**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**H-1B Strengthening Working Families initiative (SWFI)**

**New Grantee Orientation**

**Thursday, August 11, 2016**

*Transcript by*

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LAURA CASERTANO: I'm going to turn things right over to our moderator today, Monica Evans. She's a workforce analyst, H-1B grants for the ETA Division of Strategic Investment. Monica.

MONICA EVANS: Thanks, Laura. Again, my name is Monica A. Evans, and I am the Strengthening Working Families program lead. I'm joined by my colleagues from the Division of Strategic Investment in the Employment and Training Administration, Robin Fernkas, office division chief, Megan Baird, program manager for H-1B grants, Danielle Kittrell, workforce analyst in H-1B grants, and also Jake Blanch, a federal project officer for Region 2, Brinda Ruggles, grant officer from the Office of Management and Administrative Services of OMAS; and Elizabeth (Liz) DeHart, grants management specialist. We are representative of the SWFI team in the Employment and Training Administration's national office and regional office.

We have a full agenda today, and we want to encourage you throughout the presentation to please insert all your questions in the chat section so we know what we're missing and what we need to address in the future. Also, there are probably some federal project officers or FPOs on the line. Welcome. We ask that you hold your questions for the FPO debrief that we will have following this webinar. You should have received the Outlook invitation.

Today's agenda includes a welcome to the ETA grant family. We'll also do an introduction to your SWFI Department of Labor team in the national and regional offices. We'll cover an overview of SWFI. We want to share our vision for the grant program and how you fit in. We'll also review your grant communication plan. Communication is a two-way street. So we'll look at how you communicate with us, who do you contact when you have questions, and also how we will communicate with you.

We'll also touch briefly on reporting requirements and instructions. Then we'll explore the grant package, taking a closer look at what is in it and what it is and information that you can find out by looking through that. We'll also discuss the statement of work reviews included in your grant package and what that means for you and your project. And finally, we'll discuss next steps, including what you should do after this call.

I will now turn things over to Robin to get us started.

ROBIN FERNKAS: Great. Thanks, Monica. And good afternoon, everybody. I just want to also welcome you. We're very excited about this initiative and very excited that you're our grantees. So we do have a lot to share today. Over the past few weeks various members of the Department of Labor team has been in contact with you about your grant, and so we wanted to sort out who's who.

First, ETA is one of several agencies in the Department of Labor, and we're made up of staff in the national office located here in Washington, D.C. and in six regional offices throughout the country. In the national office our division, the Division of Strategic Investments, serves as the program office for the Strengthening Working Families Initiative. I serve as the director, and for short we call our division DSI. So you'll hear that throughout this and as we go along for the next four years.

But I serve as the director of DSI. Also part of DSI is Megan Baird who you will hear from shortly. She's the program manager for the H-1B programs, including – and again, another acronym, but we're calling this initiative that you're a part of SWFI. But she does include SWFI. And Monica, who you just heard from, is our moderator and also the program lead for SWFI. And Danielle Kittrell also works in DSI and supports this initiative.

The program office works together with the Office of Grants Management or in our vernacular OGM, and later you will hear what OGM does from Brinda Ruggles who is the H-1B program's grant officer. The program also – program office also works with the Chief Evaluation Office and the Office of Policy Development and Research to support you in implementing various aspects of your projects.

As an extension of our program office team, we work very closely with our regional office colleagues. So each of the ETA regional offices assigns a federal project officer or FPO to work with each grantee. Jake Blanch, an FPO with Region 2, will discuss the FPO role shortly. Your FPO is really the single most important person you will meet during your period of performance and plays a critical role in the success of your grant program.

So the Division of Strategic Investments serves as the program office for SWFI, and so what does that mean really? What do we do? DSI has several functions to ensure the success of your grant. So first, we support your FPOs in their role. We also provide policy guidance and clarification when necessary, and we provide technical assistance or, again, another acronym – sorry about this. TA is what we refer to as technical assistance.

So this may be – our technical assistance may be to all grantees on universal topics such as performance reporting, recruiting participants, or job placement, or we may also provide customized technical assistance to grantees to address specific aspects of your grant. Some of this TA includes creating peer networking opportunities so you can learn from one another.

Another key role for us is in performance management. We work with our Office of Information Systems and Technology to collect the performance data that you compile for your grants and track your overall progress. We will touch on quarterly reporting requirements later in this presentation and then you'll be hearing a lot more from us in coming months on what you're expected to do and we'll provide a lot of technical assistance and support around that.

In coordination with the grant officer and regional offices, we review some grant modifications. So finally, our role is to periodically request additional information about your grant outcomes for our quarter reports to Congress. We are often asked to report on grant outcomes by the White House, the Office of Management and Budget, the Government Accountability Office, and others. So we appreciate your timely response to these requests for information when received.

So in addition to the performance and grants management TA provided to you by the national and regional offices, the department's also working to procure an external technical assistance provider to complement national and regional office efforts, including intensive and ongoing technical assistance to support you in effectively addressing education and job training barriers for low to middle-skilled parents.

So this TA will address childcare needs for parents seeking education and training and also will increase access to childcare resources. So stay tuned for additional information on our TA efforts in the near future, and we will always be coordinating those with the regional offices. So you'll be hearing – your FPOs should be aware of what's coming up in terms of technical assistance too.

The Office of Grants Management runs the grant competition and makes selection for the grant awards. So after the grants are awarded, all of the official grant documents are maintained in the grants office, and modifications, such as your statement of work changes, budget realignments, administrative changes to your grant, and equipment purchases over $5,000 are approved by the grant officer.

The grant officer for the SWFI grants is Brinda Ruggles, and the SWFI grant specialist is Elizabeth DeHart. You'll be hearing from both of them in this webinar. Others in the Office of Grants Management also provide guidance on important policy issues and training on the fiscal and administrative requirements of the grant. And again, we will be sharing with you links and also information on how you access those resources as we go forward.

So now, I'd like to turn to Jake Blanch, one of our federal project officer's in the Philadelphia regional office, to have him explain more about the FPO's role in supporting you.

JAKE BLANCH: All right. Thanks, Robin. Hello, everyone. So the map on this slide shows the configuration of the Department of Labor's six regions. Your federal project officer, or FPO as we tend to refer to ourselves, is based in one of these regional offices. The role of your FPO is to assist you and serve as a resource on all grant-related matters. So this person is key to the successful management of your grant. FPOs are your primary point of contact for all technical matters and the person with whom you will have the most frequent and direct contact.

FPOs are responsible for – excuse me – providing compliance assistance, conducting oversight and review of grant performance, and delivering or arranging technical assistance for you in reaching your outcome goals. Your FPO should always be your first point of contact for any grant-related questions or issues. How do you find out who your FPO is? You likely already heard from them, but, if not, they're identified right in the pages of your grant award package.

And with that, it's back to you, Robin.

MS. FERNKAS: Thanks, Jake. So finally, as you know, you're required to participate in a national evaluation of the Strengthening Working Families Initiative. The department's Chief Evaluation Office is responsible for conducting this national evaluation, and in order to do this, they're in the process of contracting with an evaluation contractor to conduct it.

Over the next few weeks the department's Chief Evaluation Office will be working with the program office – that's us – to provide you with more information on the evaluation and get information from you about your programs. So you'll be hearing more about that soon. And so now, I'd like to turn things back to Monica.

MS. EVANS: Thanks, Robin. Now that you know who we are, all of us sitting in this room would like to know more about who you are. Thank you for using the chat to tell us who you are and the location from where you are dialing in. Unfortunately, it would take us hours to do an individual roll call and introductions. So let's experiment with a few ways to break the ice and connect with each other virtually.

First, let's start by creating a virtual nametag. It should read, hello. My name is. Hopefully you have this information accessible, such as typed out in a Word document. Throughout this webinar you will have several opportunities to give feedback both over the phone and on chat windows. When you do enter questions, please copy that information into the chat window or introduce yourself so that those of us listening can follow up with you later. We will be keeping a record of the chat windows and distributing them following the webinar.

Before we move on to the next agenda item, let's do a quick polling question to help us know more about you. We'll start easy. Is this your first ETA grant? Please answer yes or no. And it looks like we have quite a few of you who have other ETA grants or have had some in the past. That's good, and, well, some new folks. Welcome.

So right now, I'll turn things over to Danielle to give you a program overview.

DANIELLE KITTRELL: Thank you, Monica. Well, now that you know who we are, let's begin with a bit about of who you are and your role in the success of this program, and then we'll do a quick review of the SWFI grant.

On June 14, 2016 the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration or ETA awarded about $54 million in grants to 14 grantees for the H-1B funded Strengthening Working Families Initiative or SWFI grants. SWFI grants provide support to parents who face barriers to training and are in need of increasing skills and competencies.

We either prepare them for entry into an H-1B aligned career pathway or advance them along an H-1B aligned career pathway and into middle- or high-skilled jobs. These grants will give more working parents a career pathway to secure higher wage jobs by addressing the significant barriers to participating in and completing training and in trying to find and acquire affordable, quality childcare. That includes emergency childcare while attending skills training programs.

Our – (inaudible) – goal of SWFI is to assist in the removal of childcare barriers faced by working parents in need of training to secure better jobs. In support of those objectives, projects will simultaneously address both job training needs and childcare barriers of low- to middle-skilled parents for individual services and at the program-level activities and by developing or improving systems, navigation services that will result in sustainable, systemic change, and that is system-level activities.

So you are here today because your project was one of the proposals selected for this grant award. In total ETA made about 14 grant awards, and that ranged from about $3.4 million to $4 million. The projects provide services in about 13 states. The period of grant performance for your project is 48 months, and that began on July 1.

This performance period includes all necessary implementation and startup activities, supportive services, systems integration, the completion of education training activities, and the award of employer or industry-recognized credentials, if appropriate, placement activities, and participant follow up for performance outcomes.

And as previously mentioned, ETA made 14 grant awards to projects providing services in 13 states. As you can see in the map on your screen, the green states are the location of the grant award winners. And the 14 grants cover a variety of H-1B industries. That includes advanced manufacturing, information technology or IT, educational services, healthcare, financial services, and business. And as you can see, this here shows the various industries in which you, a SWFI grantee, will train program participants.

So a total of around 7,900 participants will be served by your programs, and again, all of these participants will be parents who have barriers to training, including childcare barriers and other supportive services. Up to 25 percent of the participants served can be low-skilled, front-line incumbent workers and also parents with childcare responsibilities. So just to give you a few examples, that includes unemployed or underemployed low income parents, low skilled, low income custodial parents, legal guardians, foster parents, incumbent worker, low income parents, as well as veteran parents and their military spouses with dependents in need of training and employment.

And our fundamental goal of SWFI is to assist in the removal of childcare barriers faced by working parents in need of training to secure better jobs. In support of those objectives, project will simultaneously address both job training needs and childcare barriers to low to middle-skilled parents through individual services, and that's program-level activities, and by developing or improving systems navigation services that will – (inaudible) – and sustainable systemic change, and that's system-level activities.

And many of your projects incorporate work-based training that enables learning by learning through models such as registered apprenticeship – and that's five projects – OJT or on-the-job training – that's about seven projects – paid work experience and paid internships. And – (inaudible) – to your grants is the conclusion of supportive and/or referral services that compliment training activities for parents.

So some of these strategies that you are using include access to and assistance with tuition or fees for childcare services provided during training and job searching, and that includes non-standard – (inaudible) – care, emergency backup care, or care for children with disabilities.

And now, I'll turn things back over to Monica to talk about the communication plan for SWFI grantees.

MS. EVANS: Thanks, Danielle. Let's talk about our communication plan. ETA wants to keep in close contact with you throughout the entire period of your grant. ETA will usually contact you through your FPO for a specific request and information. We also will use the SWFI mailbox for general requests and information as well as the grantee community of practice which has a website link on this slide. An important note. FPOs and the national office regularly send out e-mail blasts to grantees. Please make sure that your e-mail system does not confuse our communications as spam.

As a grantee, when you need to contact ETA at the national office, you should do so through contacting your FPO first. Also, copy the SWFI mailbox, SWFI@dol.gov, as appropriate. Remember to include your grant number and lead grantee organization name, describe your question and issues as specifically as possible, and please be patient.

As you begin to hire staff, it is important to provide contact information for these individuals to ETA as soon as possible. We recommend that you have at least one primary program point of contact, and please be sure to update this information, should it change by both notifying both the national office and your FPO.

One of the most important members of your team is the individual you designate as your primary point of contact or POC. That person will receive all future communications regarding training webinar series, policy guidance, or other important information as it pertains to the program aspects of your grant award. As soon as this information becomes available, please send an e-mail to the SWFI mailbox at SWFI@dol.gov.

It is important that you alert your FPO and national office staff with any changes to the main point of contact for your grant. And thank you again to everyone who has already sent in the updated contact information. Please also note changing the signature authority of your grant requires a formal modification.

In addition, each of your abstracts are on this webpage, this link, and as you know, those abstracts provide important information about your projects, including a brief description, key partners, amount of grant, key outcomes, and contact information. By clicking on the applicant information tab, you can check out the abstract and find out what your fellow SWFI grantees are doing.

Finally, SWFI has a community of practice. WorkforceGPS or WGPS is an interactive online communication and learning technical assistance platform that was designed to communicate with and build the capacity of the public workforce investment system in order to develop and implement innovative approaches to workforce and economic development in the 21st century economy.

This website, which offers resources and peer-to-peer connections, supplements other TA provided by ETA's national and regional staff to help the public workforce system, education professionals, and businesses. This is our platform for sharing valuable resources for operating your grant like technical assistance materials, training modules, including this one, and FAQs.

This is one of our primary ways of communicating with you, as every resource that we release through the SWFI mailbox will link back to WGPS. This includes a schedule of upcoming webinars in your orientation series.

Now, let's review the communication plan. Note you should always contact your FPO first if you have questions. If you are the grant lead, e-mail your FPO. If you have questions or difficulty accessing the performance reporting system, e-mail SWFI@dol.gov with a copy to your FPO.

If you have questions or difficulty accessing the financial reporting system, e-mail EBSS.help@dol.gov with a copy to your FPO and SWFI@dol.gov. If you have questions about evaluations, e-mail SWFI@dol.gov with a copy to your FPO.

I'll turn things over now to Megan who will discuss reporting requirements.

MEGAN BAIRD: Thanks, Monica. It looks like from some of the questions – (inaudible) –, this is a section that lots of you are very interested in learning about today. As I'm sure you are all aware, ETA has significant expectations around performance reporting, and you may have read that we have performance reports that are due quarterly as well as a final performance report.

And these reports contain detailed information about your grant activities, including strategic partnership activities, timelines, grant outcomes, and any promising approaches and success stories you'd like to share. All of these reports are valuable. Tracking your performance and outcomes can help your organization sustain and grow its workforce development strategies. It's also important because it demonstrates the positive outcomes of the grant activities to investors and partners.

It can illustrate a return on investment to employer partners, an important factor in keeping your employers and securing new partnerships and resources. Tracking performance and outcomes helps ensure sustainability of the project and partnership, and it leads to continuous improvement in the program to ensure you are meeting the needs of business and participants.

And finally, from your grant reporting standpoint, as Robin mentioned earlier, your reports allow us to share your successes to Congress, the White House, Department of Labor administrators, the Office of Management and Budget, Government Accountability Office, and other key stakeholders.

SWFI grantees are required to submit two ETA reports on a quarterly basis, and these reports must be submitted on time each period in order to comply with the reporting and record-keeping requirements of the grant. And each quarter grantees are required to submit two different quarterly reports.

The first report is the quarterly progress report, or we call it the QPR for short, and this QPR includes two items. It includes a performance report that has data and a narrative report.

The second report is a quarterly financial report, or we also call it the QFR for short, and this is submitted through the ETA-9130 form. The QPR will be submitted using an electronic reporting system that is currently in development by the department, and a separate system is used to submit your quarterly financial report.

The quarterly progress report provides updates on participant outcomes achieved as well as a narrative of the grant activities, and this quarterly progress report is due no later than 45 days from the end date of the quarter. So your first quarterly report will be a report on activities that occurred during this quarter, so anything that occurred during the period of July 1, which is your grant start date, through September 30 of 2016.

This report is due no later than November 14th. And we realize that many of you may not have a lot to report on, but you still are required to submit a quarterly report. And more information on quarterly progress reports, including the data elements and narrative report field, will be provided in the next few months.

You may be wondering how you will submit your QPR to ETA. Currently we are working on a performance reporting system at the department, and this system is the same system that the WIOA grantees will be using. For those of you that are existing H-1B grantees, you will not be using the HUB system. We identified in the – (inaudible) – all grantees would be reporting in accordance with the WIOA approved performance reporting measurements. In preparation you should prepare to collect and track participant-level data on demographic information, services, training received, training completed, credential outcomes, and any employment information.

This information will need to be submitted to the department. And please ensure that when you're collecting this information, you're also collecting dates that correspond with the starting and the completion of these activities. This also includes collecting Social Security numbers which will be used by the department to track and report long-term employment outcomes which are called the common performance indicators, and those are also identified in the WIOA performance reporting requirements. And most importantly, please ensure that you follow personally identifiable information protocol, that you store this information securely.

As I mentioned, since the performance reporting system is currently in development, grantees will be following what we're calling an interim reporting process. We anticipate that this will only be used for your very first QPR, July 1 through September 30th of 2016, due no later than November 14th, and this process will apply to your first QPR. In this process you will not be submitting any participant data to the department.

However, you must ensure that you are collecting participant-level data because once the system is active you will have to submit data cumulative on all participants served since the start of the grant. So again, you will not be submitting participant-level data or any data file to the department for your first quarter, but you must ensure that you are tracking participant-level information to submit once the system is available.

You will be submitting a quarterly narrative report. Eventually this report will be submitted through the same online reporting system, but at this time you will be submitting it via e-mail. Quarterly narrative reports should be e-mailed to your FPO with a copy to the program office at SWFI@dol.gov no later than the reporting deadline of November 14th. And we will be sending this out in writing to all of the grantees as a follow-up to this webinar clearly outlining the interim reporting process.

So I see that a lot of you are asking about what the participant-level data consists of. Again, we'll be providing very detailed training and guidance on performance reporting in this next quarter, October through December. But in the meantime, there are some great resources that you can check out if you want to get a sneak peek. As a reminder to any of our existing H-1B grantees, this is very different from what you are tracking for your older H-1B grants that are reporting under – (inaudible). It's very different. So please ensure that you are not using tools that you used for a different grant program.

There's a bunch of links on this slide, and the SWFI data elements are identified in the PIRL, which is under WIOA and not the link on the slide. All of these data elements have been approved, and we'll be providing in-depth training on which of these specific data elements apply to the SWFI program as well as walking through the definitions of what those are.

And a little bit on quarterly financial reporting. All ETA grantee recipients again will have to submit a quarterly financial report. This is called the ETA-9130, and you report on all expenditures charged against the grant. As with the quarterly progress report, the financial report is due with – no later than 45 days after the end of a quarter. Your first quarterly financial report is also due no later than November 14th.

Covers the period of July 1 through September 30th, and as a reminder, the ETA-9130 is accessed through the ETA financial reporting system which is separate from the performance reporting system. And more information and training on the ETA-9130 will be provided in the near future, and we're even going to touch on that in our presentation later today.

So just to review some key reporting deadlines, again, your grant started July 1. Your – which means that you cannot have served anyone prior to July 1. Your first quarterly progress report is due no later than November 14th. Your first quarterly financial report is due no later than November 14th, and your grant end date is June 30, 2020, which seems like a long time from now.

And before we turn it over to move on to the next section, it looks like there's some very specific questions on performance reporting that we can take a moment and quickly answer some of those. There's some questions here on collecting accessed ends and documenting participants. Please ensure that anyone that you serve through the grant was first determined eligible to be served, and if you have any questions on that, certainly contact your FPO.

In order to be served through the grant, the individual must be eligible based on the requirements on the FOA as well as the population that you identified in your statement of work. And the collection of Social Security numbers is required. An individual can choose to not disclose that information but you must ask for it and this will be covered in great detail in our performance reporting training.

There are also definitions in the link that I mentioned for the PIRL which is escaping me this very moment what PIRL stands for but it's P-I-R-L. It is the Participant Individual Record Layout. Thank you, Robin. It does include definitions for every single data element for some folks that were asking questions about specific definitions. If you have questions about definition for items that are identified in the FOA, please certainly reach out to your FPO for clarification on that.

And to be clear, we are not developing a database or a case management system for participant-level data. We are developing this mechanism for which you will upload a CSV file containing participant-level information into a system that will do edit checks and then produce a quarterly progress report.

For those grantees that maybe had WIA or WIOA grants, it is a very similar system and mechanism for grantees that were using HUB. It's a very similar system and mechanism of file upload, but we will not be providing any case management or database type systems for grantees to store their information in.

OK. And please continue to keep typing in questions on anything we've covered as we go, but now, I will turn it over to Brinda who is going to walk you through the grant award package.

BRINDA RUGGLES: Thank you, Megan. Hello, everyone. Congratulations again on receiving the SWFI grant from Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. I'm going to be going over with you today about the grant award package that you received from us.

So the grant award package consists of the grant award letter and the actual grant agreement. This agreement includes the notice of award which contains the signature page, the condition of award page, the grant terms and conditions, the application for federal assistance, also known as the SF-424, the budget which includes the SF-424A and budget narrative, the statement of work, and, if applicable, the indirect cost rate agreement.

The grant award letter contains important information about the two systems that require a password and PIN. The first is the payment management system which allows the drawdown of your funds. Information and forms can be found at www.doleta.gov/grants under the payment information.

So on that same site under financial reporting, you'll find information about the online grantee financial reporting system and the ETA-9130 also called the federal financial report form. Your passwords and PINs are sent separately after you supply the necessary information. Once you receive it, please do not lose it.

The first page of the grant agreement is the notice of award. This page has the project title which is the H-1B SWFI Partnership Grant, and it contains the grant recipient's identifying information which is the name of your organization, address, EIN, and DUNS number. It also contains the federal award identification number, otherwise known as the grant number. This is the agreement number.

All SWFI agreement numbers should start with an HG and then a five digit number and 14-60-A as an example and then either a one or two-digit number. So please reference this number when you contact your federal project officer or the national program office when you have questions about your grant.

So I do want to say that your initial documents that we sent you has an AH grant number. So please do not use that. Please use the grant number with an HG. So the period of performance, award amount, Uniform Administrative Requirements, and cross principles and signatures are also included in this document.

As grantees you are required to fully comply with all applicable statutes and regulations and cost principles in performing your responsibilities under this grant agreement. Cost principles that are a set of government-wide rules that apply to all ETA grantees are outlined in 2 CFR 200, the uniform guidance, and 2 CFR 2900.

The Uniform Administrative Requirements stated in 2 CFR 200 and codified by ETA regulations at 2 CFR 2900 outlines the standards for obtaining consistency and uniformity across federal agencies. And there are other requirements as well included in the terms and conditions of your award.

After the NOA page of the award agreement is the condition of award page. All grantees share the first two conditions. One is to participate in a federal evaluation of SWFI and the use of funds for participant support service costs, including childcare, whereby grantees may use up to 25 percent of grant funds to provide quality affordable childcare and other support services to individuals who are participating in education and training activities provided through these grants. Grantees may have additional conditions of award based on an analysis of the information submitting for the competition. Please resolve these conditions by working with your FPO.

Following these are the terms of your grant starting with the order of precedence, if there is any conflict in what federal laws require followed by any other applicable federal statutes under implementing regulations, and finally, by the terms and conditions of your award. Next in the agreement is the reference to the NOA followed by other pertinent grant information.

The other terms and conditions of your grant agreement include the status of any indirect cost rates, federal project officer contact information, equipment requirements for prior approval, no approval to pay for pre-award costs, reporting requirements, consultant fee limits, publicity requirements, procurement requirements, audit requirements, and intellectual property requirements. There are five attachments to the grant agreement that you received, and these are the SF-424, SF-424A, budget narrative, statement of work, and the indirect cost rate agreement, if applicable.

One very important terms of your grant deals with equipment purchases. ETA defines equipment as any tangible personal property, including information technology systems, and has a useful life of more than one year and a per unit acquisition cost of $5,000 or more. Grantees must receive prior approval from the grant officer to purchase any equipment. Even if the request to purchase equipment is already specified in your statement of work and a budget, prior approval is still required.

You are to submit a detailed description list of equipment you plan to purchase for your program to your FPO for review. We encourage you to submit this request as early as possible in the period of performance with as many planned pieces of equipment as possible. Your FPO will review these items and submit the list for approval. A modification to your grant will be processed approving the equipment purchases.

Attachment A, B, and C of the grant agreement contains the SF-424, SF-424A, and budget narrative, respectively. All three of these documents were taken from your proposal. Attachment D is your statement of work, commonly known as the SW. This comes from your obligation and includes the project narrative and all required attachments such as abstract, documentation of employer commitment, documentation of commitment to participate in an evaluation, organizational chart, and performance outcomes table.

Attachment E includes the negotiated indirect cost rate agreement for applicants claiming indirect costs. If you claim indirect costs and did not provide a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement from your federal cognizant agency, you are put on a 90-day temporary billing rate, and if that is the case, please send your approved indirect cost rate agreement to your FPO. If the agreement is not submitted within 90 days of the effective date of the award, no funds will be approved for reimbursement of indirect costs.

ETA has reviewed your statement of work, budgets, and accompanying materials to identify potential and allowable costs and compliance issues. And the purpose of all these reviews is to catch potentially problematic items up front so that they don't become bigger issues later in your grant. We know there are a lot of rules and regulations to keep track of. So we want to do our best to help you make sure projects are in compliance.

Included in the condition of award page that we mentioned earlier is a detailed list of items we have found that require qualification or potential modifications. The review has focused on major potential costs and compliance items, and you will have 45 days to work with your FPO to respond to these items. In addition to the cost and compliance items, a separate review of your outcomes and performance measures has been conducted. You will also have 45 days to respond to those as well.

Lastly, you have received, along with your grant award package, the SWFI Handbook which is a general resource for you to orient you to the grants process here in ETA. The handbook contains pertinent information that you and your staff need to know more about ETA grants and other additional resources that you may find useful to have as you implement your grant. So I would highly encourage you to read that handbook, if you have not done so.

So now, I'll turn things over to Liz who will go over with you grant modifications.

ELIZABETH DEHART: Thank you, Brinda. All right. I'm going to review grant modifications. The processing of grant modifications is a vital part of the grant process. During the next few slides I'm going to outline the why, the what, the how, and the when of grant modifications. This leads us to the question, what is a modification? It is a tool used to make a change to your grant agreement for clarity between the grantee, the regional office, and the national office.

Why should you do a mod? The first one is a change of scope. Note that a change of scope is very rare and not always approved. Your scope of work is based solely on the requirements outlined in the FOA, and this is how you competitively won this grant. For instance, for SWFI, if your proposal was to work in high-tech industries and you would like to change to an industry that's hospitality, this would not be allowable.

Changes in your service area, expanding or shrinking the service area would be served. A change in partners, you're required to have a large variety of partners to know – to have a successful SWFI grant. If something happens to one of these partners, let us know immediately.

Change in authorized representative or contact, if things have changed with the key personnel, let us know. Do not wait. Change in number of participants, decreasing participant numbers must be thoroughly reviewed by your FPO, the program office, and the grant officer. It is not a change that we easily approve of.

A few other reasons to request modifications are the transfer of funds amongst the 424A categories or program functions and activities if the cumulative amount of such transfers exceeds or is expected to exceed the 10 percent requires approval from your grant officer. You may have room to extend your grant, and a modification is required to extend your period of performance timeline.

A change in signatory authority or contact person for the grant. As Brinda mentioned, equipment purchases requires grant officer approval, including those requested which includes – which was included in your grant application. Again, these are just examples, and when in doubt, always contact your FPO.

When your FPO receives a request for a modification, they'll review the request. He or she will ask, how will services and staff be impacted? Is the change effective and beneficial? What about enrollments and expenditures? Are they on target, and if not, why? Does the change conflict with the requirements of the FOA? Is the change allowable under the uniform guidance? Prior to submitting this modification to the grant officer for approval, the FPO must first concur with all of their changes.

It must be submitted on the organization's letterhead and signed by the authorized representative at least 30 days prior to the effective date you are seeking. Include the purpose, why the modification is necessary, and how the change will benefit the program, along with supporting and required documentation as necessary.

If the modification is to change the authorized representative, the letter should not come from the existing authorized representative. Instead the letter should come from the president or the board of directors, perhaps the president of the university or grantee's executive director. You cannot sign the grant over to yourself. If it is a budget realignment modification, you're required to provide a revised SF-424 and 424A and a budget narrative.

The budget narrative should have a clear delineated description of costs associated with each line item in the 424A in a narrative format which aligns with the subtotals and totals provided in the narrative and indicated on the 424A. It should also justify amounts and changes you're requesting.

The amounts listed in the budget narrative should match the amounts listed for each line item on the 424A. When in doubt, always consult your FPO for guidance. This is the most common reason we send modifications back. A budget realignment does not add up properly. Please, before you submit them, make sure that everything adds up.

I encourage you not to wait until the last minute to submit a modification. You should always be monitoring the performance of your grant and make adjustments as needed. Again, you can discuss any anticipated changes with your FPO. He or she will provide the necessary technical assistance. Your FPO is always your first line of contact to provide any technical assistance.

This concludes our presentation from the Office of Grants Management about the grant modifications. Are there any other questions before I turn it back to Monica? OK. Perfect. Monica, back to you.

MS. EVANS: All right. Thank you, Liz. To review, here are some of the next steps that you should take after this orientation. If you have updated program contact information that you have not previously submitted to SWFI@dol.gov, please do so as soon as possible. Updated contact information helps to ensure you receive important and useful program information.

Also, please be sure to respond to any items requiring a response to special conditions in your grant award package, as appropriate. And finally, get started on your fiscal and administrative training series and up to speed on DOL performance reporting.

But the training orientation series doesn't end there. We've got several more trainings to help you as you implement your grant, including performance reporting training, additional fiscal and administration training, and an evaluation orientation kickoff. That's quite a list of upcoming training. To help you keep track of upcoming training events in the orientation series, we have a SWFI orientation training series plan which we have provided as a handout. We also will provide you with the link.

The next set of training in your grant orientation training series is to watch four fiscal and administrative online trainings. These trainings are prerecorded so that you can watch them at your convenience. Links to these events are included on your screen and will also be sent out in a follow-up e-mail to today's webinar. It is important to note that the first series on fiscal and administrative requirements of your grant should be completed by September 15th.

OK. Last poll. After listening to us talk for so long, your heads are probably spinning, and you probably have some questions. Please go ahead and post your questions into the chat window. While you're doing that, please feel free to respond to our poll. Question is, how do you feel after today's webinar? One, Geronimo, two, uh, SWFI or swiftly, and three, a little overwhelmed but excited.

MS. : Geronimo.

MS. EVANS: OK. So Geronimo, we're ready. OK. That's great. Hopefully many of you are excited, and again, we will be following up with more information. And if you have questions, you have the contacts, the ways to communicate with us. We're looking to see if we have any additional questions. While we're waiting for questions, any last minute things we'd like to cover? We're good? OK.

And just as a reminder, here are the links to the resources we mentioned during today's webinar. We recommend that you bookmark these pages. That includes the SWFI abstract, the SWFI Community of Practice, the grantee orientation webinar series I just mentioned, as well as the Grantee Orientation Handbook that Brinda mentioned. Also, a very important resource is your FPO. We will also be sending out the recording of this orientation in a couple of days as a follow up.

So I see we have a couple of questions coming in. So we're going to wait and let people respond. OK. So we have one question here. "The PIRL didn't list anything regarding low income guidelines. Is there anywhere that we can find this? Is it in the LIFL?"

MS. FERNKAS: Natalie, first, you win the best grantee today because you've looked at the PIRL. If others have, please let us know too, and you can also be the best grantee. We can certainly follow up with this, if you want to e-mail your FPO and copy the program office. I'm not sure if you're looking for a definition in accordance with just reporting information or if you just want to know what the definition is for low income as aligned with the FOA or your statement of work. We can certainly follow up off of that online and get clarification.

MS. EVANS: OK. Next question, "Are you planning a grantee meeting or conference this year?"

MS. FERNKAS: We typically do have grantee convenings within the first year of the grant. It's usually towards the end of the first year just to make sure that all of our grantees have fully staffed up and started to train people and can come with really good questions.

We have not picked a date yet. As soon as we do, we will certainly let you know and give you notice. It's always held in Washington, D.C. So just stay tuned for that. As soon as we have information, we'll let you know, but it almost always is towards the end of the first year of your grant.

And Candace, you are also our other favorite grantee. Thank you for looking at the PIRL.

MS. EVANS: OK. Additional questions? OK. If you do have additional questions, again, you have – you can definitely contact your FPO and cc SWFI@dol.gov. We want to thank you for joining us today. We're really excited to work with you over the coming year, and good luck with your grant.

All right. At this point I'll turn it over to Laura. Do you have any final statements?

(END)