**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Reemployment and System Integration (RSI) Dislocated Worker Grants**

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LAURA CASERTANO: With that, I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Dana Matthews. She's a workforce analyst for the Employment and Training Administration with U.S. Department of Labor. Dana, take it away.

DANA MATTHEWS: OK. Thank you. Good morning and welcome to today's WIOA Wednesday session of Reemployment & Systems Integration-Dislocated Worker grants, usually referred to as RSI-DWG. As Laura said, I'm Dana Matthews, a workforce analyst with a division of WIA adult services in the ETA office for Department of Labor.

As you know, we're entering the fourth year since the passage of WIOA and RSI-Dislocated Worker Grants were made available two years ago to help integrate workforce systems, yet some states are still facing difficulties. That's why we are peer sharing today to help to manage this grant. But before we move on, we want to take a brief poll to get an idea of where everyone is in relation to the RSI-DWG grants.

So you'll see the poll question. Question number one: What has been most challenging when spending your grant funds? A response to the answers, so far it is finding a vendor and the proper equipment, we have some financial and budgeting modification issues, one, 12.5 for staff issues. And we're going to discuss all of these challenges throughout the presentation today to give you some insight on how to correct those issues or problems.

Poll question number two: To this date, what percentage of your state's RSI-DWG grant is complete? Guess if you're not sure. Would you say you've accomplished 80 to 100 percent of your grant project, 50 to 79 percent, 20 to 49 or nothing up to 19 percent?

And if you're not sure, you can just click on no vote. So you can see why they need this peer sharing webinar today, because a lot of you have a lot of work to do. So that's the purpose of today's peer sharing so we can get those funds spent.

Poll question number three: Do you think your state would need an extension beyond September, yes or no? And we'll provide information on how to apply for the extension.

During this peer sharing session, we will review RSI-DWG's purpose, goals, expected outcomes and requirements. RSI is a discretionary grant that was awarded to 40 out of the 51 states and territories that includes Guam, Puerto Rico and Hawaii who received $1.1 million as seed money to integrate their workforce IT systems.

The expected outcome is to connect the programs and services provided to dislocated workers, including unemployed, unemployment insurance claimants and those with long-term unemployed jobseekers. So today you will hear from two agencies who's doing just that, yet, they've probably had some of the same challenges that you're going through now.

You're probably experiencing problems with budgeting these funds, upgrading your systems versus hiring a new vendor to buy new technology, should you train your current staff or should you hire someone new to come in as a project manager or coordinator? So those are some of the challenges that I read on the narrative reports that come in.

So after their presentations, we will have time for questions and answers from the presenters and also, here the national office will have someone from grants and management to answer your financial questions to help you move forward. Next slide.

So let's just review some of the goals of RSI-DWG. This dislocated worker grant was issued in 2016 with the goal to improve the integration of state unemployment insurance, Wagner-Peyser employment services and WIOA data systems, streamlining case management and assessments and ensure needed job search and training services are provided.

Make your labor market information easily assessible and certified training providers with their performance outcome all in one system. So actually, anyone who comes into an American Job Center will benefit from this robust online service delivery system, because in 2016, most states have siloed systems, they didn't talk to each other.

The UI claimant entered data into one system and then your TANF clients – everybody had different systems. Some states had one, two, three different databases. So to fix that, Department of Labor made available this grant two years ago. I know many of you have accomplished, if not, at least one or two or all of these goals, yet, that's why we're peer sharing today to hear just how easily or complicated it is to integrate all of your workforce systems.

So the expected outcomes of our RSI-DWG. So with a new integrated workforce systems, you should experience improved service delivery, a performance reporting system, streamlined case management and assessments from your UI, your TANF, dislocated worker files all in one database, you will see an increased in your numbers of those long-term unemployed claimants, you'll get – they'll get hired a lot quicker, assisting your employers with transferring employees into new positions of skills training before they're laid off due to a store closing or a company downsizing. This is what we call rapid response.

And those jobseekers who are coming into the American Job Center or the One-Stop Center just should experience through click single sign-on, integrated registration, a personalized workforce profile/dashboard and then proceeding to use self-services. So those are some of the outcomes you will experience once you integrate all of your workforce systems and that's why these funds were made available to you. So with all of that being said, we will hear just how easy or complicated it is to do this from our presenters. Next slide. But before our presenters get started, there's some key reminders I need to review with you.

First, the funds availability. RSI funds are considered to be seed money, as I said earlier. States are expected to provide additional resources as needed. So the period of performance is two years and that started September 30, 2016 and the funds will expire 2018, September the 30th, although, if you need an extension, you can apply for an extension.

Secondly, we strongly encourage partner engagements to effectively improve your integrated technology systems. Work with your One-Stop partners to help accomplish these goals. And the next the consortium says, if you entered into a state consortium, then you have to have an MOU in place with details on who would do what.

But some of the reports are showing me that some states want to get out of the consortium. So if that's the issue, you have to submit a modification form with those changes on it if there are going to be major changes to your consortium. And then next, the reporting. Quarterly reports are due 45 days after the end of the quarter. So this next quarter those reports will be due on May 15th and that should also include a narrative just to tell us how you're progressing, how close you are to accomplishing your deliverables that have been identified in your report. And then also, I have some questions about the narrative.

There's no formal form to complete when you're submitting your narrative. You can use a simple email or you can add it to the 9130 that you submit for your quarterly report, but just some type of narrative showing the progress that you've accomplished or if you need TA along the way; and so all activities must be carried out according to the laws and regulations of your state UI system, especially confidentiality departments.

UI claimants must receive meaningful assistance when using your technology and start as a direct connection for real-time well-spaced communications to program staff who can provide information or services.

And then last but not least, the POPs is the Period of Performance. Like I said, it ends September 30th, but if you find yourself needing more time, submit the extension form that's attached to this webinar and we will get those over to OGM. Next slide.

I would like to highlight some vendors. If you're having problems selecting a vendor and purchasing new equipment, DOL set up a pilot program with Workforce Connect Technologies and that's why Mississippi is speaking today, because they participated in that pilot program, but there are other vendors out there using – utilizing American One-Stop Operating System.

You can find their information on our resource page. But those are some vendors who will help you integrate your programs, all of your programs, your TAA programs, your TANF programs, your adult education. If you need assistance with connecting those programs, contact one of these vendors or there are others. Next slide.

And now you will hear from our two state agencies who are spending funds and accomplishing their deliverables. They will talk to you about their integrated IT systems and how they made the decisions to accomplish what they did.

The first presenters will be Ms. Jackie Turner and Laura Ring. They're coming to us from Mississippi Department of Employment Security and accompanying them is Jonathan Barlow from the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center. And then after them, you will hear from New York State Department of Labor, Ms. Vicki Mockler. Next. Jackie and Laura?

JACKIE TURNER: Thank you, Dana. This is Jackie Turner. I am the deputy executive director CFO here at the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and we'd like to thank DOL for the opportunity to present Mississippi's progress with the RSI-Dislocated Worker Grant. The grant announcement came at a great time for Mississippi as it did provide seed money to help us align our vision for program alignment through technology to integrate our programs across the core program partner agencies here in Mississippi. Today, you will hear from Laura Ring who is the director of the Office of Grant Management here at Department of Employment Security.

Laura has responsibilities for state-level WIOA Title I, adult dislocated worker and youth programs and discretionary grants here at Employment Security and from Jonathan Barlow who is our associate director architecture and development/design administrator at the National Strategic Planning and Research Center, which is a research center which is part of Mississippi State University. So I'm very happy to turn it over to them, because they have been working on the grant and the development of the Mississippi, what we call the, hub technology. Laura.

LAURA RING: Thank you, Jackie. So in Mississippi, we've worked, over the past decade or so, to integrate our workforce technology across the various programs that are housed here at Employment Security.

And so currently, our Mississippi Works system, which is the system we use for our workforce program, it currently includes Wagner-Peyser, the WIOA programs, adult dislocated worker and youth, JVFG, the vets program, and Trade. And Mississippi Works is fully integrated with the unemployment insurance program. As Jackie mentioned, our WIOA combined state plan included the concept of an integrated WIOA program technology and we wanted to create a hub-like system.

And Jonathan's going to describe that system in just a few minutes. But the WIOA partners in Mississippi have many, many workgroups and meetings during the development of our state plan and those workgroups evolved over time into teams that led the hub system development.

One of those teams was what we called our business rules committee and after many focused meetings, we've determined that we wanted to ask six common questions of all of our customers to determine if they may be eligible for other partner program services. We also have data and technology teams and those were primarily the IT leads and vendors for each agency.

I want to talk a little bit about vendor selection. So for our state, we determined early on that it would be just way too costly and time intensive to build one new system for Title I, II, III and IV programs.

And so the idea of the hub where each agency's unique systems could retain their autonomy made sense for us. And it made sense for us that NSPARC would be the vendor. NSPARC is a research and software development entity of Mississippi State University and they're already the contracted vendor for Employment Security's workforce system and they also do work for some of our other partner agencies.

And the state to state procurers in Mississippi also make that a very smooth process for us to be able to work NSPARC. Some of the highlights of the grant and the work that we've done in Mississippi, to me, the thought that one common customer profile for each of our agencies that we can access avoids so much duplication to already have that profile pull up when a customer has already been served by one of the other partner agencies, just takes off that duplication.

And next steps for us are the ability to see a customer's services across programs, referrals and a common success plan for our customer across of the agency programs, rehab, human services, adult education and all of the workforce programs at Employment Security.

So we're excited to see that this vision is really becoming a reality for our customers and for our staff. And so the partnering and collaboration in developing the hub has also further strengthened our partner to partner relationships.

We spend a lot of time working together to develop the technology. Some of the challenges that we have related to the grant, I don't think that they're unique of any system development, but trying to visualize not only the hub, but how the hub will interact with each of our agency systems and what each of our agency systems see was kind of hard to visualize at first.

And then trying to plan training where it was common to each agency's system, because each of the four partner agency systems will look a little different once the hug interacts with them. So that was the challenge for us is with this faceless-like system, how do we plan training as it actually is implemented in each of our agencies. So I'd like to introduce Dr. Jonathan Barlow who's with NSPARC to give you a high-level overview of our hub technology.

JONATHAN BARLOW: OK. Thank you so much, Laura. Appreciate the opportunity. So the WIOA hub was an attempt to ensure the coordination of all the WIOA partners around a programmatic plan called Smart Start. We had the idea of first coming up with how we wanted to serve people and then finding a technology and using data to make that happen. So we – it's a no-wrong-door approach to customer service. Customers come in – over on the left, you can see the WIOA customer coming in to any partner, number one, and then they go through a common set of case management functions.

One would be this individual service assessment, the six questions that someone mentioned and we can answer that question about what the six questions are in a moment. Based upon answers to those questions, we send out electronic referrals to the partner agencies and make sure that the person doesn't fall through any kind of procedural cracks or gaps.

We use a work-ready report card, which is a way to help a person figure out where they are relative to the labor market and where they might be able to go with training and literally have an individual success plan that is an across-agency success plan and it has WIOA relevant goals and services on the plan that all the partners can interact with.

Finally, we send them out in a pathway and maybe a basic education pathway. Maybe they don't have a high school diploma and need to go to adult education, maybe they have some difficulties that rehab services can help with and then we also connect them with supportive services, TANF, SNAP and so forth.

And then eventually, there's an exit strategy, something like an apprenticeship or some sort of subsidized work and finally, unsubsidized employment is really the goal. And in our WIOA plan for the state, we really set a goal to put people in what we call opportunity occupations and these are middle-skill jobs that have a very good salary and can support life.

Then you can see the number four down at the bottom all the supportive services are there throughout the whole process. We're able to use a combination of services to serve people. The hub, as Laura mentioned, has human users.

So this diagram shows you we have four main partners, vocational, rehabilitation, adult education, human services and then the workforce UI systems and they communication to the hub through a machine interface. So staff members, every morning they come to work, on a day when they're interacting with the hub, it'll be no different than the day before, they will still use the same system.

There will be some differences, though. If a phone number changes, for instance, at another partner, the partner system will know that and will give the staff member the opportunity to accept that change in their system as well. So all the systems maintain their function in the agencies that they were developed for, they have very specialized needs.

You know, rehabilitation services does a lot of work with medical information and that sort of thing that isn't really necessary for the other WIOA partners. And so those systems maintain their very focused purpose and all the staff training is still valid, they all serve people in the same way, they just serve people with an awareness of the larger state context that the WIOA plan set up.

We also have a dotted line there. The system is very flexible and really, any state could use it, any other entity could use it. We could start looping in the higher education system. It's really very flexible and the – I'll tell you what's in the system in a moment, but it basically allows you to connect, share records, also, pass electronic referrals back and forth and it's very flexible. I'm going to go to the next slide here.

Here's the actual recipe. Here's the data recipe for what's inside the hub. There are some interagency lookup tables. You know, we had to gather – part of the planning process we had to gather a list of all the services that everyone offers so that we can record when those services are given to establish participation periods and handle reporting.

It also has version data and we say it's version data, because the different agencies will need to modify this data. So the participant profile and the participant success plan these things are in common. And so if someone else changes their phone number, the other agency needs to know that that phone number changed. And so we actually version those records and allow the systems to interact to make sure they have the latest version of a particular participant. And then WIOA customer data. So this is what's needed for three things. We really need this for case management and we – and that's a real time endeavor. We need this continuous performance improvement and monitoring and that's also real-time and then ultimately, we need it for federal reporting and that's retrospective.

So if you look at the participant service enrollment, that's one thing that's in there. So anytime a participant's enrolled in a service, the hub is notified about that. A participant's score, if they taken an assessment, that could establish some sort of skill gain that score goes into the hub, same thing with earned credentials.

And then the referrals are all about connecting agency partners and having an electronic way to trace those hand-off points from one agency to another. Finally, the participant service assessment, that's the questionnaire, the six questions that we ask folks and that allows us to do the initial automatic routing of people to the right location no matter what door they entered through.

This is the WIOA data flow, just kind of a repetition of what we mentioned before, but just to show it in a different way. The customer, on the left, will interact with agencies from all different partners. We do have some comprehensive workforce centers in Mississippi.

There is one in every workforce area that contains, under one roof, all of the WIOA partners, but a lot of times people will be interacting with one partner at a time in county offices. And so it doesn't really matter where you go, workforce, adult education, vocational rehab or TANF/SNAP, you'll encounter a staff member who's using a system that in turn has its own database that is linked to the interagency WIOA data hub.

The data hub then facilitates the transfer of information from partner to partner and it really – it's very WIOA-focused. So it just has the information necessary for WIOA customer service and reporting and performance management. So it's a very focused system.

And you notice the staff members are still looking at their own systems, they're not looking at the hub, they're using their own systems, but their systems have been slightly modified to work with them. And so that's kind of an overview of the hub and what it does and how we used it to connect different partners under a combined WIOA plan. And that's all I have. That's my last slide.

MS. MATTHEWS: OK. Thank you. Next, Ms. Vicki?

VICKI MOCKLER: Good morning, everyone. My name is Vicki Mockler. I'm an employment services manager here at the New York State Department of Labor. My role has been to work with our system vendor, excuse me, as it relates to our case management system that's used to track right now for our Title I and Title III participants.

Moving right in, first, I want to talk a little bit about the fact that service and system integration go hand-in-hand. Early on, New York recognized the importance of providing access to quality services across programs, including unemployment insurance, Wagner-Peyser and at the time, WIA, now WIOA.

As a result of this, in 2006, New York adopted a functional alignment policy and co-enrollment policy. The policy requires our local career center staff to align their service delivery structures to provide access to quality services based on the customer's need regardless of which program may be funding that service.

Oh, so we have somebody that's still talking in the background, sorry about that. With the implementation of the policy, it required that all of our Wagner-Peyser customers were co-enrolled in WIOA. And when applicable, we also co-enroll with other programs, such as the Trade Act program or TA program.

This requirement required us to provide a registration process to ensure data collection requirements were captured across all programs. To achieve this level of service integration, New York developed and began executing a plan to integrate our various systems. These integrations included things like single sign-on or points of access as well as secured data sharing across application.

These integrations also allowed for increase reporting abilities and subsequently, better outcomes for our jobseekers. So as Dana mentioned in the beginning of the presentation, New York was one of the original states awarded under the ES-UI Connectivity grant and we used that opportunity to develop some of the processes under – that are also deliverables under RSI, such as the single sign-on, a workforce integrated profile page as well as an integrated workforce registration.

This project really allowed us to integrate access to online services for unemployment insurance as well as employment and work service programs, such as Wagner-Peyser and WIOA. And I want to just talk through very briefly those three deliverables we had under ES-UI Connectivity, because it leads right into our RSI grant process.

So the first deliverable under that project that we tackled was the integrated sign-on process. This process allows our customers to securely access unemployment insurance services, such as filing for a claim or certifying for weekly benefits as well as job search assistance and career exploration services that are available through our JobZone self-service system.

The screen you see here also allows our program staff to make important notice aware – make our customers aware of important notices and/or scheduling system outages for maintenance. So it's really an easy way that – there's that no-wrong-door approach for our customers coming in to receive both types of access.

Another deliverable was the Workforce Integrated Profile Page or what we refer to as the WIPP. This was developed to be a central point of access for online services that are available to our customers. There are several sections to the WIP. These sections show customers a preview of features with the ability to link to get more detail.

Customers have access to our secure messaging system, which is that first section at the top of our screen. This is used to remind customers of mandatory reemployment service appointments at their local career centers. We can also display any type of notification regarding upcoming job fairs or services available in the center.

The next section down on this screen is the most recent posting. So based on the information collected, we are then able to display right directly on this page jobseekers relevant job leads that will help in that reemployment process.

Moving forward with our WIP, there's also several other sections, but here is where really the meat of our application starts. This allows customers to access those services for unemployment insurance as well as the JobZone services that are now integrated in the background, but what this does is that the first time they access information from either type of service, this is what will prompt the customer to complete that integrate registration process we mentioned earlier. The integrated workforce registration is used to capture the common data elements between the unemployment insurance and employment service programs.

Customers are prompted to complete this registration when they first access our JobZone self-service tools or the UI online services. Customers require to update or confirm their information annually so we make sure that we can at least prompt them to complete it annual, at minimum. We also update from our services in the career centers as well.

The item UR has multiple benefits, such as a streamlined registration that provides staff with early access to quality information that can assist them with the service delivery. This screen walks the customer through the various data that is needed and will prefill based on information we already know about the customer.

So the customer – (inaudible) – the first time. If they've never been seen in our career centers previously or filed for unemployment insurance, this information starts out as a blank record that they'll need to complete through, however, if it's a returning customer, this information is already prefilled for them where they can update information or just confirm that the information is correct. It has a simple navigation bar along the top of the screen that does allow customers to see how they're progressing through that registration. So it kind of gives them an idea of how that process is and where they are in that process.

The data collected through the integrated workforce registration is then seamlessly shared between both our unemployment insurance system as well as our workforce system. So with that being said, having those deliverables under the ES-UI Connectivity process really helps us to think about how to best use our RSI grant opportunity.

Building off of that success New York outlined two main goals when applying for the RSI grant. These goals were the America's One-Stop Operating System or what we refer to as OSOS technology refresh as well as the JobZone résumé writer enhancement.

A number of factors led to New York's decision to select these goals. One, we wanted to ensure that we were able to hit the ground running and expend funds timely. So we opted to move forward with projects where we had an existing relationship with an IT vendor. New York, in conjunction with the One-Stop Operating consortium – so I should mention here the OSOS system is operated and maintained by a consortium of states.

So we each pay a subscription fee in to use the system. With that being said, we had already committed to this technology refresh as a consortium of states and the RSI grant opportunity just provided us that seed money, if you will, to make sure that we could move the project forward and do so in a relatively quick timeframe.

In addition, we were already working with a vendor. Our OSOS system is fully integrated with our JobZone self-service tool that is used by customers. So we're using the same vendors. So our budgeting with this project has really been just on our IT support in – of these two systems. So now I want to talk a little bit more about the technology refresh. OSOS was originally a federally funded system developed to meet the requirements of WIA. Once federal funds were no longer available to support and maintain OSOS, New York, along with other states, developed a consortium to continue its use.

The system was originally developed in the late 1990s and since then, the consortium states have made continuous modifications to align with changing legislation as well as the needs and technology changes of our customers. In order to ensure that the system remained modern and has the capability to integrate with new tools and technology, the consortium states recognized that the underlying technology of OSOS would need to be upgraded. With this in mind, we also considered that the system would be adjusted – would need to be adjusted to comply with WIOA legislation.

We partnered with our IT vendor, NaviSite, who began the refresh of the OSOS technology. With that, this will increase our ability to integrate and connect with new technologies and tools as well as improve the connections we already have.

It has a service-oriented architecture that will help us to make those connections and underlying it allows us to collect and report at an upgraded level from where we currently stand. So here is an example. One of the things that is part of our upgrade of the system is we want to make sure that the system is browser-independent, it's mobile-friendly.

So what you'll see here on this screen is a varying length of how the system can be used on multiple types of a device, all the way from a computer screen down to a tablet or a phone level. Because of the upgrade and the technology, performance of the system will be greatly improved by this technology. We knew that we needed to make significant modifications for WIOA and at the same time, refreshing the technology at the same time made the most sense for New York. So the technology refresh allows New York to remain compliant with WIOA data collection and reporting requirements as well as improve out staff's ability to access real-time data when providing services to customers.

This really, like I mentioned, already opens the door for integration of new tools and technologies and ensures that our system is compliant and sustainable for the long term. Another added benefit of this upgrade is that the similarities from our current system and the overall structure behind the scenes allows us to seamlessly transition to what appears to be a new modern system without the extensive training needs that are required when moving to a new case management system. Some of the added benefits that we're working with right now are our correspondence, working with customers. I know we mentioned a little bit on our Workforce Integrated Profile Page, or WIPP page.

We have the ability to work directly with customers and message them securely. Some of the upgraded features with the technology refresh will also allow us to use text messaging with customers when allowable and agreed upon by the customer. So it doesn't broaden the amount of technology that we will be able to easily integrate with. The second deliverable under our RSI grant is the JobZone résumé writer. Given the improvement in our economy, jobs are becoming more and more – (inaudible) – among applicants.

Here in New York, we believe it's critical for jobseekers to have a quality résumé that sets them apart from the competition. Our existing résumé tool is functional, but as with all technology, there's always room to improve and grow upon. Our project strives for a user-friendly tool that is accessible by both jobseekers and self-service as well as our career center staff and getting customers into that process of developing the résumé.

Information – the JobZone résumé writer is fully integrated with our OSOS case management system. So one of the benefits of our upgraded résumé writer is information that was collected both from that integrated workforce registration as well as by staff in the career centers can be easily prefilled into our JobZone résumé writer.

And we'll make it a quality résumé just to help customers have something to work with and again, there's always continuous improvement with that. And with that, we expect that with a quality résumé that sets them apart, it will also improve our outcomes in the long run in getting them back up and running and back to work. So here you'll see the enhanced résumé writer allows the user to see their résumé as it's being created. Our existing tool has more of a tabular approach to collecting the data and then presents it at the end.

One of the things we find is many people are very visual, they want to see that as it's being created to allow them to adjust for formatting or differences that they may want to highlight in the template. So in this screen, users can choose the résumé type and styles at the top of the screen and choose to prefill the information from the information collected in the IWR as well as through the career center or the customer's entries within the JobZone system.

This allows the customer to easily transition and view their information in a variety of résumé types and styles. This is a little bit more – this is expected to be helpful for staff as a starting point that can then be modified and updated with the customer at the time they're in the centers at their appointment.

While the tool can be used by staff, we also intended this tool to be self-service. So the individual users can access their JobZone account and create their own résumé. With that being said, users' levels of knowledge on résumé development are going to vary. So the system was designed to walk customers through a brief set of questions that will assist them in choosing the appropriate résumé type and style that will highlight their knowledge, skills and abilities. Again, these are tools that we do expect will be used by both staff and individual jobseekers. So we're really trying to broaden the use and the ability of our customers to easily design and create that initial résumé.

That's kind of my last slide. But with these two projects, New York is really looking at this as a way to move ourselves forward and integrate with additional systems. We have future plans to integrate and add functionality to our workforce integrated profile page or that landing page, specifically around once we have a modernized system, being able to service with that service-oriented – (inaudible) – we can then choose to add functionality, such as next steps and provide jobseekers access to things to improve upon their ability to gain meaningful employment and sustain that employment.

So these two tools, we believe, will be able to help that process and ultimately get us those improved outcomes for our jobseekers.

MS. MATTHEWS: OK. Thank you. Let me bring your attention to the resources we are providing. If you want to read up on the guidance and services provided requirements of WIOA and Wagner-Peyser, you can refer to TEGL 19-16.

And then also, if you want to read on the policies or requirements of RSI-Integrated Dislocated Worker grants, that's TEGL 05-16 and Dislocated Worker Opportunity grants you can find information on that at TEGL 01-17. And the modification forms, if you want to apply for that extension and read on the requirements, we have a list of reasons that you may not get the extension.

So you'll want to read that before you apply for that extension. That's the modification request POP form. And then also, information on the IT company and information on consortium used in Mississippi. So now we're going to address some of your questions.

And I have Ms. Lynn Fraga in the office, she's going to address questions one and three since they're building the financial part.

LYNN FRAGA: Yes. Hi, everyone. This is Lynn. Can you scroll down so I can see question one just briefly? Thank you. So the first question we have is can we use these funds to help fund our new integrated database system for Title I and Title II or is that III?

MS. MATTHEWS: III.

MS. FRAGA: III. This question is fairly broad and I think in order to accurately answer it, we would need to get some more information offline from the person who submitted the question. Generally, this would be a collaboration between both the program office and the grant management office.

We want to make sure that your proposal would meet both the requirements of the TEGL as written and appropriate grant management activities. What I would suggest – and it does sound like it would be a statement of work, a change in your original statement of work.

So it would require a modification, but before you go to the trouble of doing that, the best approach is probably to reach out to your federal project officer, ask them the question, and they'll share that with us here in the national office as well, and the more heads the better, and then we'll promptly get a response back to you regarding that proposal.

And then if it seems likely, you can submit the form of medication request and we'll – and hopefully we would approve in the end. So then I'll move onto question three, which is we have been submitting our quarterly report as well as our grant modification to our region three grant officer. Is there someone else we need to be submitting them to?

I'm happy to get this question, actually. I did want to clarify the situation regarding the quarterly reports. As you know, grantees are required to submit the ETA 9130, which is the fiscal report. We do not, however, have official clearance for the Paper Reduction Act clearance to collect formal quarterly performance reports at this time.

The Department has quite a backlog for those. So we did not anticipate to be in this spot, actually, but we have been all along encouraging the FPOs to check in quarterly with you or for you to check in with them and maybe provide an optional narrative just so that we can all stay in-tuned to what's going on with these projects.

Certainly, if that changes at this late day, we'll let you know, but I did want to clarify what the requirement is around that. So I think that was all. It seems like Jonathan is the man of the hour. So with that, I will turn the remaining questions over to him.

MR. BARLOW: Thank you very much. The first question was what are the six common questions that Mississippi uses to screen customers for potential referrals to partner programs. I do have those in front of me. I'll kind of summarize it instead of reading them verbatim.

But the first question, essentially, asks if you have a high school diploma or equivalency and if you signify no, then we'll refer you to adult education. The second one is do you have difficulty seeing, hearing, talking, using your hands, etc.? And we have a list of things you might have difficulty with.

If you answer yes to that question, we refer you to rehabilitation services. The third one is are you the parent or caretaker of a child under the age of 18 living in your home and there's at least one parent absent, etc.? That is a TANF question. So if they answer yes to that, we'll refer them to human services for possible TANF intake.

And then do you need help buying food for your household? That's a staff question. So there's a yes or no to that one. Are you working? If they say – there's no, there's yes, but I need a better job and yes, and my job meets my needs. So there's a different way that you might be referred to Employment Security.

So you imagine you come into human services, you say that you need a better job, then you'll be referred to One-Stop or to a partner affiliated One-Stop. And then the last one is are you 16 to 24 years old not attending K-12 school or college and need assistance with furthering your education or getting a job? That's a youth services question. That's the sixth question and if you answer yes to that, then we would refer you to a youth services provider in the state.

So those are the six questions. The next question, I'll do five first. It's is there a registration process that takes place and when does that happen? And I guess, the best way to answer that is the registration process stays the same.

So every agency conducts its own registration process, but every agency has modified their intake slightly and one very obvious way is that they ask the sixth question. So that's one modification.

Another one is that all of the agency partners have – ensure that they've – that they're asking all the questions necessary to complete the Personal Information Record Layout, the PIRL reporting instrument that DOL and non-DOL members of WIOA have to conform to. And so we make sure that we're asking questions in the same way. So everyone did sort of modify their systems in some ways to intake the right questions and answers, but in general, you would do intake at a place when it's appropriate to do intake.

And so you get into the WIOA hub by doing an intake in one partner or another. So it doesn't really matter where you enter. And one of the innovations is that you kind of build your WIOA profile gradually. You know, you get part of it if you go to get help from adult education and then other additional questions are asked if you go to Employment Security or to a One-Stop center. And so over time, we gradually build that WIOA profile that's necessary for reporting and for customer service.

So we really just take advantage of the existing intake process. There is one exception to that at Employment Security. The Employment Security system has a lot of self-service options for customers; they can build a résumé and look for jobs and that sort of thing. And the work-ready report that, that's the other question, what does the MDES work-ready report card include?

And essentially, that was our way to try to do justice to the sector strategies. So in every workforce area under the WIOA plan, the local areas establish sector strategies. That meant that they would choose industries and occupations that they were promoting as being really in demand in their region.

And so what we do is when someone's signing out, we show them a list of these occupations, we show them the basic labor market information, what you might make in the occupation and we allow them to explore that occupation a little bit.

And of course, they can look at any occupation under the sun, but we kind of privilege the ones that go along with the sector strategies as far as the attention we give them. And then when someone selects an occupation that's interesting to them that they believe they could be trained for, they click help me make a plan to get there.

And when they click help me make a plan, that's what starts building that success plan. The whole success plan is based around a particular occupation. And so all the services, the training services would go toward that occupation, all of the barriers that might need to be met to fulfill that training, they would be part of the plan as well.

So that's what workforce ready report is. It's essentially telling you how long it would take you to get to different occupations through training, because the system already knows the person's résumé, it knows their current level of education and it also knows what the occupation requires. So I guess that's a good summary of it.

CHARLOTTE: OK. Thanks. Vicki, this is Charlotte at the national office and I have a question for you. And it's related to your JobZone résumé writer. On one of the slides, it showed – it had a question, are you over 18 and you had the option to click on it or not. Does that change how the résumé looks or what was the reason for that?

MS. MOCKLER: That was a sample question that we're using. What we're ultimately trying to get to is what type of education or experience the individual has to decide what type of résumé we may want to work with for that – (inaudible) – for that customer.

For example, if they're over 18, if they were recently graduating school, it may be better to highlight your accomplishments that you've done throughout publishing if you're in, let's say, an English major, we may not want to focus heavily on your work search experience, because you may not have much.

So again, those questions are really to drive down what is the best way to market that individual customer's skills and abilities on a résumé that's going to get them noticed and get them into those job interviews and ultimately, employed in the long run.

CHARLOTTE: OK. I think that's good. I was wondering what that would've looked like, because young people, yeah, they don't have that work experience, but it's a trigger for the staff to look at how to best highlight what they do have. I like that.

MS. MOCKLER: It's for staff and also, that would be available directly for the jobseeker themselves. So in most cases, on the youth side, it might be working with an individual career adviser that's helping them to develop that résumé, but it's also a tool for – like I said, all users have different ability and skill levels with résumé development. So we're trying to make something that is really useful to customers on a basic level and staff are a bit more familiar and aware of best practices with résumés. So this is kind of our happy way to get that in between as well for a self-service tool.

CHARLOTTE: Great. Thank you. Any more questions. Jonathan, I had a question for you on the part where you're saying that the partners have a data sharing agreement. Is that included in your MOU?

MR. BARLOW: Yeah. I might let my colleague here, Steve Grice, answer that question, if that's all right.

STEVE GRICE: Good morning. The – in Mississippi, we have separate data sharing agreements in place between various state agencies and the state data clearinghouse. So Mississippi's model is perhaps a little different than maybe other states where Mississippi, almost a decade ago, decided to go down the path of creating a state data clearinghouse that would manage the transfer and sharing of information between various state agencies for different purposes.

And so the hub that Jonathan talked about and kind of the innovations that the Mississippi Department of Employment Security have been able to bring about is partly in response to the fact that we have a state data clearinghouse that manages kind of independent data sharing relationships between parties so that no one agency is sort of burdened with managing all of the different kinds of data sharing agreements they might need to have in place.

CHARLOTTE: OK. And can you share that?

MR. GRICE: A sample data sharing MOU, absolutely, we'd be happy to. We will work through Jackie Turner and Laura Ring to make sure that information gets out.

CHARLOTTE: OK. Thank you. Vicki, do you see the question, what does New York's employability's score include? Can you answer that?

MS. MOCKLER: Sure. I can absolutely answer that. So New York's JobZone self-service system also includes what we call an employability score. The employability score is – think of it almost like your credit score, you put in some basic information about your spending and this case on the employability side, you're putting in the type of occupation, you're looking to gain employment and what your current education, what are your skills and experiences with that particular occupation and ultimately, what that does is it evaluates it based on an algorithm within the system to give you a starting point of the score.

From there, it also provides you information on how to improve that score. It's looking – that score also takes into account current labor market information. So if you're in an area of the state where you're looking for a job that's not prevalent in that particular area, it's going to tell you that this is a job that doesn't appear to be in demand in your location and you may need to look at alternate options. But that employability score, it really does bring that all together to say, here's how you can improve.

And one of our next enhancements, as I mentioned early on in our workforce integrated profile page, we would like to do some more next steps with individuals around that employability score, particularly, if they are looking for an occupation and the occupation says, most individuals in this type of occupation have a bachelor's degree and the individual only has, let's say, an associate's degree, it's making that recommendation that you may want to consider additional training to get you to that goal. So the employability score really does play more of a self-service tool as giving jobseekers a standing of how they compare with their given occupation in their local labor market.

MS. MATTHEWS: OK. Thank you. Laura, can we go over the poll questions one more time to see what those final scores were?

So question two – you see on question two today, what percentage of your state's RSI-DWG project is complete – so I think that the majority is 0 to 19 percent and that's why we're having today's webinar, because we need to get those numbers up with September really close. It's best that you spend most of the funds before that deadline, because our printout shows that only six states have spent 40 to 50 percent of the funds and 23 are below 10 or less percent.

So we really need to encourage you to reach out to Mississippi or New York for assistance and guidance, if needed and also, contact your FPO who can provide referrals or resources and give you TA. Back to question number one, what was the – what has been most challenging to you, the majority of you said, finding the vendor or proper equipment, that was 53 percent. So in the presentation, we prefer it's at least two, but there are others out there. So do a little research.

And then also, question three, do you think your state will need extension, so far 100 percent – 21 of you are saying, yes. And like I said, those forms are attached. Laura, can you show the forms? They're attached.

MS. CASERTANO: You can download the forms from the File Share window, the bottom left-hand corner.

MS. MATTHEWS: OK. So those are provided for you. And are there any other questions or comments from our presenters?

MS. MOCKLER: Just a thank you. This is Vicki in New York. Thank you for the opportunity and I know my contact information is included in the presentation if there are follow-up questions, feel free to reach out.

MS. MATTHEWS: Yes. And I would like to say thank you to the presenters and to our national office, Ms. Lynn Fraga who came in to – just with answering the questions and my other colleagues, thank you for your time. Don't hesitate to contact your FPOs and FPOs, feel free to contact us here in the national office if you need additional assistance.

But let's get to spending those RSI-DWG funds. Thank you.

(END)