**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Trade Adjustment Assistance: Targeting Program Challenges Using Case Management Funds**

**Wednesday, October 18, 2017**

*Transcript by*

*Noble Transcription Services*

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LAURA CASERTANO: Again, I want to welcome everyone to today's "Trade Adjustment Assistance: Targeting Program Challenges Using Case Management Funds" webinar. And I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Susan Worden. She's a supervisory program analyst. Go ahead, Susan, take it away.

SUSAN WORDEN: Thanks, Laura. And I'm really excited to be part of today's presentation. Today's presentation will be a spotlight of a best practice from the state of Oregon. This will be the first of two best practice webinars which we'll be presenting in October and November. And as I said in the title, the focus here is about leveraging current TAA case management flexibilities in compliant and innovative ways. And Oregon is a great example of that, as I believe you will see.

Today's presentation is actually a repeat, although slightly expanded, of a presentation that was done in August in Boston as a half day pre-con to the Rapid Response summit. And it was very well-received. And we're very clear about the fact that we need to share this as far and wide as possible. And with that let's go ahead and get into the meat of today's presentation with an overview of what we'll be covering.

So we'll be starting with an overview of key TAA program challenges. My supervisory analyst role is as head of the performance management and data reporting unit. And we in the TAA program have a strong conviction that our data shows a lot about what works and what doesn't. It's one of the reasons that we focus so hard on getting the data right because we want to be able to represent the hard work of the states in terms of serving our TAA participants and also be able to identify what's working and what's not. To that end we'll be looking at a few data slides that I think kind of emphasize the challenges that we're currently facing in the TAA program.

I'll then be turning it over to Ricqué and Shelley in Oregon. Ricqué will be doing an overview of the Oregon Trade navigator model, which is kind of a staffing infrastructure model that is pretty sophisticated and really has reaped a lot of benefits. Shelley will be leading off on talking about her role as a Trade petition coordinator in the state of Oregon. And this is a pretty innovative role that we're really excited about, that we really think is worth sharing, and did come about as a result of Oregon's initiative.

We will be doing obviously Q&A. There'll be polling throughout, polling questions throughout, and also there'll be opportunities for formal Q&A section at the end. We'll be closing with sharing other resources of existing webinars that the office of Trade adjustment assistance has already presented that relate to today's topic, and also be providing you with the contacts that you need to use to follow up with both directly with the state of Oregon, and reminding you as ever that your regional ETA contacts are your first stop in seeking out any technical assistance. And then we're closing with some of the upcoming events that I mentioned earlier in terms of future technical assistance webinars.

I'd like to start off by getting a sense of who we have in the virtual room in terms of participation today. All of the folks that are represented in terms of roles on this next polling question slide would be relevant audience members for today's presentation. And given the fact that you had advance opportunity to begin populating, I think what we're looking at now is probably a representation. If you haven't already selected a role, please do so now.

I'd like to point out that today's presentation, as with all workforce GPS webinar presentations, is being recorded. There will be a transcript as well with all sorts of fancy bells and whistles, as the folks at Maher & Maher know how to put out. And once that is properly packaged, and archived, and a link is made available, we'll be sending that back out to all the registrants.

Because we really do encourage for those of you that are aware of people who may not be attending in your state that you think may have some ability to influence the decisions in your states with regard to use of case management funds, please make sure that you forward that link to those folks so that we can really leverage our resources with these innovative best practices to the extent possible.

OK. Looks like the bulk of the folks in the room are state Trade coordinators, which is great. We've got – yeah, it looks like we've got a sprinkling of participation from all different levels. OK. Great.

OK. So as I mentioned in my introduction, I'm going to break straight into looking at the challenges that the TAA program faces. The TAA demographic is a very needful demographic, as those of you in the room that serve the TAA participants know. They're older workers who have been out of school for a long time and every often need to re-skill in a completely different industry. But we're not able to reach Trade participants based on how the Trade eligibility process is structured until a petition is filed on behalf of a potentially eligible worker group. What you see on this slide represents a trend between 2009 and 2017 – I'm sorry, I think I did these in reverse by accident.

So I apologize. What I meant to put here was actually a petition filing trend, which is what I was speaking to. This trend also shows the same kind of trajectory as what you'd see with petition filings. I would say when we get to the recorded presentation we might be able to insert it back in somehow. But the trend for the number of petition filings unsurprisingly is the same trajectory that we have for the total TAA participants served. As you can see we spiked in the 2009-2010 period. And since that time we basically had a precipitous drop. And there has been some improvement since then, but obviously nowhere near what we had earlier.

Now there's a lot of pushback that we get from folks based on where the economy was at in the 2009-2010 interval. However our evidence suggests that really doesn't explain all of what's going on with regard to our declining participant trends. And it really does reach back to being able to identify eligible worker groups so that they can actually file petitions. So the fact that we have declining participants is obviously a real challenge.

What you see here is looking at our participation from a different level based on the entered employment rate that is tracked in the first quarter after program exit. And if you look along the vertical axis you see a percentage that represents the former common measure entered employment rate, which is those that are employed in the first quarter after exist, and along the bottom axis you see the number of months broken out in even numbers from a negative two to zero up to 36 months after separation.

So what we're seeing here is that the sooner we get to serve folks, sometimes even in advance of their actual separation, given that in the Trade program under the adversely affected incumbent worker clause, we're actually able to put folks into the TAA program, to put them potentially into training before they're even laid off, while they're still just threatened with layoff.

And then looking out over the number of months, the longer it takes us to serve folks, the lower the outcomes are. And this downward trend is even more dramatic when you look at those that we have in training, keeping in mind that the Trade program serves between 50 and 60 percent of its overall participants with training. That's a very significant factor. So we know we need to speed up the process, but we're challenged by the fact that we have this statutorily mandated complex eligibility process. Starts with the group eligibility and then of course there are unique eligibility requirements that must be met on the state level as well.

So looking at what our challenges are in terms of speed with which we're able to reach people and the volume of people that we're able to reach, let's look at what we have in terms of what I'm going to call untapped resources. What you see on the slide here is the projected amount of funds that will be returned to the U.S. Treasury of FY '15 grant funds.

Of course we don't know finally what it is until that November 15th deadline on the 9/30 data, but we're currently projecting that there will be a total of $63 million returned. And given the extent of the challenges that we're faced with and the flexibilities that are available, that's really kind of criminal. And it's one of the reasons why we've identified that providing technical assistance on the best practices that are going on with regard to how states are using their case management fund flexibility to apply to these critical challenges is really paramount.

Another thing that really drives the success of the TAA program is co-enrollment. And what you see here on this slide, focuses in on the blue line, shows the performance of those who are co-enrolled with the WIOA title one dislocated worker program, and the red line shows the performance of those who are not co-enrolled. And again we're looking at that entered employment rate, which is no longer technically valid, but it's tracking employment in the first quarter after exit. Of course we've moved to a second quarter after exit model under the new law, but first quarter is still kind of our initial indication of who's getting a job when.

So clearly co-enrollment makes a huge difference to the Trade program. And we really like to promote the fact that co-enrollment works because there's a very popular untrue myth that co-enrollment with Trade participants actually hurts outcomes. Our data going back to 2009 shows a different story. And that's what you see here on the slide in front of you. It's an unfortunate truth that in the wake of WIOA implementation, co-enrollment is actually declining for a variety of reasons. And the best practices of Oregon and some of the other states we're going to be highlighting next month really testify to why co-enrollment does work and how it is possible in the WIOA environment.

Here I'm going to ask a polling question that you should've had an opportunity to look at at the beginning while you were waiting. What I'm asking for here is for folks in the audience to select what they see as challenges for the TAA program implementation in your states. And notice that you can choose as many as apply. For those of you that select other, please feel free to enter into the chat box to give more information on what those other challenges may be that are not otherwise specified. OK. We see some folks typing into the chat box.

Currently it's looking like our major challenges that are showing up is not enough petitions or potentially TAA eligible worker groups, and selecting worker lists from employers, followed closely behind by delays in group eligibility processes. I'm seeing folks typing into the chat box. Melissa is saying that we've got Wagner-Peyser staff shortages both at Trade coordination in our central office and in the field. And a ditto from Mandy; my apologies for not announcing last names I'm afraid I'll mispronounce.

Melissa or Mandy, did you want to be able to speak a little bit more about those challenges? If you are on the phone, you could do so. But if you're not, then basically I have to rely on your chat. Frank saying staff shortages. OK. Lots of comments on staff shortages. Given the fact that much of what we're going to be talking about today has to do with staffing structure, I'm hoping that some of the solutions that Oregon has come up with may help you target solutions, although I appreciate that each state environment is unique.

And OK, so I guess I'll just wrap this polling slide up by saying that the areas that you've identified today having to do with not having enough petitions and delays in group eligibility are things that we will be talking about how the state can support in maybe non-traditional ways or ways that your state may not traditionally be working with employers to do. And with that I'll switch to our next slide as I begin to introduce today's best practice which is the state of Oregon.

So the question is, why Oregon? Oregon's best practices first came to our attention as a result of a reporting feature. I want to make everybody in the audience aware because we have varied levels of quality with regard to the data element that brought Oregon to our attention. As part of the quarterly TAPR performance reporting, there's a narrative field that states must submit that attest to their efforts to improve TAA outcomes.

Depending on the quality of the narrative and the quality of the practice that is described in that narrative, it may come to our attention and be selected as part of our quarterly workforce highlights, which is a publication that ETA puts out for all program offices. But in addition it comes to our attention for potential elevation as a best practice, which is why Oregon has ended up as a best practice in today's presentation.

I will also loop back and talk about a review of our data reveals that in FY 2016 Oregon was number one in both petition filings and in overall participation. And as a result we know that whatever they're doing must be working. So with that I will turn it over to my state level colleagues in Oregon. Ricqué and Shelley, take it away.

RICQUÉ SMITH: Hi. Good morning. My name is Ricqué Smith and I'm one of two program managers for the Trade adjustment assistance program here in Oregon.

SHELLEY FORSBERG: And I'm Shelley Forsberg, the petition coordinator here for the state of Oregon.

MR. SMITH: So today we're going to talk about our Trade Act navigator service delivery model as well as petition coordination. I want to thank Susan quickly for the invite to share this information. I want to also say it was very validating to get a call from the national office after reviewing the data and the summary that we put in our Trade Act participant report. And just thank you very much for that.

So today we're going to start by doing a brief overview of the background of our service delivery model. We're going to talk about the unique role of the Trade Act navigator. We're going to review petition coordination and the role of the petition coordinator, and how our positions are funded. Further we'll wrap up by talking about rewards that we have received and lessons we've learned. And we'll have some time for question and answer.

So before we talk about the history of our service delivery, I'd like to give you a snapshot of our current activity level and program administration in our state. Then we'll review the size of our state and its rural and urban populations. We have two program managers that also serve as coordinators for this program. One supports the employment services side of the program – that would be me – and the other supports the unemployment insurance side of the program.

We have one petition coordinator who you'll hear from, Shelley, later in the presentation. We have an analyst that supports data, and funding, and modernization efforts with our IT department. And we have a TAA liaison to our 17 community colleges and apprenticeship programs. We have several case managers that are located in one central office. And we have the navigator positions we're going to review today.

We have over 700 participants that are in active training and over 2,000 that are in various stages of career development and work search. So let's go ahead and take a look at this map. You can see that Oregon is the 9th largest state by area, 99 percent of which is considered rural. The blue dots there represent business establishments. And you can see the concentrated areas where businesses are most located, and then areas few and far between. We'll talk about that map more in the slides to come.

Prior to 2009, we had Trade staff that were located all around the state. This was a challenge in the sense that it was hard to maintain consistent levels of service delivery and program knowledge for the staff, as you can't predict where the next Trade certification is going to occur.

Because of that we pulled staff into one location, a centralized location, and we traveled out to affected worker groups to deliver program services. This approach allowed for a hub of Trade program information to be shared easily amongst the group, for delivery of services to be consistent, and afforded the ability to distribute the workload more equitably among the team.

While highly efficient and cost effective, we wanted a more intentional and visible connection to our participants, to local partners, and to increase awareness of the Trade program. And Susan?

MS. WORDEN: Thanks, Ricqué. I just want to interrupt for a quick poll. This is a true false questionnaire. The question is, "Trade funds may be used to fund program awareness and outreach activities in the state." So it's true or false. I'm waiting for those numbers to go up. Yes, you do have to vote. We're encouraging active participation here and we'll be moving on to the exciting presentation as soon as I have sufficient critical mass.

OK. We're getting close to our audience number. And the answer is true. Really want folks to focus in on this because I understand that it may not be in your traditional interpretation that outreach activities are something that are allowable under employment and case management funds. And we'll be talking more about that in the presentation with Ricqué. Go ahead, Ricqué. Thanks.

MR. SMITH: OK. Thank you. All right. Because we wanted to increase our local connection for the Trade program while also maintaining the efficiencies of our centralized model, the Trade Act navigator idea came to life and was presented to agency leadership in March of 2015. I presented the following concepts to leadership.

I wanted to align with the nine workforce areas around the state. And a lot of this came out of reading WIOA and understanding some of that intent. We wanted a localized approach, again while maintaining our centralized model. We wanted to increase knowledge of the Trade program. It seemed that Trade was a mystery and we really wanted to demystify the program.

We wanted to better serve our participants that were entering into the workforce system. We wanted to increase on the job training through job development. We wanted to mirror sector strategy messaging that was occurring in each of the nine areas to Trade participants. And we wanted to increase our performance rates. We also lastly wanted a solid connection to the local Rapid Response teams regardless of whether or not Trade Activity had been identified. Once I had approval from leadership, I was able to invite others for further position planning.

So here's a map depicting the nine workforce areas in Oregon. And we're going to review this map later in the presentation to show you where these positions are located. So further planning and input was needed for these positions. And it was really important to understand locally what the partners wanted to see with these positions.

So I began by connecting with two areas that have frequent overlapping affected worker groups. And that's the Portland and Clackamas area. And we invited stakeholders from each of those areas. Those stakeholders included staff to the local workforce boards. We wanted both Title I service providers from each of those areas. We had our state dislocated worker unit attend, and we invited local employment department staff, Wagner-Peyser staff, as well as Trade case managers, to talk about this position.

I presented the concept to these stakeholders at these meetings. And then from those meetings we talked about where these positions should be located, what teams the positions should be connected to. So for example, the Rapid Response teams, business teams that work very closely with the employers in their community, and we actually came up with the name of the position during these meetings. So we didn't know what this position would be called. We didn't know what those desired attributes would be. And these meetings really helped form the scope of work for these positions.

The result of the planning meetings was very positive and collaborative. We had buy in from all parties that attended, which was really important we felt for the success of these positions and the messaging of our program going forward.

As a result of these meetings, we were really able to flesh out the necessary details not only for the position in the two areas, but the meetings provided a foundation to bring to the other areas in the state to talk about the scope of work and what their area needs may need. With this foundation in hand, I scheduled meetings with the remaining areas, and reviewed the concept again, and the foundation of the work that had been done in the Portland and Clackamas area.

The other piece is that some of the areas didn't have full participation, and that was OK at that time. We made sure that if they didn't attend some of those meetings, that we sent the planning meeting minutes to the folks that weren't able to attend. But our intent with every area was to be very collaborative and inclusive to make sure that this position not only represented the needs of the Trade program, but represented the needs of the nine workforce areas that we were working with.

After all of these planning meetings, we scheduled interviews when we recruited the navigator positions. And each area had Title I providers, workforce board providers, or staff to the workforce board, as well as Trade and our state dislocated worker unit staff. So we had a mix on the panel to make sure that we were getting the right fit for these positions.

Once these positions were brought on, the navigators were brought to our central office location where the case managers reside. And they received two and a half weeks of intense training. Each navigator was paired with a case manager mentor that was familiar with that navigator's represented area.

We really focused on high level program information because these positions do not need to be in the weeds, so to speak, the way that our case managers are with the program knowledge. They need to be able to promote the programs. They need to be able to partner well. They need to understand their goals and the political dynamics that exist in their area.

Lastly, each navigator was given a binder that contained all the meeting minutes, we had some visuals for what came out of those meetings, and also included the goals that they would be working on in their area.

So after months and recruitment and training, the navigator service delivery model rolled out in December of 2015 in seven of the nine workforce areas. So we're going to talk about some of the initial goals of this position. And a lot of it you'll recall from the concept. So in alignment with each workforce area, the navigator helped by, one, navigating effective workers entering into the workforce system and connecting them to appropriate resources.

They're also an active member of their local Rapid Response team, not only when potential Trade has been pre-identified. They are to increase awareness and ultimately eligibility to affected workers on the Trade program, and their goal is to increase on the job training approvals through increased messaging and collaboration with partners.

We're going to take a deeper dive into these goals in the following slides. So our navigators interact with TAA participants in a variety of ways. Ultimately it starts at the Rapid Response session and then the Trade Act information session once the workers become eligible for Trade services and benefits.

The navigator assists affected workers entering into the WorkSource system and hand participants to their case manager located here in Salem after Trade information sessions have occurred and various assessments have been provided as well.

Our navigators also work a couple of hours each week at the community college or colleges, depending on the area, to connect with participants that need additional assistance either with their proposal for training, forecasting their schedules, their benchmark reports, but also to help them with reemployment needs in the final term of their training.

The navigator also provides assistance with placement for participants interested in on the job training through job development efforts. Essentially the navigator helps participants that are entering into the WorkSource system, hand them to their case manager, and then the case manager hands them back to that navigator when reemployment services are needed.

In regards to the sector strategy emphasis, in an effort to best support each area, the navigators also focus on sector strategies in their area. It's important that each case manager is aware of what different sector strategies are being focused on in each of the nine workforce areas. While we can't tell participants what kind of training they should take, we can educate these participants on what's viable in their labor market and in others as well.

So in regards to Rapid Response, each navigator is a contributing member of the local team. The navigators are there to help when needed, even if there isn't Trade involvement, as the Rapid Response team sees fit. We interpret the ability to do this as a way of educating those the navigator interacts with on the Trade programs, elevating program awareness.

When we do have potential Trade eligibility, the navigator briefly reviews the Trade program with the affected worker group, they review how to track petition information on the DOL website, and they inform the worker group of very important deadlines that they need to be aware of should the certification come through.

Further, by attending Rapid Response sessions, the navigators collect required Rapid Response participation data, which Trade has to report on on our federal reporting. Further still, in the event of a Trade certification, that same navigator that attended the Rapid Response provides the Trade Act information session to the same affected worker group; and the local Rapid Response partner is invited to the session to share information on Title I services, providing a continuity of our program delivery.

Lastly, the navigator reports all layoffs to the TAA petition coordinator, to investigate the potential of Trade impact. And at this time I'd like to call Shelley to talk about her piece as the petition coordinator.

MS. WORDEN: But before doing that, we have a polling question. So as folks are filling in the next polling question, it's a true-false question. The question is, "TAA funds may be used to identify employer based training opportunities." This would include everything from OJTs, to customized training, to apprenticeship opportunities.

I also want to take this opportunity, as folks are filling in the poll chat responses, to elevate a couple of things we're seeing in the chat box. First of all from my OTAA colleague in the policy development unit of OTAA, a reminder that all training is customer choice, but within a demand driven environment where all six criteria, TAA criteria, are met for TAA approvable training.

In terms of our audience chat, I have put a question in. Some of the folks basically were giving feedback on the reasons that they see TAA challenges. And we're getting responses. I want to say I really appreciate your use of the chat function. Please remember that per the workforce GPS protocols, all the chat questions and responses will be archived for potential future follow up. So please do make fulsome use of the chat box feedback, question, answer, comments, hopefully all related to the topic of today's webinar.

And also I've got a question for Ricqué from Phyllis Gish (sp), I believe of Kansas, who asks how many Trade navigators you have on staff.

MR. SMITH: We have a total of 11 Trade Act navigators that support that role. And we'll talk more about what that looks like in the following slides. We also have 20 case managers.

MS. WORDEN: Thanks, Ricqué. And I just want to wrap up this slide. I just want to congratulate everyone. Everybody got it right. Yes. It is true that TAA funds may be used to identify employer based training opportunities. Thanks. Back to Oregon.

MS. FORSBERG: Well good morning again. This is Shelley Forsberg, the petition coordinator here in the state of Oregon. And the work that I do around petition filing really begins and ends with strong partnerships. Time and time again our office would be notified that there was a layoff, and really shortly thereafter with a statement that this was not Trade related. After some of them came through that I thought, gosh, this is just really questionable, this is an industry that is almost always Trade related.

And so I talked to Ricqué and it was kind of decided that well let's just take a look at the last 30 days of those kind of messages and see what we have. And so after a deeper look at those layoffs, we realized that about 80 percent of them seem to have some kind of Trade effect involved. And then most importantly during that time we really started building some really strong relationships with our Department of Labor investigators and the certifying officers.

About June 2015, our program was reauthorized, and the guidance that we found on page eight, number six, table 5-15, directly impacted the way that this position would grow, specifically that it stated the CSAs must make every effort to notify workers that a petition should be filed if they believe the worker group may be eligible for a TAA certification under the 2015 criteria.

We made a lot of mistakes in the very beginning. We filed things that we probably wouldn't looking at them now, and we didn't file for some things that we probably would have looking at it now. But we just learned a lot and we just moved forward.

A few months later the navigators came on board. And as part of our local Rapid Response teams, we netted some of the most wonderful results we would see. This became our best fluid seed of business, affected workers, and partner connections, that we could really ever dream of. The positions brought about better in-depth petitions by providing more detail from employers and affected worker connections.

They built this by being at the table from the very beginning. So the way it was before is a lot of times Rapid Response would happen. And if they thought about Trade and thought it was, they'd let us know. And that's not a real great way to really connect with employers nor the affected workers. And I think we lose a lot of people by doing it that way. So with our navigator model, they were at the table from the very start.

It really brought about more in-depth petitions, and provided more details, and helped us to really get back to the investigators' information that they were seeking. Because they had built relationships, were part of that Rapid Response, they knew these employers, they knew these affected workers. And if there was something that our investigator needed, we knew we could have it within just a really short period of time, which kept our investigations moving a lot more quickly.

They've been really key in our campaign again to educate all of our stakeholders to think differently about trade. And I think this has just been huge for our state, because I'm sure all of you guys know that most people think about Trade and they think well I didn't move any of my jobs to another country.

We know that there's a lot more than one path to a certification, so this thinking differently and getting our partners and workers to think differently about it was super-important. As part of a larger state team of professionals, we worked together to gather this information, and we ask questions, we evaluate date. And most importantly we consistently communicate with each other and educate with the goal to file a Trade Act petition if it sees potential.

One of our investigators early on when I started off, I would call and say, I just want to run something past you to see if you think it's worth filing. And finally he said, hey, you know, it's really the state's job to go ahead and file, and our job to make the decision, so it's OK if you get a denial, because I really worried about wasting people's time.

Once that pressure was taken off, I just started learning as denials came through and seen the reasons for it, of whether or not it was worth – whether or not it was going to potentially meet that criteria. So I don't worry as much about it.

Although my position is funded by the Trade Act program, one of the primary perks it added was really to our local response team, a resource dedicated to help file these petitions. So I think it's really hard when you think about employers, they maybe would file this once every 10, 13 years, or maybe only once ever in their career, and so it's intimidating for them.

And our Rapid Response teams, the way our state is spread out, as Ricqué showed you on the map, you might have something happen in a rural area. They might only see a Trade petition out here once every 20 years, 10 years. And so having someone who files them – and last year I filed approximately 100 – and having someone who files them, I kind of know exactly what I'm looking for. I kind of know what I need to add to it; I know what the DOL investigator is going to be looking for. And so it's just kind of grown as we've gone. The relationships that we've built with our investigators, and the knowledge and experience, has really helped us put together some very successful petitions.

And I think what's important is we always let the employer or our partners know that they can file. We work as a team even though I conduct a review and file. I always leave it up as the option, we can file this together, I'm happy to do the work and then send it to you, if you want to fill it out and send it to me for review I'm happy to do that. But most often our partners, and our business, and our affected workers, they would like me to file. They want that extra resource and someone to kind of handhold them through this process.

I'm a resource pretty much for any stakeholder, is the way I look at it, that is wanting to partner. That includes any affected workers, our employers, our board, Title I, and any local American job center staff. Again what I really like to do and make sure is that as a state we're always communicating our results statewide. And when we do these communications, I try to send out an email once a month with all of the layoffs that we're looking at, including anything we filed, any decisions that have been made.

And in that report it always says we or the state of Oregon. It never says TAA, trade, or Rapid Response. Because I think it's important that we look at it as it's a team spirit, that we have to do this together. If they're told by a company there's no trade, and my review shows that there is potential trade, I know I can count on the people at the local level to ask follow-up questions. In return I'm going to help them file a petition that's going to be as high quality as possible.

Our navigator positions are a real key role in this partnership with Rapid Response teams. They're our ears, our eyes, not to mention our ground-level educators of the Trade Act program, which is huge, because a lot of people don't know what Trade is. They don't even know – they don't think of Trade the same way. They just think that it means that their company moves the whole work over there and that's the end of it. The majority of our companies I review come from referrals I receive from our navigators.

So when we got started there was quite a few things as far as – just before I get going on this slide, I see there's a lot of questions coming in. So when I get through the slides, I'll go back and answer them for you guys, if that works. But with our think differently, we started our whole campaign, we started asking some of the questions originally that came off of the business data report. And I'm just going to list a few of them. In my notes that you guys will get afterwards, you'll see all of them. But some of the questions that were originally on our form was of course how many workers have been or will be separated and when, and why were these workers being separated, and specifically what is the exact Trade-related effect.

So just to cover a few of them, we learned right away that we needed to change some of the questions in order to find out if there was any Trade connection. And instead of asking specifically what's the exact Trade-related effect, we stated asking questions like is the company doing business in other countries, and if so, where? Has the company recently been sold or purchased by another company that does the same or similar type of work, and if yes, who? Do they compete with products and services from other countries, and if yes, who and what? And does the worker know the name of the competitors, and if yes, who?

And most importantly when it comes to the workers, because sometimes they don't know and employers don't tell them, two questions. Has the worker trained replacement workers based in other countries prior to this layoff, and if so, what country? And has the worker or coworkers traveled to other countries to train the workers, and if yes, what country? Both of those are important because some of these employers bring workers in and some of them send their workers out to do this training. And then they find once they're done with training that they're laid off.

Our investigators really love a good email. I'm sure most of you know that. And sometimes they're really, really hard to get. So one of the things that we did was modify the form to include the contacts, including email. Because we knew that if we did get enough information and wanted to file, we're going to need those emails.

And that's one of the fastest ways for a certification to happen. It's a lot easier to do through email than it is to try to get a hold of some of these large corporations. So it has increased the speed in which decisions are made. Lastly we worked with our state Rapid Response team, and we agreed on some add-ons, and they really spruced the form up. And that's how this whole think differently form became our team approach.

MS. WORDEN: And just so that everyone is aware, you have the ability to upload this think differently form if you're interested. It will probably be a little bit of a better visual than maybe what you're getting right now. But that form is available in the box below.

MS. FORSBERG: So some of the common conversation notes that we made with employers, I just kind of wanted to go over a few things. Because what I found in the last – what I would say we all have seen, is that employers are very intimidated just by the mere word of investigation. I mean they think they're being investigated and they may be in some kind of trouble. So over the last few months our way in which we communicate has changed. And so I want to talk a little bit about that. Some of the things that we found most helpful when trying to calm the fears of the employer is to always think of every conversation and how to leave it with the employer as a win/win situation, very positive.

Our employers are always looking at their bottom line, their company image, and how does this affect me. I mean primarily what are people going to think of my company if this is going on. What we're here to do is not only to help our affected workers, but to support employers. Bottom line, we want to support employers. Many times we work in partnerships with these employers.

The way that we've gone about that is really to allow – and not only allow, but encourage our employers to be as much a part of our program as possible. So just think about how a certification can be utilized as part of an off boarding process, something the employer can be excited to be a part of to connect their employees to.

This is really where we provide a high end overview of potential benefits to their employees, and talk about that there's really no cost to them. That's another concern that they have. We invite them to be a part of our information sessions. We want them to feel like they're helping provide this to their employees, that they're a part of a bigger picture. And

So I even guide them with how that might look. Over the phone I say, you know, I kind of give them a sample. I'll say it could be something if you want to be a part of it and do our introductions, you could say something like good morning, we're very pleased to announce we've been working in partnership with the Oregon Trade Act unit to see if we can get a certification for Trade Act program. They've joined us today to talk about these potential extensive services. And that just makes them as part of our team and takes some of that fear away.

The other thing is to really – to be empathetic to them. It has to be hard for companies to be laying workers off. And so I always tell them, I'm really sorry to hear that you're having to lay people off, and we're very honored to be working with you and help bring these potential benefits to your employees, and just think of all the doors you're going to help open. And so really having them feel like they're part of a really great thing has been incredible.

It's important to make sure that they don't feel like they're in any kind of trouble and that they're not alone in this. Because that's what you'll hear a lot is I don't like being investigated. We have two of those happening right now in our area. So it's important if we can have those conversations early on to explain what the next steps are going to look like.

In our global climate – some of the things I tell them is, in our global climate many companies find it really difficult to remain competitive. And sometimes they just can't compete with products from other companies flooding our markets. Many times this leads to decisions to close or move work to other areas to remain competitive. The best thing you can do is help us help you and your employees take advantage of a new opportunity.

So I also explain very specifically what the next steps are going to look like so that there's no fear in that. I advise them not to be afraid of the Department of Labor. Investigators are really wonderful resources. One of their goals is really to see how to say yes to a petition. It's not about trying to say no. And they're kind of on our side. And that's really just being a champion for that investigator. Because I think that even the title alone, investigator, it's scary to an employer. So sharing examples of best practices, oftentimes we have some really great best practices that have happened with employers over time. And so just sharing those partnerships that went smoothly really helps them understand not only how it can look, but it also sends a message that you've guided people through this process before and that they're really not alone. This isn't something that just is happening to them.

And I always kind of close the conversation by emphasizing that it's been our experience that employees that feel like the employer is doing everything they can to support them, are going to only have nice things to say about that employer; and that here at Trade Act we're always looking for employers that we can have as a success story, that we like to showcase our great partnerships that we built to other employers who share the same concerns and this is only going to do good things for the company's image.

It's a great way to show how hard decisions can be handled in a really positive way. I think when you look at it in those kind of conversation terms to the employer, that they're going to be more excited about being involved in this program. You have to kind of rally them to this.

The last thing I really want to point out when working with the employers is that many times they're worried about their employees quitting before they're done filling their job orders. So it's' really important to address that by explaining that workers must have a qualifying layoff.

If the issue comes out through the conversation that it's more about that they're in the middle of a sale and the other company needs a workforce, it's important just to explain that it's best to secure the benefit, as quite often not all employees are going to be offered work. And at the end of the day as long – if there's a great job being offered and they refuse that job, they're not going to necessarily qualify either. So I think just having those positive conversations is important.

MS. WORDEN: Shelley, if I could just jump in really quickly, I just want to basically provide feedback given that you presented this previously as part of a pre-conference to a Rapid Response summit that was really designed to be a gathering of state and local Rapid Response folks who are tasked basically with doing outreach on behalf of ETA workforce programs.

I think it was generally acknowledged that your kind of customized orientation from a TAA perspective is really a critical factor, that you're not looking to replace the Rapid Response staff in the local or state areas, but instead you're really a great complement because you really do understand the issues that are at stake specifically with regard to optics for trade, and therefore can really negotiate the relationship with the employers in a way that really is effective in serving the agenda.

But again you work very closely with the Rapid Response partners to ensure harmonious relationships, and no one's reinventing the wheel, and it's all just supportive and collaborative, rather than being anything else.

MS. FORSBERG: Yeah. So I'll just speak to that a little bit, because it's kind of hard to show you something visually. But no matter which way it comes, whether our partners, our Rapid Response team learns of the layoff, they will let me know to start looking. And if it comes through our hotline or comes through our navigator, the first thing that happens within just I mean sometimes minutes, is an email out to those local areas saying, hey, we've just learned of a layoff. So it is definitely a partnership.

And the other thing that I have a lot of respect for is I don't go out and just start making contacts to these employers. It's a conversation. It's a strategy call to say, OK, we've had a petition for this before, I think it's highly likely we would have another certification for this company, or whatever that's going to look like. And talking to them about either here's some stuff I need to know, and if you're willing to find that out, that would be great. That's all I'm going to need to file. Or hey, if you're OK with it, I'd like to give them a phone call, and can you give me a soft handoff. So it's definitely a partnership.

So I just want to talk a little bit about some of the key points to our success. I mean when it comes to company layoffs, many times they give us reasons that don't say trade. They'll say bankruptcy, I sold the business, focusing on a new area, mismanagement, retirement, health. It's important to ask why. What led up to the bankruptcy? Do you have a lot of competition? And if so, who? I mean, what's changed for that company?

Because oftentimes that's where we found a lot of our Trade is underneath all of these things. I mean who did you sell it to and why did you decide to sell? I mean maybe they sold it to a competitor. Maybe they decided to sell because they just really weren't making money and they need to get out of it. And why weren't they making money? Has it become more difficult to remain competitive in their market over the last couple years?

So you're working on a new product. That's wonderful. But does that mean you're not going to be making product X anymore? So often they'll make a product, and then once the patent's off of it and anybody can make it, they'll move it somewhere else to make it cheaper, and then they'll start working on a new product. So questions like that, that's hugely important.

And then when reviewing the answers to the why question, the most important thing that I think has helped us along the way is that I was told at one point and then referred to this in the law, is that Trade does not need to be the reason for the layoff, just a factor that contributes importantly. That's been huge, because oftentimes we can see that it contributes importantly. But it's not the main reason the company's – (inaudible). The main reason is they filed bankruptcy. But underneath there, there was Trade that contributed importantly. And so that's an important thing to have in the back of your mind as you're looking through all of this.

I mean from this point we just would kind of follow the trail. We started capturing all layoffs, anything reported to us, anything we saw in the news, anything in our state that our state analysts were working on, or economists. We started capturing those things. And we would take a cursory look. So maybe it was something that we knew right away from looking at, it wasn't trade. But it was looked at. Other things are not always as evident. And some are very evident that it's probably trade. But we started looking, capturing, reviewing, and reporting all layoffs. We started to search the internet for news stories. We checked our (inaudible) website for companies as well as their competitors to see if there's already certifications out there. We study company websites, because oftentimes they'll have stories about how they opened a new place up in Malaysia. So we study their websites. We outreach to affected workers and those employers through our Rapid Response efforts.

We search social media. I found some pretty interesting things about companies on Facebook. A lot of them have Facebook in India, where they were actually giving away bicycles for the positions they were hiring for that they just laid off here at a call center. We read company public employee forums because oftentimes those employees know what's going on, and they'll be writing things because they're upset they're losing their jobs. And so at least will give you maybe a name of a country or something that you can start doing a little research to see what you can find. We research industries in general.

Currently our kind of next step that we're working on right now is implementing an automated list that we'll be able to review hopefully quarterly. We have still some things to work out on that. But it's going to show us layoffs by bin number, by the employer bin number. So we'll be able to see raw data as far as numbers. And then maybe go in and look to see if we've missed something.

Obviously if it's for a bus company, it was probably because school's out or whatever. But we'll kind of be able to look to see if there's things that we don't – because we're not always warned. Not all employers are going to warn us. Not all of them are going to come through the door. So sometimes just trying to make sure we're not missing people out there who could be benefitting from our services.

I think the thing I just want to emphasize before I close is that again Trade doesn't need to be reason, just a contributing factor. I guess we'll take a look at some of the questions. I'm not sure, Ricqué's been working on some of them I think as we go.

MR. SMITH: I'm not sure. Are we going to review questions at the end? Or did you want to do them now, Susan?

MS. WORDEN: I think we should – I was thinking of potentially doing the expenditure and cost information when we had the polling question. But if you want to go ahead and do it now, that's great too because it's a natural break. Go ahead and choose what you like of the questions that you see up there.

MS. FORSBERG: I will answer number three to start off with. So they're asking the difficulty companies with the DOL investigation process. We did have some difficulties especially early on. But part of that really engaging early with our navigators, having those relationships, has really improved that as well as the way we communicate with them.

Lately, I mean the last several petitions we have filed, I've actually been a resource for them with their BDR as far as making sure – and when I say resource, I'm not answering questions for them. That just means I'm looking at their – to make sure there's no empty things that they've left out. Because they're nervous about it that there's no gap. And then if they have questions, I try to get them linked up to the investigation. If they're comfortable with that, some of them will reach straight out to them. And if not, sometimes even though I offer that up, they'll say, oh, if we have to I will, but I just want to know this. And then I usually will talk to the investigator, let them know what's happening, and then kind of get back to them, and encourage them to go back again to that investigator.

But that's been really helpful in a few of them where it just eases their – I think the more you can be in partner with them, the better that's going to get. And I'm willing to always be a coach or to even if anyone wants to call if you have specific issues, I'm always open as a resource to help out, to talk about things that we've done or things that have happened and worked for us. I think the only other one – and then as far as Oregon having issues with workers, number five being called back temporarily to work, separating the employer after being laid off. I mean, yes, I think we all have those issues as far as being called back.

MR. SMITH: And yes, that can happen. However there's a couple things. One, we educate workers that they're not required to go back to that recall if they're in an approved training plan. The other piece is that if they're in an approved training plan, it should not impact their unemployment or TRA benefits. They shouldn't be disqualified if they're enrolled in the TAA training plan.

The other piece with workers being recalled, we're looking at a way to look at firm specific training. For Oregon and for other states, if anybody does this kind of training, I would love to talk with you. But just so you know, we're looking at that as a way to help companies be viable if they do bring workers back to that company, or if they have a need or interest to skill up that workforce that maybe is eligible for trade. But we're still working through the dynamics on that.

As far as the questions on whether or not case managers are full time to trade, they are full time. Both the navigators and the case managers are full time only to the Trade program. That said, we have applied as much flexibility as we can with our navigator positions. And we'll talk about that a little bit when we talk about funding. But they all charge to the case management grant. Let's see, as far as the percentage of the grant that is case management, we had 8.5 percent of our case management grant –

MS. WORDEN: Sorry, Ricqué. Can I just do a little correction there based on what I'm seeing in the presenter chat? It looks like of your FY '15 grant, that about 36 percent of your funds were spent on case management.

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MS. WORDEN: So I think that's probably the one that is the most meaningful, because basically these are closed out – funds that are about to close out and therefore represent kind of a meaningful percentage of a total percentage of a grant year.

MR. SMITH: Perfect. Thank you. And then as far as how we divide our case load for our navigators and our case managers, the navigators – again we'll talk a little bit more about this in the future slides – but the navigators really help with entry into the system and the program. They then hand off each participant individually to the case managers, who then manage, and we distribute that workload based on the last two digits of a participant's social security number.

Once that participant is ready to reenter the workforce, we have a list that we use, a training completer list; we'll talk more about this in a little bit. And the navigators then pick up those participants to help them with reemployment needs. The other piece is our on the job training piece. That is a case load that the navigators solely case manage. So case managers will hand participants that are interested in on the job training to a navigator for job development and assistance. And let's see, Shelley will talk about six?

MS. FORSBERG: So number six, as far as how many of them get certified or approved, it's kind of difficult. Because if you looked at the raw numbers and ran a report on there, it would not be – I don't think it's a true statement. Because some of them get terminated and added to other petitions. And so now that we don't do amendments like we used to, what happens is we file new petitions, it gets terminated, added to another one. So if you took all of that kind of stuff out where they were terminating things for those different reasons, and actually looked at our percentage, I think the last we looked, which was a few months ago, at that point 70 percent for that year were certified, a little more than 70 percent.

But I think it just depends on – and then not all of our certifications show under our state. Because if I file one and it's a corporate, and it ends up covering multi-states, which I 've done a few of those, that will show in someone else's state. So based on the records that we have kept, we're a little better than 70 percent. I think we were at 71.

MR. SMITH: And just quickly because we're getting close to time here, yes, customized training is what I'm asking for. Any ideas out there will be great for another time. And then our average case load is anywhere between, 75 is the max that we would like our case managers to have, but it's typically 75 to 100. That includes participants that are in various stages of career development and/or work search.

So let's go back to the slides, please. OK. Thank you, Shelley, very much. So increasing program awareness is a key part of the navigator role. These navigators are constantly educating those that they interact with on what the Trade program is. They promote successful petition filing by connecting with companies, connecting with Rapid Response team members, and connecting affected workers to the petition coordinator for assistance. Our navigators also discuss program successes and collect stories from participants. We have a real focus on that right now in the program. We really feel the need to promote the success of the program and the outcomes more so than we've done in the past.

We also expand awareness through key stakeholders, which include much of the folks that we collaborated with when creating these positions. And we also expand program awareness, these navigators do, by talking with those that are entering the American job centers, those that attend Rapid Response sessions, and those that are on community college campuses. So a little bit on our on the job training, historically we've not had many TAA OJT approvals in Oregon. We believe this is due to a lack of awareness among businesses that the program existed as a resource, and because participants had to market themselves, and the program benefits to employers. That's a tough sell even for seasoned staff. So to have our affected workers doing it, it wasn't the right approach.

We know classroom training isn't a fit for everyone. And it's not required for every occupational goal. Therefore we really wanted to increase on the job training for our program through job development and intentional employer engagement. While meeting with employers, we wanted navigators to include messaging on layoff aversion by discussing programs like work share, TAA – (inaudible) – or the work opportunity tax credit when appropriate, and to message OJTs as a system and not program specific.

You're probably well aware that there's many different on the job training funding sources available in the workforce system. The intent to message as a system is to simply educate employers on the possibility of the OJT. The employers don't want or really need to know all of the different options. They just want to find the right person. And the system then needs to find the right talent for the employer regardless of the funding stream. So that's been the piece that we've been really focused on and we continue to work through. Lastly the navigators actually manage this case load.

So here are the nine workforce areas again. And here's the division of where these positions are located. Our Portland and Clackamas area historically and currently have the most consistent Trade Activity. Because of that our model includes more positions in that area. And these positions, while they're part of the navigator model, they're slightly different duties. Some of these positions only help with those that are entering into the system because they are so busy with Rapid Response, and with Trade Act information sessions, and with career planning workshops, that they really just need to focus on that.

Some of our other positions, they're only focused on on the job training, job development which is very time consuming, and reemployment services. The rest of the state has a navigator assigned. You can see where those assignments are. The northwest area and eastern Oregon historically have had little to no Trade Activity, which is why navigators they're physically located in one area, but they back up the other area. And they still travel out as needed.

So here's the model in practice. The navigator connects to participants entering and exiting the WorkSource system. They start by connecting with affected worker groups at the Rapid Response session. The navigator then provides Trade Act information sessions, and later career planning and assessment sessions, and hands the participant off to their case manager. The navigator is a resource to participants in the American job center, on community college campuses, and is key in messaging local sector strategies. They're also very importantly the local face of Trade for our partners.

The navigator connects with participants in their last term of training, to transition them as quickly as possible – and when I say training, I mean classroom training – to transition them as quickly as possible to reemployment, and provides eligible – or excuse me, provides outreach to those that are eligible for the program but have not yet engaged. So having these positions allows for local dynamics to be appropriately represented with one program. It frees up the coordinator for other duties and keeps the coordinator constantly informed of relevant activities in each area that can impact performance and outcomes. And it allows case managers to effectively case manage.

Regular communication is critical in this position. Each week our navigators report out on key activities. The audience for these reports is really targeted to case managers to inform case managers on the local dynamics. But it's also shared with Trade leadership and partners with each area. As a program team, we hold all staff trainings and meetings to review this model and adjust as needed in how we hand off between case managers and the navigators. And then I meet one on one with the navigators every three weeks or as needed, especially if we have Rapid Response sessions or Trade Act information sessions. We have a meeting every time one of those occur.

So we fund both the navigator and the petition coordinator roles through case management. I mentioned a little bit earlier that we really looked at the flexibility that 2015 afforded with case management. And we focused on performance and outcomes. We focused on doing true job developed, which again is very time intensive and something that case managers haven't been able to do. They haven't had the capacity to do that in the past. And we really wanted to increase knowledge on the program and expand our footprint. Polling question, Susan?

MS. WORDEN: Thank you, Ricqué. I'm going to try to whip through this really quickly. We are not going to be able to address all the questions we're getting in the chat. I just want to remind folks that we do and can promise follow-up. If you could answer the question that is on the polling slide right now, you should have the ability to enter the information.

Given the fact that we already told you that Oregon was spending 36 percent of their FY '15 allocation on case management, I'm really hoping everybody gets this question right. Feel free to correct your original entries if needed. The correct answer is A. States must spend a minimum, that is a floor of 5 percent of their total FY grant during three year life of the grant on case management.

And I've just had feedback from one of my colleagues, that to the extent possible we really should try to make this dynamic presentation and be able to address these questions in the room, Ricqué. But this does require a slight modification given the fact that states do have the opportunity to see the slides. I'm wondering if we could spend the bulk of our remaining time on looking at some of these Q&As for the benefit of our audience, as best bang for the buck. Can you shift?

MR. SMITH: Absolutely.

MS. WORDEN: OK. Great. So let's look and see what we're looking at. These are all obviously for the state of Oregon. So I'll let you take them on.

MR. SMITH: OK. So the navigators, do they handle any of the applicant documents? Yes. So the navigators will at times assist with our training proposal packets. So when our customers need to research options or they are researching options and they're putting together a packet of information that we work with them on, our navigators are a resource for that. Our navigators also facilitate assessments, and sometimes those assessments include forms. Those forms are then transmitted to the case manager for interpretation on the results of those assessments. The navigator does not have to interpret those. The other piece is the request for entitlement. So there are various forms that the navigators handle. And really it's a partnership with the case manager. They have to hand information back and forth for the benefit of that participant entering into or exiting the system.

Details of how information is presented? So our Trade Act information sessions include a makeup of our Trade Act navigators. Historically – I shouldn't say historically – many years ago the coordinators went out and presented this information, and really that takes a lot of time and it's information that seasoned staff or good presenters can do. So the navigators attend those. They talk about the employment services side of the program. We have our unemployment insurance folks that talk about the unemployment side of the program.

We invite our Title I providers to talk briefly about co-enrollment opportunities and services that they can provide. And we have our healthcare marketplace that comes because they're an excellent resource to talk about the health coverage tax credit. It's been a great partnership with them. So our sessions – I hope I'm not missing anybody – but our sessions last for about an hour and a half. And we schedule them for two hours. It depends on the size of the worker group. But that's what we do for those sessions.

The case manager position, OK, the higher level or vice versa, and educational requirements. So the case manager position is a – our classification business and employment specialist. The navigators are program analyst I, so they're slightly higher classification than the case management positions. And the reason why is because they are frequently among diverse stakeholders and have to work across multiple organizational boundaries.

Our case managers do as well, but it's in a different setting. And so the navigator is a slightly higher classification. As far as education requirements, both positions it really depends on level of experience. So yes, there is an educational component and/or there's the work experience component. OK, the minimum 5 percent of the grant –

MS. WORDEN: Ricqué, if I could step in, I'm so sorry. Obviously there's been a lot of great questions. I'm sorry; we're not going to be able to address all of them here live. However we can commit to following up.

I want to remind folks, one of the utilities of employment and case management funds that can be paid for through this resource is actually traveling to your peers in other states to learn about their case management models. That can be compliantly used to support those activities. And obviously Oregon is a lovely state and I would highly recommend traveling there to see Ricqué and Shelley. And we do have other states who have already exploited this flexibility.

We will be following up for those questions that we weren't able to answer here. But I need to jump ahead really quick before I turn it back over to our facilitators for today's webinar. If we could move forward towards the end, I want to put in a plug for the contact information for Shelley and Ricqué, which is towards the end, if we could jump ahead. Well actually stop here. Just a reminder that we do have existing related webinars available. And here you've got the web links for each of those. I'm not going to go over them. You'll just have to read through it yourself.

Contact information, myself, but more importantly for Ricqué Smith and Shelley Forsberg who have done such a bang up job in the state of Oregon and presenting today as well. Very important last plug, if you have any questions or concerns about compliant use of employment and case management funds, please remember your initial touch base is your regional ETA Trade staff, and the list is provided here. The link will give you the relevant contact information.

And just a reminder of the fact that next month we will be having another state best practice, this one featuring both New Hampshire and Massachusetts. We'll be talking a lot about participant take up rate of those determined eligible and the speed of the eligibility determination, how can that be expedited on the state level, and as well as reporting in the PIRL, which will begin in the report quarter ending 12/31/17.

(END)