**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**WIOA State Plans: Using the Online Portal for Plan Submission**

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LAURA CASERTANO: Again I want to welcome everyone to today's "WIOA State Plans: Using the Online Portal for Plan Submission" webinar. And I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Heather Fleck, with the Employment and Training Administration. Heather, take it away.

HEATHER FLECK: Thank you, Laura. And welcome everyone to our presentation on using the online portal for your WIOA state plan submission. I'm happy to be joined today by my colleagues from the Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Jim Doyle and Shannon Moler. They'll do the bulk of the presentation today about the technical aspects of the state plan portal.

Our objectives today is to provide you a general overview of the WIOA planning requirements for the required tier modification. We'll provide more generally an overview of the portal and how it works, and then delve into more of the technical tips for how you navigate the portal and use it. So a lot of the content is very technical, very mechanical. So don't expect too many jokes today. Brace yourself. And if you have questions that arise throughout the webinar, please put them in the chat window and we'll address them at the end of the presentation.

So many of you know that WIOA requires that states review their plans every two years and update their strategies based on any changes in the labor market or economic situation, and any other items the state wishes to change. All the requirements are based on the information collection request, which was approved by the Office of Management and Budget. And everything in the portal is aligned to that information collection request.

The state plan modifications are due on March 15, 2018, so coming up pretty quickly here. Hopefully you've seen the joint guidance that the Department of Education and Labor issued. ETA, the Office of Career and Adult Technical Education, and Rehabilitation Services Administration each issues their own guidance, but it's the identical content. And we strongly advise you to read that guidance as well as review the information collection request requirements before you submit your plan. And I already covered that point.

We will be having a webcast series posted in the next few days that will provide more substantive information about state plan submissions and the kind of content considerations you might want to have in mind as you're planning now and for future plans. So stay posted for that technical assistance series. But for now we're going to jump into the – oh, I apologize. I missed a key point. So we'll go to the next slide. Thank you.

So the portal has a nice feature in that multiple individuals within the state can enter content. But we ask that only one individual submit the whole plan on behalf of all the partner programs. We here at the department affectionally call that person "The Big Submitter." So if you have that person designated and it's the same person as before, great, you're good, you don't need to let us know that. But if that big submitter has changed since your last state plan submission, please let us know. The email address is available there on the slide. So now I'm going to turn it over to Shannon for how to use the portal. Thank you.

SHANNON MOLER: Thank you, Heather. The first topic is how to request access. This is important to note for new users as well as veteran users, since users who previously requested access that has not logged on to the portal in over 400 days may need to request access again.

There's also a possibility that a user ID will disappear if the user requests a password reset, but does not respond within the two weeks of receiving the email to update the password. To request access, users will visit the request access webpage. For step one, choose the appropriate agency and enter the requested contact information. In this example I have selected RSA for the agency to whom I report information, and Alabama as the appropriate state.

In step two, the user will select the appropriate program. Please note that the options available as the user moves through one step to the next will be dependent upon the choices made. For example, if the user selects DOL as the primary agency in step one, the program administrator of RSA would not be available in step two. Here I selected vocational rehabilitation state grants.

In step three, the user will select the appropriate grantee, which will be filtered down based on the options the user selected up to this point. Here I selected Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Step four is select the access level required. Note that the system automatically grants you access and may be upgraded by the user administrator as appropriate. User administrators will obtain the necessary verification required for a user's permission level. If there is a new big submitter that Heather mentioned and the permission requested is to submit the state plan, this must be verified by an authorized official with the governor's office by email or letter.

If needed users may request edit only or edit and submit by clicking on technical support located under help, and then clicking on I need to enter data on a form that isn't listed on my data entry screen, or I need to upgrade my access option. Here you can see that read only was selected for WIOA VR.

In step five, the user will see information about what happens next. The user will select Done, and an email will be sent to the address entered in step one to confirm the request. Please note that the user must access the link referenced under the third bullet, as it is time sensitive to prevent illicit or unauthorized access. Once the request is processed by the appropriate department, the user will receive an email with a username and a one time password. Users will be asked by the system to change their password after logging in. Next, Jim will discuss how to log on to the portal.

JIM DOYLE: Thank you, Shannon. Thank you, Heather. At this point I'd like to go through and discuss the process the users would take to log on and then to modify their state plan. It is recommended that users use the link identified on this page.

If a user forgets or does not have this link, they can type in rsa.ed.gov, and go to the top right hand corner of the screen, click Log On, and of course enter their username and password, as just discussed by Shannon. That would then get them to the same necessary access that they would need. But that first page for the log on would be different otherwise without using that link.

I wanted to show you the welcome screen at this point. And this is essentially when we would – what the users would see once they log on. At this point you will note that a user can update his or her account. They can go to the data entry screen or in some cases user management options. For the primary purpose of this presentation, what most individuals will be accessing, individuals will click the data entry link at this point. So we're going to switch over to an interactive session to show – get away from the PowerPoint, to try to help demonstrate a little bit of the next few slides that are on your presentation or that'll be available through PowerPoint.

And what we're showing right on this screen here is what a user would see. And this is a demo site. But this is for an Alabama user. And thank you, Alabama, for letting us use your account. Although any changes we make will not be saved. Once we get to the data entry screen, you'll notice first that now the user has access to the 2016 and 2018 plans. As you know, all the 2016 plans are currently published.

And as you would expect, the plans when you access the portal for the first time, the 2018 plans will be in draft mode or status. We will be announcing now that the portal will be open tomorrow. And I would say sometime around noon to be safe. But tomorrow the portal will be open for state users to access to begin entering in their state plan. We're going to submit that information now as well through other means.

Dependent upon the users' permission levels, the user can access the common elements portion of the plan and the appropriate program specific portions of the plan. So you'll note that there are different tabs there that the user may be able to click on to to get into the various portions of the plan. User can only edit or may have edit and submit to various portions of the program specific portions of the plan, but that would only depend on whether or not the user has access to those parts of the plan.

OK. We are now going to go into the draft version of the '18 plan. And what I wanted to show you on this page is when you go into the plan you will see the screen as you hopefully are seeing displayed now, which shows a set of accordion files or expandable files. And I wanted to really highlight the first three.

And I'll go through them, but I wanted to first show you the status of the program specific portion of the plan. When a user opens this up, the user can use the links to access a specific part of a plan, or check the status of a plan, or identify who updated this section most recently, or even when it was last updated. So you'll notice that those tags are included following the link that would lead to that portion of the plan.

I wanted to also now show the next expandable file. And this is the table of contents. And the table of contents is set up exactly how the ICR was or is, dependent upon what responses are required. And so the user can click on any of those links that you see in order to jump down immediately to a specific part of a plan –

MS. CASERTANO: Hi, Jim. I just wanted to interrupt you for one second. I just want to show everyone how to enlarge the window. If you look at the top right corner of that demo, there's four outward facing arrows. If you click those, it'll make that screen much larger.

MR. DOYLE: Great. Yeah. Thank you so much for that advice. And certainly much of this is also on the PowerPoint that'll be made available to download. So we're going to just – I'll just quickly demonstrate, if you click on one of the links as we just did, it'll bring you to that portion of the plan. You can see the contents of that element. You will further note that the contents of that element contains what was last submitted or approved for the 2016 plan.

At this point I wanted to go back to where we just were. So we're going to go back and I'm going to demonstrate the various ways to navigate a little bit later. And the third – so the third expandable panel, which is viewer export. Now viewer export contains any of the previous versions of the plan that had been saved or submitted.

And so you will note that there are a number of versions here from 2016 based on when the plan was reopened, each time it's saved, and then has to be reopened, a new plan is created. For purposes of what's significant here, is you will note that if a user wants to save the plan, and open it, and download it to Word, and perhaps print it out, save it to a file, they can do that by exporting the either 2016, 2018 plan, whichever one they're trying to access. And of course they can just click it and view and then print it is another option.

All right. So let's go to the table of contents so we can jump – in fact maybe just to demonstrate how – if we go to the section above that, if we click on one of those – the first link, it actually will – once we click on to it, we can actually get to the table of contents as well. But if click on a program specific portion, it would bring us to the table of contents only for that part of the plan. So it makes it a little bit easier to kind of jump down into a part of a plan. But either way it can be accessed.

So when modifying a plan, it's important to note that you're going to begin with the information that was last submitted in your 2016 plan or that was last approved. So in this case we look at this particular element. And if – I think we need to go for the user access back to the common portion of the plan. And we'll just go down to – we need to go down – keep navigating forward. Yeah. That's good. Scroll down. All the way to the bottom of the page.

And we're going to show how this portion of the plan could be opened up and edited for the user to then modify a portion of this part of the plan if they choose to do so. We recognize that not all parts of the plan will be modified. The user may modify specific portions of the plan that have changed in the state or that the state chooses to update based on the economic conditions or other factors that have changed over the last several years. And I know there'll be additional guidance about that as well.

But for the purposes of this training, just wanted to show how this information can be modified selectively or as whole. So if a user would want to – may choose to leave the text or the whole element in place. They can modify part of it. Or they can reenter the entire element in full. So we understand a majority of these elements may not be changed for some state plans.

So when editing an element, it's important to note that the information contained within a text box should be set up to look the way you want the information to appear when the plan is finalized and published. Meaning if you are pasting in a Word version into that particular element, into that comment box, you should delete the response or the portion of the response as necessary before inserting the text. So just don't append the additional information at the bottom of the text box.

We're going to click – I also wanted to show you once the information is entered into the text box, the user has multiple ways to have that information saved. So you will note that on the screen here that there is a save button, previous, next, return to view buttons. Now each of those buttons will save the information or any changes that the user has made to the text box and preserve it.

So if a user wants to make some changes and then come back and make others, they can simply save it. If they finished it and want to go on to the next one, they can click next. Or if they choose to take a look at it, they can click view at the top of the screen. But the other option is if they want to go ahead and move away from this and go to another part of the plan, they can also click at the very top of the screen, view entire, view the entire plan.

Now before we do that, I wanted to just show that once the plan was saved and clicked in view, you can see if there were changes, if we did make changes. You would then be able to go back through and look at it. And again the next or previous screen and next screen buttons are available for you to go back and make the edits or review the other parts of the plan if that's the process you're using.

But yes, if you want to just then jump to a different portion of the plan, you would click the entire plan link at the top of the screen. So we're going to go ahead and click that now. And while we do that I also wanted to point out that at the bottom you may have noted the text box there. After we had edited, if we had edited, our username since we logged in would have been noted there, and the day and the time would have followed it. And so that will track who was the last person to modify that particular part of the plan and on what day.

All right. At this point I'd like to switch back to the PowerPoint and go over some helpful tips. And we're going to move forward over to slide 22. So a couple things I wanted to point out when you're entering the text into the comment boxes. One of the main objectives of the portal is to ensure that all information in the state plan is fully accessible or that it's 508 compliant. So therefore the information that's entered into these text boxes must be accessible.

So any font colors that a user may copy from Microsoft Word, if that's the document that it's created in and pasted in, will not be saved. Now that way the plan will look consistent across the entirety of the plan. So all font colors and the font types. So if it was done in Comic Sans for instance, it would be stripped and it would be consistent with the font used throughout the rest of the plan. But any underlining, bolding, italics, will be retained. And we'll talk about the rich text mode a little bit, which is significant in terms of maintaining that part of it.

Any documents that are pasted in, if they're over four pages, so if you're pasting it in from Microsoft Word, four pages which is approximately 12,000 characters, would require a header to be included or separated. So it can only go up to about three and a half pages before a new header is required. Tables can also be pasted in as well. Those tables may come from Microsoft Word or Excel. Just must be accessible. I'll talk a little bit more about that in a second. And if information is saved into the system that's not accessible, the system will alert the user with prompts on how to make the necessary fixes. So we're going to go to the next screen.

So when entering information in, if the text box defaults to the rich text editing mode, the other mode that the user has the option to switch over to is the basic editing. Only basic editing mode should be used if the user wants to add in some programming for the purposes of connecting in links to images. I want to talk about that in a second. So primarily it defaults to the rich text mode and that's what you're going to use, which will allow you to preserve that underlining and some of that other formatting that the user may want.

It's also suggested that Internet Explorer is used when accessing the portal, though it's not required. If a significant amount of information is being copied in, again it's always best to use Microsoft Word and run accessibility checker to have a quick and easy way to find out if it is accessible, if there are going to be any issues. And that's very easy to find in Microsoft Word. If you go from the File pull down menu, it's Insert, and then you'll see accessibility checker. So it's very quick and easy to get to.

And the only thing you need to remember about the text boxes is do not include a couple of characters. A little squiggly line, which I don't know what the technical name is for that, but I've never used it in my normal writing though. The less than and greater than signs. So stay away from those because those are designated – I want to see if we can go to the next screen.

So keep in mind that the tables should be kept simple. With tables, any – there cannot be any merged cells or split cells, since that is not accessible, can't be read by a screen reader correctly. So you want to keep your tables as simple as possible, although there have been some very well-done tables in many of these plans, in addition to some of the other uses of illustrations that I'll talk about. Also keep in mind the first row of a table is always going to be marked as the header row. Go to the next screen.

Now pasting images presents additional problems. Images themselves are not accessible. And the system does not allow therefore images to be uploaded. So with that being said, images can't be and have been as we've seen in the first go round with the 2016 plans contained in some of the plans. And it can be done by having them connected through a link at a website.

So the image is actually saved on a website and linked. And there's some instructions on how to actually do this. And we attached those – a couple of documents to help users if they would like some instructions on how to do that, to be able to follow. Which it's probably a little bit more than the common user will need to do, but if they did want to copy in some charts, graphs, those are all considered illustrations.

We also included in this slide presentation using – I'm sorry, the accessibility, make your Word document accessible rather, on slide 27. And so that is another resource that could be used that wanted to make sure the users are aware of. So I do recommend that the users take a look at some of those various options there. In addition at the bottom of the website that they're on when they're on the portal, under help they'll see using the unified state plan portal, which contains links and additional information regarding some of the content. And I'm speaking about in the documents that I also included in this webinar that can be downloaded. So there's a lot of information there, additional information outside of what I included.

OK. And then the final slide, just again try to maintain the answers in terms of the responses to four or less pages or otherwise insert a header. And use – access the accessible Word checker as necessary to check it if it is a lengthy document. And that'll maybe save some time. So I think I'm going to at this point hand it back over to Heather.

MS. FLECK: Thank you, Jim. Here on this slide are some of the resources that were mentioned throughout the presentation, so you can navigate to those as necessary as you're using the portal and preparing your plan.

And in just a second here we're going to go over several of the sections that we got throughout the presentation. But I want to also encourage you to stay tuned within the coming days for additional webcasts and technical assistance on preparing your state plans. I'm hoping that most of those web casts will be available to you during next week. So with that we will go to the questions.

And first one is, "What is the effective date of the modifications?" And I can take that.

So the plans are due March 15th. And the statute allows the federal agencies 90 days for a review and response. So that would put us around mid-June if you submit on time. And the plans are effective for a two year period. So they would go through June 30, 2020, and starting with the program year, July 1st. The next question is, how can I find out my old password so I can reset it to a new one?

MR. DOYLE: I'm going to say look real hard. I think the bigger question is, is how long has it been since you've accessed your account. And we do have Ken on it and I'll probably bring him on in a minute. But I'm going to defer so maybe he can weigh in on some of these at one time. But if a user does – do we have Ken?

KEN: Yes. I'm here.

MR. DOYLE: OK. Ken, correct me if I'm wrong, but after I think it's 400 days the user account not being accessed, that user account is no longer available. Is that correct?

KEN: That's correct. After 400 days of nonuse, the system actually cleans out the accounts. And then Shannon mentioned earlier, in the event that you requested a password reset but never actually reset your password, your account is also subject to being removed by the system. So it is possible that you would get a message when you go to log in with the same password you used last year, that it could not find your account, and in that case apply for a new account.

MR. DOYLE: I think there was another question about whether or not access on the RSA website for reporting. And this would be for other RSA required reports.

KEN: I was going to answer, yes, it's possible to have all the access that you need for the various parts of the plan added to your account. Use the technical support link at the bottom of your screen. Note that depending on who you are primarily reporting to, which department, it will go to different people. But it is possible for us to add other forms to your account.

MS. FLECK: OK. Let's go to the next question. Did I understand correctly that more than one person in the agency can have – Laura, can you put that question back up?

"Did I understand correctly that more than one person in the agency can have access and enter the state plan information?"

MR. DOYLE: I'll go ahead and answer that. Absolutely. It is very common for, particularly for the common elements portion of the state plan, for multiple users, many users to access different parts and enter in the plan. Just be careful that the different users are not entering in the same actual element at the same time. If that element is opened up while somebody else already has it opened up, and then say that information could be lost once the last person clicks save. But yes, there is no problem with users accessing – multiple users accessing the system and entering in information.

MS. FLECK: Thanks, Jim. Next question is, "Will our plans already be loaded?"

KEN: Oh, yes.

MR. DOYLE: Yeah. An emphatic yes there. The plans are loaded and will be available starting tomorrow.

MS. FLECK: And that's your last approved plan is what we're referring to. Obviously not the one you're preparing now.

MR. DOYLE: Right. Obviously you would update the 2018 plan, which will be submitted by the 15th of March based on the various areas that need to be updated.

MS. FLECK: OK. Thanks. Our next question is, "I think it's perhaps clarifying – the question to clarify the big submitter. The question is, in previous submissions DOE, RSA and DOL could submit. Is that not allowed anymore?"

MR. DOYLE: Yeah. I guess I need a little bit of clarification on that. In terms of DOE –

MS. FLECK: I think it may refer to the separate program specific section of each plan. And there's a person that's perhaps the submitter for that program individually.

MR. DOYLE: Yeah. So the VR agency, and I think when they said RSA, they referred to the VR agency, would certainly submit and identify their portion of the plan as complete, as would DOL, as would Wagner-Peyser and adult education. Each of those portions of the plan should be identified in the portal as complete before the plan is formally submitted by the big submitter, as Heather had referred to earlier, as being complete for us to review.

MS. FLECK: The next question is, we are still required to submit the VR portion of the plan for approval. That person may not be the same person as the main submitter. Is that a problem?

MR. DOYLE: So that is correct, where the VR portion of the plan is certainly part of the plan, which is why it's called the VR portion of the plan. So that would be developed by the VR agency. But the unified or combined state plan is submitted by the state. And hopefully that's in conjunction with all the core partners.

MS. FLECK: I think we addressed this during the webinar, but we'll clarify. "Does the same issue still exists with uploading charts and graphs where some coding is necessary to get them to show up in the portal?"

KEN: Yeah. Ken here. Let me jump in on that. And the answer is yes, it's handled the same way as it was before. We don't have storage space for images for logistical reasons that are just too complicated and boring to go into. So the images have to be stored on a web accessible site at your state. And then you put in the code that we suggest using the portal documentation.

MR. DOYLE: Yeah. And hopefully the users will find that documentation fairly straightforward, hopefully.

MS. FLECK: Another question about the VR portion. If a full plan goes through the portal, does the VR portion still send their part to RSA?

MR. DOYLE: No. This process would be the same process used in 2016 when the initial unified or combined state plans were submitted. The VR portion of the plan is submitted as part of the unified plan. And so it would not be submitted or sent to us separately.

MS. FLECK: Next question, "I can see the combined plan and an additional SCSEP portion. Does the big submitter submit the combined plan and others can submit their SCSEP portion? Or does the big submitter submit both?" So the big submitter is the individual that says on behalf of all the programs included in the plan, which would include SCSEP if SCSEP was included in the plan. They're the ones that hit Send so that it gets sent to the Department of Labor and Education through the portal to say, this is our entire plan and all portions of the plan that we intend to submit.

So there's not a separate submission process for different programs that are included in the plan. It's all the same process. It may be different people that enter that information and save that information, but there's just one individual, the big submitter, who sends the entire plan and all the pieces to the Departments of Labor and Education.

OK. Is the big submitter the individual who posts the combined state plan? Yes. Does Internet Explorer include MS Edge?

MR. DOYLE: Yes. And I don't – they're not making a distinction between those two when I said Internet Explorer.

MS. FLECK: Next question, "How do we enter footnotes?"

MR. DOYLE: I don't know – Ken?

KEN: We don't have support for footnotes at this time, I'm afraid. The plan is getting generated as a big document. And so we have no way to place the footnotes either at the end or in the middle. So we would encourage you not to do that. If you absolutely need to, you can put an asterisk.

And then at the bottom of the entry for that section, you can type some of the underscore characters, then a new line, and put an asterisk in the footnote. But I think your readers will find that hard to navigate. And it certainly won't be easy for people using JAWS to get to those type of footnotes. So where possible include that in the body of your response.

MS. FLECK: Thank you, Ken. All right. This next question is from a person new to the process. They said, "I didn't do the submission in 2016. How can I tell which format the text is in, rich or basic?"

KEN: There's a toolbar for the rich text format that has an icon for bold, and italics, and bullet. The plain text box is just a box with no icons. Furthermore, at the top of your screen when you're in edit mode, there'll be a button where you can toggle between rich text and plain text. And so just by reading the top of the screen you can tell.

If it says, show me the rich text mode, that means you're currently in plain text. If it says, go to plain text mode, that means you're currently in rich text mode. So be sure if you're pasting in formatted text from Word, that you're in rich text. And be sure if you're entering some of those HTML commands to put in images and charts, that you're in plain text mode.

MS. FLECK: Thank you.

KEN: I probably just caused 20 more questions there, I realized as I was answering.

MS. FLECK: All right. Could you go over the designated submitter requirements again? So last time around there was one single person designated in each state that was the person identified as having the authority to hit Send on the entirety of the plan, so that it would be transmitted to Department of Labor and Department of Education. That designated person was designated by the governor or someone high enough up in the state to say, this person can speak on behalf of all the program. So if that person is the same as before, you don't need to do anything, except make sure their account is still active. But they are in the system.

If you have a different person, say that person's taken a new job, or things have changed in the state, and that person is no longer the designated person, please send an email or a letter to Department of Labor and Education indicating who is the designee. And we need that person designated by the governor or someone high enough in the state government that can affirmatively say this is the person that submits on behalf of all programs. So the email address where that information can be sent is wioa.plan@dol.gov.

OK. Next question is, "Could multiple staff from the same agency have access to the portal to enter information?"

MR. DOYLE: Yes. And the answer is yes. There's certainly – we're not placing a limit on that. Agencies could have whoever they choose to enter the information, as long as they have an account.

MS. FLECK: Great. OK. This next person says they requested access on January 30th, received an email saying they would be validated which can take several days. When can I expect the username and password?

MR. DOYLE: I would say whoever was identified as being the person who had validated, please contact them. There might have been an oversight. I don't know which agency it is because each agency user administrator is notified. So it may just be something that you should follow up on.

MS. FLECK: But normally if it is working correctly, the person is verified as having requested an account and being a legitimate person that should have access, once the user administrator says, yes, they're okay, they should get an email with temporary login information. Is that correct?

KEN: Yes. That's correct. But do keep in mind for those people on the phone, that we do need to contact people at your state to make sure that you legitimately need to enter data on the plan. And that may cause a delay too. So it's not just that we're dragging our feet here in the federal government. There's some back and forth that happens behind the scenes. So please be patient with us.

MS. FLECK: Next question is, "What is the federal contact information for the person in charge of portal access for the adult education program?"

MR. DOYLE: I don't know that off hand.

KEN: Go to the login screen and click the tech support. And we'll sort it out.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Ken.

MS. FLECK: Thank you, Ken. OK. The next question is, "How much variation do you typically find between different state WIOA plans? Which components are always consistent?"

MR. DOYLE: You want to take a crack at that?

MS. FLECK: Well, that's a challenging question to answer. And I can't say that I really have a good answer. Every state is different. Every state has different priorities, a different governor, a different vision. So I would say there's consistency because of course the requirements are the same across all programs. But in terms of how much a state writes or elaborates on their particular state's plans and operations compared to another, it does differ, but you will find similarities.

MR. DOYLE: Yeah. I'd say the only thing that's really similar about the plans is that they're all different. They have all used differing approaches in terms of what information. And some have been – have illustrated it differently. But all have been very good on elaborating what the focuses are and the economic conditions of the state.

MS. FLECK: And this is a good chance to remind you that all the state plans are actually available online, all the plans from program year 2016. So you can access those. In a moment here I'll give you the link because I can't remember it off the top of my head. But you can look at other states' plans, do a comparison. There's a search option on there where you can do queries to compare the same elements across multiple plans. So it's a very good resource for getting ideas and seeing what your peers are doing.

MR. DOYLE: Or check particular keywords, if there is a particular area that you are trying to identify. Just try not to make it too general because the results will be too much.

MS. FLECK: OK. As a new person to this process, what is the exact role of the big main submitter? They are the ones authorized to send the plan electronically. It's like if you think about it as a governor signing a letter and somebody putting it in the mail. They're the person that puts it in the mail, basically.

MR. DOYLE: Well, and the other way I think about it is this is the reason, because generally that person who puts it in the mail doesn't need to get any type of verification. When the governor submits a unified or state plan, they sign it. And this is the way that the governor would sign it, by designated that person. So that person is designated by the state to submit the plan on behalf of the governor.

MS. FLECK: Thank you. I think this next question is for Ken. "Where is the specific code as well as examples for uploading images into the portal?"

KEN: I believe the code is in the using the portal document which is online. And I think it's an attachment to this PowerPoint. But that's working off my memory, which is kind of faulty. So I'll double check that it's there, but I'm pretty sure that's where the example is.

MR. DOYLE: Yeah. Using the state plan link at the bottom of your – when you login, you'll see it under Help. And also attached with this webinar you'll see several documents that also contain that information.

MS. FLECK: Here's another clarification on the VR portion of the plan. So can you repeat, we do not have to submit the VR portion separately from the combined state plan. The regulations seem to imply that VR must approve that portion of the plan separate from including it in the combined plan.

MR. DOYLE: The commissioner of RSA does have to approve the VR portion of the state plan, but it's not submitted separately. The plan is submitted with the unified or combined state plan regardless of the type – which programs are included. It is submitted as part of that state plan. And the commissioner of RSA would approve the VR portion before the secretary or the secretary's designee from labor and education will approve the combined or unified plan.

MS. FLECK: The next question is, "Before the March 15th deadline and before the big submitter has sent, can federal staff verify that the plan is entered into the portal correctly? Or will the portal automatically verify everything is in order?" So you can – no, federal staff will not confirm that it's entered correctly until after we're allowed to see it.

We actually can't see your drafts – most of us cannot see your drafts. Put it that way. Because we don't have the right user privileges, nor do we want to interfere with your developmental process. So you would need to actually submit the plan before we could say anything is not correct.

MR. DOYLE: Yeah. So when you try to save information within a comment box, and we're talking about of course hundreds of comment boxes, all of which are currently filled, but many of which will be redone. If there's an issue, it'll be identified as an accessibility issue when it's saved. So it's also recommended that you try to view the plan to see what it looks like. I don't know if Ken wants to speak beyond that in terms of identifying issues, but that's –

KEN: Yeah. The portal is actually a little bit light on identifying issues. We don't really have an automated way to go through and make sure the text is in order because it's all narrative based. That's really more of a judgment call and something a computer has a hard time doing. So yeah, the portal doesn't automatically check that everything is in order. Is that the question there? Am I on 25 or did I jump ahead?

MS. FLECK: No. That was it.

MR. DOYLE: No. That was it.

MS. FLECK: The next question is, "How will modifications to plans appear? New or bold font? Different font color? Side by side comparison?"

KEN: None of the above. The old plan, the old test is always available to you in the view or export plan. As we saw in the demo, we have every version of the plan that's been submitted all the way back. But we don't do a side by side comparison at this point of the plan. So make sure that your text that you're putting in represents your current plan and only your current plan.

MR. DOYLE: Yeah. And I would definitely want to highlight that point, that when you enter in a response, there's an existing text there, either delete the entire response or make sure whatever you modify, edit or append, is how you want that response to look. But do not make it where it's just again adding on to the bottom of whatever was there last time. That's not what we're looking for. What you see in that text box is what will be published as the response to that particular element.

MS. FLECK: Thank you. And just going back to the mention of where you can find and search on other states' state plans, the link is www2.ed.gov. So www2.ed.gov. OK.

Next question. "Will the reviewers review the entire state plan or only the sections that are modified?" And I assume that means the federal reviewers. And the answer is it depends. And we're still sorting through which portions we'll review. But we will definitely without question be reviewing the pieces that were modified, as well as some of you may recall you had action plans in the previous submission where you indicated you would be updating certain portions throughout your implementation. So we'll be verifying as well that updates were made in accordance with what was promised in those action plans.

Next question is, what if you were the final submitter, but you haven't logged in for 400 days? Do you just have to get a new password? Or do you have sign up as the final submitter again?

KEN: It depends if the ID is still there. If it's past 400 days, it's quite likely that your user ID is just gone. So try to sign in. And if you get the message that, did you check your typing, did you type it correctly, you may have to apply again though.

MR. DOYLE: The individual would request that access, so we would know that they were requesting access to submit the combined state plan. So we identify who is the, quote, big submitter based on who is requesting access to submit the unified or combined plan. There's only a person or two people in some cases that do that for each state.

MS. FLECK: All right. Does the portal list who the big main submitter is? I mean, yeah –

KEN: It does federal staff. But I don't think it does to the point where end users, state users can see it.

MR. DOYLE: Yeah. That's correct. There's nothing in terms of looking at the plan that would identify that.

MS. FLECK: So if you're not sure who that person is in your state, you can email wioa.plan@dol.gov, and we can look that information up for you. OK. This is a very popular topic, the big submitter.

"Please clarify the big submitter role again. Am I correct that more than one person can enter portions of the state plan, but there must be a designated person to submit the VR plan? Is that the big submitter? Or is the big submitter the person who submits the entire combined state plan?" The big submitter is the person who submits the entire combined state plan.

MR. DOYLE: Right. And so the VR plan, again just to separate that, the program specific plans are typically developed and entered by multiple individuals, sometimes just one, but hopefully a bunch of individuals have worked on it. And when the plan is ready to be submitted, that plan itself would be identified as complete by the appropriate person for the VR agency. But that's not the big submitter.

There is according to the act and the regulations, it's required that the governor submit it. So when we talk about big submitter, we're referring to the person – we don't expect the governor to log on and click submit the plan, and then when we send it back for him to go in and look for errors and stuff. So we're just – we understand that it's going to be a person designated.

MS. FLECK: OK. "In single area states that are submitting the local plan, is there a special place in the portal where we enter it?" Yes. So if you – the portal elements align exactly to the elements that are in the paper information collection request, which you should be able to find on the doleta.gov/wioa website.

There's also a link in the guidance that we published recently if you need access to that. But it doesn't appear any differently than any of the other elements in the portal. So you just enter the information that's being requested directly into a data entry box for the single area states.

Next question is, "Is there a possibility to extend the 400 day limit for logging in? If the plan is submitted every two years and there are no changes during that time, a new password needs to be generated to get into the system. "

KEN: The answer I'm afraid is no. 400 days is actually an extension of the typical federal policy which is 90 days. We got that extended to a little bit more than a year. But yes, we would need you to log in, just log in once a year to keep your account active.

MS. FLECK: OK. Next question is, "Where is the link for the tech support resources, such as for the basic coding information helpful for uploading images?"

MR. DOYLE: Right. So for those of you who are able to see the file share with this presentation as part of this webinar, there are two documents. And that's one avenue. If you go on and log on to the website, to the portal rather, once you log on under the help at the very bottom of the page, you will see, I believe it's called, Using the Portal.

And there are resources and different links to additional resources within there. So all the information that you need is either – I try to save the primary ones that I found most helpful just to enter the information based on the questions last go around in these two documents that we uploaded or saved for downloading. But you can also access that same information on the portal.

KEN: And also it exists as a link on the technical support page. And you can get to the technical support page on any screen. It's on the help menu at the top and also on the help menu in the footer.

MS. FLECK: Laura, just can you clarify on the Workforce GPS page if those two documents are currently available for download?

MS. CASERTANO: Yes. They are. The PowerPoint and the two documents are available on – I'll put the link in the chat box.

MS. FLECK: Thank you. OK. Next question is, "How does the system/communicate with Department of Education's Perkins state grant system?"

MR. DOYLE: Heather's looking at me because I work with the Department of Education as if I had an answer to that. It does not communicate with the Perkins state plan. We did way back when we were working on this portal in its infancy try to talk about that and work with Perkins program.

But it was identified as not being really feasible for different reasons. So the bottom line is that Perkins has the process for submitting the state plan through their system. And I suggest you contact the federal agency to find out exactly the information that needs to be submitted if your state is one of the state agencies that are included.

MS. FLECK: And actually in one of those webcasts I've mentioned before, it will be one from Sharon Miller, who's the director of the Perkins program. She does explain a bit about this particular quirk and what states should do who are in the combined state plan. So hopefully that will be available to you next week. OK. Next question is, do we update just the sections of the plan that have changes? Or do we have to insert all of the older plan text even if there are no changes to that section?

MR. DOYLE: So all the older text is already inserted. So the answer is, no. You do not have to insert any additional text. The plan is carried over and made available for the state to update the different elements as necessary.

MS. FLECK: OK. Next question. "Please clarify the modified sections will be reviewed, but they do not have to be highlighted to alert the reviewers where the specific modifications are. Is that correct?" That is correct.

MR. DOYLE: That is correct. We have different ways that we plan to review the plan and identify what changes were made. So again, I can't stress this enough, when you go in and make changes to your plan, when modifying an element, make that element look to reflect how you would like that element to be presented.

MS. FLECK: To the public.

MR. DOYLE: Yeah. Exactly. To the public. So give the current response, in other words, to that response, and not a mixture of the old and new one.

MS. FLECK: But we appreciate your consideration of the federal reviewers with that question.

MR. DOYLE: I love that.

MS. FLECK: All right. Are there any other questions coming in? It looks like our last one. All right. Well, if not – it looks like a few folks are typing right now, so we'll pause a minute while that's happening. This should be our pause for jokes, but I don't have any prepared.

MR. DOYLE: I was told mine are inappropriate.

MS. FLECK: If we need further assistance as we do this, who can we reach out to? Your first – if you're an Employment and Training Administration funded program, you should reach out to your regional office.

MR. DOYLE: If you are a VR agency, you should reach out to your RSA liaison. And if you are unaware of who your RSA liaison is, if you go to our website at rsa.ed.gov, under programs or contacts, you'll see the listing of our site liaisons.

MS. FLECK: And I know for the adult education program there's also each state has a designated federal representative. So follow up with that individual. So it's really just the same federal folks that you would normally follow up with for any business item. And they'll navigate to the right person if they can't help you.

"Will the questions and answers be made available to all to review?" Yes. This entire webinar has been recorded. It will be available within two business days, so that you can go back and listen again if you want to. Also a transcript will be available, so if you want to go to that part of the presentation and read the questions and answers, you can do that. What time does the portal officially close?

MR. DOYLE: It's not going to officially close at any point. The plans are due on March 15th. We really don't plan to look at the time stamp on that in terms of just try to get them in before you go to bed on March 15th. And I think everybody will be fine. So we're really not holding to that close of a precise deadline.

MS. FLECK: But try.

MR. DOYLE: The 15th is still the 15th.

MS. FLECK: OK. More questions, with guidance fees set on Perkins for updates needed to the state plan, do they have to follow the 30 day public comment period? So any partner programs included in a combined state plan still must adhere to the specific requirements of that program. And I'm not familiar with whether Perkins requires that 30 day public comment period or not. But yes, in general the WIOA planning requirements do not overtake other specific program planning requirements.

OK. Next question. "Training and Employment Guidance Letter 617 indicates that there are changes in the ICR, the information collection request, including additional use questions and AFLA assurances, that's the adult ed program. Will these new section portions be blank in our draft 2018 plan in the portal?" Well, the youth questions were merely wording clarifications of the same requirements. So there will not be changes.

MR. DOYLE: Additional assurance –

MS. FLECK: The same information will be in there as you put in before. We didn't change the questions per se.

MR. DOYLE: I think under Title II there was an additional clarification to describe a particular part in addition to an assurance. So – (inaudible) – because I know you helped make some of those changes in the portal after the ICR was approved by OMB, I don't think there would be any of that necessitating creating a new element.

KEN: Yeah. I think, and boy that's a great question, I'm trying to think back to how it looked in the test environment. I think that all of the answers carried over from before. But in the places like in this place where there are new assurances, those of course will be blank. But I think that some of the questions that carried over from before, even with minor wording changes, those would carry over the same answers.

MS. FLECK: So the best course of action is for you to carefully review your plans to ensure that you have marked the assurances as you intend to have them marked, and that you have your responses to each element as you want it, whether you have modified it or not.

KEN: Exactly.

MS. FLECK: OK. And then I think this is the final question, "Will there be further training regarding the use of the online portal?"

MR. DOYLE: I will say that the training that we have conducted are going to be available – are being recorded this one, is the other one was for the federal side. And then of course you're doing something else, right?

MS. FLECK: The webcast covering more of the content requirements.

MR. DOYLE: Exactly. So this information would just be available for those users if they wanted to listen to it or didn't get a chance to listen to this presentation.

MS. FLECK: Right. But if you run into trouble using the portal, please contact your appropriate federal agency for assistance. Well, I think that's all the questions. I want to thank Jim, and Shannon, and Ken for joining us today here in the Department of Labor.

Thanks to Laura for your assistance running the technology. And thank you all for participating today. Hopefully this has been helpful to you and we look forward to receiving your state plans very soon. Thank you.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you.

MS. MOLER: Thank you.

(END)