starters programs expose learners to different career opportunities. Some programs may focus on an industry such as construction whereas others might get a little more specific with a role within an industry, such as carpentry.

Scott Stump: They equip adult learners with a range of skills, including both academic skills like literacy and math as well specific technical skills that they'll need in their chosen field. So very much of being in the model of integrated education and training. They also help prepare learners for the workforce more broadly, through things like psych visits and mentors that enable learners to better understand workplace expectations. pre-apprenticeships also offer broader support to help remove barriers to participation. This includes providing a stipend for child care or travel or offering counseling or other supports, either in house or through a partner. Programs may also help cover up front apprenticeship costs, such as equipment or PPE or union fees. And finally, programs help learners transition into apprenticeships or similar industry roles.

Scott Stump: While pre-apprenticeships are designed to lead into apprenticeships, many programs also have relationships with other industry employers as well. And so, throughout our conversations with pre-apprenticeship programs we've heard from the many adult learners about the benefits of pre-apprenticeships and some of their statements are on the screen, you can see that these echo some of the benefits I shared on the previous slide, such as being exposed to different options, receiving guidance and feedback from experts that work in the industry. And opening up new career opportunities.

Scott Stump: So, based on that background, it's my pleasure to ask our director Cheryl Keenan to step in and tell you a little bit more about this challenge.

Cheryl Keenan: Thank you, Scott, so I bet the question on everybody's mind is why are we running this challenge? Well for one, some people, including adult learners and adult educators, are not always aware of pre-apprenticeship programs or their benefits. This means that organizations are missing out on opportunities to provide them and most importantly adult learners are missing out on opportunities to participate in them.

Cheryl Keenan: We would also like to see more adult education programs offer pre-apprenticeships, so that more adult learners are prepared to participate in apprenticeship programs in growing industries. And based on what we've heard from providers, adult education programs would like more support so they may be successful in securing funding for pre-apprenticeship programs.

Cheryl Keenan: How will this challenge help? With all of this in mind, the Rethink Adult Ed Challenge has been designed to spur the creation of new pre-apprenticeship programs across fields, from construction and manufacturing to healthcare and technology. And it's been designed to increase the capacity of adult education providers to deliver high quality pre-apprenticeship programs. We also want to boost the profile of pre-apprenticeship programs across the field of adult education so that more people are aware of their benefits.

Cheryl Keenan: There are several reasons that people should consider participating in this initiative, firstly the challenge will give all finalists access to a great set of curated resources and support to help them develop their program designs. This will include everything from how to design an effective curriculum to how to market your program and recruit adult learners. This intended to not only help participants with their stage two submissions but also equip them with the knowledge and skills to go out and implement a program beyond the challenge.

Cheryl Keenan: All finalists will be running to receive a share of a quarter of a million dollars in cash prize, which can be used to help get your program off the ground. And you will get a chance to participate in a high-profile national initiative which will put your organization at the forefront of adult pre-apprenticeship programs.

Cheryl Keenan: In order to participate, an applicant must be an eligible provider as defined with WIOA and must be currently receiving federal AEFLA funding. The organization must be receiving funding when they apply as well as for the duration of the challenge. Funded AEFLA providers commonly include organizations such as community colleges, school districts, community-based organizations and libraries.

Cheryl Keenan: Providers do not need to have prior experience with pre-apprenticeships but those with experience are still welcome to apply. Programs can be designed for any industry as long as the application can demonstrate there is a demand for more skilled workers in the relevant field. We will explain more about this when we discuss the selection criteria.

Cheryl Keenan: So that's just a morsel of information for you from OCTAE and now I turn it back to Eden, thank you.

Eden Baker: Great, thank you Cheryl. I'm now going to walk through the challenge structure in a little bit more detail. One thing I should flag too, is just that we will be sharing a copy of these slides and a recording of the presentation on the challenge website in the coming weeks. So, don't worry too much if you've missed anything specific.

Eden Baker: So, moving on to the stage overview. The Rethink Adult Ed challenge will be conducted in two stages, we are currently in stage one. So, during this stage all AEFLA funded eligible providers are invited to submit a preliminary design of a pre-apprenticeship program. Submissions are open now and close on Wednesday, November 25. So just before Thanksgiving.

Eden Baker: All stage one submissions will be reviewed by a panel and up to 100 finalists will be invited to progress to stage two. These finalists will be announced in January 2021. So, then the stage two virtual accelerator will start in February 2021. Throughout this accelerator finalists will have access to virtual resources and support through things like webinars and case studies to help them refine their program designs.

Eden Baker: These resources are designed to help finalists prepare program proposals for our stage two, as well as equip them with the knowledge and skills to implement a program beyond the challenge. We know providers are incredibly busy particularly at the moment. So, the entire accelerator is self-paced and all topics will be accessible online. At the end of the accelerator in June next year, finalists will be invited to submit stage two submissions. These submissions will be reviewed by a judging panel and winners will be announced in the summer of 2021.

Eden Baker: So, looking at the submissions themselves. For stage one, entrants are required to submit a preliminary design and this includes evidence of local or national industry need. So, this might be things like anecdotal evidence, job board listings or data from your local workforce development board or the Bureau of Labor Statistics. An overview of the adult education activities the program will deliver, a description of the adult learners your program is targeting and their unique needs, a list of potential apprenticeship and industry partners. So, for stage one we aren't expecting that you have formalized these relationships yet but we will expect that you have a good idea of who these partners could be. And then finally your teams expertise and how this relates to the challenge.

Eden Baker: One thing to note for stage one is that you will need approval from your state before submitting. So, to streamline this process, we've prepared a form that you can email to your state directly. This is available on the submit page of the challenge website. You can also upload your own documentation, for example an email from your state director if that's easier.

Eden Baker: Then at the end of stage two, finalists will be invited to submit program proposals. And these are more detailed than the stage one submission and will include things like a description of the proposed pre-apprenticeship program structure. So, things like the duration of the program and how it will be delivered. An overview of the workplace and academic skills the program will address and evidence or partnership development. So, things like a letter of intent or a MOU from at least one apprenticeship provider. Finalists will also be required to demonstrate that they've considered things like program outcomes, resources and budgetary requirements. As you can see, the stage two submission has a lot of similar themes to stage one but will require additional preparation and is a lot more detailed.

Eden Baker: Moving on to the selection criteria. So, for stage one a review panel will use the stage one criteria to select up to 100 finalists to enter stage two. When we're reviewing submissions, panelists will assign one to five points in each of these categories. So, the first is local or national need, and this is the extent to which the entrant describes local and national industry demand for more skilled workers in the relevant field. The second, industry connection, the extent to which the entrant identifies quality programs and other potential industry partners. The third, skill advancement, the extent to which the entrant identifies appropriate adult education and literacy activities needed to help adult learners prepare for apprenticeships or other industry roles with opportunities for progression. The fourth, learner focused, the extent to which the entrant demonstrates an understanding of its prospective adult learners and their specific needs. And then finally team, the extent to which the entrant demonstrates the necessary skills, experience and commitment needed to advance this pre-apprenticeship program concept.

Eden Baker: A few things to note with this. So, all of these criteria are weighted equally. You'll also notice on the website that the submission form identifies how different questions relate to these criteria. This is just for your consideration, and review panels will review all submissions holistically.

Eden Baker: Moving on to the stage two criteria. So, depending on the number of submissions we receive for stage two, a review panel may conduct a preliminary review of submissions and then a judging panel will review the highest scoring submissions. One thing I do want to flag here is that the rules on the challenge site initially stated that judges would score the 30 highest submissions, this has been revised slightly and now says at least 20 but now more than 30 of the highest scoring submissions will advance for scoring by the independent judges. In reviewing the submissions, panelists and judges will assign one to five points in each of these five categories.

Eden Baker: The first, local or national need, the extent to which the entrant demonstrates local or national industry demand for more skilled workers in the relevant field. The second, industry connection, the extent to which the entrant has established partnerships to facilitate placements in apprenticeships or other industry roles with opportunities for progression. The third, skill advancement, the extent to which the program will deliver adult education and literacy activities that will equip participants with the necessary academic, occupational and workplace skills and credentials needed to enter apprenticeships and other industry roles with opportunities for progression. The fourth, learner focused, the extent to which the program reflects the interest and needs of the target adult learners such as through tailored outreach strategies and support services. And again, finally team, the extent to which the entrant demonstrates the necessary skills,

resources and commitment to establish and deliver a high-quality pre-apprenticeship program beyond the challenge. You'll notice that these categories are the same in both stages one and two, but the descriptors do differ across both. Again, all of these criteria are weighted equally and submissions will be assessed holistically.

Eden Baker: So, looking at prizes, so as Cheryl mentioned, the total prize pool for this challenge is \$750,000. At the end of stage two, a judging panel will select one grand prize winner who will receive \$25,000 and up to five runners up who will receive at least \$100,000 each. These cash prizes are intended to help recipients get their pre-apprenticeship programs off the ground, but typical financial reporting is not required.

Eden Baker: And then looking at how to enter. If you haven't already, we do recommend that you have a look at the stage one submission form which is on the Rethink Adult Ed challenge website now. So that you can get a good idea of what is required. Submissions are open now and close at 11:59 PM Eastern Time on November 25. As mentioned, it is a good idea to submit well before this time just in case you have any technical difficulties. If you do experience any technical difficulties with the submission form, you can reach out to hello@rethinkadulthood.com and I'll share that before we finish up.

Eden Baker: And then on number two, you'll also need to get state sign off for stage one so please allow enough time to do that too. And then don't forget, there is a resources page on the Rethink Adult Ed website and this contains a selection of resources to help providers to prepare their stage one submissions.

Eden Baker: Okay, so we are now ready for the Q&A. I can see that a few people shared through the window, we also have quite a few questions that we've received through the Eventbrite registration. So, keep sharing your questions in the Q&A and we will answer as many of these as we can, as I mentioned at the beginning, we'll also be sharing a copy of the FAQs on the challenge website. So, if we don't get to your question today, we will respond or include that in the FAQs on the challenge site.

Eden Baker: Okay, so one thing that we have had from a few people is just how they will know whether or not they receive AEFLA funding. Cheryl I'll just pass that one over to you to provide a little bit of guidance.

Cheryl Keenan: Sure, thanks a lot Eden. Lot of questions in there about how do I know if I have AEFLA funding or how do I know where to go to get the verification that I need for the application? So, if you don't have knowledge of whether your organization has an AEFLA grant, I would encourage you to go to your business office or your grants manager and try to confirm within your organization the person who handles those grants, whether or not you are an AEFLA grantee.

Cheryl Keenan: I would also say The State Adult Education Office is located in various places in different states. Most states have The Adult Education Office in their Department of Education. However, some states are administered through their community college or board of regents systems and some states are administered in their workforce agency. So, this goes back to your own structure but within any of those organizations there should be an office that's responsible for adult education in your state and that is where you can reach out to have them complete the verification paperwork that is required in the application.

Eden Baker: Great, thank you Cheryl. So, in a similar vein we've received several questions from organizations that aren't eligible but are interested in participating in the challenge. So, one question is, "My organization isn't eligible but we work with an AEFLA funded provider, can we enter as a team?" And the answer to that is yes. So, if your organization is interested in participating but is not an eligible provider you're welcome to join as a team that is led by an eligible provider. So, entrance may choose to partner with any organization that it believes would be most effective in advancing it's pre-apprenticeship design as long as the team lead is from an entrant that meets the eligibility criteria.

Eden Baker: Okay, so another question I'm coming through here, can existing pre-apprenticeship programs submit a proposal to expand capacity or should only new programs apply for this challenge? Cheryl I will pass that one over to you.

Cheryl Keenan: Thank you. No, if you're an existing program and you would like to expand your pre-apprenticeship services you are certainly eligible and welcome to apply.

Eden Baker: We've had another question here, so what is the role of a team lead? So, the team lead serves as the primary point of contact for the challenge and they are responsible for submitting the entrance program proposal by Luminary Lightbox, which is the submission form. The team lead, as I said before, must be from an eligible provider.

Eden Baker: Okay, so we've had a similar question come through from a few people about industry. So, we should we limit our product to one industry or is it possible to propose a project that supports more than one industry? Cheryl, again, I'll pass this one over to you.

Cheryl Keenan: Okay, thank you. I'm having a little technical going on here, just give me a moment. Entrants may have very different beginning points. So, what will happen is that you will be assessed on whether your program meets the requirements of our pre-apprenticeship programs. While you may submit an application in more than one industry, I would say that yes you may do that and on the form that you have to fill out you would check the other box and then specify those industries.

Eden Baker: Thank you, Cheryl. So, another question here, so does the pre-apprenticeship need to lead into an apprenticeship specifically IRAP? I can have a go at that and then Cheryl I might pass it over to you for additional context. But the way have defined apprenticeship is quite broad. So, we are thinking at this point, it could lead into any apprenticeship program, not just an IRAP and not just a registered apprenticeship so any apprenticeship program is fine. And then one other thing is also just to note that we have considered other industry partners as well. So, you'll see the way the selection criteria is written, it does consider partnerships with other relevant industry partners as well.

Cheryl Keenan: I think you covered that Eden, thank you.

Eden Baker: Just checking, thank you Cheryl.

Eden Baker: Another question here about our local vs national need and whether there's an emphasis on scale. Cheryl I'll pass that one over to you.

Cheryl Keenan: So, I'm going to pass this one over to my team, is there anyone on the team that would like to talk about that?

Travis Combs: I can take that one Cheryl.

Cheryl Keenan: Sure, thank you.

Travis Combs: So, with regard to this question about there being an emphasis on scale, I don't believe there is an emphasis on scale. I think that the judging criteria in stage one and stage two will reflect each of the entrance applications respective to their local and national need and their regional barriers.

Eden Baker: Thank you, Travis, so another question we've received is about how the challenge is defining pre-apprenticeship. So, a pre-apprenticeship program, we are seeing as a program that supports individuals in developing the skills and knowledge they need to gain entry to succeed in an apprenticeship program. Like I said before, we are also thinking about how these programs prepare people for other industry roles as well but we do think that it's a relationship with an apprenticeship program is what distinguishes pre-apprenticeships from other adult education or workforce readiness programs.

Eden Baker: And then another question we've had is about whether programs need to be certified. They don't.

Eden Baker: And then another question here, so can funds be used for English language learners who are work eligible. Cheryl I will pass that one over to you.

Cheryl Keenan: Thank you, Eden, yes generally the funds can be used to serve any individual who is eligible for services under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and that of course would include English language learners.

Eden Baker: Thank you, Cheryl. We've received quite a few questions about the difference between this challenge and a grant, so Cheryl and team I will pass that one over to you.

Cheryl Keenan: I'm going to toss that one over to Chris Coro. Chris could you chime in on that one?

Chris Coro: Sure, so essentially, challenges are used across the federal government and the interest as I understand it, is in actually our primary purpose. And that is to spur innovation. The federal grant process requires a lot of, I'll nickname it pre-thinking, of the federal government before a grant notice is issued and that can be considered to constrain the innovative process at the local or regional level.

Chris Coro: In the case of a challenge, it's much wider open. We have a goal, we tell you what the goal is and we don't put a lot of Federal requirements around it. It's on the local applicants or the teams to come up with the best solution that gets to the goal. So, in this case, the preference for a challenge over a grant is really to spur that innovation within the adult ed system and to really let the imaginations of local programs and their partners be the guiding force.

Eden Baker: Great, thank you Chris. So, the next question, do we need to include how many students we aim to serve? Again, Cheryl I will pass this one over to you.

Cheryl Keenan: Sure, I would say that you should review the selection criteria and ensure your submission demonstrates the rationale for your program design which would of course include the size of the program. All preliminary program designs will be assessed against the same selection criteria. I think the most important thing here is that you can address the need for the program in the design and in doing that, that would give you an ability to address your rationale for the size of the program.

Eden Baker: Great, thank you Cheryl. So, I can see a question asking for the definition of a pre-apprenticeship, so I'll read it again a little bit more slowly. So, the way that we have defined pre-apprenticeship for the purposes of this challenge is a program that supports individuals in developing the skills and knowledge they need to gain entry to and succeed in apprenticeship programs. We are thinking that a relationship with an apprenticeship program is what distinguishes pre-apprenticeships from other adult education or workforce readiness programs. And like I said earlier, programs do not need to be certified. And we do have more information on this on the challenge website as well. So please have a look there and there's a full definition.

Eden Baker: Okay, so the next question, can we use an existing pathway or program and add a pre-apprenticeship component. Cheryl and team, I will refer this one to you.

Cheryl Keenan: I'll start and then I'll turn it over to some others. I think that we believe that applicants will have many different starting points for where they start to build their pre-apprenticeship program and design. And I think that the thing that's most important is not where you start but where you end. And whether your application addresses the requirements of the pre-apprenticeship program. So, I think there's many starting points that are feasible. And the one that you are suggesting here certainly may be a feasible place to start. But again, focus on the end result of meeting the requirements, that's what your application will be judged on. Are there others on my team that would like to add to that answer?

Chris Coro: I think that you nailed it, honestly. I think that's the emphasis. It's the goals post and not the starting point that matters more.

Cheryl Keenan: Thank you, that's a great question.

Eden Baker: Great, so another question just about the review process, so who will judge the stage one applications? So, for stage one a review panel with a broad range of expertise relevant to the stage one criteria that I spoke to before, will review the submissions. This panel will have a diverse range of personal and professional expertise related to pre-apprenticeships and workforce development more broadly.

Eden Baker: So, a couple of questions that are in a similar vein about providers teaming up. So, can two providers apply jointly, Cheryl and team I will pass this one on to you.

Cheryl Keenan: That's a really interesting question. Does anybody on my team want to enter to address that one?

Chris Coro: This is Chris Coro, I don't recall that we've set up anything in the design of the challenge to preclude that. I think the challenge encourages partnerships for sure. And if adult ed providers believe that they can produce a really high-quality pre-apprenticeship program I don't believe that there's any design decisions that we've made that stop them from doing that. But as a side, they might want to think ahead of time how they're going to split up the prize money if they should win. But I don't think we've done anything to stop them from deciding to team up.

- Cheryl Keenan: Yeah, I would say, just keep in mind that the applicant must be a funded eligible provider. If two funded eligible providers want to apply, I think you would have to identify who your team lead is. But I agree with Chris that there's nothing that we set up in the design of this that would inhibit those kinds of joint applications or partnerships.
- Eden Baker: That's right. Thank you, Cheryl and Chris. So, another question, does the pre-apprenticeship program have to have a hands-on component? Cheryl and team?
- Cheryl Keenan: It's always Cheryl and team here. I'm quite sure I understand the question. Travis, you have a lot of on the ground experience with pre-apprenticeship programs do you want to take a crack at that one? You might understand it a little bit better than I do.
- Travis Combs: Yeah, I would say that in the design of the pre-apprenticeship program that an entrant would be submitting, that would be something that you want to refer to in your overview of the activities and programs that you'll be providing to the learners with respect to the industry and the connection to the pre-apprenticeship program. I want to say it's a requirement but I don't believe that we included that as one of the selection criteria. I do believe it would be an added benefit to the program if there was a hands-on component included.
- Eden Baker: Thank you, Travis. So, this relates to a question we received earlier but you mentioned local and national needs. So, is there an emphasis on programs providing services at a larger scale, Cheryl?
- Cheryl Keenan: Yeah sure, you guys are just throwing some hardball questions at us. Thank you so much for having such rich questions. Again, I would go back and say that the sections that you have to address in your application will talk about need. There's nothing per se in the design of this that says that it needs to be national or it needs to be local. But if your need was tied to a larger scale national need that could certainly be viewed by judges as a strong statement of need. So again, I think that these are things that you just have to consider in your application. There is no focus per se, as you are asking, but again, it's up to you to craft a strong statement of need and justification for need. My team have anything else to say about that one?
- Chris Coro: No, I think that you've appropriately emphasized that it's on the applicants to make the case for whatever the scale of the need they've described within the context that they're also describing.

Eden Baker: Great, thank you. So, I mentioned earlier that for stage one you will be required to get state sign off. And we've received a question, so who needs to sign off on behalf of my state in order for me to participate in this challenge? Cheryl and team, I will pass this one to you as well.

Cheryl Keenan: Sure, I think I tried to combine some of these in our answers earlier but you would need to get the sign off from your state adult education office. And that is in different places in different states in different government structures. I would certainly address it to the state director of adult education but that state director of education may designate someone to sign it so we're not looking for a specific individual in the State Adult Education Office but it does need to come from the State Adult Education Office.

Eden Baker: Great, thank you Cheryl. We've also received several questions about age. So how does the challenge define adult? Cheryl, again I'll pass this one to you.

Cheryl Keenan: Yeah sure, so we're using the definition of an eligible individual under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Some of you have a lot of familiarity with that definition but for those of you who may not, an adult is for the purposes of this challenge is defined as an individual who has obtained the age of 16 years of age but who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law. So, youth who are still falling within compulsory school age in your state are not considered adults under this challenge. So, it is a person who is 16 years of age and not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under your state law. And who is also an individual who needs educational intervention, has not achieved a high school diploma or is an English language learner. So, it's generally the individuals that you would be serving in your adult basic ed program in your state.

Eden Baker: Great, thank you Cheryl. The next question, so are we required to have AEFLA funding for both stage one and two? So as Cheryl mentioned earlier, to be eligible to participate in the challenge, organizations must be an eligible provider as defined in WIOA and be receiving funding under Title II of WIOA at the time of applying, so at the time of submitting, and for the duration of the challenge. So, to answer that question, yes, we are expecting that eligible providers will be receiving AEFLA funding for both stages one and two.

Eden Baker: Okay, so next question here. If a consortium is the recipient or provider of AEFLA services in an area, does that complete consortium need to apply for this or can a similar group of members form and apply? Cheryl and team, I'll pass that one over to you.

Cheryl Keenan: Yeah this is a great question. You guys are, like I said, coming up with great questions so thank you so much. Yeah, a lot of eligible agencies have formed consortiums when they apply for their AEFLA funds, if you are a member of a consortium, if you are a proper member of a consortium. You are considered an eligible provider. So, I believe that if a member of a consortium wanted to go outside of their consortium application to apply, they may do that. Can a smaller group of members form and apply? Yes, I believe a smaller group of members can also apply. Just remember that you need to be an eligible provider, so if you are a member of consortium and funded through that consortium, you are an eligible provider who is funded to provide AEFLA services. But that's a great question and I'm happy to be able clarify that.

Eden Baker: Great, thank you Cheryl. So, we have another question about program design: What would be the length of time that the pre-apprenticeship has to be designed around? For example, the number of months, a year et cetera. Cheryl, I'll pass this one over to you.

Cheryl Keenan: I'm going to pass this off to Travis. This is like a game you play, like Duck, Duck, Goose.

Travis Combs: It is. So, I would say that an entrant for this, to address this question would need to provide a sufficient amount of time in their proposed plan in order to deliver adult education and literacy activities to equip participants with occupational and workplace skill leading to credentials and to an either registered apprenticeship, an IRAP or another opportunity for progression. I think it's up to the entrant to provide a length of time that leads to those skill advancements.

Eden Baker: Thank you, Travis. I should note too, we are receiving lots of questions, so we're going to try to get through as many as we can but we will publish a FAQ document on the challenge website in the next week or so. So hopefully we'll cover everything then if we don't manage to get to your question today.

Eden Baker: Okay, so another question here: is there a guide to allowable expenses under this competition, is it the same as allowable expensive under our federal grants? OCTAE team, I will defer that one to you.

Cheryl Keenan: So, Chris, I'm going to kick this one over to you. I know you've been working with our attorneys closely on getting these kinds of clarifications.

Chris Coro: Yes, so we are planning on issuing as part of the FAQ that comes out of this webinar more information on the specifics of the uses of funds. Essentially, to understand for today, we certainly hope that the prize money would be used to support the challenges that won but also to be consistent with any other activities within the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. But again, when we issue the official FAQs so you will want to bookmark the site that Eden and her keep referring to for this challenge. You can get a little bit more of the specifics.

Scott Stump: And can I also jump in on that one just for a second? I just wanted to underscore and put a big exclamation point on Chris's note there. This is not a grant, it is a challenge prize competition. And it's meant to do that because it first and foremost puts information out there on this work. And so, on the website that highlights the Rethink Ed Challenge there are already resources. So, if some of you don't want to want go through the extra size of participating in the challenge, fine but if you still want to do pre-apprenticeship, there's information and resources that are curated and going to be available to you to step into this space even if this opportunity is not for you.

Scott Stump: From there, once individuals have submitted their basic ideas and entered a proposal in the competition, there'll be 100 different programs hopefully selected to go along that journey and to be participating in a virtual academy. To get expertise, advice in building a great model and then it will only be at the end then that the cash prizes will be awarded to those that really refine those proposals and are ready to move forward. So, do know that this is not like a traditional grant application process where you get everybody together, put down your best thinking on that day and submit it. This is walking together through the build process so that we can hopefully get over 100 really good adult education programs connected to a pre-apprenticeship pathway for learners which I think is a lot more than we could do in just one grant program out to just a few entities.

Eden Baker: Great, thank you Chris and Scott. So, then another question along similar lines. If we're lucky enough to receive an award, what is the time frame for accessing and spending the funds, for example is the \$100,000 expected to be spent within one year. And also, is this a brand new competition?

Eden Baker: So, any winners will receive the prize in a lump sum and the funds may be used over multiple years. And yes, this is a brand new competition. We just launched at the end of September.

Eden Baker: Okay, so a couple of questions here as well about the components of a quality pre-apprenticeship program. So, what makes a quality pre-apprenticeship? Cheryl and team, I will defer this to you as well.

Cheryl Keenan: Okay Travis, you're on.

Travis Combs: Thanks Cheryl. High quality pre-apprenticeship programs should align to industry demand, set clear pathways into apprenticeships and also other industry roles and provide support services for their participants. Please refer to stages one and two's selection criteria to see how programs will be evaluated.

Eden Baker: Great, thank you Travis. We have another question about AEFLA funding: is there a way to find a list of which organizations are already receiving AEFLA funding?

Cheryl Keenan: So that's a great question, you know, if you know where your State Adult Education Office is located, and this is a good opportunity to find out where they are, I believe most states, if you go to the webpage for the Adult Education Program in that state, states have their funded providers listed more often than not on those web pages. So that's where I would start looking if I was trying to find that list. If you're not successful with that, I would call the office, I would call the state director and I would ask where I could find such a list. But that information would be in your state office.

Eden Baker: Great, thank you Cheryl. I know we've received a few questions just about whether we'll be sharing a copy of these slides, so yes, we will be. We will be sharing a recording of this presentation and also a copy of the slides themselves in the next week or so. Like I said earlier, we will also be uploading a copy of the FAQs to the challenge website. If you haven't already, sign up to the newsletter and I'll share a link where to do that in a moment just so that you do receive notifications on all of these things.

Cheryl Keenan: There's some great information change in the chat about people already matching up. I'm glad to see you taking advantage of those opportunities.

Eden Baker: Exactly. Okay, I think we probably have time for maybe one or two more questions. So, there's one here about the virtual accelerator. What are the time commitment expectations for the accelerator process, and how many staff hours should we expect to devote to this if selected?

Eden Baker: Like I said earlier, the accelerator will run for several months next year, so from February to June. At the moment, we imagine that finalists will devote several hours to this each week. But it is entirely self-paced and all of the materials will be online. It has been designed in a way that will allow finalists to adjust it around their schedules and do it in an order that makes most sense to them based on their availability and time commitments and also their needs in terms of which topics they might need to engage with more or less.

Eden Baker: Okay and then one more question here just about prizes. Is there an anticipated approximate number of final awards? The total prize pool is \$750,000 and within this, one grand prize winner will receive \$250,000 and then up to 5 runners up will receive at least \$100,000 each.

Eden Baker: Right, I think we might have to wrap up. I know there's still a few more questions to go, but like I said, we will be publishing a full FAQ. So hopefully we'll address your questions in that. It will be published on the challenge website in the next week or two. In the meantime, you can visit rethinkadulthood.com to sign up for the challenge newsletter and have a look at the submission form and get yourself acquainted with what's required in that. Please also add hello@rethinkadulthood.com to your address book to make sure that all important messages get through. You can also visit edprizes.com to learn more and sign up for the Ed Prizes newsletter to receive updates on future challenges as well the challenges that Scott mentioned earlier. And then if you do experience any technical issues with the submission form please also reach out to hello@rethinkadulthood.com.

Eden Baker: Again, thank you all so much for joining, and I will echo Cheryl's sentiment, these questions have been amazing and incredibly thoughtful. We really appreciate your interest in the challenge and are looking forward to seeing all of your submissions.

Cheryl Keenan: Thank you everybody for hanging in there with us and all the great questions. We look forward to working with you and hearing from you again.