**WorkforceGPS**

**TAA Administrative Collection of States Overview and Questions**

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GRACE MCCALL: Welcome to "TAA Administrative Collection of States Overview and Questions." So without further ado, I'd like to turn things over to your speaker for today, Robert Hoekstra, program analyst, PMDR technical expert, Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance. Robert?

ROBERT HOEKSTRA: Thank you very much. Hi, everyone. It's nice to see a lot of people I know and a couple people I don't. So this is a webinar to talk about our inaugural collection of the TAAACS collection, the TAA Administrative Collection of States.

But I want to start out by finding out who's on the call, so we're going to do a quick poll and just let me know what your roll is in the organization so that I can make sure we get questions addressed to what the audience is. Perfect. I'll just give it another quick minute. Make sure we give everybody a chance to answer. Great. All right. It looks like the vast majority of you are trade staff with some reporting staff in there, which sounds pretty appropriate for the topic on this conversation so that's great.

So we're going to move on and talk a little bit about our agenda here. We're going to do a couple of things. We're going to talk about what this new TAAACS thing is. We'll discuss the reporting procedures. We'll understand the purpose and then we'll do a section-by-section walk-through, make sure we get any questions you have addressed so that we can have a successful first collection.

So let's run through some of the basics. First thing is that the TAA Administrative Collection of States is designed to give us some baseline information on state organization, including some state practice, so that we can get some context for technical assistance. We can identify states who are doing things interestingly.

We can prioritize some technical assistance when we'll get to a section specific to that as well. And then we're actually going to take this data and combine it with a couple of other data sets that you guys provide such as the PIRL to make sure we can figure out what state practices are related to positive program outcomes so that we can do some better technical assistance throughout good state practices.

So we use an eight-week timeline for TAAACS, so this period opened at the beginning of January and it will be due February 28, which strangely is not the last day of February this year, but it is Friday so it's February 28th. And we are normally going to run this from October through November. So this first one, we just got it approved. That's why we're doing the initial collection now.

But starting with the next year, we're actually going to start our FY 2021 collection in October and that way we can have this data and any updates ready for our annual report to Congress. You can request extensions. You can do that by talking to me and your legion. And so, if you do want to follow this data and don't fill this out by the end of February timeline, feel free to reach out and we can talk about giving you some extra time.

So you guys should all already have a copy of the TAAACS spreadsheet. If not, it's also attached here. I'm going to encourage a lot of you, if you don't have it up in front of you before we get to the section where we do a section-by-section walk through, to definitely pull it up in another screen because we are going to be walking through it in some pretty significant detail. The goal is to have states fill out that spreadsheet. There is dropdowns or fields to type into and then just e-mail that spreadsheet back to me and you can see my e-mail here.

I do do a review of it for completeness that makes sure both all the fields are filled out that need to be filled out. In addition, that the answers make some sense. So there is some validation on the Excel spreadsheet to make sure you don't type in completely erroneous things, the question being answered. But we'll get to some of the areas that it's very important that we get, that you format your answers in a particular way. And so, I'll be revealing those and talking to people as I get sheets back.

So this new collection was approved at the end of December, December 30th. You can see our new fancy OMB number here, which is a product of a very long, long approval process. It has 165 questions and we estimated that after asking a couple of states to look it over and actually respond to it, that it takes about five hours to complete.

If for some reason you are taking significantly longer than that, please talk to me. I want to make sure that we're not overly burdensome in this collection. It does include primarily discrete data and categories and it does allow you to, and it does provide some help text on how to frame those answers.

There are a couple of free text fields. There's a comment section at the end and we do like to have that context but it's really important here that we get discrete data because we are going to use it in data analysis and we're trying to reduce how much data cleaning we need to do.

The information will be submitted annually. And like I said that collection will normally run in October and November. It is mandatory under the statute as well as the Governor Secretary agreements.

So unless otherwise specified, the responses should be limited to the TAA program. This is on the top of the question as well, so all of the definitions are there. But we do define TAA broadly, so it includes TRA, A/RTAA and any other benefits that are through the TAA program.

Here's definitions and this was copy and pasted directly from the top of the collection so I'm not going to spend too long on here. We do collect a number of things on staffing numbers, so we do that from the full-time equivalent workers. We do have some information on local and regional offices and there's a couple of them that are definitions in here that are pretty helpful. If you guys have questions on that, I'm happy to take those now or when we get to those sections.

The collection covers eight broad areas. This includes the state organization, so that's things like staffing members, what your eligibility procedures and participant training procedures are, how well you're integrated with other workforce programs, the IT systems and your reporting, how you train TAA staff, how you conduct outreach, job search and relocation benefits and how you're going to provide those, and then some questions on barriers. And this is one of the things we'll talk about in us being able to prioritize technical assistance.

And Shelly, I see your question on merit versus non-merit staff. I'm going to table that until we get into a very detailed discussion of staffing, but I will definitely come back to it.

So there's a couple different kinds of questions. Some questions ask for data like an actual count or an estimate and we did, we're careful to allow estimates for a lot of the specific numbers in there. So for example, if you are trying to figure out how many local staff you have, we know that you might not have that off the top of your head so an estimate's okay as long as you try to make some meaningful guess as to what, how many people that involves.

Many questions ask for a scale so you'll see a lot of things where we're trying to rank things. And so, you'll get a lot of that. We do want you to use your best estimate when you don't have data so that we can have as complete data set as we can and we know that there's going to be some subjectivity to some of the questions in this collection.

Some of them do ask flat out for an opinion. So for example what are the most significant barriers or what is your level of integration. We'll talk about them specifically but a lot of programs, we ask you to give a one to five scale. Obviously, there is some subjectivity to that. We do give a little bit of framing around that so hopefully we can get a little bit of consistency, but it is going to be a little bit subjective and we just have to recognize that what we're getting is TAA opinions about how that integration is going.

So types of answers, there's some numbers which are the actual estimates. We have a lot of yes/no questions. When you do see the rankings, it's important to use numbers only once. So for example, you'll see something that says rank from one to five with one being the most common. Please don't give us three ones and two twos.

You actually have to put one, two, three, four, five unless something doesn't apply, at which point it would be, say, just one through four. When you do provide percentages, so for example, we ask an expertise of staffing, whether they are experts or the level of expertise, that should add to 100 percent. That's when I'm saying they're going to be techies, so if your numbers don't add up to 100 percent we're going to have to take it back to figure out what the actual numbers are.

And there's a lot of these that we put in meaningful categories so make sure you select the best choice. I know not all things are going to be perfect. So for example, we have one that just asks for centralized versus decentralized and I know no one's going to be happy with deciding on one or the other so just pick what you think is the best representation of what's going on in your state. And you'll see also some scales and there's a couple of free text things that we'll get at in a minute.

So important notes. Clicking on the field where you enter the information, there is help text on nearly every single field. It gives you some framing around how to answer those. So for example, you can see the snapshot here has your level of integration and it gives you kind of what we're looking for, what a one, a three or a five means.

Obviously it's not perfect, but that should give you some framing around what that scale should look like. There are some sub-questions that are indented so you may or may not need to answer everything on the form if it's not applicable to you due to a superseding question.

And there is an affirmation section at the bottom where you have to fill out who filled it out and do a little electronic signature. That is important. We do, I am going to be taking those back to make sure that we actually get some one signed off so we know who to talk to if there is a problem.

If you don't understand something, ask. This is basically our first time doing it. It is, we've gone through a lot of steps and time to get this right, but it's still the very first time we've done it. So if there's something confusing or something that you just don't like you can always come to me, ask me questions. That's what I'm here for and if there's anything really crazy about this I'm the one to blame. So I'm the perfect person to reach out to.

All right. Any questions on the set up of TAAACS before we move on to the content?

So yes, Joan (sp). Joan asked whether or not you can submit this early. You absolutely can. I already have received two, so special thanks to New Jersey and Arkansas for already turning in a completely valid sheet.

So I'm happy to receive it any time within the period. My only caution to that is when we do get to the second collection in October, November, I don't really want to see sheets in September. But as long as it's within that two-month collect, that eight-week collection period, I'm happy to receive them any time during that.

So Scott (sp), you have a great question about baseline. So baseline is not meant to be a what – it is not meant to be a way to compare states. It is meant to be when we walk into a technical assistance call with you, we have some understanding about what your state structure is.

That's one of the things that we sometimes run into when we are trying to provide technical assistance, especially when we have those individual one-on-one state calls is that we actually spend a significant amount of time trying to find out what your state looks like or what the setup in your state looks like and this will give us that information ahead of time that we can look at and say well, here's some of the major things that this state is or is not doing.

And so, we can use that for, to inform our technical assistance discussions. It's not meant to be a comparison between states except in the specific circumstance of specific practices where obviously we'll be looking at how specific state practices might impact outcomes.

And multiples have completed it. So great question, Mira (sp). You can have as many staff work on it as possible. You do need one person to sign off as a this is done. So, but we don't particularly care how many hands are in the pot as long as it gets done and someone says we're done and hands it over.

So yes, feel free. I highly encourage you to talk to other staff, to talk and not just within TAA but outside of TAA for some of the questions which we'll get to because it does have some questions to talk about how we work with other departments and I think that's a great context to have.

And I'll wait just another minute to see if there's other questions. All right.

So that's done. We're going to go through section by section, so if you don't have the collection up in front of you, I highly encourage you to pull it up and we will try and talk through each of them.

So the very first section is state overview or the state organization. We have a couple of objectives in the section. We're trying to figure out what your staffing model looks like and how it's arranged, which staff do what kind of work in the TAA program, how different staffing levels.

We want to be able to compare staffing levels to other states in similar size and other participation levels so we kind of have a baseline of whether you are on the low end of staffing or high end of staffing for similar states. We want to know how experienced your staff is in the state which helps us with our technical assistance.

You know, if you are onboarding a lot of new people, that's really helpful for us for what kind of information we disseminate. And so, the control in there. There's just one question on the use of central or local control and we'll talk a little bit about that in a minute.

All right. So let's talk a little bit about staffing. And Shelly (sp), your question about merit versus non merit staff, so this is specific to the merit staffing rule which I am pulling up the citation for now because I just don't know it off the top of my head, which requires particular hiring procedures and then actually be state-employed staff. And so, it should be whether or not they satisfied that merit staffing rule.

You'll also see for the various questions here whether or not certain groups apply. So for example, you should be able to see that when we ask how many FTE are employed at the state level not counting local staff or not counting those who are reporting or supporting locals directly, we are only including those for example, the state program staff. We're reporting a fiscal staff and if there's like a state regional staff.

So you'll also notice that only question one requires you to determine whether they are part of state merit staff. And I want, hopefully people can take a quick look at this and make sure that that makes sense. There is some long descriptions in each of these that say please include this group and not this group in this table, so that's a pretty good summary of who's included in question.

I'll wait just a minute for questions on this. For the citation on the merit staffing rule, it's 20 CFR 618.890 and I'll put that in the chat as well.

All right. So we're going to just start from the top. When considering open or filled positions we report only active staff, so it's only active staff. If you have open positions, hopefully they'll be filled by the next time we do the collection. Part of it is we're trying to look at it and see what your current staffing is and what the direction or prior staff is great. Obviously, they don't have provider capacity yet until they're hired so it's just filled positions.

If your local area uses timing merit staff, they do count as TAA merit staff so they would count in question one. You'll see that includes a count of local state or local staff and case managers for the merit only. Otherwise, the merit staffing rule doesn't apply to any of the other questions on staffing.

For state-level, it does include, includes central administration so it thinks people who are serving a role that's across the entire state, if they're trying to serve a local geographic area then they are not, I wouldn't generally consider them state staff so you're kind of counting your TAA coordinators, your TRA folks that normally sit in a central office. I realize there's a little bit of grey area but your best estimation is obviously what I'm looking for.

If, so Shelly asked if a provider or local board staff perform some duties, they could be included in the merit staff calculation so absolutely. So if you have someone who is working on trade issues even if they're local staff they can definitely be included in question one as merit staff.

I will say we are turning FTE so if they are only working part time on trade and they only spend a quarter of their time on trade, then they should count as a quarter of a person on the FTE calculation. So just bear in mind that if people are splitting their time you should be taking that into account.

Don (sp) asked if on question eight, how many total FTEs are associated with the regions in the state, whether it's specific to TAA or total employees. So everything in this collection is specific to trade. There are some places where we talk about other people who work on trade issues that aren't in the same trade department. So for example, there's some staff that are submitting TAA petitions but specifically for eight, it should be your trade staff or people working on trade issues.

So the, would we count the merit staff for WIOA? We have a local job center case manager and a few participants who are co-enrolled. So absolutely. If you have WIOA local staff, case managers who are helping trade participants, then yes they would count as local staff for the time that they're serving trade participants. So make sure you do as many times spent. The, and whether or not they're merit staff obviously depends on whether they will go in question one or just in question four.

Are there questions wanting numbers of staff or just no? So these are questions asking for the number of staff so let me see this. So I'm going to flip to the next slide. We can go back if people still want to look at the chart, but here is the questions one through four and you'll see that it's actually asking for the number of FTEs and you'll see there's these long parentheticals. This is when we did ask for some comments back from states, this was the one section that got many comments for clarification on who's included. So make sure you read these very long parentheticals so that we can try and get the groups we are working for.

Would this field include monitors and policy staff? So great question, Michelle (sp). It depends on which specific question, so as a general rule yes. So in number two for example, you're looking at your program, your reporting, your fiscal. So your program staff which may not be serving participants at all certainly would be included in that if they are doing monitoring or policy staff so that should be included here as well.

Scott (sp) says the slide does not look like the spreadsheet and you're right. That's because of the format that we had to paste it into. The spreadsheet, the language is still the same though. And like I said, feel free to open up the spreadsheet next to it. It's just blue because of the coloring we had to do on this slide, the previous slide.

So this is meant to be a helpful guide. This is not obviously the spreadsheet itself, so I took out the parentheticals to be able to make it easier to read as a giant table, but this is supposed to be just a helpful guide to what's included. It's not a reproduction of what's on the collection.

A couple more people typing. I'm just going to give a minute. So here, that's a great question Maureen (sp). Maureen asked whether TRA local staff, how exactly TRA does. So remember, we're broadly defining TAA to include anyone administering that TAA benefit or service so that includes TRA, R/TAA, job search or anything else administered through the trade program and not administrative. And to be clear, that's through, under the statute. That's not whether or not they're part of your department.

So Don (sp), great question on how many total FTEs are associated with regions in the state. This is including both merit and non-merit staff, so unless you're specifically asked about merit staff you should be including both. So actually, I think only question one is dedicated to merit staff. Question eight should include both.

All right. We're going to slide forward. If you have more questions on staffing, I am absolutely happy to address them. Just type them in and we'll address them as they come in.

Included in section one is some questions on rolls. We do ask that you give us a percentage of your staff that are expert, intermediate or novice. This should add to 100 percent. That way we can kind of figure out what the balance of staffing is in your state.

We have a couple of questions on who does major activities such as filing petitions, filing intake and who has the most contact with trade participants. The categories, make sure you click on the field and or ranking. So for example, question nine on who is most likely to file in a state, it requires you to rank from one to five. If there's a group that doesn't you'll obviously exclude them but you should be having if three of those categories file, you should have numbers one, two and three in there.

And then question 14 is a little bit different. It's asking about centralized or localized, whether you are generally run out of a central office or whether it's state with a lot of local control. We have some language in there that talks about broad things to consider. That includes who is, where are the procedures for approving TA benefits?

Are you using standardized forms across the state or do locals have their own? Do they set their own policies in the local offices or is it all done centrally in one location? And so, we're looking for the best answer but those are some of those things you should be thinking about in terms of whether you are centrally controlled or localized.

All right. So a couple of questions before I move onto section two. Shelly asked about, on question 10 where we're looking at the distribution of expertise, whether it should be based on data or how we view the level of expertise. We aren't requiring you to cite any data here. We recognize part of the reason why we didn't do this based on something like tenure is because expertise with the TAA program obviously varies.

It depends on how much they actually interact with the TAA program, how much they've had to dig in and address complicated issues and things like that. So there probably is not an objective way to measure this, which is part of the reason why we're asking for kind of your subjective ranking.

How do you differentiate state staff and state staff who work at a local office? So Erin (sp), that is a terrific question. And I guess my question is whether their major role is as a, as supporting that local geographic area or if they are supporting the state as a whole. So if they happen to sit in a local office but they are doing a role that would normally be associated with the central state office serving people all across the state, then they are probably state staff. If they are sitting in that local office because they're focused on the people in that geographic area, then they are probably local staff.

Would rapid response employees who spend 15 percent of the time filing petitions be considered .15 of merit staff? I would say so. Yes, Sarah (sp). That is a great way to look at it. We do want to take into account how much money they spend on it, so rapid response is obviously people we work with a lot and they will be filing, doing a lot of work on behalf of trade abut that won't be their full-time job often. So you should be taking into account how much of that is full-time equivalent work there.

All right. I'm going to move onto section two. If you have continued, feel free to continue to read questions on that. I know staffing is going to be the one where people are going to have the most difficulty figuring out where these things go, so I'm happy to take any other questions as they come in.

All right. Section two is about eligibility determinations and participant training. So we are trying to figure out how do you verify eligibility, what group does it. We're going to be looking at if we see differences in take-up rates depending on how the eligibility processes are arranged. We're going to try and see if there's differences in the utilization of benefits, depending on how particular eligibility determinations are made.

And we also want to know what your training approval process is. So one of the things on here is asking whether or not, or who determines what the training, who approves the training and whether there's particular thresholds over which additional checks need to be made. So that is what we're trying to get at in this section.

So we're going to ask questions on how, which is how do you normally do eligibility determinations with UI wage records. This might be FEIN. We want to hear about what that process normally looks like. We're going to find out which groups are generally doing it and then we're going to figure out four specific types of benefits.

So the general TAA eligibility, that initial TAA eligibility is the program eligibility. So are you part of a certified worker group? Yes or no. So not specific to a training benefit or a TRA benefit or an A/RTA benefit. Spelling on the side that nobody caught. But it should be that initial already part of certified worker group eligibility determination.

The training approvals, who, training amounts. Do you do approvals for remedial training only and do you require credential as part of a training plan when you are doing the approval for training?

Any other questions on eligibility? So a couple of notes. So Joe (sp) points out that it's very possible to hit eligibility and it may not be done by either FEIN or UI. That's absolutely true so you can certainly select no for both of those. There's no reason any one of them has to be yes. Obviously, if we have initial questions we may follow up to find out how it is you are doing that. Part of this is we do know that there is also just we get worker list and facts in other ways. So we recognize that there's other processes. This is part of us trying to figure out who uses these specialized processes.

On 16, so does your state use FEIN numbers in parts to determine TAA eligibility? So the question is do, are you using a process that requires to be employer federal identification code to line up? So for example, if you will only consider someone eligible if the determination, the main component of determination maps to a particular FEIN, let's see it amounts to wage records, then you are absolutely using it. If you are matching the name of the company but you don't care whether or not it maps to the official federal employee ID, then the answer is no. I hope that was helpful.

A couple more questions. Does the state require training plans to include credential attainment? I'll have the answer to that for OJT. So remember we're trying to do the best answer. And so, if OJT is a major part of your process, that might change something. I think for almost all states that's not true, so as a general rule if the answer is yes than you should be selecting yes for whether or not credential is attained.

There are some other options. So for example, it's yes always or yes on the higher approval, depending on how often OJT is used you may consider using that option. I think we recognize OJTs use a carve out in this, so we're trying to get what your general process looks like. That was question 26.

And 15 and 16 can you do yes for that question? Absolutely. So you may be using UI records and that may, and you may additionally be using a process that uses FEIN or it may be an integrated process that uses both UI records and the FEIN so you absolutely can say yes or no to both of those. They don't have to be tied together. You don't have to have one yes and one no. They can both be yes, both of those details.

All right. Great questions.

So section three is on integration. We have a couple of objectives here. We're trying to figure out how states integrate, what types of integration are most common and which ones are most important, what types are more effective mechanisms for integration and how are the participant services themselves integrated.

So we are primarily do this through ratings, so we do, we recognize that this is a bit subjective so we do use a scale. One is little to no integration with siloed service delivery. Three is periodic integration with coordination only as needed. And five is you're highly integrated where you're regularly coordinating service delivery. Obviously two and four is somewhere between that and these should just give you a frame around where to estimate your own integration. We do this for a number of different programs in the section and three of them I'm going to call out with a little bit more detail.

So we do ratings for these kinds of programs. Hopefully they're all fairly self-explanatory although I'm happy to answer questions on that. And then we do, we ask about your specific methods of integration with rapid response, TRA and fiscal. And so, these are just a yes/no for each of these types of integration and yeah.

The TAA and rapid response question, is it directed towards state or local staff? That is a great question, Scott (sp). My short answer is you should be considering your state processes as a whole so we're not particularly concerned with whether or not this is really great integration at the state level or the local level. We want to know overall what the level of integration is.

Obviously, some of the processes which we do ask about for rapid response are going to be specific to kind of your state-level staff. So for example, whether your in the same department probably is more specific to your state staff. There are some system ties to processes. For example, there are electronic ones that are probably more specific to how your local staff interact with each other. But we're just trying to get an overall feel for where that particular integration is.

One more person says informal process. So great question on formal versus informal process. The difference I would say is that a formal process is we have an established we have – I'm trying to think of another category that's not already covered here. But since I'm having trouble coming up with one, let's assume that meetings wasn't on there and so that was another. So if you have a meeting that occurs with predictable regularity, you know that every once a quarter you're going to get together and do this, that is a formal process preferably.

Or if you have a, like an SOP that says every time we have this situation you have to go talk to XYZ, that is a formal process. An informal process is when you say when I think I need to I'm going to go over and chat with that other department. That's a very informal process in that event. It doesn't have to be specific to an MOU. It just has to be whether or not you have a procedure that is predictable.

All right. The last part of this section we do ask about your current common exit policy and whether you have a co-enrollment policy that's with WIOA adult and WIOA dislocated worker. Those are all categories. I think they're pretty self-explanatory. They are a little TAA-focused. So for example, for your common exit policy, if TAA is not included you can just say yes but TAA is not included. So we're concerned really with common policy with TAA.

And then there's categories for the current co-enrollment. So that stems from we don't have co-enrollment to discretion, to referral required to you requiring co-enrollment. And then we also have an option recognizing that you may have different local areas that set their own co-enrollment policies so there's an option for that as well.

Great question, Thomas (sp). JVSG is Jobs for Veterans. I'm working on it. Jobs for Veteran State Grants. There you go. And thank you, Scott. It's one of those things that everybody just quotes, really throws out there and never really did ask what the actual acronym stands for.

I could go another minute to ask questions on this section before we move on. All right. Let's move onto section four.

Section four is IT systems and reporting. This is actually one of our longest sections so I apologize about that. The – we have a couple of objectives here. We want to know how you do TAA reporting, how integrated your IT systems are, how frequently you update it. Part of that is we're trying to figure out what kind of, what speed of upgrade really gets them benefits in service delivery and how much you leverage your IT for case managers and participants. And most of the questions are actually in this last category and you'll see that when we get into those.

So for reporting, we're trying to find out if you have a dedicated set, a unit or a staff that do reporting. Whether they do all DOL reporting or specific for trade, we want to know whether you've used that, those reporting staff if you have them for any kind of reporting other than DOL stakeholders.

So for example, if all they do is construct the PIRL and submit it, that's great. But if instead they take that data and also give reports to your local offices on how they're doing or something like that, that's another stakeholder and we want to know whether or not they're doing those kinds of other activities.

We are trying to look at the complexity of integration and how much, or when your last upgrade was. So as far as your last upgrade, as far as your last upgrade, if you don't know a specific date that's perfectly fine. Give us the best estimate. Some people are going to say it was 12 years ago so give us some gauge even if you don't know the specific date, as close to the last date that you can is very helpful.

And so in addition, we want to know how the use of IT systems go so we are looking at both the staff and case managers so this is going to be questioned like are you using paper-based where you document in the system the important things that have to go into the PIRL? Or are you actually using an integrated electronic system for doing your local staff doing the work? We also want to know where documents end up getting placed. Are you doing paper files? Are you actually uploading them somewhere? And then we ask a lot of questions around the online portals and what participants, whether they have access to an online portal and what they can do there.

Yantsi, (sp) and I apologize if I'm not pronouncing your name correctly, asked about 67 through 72 which is all about, they're all subtopics under 66. So this is about whether the participants can go in and fill out forms in the system. So they should be all participant focused from question 58 through 74.

Other questions on this section. A couple people typing. I'm going to give it just a minute. So on 52 through 54, so the dash instead of an and is where I'm going to take a little bit of a note on Laura's 52 through 54. The next major upgrade date is optional. That's an if known. But if, but 53, date of last major upgrade completed, you should be providing at least an estimated date. So something that is in the future and it's not planned, you can leave that blank. But something that's happened in the past, you should be at least providing an estimated date.

For 67, is it – (inaudible). So 67 is, like I said, this whole section is about access to the, like participants going in and filling out forms in an online system so it's whether the participant can fill out that form in an online system themselves. If case managers are going in to assist and completing it form them, that's not relevant to this section, although interesting nonetheless.

Is the benefit system addressed in survey if not part of the case management system? So we do specifically ask questions on the UI system. That includes your TRA, R/TAA system. So for example, question 53, date of last major upgrade to UI systems, would apply to your benefit system.

Obviously, we had to pick one term and a lot of people used different terms so that's the one we used. You'd find UI at the top as covering those, but that's what that's trying to get at. We don't ask a lot of questions about your benefit system. It's really just that and then the number of different systems used to generate the PIRL which is 47. So if you are combining data from, say, a case management system and a benefit system then that would at least give you two.

Question 69 through 72. Learning eligibility through payment requests. So these are all talking about eligibility, so can an application for TRA, R/TAA be completed? The requirement is whether or not they can put in that initial eligibility determination, not whether they can submit for specific payments.

Questions. Is the UI system TRA, R/TAA specific? So that's a great question, Steven (sp), about whether the UI system upgrade applies. So I would say if it affects TRA or R/TAA, then I would count it. If for some reason you then upgrade that didn't touch the trade benefits at all, it wouldn't count. But if it's just a general upgrade that affects everything including TRA and R/TAA then I would count it.

Great. Keep the questions coming. We're going to move onto section four. Five.

All right. So the next section is training for TAA staff and there's only eight quick questions in here. It is check all that apply. So these should be, they're categories so we are looking for frequencies on a lot of these. How do you train your staff? So are you, do you have a handbook? Yes. No. Do you do conferences? If so, at what frequency? Do you use an online forum? So there were some that are yes/no. Some have frequencies depending on what exactly the training mechanism is.

I think this is pretty straightforward. Does anyone have any questions on this? Great. Great.

All right. Sixth section is outreach. On outreach, our objectives are how do you know to file a petition? How do you contact workers? How successful is that contact? And how to practices relate to state upgrades and petition filings, which obviously we will be looking at our own data to do.

Petition filings, we want to know for example, do you have a process for evaluating WARNs? What about one where a WARN is not required? What about those where we do do a portion of TAA eligible groups that have a petition filed. This is highly subjective. This is Gerry's (sp) question and you're just trying to do a best estimate. So the idea is we know that there's a lot of layoffs in the state. Not all of them we know about. Not all of them we file a petition for. So do you think there's people out there that you are not filing for? And if so, how much?

And you'll see that the categories on this are very broad. It is just none, less than half, about half, more than half or almost all. So we're looking for something general. Do you think you have sufficient contacts that you are finding out about layoffs and filing petitions for them or do you think that you are just getting a periodic news and you aren't really identifying all of the layoffs that could be trade-impacted? And yes. We recognize this is highly subjective.

All right. Reaching eligible persons. So we are looking for estimates of groups notified, the percent that acknowledged that notification and the percent that applied for TAA. These can be broad estimates. If you don't have data on it, just give us the best guess you can. Some states do actually have specific data on it. So if you can run that, obviously we would love to have real numbers.

And so, one of the questions is on 81 which asks total number of workers notified of group eligibility in the last year, so this is how many people you reach out to with a notification saying hey, you may be eligible for trade. Come and talk to us and file an application with us. And the period of reporting we're looking for is within the last year from the time of this collection.

I realize that there is a two-month time so from whenever you are answering that question, pick a year, I'm under the general presumption that if you move it by a week it's not going to significantly change this number. I could be wrong in that, but when you fill it out a year from before that until then.

And then rankings on most used communication methods, which should be just, so I do want to make sure you are ranking only once. So the first section is methods of contact and second ranking is sources for identifying worker contacts. The one to nine and one to seven. You should have two ones anywhere.

You can have blanks if it's something that's just not used. So for example, in the first question on methods of contact, there are nine possible. If there are two you don't use, then you should have numbers one through seven. But make sure you don't double up any numbers because we will get that because we do want to have as close to a hierarchy as we can.

Great. Any other questions on section six? All right. I do know that 78 is going to be complicated. That's probably the most complicated question to answer on here. That's why we used really broad categories, so we know it's subjective and we'll just have to work with it as best we can.

All right. Section seven is just on job search and relocation. This is the shortest section on here. We want to determine when states offer job search and relocation, partly because we're trying to determining if there are certain times that are associated when people utilize those benefits more or less. They are a simple yes/no. There's only five questions. They're, and remember you're talking general practice so it varies considerably between your, whether an individual case manager does or doesn't tell us what you think is generally going on in the state.

Any questions on section seven? This is the shortest section and hopefully the easiest to get through. All right.

Last section. Last section is on barriers and this is one big question with 15 barriers where we're trying to determine what challenges states are encountering and help us prioritize technical assistance. So once again, it's important that all numbers are unique so you have the numbers one through 15 if you're experiencing all the 15 barriers we should see one one and one 15 in there.

If there is a barrier you're not experiencing, it's okay to have a blank. That obviously will truncate how many numbers you have in there. This is going to be deeply important. We're trying to figure out where to prioritize our time when providing technical assistance, so this is something we're going to look at, probably the very first thing we'll look at when we get all the sheets in. So definitely try and take some time to think about this and where you think the biggest issues are in there.

Any questions on that? All right.

So there's some closing notes. The affirmation at the bottom of the screen definitely needs to be filled out. If you want to contextualize any of these responses you've given, you say I selected yes but you really should know X, Y and Z. Make sure you put that in the comments section, which is number 88 on the form.

They are completely optional, but we love to hear those things. Obviously, there's always a balance between how much detail we can get and how much we can make it into an actual piece of data. So we're trying to give you the opportunity here to give us those context elements that you don't get by having to pick a dropdown.

If you have questions or comments in addition to, we're going to spend some time now talking about any other questions or comments. But I also just want to hear from you guys. So if you think that you are confused about a question or if you say hey, it would be great if this question was phrased this other way. Or hey, I see these five options on this question. I really wish there was a sixth option that says Y. Or if this is taking you a really long time to fill out, I want to hear all those things.

Obviously, we're going to do this once a year. At some point, we do have to renew the form and we'll make adjustments when we do that so if there's things you wish were different about this collection, please tell us. Specifically, please tell me so that I can make sure that we get changes to make this the most effective collection we can.

So Scott, great question on co-enrollment. My short answer is I think we get enough information on the what's going on with co-enrollment in the section above. That's an interesting suggestion. I might consider adding it at some point on this collection. The, I am hoping that the co-enrollment questions get significantly modified shortly for other reasons that I'm not going to go into.

Can we put the count side down if we need to clarify an answer? So Robin (sp), that's a great question but my short answer is I really hope you don't. the reason is because we're going to use an automated process to follow the answers out and put it into a connected spreadsheet so that we can combine all 50 states.

And if you put stuff in places on the form where it's not intended to have an answer we might miss it. I am going to look for each one of these and I'll probably know it but I'll probably also tell you to move it because like I said, I want to make sure that when we combine this into one data set, we have all the pieces of context in the right place.

In the comment section – so yeah. Absolutely. So Scott, you don't need to put in what the state is because we absolutely will have what state it is in the affirmation section down here. And honestly, we are categorizing but we'll actually sort all the sheets by state name. So we don't need the state in there but if there is a specific question you're talking about in your comments, it would be really great to have, either tell us what question it is or there's numbering along the entire left side of this so that every single response you can refer to its number. I know that's very intentional. So whatever context you can give is the best.

The next text has mostly the same questions. So great question. So it is an approved form, which means that we can't change it without going through about a six-month process of saying, of justifying to a variety of other agencies why we are changing the form. So the next collection 100 percent will look exactly the same as this one. Obviously, we do review that every three years at the minimum to be able to change it, so it will change eventually but the next collection will be exactly the same as this one. And that one like I said will happen in October and November of this year.

All right. So a couple of resources. At the end of March, so you guys are going to turn in your sheets at the end of February. At the end of March, we're going to do an initial webinar that just says hey, here's what we saw across multiple states. That will hopefully, I obviously don't know what insights I'm going to share because we don't know until we get the data but hopefully that will be very interesting. As a reminder, there's the participant reporting page which has a whole bunch of great resources on reporting and there are some upcoming webinars on the TAA community page. And there is my contact information.

Will you be sharing the Q&A from – so this webinar is recorded and will be shared out. There is usually a transcript done and a minute-by-minute like executive summary. So for example, if you are looking for questions on or you're looking for the staffing section, it'll say here's where in the webinar you should go to listen to stuff about staffing. Obviously, questions that have drifted between sections, although I don't think we've actually had a ton of those, will be a little bit harder to find. But if there are other questions obviously feel free to contact me.

And yes, Gerry, the report gets sent specifically back to me. So feel free to include regions or the reporting box or whoever else you feel comfortable with, but it specifically has to go to me. I'm the one who will be working on this data and administrating this.

All right. Final questions, comments. All right. Thank you, everyone.

And just a reminder, we're going to close this up. Feel free to please stick around and give us some ratings on this and there you are. I'm going to kick it back over to Grace.

MS. MCCALL: All right. Excellent. I'd like to thank all the participants and our presenter for today's webinar.

(END)