**WorkforceGPS**

**TAA Administrative Collection of States: Initial Review of Results**

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LAURA CASERTANO: With that I'm going to get myself right out of the way. Again, I want to welcome everyone to today's "TAA Administrative Collection of States: Initial Review of Results" webinar. I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Robert Hoekstra. He's a program analyst with the Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance. Robert, take it away.

ROBERT HOEKSTRA: Thanks so much. So hi, everyone. I see a lot of familiar faces, which is great. This is a little bit different of a webinar. We have a lot of content to get through. I would like to encourage people to put as many questions as you have in the chat. But we also know that we're going to be covering a lot of material here. So if you have questions after, that's great to hear follow-up questions as well.

So we're going to kick things off here. We did – had a quick poll at the beginning to see who was on the call. It looks like we've got a really good mix of stuff. If you haven't filled out the poll, you can do it really quick here.

And it looks like a lot of TAA staff, as well as a good chunk of reporting staff. So that's really great to see. I do see a number of people from a number of different other places as well. So it looks like we'll have a good mix.

All right. So we're going to do a real quick recap of the basics of the TAA Administrative Collection of States. You'll see the TAAACS acronym used throughout the presentation; that's what that stands for.

This was a formal collection under this OMB number. There's 165 questions, took about five hours to complete. It provides discrete data and categories and it provides a lot of help text on how to fill out the answers to various questions.

It is mandatory under our reporting collection and I am very happy to say that we got 100 percent compliance. So every state submitted and pretty much on time. And I was really happy to see that states corrected any issues in their reports really quickly. So thank you, everyone, for doing that.

The purpose of TAAACS is to provide some baseline information on state organization as well as practice, so that we can also identify what states are doing things differently and what might be working for states. It helps us prioritize technical assistance and we are going to use some of that data to investigate program metrics and that's a lot of what we're going to talk about today.

There's eight topics covered in the TAAACS. This includes the – you can see the list here, but state organization, eligibility determinations, integration, IT systems, training for staff, outreach, job search or relocation, and barriers. Obviously, we will not be able to cover every single topic in today's presentation, so we had to pick and choose a little bit. We do try and cover a little bit in each of these subject areas, so you'll some of that as we go through.

We give you guys eight weeks to collect the data. We did this this time January and February of this year. That's because the collection had just been approved. Going forward, it will normally run in October and November. So it'll be due at the end of November in 2020, which will allow us to integrate it with some of our annual reporting so that we can talk – that you have that context when we are talking about our annual report to Congress.

You can request extensions. And it's returned as an Excel sheet to me, and you can see my email address here. So that's generally the process.

All right. So we're going to jump right in on the results. This data is based on the TAAACS that you just filled out, since that's the only one we have so far. It is based on TAADI results in the most recent quarter that we've submitted, as well as most recent PIRL data for the last four quarters for a lot of the performance metrics. We do have a couple of notes where we tweaked that a little bit.

I'm also just going to caveat this starting off by saying we make a number of observations about the relationship between policies and results. This is a very initial look and is mostly looking at brief correlations between a couple of the variables. So this isn't a comprehensive multivariate analysis. It is not significance tested. It is not – we haven't done that in-depth analysis yet.

And that's why this is called the initial results, because we are definitely going to be doing some of that deeper analysis. But the initial results will definitely generate some ideas. So I want you guys to think about how you fit into this data and try and make some informed decisions about what your current policies are so that we can have more comprehensive discussions going forward.

We also – this is not going to be our first and only presentation on this. So just note that we are going to be looking for feedback about where you guys find it interesting, where we can do some more of that in-depth analysis. And we're also going to be just holding a couple more of these webinars but we don't know when yet.

All right. So the first thing we looked at was the number of state merit staff by population and certified workers. You can see on the left-hand side population size and the merit staff as a ratio of population size; and on the right-hand side, merit staff as a ratio of certified workers. And you'll see this nice little average line indicates what the average ratio is for all states and you can see how far off from that your state sits.

So the first thing we're going to talk about is just to point out a couple – we have some big outliers where the number of staff is significantly higher than most in terms of the ratio. And remember, you're not just looking at the height, you're looking at how far away from the line you are. So for example, you can see Pennsylvania and Missouri are well off the average; whereas California is actually pretty close to the average even though they are a large state.

So you can also see on here, by comparing the two, some changes. So you can see that Illinois has a low number of staff for their population size. But the distance gets even more emphasized when we look at certified workers because they have a fair number of certified workers for their population.

We also know that there's some states that might shift from one side of the average line to the other. So here you can see Oregon appears to be on the high end for the population on the left, but on the low end for their number of certified workers. And I think this is attributed to their navigator model which helped them identify number of eligible workers – a large number of eligible workers for their population size.

This is just a quick breakdown of the same information. We did it based on region. You can see the line indicates the median ratio and you can kind of see where your state fits within this. Just again note that if you are – that if you moved up or down relative to other states as you compare the two perspectives, it indicates some different in the ratio of certified workers to your population.

And I'm just showing this one if you want to see where you are in terms of everybody and not just region. You'll find everybody here.

All right. Second thing we looked at was state expertise. We looked at the percentage of staff you determined were expert staff, plus half the percentage of those with intermediate staff. So for example, if you said 50 percent are experts, 25 percent are intermediate, and 25 percent are beginners, then we would give you a value of 63.5. And I realize that this is often the state staff rating themselves on their own expertise. So we do really appreciate the self-reflection and honesty that goes into this.

Just to give you an idea where you compare to other states, and you can see kind of the distribution here, where obviously blue is the people who rated themselves as having the most expertise and orange being less.

So that said, if you are still learning, if you're new, there's good news and that's staff expertise at the state level doesn't appear to have any significant relationship with employment rates or other performance outcomes, petitions filed, certification rates, or any other major metrics we looked at. So if you're still learning, it seems that the state staff expertise isn't tied to a whole lot of outcomes.

Here is distribution, the same thing with your rating of case management staff. Give you a minute just to take a peek.

I also know that there's a lot of information on these slides. So just a reminder that the PowerPoint is attached to this; you're welcome to open it up and take a look at that so that you get an idea – or so that you can take some more time looking at these images as we go through.

And here is state staff case management expertise. The comparison generally shows that higher state staff expertise is related to higher case manager expertise, but there's definitely exceptions. So for example, you can see California down here has a really high case management expertise and – but a relatively low state. That just tells us that there's relatively new state staff coming in.

And then the other takeaway is that state staff have an average expertise of 71, whereas the case managers have an average expertise of 64. So we know that our state staff are generally more experienced than our case managers.

All right. So here is case manager expertise versus, in this case, TAADI training case management. We do see some correlations between case manager expertise and measures such as training completion, as well as training case management in TAADI and some other measure that are really driven by case managers. So how often they're reaching out to people or getting that documentation correct. So having experienced and training your case managers definitely has an impact on your TAADI results and some of the other metrics for participants.

All right. So one of the core breakdowns we were looking at was centralized versus localized programs. And you can see the breakdown here. I will say, it was a little less illuminating than I had hoped. Looks like there's only five states that are categorizing themselves as decentralized. And because that's such a small portion of our total states, it does make it a little bit more complicated for us to do some analysis around that.

So you won't see us talking about this much. And just – we'll talk a little bit at the end the more – or the next collection in October we'll look if that's the same. But we're looking at possibly doing some revisions for the year after that and this would probably include breaking down the centralized, localized categorization a little more granularly so that we can see some differences.

We then looked at the use of what systems are used for determining eligibility. So whether the state used wage records for eligibility – and you can see that across the top, so whether your state used wage records, yes or no. Then you can also see on the left-hand side whether the FEIN is used for eligibility.

So the big distinction here is that if you are not using FEIN but you are using wage records, that means that you are probably relying on a complete name match instead of looking at that company record as an employer record. And what we see, interestingly enough, is you can see in the upper right the highlighted amendment 12 percent.

So we looked at how often decisions – or certifications need to be amended. And you can see that if you are using wage records but not using Federal Employer Identification Numbers, then you are submitting amendments at twice the rate of other states. So just something to ponder. If you find that you are amending frequently, then it might just be a product of this.

All right. So next we looked at what unit is determining TAA eligibility. And we gave three options. We gave TAA, TRA, and UI. And then we actually gave an "other" option; I think only one state picked that, so we filtered them out of the analysis.

You can see that the TAA units have a higher percentage of workers who acknowledge eligibility notifications. And they're also more likely to receive Rapid Response. And you can see there's actually a pretty significant difference in some of these. So for eligibility we're talking a solid about 3 to 4 percent. And Rapid Response is even more significant without about a 6 percent difference in Rapid Response.

The flipside is that TRA units, when they determine eligibility, are more likely to have participants engaged in training. And we think this is probably because of the implicit priorities of the two departments. So obviously, if your TRA departments are reaching out, they're going to communicate a lot about what it is that they need to continue receiving TRA payments. And a lot of times that translates into training. So we do see higher training rates with TRA units reaching out.

We also looked at training thresholds. So what is training thresholds? You may also know this as a soft training cap. So where – if over a certain training amount, a state requires additional approvals. For states that have a training threshold, which is almost exactly half of our states, you can see that there's a wide variation in what those thresholds are, all the way from $50,000 in South Carolina to only $13,000 in Wyoming. But most states have a threshold of $20,000 to $25,000. And remember that there's half of states that don't have a threshold at all.

On the right-hand side you can see that the average cost of training is affected by this. So states with no average – or no threshold average just over $15,000 on training expenditures per training participant, while those who have implemented a threshold have an average of only about $12,500. So it's a not-tiny difference in this – in the amount of money spent.

But it should be noted that almost – that 14 percent of participants who are training in these states with a threshold are training over that threshold. So it's not like this is being treated as a hard cap, but it does definitely disincentivize these higher cost trainings. So that's just something to look at.

So we did a number of pieces of analysis on the integration ratings you provided. So if you recall, we asked for ratings on a scale of 1 to 5 on how you integrated with other programs. And then for Rapid Response, fiscal, and TRA, we asked whether they shared departments, units, shared managers, so that we could get an idea what kinds of setups were used to help integrate those groups.

One of the first things we found was that when Rapid Response is in the same department as TAA – and 37 states had this – they averaged almost 12 percent higher on the TAADI Rapid Response measure. So that integration does seem to have a big – make a considerable difference in how often people are receiving those Rapid Response services. And so that's definitely something to think about.

It's even more pronounced when we look at a fiscal department. So we were actually surprised by the number of people who had fiscal in the same department as TAA. There were 33 states. Which gives us a really good split because that means that we have about 19 states that were not – counting our territories.

And that the TAADI training expenditure passage rate – so for those of you who aren't familiar, we in our TAADI every quarter try and do a 15 percent difference match between the training reported in your fiscal 9130 with your training expenditures in your PIRL. And departments that have this match pass that measure 70 percent of the time. Whereas those who are in a different department only pass it 30 percent of the time. So that's a pretty substantial issue.

We also looked at integration with VETS program. Here, interestingly enough, we kind of expected that if you were more integrated with your VETS program we would see some differences in how many veterans participated or how their outcomes were, but we actually didn't see any real difference between those who were highly integrated and those who were not highly integrated in their VETS programs. So that's just something we'll probably look a little more into and see why integration isn't helping that kind of – those kinds of actual results.

We also looked at integration with Title I. And it is associated with higher training rates and higher employment rates. So if you are trying to – so this also ties into how we think about co-enrollment. But integration with Title I is actually a decent indicator that we're going to see some higher participant indicators.

One of the most fascinating parts about this is that we saw integration ratings of 2 and 4 – and remember, you're rating on a scale of 1 to 5 – typically have lower outcomes in training rates than when you are providing clean scales of 1, 3, or 5.

And I think what this tells us – and you guys can feel free to chime in if you interpret it someplace differently – is that if you are highly integrated or just know you're not going to integrate, then you can handle that pretty well. It's when there's some ambiguity, when it's unclear exactly where you stand with those other departments, that we actually see some pretty big drop-offs in those outcomes and training rates.

So just something to think about, that it's not always that integration is better, but sometimes just having a clear – clearly knowing where you stand can have a big difference.

So common exit policies. All but eight states have TAA included in a common exit policy, and 75 percent of states use a fully integrated common exit policy that includes TAA, Title I, and Title III.

If you do not have comprehensive common exit policies, we do see it being related to more TAA-specific reporting staff needed. You are more likely to use a custom state-developed system rather than, say, a vendor or a commercial off-the-shelf system. And you are also more likely to need a greater number of systems to generate your PIRL. So it means that you're not just not integrating on the common exit side, but that it is actually requiring more people and more systems in order to do that.

The number of states without a common exit policy for TAA report – a number of states without a common exit policy report high co-enrollment rates, but they have much lower rates of receipt of any basic career services, which may indicate that that co-enrollment is being indicated when services aren't actually being provided by those partner programs. So in other words, it might just be co-enrollment in name only. So for example, we know a few of these states report 100 percent or near 100 percent co-enrollment, but they're not actually providing those services.

We also looked at your self-reported co-enrollment policies. And in this case, the results are pretty similar between adult and dislocated worker; we're just highlighting dislocated worker here. We gave five categories that the case manager gets to decide whether to refer them over for co-enrollment, whether you encourage them to do co-enrollment when they're unsure.

We have a "varies by local area," which as you know may just mean that certain local areas have different policies. We asked if a referral is required over to – so that that other program can assess whether or not they should be co-enrolled. And then co-enrollment required.

Now, one of the observations I'm going to make here is that when co-enrollment is required, we still only see a TAADI co-enrollment rate of around 68 percent, which might mean there's a decent gap between what your stated policy is and what is actually happening on the ground. But I will say the policies really do make a difference.

So we see that simply encouraging co-enrollment, versus just leaving it up to their discretion, increases co-enrollment rate by 5 percent. And requiring case managers to make that referral will actually increase co-enrollment rates 32 percent. So you notice only 68 percent of participants are being co-enrolled – I'm sorry, I already – (inaudible).

So yeah. Just know that your co-enrollment policies are really making a big difference. And simply encouraging or saying, let's make a referral even if you're not going to co-enroll, can actually make a huge difference in what your co-enrollment activity looks like.

So we did a quick breakdown on the number of systems it takes each state to generate their PIRL, as well as the age of case management systems. There are – so 30 states have leveraged case management funds to upgrade their IT systems in the last three years, which is really great news. We've been talking about trying to use those funds and leveraging those funds to do those IT upgrades, so it's really great to see that a lot of states have managed to do that.

This year all but six states had some sort of online portal. However, only five states reported an IT system for TAA participants that allowed them to have any kind of meaningful ability to fill out TAA forms. And only 9 had a system that allowed case managers to do any kind of real-time communication with participants.

So if you're looking at states that are kind of leading the participant portal – leading in providing those participant portals – then you could talk to Tennessee, Ohio, Florida, New Jersey, or Utah, who seem to be kind of leading that pack, which is great.

Now, given the number of shifts underway in our current environment, we'll definitely be paying a lot of attention to this when we do our October collection – October-November collection – to see how many of these mechanisms for providing services to participants shifted over the last few months, which will be fascinating to see.

Just to look back at the charts, you can see that the vast majority of states do not use a large number of systems to generate the PIRL. We're talking between one and three. But there definitely are outliers and these line up a lot with your – whether or not you're using a custom system. There are definitely some outliers here that I wasn't expecting.

And looking over at the age of case management systems, you can see our oldest case management system is 14 years old. When we were talking about this before the presentation, a joke was made that the UI systems would be even more disappointing. The oldest UI system is 47 years old and it's basically a good three-quarters of the states would look red if you applied the same scale.

So it's good to see the case management systems are keeping up a little bit better than UI systems, but definitely bear in mind kind of where you're at in terms of how old your systems are.

So we looked at how training works – training for TAA staff. So this section we said, how do you train your staff? Nearly every state has a handbook for TAA staff. But those who don't, the five who don't, do see substantially lower employment rates. So if you aren't building out a handbook and those kinds of things, then you're probably not paying a lot of attention to the training of these staff and that might have some impact on the participants themselves.

All but seven states do hold conferences. But a third of those who conduct conferences hold them less than annually. We do see that webinars are highly leveraged and 30 states hold regular conference calls. So if you are part of the 22 states that do not hold regular conference calls, you might consider why your state is a little different than the slight majority.

States that don't connect – conduct any kind of regular conference call of webinar do have somewhat lower credentialing rate, training completion rates, and case management rates. So having that regular communication does seem to make a difference on how people are served on the ground.

Training. We do know that training is important. But that one particular mechanism of training over another doesn't seem to have a major difference in the data we looked at. So that's just a good note, that there's no one-size-fits-all about this is the right way to do training. But that obviously training is generally important.

So let's talk a little bit about outreach. And we're going to spend a couple slides on outreach. There are 11 states that don't have any process for evaluating warn notices or other layoffs to determine if a petition should be filed. They're instead obviously relying on workers who are seeking to be served to provide notice so that they can file a petition, or relying on companies and workers themselves to file petitions.

After controlling for population size, the number of eligible workers doubles by having a process to evaluate layoffs, et al. Four states that have a process that only look at warn notices and not search for other kinds of layoffs, and they do see a substantial increase over those that have no process. But it still falls fairly considerably short of the ones that have both the warn notice process and (want ?) to look for other kinds of layoffs.

The majority of states – so there's approximately about a 25 percent increase in the number of people coming in – or number of people notified just by having that additional step. And we attribute this a lot to timing.

So if you are affirmatively looking towards the – towards what layoffs are going to be occurring and what layoffs are occurring, you can file those petitions early, you can get determinations much earlier. And we know that serving people quickly is really important to getting people in the door and getting good employment outcomes.

And so waiting for people to walk in the door who have already been separated, before you start filing those petitions, obviously has a pretty big impact.

We then did the same breakdown by the number of people actually applying for benefits. And you can see the big difference here are the couple of states that are doing warn notice only. So warn – those who look at the warn notices, they do step up the number of people who are getting notified that there is eligibility. But they don't see the corresponding number of people coming in. And that, like I said, comes down a lot to timing.

So if you aren't proactively looking at the layoffs and are instead just looking at when a warn notice gets files, you're also going to see some pretty big delays and that's going to impact how many people actually come into your program.

I'm going to pause for just a minute and see if there's any question on that before I get into a very long, complicated slide. (Pause.)

All right. So we're going to talk about this slide for a while. So remember that these are not independent. What we did is each state we looked – we asked them percent of workers acknowledging communication as well as how many are applying for benefits. And then we asked each state to rate what mechanisms they use for notification. If we had a – if you left it blank, that means you didn't use that notification method. If we got a rating of 1 or 2, we considered a primary way of communicating, and secondary if you gave it a number but it was after 2.

Using overall acknowledgement and application rates for states, we can kind of compare how these different methods are working. Letters are the most common primary method, with only one state – who happened to not have any participants – and all but six states use it as a primary method. So most states, as either their 1 or 2, said we are sending a letter.

Letters are good. But we'll see that we actually get higher ratings on this if it's in the secondary. And obviously, that number of – that N is quite small, so it might not be significant, but you do see that the states who will use it as a secondary method – and we'll talk about what primary methods they are using – might actually be more effective.

Most states use newspaper notices, with two-thirds of those who use it use it as a secondary method. Those states that primarily rely on newspaper notices have a 5 percent lower acknowledgement rate and an 8 percent lower application rate.

Using intermediaries such as a company official or a union is by far – has by far the highest acknowledgement and application rate. But only 13 states are using that as a primary method. Using those intermediaries as your primary method increases the rate of application for benefits by 13 percent, as compared to states who use that as a secondary method.

And we acknowledge – we see this as you have buy-in and you get kind of that social acknowledgement by coming from someone they know, someone that they already have a rapport with, rather than just directly from the state. And so using – leveraging those union or company intermediaries seems to make a really big difference.

There's no states that use text messages as a primary method of communication. Those that use them do have a higher acknowledgement rate, but it doesn't appear to have a meaningful difference in getting people to actually apply for benefits. So it seems to be one of those where people get it; they say, oh yes, I'll definitely look into that; but they don't actually necessary follow through.

Nearly 80 percent of states use email as a method for communication. And those that – which do not use email do have a substantially lower rate in both categories. It seems that emails, however, are most effective as a follow-up method, such as following up to – (inaudible) – phone call communication.

Phone calls are also widely used and see high rates in their use. Phone calls are one of only three methods where using as a primary method sees higher application rates than using it as a secondary method.

Social media is – doesn't actually have great results. We can see that states not using it at all strangely actually have higher numbers. And this might just be – of people coming in and applying for benefits, this might be a matter of focus.

We also see that the lowest – it has the lowest rates in both categories as a primary method. And if you are one of just a couple states that primarily rely on this method, you might consider looking at some of the other methods as a primary method and using social media as a secondary method. Obviously how people use social media varies pretty considerably. So that's just – obviously it's a broad category.

All right. So quick question I saw was whether or not a peer counselor would be considered an intermediary? And yes, they would be. So when you are looking at intermediaries, think outside the box. You definitely need to – having someone that they get to know or someone that they have some sort of rapport with definitely helps explain some of that difference.

Other online postings has an intriguing result, but it's – there's only one state using it as a primary method. But they do see some decent outcomes, particularly in terms of those applying for benefits. So we'll probably follow up more with that one state. So yeah, we'll go from there.

All told, intermediaries and phone calls seem to have the most promise as a primary method; with email, newspapers, and text messages showing some promise as secondary methods. And I'm certainly not going to discourage people from using social media, but I would definitely recommend not relying on it as your primary way of communicating with folks.

I'm going to wait for just a minute. I know that was a ton of information about communication methods, so I'm going to hang on the phone for one quiet minute and let people type any questions they have into the chat. (Pause.)

I'll give you another minute because I see a couple people are typing. (Pause.)

So there are – that's some really great questions. So my first note is actually on your second question, "Will this have an impact on new regulation requirements?" No. Our TAAACS data right now is, as stated, in its early stages. We are not looking at making any of this as a requirement. So state practices are very interesting, but for the most part we don't really want to tell you how to do things. We want you guys to figure out what works best in your circumstances and in your state.

We just want to make sure that you understand where other states are at and how we see some differences, so that if there are things you need to rethink about your own process, this is a great time to have that kind of self-reflection. So I wouldn't be worried about us coming down and saying, these are the ways you have to communicate with people. That certainly would not happen.

That is a really great point about engagement. I will say, there's a key phrase in what you said you guys are doing in your state, which is using a targeted social media campaign. I imagine leveraging social media impacts are – probably depend greatly on how you use it.

I would also say the number of people who primarily use social media is pretty small. So it just – obviously it could just be a small sample. It could just be random. But yeah, looking at it as the primary way to talk to people doesn't seem to look great.

Yeah. Like I said, the current regulations are not based on any of this data. So you shouldn't expect any requirements – (inaudible) – out of this.

All right. So next we looked at the most common ways for getting employer contact information. So you guys told us which of these ways you guys used the most for getting these worker lists from employers.

Employers are – for getting communication information for workers, by far and away employers are where you guys are getting most of your information, with state records – with state records are often used but with half the priority of worker lists. So there's a pretty big difference here. Interestingly enough, getting contact worker information from other workers is basically not used by any – or by most states. Only 15 states use it at all and it's only used as a last resort.

There is one state – and I'm going to call out Kansas here – that lists it as one of the top three ways that they acquire this information, which I find fascinating. And I definitely want to learn more about how successful that is. We know that the employer lists are great if they can provide it, but having some of these other methods to make sure you get good contact information and not just some contact information can make a really big difference on how people are going to actually get into the program.

All right. We looked at job search and relocation. And here are some of the observations we had. Every state informs participants of job search and relocation benefits at the start. Thirty-six states talk about these benefits at training completion and additionally at the case manager's discretion.

States that don't talk about it at training completion have substantially lower utilization rates, like half. And 40 percent of states that had a specific follow-up time actually are associated with lower utilization. So there's a question in this. But the big finding is talk to your participants when they finish training to say, by the way, you remember there's this job search and relocation thing.

But also, I'm a little curious how we ended up with lower by having this additional follow-up time. And if you guys have thoughts on why that might be, we'd love to hear it. It's not a huge difference, but I must admit, it went in the opposite direction from what we were expecting. So I'm going to let you guys think about that for a minute. (Pause.)

All right. So the next thing we looked at was – the last thing we looked at was we asked you guys to do a prioritization of what your biggest barriers are for running the program. In total, here are the listing of barriers based on your feedback. Note that you actually ranked these from 1 as most important – so we actually reversed this. That biggest number – (inaudible) – barrier, that's where most people rated a 1.

And the highly rated ones are generally not surprising. But we didn't really expect companies not being informed to be the top barrier. I must admit, we expected things like processing time to beat out.

So we're definitely leveraging this to adjust kind of where we decide to train, what kinds of new products we're going to be developing and what new initiatives there are. And so we actually really appreciate this feedback. This gives us a lot to work with in terms of what to focus on.

All right. So I know that was a lot of content very, very quickly. But I want to open up the floor and let people share with that they think, whether – what you liked or didn't like about the analysis. What you found surprising. I want to hear how you guys want you – what you guys want to see more on.

So what would the next round of this really look at? We could do a deep dive on how we communicate – communication methods. We could do it on how we get worker list information. We could do it on IT systems. We really want to know what would be most beneficial to you. And also so that we can start considering what kind of much larger analysis we might end up doing. (Pause.)

Please don't be shy. I know that was a lot of information. You do see two attachments in the file share; one is a copy of the PowerPoint. So if I went too quickly through some of those slides, I encourage you to open that up really quick and look back at whatever chart you had questions on.

I will also say that the second thing I attached was a copy of the collection so you can see what kinds of questions we did ask. Obviously we didn't cover everything here. We couldn't. But we definitely are looking at all the other pieces of information we gathered. (Pause.)

Thanks, Nathan. I'm glad you see the potential in this. I do know that there's a wide variety of things here where we see a difference and we're not entirely sure why. There's also a number of things in here where I'm hoping it's really giving people an idea of whether there's certain practices you might change or adjust. And we'd be very curious to see if you guys do decide to make some of those choices to change, as that obviously will be reflected as we continue doing this collection over time.

I really hope that – I know that some of these things are not going to be within your control. So for example, we know that integration with – having fiscal in your same department, while we do see a really big difference there, I know that for the most part you guys don't make those decisions. But I'm hoping that we can start conversations that talk about how to improve that kind of integration. (Pause.)

Laura, is there any way we could expand the chat screen so that it's up front in front of the slides? (Pause.)

So Mandy, I definitely saw that you mentioned filling out in the "efforts to improve outcomes." And this is a really great place for that.

So as you know, we often tell you things we don't want in there, like explanations of – (inaudible) – results. But if you guys are talking about making any kind of adjustments or you guys have done something different in terms of communication methods or something else like that, in an effort to try and increase these results, that's a really great place to document it. And we'd love to hear that so you can see what states are doing over time and getting kind of that narrative explanation.

Because this data is really helpful for this analysis because it's discrete, but it's also – it's a little bit of a (mallet ?), right? So grouping yourself into a big category is – you lose a little bit of the fine-grain analysis to that. And "efforts to improve outcomes" is a really great place for you to tell us some of those things that you guys are changing or looking at changing.

So Joe, that's a really great question about the survey questions. As a general rule, things will stay the same. So when we get to the October and November collection, there won't be any changes whatsoever. Partly is because in order for us to change a question on here, we have to go through a very, very long clearance process. And as you know, it's six months away, which is really pushing it.

But we do have a list of some of the changes we do want to make. So you won't see a big change in the overall structure, but you might see some of the questions that we found just weren't very helpful taken off. And you might see a couple of questions put on where we want something more granular.

So up at the top of the presentation I talked briefly about the distinction between centralized and localized, and those are really broad categories. And we gave you some factors to consider, such as whether they have – the individual localities have their own forms or they're making the training decisions, or that's happening at the state.

I would guess that in the iteration in 2021 to see some of that broken out we might ask, for example, do localized units develop their own forms? Instead of just giving a general localized, centralized, so that we can get kind of some more detailed analysis there.

I'll also say, in the 2021 version we probably will have to rethink our staffing questions a little bit. But we'll get to that when we get a little bit closer.

If there are specific questions that you wish we had asked about, or ones that you thought was just not a helpful question or you wish it was phrased a different way, I'd love to hear all of that. Because we do want to try and make this as useful as possible going forward.

I will say, though, general format and most of the questions will stay the same because we see a real value in being able to trend this information over time. So for example, I wouldn't expect any differences to how we ask the integration questions, partly because we want to see if people's integration is shifting over time, and being able to see how those shifts might impact something.

So in the near term, not changing. In the long term, it might be a little more complicated.

Kathleen, I see your question. I'm going to decline to answer it. That is for a different conversation. I apologize.

For – (pause) – yeah. So Mandy, that's actually a really good trigger. She asked if – how states have been successful at getting things like leased worker information. I'm going to encourage not just people to respond in here, but we have both set up a – in the TAA forum on the – or the TAA community on WorkforceGPS we have a discussion post – (inaudible) – being able to ask these kinds of questions of other states.

That's a really important topic and I highly encourage people to post in there and respond to each other so that you can get some of that communication going. We might be adding – I'm going to look at adding to the 2021 version some questions about how leased worker information is gathered.

And my final comment is we did actually today create new posts in places in that forum so that you can give us feedback on the survey, as well as if you just have thoughts on the practices after hearing this webinar or have questions. So there's that discussion point where we can get broad discussion across states and I highly encourage people to leverage that.

So Joe, you're right, that a lot of your responses may be the same year to year. And that's good to know. So we obviously want to know if your integration is staying the same or moving over time, or your staffing level has adjusted over time, you know, when you have – when either you hired a lot of new staff or you've reduced the number of staff.

We also want to know if you have changed your communication methods. And I have not – I certainly would encourage people to take a peek at what they submitted the last year before you submit the new year. Just it provides you some grounding so that you're not remaking it up all the time.

But I do want to make – want people to not just copy and paste because I do want to see, if there is some meaningful difference, what has changed? And I'm assuming that we're kind of hoping things like integration gets better over time. We're hoping that your eligibility – or your response rate for notifications and the number of people who actually apply to come in the program changes over time.

So we know that there's a lot of things that are sitting the same, but that's – but by asking again, that's the only way for us to know – to identify what has actually changed. (Pause.)

So there was a couple of questions on the fiscal data. There are definitely some big challenges in getting data to line up. As Susan mentioned in the chat, there are two really important webinars on that. One we did in – don't quote me on this – last November, that had some state promising practices on how they've managed to get those things to line up. So I highly encourage people to take a look at that.

There was also a discussion forum specifically on fiscal reporting so that states can start having those discussions amongst themselves. Obviously we are perfectly welcome to have some chats with you guys about what kind of technical assistance we can provide to better align those.

And there is also a webinar that was done last December to answer a lot of those reporting questions that – and it went into some details about the major reasons why we've seen misalignment and where you might find issues in your process. So I highly encourage all of those. (Pause.)

Yeah. It's all – if you look on the webinar page, it's all in a fiscal section so you can see all of those things together. (Pause.)

Yancy (ph), I do see your question about promising practices and establishing common exit policy. I think that's a really great question. I don't know that we have anything, off the top of my head, on how to establish one. Obviously you do see that common exit is – generally makes things better. But I will say I don't know that we have a lot of resources on how to go about putting that together. I'll have think on that. Maybe follow up with me by email. I'd love to try and parse that out with you and see what resources we could put together. Yeah. (Pause.)

All right. Laura, when you have a chance let's go back to the slides and we'll talk a little bit about resources. But I encourage people to keep typing in questions if you have them. We have a little bit more time, so I'm happy to talk through any other comments or questions people have.

So in closing notes, we do have a TAA participant reporting page, which this link is wrong. It'll actually work because it's redirected, but as you guys probably know – and I missed this – we did change over our web address so it's now all at dol.gov/eta/tradeact. So I – but I encourage people to – even if you click on this link, it'll get you to the right place.

Take a look at our participant reporting page. We have a ton of resources up there, frequently asked questions. We have information on co-enrollment and information on how to fix reporting issues. So for example, if you are one of the states who is reporting co-enrollment but not reporting benefits, there's help on there about how to make sure that reporting gets fixed.

There is – and here's the link to that community page. This one in particular is a list of events, but I believe we have the – oh, I took the form off. But if you go to that, one of the links right under that is the discussion forum. So I highly recommend you guys take a look at that as well.

All right. I'm going to wait one more minute to see if there's other questions. And I would ask people to hang out for just a minute. I know once we're all done with questions they are going to have you take a quick – collect some quick information about how you – what you thought of the webinar. And we want people to be able to fill that out; that helps us a lot. (Pause.)

All right. Well, thank you very much. Laura, I'm going to kick it back over to you to put up those questions.

(END)