**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**New Guidance: National Dislocated Worker Grants**

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LAURA CASERTANO: And again, I want to welcome everyone to today's "National Dislocated Worker Grants, Updated Program Guidance" webinar. And I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Amy Ambrose with the Office of Workforce Investment, the Employment and Training Administration. Amy, take it away.

AMY AMBROSE: Thank you very much. Welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining us this afternoon. We hope that our presentation is informative and helpful in our National Dislocated Worker grants, and particularly in dealing with challenges right now.

Our presenters today include Robert Kite, who is division chief for the Division of Adult Services and Governance inside the Office of Workforce Investment; and my colleagues, Kim Powell, Jeff Ryan, in Office of Workforce Investment; and Lynn Fraga in the Office of Grants Management.

OK. So for today's agenda, we don't plan to go line-by-line through the TEGL – TEGL 12-19, which is our training and employment guidance letter about the operations of Dislocated Worker grants. But we do plan to provide an overview of the purpose of the DWG program, talk about performance information that you need to have – performance reporting – talk about DWG policy and programmatic highlights from the TEGL – so we're going to hit on some of the changes since TEGL 2-15 and the application procedures for submitting a grant request.

But before we get into the content today, we have a brief polling question to see who we have on the phone. So if – I guess, how does – there it is. Hi. There's the polling question; you should see it on your screen. "What type of organization do you represent? A state or outlying area, a local workforce development board, Indian tribal entity or WIOA 166 grantee, federal agency, or other." (Pause.)

OK. And it looks like the vast majority of us on the call today are representing a state or outlying area workforce agency. We have some local boards on the phone also; federal agency is on the phone. So that's great. That's the audience we were hoping to reach.

OK. So now I'm going to turn it over to Robert Kite who has just a few opening remarks to set the table before we start the presentation. Robert?

ROBERT KITE: Thank you, Amy. On behalf of the Division of Adult Services and Governance, and the larger OWI and OGM staff, I want to first thank all of you for joining the webinar today.

These are uncertain times that have shaken up both our professional and personal lives. If you're like us, it's a struggle right now for all of us in trying to maintain balance between the two. Nevertheless, we engage in this workforce development; work must push on.

More than ever before, the American people need the services and benefits of a public workforce system. I commend you and your steadfast dedication to make a difference in the lives of the people who are depending on us to be there for them.

We were fortunate to have John Pallasch, the assistant secretary for Employment and Training, speak to OWI on Tuesday. And I'm going to share some words that he left with us that I think you will also find meaningful.

John said, "Sure, we face a major challenge, with possibly over 7 million Americans unemployed. But this is the workforce system's time to shine." John's very positive, very upbeat, and looks forward and believes in our ability to meet the needs of the American people.

We hope the information shared in this webinar will help you better address the needs of dislocated workers at both the state and local levels.

I would be remiss if I didn't tell you that TEGL 12-19 has been a labor of love for us. It's been more – it's been long-awaited I know out in the field, and we've been at work for well over a year in getting it published. So we hope that you find it very useful.

We also know that you're likely to have many unanswered questions beyond TEGL 12-19 in regards to applying for disaster COVID-19 DWG funds. While we may not be able to answer all of them, we will do the best that we can. There are many questions coming from the field and we are working through a vetting and clearance process to ensure that we provide the most relevant and responsive answer. We thank you for your patience as we tread these uncharted waters. I encourage you to stay safe and healthy.

And I now turn you back over to Amy. Thank you again for being with us today.

MS. AMBROSE: Thank you very much, Robert. OK. For many of you on the call, you have a long history with National Dislocated Worker grants and they may be very familiar to you. But for those, this may be a new introduction to the program, so we wanted to provide a little bit of an overview before we head into some of the nuts and bolts.

So DWGs are supplemental resources that provide flexibility in responding and recovering from qualifying events. And those events include disasters and also layoff events. ETA expects that grants will be aligned with existing state and local priorities, resources, and programs.

DWGs should not be seen as stand-alone programs; they're interlocked with the other formula programs happening in the field. We expect that programs will be executed in coordination with existing efforts through Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion formula-funded activities, business engagement efforts, and more.

We also expect the projects to maximize positive outcomes for participants. So that in a nutshell is the DWG program. It exists to supplement the resources and provide flexibility in responding to moments where we need added capacity.

So we're going to start by covering performance reporting. Someone told me once, we need to see the end from the beginning. And these are about – the reporting gets at the outcomes that we are aiming for. Kim Powell is going to present on this topic. Kim, are you on the phone?

KIM POWELL: I am here. Thank you, Amy. I'd like to take over the slides for now.

So today I'm going to summarize where you can go to find more resources about the DWG performance and reporting requirements.

So previous program guidance for DWG contained the performance information within the program guidance. But the TEGL we're talking about today, the focus of the presentation – TEGL 12-19 – is different. The performance policy for DWG was actually issued in separate guidance issued specifically about performance.

The DWG operations TEGL contains a small section about reporting on page 21, and the new guidance then refers readers to a more comprehensive TEGL that covers performance for many ETA programs, and specifically for DWG.

The performance guidance for the DW program is found in Training and Employment Guidance letter 14-18. This guidance was released about a year ago on March 25th, 2019. And part of the intention of this performance TEGL was to bring alignment to performance management across ETA programs, and also customize guidance to the specific programs as needed.

To accomplish that, TEGL 14-18 is structured with a main body that applies to all the programs covered in the guidance and then an attachment for each program. So the DWG guidance is found in attachment 6 of TEGL 14-18.

So the links on the slide is where to find these resources. These are also posted on the webinar screen. There are two links and both are relevant. The first is to the main body of the TEGL, which describes overarching policies for DOL programs. And the second, attachment 6, describes performance accountability requirements for the DWG program.

The information found in the main body of TEGL 14-18, along with attachment 6, govern all the performance policies for the DWG program.

So we can go back to the slides. (Pause.)

The DWG grantees report in accordance with these six WIOA indicators of performance: employment the second quarter after exit, employment the fourth quarter after exit, median earnings the second quarter after exit, credential attainment, measurable skill gains, and effectiveness serving employers.

These performance indicators extend to all types of DWG grantees, regardless of the type of entity. So that includes states, outlying areas, local areas, Indian and Native American tribes, and nonprofit organizations.

So this is a view of what the grantee report will look like once the performance data is submitted. It includes performance outcome data, as well as information on services provided in the grant and characteristics of the participants.

There are two reports to complete for DWG. The first is the quarterly performance report, which is displayed when the performance data is submitted. Grantees also fill out a narrative report template each quarter, the quarterly narrative report. And each of these reports is submitted through WIPS.

The Workforce Integrated Performance System, or WIPS, is the online system for submitting DOL performance reports, including DWG reports. And the WIPS reporting system is accessed using the link shown on the slide.

Information on DWG performance is available on the DWG performance webpage. This webpage contains a number of resources, including additional resources to learn about DWG performance. There is also a comprehensive reporting guide, called the "DWG Reporting Technical Assistance Guide," which provides detail on all aspects of reporting.

And in addition to the reporting guide, there is a webcast available on DWG performance. The webcast covers the definitions and policies from the performance TEGL and provides instructions on the reporting process. And this is posted on the WFGPS website.

So after presenting these resources, I'm now going to turn it over to Jeff Ryan, who's going to talk more about the DWG program and TEGL 12-19.

JEFF RYAN: Great. Thank you, Kim. Hello, everybody. Good afternoon, morning.

Just to reiterate what Amy said at the beginning, we're going to talk about highlights, changes, revisions, and clarifications that exist in the new TEGL 12-19 from the original DWG TEGL 2-15. If we try to just go by line-by-line to walk through the entire TEGL it would take us hours, and I think we want to just try to focus on those things that are different so we can get to question-and-answer period with you.

Of course, as Robert said in his remarks, there will be a lot of questions about COVID-specific activities that we're not going to be able to answer on this call. But if you have them, please make sure to put them in the chat box. We will collect them and we will do our best to get answers to them to be posted to our COVID-specific resource pages that ETA is creating.

And if you have questions that come up after the webinar's over, I'd recommend that you reach out to your FPO and they can help organize questions that come in so we can try to get them all answered.

But let's start really at the basic level, the types of DWGs. You probably noticed in our guidance we only cover two types of DWGs now, disaster recovery and employment recovery. In the old days we had four major types that are on the screen – DWGs for layoffs, for service members, for trade-impacted workers, and for emergency and disasters.

We tried to simplify the program as much as possible to recognize that there are really two major categories. There are some subtypes within those categories, but those are the broad categories for which you'd be applying.

So let's start with disaster recovery; I think that's probably on everybody's mind today. So let's take a look at what's going on in the world of disaster recovery DWGs in terms of this TEGL.

First I want to just really briefly give you a purpose and the limitations on disaster recovery DWGs. They are grants that provide, as most of you know, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance employment. So they actually provide jobs to people, as well as employment and training services, which is – should be read as career and training services.

The DWG program uses the terms "employment and training" and "disaster relief employment." So the two "employments" in there may get confusing, but those are two separate things. Disaster relief employment is temporary jobs. Employment and training services refers to the career and training services that we would do.

And these grants are designed to minimize the economic and employment impacts of declared disasters and emergency situations in those disaster-declared areas. We should point out that all activities carried out under disaster recovery DWGs must be specifically addressing the impacts of the current disaster and not be designed solely to prevent impacts of future disasters. The TEGL gives you some – (inaudible) – of what that means if you are looking for more information on it.

DWG funds under disaster recovery DWGs may also be used to provide employment and training services to dislocated workers and to other eligible participants. And we will cover what – (inaudible) – are shortly. But again, we want to state that employment and training activities should be designed to ensure that the participants in the grant can obtain unsubsidized sustainable employment following their participation in the grant. That's sort of the reason for doing employment and training activities under a disaster grant.

So really quickly, there are three types – three entity types that are eligible for disaster recovery DWGs; that's the state agencies, outlying areas, and Indian tribal governments as defined in the Stafford Act. And I put the citation there. That's different from the WIOA 166 grantees. These are two different populations, so we wanted to just clarify that those two exist in that context.

And then when grants are awarded, states or other grantees may subgrant funds to local boards and may expend the funds through public and private agencies and organizations. So it's not – we don't really have a limitation on who can be carrying out those activities.

I should point out, though, that we do expect that funds are allocated as quickly as possible to any subrecipients to ensure that we are addressing this crisis as quickly as possible.

OK. Eligible participants. The eligibility for disaster recovery DWGs hasn't changed from 2-15. But we wanted to point out one piece of information, that as grantees, you are responsible for setting the appropriate policies and procedures for determining who is an eligible participant. What that means essentially is that you have the authority to provide exceptions to existing policy regarding acceptable documentation that must be collected.

What we really are talking about here is that you may rely on self-attestation in certain cases to determine that someone is eligible. But we expect that you will eventually collect all necessary documentation at some point in the future. There are times when people do not have documentation at hand but need to be enrolled quickly. And that's OK, as long as you are eventually collecting the necessary information.

OK. We have a couple of ways that disasters are declared. One is by FEMA; that's sort of the long-standing declaration for public assistance. That hasn't changed. WIOA also created a new category of declaration by other federal agencies for what they call "emergencies or disasters of national significance."

The reason we wanted to include this here – it hasn't changed from TEGL 2-15, but we did clarify one piece of information. That in order to be eligible for a disaster recovery DWG for a declaration by an agency other than FEMA, you must also be able to include in your application information that demonstrates that this disaster emergency could result in a potentially large loss of employment. So that's a fairly odd sentence.

So we've just clarified for you in the context that we believe that you should be able to demonstrate or project the loss of at least 50 jobs in order to be eligible for a non-FEMA-declared disaster. FEMA-declared disasters do not have that same requirement. They do not require you to demonstrate a large loss of employment.

And I should also point out that COVID-19 got a FEMA declaration. So not that – unfortunately, it (would be ?) difficult to demonstrate large loss of employment, but that's not part of the application if it's a FEMA-declared disaster, as we have with COVID.

OK. Let's see. We have also wanted to clarify for any grants that address individuals who have evacuated or relocated from a disaster area. We see this sometimes when there's a major storm. We saw it with – after Hurricane Maria, we saw it with Katrina, and there are other times when it happens.

The language in the TEGL has always said "a substantial number of individuals have relocated or been evacuated from a disaster area to another area." We've defined "substantial" in this context to mean 50 individuals. It doesn't say "workers;" it says "individuals." So we're not looking at 50 workers specifically.

The important thing to note here is that the relocation or evacuation of 50 or more individuals to a non-impacted area can be a qualifying event for that area to apply for a DWG, but it does not restrict who may participate in the grant. Any individuals who are otherwise eligible, as defined in the TEGL – so that's dislocated workers, long-term unemployed, self-employed individuals who become underemployed – I think it's significantly underemployed or unemployed as a result of the disaster, and individuals temporarily or permanently dislocated by the disaster. Any of those individuals may be enrolled in a grant that was awarded to address relocation.

We're trying to address the increased impact of a new population coming into a community that wasn't taken into account when the formula was created. So the increased impact on the workforce system can be addressed with a disaster recovery DWG, which is why we allow any individuals who are eligible to be participating, not just those who were relocated.

To clarify a little bit, this is not new but I just wanted to make sure that we talk through a little bit the grant activities that are under disaster recovery DWG. There's two types. So first, you must – your grant must provide disaster relief employment. Disaster relief employment is two types; cleanup and recovery efforts and delivery of appropriate humanitarian assistance. We define that in the immediate aftermath of the disaster or emergency.

The grant may also provide employment and training activities. So we've talked about this a little bit, but the reason we wanted to say it again is because your grant must provide disaster relief employment. It also may provide employment and training activities. You may provide supportive services to participants receiving either disaster relief employment or employment and training activities.

There are, briefly, two exceptions to the requirement to provide disaster relief employment and I'll just cover them briefly just so we are all on the same page with that. There are two cases where you may be able to get a disaster recovery DWG that does not require disaster relief employment to be provided.

The first would be in a declaration by another federal agency, not FEMA, where there are circumstances and the nature of the disaster that just don't allow for cleanup and humanitarian employment opportunities. We've seen a few of these over the years where there have been a declaration of an economic emergency of some kind that has an impact in a community but doesn't have any kind of physical or humanitarian needs associated with it. So that's one possible exception.

The other is in a case where a DWG is awarded due to that influx of individuals who are relocated from another area, where there's no disaster in the area where they've been relocated to, it's possible that there won't be any disaster relief employment. Although either of these grants you could still potentially offer disaster relief employment if it's appropriate. And maybe humanitarian assistance only, but it's certainly something you should be able to determine based on the needs of that specific event.

Even though this isn't really new in TEGL 12-19, I just wanted to highlight again. For any disaster recovery DWGs you might be thinking about or preparing, what disaster relief employment covers. So again, disaster recovery DWGs are providing disaster relief and humanitarian assistance employment, plus potential employment and training services, to minimize the employment and economic impact of declared disasters and emergencies.

So I've said that already but I want to highlight it again because we're talking about the employment and economic impact. So those are important things to remember when you're thinking about how you're going to develop a project to address a particular situation.

Cleanup and recovery efforts – including demolition, repair, renovation, and reconstruction – is the kinds of disaster relief employment that you are likely to be doing. What I want to point out is that this is for damaged or destroyed structures, facilities, lands, et cetera, located within the disaster area and in offshore areas.

We've actually had some grants where offshore areas have been targeted for cleanup, so that is something that we can possibly address. But again, those impacts have to be specifically related to the emergency or disaster that was declared at that time.

We also allow for employment related to the delivery of the appropriate humanitarian assistance in the immediate aftermath of a disaster or emergency. So again, those – I've talked about them a few times but I just want to be as clear as possible about the types of employment that can be carried out under a disaster recovery DWG.

Let's talk a little bit more about humanitarian assistance. We tried to make this definition pretty flexible and broad to help you when you are designing your projects. Humanitarian assistance generally includes actions designed to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. So that's a fairly broad context.

We think that it includes activities such as the provision of food, clothing, and shelter. Not the purchase of those items, but the delivery of items to people in need is certainly possible. There are many other potential areas of humanitarian assistance that you may determine as a crisis unfolds.

And again, as with the cleanup type work, if you're doing humanitarian assistance it has to be directly related to the immediate disaster and not preventing a future disaster. So that's a little bit harder with humanitarian assistance than it is with cleanup type activities. But always remember, if you're doing activities it has to be addressing the impacts of the crisis, not preventing future crises from occurring.

OK. A big change we did make that might be really helpful to you is we really tried to clarify the circumstances in which you're able to work to do cleanup and other temporary work on private property. Generally speaking, we expect that projects funded under disaster recovery DWGs will provide the cleanup and humanitarian assistance in public spaces. We expect you'll give the highest priority to heavily damaged public facilities, public lands, et cetera.

However, we do recognize that there are times when you need to work on private property in order to achieve the goals of the grant, which is, again, to address the employment and economic recovery of a community or an area.

So with proper approval from the grant officer, we can allow work on private property with the following circumstances. First, that whatever work you're doing must be intended to remove existing health and safety hazards to a larger community. So something that's on private property but is affecting potentially the water supply of the community or some other factors.

Or to alleviate specific – and here's the terms again – economic or employment-related impacts of the disaster. One way to look at that is cleanup work that would allow an employer affected by the disaster to resume operation and allow people to come back to work. That's an important element of getting cleanup on a private property.

One example might be if there's a large farm that had a fairly significant workforce for our community and was damaged by a fire or a flood or some other impact, and is unable to reopen. You may be able to get permission to do cleanup or other recovery work on that private property in order to help that employer reopen.

But we should clarify that the activities that you're doing are to remove health and safety hazards or other – on homes, structures, on private lands, it's to return those lands, structures, et cetera, to a safe and habitable level, not to improve them. So you can't rebuild a facility that's better than the one that was before. This is designed to recover, to repair, to rebuild, not to improve.

We always want you to prioritize your services to older individuals or those with disabilities, people who are most impacted by disaster events. And the funds that you use may not be going to the cost of materials to do the repairs. We are providing workforce. We're paying salaries for cleanup workers. We are not paying for the materials to do repairs or other activity.

And again, I'm going to reiterate, you need to have prior approval from the grant officer before you're doing that kind of work.

OK. Really quickly a couple of other policies that we wanted to identify for you. The disaster relief employment limitation, you all probably know this, but disaster temporary employment is limited to 12 months or 2,080 hours per individuals. So we get a lot of questions that say, our grant has reached the one-year timeline but we have people who haven't worked a full year; what are we supposed to do?

What I want to reiterate is that this is per – it's an individual timeline. The limitation on work duration is for an individual, not for the grant as a whole. So individuals have to be – that's where you need to be paying attention to timelines. The grant obviously needs to be extended or be able to cover the full work time of individuals.

But when the grant hits one year, that's not the same as workers hitting one year, because most likely you're not employing the workers on day one of the grant. If you are, that's great, but it's unlikely that you'll be able to recruit and hire people within the same day as receiving the grant. So remember, that's a 12-month or 2,080 hours – which is full-time – work for a year per individual.

We may be able to authorize an additional 12 months for those workers with a modification. We do always hope that if there are other individuals who could be enrolled after that first year, that you might consider enrolling them to give other people an opportunity to have these jobs. But in either case, you'll need to have a modification for that.

With regard to participant wages, one change you may notice is we use the term "worksite employer" in this TEGL instead of the term "employer of record." Just a slight change, but it's a little – I think a little more clear as to what it means.

We did clarify that there's no limitation on the type of organization that may serve this role. The language in 2-15 made it a little unclear who was eligible to be worksite employers. We just flat-out say in this TEGL there's no limitation on the type of organization. So public, private, nonprofit, whomever you can get to play that role.

However, they must always pay the higher of the federal, state, or local minimum wage. And their wages must be comparable to rates of pay for other individuals employed in similar occupations by that employer, whether those other employees are permanent or temporary. We don't want either the DWG grantees to be paid significantly more or significantly less than other employees of the worksite employer.

OK. So a number of you probably have questions about the emergency application concept. Generally the rule is that you are required to submit an emergency application within 15 days of the qualifying declaration. And the emergency application requires you only to provide limited information. Currently, we are accepting your COVID applications without that additional justification for why you're more than 15 days since the declaration. We understand that it's very complicated and we are making it so you don't have to have that additional justification.

In a normal circumstance, if you were applying for a disaster recovery DWG and you wanted to use an emergency application, you would need to do that within 15 days of the declaration or provide substantial justification to the grant officer to allow you to submit that modified application.

And again, we will always have a full application required within 60 days of your initial award. And then you'll be including full information, your budget, your implementation plan, lists of worksites, et cetera. And in addition to addressing any initial special terms of award that were included in your award at the time of your emergency application being approved.

OK. So the last thing I want to talk about with regard to disaster recovery DWGs is the timing of services. We really wanted to clarify this for you all. You're permitted to enroll participants in disaster relief employment, in employment and training activities, or both. They don't have to – they can be only disaster relief. They can be only employment and training. Or they can be both. Those activities may occur concurrently.

You may have people who are doing cleanup or other work certain days and training other days. You may have some kind of other mix of how they're doing those concurrently. You may do disaster relief employment first and employment and training second. You might do employment and training first and disaster relief employment second, depending on the circumstances that you're trying to address. All of those are perfectly allowable.

But we just do hope that you will assess each individual participant to determine what their actual needs are and enroll them in either disaster relief employment, employment and training activities, or both, based on what you believe will give the best outcome to those individuals.

But again, I just want to reiterate, under a normal FEMA-declared disaster, the grant has to offer disaster relief employment. Not all participants need to be in that, but the grant has to have disaster relief employment as a component.

OK. Let's do a little bit about employment recovery DWGs. Just a quick overview for you. As with the disaster recovery DWGs, we're not going to get into every detail because we'll be here for a while. But just a brief overview.

DWGs for employment recovery are providing resources to eligible applicants to respond to major economic dislocation. That's unexpected layoff events that cause significant job loss. The secretary of Labor awards these DWGs at their discretion to eligible entities where that entity can demonstrate that the need for additional fund to provide employment and training assistance to workers who have been affected by these dislocations. Or also, that would be closures and realignments of military installations could be included in that plant closures and mass layoffs context.

We examine each application on a case-by-case basis to make sure that you're demonstrating appropriate need. And overall, these grants provide employment and training assistance to dislocated workers and to the other eligible participants, which we can talk about a little more. But just to be clear, these grants do not provide disaster relief employment; that is only under disaster recovery DWGs. These employment recovery DWGs are employment and training activities only, so career and training services as you would normally do.

Qualifying events for employment recovery DWGs. We generally look at three primary types. A mass layoff or plant closing, so that's affecting 50 or more workers from one employer. You may also include smaller layoffs at other companies in the area if that primary layoff caused downstream layoffs or contributed to those layoffs.

Industry-wide layoffs, so that's layoff events from multiple companies in the same industry. We do that based on a two-digit code – (inaudible) – the NAICS code. In an industry-wide layoff, you can have additional layoffs affecting fewer than 50 workers may be in included in the application – (inaudible) – at least one company with a layoff affecting 50 or more as part of that application. And those additional companies are part of the same two-digit NAICs code.

The final one is community impact, so that's multiple small dislocation events. We look at that over a period of up to 12 months, that have significantly increased the number of unemployed individuals in a regional or local workforce area. We're generally looking at those that are areas that are probably more rural or have employer bases that are predominantly smaller companies. Basically where layoffs that would be impactful to that community might not otherwise meet the definition of mass layoffs.

We also have another qualifying event that we won't talk about too much today, but just as a reminder, this is for dislocated service members. We refer to this in the TEGL as a "special population DWG." But the activities for those are the same as under an employment recovery DWG.

But these are cases where you may see what we term a higher-than-average demand for employment and training activities from dislocated military service members and dislocated military spouses. Essentially, anything that's exceeding your resources for providing such activities. So essentially the same concept as how a layoff event would be impacting your formula resources.

OK. Eligible applicants is partly the same as you saw in 2-15, but there are two additions that we included that are part of the regulation but we wanted to clarify in the TEGL for how those applicants could be potentially able to apply for employment recovery DWGs. So this is separate from the eligible applicants for disaster recovery DWGs.

So it's, again, states or outlying areas, or a consortium if there are – multiple states or outlying areas may apply together; local workforce development boards or, again, a consortium of those; Indian and Native American program grantees. This is our WIOA section 166 grantees. That again is different from the eligible population – eligible applicant pool for disaster recovery DWGs, which is tribal entities under the Stafford Act. So just to be clear about the difference there.

If you want to look at the TEGL, these are on page 9 with more information. But there's two additional entities. One is those entities determined by the governor of the state to be appropriate to apply. And there's some information in the TEGL about what must be demonstrated in such an application. And then secondly, entities that demonstrate to the secretary of Labor their capability to effectively respond to the circumstances related to particular dislocations.

So again, that page 9 has a much longer description, but there's additional documentation that would need to be submitted with both of those types of applicants in order to demonstrate their allowability to be an applicant under an employment recovery DWG. And just to clarify again, those two entities are only eligible under employment recover DWGs, not under disaster recovery DWGs.

This slide shows a little bit of a clarification we wanted to make. It's something to think about when you're applying for grants and thinking about who is going to be the participants in the grant.

Eligible participants haven't changed. The TEGL refers directly to what the law and the regulations say about participants. However, we want to clarify. Because employment recovery DWGs are intended to provide this supplemental funding that Amy talked about at the beginning to address the increase burden faced by the workforce system resulting from a qualifying layoff or layoffs – so essentially, the formula funds that are allocated were not sufficient to address an increase in participants and need based on one or more qualifying layoffs.

The TEGL encourages you to prioritize services to those individuals directly impacted by the qualifying layoff event. But other eligible participants in the community may be included, because when the workforce system is taxed due to additional burden, all participants in – all eligible participants in that workforce area or region are also impacted. When the need for services increases and the available resources don't change, everybody has to get less.

So the idea is that eligible participants are dislocated workers in the area. And the qualifying event, being the layoff event, they don't have to be only individuals laid off from the qualifying event. We can talk more in the future about how you might consider that when you're developing an application for how you want to determine who is going to participate.

But in the same way that the people relocated from one disaster area to a non-disaster area do not have to be the only participants in a disaster grant – addressing that event – the same concept applies with employment recovery DWGs. Eligible participants are those dislocated workers in the area. We do, again, hope you prioritize those directly impacted by the qualifying event, but they are not the only eligible participants.

Might be a little confusing. It's somewhat of a change from how we normally address this in the past, but we wanted to clarify that for you. And we can of course talk more about it as we go in the future. And if you have additional questions, work with your FPOs when you're developing your applications and they can help you as well.

OK. The other major change that you will see in the TEGL is we don't anymore have a special category of application for what we used to call dual-enrollment grants for those grants to address trade-affected workers. That doesn't mean that you can't serve trade-affected workers under a DWG. We are just saying that these individuals can receive services along with any other eligible participant under a DWG as appropriate. Trade-affected workers are still dislocated workers, can still be served under a DWG.

There are obviously rules about what trade will cover versus what others will cover and those rules need to be followed, where trade, for example, doesn't allow other entities to provide training. We wouldn't provide training under this DWG for that. But we can provide other services not provided by the trade program.

The TEGL gives you a few examples of how to think about working with trade-affected participants. But essentially what we're saying is, if you have participants, some of whom are trade-affected, some of whom are not, all of whom are trade-affected, it doesn't matter. It's all about making sure that you're addressing the needs of the affected workers and following the rules of those programs. But there's no real difference in our mind about who is participating, so long as they're eligible dislocated workers.

So if you have trade participants when you're doing a budget, for example, and you're thinking about how much to budget for training versus other career services, that's where you might be looking at how many participants are trade and would be getting TAA benefits and therefore wouldn't need training. But it's all part of the same application.

Another impact of this – under dual-enrollment we had the restriction that only states could apply for those grants, not local areas. With the removal of the dual-enrollment type, local areas can apply for employment recovery DWGs the include workers who might be trade-affected. So hopefully that makes things a little easier for everyone involved.

OK. We're getting towards the end of my slides here. I just have two more things I want to talk about. The first is the timing of your applications.

We expect employment recovery DWGs to be submitted within 120 days of a qualifying layoff event. We should point out that eligibility for assistance is upon notification of layoff. So the sooner you can apply for a DWG, if you have advance notice of a layoff, we can look to applications being submitted even prior to the actual date that people lose their job, if there's a qualifying layoff notification while they're still working. So if we can – the sooner you can submit an application, the better.

We always expect that most employment recovery DWGs are submitted as full applications. But there are circumstances where a major layoff event might be sudden and unannounced, or there might be a fire or some other event that causes a workplace to be shuttered for whatever reason.

In such cases, we do accept an emergency application, similar to as we do under the disaster recovery DWG. So if such cases happen, you can submit as an emergency application, which again is a much more streamlined application for which you would then, 60 days later, be expected to provide full information.

OK. The last thing I want to talk about is the factors that we think about when we're making awards. Again, just to reiterate, these are secretary's discretion to award DWGs. And we look at it as supplementing your resources to address situations that can't be handled through your normal capacity. We do these determinations on a case-by-case basis. But we don't necessarily set firm requirements on what you have to show us to meet that there's a demand beyond the normal capacity, but there are things that we might look at and might ask you for.

But I should first say, we do not any longer require that in order to be an eligible applicant you must have spent 70 percent of the prior year dislocated worker formula funds. Let me repeat that. We no longer require the 70 percent prior year formula funds expenditure level. So if you spent less than 70 percent of your prior year formula funds, we might look at other factors to make sure that this indeed is an event that's going to overly impact your normal capacity. But that is not a threshold that you have to meet.

So some of the other factors – we might look at your expenditure levels from prior year. We might also look at the quality of the proposed project, the severity of the job loss, that you're identifying your qualifying event. We might even look at past performance in administering your DW programs or prior DWGs. And we might also look at quarterly financial reports to – particularly to verify expenditures and transfers to the adult program. We might also look at some disbursement reports in between those quarterly reports if we need additional information.

But the big piece of news in this is that you – the 70 percent threshold does not exist any longer. So we hope that that should make a little more streamlined in your ability to apply for employment recovery DWGs. We know that that often was a barrier based on how that impacted you. So for now, we're looking at a bunch of factors, but 70 percent is not a threshold that you have to meet.

OK. That is enough hearing from me. I'm going to turn it over to Lynn Fraga now to talk about some of the DWG application procedures. Lynn?

LYNN FRAGA: Great. Thanks so much, Jeff. Hi, everyone. I'm Lynn Fraga, the grant officer of the National Dislocated Worker grants. My unit receives and processes the DWG application and modification requests. We work closely with our friends in the program office, those who you have already heard from today, on the review and award of the grants.

So I'm here today to touch base with you on application procedures. In conjunction with our new policy guidance transmitted by TEGL 12-19, we did update our procedural documents. There's really only significant change to speak of. Beyond that, we mostly revised our how-to-apply instructions in the areas that regularly caused some confusion.

I will also today introduce to you a new set of suggested forms we created for your application and mod submissions.

So with that I'm going to dive right in so we have some time to address the many questions that are flooding in.

So how can you get a hold of these new procedures? Where are they? There are two locations right now. Your primary resource will be the grants.gov announcement affiliated with TEGL 12-19. Housed at this announcement site are the how-to-apply instructions, as well as every suggested form we have created for the various application and modification types.

The other resource – the second one listed on this slide – is the Office of Grants Management website.

And I fear – I'm two slides into this presentation, but I may have to do a mea culpa on the links that's provided. Even as we speak, information is being updated based on COVID-19 information requirements. So if that's the case, I apologize. But right now I can tell you it's easy to find. If you log onto DOLETA, you're going to be faced squarely with the option to select grants. You want to click on that and it will take you to the page where the how-to-apply information is. You may just have to scroll down briefly.

So here on this page, if it's not here now, you will eventually find the how-to-apply instructions and links to the grants.gov announcements for applying under a new TEGL 12-19, which includes the employment recovery DWGs, the disaster recovery DWGs, as well as COVID applications. And also you'll find the link for TEGL 4-18, which is the announcement to use when applying for National Health Emergency grants serving the opioid crisis.

So on this next slide, I'd like to emphasize how important it is to subscribe for updates to DWG TEGLs within grants.gov. And I'm saying this not only to the applicants and grantees on the call today, but also to interested parties within ETA, like our FPOs or grant staff. This is incredibly important during this unique time as we address the public health emergency for which plans are changing frequently, along with implementing new policy guidance.

If we do make any changes to TEGLs or the associated forms, you will receive real-time updates as soon as those changes occur in the grants.gov system. And even as we speak now, we're working on new COVID-related materials which we hope will be available soon. So please stay tuned and do subscribe to the announcement if you can.

The slide here is a snapshot of how to subscribe to these updates. On the landing page for the funding announcement, at the top right corner, there's a subscribe button. You'll see the top arrow there designates where that is. However, even if you do not subscribe, you will see the changes when you log into the TEGL announcement itself, as you can see from this slide. The latest modification was done just a day ago.

So now let's talk about the updates to the how-to-apply instructions. Like before, this is a transparent summary of the process and it's written for all DWG stakeholders, applicants, grantees, regional office staff, national office staff. And like before, the instructions for submitting various grant actions are at the start of the document. And the table illustrating required forms for each type of application and modification live at the end of the document.

For the purpose of today's call I want to highlight that submission procedures are relatively the same, in spite of the new policy guidance. All new funding requests must continue to come through grants.gov. And those of you who have been working for DWGs for a while know that we are phasing our old application system called the e-system. However, those DWGs that were submitted through the e-system have continued to live on in that system and we must also modify them within the system.

For our newer grants that have been submitted via grants.gov, you can continue to email your modification requests to your federal project officer or regional office mailbox, depending upon their procedures.

So this is fairly standard procedure from before. But you may ask, so what has changed? And I'm going to cover that on our next slide. No? Sorry. I skipped ahead.

So the big change here is that we are now making technical assistance calls a regular part of our process. These calls are between applicants, grantees, regional office staff and national office staff.

So to clarify, as your main point of contact the federal project officer leads the way in helping you manage and implement your grant. This has not changed. However, when it comes to all of this reviewing and understanding requested grant actions, sometimes there's no better way than to work through the issues with a good discussion to get us all on the same page.

So while we require the written word for documentation purposes, a conversation to center the perspectives is very valuable, which is why we're making these conversations a placeholder in our normal process.

The slide references the common conditions for this call. These will be first offered when a funding request is returned for revision. In order to keep the ball rolling on the request, we strive to hold it within five days of the return. And as well, we recommend that applicants and grantees submit a revised version within 10 days of the return. This helps maintain an even keel regarding processing timeframes, avoiding the additional stress that comes for every one of us when much-needed funding is anticipated.

We've had a good many of these calls in the last quarter and the national office has been grateful to have that time with applicants and grantees. They've been very helpful and we hope you take us up on the offer. We do try to keep these calls moving quickly, to get to the heart of the information needed, making it productive for all.

So the next slide we're going to talk a little bit about the new collection of suggested application forms. In conjunction with our new TEGL, we have updated a suggested optional form for the submission of applications and modifications. Just a reminder, these are now housed on grants.gov.

I'd like to stress that, as the term "suggested" is in the name, these are optional formats. Applicants and grantees do not have to use them. However, we did create them to assist in gathering the information we need to make a determination on a grant action. Also, consistent forms, if used over time, may be helpful for us – all of us as – we exchange information back and forth.

So I want to emphasize that we do expect that these are living documents in the near-term. There's a lot going on. I'm sure as we use these we'll find things that should be changed or may be helpful if they would be changed. And I encourage all of you to pass on your suggestions after using them a bit. And I will provide contact information at the end of this presentation so that you can use that to provide your feedback.

So I mentioned earlier that the available forms – the suggested forms – are referenced in the how-to-apply instructions at the back of the document. This slide is a snapshot of the table illustrating what suggested forms should be submitted for each type of application requesting funds. The column header contains each application type, and listed below are the suggested forms associated with it.

For instance, if we're looking at the COVID-19 emergency application in the first column, the standard OMB SF-424 is required, along with a COVID-19 suggested project summary for a new grant request. If applicants want to provide the same info in a format of their own, they're welcome to do that.

Taking a second look – or taking, rather, another look at a second example, I should say, for the employment recovery DWG in the next-to-the-last column you'll find lists of the 424, 424A, your own budget narrative, a suggested project summary, a suggested enrollment and expenditure worksheet, a suggested employer data worksheet, and a suggested project operator worksheet.

So I just want to pause here a moment to go back to Jeff's earlier discussion on qualifying layoff events as it relates to the employer data worksheet. I see also we're having quite a few questions on this come in as well.

So we will need to get information about the employers when you're submitting a new funding request, as this will be a qualifying event for you to submit a DWG. As well, the employers that you list and the layoffs that you list, as well as any Rapid Response provided, will also provide a justification for the funding that you will ask for.

But as just mentioned, our new policy TEGL provides grantees the option of providing services to eligible individuals in the same geographic areas not impacted by the qualifying layoffs. Please know that we do not need a comprehensive employer list as individuals are added to the grant outside of those employers. Meaning you don't need to modify the project anymore to add an employer.

However, something you may want to keep in mind, if you want to request supplemental funding in the future, one of the best ways to do this is to note additional known layoffs, the number of participants impacted, relevant Rapid Response, or any trends you're identifying as you enroll folks into the project.

Again, I would encourage you to keep good records, like you always do. Document, document, document. So that if there is a follow-on opportunity to ask for supplemental funding, you have that at the ready.

Moving on to slide 47, here's a very similar table, also found at the back end of the how-to-apply instructions, which lists the applicable suggested forms for various types of modification requests.

So please know that you may need to use a hybrid of these suggested forms listed in each column if making multiple changes to your project – (inaudible) – modification request. And when in doubt about the required information for a particular mod, please jus consult your FPO and we're happy to talk through that together. These suggested forms are not meant to be cumbersome or burdensome; they're meant to be a help. So we're always available to talk through whatever requirements we think might be needed for a particular mod submission.

So moving on, I'd like to highlight some of the changes made to the suggested forms. We focused quite a bit this time on improving information collection for modifications. And hopefully we made some changes which will make it easier for you to provide the relevant information so that we can quickly and fully understand the stated need.

Before we dive into this slide, I do want to provide just a little bit of background for context. So of particular importance – (inaudible) – modification submitted to request additional incremental or supplemental funding.

Please know that your funding requests are documented within a decision package that travels to the office of the secretary for approval. Therefore, there are many sets of eyes looking at this. We receive lots of good questions as these packages make their way through the building.

It's important to understand that if a reviewer, who is not intimately familiar with the DWG program, they may ask a very perfectly good question about a disaster project, such as, so why did the department provide 5 million (dollars) in year one, 7 million (dollars) in year two, and now more money is requested to finish the project at year three? And why isn't the project finished?

So those of us who work within the program know this can be a likely scenario for some of the larger disaster events we've encountered as of late. But if it's not clear in the application, it's a very good question. That's why it's incredibly important for us to paint the big picture.

In your request, please try and refer back to initial projections. Tell us where the project stands now in terms of statement of work progress. Tell us your specific plans for the new money.

So all of that to say – I'm going to introduce this next slide now. This is one way that we've incorporated additional information so that we can maybe focus on providing a snapshot of where your project is in the here and now.

This is an enrollment and expenditure worksheet for disaster projects, which will hopefully get us to where we need to be with those previous questions we discussed. This is a snapshot of a form to illustrate progressive enrollment and expenditures. You're noting the initial plan projections in the column at the left for the serious disaster activity. And then if requesting additional funding, you will be entering data in the blue column to the right, providing expenditure and enrollment data for the project in the here and now, as well as your projections for those same data points if you get the additional funding that you're asking for.

We realize that this alone is not a substantive document for funding determination, but these are still critical details that we need to establish need.

So continuing this thought let's take a look at the next slide.

I just mentioned how important it is to paint the big picture when asking for additional funding. Here's another change to our suggested forms which may help us accomplish this.

This is a snapshot of the suggested project operator worksite information form used for disaster recovery projects. Our suggested form collects worksite information for each project operator. As well, we've added a column for the status of the work at each site.

The status column becomes very important when we try and understand a grantee's need for additional funding. It provides a statement from you regarding the accomplishments to date and establishes what needs to be done with proposed funding.

So this form is a record of project activity. The status column in your submission of mod one, the full application containing the budget and plan, would indicate the worksite is new or perhaps, you know, 10 percent finished.

Your third mod requesting incremental funding should indicate progress across the board, ideally. And if not, it should note challenges encountered. Again, this is not substantive as a standalone document, but helpful as we try and understand the big picture of your funding request.

So last but not least, I'll just highlight one other change for our suggested modification forms. While the form itself did not – (inaudible) – well on this PowerPoint slide, I did want to acknowledge this modification summary form – the suggested, I should say, modification summary form – which gives us a quick read on what grantees are requesting.

It provides checkboxes to indicate the various requests being made. It provides a quick enrollment and expenditure summary. It provides a space for a narrative to address the details behind each mod. Again, just something to help us all center on the required information in a quick and easy format.

So that's really all I plan to highlight today in terms of updating procedures and suggested forms. I realize we'll need a minute to digest and use them. I also know we want to leave time for the questions that are pouring in.

In closing, though, I do want to mention two more thoughts. Regarding DWG's award timeframe. So the department does have a statutory obligation, per the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, to approve funding requests within 45 days of receiving the fundable application. WIOA provides another 10 days for grant execution. So please know that funding requests generally require this full timeframe, making it important that you prepare your requests within a timeframe that allows for plenty of room for the unexpected.

I should also note that we are incredibly busy with COVID-19 applications. While this does not relieve us of our statutory obligations to timeframe, we all have to be mindful of the challenging environment ahead.

So please don't hesitate to ask us for a status check on your package to ensure it's on our radar. We welcome that; we really do. But please understand that our reply has to be a general one. We'll say yes, it's on our radar and probably that it's in clearance.

One final note. I mentioned this before but, again, please do not hesitate to provide us feedback on the suggested forms or methods to improve our procedures. I mentioned earlier that we anticipate the need to tweak our procedures and forms in the challenging days ahead and we value your input on that. And the slide gives you some contact information to do that.

This concludes my discussion on application procedures. I will be here to answer your questions in just a bit. I'm going to hand it over to Amy to begin that piece of today's presentation.

MS. AMBROSE: Thank you very much, Lynn. For the duration of this call we've been collecting your questions. And we recognize that we have seven minutes left on the call and we have about 28 questions that have come in.

We want to assure you we're keeping the transcript. Any questions that we don't get to on the call, we are going to process and respond to in time. In order to make sure that we are consistent in how we're responding to the questions, they're all going to be cleared and probably posted as that first batch of Q&A's were posted, once we are sure about the answers.

But to kick it off, Lynn, there's a couple of quick questions – to throw it back to you just for a minute – regarding disaster DWGs with the emergency application that are currently in-house and when those applicants could expect to get notice. And also, if we know now how many states have been awarded the recent DWs for COVID-19, are those listed somewhere? Do you want to take those two questions, Lynn?

MS. FRAGA: Sure. I'm happy to do that. So past practice – well, first let me say, I did mention the 45-day statutory requirement. The past practice has been that these disaster applications for the big disasters have moved much more quickly through the system. I'm thinking of things like Hurricane Harvey, Irma, Maria, California wildfires.

While I can't speak to timeframes for any of those that are in our queue now – and I'll say specifically COVID-19 – I can I think safely say that every corner of our agency is working to do their part to ensure that when all the stars align, this money will roll out the door as quickly as possible. And I think I am safe to say that we have not awarded any COVID-19 DWGs yet.

Amy?

MS. AMBROSE: OK. We can roll through these questions in the order that we received them, as time allow, I suppose. "What is allowable for humanitarian assistance in the current COVID emergency?" This is a question that came in as we were speaking. It was also addressed in the COVID FAQ.

Disaster relief employees may assist in addressing many needs created by this public health emergency and the prolonged social isolation that is necessary to curb it. And there's a list of these allowable activities. Delivering medicine, food, or other supplies; and helping set up quarantine areas; organizing, coordinating recovery; cleanup activities; responding to the impacts of the disaster. This is on page 6 in the COVID FAQs that's included in the link to coronavirus COVID-19 resources.

The next question is for Jeff. "The statement "relocated individuals," any eligible individual in the area covered by the grant may be enrolled, not just evacuees?" Jeff, would you like to answer that?

MR. RYAN: Yes, that is correct.

MS. AMBROSE: Oh, I see. The answer is on the screen. OK.

MR. RYAN: Yeah. That is correct. The eligible participant and the qualifying event are two separate things. We want to stress that for both disasters and employment recovery grants. The qualifying event is one thing; the eligible participant is a separate determination. But we always want you to serve the people who are most directly impacted.

MS. AMBROSE: Great. Thank you.

Another question related to COVID-19. "What options are available or what exemptions can be requested to allow current disaster grants to assist with COVID-19 recovery, while other cleanup and recovery efforts are halted?" Answer: Generally, disaster recovery DWGs may be expanded to include new disaster impact if they fall within the same program year of the award of the initial disaster. This information is reference to TEGL 12-19 on page 8.

If an existing disaster recovery DWG was awarded in a prior program year, appropriations law prohibits adding new emergencies to the existing DWG project. So in such cases, ETA recommends the state requesting additional funding to address the COVID-19 health emergency.

So I hope that answers question number 12. It may not appear as question number 12 on your screens. (Chuckles.) I apologize for that.

OK. We have a few questions for Lynn regarding the emergency application. Lynn, do you see those questions on our screens – the presenter screens? It's 18, 19, and 22.

MS. FRAGA: Yes. I see 18; I'm going to take that as a general reference to the full application for the COVID-19 grants. We are aware that these present a unique situation relative to our usual process for providing a full application. There are some problem areas. We are working through that and we hope to have some resources posted for you soon. So stay tuned. Makes it all the more important to subscribe to the TEGL 12-19 posting.

Question number 19, "Regarding disaster relief employment, can this fund the supplies that the participants need to safely carry out their work, protective gear for workers?" The simple answer is yes, definitely.

Question number two – or 22, rather, "Are we able to provide supportive services to participants who just received disaster relief employment that are not enrolled in full career services?" The answer is yes. Supportive services are allowable when they are needed to enable individuals to participate in disaster relief employment and training services.

Well, let me say this. We look at supportive services just a little bit different relative to disaster relief employment. Supportive services are generally transportation, child care, those kinds of things that support participation in disaster relief employment. We also look at supportive services as the tools that are needed to do the job that needs to be done.

Amy?

MS. AMBROSE: Thank you, Lynn. The next question is, "Can gig, contract, and self-employed workers be served?" And the answer is that any dislocated workers may be served if they meet the DW definition. They can be included in DWG applications.

OK. So I am looking for the next question that is ready. I'm going to take a moment – and we are now at 3:30 – to say thank you.

We are in the midst – while we're talking we're looking at the thoughtful questions that are coming in. And we don't want to be remiss in not answering them. We're considering doing a follow-up call to this webinar. Could you please post in the main chat if you think that would be valuable? We'll try to do that as soon as we – as soon as possible to try to schedule a follow-up.

I'm seeing a lot of yeses. OK. We'll continue this conversation, then. This is by no means the end of our discussion about DWGs and our response to the coronavirus health emergency.

Does anybody else – any of the other presenters want to add anything before we close out the call? (Pause.)

OK. I'm ready to turn it back to Laura, who can close out the presentation and explain where the recording will be posted.

(END)