

>> HARMON: Hi, I'm Dorothee from Pima County One Stop, and I want to tell you about the close collaboration that HPOG has helped to catalyze between the community college and the public workforce system in Tucson, Arizona. When we first got the grant we were up to our neck in a deep recession. Our One Stop Employment Centers were jammed with job seekers, both long-term unemployed and people newly falling into poverty. We served over 20,000 job seekers in 2010, a 123% increase over the total in 2007. And many of these folks were desperate to get into some type of training that would help them find work at a decent wage.

We were experimenting in the face of crisis. We had teamed up with Pima College Adult Education to create an experimental bridge program for laid-off workers trying to go back to school and start over. The model we came up with was full time, intensive, cohort based, and contextualized to the career field, and we already had a pilot group ready to go in health care. We also started a pilot emergency services program specifically for unemployed job seekers in training, capitalizing on our emergency services network to keep vulnerable students on track. So when Pima Community College was awarded the HPOG grant, they opted to tap into the existing infrastructure that we had for serving job seekers, and we said, great, you have 16 training programs for low-income people, and we have hundreds of people that are already looking for help to get into the health-care fields. We have a network of agencies that are sending us more people every day. Let's try to get some of these folks into HPOG.

We started working together, and within a few months, we had hundreds of people engaged. Now at this point, we thought we knew each other. We had a long-standing partnership, going back more than ten years. We had been co-funding student advisors to positions to work at our job centers with job seekers going into training, and we had partnered on numerous special grants to develop new curriculum and specialized training. But now our partnership was about to go on steroids. We had dedicated teams of workforce development specialists and college advisors specifically working with each HPOG participant to create a single plan.

All of these elements that you see -- and I have a list -- orientation, eligibility determination, random assignment, careers, prerequisites, past history, future preparation, time management, assessment, family circumstances, clinical externships, academic factors, emergencies, financial crises, childcare, grades, exams, licenses, job offers, uniforms, all had to go into one unified plan. How did we do this? Well for one thing, regular communication at our leadership team. We hold bi-weekly meetings to review our progress and troubleshoot issues. And you can tell that I was at this meeting because I left my hat inside the picture frame.

It's also important for college and one-stop staff to communicate almost daily, and they do that both at co-location sites and when they're at different sites. Sharing data about our mutual clients is extremely important. We keep detailed case notes and track and document each step, and that way we avoid duplicating efforts or missing an important detail. We have data-sharing protocols such as FERPA release forms. And as a workforce system, I'm able to access unemployment insurance data that can help the college track their employment and retention success. In turn, the college can share academic progress information that can help my team intervene early if there's problems that are going to trip that person up.

It's also very important for us to be sharing our resources, pooling our resources, avoiding duplicating, spending our grant funds more efficiently, and then leveraging the Workforce Investment Act funds and other local resources. In order to do that, we have to have a consensus about our division of labor, who does what best, and then let that happen. Respect for our different organizational cultures, academic culture, and work culture, and social or community development culture are very different from one another in terms of vocabulary, behaviors and values. And all of those worlds have to be engaged in the mission of HPOG. And this is a picture of one of our workforce specialists posing with Johnson Bia, PCC Community College president. And this is a picture of my pet desert tortoise illustrating the importance of patience with our individual bureaucracies and processes.

We foster these qualities in our teams through joint quarterly professional development sessions that combine facts, food, and fun. And actually, those piggy dollars that you saw earlier were from one of our professional development sessions. It was it was HPOG Jeopardy. Ultimately, it is that shared vision of what we want for our mutual customers that motivates us to communicate, advocate, and innovate, and compromise together, and through that commitment, we challenge each other to work at our best. Thank you.