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**Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs: Information for Prospective Standards Recognition Entities**

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GRACE MCCALL: And welcome to "Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs: Information for Prospective Standards Recognition Entities."

So without further ado I'd like to turn things over to our moderator today, Andrew Kilberg, counselor to the secretary, United States Department of Labor. Take it away, Andrew.

ANDREW KILBERG: Thank you very much. As was just said, my name is Andrew Kilberg and I am counselor to Secretary Scalia. I am honored to be with all of you to kick off this webinar on the Department of Labor's recent Final Rule adopting a new system for advancing the development of high-quality industry-recognized apprenticeship programs, or IRAPs.

Before we begin, I do want to acknowledge the incredible work of the public servants here at the Department of Labor in our country's battle against the coronavirus. Across all of our agencies, DOL employees have been working very hard to help the American people in this unprecedented time; from expanding unemployment insurance to implementing paid leave; to keeping workers, especially essential workers, safe on the job.

Regardless of the economic situation, however, Americans need access to effective training to secure good jobs in a changing workplace and labor market. Apprenticeships are a proven pathway to a prosperous career. A well-designed apprenticeship system can open that pathway to new industries and new workers.

As Secretary Scalia said when the IRAP rule was published a few weeks ago, the new IRAP system, quote, "provides a flexible market-led approach for expanding apprenticeships to industries that historically haven't relied on them for worker training. The rule calls on business associates, community colleges and others to lead the way in developing and recognizing apprenticeship programs for the jobs needed in our changing workplaces."

I couldn't agree more with the secretary. IRAPs will serve as a complement to the registered apprenticeship program that has been in place for over 80 years and has seen particular success and adoption in the construction sector. And we believe that the IRAP system will help accelerate the adoption of that apprenticeship model of training and workforce development into new industries in which apprenticeships historically have played a major role, including industries that may be critical to our economic bounce-back, such as robotics and healthcare.

The new rule will leverage industry relationships among businesses, trade associations, educational institutions, employee organizations, state and local government agencies, workforce boards and others, to identify the specific skills the businesses need and to set competency standards and introduce portable credentials.

Those organizations now have the opportunity, under the auspices of the Department of Labor, to establish what we have termed "standards recognition entities" – or SREs – that are responsible for recognizing individual IRAPs. This system maintains DOL's important oversight function while freeing industry to innovate, especially in sectors that have not traditionally used apprenticeships.

With that I'd like to turn it over to today's presenters. John Ladd is the administrator of the Office of Apprenticeship in the Employment and Training Administration at DOL. Cierra Mitchell is the chief of the Office of Apprenticeship's new IRAP Division. It has been a pleasure to work with them on IRAPs and I can safely say this webinar is in excellent hands. John and Cierra?

JOHN LADD: Great. Thank you, Andrew. Really appreciate you taking time. I know how incredibly busy you are right now, so we do appreciate you kicking us off here.

Thank you all again for joining us today. We're really excited to have so many of you on the call. I'm joined by my colleague, Cierra Mitchell, and we're going to get started right here – now in a minute.

So just quickly I'll highlight a couple of today's objectives. We're hoping that many of you were able to join us on our call last month where we did a general overview of the Final Rule. We talked a lot about IRAPs themselves. But this particular webinar is really to focus on those entities that are serious and interested in becoming a standards recognition entity, as Andrew mentioned earlier.

So we hope you learn about the criteria to become an SRE, you'll learn about the various roles and responsibilities of an SRE. And we're really going to dig down here and drill down a little bit deeper and we're going to go through the application process for becoming an SRE.

We do intend to launch an online portal. The process will be fully electronic. We're trying to TurboTax this and make this as easy as possible for people to go through the process. But we want to begin making people aware and becoming familiar with that process. And then once the rule goes into effect on May 11th, we will be launching the portal. So we'll be talking a little bit more about that later in the webinar.

But again, to remind everyone where we've been and what the path is moving forward, you see here our implementation timeline for industry-recognized apprenticeships. And it was a journey up unto this point, but this process really – you can see here – began with the publication of the Final Rule on March 11th. Again, we have a 60-day effective period before the rule goes into effect, so the rule will go into effect on May 11th.

And then we intend to leave the process open for people to apply for at least a month. And during that month we'll be accepting applications. We'll continue to accept applications. The portal will always be open to accept new applications. But for those that do submit their applications by or around June 11th, we are intending to batch those initial applications and to conduct a review of those applications. And those would be part of the initial round of SREs that will be available for review.

We will be doing our internal review here at DOL. We anticipate that's going to take about 90 days. And so if we move forward, we will be able to make announcements of the first recognized SREs by around Labor Day or sometime in late summer, early fall.

Cierra, I'm having some issues with my computer, so if I could turn over the next slide to you and then I hopefully will be able to get right back on.

CIERRA MITCHELL: No problem. Thanks, John. Hi, everyone. All right. Moving on along to standards recognition entities.

So for those who didn't get a chance to attend the webinar – the previous webinar, an SRE is a third-party entity recognized by the Department of Labor as qualified to recognize apprenticeship programs as IRAPs.

These entities – the types of entities that can apply include but are not limited to trade, industry, and employer groups or associations; corporations and other organized entities; educational institutions, such as universities and community colleges; state and local government agencies; nonprofits; unions; joint labor-management organizations; certification and accreditation bodies; or a consortium or partnership of all of the above. So in a nutshell, that's what standards recognition entities are.

John, are you available? Or would you like me to take the next slide?

MR. LADD: If you could take one more. I'm almost – (chuckles) – almost back online.

MS. MITCHELL: Sure. No problem. Gotta love technology.

Why become a standards recognition entity? Well, one is to serve as an industry leader and provide direction to the apprenticeship programs in your industry to ensure quality and relevancy to employers' needs.

And as Andrew so eloquently messaged earlier and mentioned earlier, I can't think of a better time that we need industry leaders to help us re-open our businesses and our jobs and bring America's worker back into these (buildings ?) and organizations. So again, one main and critical reason is to become that industry leader and provide direction.

Two is to set the standard for apprenticeships, ensuring more flexibility to meet the needs of industry, and to help close the skills gap and improve our own economy, again, when our country needs it most.

And three, to help the economy and companies scale back up and redeploy their workforces to new economic realities and pressures.

So again, becoming a standards recognition entity is critical. We need leaders and we're hoping that a lot of you on this webinar apply.

And John, I guess I will turn it over to you.

MR. LADD: Sure. Thank you. Sorry about that.

So I believe we're on slide 8 now. So what are IRAPs? Again, we covered a lot of this in our general webinar. But IRAPs are high-quality apprenticeship programs that provide individuals with the opportunities to obtain workplace-relevant knowledge and progressively advancing skills.

And the Final Rule then establishes a process for our office – the Office of Apprenticeship – to recognize qualified third-party entities, known as SREs, who in turn will have the responsibility for evaluating and recognizing IRAPs consistent with DOL standards.

So that is broadly the definition for IRAPs. But as we move to the next slide – if someone could advance the slide – there are 10 specific requirements of IRAPs and you see them laid out here. These are all identified in the regulation and we want to be sure that folks understand that SREs will have a responsibility for approving IRAPs that have each of these 10 specific requirements.

So in order for an apprenticeship program to be an industry-recognized apprenticeship program, it must involve paid work. It must have a written apprenticeship agreement. It must include specialized knowledge and experience. It should provide mechanisms for – to provide credit for prior learning. There must be a written training plan.

The apprenticeship program should lead to an industry-recognized credential. IRAPs are also required to follow all relevant state and federal equal employment opportunity requirements, to provide mentorship opportunities, to disclose costs and fees, as well as abide by all federal and local safety requirements.

So these are critical elements that every IRAP must include. And SREs are recognizing these programs, that they must have processes and policies in place to ensure that these requirements are in place. Next slide, please.

So why IRAPs themselves? IRAPs, again – particularly as Andrew mentioned, are critical for the economy. They provide an additional pathway to assist career seekers and job creators. They can help serve the needs of businesses by expanding apprenticeship across more industries. They can be freed up to adopt more innovative industry-driven approaches that can scale the apprenticeship model.

They – IRAPs themselves allow more flexibility to design apprenticeship programs that meet specific business and industry needs. They can supply that immediate pool of workers for today and skilled talent for tomorrow. And ultimately create potential to access tools and products to help businesses develop and launch programs quickly.

So really important elements that are important today in the COVID context, but certainly also moving forward when the economy rebounds. Next slide, please.

For the IRAP sponsor, it's important that – there are a number of different roles that we talk about here. There's the SRE and there's the IRAP sponsor. The sponsor is the entity responsible for administering the IRAP program itself. So this is traditionally employer corporations, industry groups, very similar to the concept of a sponsor in the registered apprenticeship space.

IRAP sponsors could be a wide range of organizations, from trade and industry groups to corporations to nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, union, and joint labor-management organizations. Next slide, please.

And so, just so we're really clear about these distinctions between the SRE and the IRAP sponsor, we've developed this chart just to be as clear as we can be. But these are two distinct roles in the IRAP system. And the roles are different. Who is eligible is similar, but the level of recognition is different as well.

SREs are essentially those entities that are recognized by DOL, but their role is to recognize apprenticeship programs as IRAPs. Whereas the role of the IRAP sponsor is to administer the IRAP, much like a RAP sponsor.

Who is eligible to play that role? Again, similar types of organizations can play either role. We imagine that it'll be more third-party entities playing the SRE role, while it'll be more typically the employer or consortia of employers that'll be playing the IRAP role.

And lastly, in terms of level of recognition and oversight, SREs are recognized and overseen by the Office of Apprenticeship, while the IRAPs themselves are recognized and overseen by the SRE.

So we hope that chart's helpful in distinguishing the differences between the SRE and the IRAP sponsor. Next slide, please.

This next slide really highlights a little bit more those key responsibilities of the SREs, some of which we've already covered. Again, their primary role is to recognize high-quality IRAPs. When they do that, they must notify the Office of Apprenticeship within 30 days that they have recognized, suspended, or derecognized an IRAP.

They provide program and performance data to the Office of Apprenticeship in a timely manner. And we'll talk a little bit more about that in a minute. But the last two bullets here are really important and we're going to be drilling down a little bit more on each of these.

To be approved to be a DOL-recognized SRE, as part of the application process you'll need to show – so you'll have to have developed – specific policies and procedures that require IRAPs' adherence to all applicable federal, state, and local laws pertaining to EEO and reflect comprehensive outreach strategies to reach diverse populations. As well as policies and procedures for recognizing and validating compliance of programs to ensure that SRE decisions are impartial, consistent, and based on objective and merit-based criteria.

So as you'll see a little bit later in today's webinar, these policies and procedures will be really important and a part of that application process that we're going to get into here in a few minutes. Next slide, please.

And so we talked a little bit earlier about the provision of timely data. And this slide highlights the very specific 10 metrics that SREs will need to provide to DOL on each IRAP that is recognized. So each of these metrics are somewhat similar in the workforce space and some are very specific to apprenticeship.

So for each – again, for each IRAP that's approved, the SREs will provide up-to-date contact information for each IRAP; the total number of new and continuing apprentices annually trained in each IRAP under an apprenticeship agreement; total number of apprentices who successfully completed the IRAP; the annual completion rate; the median length of time for IRAP completion; the post-apprenticeship employment retention rate, to be calculated both at the 6- and 12-month point after program completion; the type and number of industry-recognized credentials attained; the annual average earnings of an IRAP's former apprentices, again calculated at that 6-month period after completion; the training cost per apprentice; and lastly, basic demographic information on the apprentices participating in the IRAP program.

So this is really robust, consumer, and program data that will be available on IRAPs. And we'll be releasing additional information on these performance metrics in a forthcoming Paperwork Reduction Act package that people should be looking for as well.

So with that, I'm now going to turn it back to Cierra and we're going to start drilling down a little bit into more of the specifics on how to become an SRE, as well as the application itself. So Cierra, thanks for filling and I'll turn it back to you.

MS. MITCHELL: Sure. Any time, John. Great work on going through what an SRE is, what the requirements are. And as John mentioned, I will now go into how to become an SRE.

So again, as John mentioned, SREs – or those prospective SREs will have to first apply for recognition with the Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship. And again, because the Final Rule does not go into effect until May 11th, we won't be able to accept applications until then. In fact, the application portal won't launch until May 11th.

But I know a lot of you are eager and excited to apply, which is exciting. And so one of our main goals on this webinar is to talk to you about what you can do now to get started so you're able to apply on day one.

So for one, we are available – you can get answers – ask questions and get answers to a lot of your questions now from our DOL staff. John and I have a great team of Office of Apprenticeship staff that work with us and who are available to help you with any questions that you may have.

So if you go to apprenticeship.gov, not only will you find a lot of resources and a list of frequently asked questions on apprenticeship.gov on the IRAP website, you can go to apprenticeship.gov/irap. Or you can go to the "contact us" feature on apprenticeship.gov, place your questions in there and it will get directed to the right person from our Office of Apprenticeship staff. Whether it's in the national office or in our field staff, somebody will be available to help you with any questions you may have.

And if any of you are concerned about how to submit an application in this current environment, we do just want to let you know that all applications will be submitted electronically and online in our application portal, which will be available on the apprenticeship.gov website on May 11th. And so I'm sure that all of you will get information on that closer to that date, but you will be able to apply online and submit everything electronically.

All right. So now that I went through kind of how to apply, one of the first things I want to talk about is, how do you make sure you are eligible? What is that criteria that you must have as an SRE to get recognized?

So the first one is you have to have the expertise to set competency-based standards through a consensus-based process involving industry experts. This is really key. Because in order to be an SRE of industry-recognized apprenticeship programs, you have to really make sure that you have that industry expertise, or that you are working with industry experts in your industry, to be able to set those competency-based standards.

So again, as we've mentioned before, as an SRE you are going to be seen as an industry lead. And so you want to make sure you have that expertise. And so if you don't have it and you want to become an SRE, we recommend that you partner and look to those industry experts within your industry.

We have gotten some questions from organizations who want to become an SRE and then asked, well, who would be recognized in the program? Or who will be providing the standards? And so as we kind of mentioned, we're really looking for the SRE to do that; that is the SRE's role.

And so we just want to make sure that before you apply, you make sure that you have that expertise or partner with the industry associations or industry experts or leads to help. Or you could also consider coming up with and identifying who those industry experts are and encouraging them to apply, and then working with them as an IRAP sponsor and having them recognize your program.

Either way works. But again, you want to make sure that you have that expertise. Because again, the registered system, DOL's role, is to really work with industry to approve those programs and recognize registered apprenticeship programs.

For this new IRAP model, the idea and the vision is to kind of put industry in that driver's seat to make sure that industry has the lead at coming up and developing the standards and the processes and the framework for the apprenticeship programs in their industry. And so you want to make sure that the SREs have that industry expertise front and center.

The second criteria is to have the capacity and the quality assurance processes and procedures to ensure that IRAPs comply with DOL standards, including safety, compensation, and quality.

So for example, you want to make sure that once you're recognized as an SRE you have the capacity to provide that technical assistance to all those IRAP program sponsors who are going to be coming to you as that industry-recognized lead to answer their questions, to help them develop their programs, to recognize those programs, and to have the processes and procedures in place to ensure that they're maintaining quality and complying with all of the DOL standards in the Final Rule.

So you'll also want to have – you'll want to have the capacity and then you're going to want to have the resources to operate as an SRE for a five-year period. So for SREs, when we do recognize you, you will be recognized for five years. And so you just want to make sure that you have those resources because we're going to announce your name. We're going to list you on our website and then people – organizations who are interested in developing industry-recognized apprenticeship programs will look to you as that lead and as that expert to provide that technical assistance. So we just want to make sure that you have the resources to be that lead and provide the technical assistance for five years.

You'll also want to demonstrate impartiality to show – because you're a kind of – again, the face of that industry. You'll want to make sure that you can work – and you may be overseeing and recognizing IRAPs across that industry, and some that might be competitors. So you want to make sure that you demonstrate impartiality.

You also want to be in good standing with the U.S. federal government and you cannot be suspended or debarred from working with the government.

And lastly, you want to have the appropriate industry and occupational expertise and resources in place to recognize IRAPs in their selected geographical area. What does that mean? That means that when you apply to become an SRE, you select if you – one, what industry you plan to be recognizing. You can list your occupations and credentials, but you also list the geographical area.

And so you list if you want to be recognized to oversee and recognize programs nationally, regionally, or in certain states or locally. And so you'll also, though, have to provide expertise based on that geographical area and that industry. So again, if you select national, then we'll be looking to make sure that you have that national expertise, and likewise to locally or regionally. So again, something to keep in mind when you apply.

Filing a complaint against an IRAP. So why would we mention this? This is important because, as John mentioned, there are certain requirements. Because the standard is so high for SREs and you are seen as the leader, we want to make sure that you recognize that not only are you responsible for your organization, but for the IRAPs that you recognize. And so one of those responsibilities lies with complaints that might come against the IRAPs that you recognize.

And so I'm sure a lot of your organizations already have these complaint processes in place. And I'm sure that none of you on this webinar will have to worry about any complaints against your organizations or any others. But just in case, and to just take the proper precautions, SREs must have policies and procedures in place, just in case an apprentice, a perspective apprentice, an apprentice's authorized representative, or others wishes to file a complaint against one of the IRAP sponsors or programs you recognize.

And another requirement is that the SRE must notify the public about the right of an apprentice to file a complaint, and provide the processes and procedures for how to file that complaint.

So we wanted to provide that information. Again, this is one of the things that you can start working on now if you are a prospective SRE.

All right. Now we can get into the fun stuff. If everyone can mute your phones, I'm getting a little feedback, I think.

The application. All right. So the actual application – again, this will be ready on May 11th. But we do have a link at the bottom to the application mockup. If you haven't seen it already, we do have a mockup of the application available on our website.

The application, though, itself has five sections. One is the SRE applicant information. This is information about the organization itself that wants to apply. And then it goes into three kind of really important sections which we will get into in the next few slides. But basically, this is where you will provide the capabilities and experience you have as an SRE, the plans on how you to – you will plan to evaluate and monitor high-quality programs, and policies and procedures for how you plan to recognize IRAPs. And lastly, it includes an attestation that basically everything in the application is correct.

OK. And so the next two slides will go over a checklist that we've kind of developed to help you with the application, because the application – (inaudible) – but one important note is that it does include some required documents. In fact, it includes 22 required documents. But don't worry because we've developed a checklist to help walk you through what those required documents are. In fact, I'm sure a lot of your organizations already have many of these documents.

But I want to go through a checklist to help you with these documents to show you what we're looking for to make it as painless as ever. And there's a link to the mockup that you have – (inaudible) – so you can go through the application as well, if you would like, as I'm going through the checklist.

OK. So this is actually a screenshot of what the actual checklist looks like. Again, it's attached to this meeting invite as well, if you want to go through it that way. But again, the checklist is here as a tool to help make sure that you have all the documents ready to submit that application on the 11th.

All right. So again, the meat and potatoes of the application really lies in the three middle sections. This is the first section, capabilities and experience, and these are the required documents in the application. Then the application also includes questions – a few questions. But the main pieces in the application are the required documents.

And so what do these required documents look like? Well, you'll see at the first one to show capabilities and experience, are documents describing your organization's structure, and resources to operate as an SRE for a five-year period. These are document such as an org chart, a list of your affiliates, and what resources and infrastructure you have in place to operate as an SRE for a five-year period. So again, sure a lot of you already have these documents in place.

The next one – is a document or documents describing your organization's qualifications and standing to serve as an SRE of high-quality IRAPs. Additionally, any experience you have in conducting recognition or certification activities of similar work-based learning, training and/or credentialing programs.

So if you're already kind of serving or acting these roles, you're already recognizing programs or have any certification activity certifying or accrediting programs, this is where you would provide that expertise and that information.

Next you would provide résumés for each expert who will be involved in developing the standards. And the specific policies, procedures, and structures to mitigate actual or potential conflicts of interest that may arise, including those that might arise if your organization plans to recognize apprenticeship programs – your own apprenticeship programs or programs that your subsidiaries or related organizations have. So again, this is where you would list any actual or potential conflicts of interest and how you plan to mitigate that.

Next you would provide policies and procedures or structures for recognizing and validating the compliance of IRAPs. These materials would indicate how IRAPs will – how you will make sure that all the IRAPs that you recognize will meet all the requirements in the Final Rule.

And lastly, specific policies, procedures, structures to mitigate financial conflicts of interest.

So these are the required documents for the capabilities and experience section of the application. And now we'll go on to the next section, which is evaluating and monitoring elements of high-quality programs. This is where you'll demonstrate the specific policies and procedures that you have to make sure that the programs that you recognize and monitor have documented and verifiable evidence of all elements of a high-quality program.

So you'll see here that it lists specific policies and procedures. Again, in order for us to give recognition for you as a standards recognition entity would be recognizing IRAPs, we want to see those actual policies and procedures. So you'll want to start, if you don't have them already, working and thinking about if you are an SRE how will you evaluate and monitor high-quality IRAPs? How will you evaluate and monitor each program's written training plan and paid work component and on-the-job instruction/work experience, and the related instruction component?

So again, you'll see that these are separate required documents so that we can get a good sense of how you plan to evaluate and monitor each program.

You'll also have to provide the specific policies and procedures for how you'll monitor the program's occupations and occupational credentials, as well as how you'll ensure that apprentices receive credit for prior knowledge and experience relevant to the instruction of the IRAP.

The next – (inaudible) – provide attach a process for publicly disclosing the credential or credentials associated with the IRAP that's recognized; specific policies and procedures to ensure each program provides a working environment for apprentices that adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local safety laws; and equal employment opportunity laws.

And then lastly, you'll want to provide specific policies and procedures regarding potential harassment, intimidation and retaliation, and the procedures that reflect your comprehensive outreach strategy to reach diverse populations.

And again, these are some of those requirements that John mentioned earlier. And in order to ensure that you meet those requirements, we're requiring that you provide documentation to kind of show how you're going to adhere to those requirements.

And lastly, the next section talks about policies and procedures, really how you are – this section of the application will show us how you plan to recognize those IRAPs. So the first required document is the proposed general practices, policies, and procedures for recognizing and monitoring the IRAP, including how you plan to suspend or de-recognize IRAPs that fail to comply with the resolution. And the approach your organization will take to retain and make available to the public performance and outcome – (inaudible) – metrics and data for each of the programs that you recognize.

So again, this is – these are requirements. And here – this is where you would let us know if you plan to have an application process for IRAPs, what the timeline is for those applications, and if you're going to have a panel. All that information on how you plan to approve and recognize IRAPs would be in these policies and procedures that you would be required to provide.

Next you have to provide the operations and the approach your organization will take to ensure transparency, accountability, and unpartiality, confidentiality, objectivity, and independence. And policies and procedures on how your organization will maintain high quality in the recognition process. So we want to make sure that you'll maintain those policies and procedures for the entire five years.

And lastly, you'll be required to submit your – how you plan – or what approach you plan to have a consensus-based process to approve competency-based standards for training, structures, and curricula.

So again, these are the – this is the breakdown of the required documents. Definitely encourage you to start thinking about these documents and start working on them now, so that when you log into the application portal on May 11th and you see the boxes to attach your documents, you're ready to go on day one. And again, if you have questions, our staff are available to help you in any way that we can.

So next I'll go over the application process. As I mentioned before, you'll be able to start submitting applications on May 11th. As John mentioned, the portal will be available all year long, 24/7, but we will review the applications in batches. It would be too hard to review on a daily basis with panels and things like that, so we will batch them.

And so as John mentioned earlier, the first batch will be pulled early June and then we'll have paneling and a review process and we'll announce those in early fall. And so that's why we want to make sure that you start working on your documents now, so you can be in that first batch of the first SREs ever to be announced. And so we want you to be available on day one and are here to help in any way that we can.

Based on the information that you submit for your application, the Office of Apprenticeship administrator, John Ladd, will determine whether the applicant is qualified to be recognized as an SRE based on the Final Rule, and will notify you. Again, that notification and announcement will take place probably simultaneously within about 90 days; so again, in early fall.

And that'll continue to happen. If you aren't able to get your application in before early June, it's OK. We will – the batching will continue after that announcement. So in the fall, then we'll take the next batch, we'll review those, and then we'll announce those probably around the first of the year and then it'll continue.

Again, just to reiterate, an SRE will be recognized for five years. And then if you want to continue that recognition after five years, you must reapply – (inaudible) – that date is set to expire so you can reapply to continue – (inaudible).

If your application is denied. I'm sure none of your applications will be denied. But just in case, if it's denied for whatever reason, we will provide a denial of recognition with the reasons for the denial. It'll tell you what needs to be done before resubmitting. So if it's denied, you can have the opportunity to submit and we will tell you exactly what has to happen to submit. If it was that one of the requirements weren't met or if there just was not enough information.

So it is very important and critical that you are responsive to the questions. Please don't just attach manuals. Please make sure that whatever you attach and whatever information you provide is responsive to the questions and that it's clear, so that we don't have any delays with your application and no problems with it getting recognized and approved.

If by chance your application is denied, applicants may request administrative review within 30 calendar days of receipt of the denial notice. And the administrator will refer any requests for administrative review to the Office of the Administrative Law Judges to be addressed in accordance with the Final Rule.

SRE de-recognition. So if and when you are recognized, the administrator may suspend an SRE for 45 calendar days and may initiate review of an SRE if it receives information indicating that either, one, the SRE is not in substantial compliance; or two – with the final rule – or two, the SRE is no longer capable of continuing as an SRE.

So again, I'm sure this won't happen with anyone on the phone today. But we just want to share with you what the de-recognition process looks like.

All right. So next steps. So thank you again for going through this webinar. If you're still interested in becoming an SRE – and I hope you are. This is a historical moment. We've had registered programs for the past 80 years. The construction industry would say 100 years in the U.S. And now we're launching this brand-new industry-recognized apprenticeship program. Never been done before. You have the opportunity to make history, be one of the first SREs. So we hope that you do apply. We are here to help you.

And if that is the case, here are a few things that you can do now to get started. One, become familiar with the Final Rule. There's a link here in this PowerPoint and the PowerPoint is attached to the meeting and will be available for download after this webinar. But it's also – there's a link to the Final Rule on our IRAP webpage.

The Final Rule is over 350 pages. So if you looked at it and you were overwhelmed, it's OK, because I'm going to give you a tip. The last 16 pages is the (red text ?). So if you don't get a chance to go through all 350 pages, if you want to go straight to the red text then you can go to – start at the end. The rest is important. But if you want to know where to start and back up, you can start at the end.

Begin to develop the plans of action, structures, and key partnerships that will form the basis for a successful SRE application. So again, we listed and mentioned the criteria. If you feel like you don't completely miss the criteria or don't completely have the capacity or the industry expertise, please start think about who those key players are.

We have a partner finder on our website and it has – it links to not only apprenticeship staff across the country but intermediaries. It includes current apprenticeship sponsors. And you can always look for other partners, through industry associations and others, that you might want to partner with.

Again, we'll review the approved applications. The application portal won't go live until May 11th, but until then you can get a sneak preview at what the application will look like by clicking on this link or going to our IRAP website at apprenticeship.gov.

You also want to monitor, again, our website because that's where we'll be posting up-to-date information and additional webinars.

Lastly, you'll want to contact us for any technical assistance or questions that you may have. And here is a link to that "contact us" page that I mentioned a little earlier today.

And if you realize after this webinar that you don't want to become an SRE and you want to become an IRAP sponsor, that is quite all right. That's exciting too. And there's a lot that you can do as well to get started.

So as you know, the IRAPs – in order to become an IRAP sponsor, you have to be recognized as an SRE. So as soon as we announce those SREs in the fall, then we'll post them online with the contact information and then you can reach out to them and get started. But for now there's still, again, so much you can do.

You can start assessing your workforce needs, consider how this flexibility in apprenticeship program could help you, especially as we reopen, rebuild our economy. You want to also familiarize yourself with the DOL standards for high-quality IRAPs.

This is a good time to start thinking about who those national industry leaders are in your sector and encouraging them to apply for recognition. If you're already working with some, again, please encourage them to apply. Please share this information with them on this website. This webinar is recorded; you can share the recording and the slides with them.

And please monitor our website for up-to-date information. We have resources for IRAP sponsors on the website too. We have an IRAP sponsor fact sheet if you want to share it with your organization or others, and we have FAQs and other great information as well.

And speaking of resources, here's a list of all those resources, including others that are available on our website. Many fact sheets, one for IRAP sponsors, SREs, and a general IRAP fact sheet. IRAP FAQs. There's a comparison chart. We've gotten a lot of questions on the difference between registered apprenticeship and new industry-recognized apprenticeship model; we have a comparison chart for that.

Again, there's a link to how you can contact us if you have any questions. And there's a hotline number if you prefer to talk to someone on the phone.

And lastly, you can sign up to our apprenticeship newsletter to receive the latest apprenticeship-related news from the department.

All right. So let's hear from you. I've been talking a lot. So now is our chance to hear from you. We have a few polling questions that are going to be coming up, one on did you find this webinar helpful? This will definitely help us as we plan more webinars in the future.

Are you interested in becoming an SRE? If so, please, please, please share your organization and contact information so we can reach out to you. We're thinking about planning something and developing some resources. So if you're interested in becoming an SRE, please let us know and let us know how we can get in contact with you.

And if you're interested in becoming an IRAP sponsor, that's critical and key as well. We want to make sure that we're available to not only help you but that we hear from you and get your feedback, and also make sure that we can help connect you to the right SREs once they're approved.

So again, please take a moment to go to the polls if you're interested in becoming an SRE or an IRAP sponsor, and sending us your organization and contact information now.

And with that I will now turn it back over to John Ladd to give us some closing remarks. John?

MR. LADD: Great. Thanks, Cierra. Amazing job. You covered so much information in such a great way. Really do appreciate it and do appreciate you filling in for me as well while I was having computer problems.

We are at the top of the hour here so we're going to be signing off. We want to thank everybody for joining today's webinar. We will leave the chat feature open for a little bit longer. We see lots of great questions coming in.

Like the last webinar, we're going to be collecting these questions, reviewing them, and ultimately we will be posting new FAQs on the website to respond to all of your great questions. So please, please – we won't be able to get to them today, but they are very important for us to understand what questions you all are having and how we can provide better technical assistance to those of you that are interested in becoming an SRE or becoming an IRAP.

Again, I want to thank you all for participating in today's conference. And I'm going to turn it back over to the operator. Take it away.

(END)