

# Training Webinar: Building and Sustaining Strategic Partnerships – Part 2

*National Community Action Partnership*

*July 16, 2025*

*2:00pm ET / 1:00pm CT / 12:00pm MT / 11:00am PT*

# Disclaimer

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# Agenda

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- Welcome
- CEM Project Overview
- Promising Practices
- Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) – Presented by Action for a Better Community & Rochester Rehabilitation Center
- Upcoming Tools and Resources

# Project Overview

# Purpose

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*“The Collaborative on Economic Mobility is intended to highlight emerging and promising practices in economic mobility for low-income communities and to expand the capacity of the Community Action network to deliver services that promote economic mobility.”*

# Key Focus Areas

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Community  
Asset Building

Innovative  
Community  
Programs and  
Organizations

High-Quality  
Education

Two-Generation  
and Whole  
Family  
Approaches

Workforce  
Development

# Promising Practices

# Workforce Development

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- Sector-based approaches that align training programs with the specific needs of key industries experiencing growth
- Employer engagement and demand-driven strategies
- Hands-on experience and mentorship opportunities
- Integration of technology and digital literacy initiatives
- Entrepreneurship and small business development

# APPROACHES TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PRE-APPRENTICESHIPS WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE

This guide is designed to accompany the webinar on Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development, exploring Pre-Apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships as pathways to economic mobility. Dive deeper into Apprenticeship pathways, action steps, and resources to enhance your understanding and implementation of these workforce programs in your community.

**CHECK IT OUT HERE:**  
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/WRKFRCGUIDE1](https://tinyurl.com/wrkfrcguide1)



## INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PRE-APPRENTICESHIPS WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE



This guide is designed to accompany the webinar on Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development focusing on Pre-Apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships as pathways to economic mobility. These programs are key to shaping a brighter future not only for individuals but for the entire community.

In today's rapidly evolving job market, workforce development is key to building strong, resilient families and fostering long-term economic growth. It goes beyond simply filling job vacancies, it's about creating meaningful career pathways that drive long-term economic growth. By investing in education and training, we empower individuals to:

- **Increase Earning Potential:** Skilled workers command higher wages, improving financial stability.
- **Enhance Job Security:** In-demand skills provide resilience in an evolving changing job market.
- **Contribute to Community Prosperity:** A skilled workforce attracts businesses, driving growth and strengthening local economies.
- **Break Cycles of Poverty:** Access to quality training creates opportunities for upward mobility.

### WEBINAR HIGHLIGHT

Discover the latest trends and promising strategies for advancing economic mobility through innovative workforce development by watching the recording of **'Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development Pt. 1'**

**WATCH HERE**

To accompany the webinar recording, the slides are available below.

**VIEW HERE**

# INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE

This guide is designed to accompany the webinar Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development focusing on Registered Apprenticeships as pathways to economic mobility. This resource is designed to deepen your understanding of Registered Apprenticeships and provide you with additional resources to support your next steps, whether you're launching a program, expanding an existing program, or exploring how Registered Apprenticeships can strengthen your Workforce Development program goals.

**CHECK IT OUT HERE:**  
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/REGAPPRENTICE](https://tinyurl.com/regapprentice)



INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PART 2

## APPRENTICESHIP WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE



This guide is designed to accompany the webinar Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development focusing on Registered Apprenticeships as pathways to economic mobility. This resource is designed to deepen your understanding of Registered Apprenticeships and provide you with additional resources to support your next steps, whether you're launching a program, expanding an existing program, or exploring how Registered Apprenticeships can strengthen your Workforce Development program goals.

### What is a Registered Apprenticeship?

A Registered Apprenticeship is an industry-vetted, structured, work-based learning model that combines on-the-job training (OJT) with related instruction (RI). These programs are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) or a State Apprenticeship Agency, ensuring they meet specific quality standards.

Feature	Registered Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Pre-Apprenticeship
Registration	Registered with DOL or State Apprenticeship Agency and abides by 23 established standards	Any apprenticeship that is not formally registered with DOL	Not necessarily registered
Wage	Paid employment	May be paid a stipend, starting hourly wage, or unpaid	May be paid a stipend, starting hourly wage, or unpaid
Credential	Nationally recognized credential upon completion	May or may not lead to credential, but not always nationally recognized	May or may not lead to credential, but not always nationally recognized
Duration	Typically 1-5 years depending on chosen industry	Typically 1-5 years depending on chosen industry	Shorter term, often a few weeks to months
Purpose	Provides industry-vetted, paid job training that leads to full occupational proficiency while earning a portable, nationally recognized credentials	Offers structured, paid or unpaid job training to prepare individuals for skilled careers, potentially leading to industry-recognized credentials	Foundational program designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeships

# High Quality Education

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- Collaborations with educational institutions: strategic partnerships between local school districts, community colleges, and universities to broaden horizons and prepare the next generation for the workforce
- Supporting the transition from high school to college or the workforce: dual enrollment, work-based learning, and financial literacy
- Integration of technology and digital literacy initiatives with online learning platforms, AI, virtual reality simulations, and remote learning opens new learning opportunities for students
- High-Quality Education and economic mobility is a multifaceted approach:
  - Collaboration
  - Innovation
  - Advocacy

# BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE

This guide accompanies the webinar Building and Sustaining Strategic Partnerships: Part 1, which explores how strategic partnerships can serve as powerful pathways to economic mobility. Learn how Community Action Agencies can build, re-imagine, and strengthen both new and existing collaborations to better align and amplify shared community goals.

**CHECK IT OUT HERE:**  
**[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/STRATEGICPARTNER1](https://tinyurl.com/strategicpartner1)**



Promising Practices for Building & Sustaining Strategic Partnerships

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## BUILDING & REIMAGINING ESTABLISHED PARTNERSHIPS

### Re-imagining What Partnerships Can Be

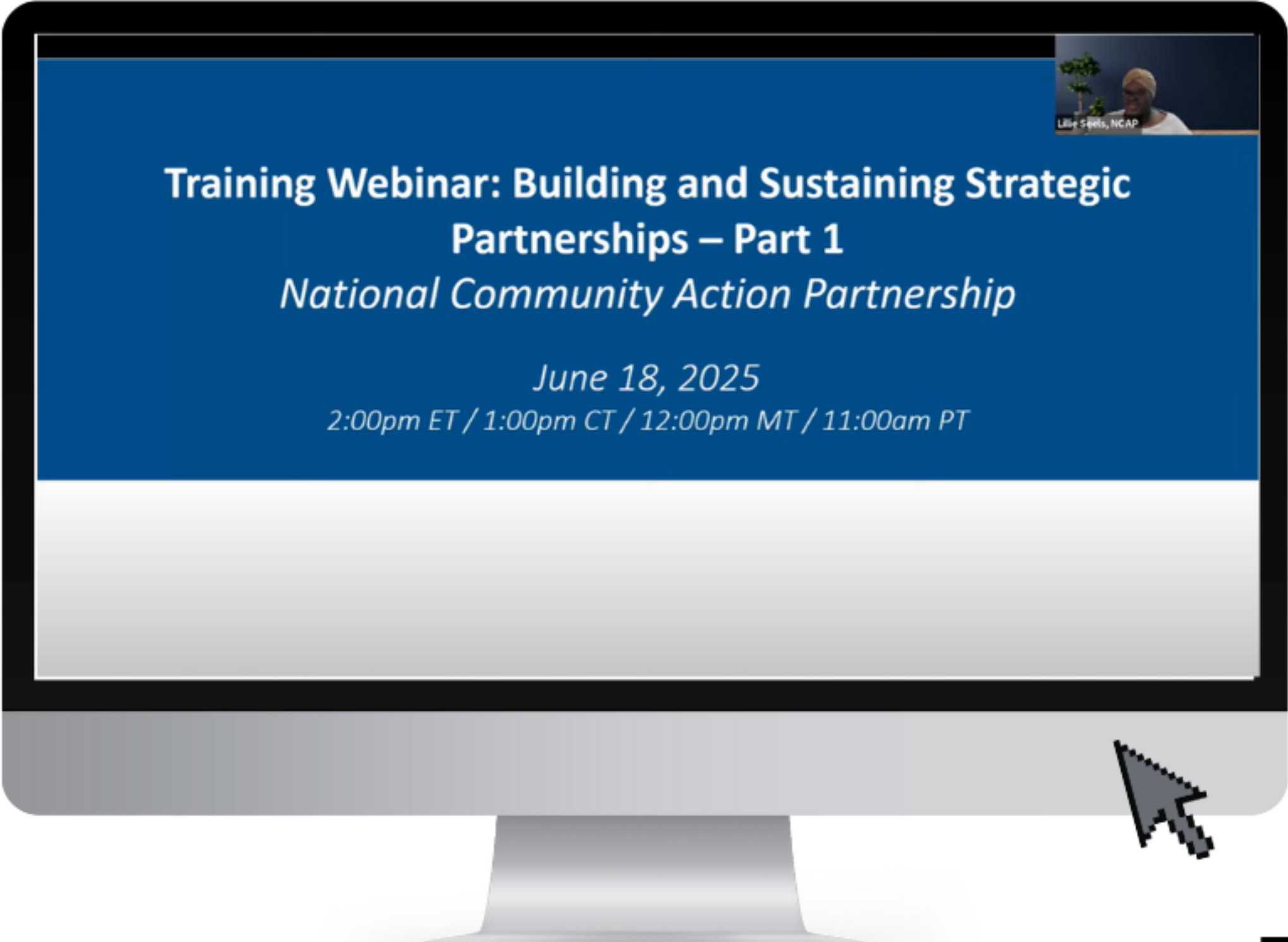
Partnerships can extend far beyond the familiar when we broaden the circle of who we consider as potential partners and reframe partnerships as relationships that contribute to building a connected community of support. This network can be fostered with diverse partnerships such as community colleges, hospitals, public health departments, small and large businesses, trade unions, cultural organizations, and alumni associations to actively support and amplify each other's shared community goals. These partnerships can bring valuable resources like funding, support, job training opportunities, and spark program innovation. Re-imagining your existing and future partnerships encourages both partners to think beyond their own scope and work towards change that will benefit the entire community.

### Building on Established Partnerships

Don't start from scratch! Your Community Action Agency (CAA) likely has a network of existing partnerships. The key is to strategically expand and deepen these connections to pursue innovative economic mobility initiatives.



# CHECK OUT THE ENTIRE SERIES: BUILDING AND SUSTAINING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS PART 1



<https://tinyurl.com/BUILDINGANDSUSTAINING1>



Did you miss Part 1 of the Building and Sustaining Strategic Partnerships webinar? That's okay!

**ACCESS THE WEBINAR RECORDING & SLIDES HERE!**



# Innovative Community Programs & Organizations

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## Opportunities in Housing

- Community housing units
- Emergency shelters
- Increasing skills for living wage jobs

## Opportunities in Transportation

- On-the-road services
- Education through online platforms

## Opportunities in Health

- Nutritious food
- Mental health services
- Transportation services



# Cross-Cutting Opportunities

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- **Collaborative Partnerships that Align Resources and Shared Goals**
  - Alignment across organizations and agencies to maximize impact
  - Shared spaces for community services: tax programs, senior programs, onsite recruitment, and employment support
  - Leveraging and deepening relationships with public-private partnerships to expand reach and impact
- **Childcare**
  - Access to affordable and consistent childcare
  - Ongoing support for parents throughout their educational and employment training
- **Integration of Services**
  - “One Stop Shop Model” for wraparound services

# **Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI)**

# Introductions

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- ❖ **Tanya Thurman**, Action for a Better Community, Inc. (ABC)
- ❖ **Mary Lou McCloud**, Rochester Rehabilitation Center

# Agenda

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- ❖ Overview of Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI)
- ❖ How the need for SWFI was identified
- ❖ How SWFI was funded, and what partnerships (financial and strategic) contributed to its success
- ❖ First Year, what it looked like when SWFI was implemented
- ❖ Successes or milestones achieved through SWFI
- ❖ Other types of initiatives ABC provides to help support economic mobility and how they connect to SWFI

# Overview of Strengthening Working Families Initiative (referred to as SWFI)

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- ❖ SWFI provided low- to middle-skilled parents opportunities to get a job or advance in their careers in high-growth or in high-demand industries – **health care, advanced manufacturing, and information technology** – while addressing barriers related to accessing training and employment faced by those with childcare responsibilities.
- ❖ Services:
  - ✓ family and career navigation services
  - ✓ job training, job placement, career advancement in health care, advanced manufacturing, and information technology
  - ✓ benefits management
  - ✓ childcare navigation services
  - ✓ systems-level activities around improvements in childcare provision and employment services

# How the Need for SWFI Was Identified

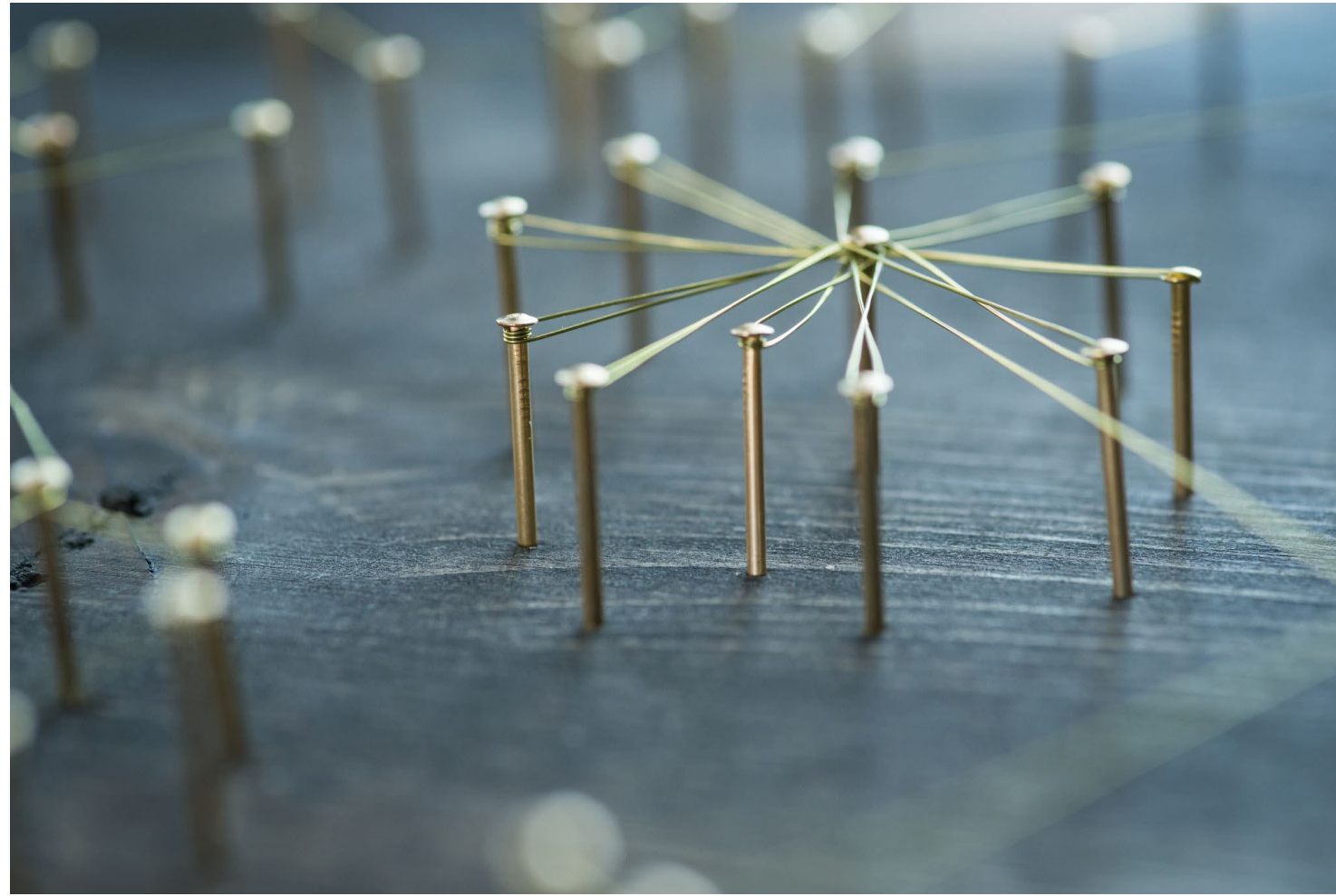
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- ❖ **6 out of 10** households with children have all parents working (married working parents and single working parents), increasing the need for affordable, quality childcare.
- ❖ Training and education can help move parents into better paying jobs, however, **some employment barriers (e.g. childcare) also serve as challenges to participating in training and educational programs.**

# How SWFI was funded, and what partnerships (financial or strategic) contributed to its success

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- ❖ The Strengthening Working Families Initiative (or SWFI) was a five-year (2016-2021) \$4M grant funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. Rochester Rehabilitation Center (RRC) was one of 14 SWFI grantees – and the only organization in New York State to receive the grant.
- ❖ Key partners representing a cross-section of organizations served on the SWFI Advisory Committee:
  - ❖ workforce systems such as New York State Department of Labor and Rochester Works (e.g. training grants, workshops, job placement events)
  - ❖ employers representing the three fields
  - ❖ local Department of Social Services (DSS) assist with wraparound supports and systems level work
  - ❖ city and county government assist with all aspects of the initiative (e.g. child subsidy assistance and systems level work)
  - ❖ local colleges and training programs
  - ❖ community-based organizations to provide wraparound supports
  - ❖ Legislators assist with systems level work
  - ❖ Funders cover any additional funding needs (e.g. United Way funding the program when federal grant ended)



First Year, what it looked like when SWFI was implemented

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First Year, what it looked like when SWFI was implemented & Challenge of COVID-19 Pandemic

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# Lessons Learned

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1. Onsite Recruitment is Essential
2. Individualized, Ongoing Support for Parents is Critical
3. Provision of Wraparound Supports Drive Engagement and Retention
4. Strong Partnerships are Key to Achieving Outcomes
5. Taking a Systems-Oriented Approach Enables More Coordinated and Effective Responses to Complex Challenges

# Successes or milestones achieved through SWFI

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## Success Story 1:

A parent who worked with the SWFI Child Care Navigator in 2019 shared the following: “When I was denied assistance to go back to school, it broke my spirit. All hope was gone. I felt defeated and was afraid I was going to lose my kids. Every door was closed and I had no options. You gave me hope to give to my kids. You did what you said you were going to do and I am so grateful”. Through the grant and support offered, the parent completed the program and left with a couple of job options.

## Success Story 2:

“Before SWFI, my husband and I struggled to justify sending our children to daycare, because almost half of our income went directly to childcare costs. We regularly talked about one of us taking a few years off of our careers to stay home to take care of the kids. But now, because of SWFI’s support and assistance, we are both able to work and build our careers. Gratitude to SWFI program and the staff”.



# Other types of initiatives ABC provides to help support economic mobility and how they connect to SWFI

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- ❖ The **Trainers Network** formed in 2020, consists of many local educational/training programs, workforce systems organizations (including employers), community-based organizations (CBOs), governmental agencies, funders and other community members that came together to address training-related community needs.
- ❖ Key Activities:
  - ❖ Developed and posted online training directories (in three fields – health care IT, advancement manufacturing)
  - ❖ Hosted training fairs + participated in employment fairs
  - ❖ Hosted a childcare fair
  - ❖ Developed a Trainers locator (in beta form)
  - ❖ Co-hosted with the City of Rochester a few conferences to bridge organizations representing training, employment and wraparound supports

# Other types of initiatives ABC provides to help support economic mobility and how they connect to SWFI

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- ❖ Efforts underway to bring a **Work Ready Community** initiative to Monroe County, NY.
- ❖ The initiative builds a multi-stakeholder coalition, representing trainers, educators, employers, and community-based organizations
- ❖ This national model, implemented in over 600 communities and recognized by nearly 30,000 employers, promotes workforce readiness through the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)—a portable, industry-recognized credential that helps job seekers stand out to employers. We were told, those with a NCRC are more likely to have their resumes moved to the top of the interview pile!

# Other types of initiatives ABC provides to help support economic mobility and how they connect to SWFI

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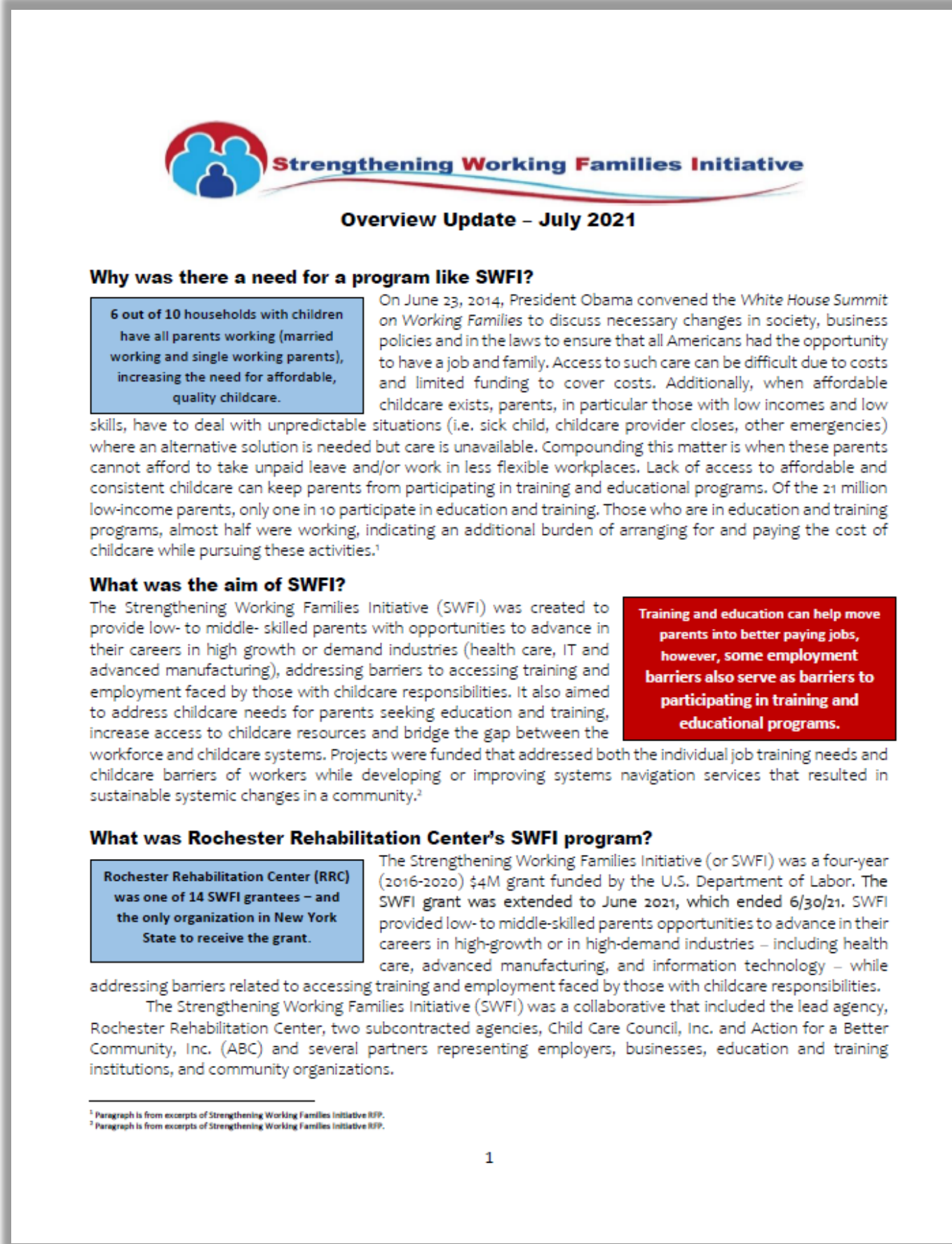
- ❖ **Benefits Project** formed in 2019
- ❖ A community-driven initiative led by ABC with over 30 cross-sections of organizations
- ❖ An online benefits calculator consisting of 8 benefits – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, Section 8, subsidized childcare, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and tax credits. The tool estimates the public benefits a person in Monroe County, NY, might receive and the amount.
- ❖ The tool will help families manage their resources and plan for employment changes—such as taking a job, promotion, or raise—without losing essential benefits that maintain family stability, that are needed to invest in future growth and achieve upward economic trajectories.

# Training Wrap-up

## ❖ Strengthening Working Families Initiative Handout



<https://tinyurl.com/SWFIHANDOUT>



**Strengthening Working Families Initiative**  
Overview Update – July 2021

**Why was there a need for a program like SWFI?**

**6 out of 10 households with children have all parents working (married working and single working parents), increasing the need for affordable, quality childcare.**

On June 23, 2014, President Obama convened the White House Summit on Working Families to discuss necessary changes in society, business policies and in the laws to ensure that all Americans had the opportunity to have a job and family. Access to such care can be difficult due to costs and limited funding to cover costs. Additionally, when affordable childcare exists, parents, in particular those with low incomes and low skills, have to deal with unpredictable situations (i.e. sick child, childcare provider closes, other emergencies) where an alternative solution is needed but care is unavailable. Compounding this matter is when these parents cannot afford to take unpaid leave and/or work in less flexible workplaces. Lack of access to affordable and consistent childcare can keep parents from participating in training and educational programs. Of the 21 million low-income parents, only one in 10 participate in education and training. Those who are in education and training programs, almost half were working, indicating an additional burden of arranging for and paying the cost of childcare while pursuing these activities.<sup>1</sup>

**What was the aim of SWFI?**

The Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) was created to provide low- to middle- skilled parents with opportunities to advance in their careers in high growth or demand industries (health care, IT and advanced manufacturing), addressing barriers to accessing training and employment faced by those with childcare responsibilities. It also aimed to address childcare needs for parents seeking education and training, increase access to childcare resources and bridge the gap between the workforce and childcare systems. Projects were funded that addressed both the individual job training needs and childcare barriers of workers while developing or improving systems navigation services that resulted in sustainable systemic changes in a community.<sup>2</sup>

**Training and education can help move parents into better paying jobs, however, some employment barriers also serve as barriers to participating in training and educational programs.**

**What was Rochester Rehabilitation Center's SWFI program?**

**Rochester Rehabilitation Center (RRC) was one of 14 SWFI grantees – and the only organization in New York State to receive the grant.**

The Strengthening Working Families Initiative (or SWFI) was a four-year (2016-2020) \$4M grant funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. The SWFI grant was extended to June 2021, which ended 6/30/21. SWFI provided low- to middle-skilled parents opportunities to advance in their careers in high-growth or in high-demand industries – including health care, advanced manufacturing, and information technology – while addressing barriers related to accessing training and employment faced by those with childcare responsibilities.

The Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) was a collaborative that included the lead agency, Rochester Rehabilitation Center, two subcontracted agencies, Child Care Council, Inc. and Action for a Better Community, Inc. (ABC) and several partners representing employers, businesses, education and training institutions, and community organizations.

<sup>1</sup> Paragraph is from excerpts of Strengthening Working Families Initiative RFP.  
<sup>2</sup> Paragraph is from excerpts of Strengthening Working Families Initiative RFP.

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# Tools and Resources

# SUSTAINING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE

This guide accompanies the webinar Building and Sustaining Strategic Partnerships: Part 2 and highlights best practices for Community Action Agencies to strengthen established partnerships to unlock their full potential and create lasting change.

Use this companion guide to take a fresh lens on deepening trust, purpose, and innovation within your partnerships.

**CHECK IT OUT HERE:**

**[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/STRATEGICPARTNERS2](https://tinyurl.com/strategicpartners2)**



Promising Practices for  
Building and Sustaining  
Strategic Partnerships

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## SUSTAINING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Whether formed across sectors, within the community, or among other mission driven organizations, strategic partnerships are built on shared values, trust, and commitment to collective impact. But building these partnerships is just the first step. Sustaining these partnerships requires you to go deeper in your relationship with your partners and build a shared sense of purpose that drives you to adapt and innovate. This ongoing effort is what transforms simple connections to collaborations that are capable of driving impact. It is through nurturing and strengthening these relationships that partnerships can unlock their full potential and create lasting change.

### Fostering Trust and Shared Vision

Trust is the currency of sustainable partnerships. A clear, shared vision provides the roadmap for collective action.



### Best Practices:

- **Consistent Communication:** Maintain regular, transparent communication. This goes beyond formal meetings and includes informal check-ins.
- **Active Listening:** Genuinely listen to partner perspectives, concerns, and ideas. Demonstrate that their input is valued.
- **Mutual Respect:** Acknowledge and respect the unique strengths, expertise, and organizational cultures of each partner.
- **Shared Ownership:** Ensure all partners feel a sense of ownership over the partnership's goals and activities. Distribute responsibilities equitably.
- **Celebrate Small Wins:** Acknowledge and celebrate milestones and achievements, both large and small. This builds morale and reinforces the value of collaboration.
- **Conflict Resolution Strategy:** Establish an agreed-upon process for addressing disagreements or challenges constructively. Focus on solutions, not blame.
- **Revisit and Refine Vision:** Periodically revisit the partnership's original vision and goals. Are they still relevant? Do they need to evolve? This ensures continued alignment.

# **COLLABORATIVE ON ECONOMIC MOBILITY SESSIONS OFFERED AT ANNUAL CONVENTION 2025**

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**Detroit, MI | August 27th – 29th**

- **Building Skilled Careers: Vocational Training for Enhanced Employability**
- **Building Tomorrow's Workforce: Implementing Innovative Pre-Apprenticeship Programs**
- **Pathways to Prosperity: Tools and Resources to Advance Economic Mobility**
- **Transforming Lives: Implementing a Whole Family Whole Home Approach to Innovation**





# FINANCIAL EDUCATION AND WEALTH GENERATION STRATEGIES FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

2:00pm ET/1:00pm CT/12:00pm PT

Join the Collaborative on Economic Mobility for a webinar designed to equip Community Action Agencies with tools and resources to help families set financial goals, identify wealth-building opportunities and make informed decisions for financial stability and growth. Participants will learn from Community Action Agencies who are implementing innovative approaches to address the financial challenges of families and communities. Gain insight and actionable strategies to help start or strengthen financial education and wealth generation programs that support economic mobility.



**REGISTER HERE TODAY!**

**<https://tinyurl.com/CEMWEALTHGENERATION>**

# FRESH FINDS

**LEARN**

**EXPAND**

**IMPLEMENT**

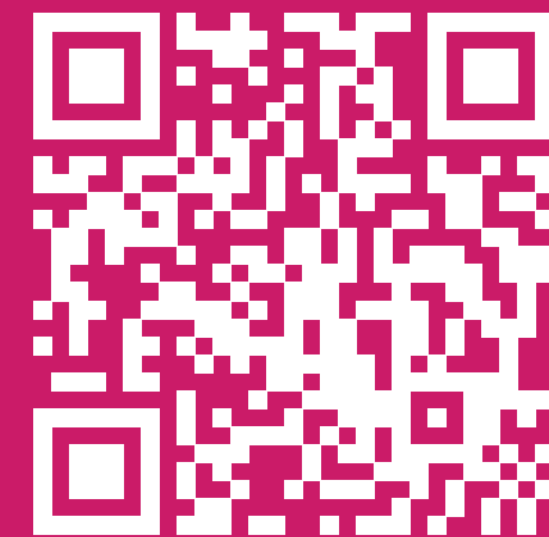
Are you interested in expanding the capacity of your organization to implement innovative programs and services?

Are you interested in improving outcomes for the individuals, families, and communities in your service area?

Are you interested in learning from the experiences of other community leaders across the country?

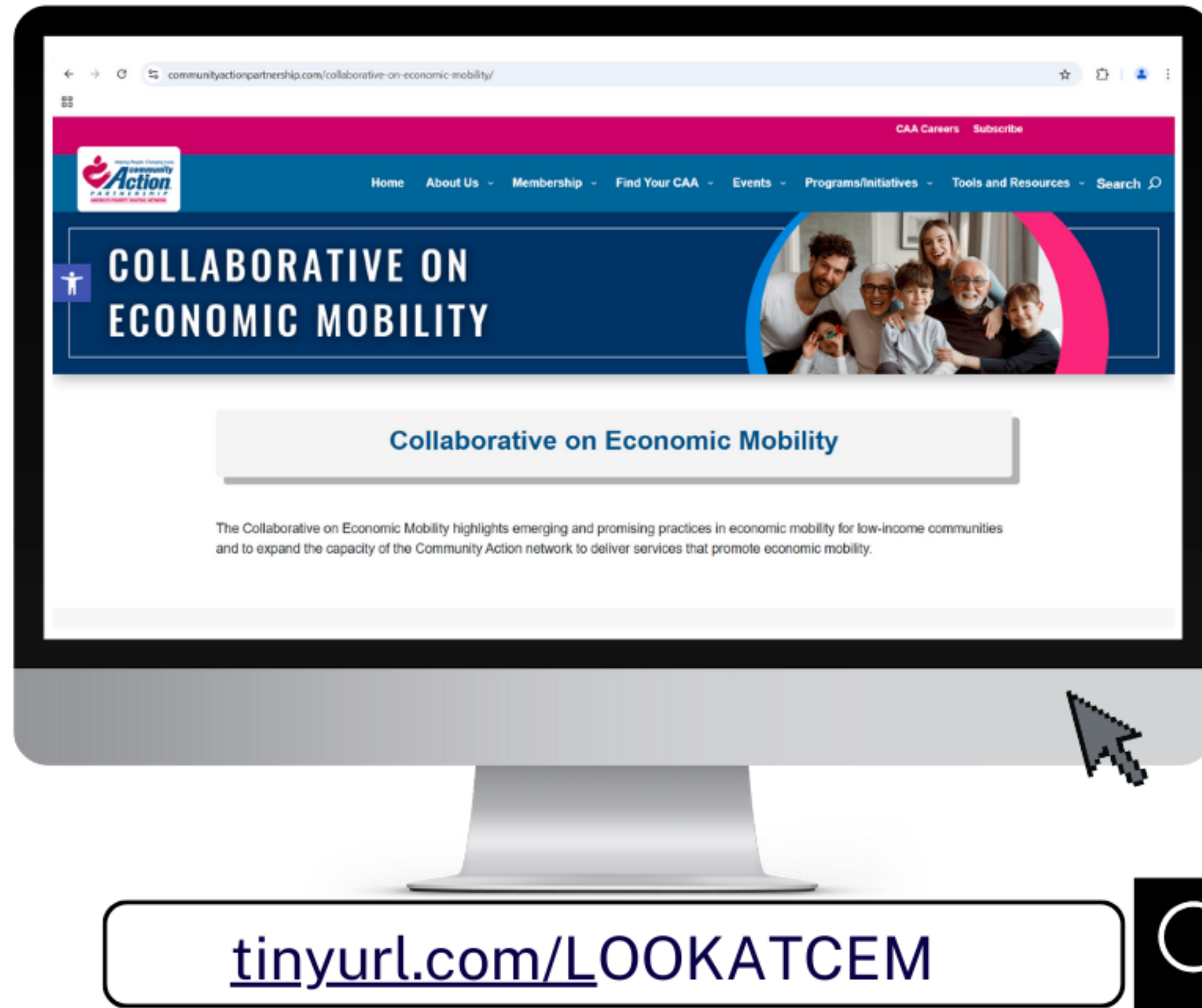


Sign up for the National Community Action Partnership's new "Fresh Finds" newsletter and be the first to know about new tools, resources, and training opportunities!



[tinyurl.com/FreshFinds25](https://tinyurl.com/FreshFinds25)

# NEW NCAP WEBPAGE: COLLABORATIVE ON ECONOMIC MOBILITY



Check out our dedicated webpage for the Collaborative on Economic Mobility (CEM) on the NCAP website!

You can find tools and resources related to CEM key focus areas and sign up for our Fresh Finds Newsletter here!

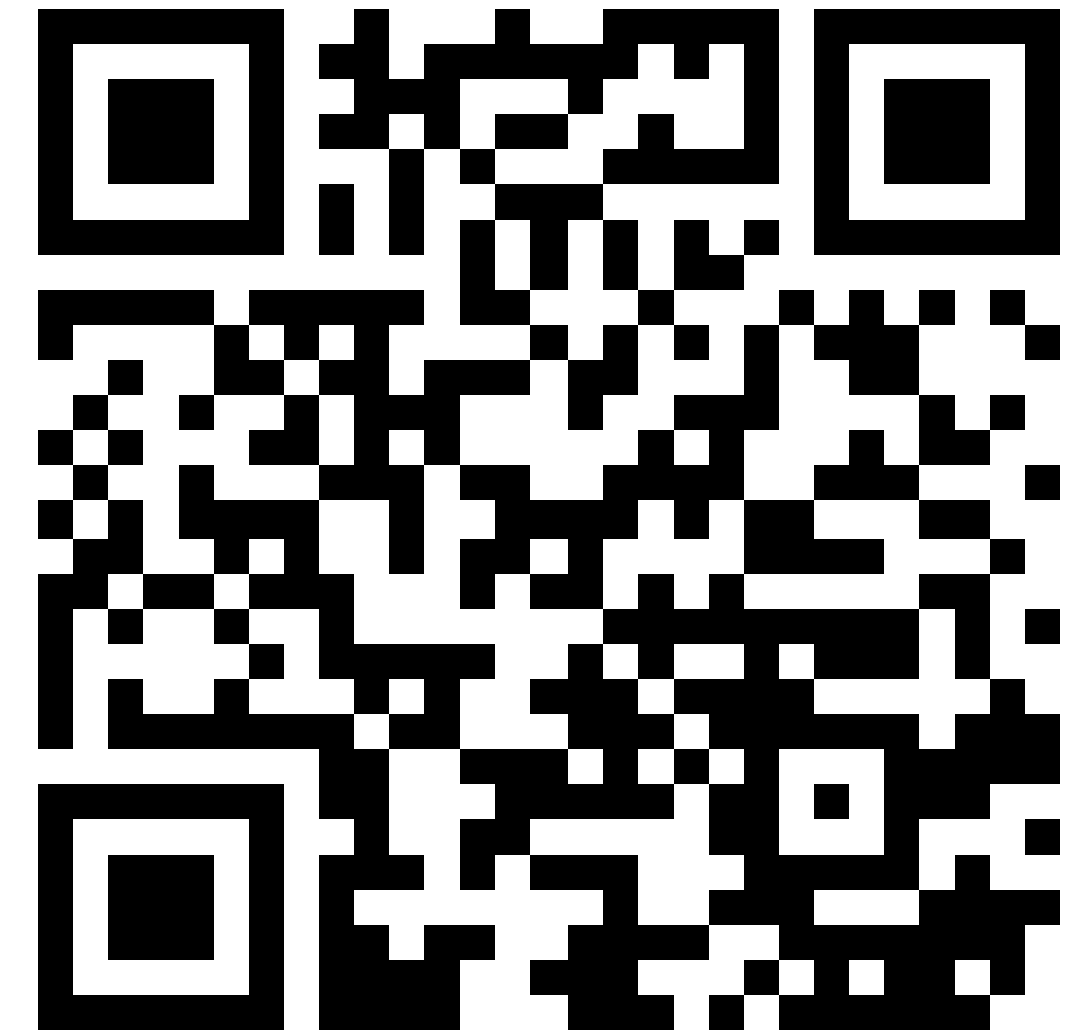
**EXPLORE  
HERE!**



# We want to hear from you!

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We would love to hear about your experience in today's training webinar. Please take a moment to complete the webinar survey.



<https://tinyurl.com/BuildingSustaining2>