**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Apprenticeship State Expansion Grants: Participant Tracking Strategies**

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*Transcript by*

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LAURA CASERTANO: With that I'm going to get myself right out of the way. I want to welcome everyone to today's webinar and I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Andrea Hill. She's a program analyst with the Office of Apprenticeship; she's an ASE program lead. Andrea, take it away.

ANDREA HILL: Thanks so much, Laura. And hello, everybody that's here. And thank you, everyone, for making time to be here with us in these very interesting days. As Laura mentioned, I'm Andrea Hill and I'm joined here by Marcia Hampton who is also in the Office of Apprenticeship; she's the grants team lead. And Gina Wells from Maher & Maher.

These events are scheduled – there it went. These events are scheduled a few months in advance. And so when we had initially scheduled this, we'd hoped to have the WIPS reporting package approval by now so we could start in earnest. But the world has changed somewhat since the end of February when we scheduled. So we've modified this webinar a little bit from what we originally hoped to present in the absence of that pending – still pending approval.

So today we're going to start off just sort of recapping what a participant is. It's really important to understand that when we refer to a participant, it's someone who is a participant in the ASE grant program, which is a particular subset of the number of individuals in the apprenticeship programming in the state at large.

We've fielded some questions about this over the last little bit from some people who have looked at this definition from the handbook and think that this is somehow different than what came before. It's in alignment with the TEGL and all – with questions that have asked during the open period of the TEGL and also with the grant agreement.

Generally with these grants, as the grant period of performance progresses, and more situations arise during implementation of the grantees which need addressing, there are natural revisions to try and clarify further what has gone before. This was one and there will probably be more.

And so the ASE program there is still the "umbrella" methodology of becoming a grant participant, where if the grantee has made demonstrable and verifiable, tangible expenditures of grant funds, such as RCI development, the individuals who come into that program may still be considered participants as long as they meet other criteria. Because OA is looking at that umbrella expenditure as sort of a training service in the macro sense.

So this doesn't conflict; it's just a little different kind of way of explaining what has gone before.

We further outline this explanation in the December newsletter and will continue to do so as we continue on with the WIPS process.

So this Venn diagram is just sort of reiterate the previous slide. It's a diagram of the entire population of apprentices in a state on the left, including those who may be from one or more of several grant programs, or maybe even none at all. And then in the right circle is the population of those persons who have benefitted from ASE grant expenditures.

Now, there are more people who may benefit in many ways, including even sponsors, business owners, who are not shown here on the chart. But the one that we're really concerned with is pre-apprentices who benefit from grant funding.

In the middle then you can see is where these two populations meet. And that's the population of persons that we're going to talk about today, those who we're going to be considering grant participants.

For both pre-apprentices in grant-funded programming, and those registered apprentices who we're considering grant participants, DOL is expecting prime grantees to report on a number of data elements. If a report contains only enrollment but not the demographic information or quarterly activity for an individual, a person shouldn't really be considered a participant just yet, until that data is tracked.

Part of participant status includes the collection and tracking of the field of data elements for each person to appear within the QPR. Currently, of course, as you're all aware, those data elements are restricted to those that are in the interim QPR. But with the approval of the WIPS reporting package, that universe of data elements will expand a little bit.

There we go. Click over.

Data tracking requirements began on the first day of the period of performance for this grant, July 1st, 2019, for any individual that would be a participant. And that's again all of the data elements for all participants at least each quarter from intake through exit. And that includes personally-identifiable information.

Data elements for the interim reporting period provided in – were provided in the interim reporting suggested template Excel form. We showed you a copy of it during your orientation and since have distributed the interactive copy. We'll have another one coming out in a little bit once we receive the approval, so keep an eye out for that. But in the meantime, we hope that that's the one that you're going to use because that will become the format that we're going to use for the rest of the interim period.

I'm missing a bullet here. Yes? No. There we go. Further guidance. I have four screens and so I'm getting a little knocked around here. But again, the guidance will continue. We have a lot of training planned to be able to help you on all of our WIPS journey.

And so for the rest of this webinar we're going to explore a little more about data tracking and reporting. And at this point I'll hand it off to our intrepid guide as we start this journey, Maher & Maher's Gina Wells. Gina? (Pause.)

GINA WELLS: I hope you all can hear me. I just got a mute off sign. So I'll start again in case you couldn't.

I'm really glad that you could join us, that we can be with you to spend some time talking about what it means to collect and track participant data under the grants. Andrea did a great job of kind of grounding us in the definition of participant. And what we want to do now is spend some time talking about what it takes to make all of this happen.

So where we're going to start is in thinking a little bit about data collection solutions. We'll start there and then we'll move into broader strategies. So let's talk a little bit about how some of you are tackling this piece. And I want to start with a polling question.

So we'd just love to get a sense from you all. When you think about the development of your case management system, the performance tracking system you're going to use, where your data's going to live, where are you in that process? And just give us a sense; there's no right or wrong answer here.

But maybe you're still thinking about it. Maybe you've determined what your system's going to be but you haven't procured it yet. Maybe you had a system in place and you're just waiting to load in the PIRL elements. I'm going to give it a minute. There's quite a number of us on the call today so just love to hear from you where you're at. (Pause.)

And right now, based on what I'm seeing here, it looks like just about half – just under half – have selected a system. And then a quarter and a quarter haven't started or have selected something but haven't sort of procured it or issued your purchase order yet. And actually, now that we come in, it looks like a little more on the "have made a determination" and a little fewer on the "haven't determined yet."

So thank you so much. It's great to just get a sense of where you're all at. That helps me kind of tailor our conversation and think about some of the questions that you might have as we're going through this content.

Want to talk a little bit – I want to ground us today in this conversation in the topic of case management. So no matter how high-quality and robust the data system is – the database is where you're housing your participant information, your ability to do good quality tracking of your participants and provide good quality services is only as strong as the case management system that you put in to wrap around and provide support for those apprentices.

And to think about how you're going to get data on participants, you have to think about what happens every step of the way, from recruitment into a pre-apprenticeship or registered apprenticeship program, through intake and eligibility determination, to the delivery of services and to how you support and track apprentices after they exit your grant-funded services.

So we're going to talk more about this in a few minutes, but I just wanted us to be thinking about this framework as we've having these conversations today.

So I'm going to give you just a quick overview of approaches. You know, as Andrea was saying, what we know of how you all are thinking about databases and where you'll put your participant information. So as the prime grantee, you're expected to develop or purchase or subscribe to some kind of participant-level data tracking or case management system, as any ETA competitive or discretionary grant would. And to collect and manage all the subaward participant-level data, according to the guidance that you've been given.

So there's a number of ways folks do this. Some grantees develop proprietary participant data tracking products. There's also a number of options available off the shelf if you don't want to develop a standalone system. So you have options.

The February newsletter included a list of options that are used within the grant community. And actually, we're going to bring up that web link now if you want to just pop it open at any point during the webinar or afterwards. And you can always access the newsletters on the ASE community. And actually, I'll just pull it over right now so you can see it. Or I'll ask Laura to do it.

So there's several – like a list of options in this newsletter, of course with the caveat that anybody appearing on that list does not in any suggest or imply endorsement of these products or methods. But we just wanted to share it with you, give you a sense of the lay of the land and the vast number of options that are out there for you.

And there's other options available beyond the ones that are included in the newsletter. And I think another important consideration here to remember when you're thinking about data tracking options – database options – is that RAPID just does not have the data elements required for participant tracking under the ASE grant. And there's a lot of folks out there who can help. If you're still – if you're one of the states that's still thinking about the approaches, your coach, your FPO, your peers, can all help you in thinking through what some options might be.

So with that said, we'd love to hear from you all what you're thinking about, what you're – for those of you who have a system in place, what is it? For those of you who are thinking, what are you thinking of? And we've included sort of an "other" here. So if the solution that you are planning to use or contemplating using isn't on this list, feel free to pop it into the chat because I think everybody loves to learn from each other about the approaches that you're taking to this.

Seeing a strong showing for WIOA data systems early in the answers. And coming in second are proprietary or customized solutions. Bulk off-the-shelf solutions, a few good old-fashioned Excel solutions in there. And it's looking like this is sort of capturing the universe of what you all are considering at this point. Happy to see that no one is clicking "other" and writing in "paper and pencil," so that's fantastic.

And at this point, now that we're seeing a number of responses, it's looking like WIOA data systems are a really strong showing for this approach and there's certainly some good leveraging of data opportunities there and nice alignment with the workforce system when you're able to do that.

So I'm going to close this out. Thanks so much for giving us a peek into the solutions you're thinking about.

And I'm excited now to let you know that your colleague Amy Beller from Iowa is on the phone with us. And she and I are just going to talk a little bit about how she and Iowa are tackling this and kind of the approaches that they're taking. Amy, are you with us?

AMY BELLER: I am. Good afternoon.

MS. WELLS: Good afternoon. We're really so grateful that you could take some time to share your experience with everyone. Can you just start by telling us what system Iowa is planning to use to capture ASE participant data?

MS. BELLER: Yeah. We use our WIOA data management system.

MS. WELLS: And who manages that system then? Sort of what is the relationship between the ASE grant and the entity that manages the WIOA data system?

MS. BELLER: So within our ASE grant we are part of our Workforce Services division, with all of our program coordinators of the workforce programs – so Trade, Title I, Title III, Rapid Response, and our Ticket to Work, along with our foreign labor and migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

So our ASE grant participants – our ASE grant career planners and myself as the program coordinator work in conjunction with all the programs and manage that system.

MS. WELLS: And can you tell us anything about what Iowa's WIOA data system is? Is it a proprietary solution?

MS. BELLER: It's actually Geographic Solutions is the vendor that we use for our WIOA data management system.

MS. WELLS: OK. But for your ASE grant you're using the existing WIOA system. You're not purchasing an add-on or anything like that; you're just using what you guys have in-house now?

MS. BELLER: Correct. We have not purchased an apprenticeship module. We are – we have looked at the data points that have been requested for the PIRL and then when the WIPS is completed we are going to really dive down deep in our WIOA system to see if what we have currently available can work. And we'll talk a little bit later about our participants and how we have that – how we're working that data. But right now we're using just the Geo Solutions in its entirety.

MS. WELLS: And can you tell us a little bit about the decision making process you used? Like, was it obvious from day one that you were going to use this system? Or did you consider some factors before leaning this direction?

MS. BELLER: So when we first did our State Expansion Grant, I found it to be really difficult to use our data management system. And that was prior to Geographic Solutions. We had a really, really old system that I was pulling and copy-and-pasting into Excel.

So all of you who are thinking of using Excel, I'm thinking of you because it is a really daunting process to copy and paste different things from a data management system over to Excel. And sometimes Excel decides to not work and then you lose some of your files. But that was the way that we did our State Expansion Grants for the first year and a half.

So when the ASE came out, I talked with our leadership and I said, there has to be a better way. So when Geographic Solutions was coming to Iowa to start within our WIOA – to be our data management system for WIOA, I sat down with an analyst from Geo and said, I need it to look like this. This is what I'm envisioning pulling out and how I want to pull reports and how I need to have participant data tracked.

So then when I mentioned what we needed, some of it could be that we had to do a fix on the Iowa side to pull everything together within our services. And some of it was just the way that Geo designed different portions of our Wagner-Peyser application.

MS. WELLS: Fantastic. It's so helpful just to kind of hear your thought process and the steps you used to take to kind of understand how this could work for you. And to figure out how you could customize or work within an existing solution to make it work for ASE.

And can you tell us a little bit about sort of how you're leveraging resources? You're using a system that obviously a very large portion of the workforce system is using. Are you leveraging any resources? Are you contributing any resources from the grant to support this?

MS. BELLER: So we are actually not using any of the ASE grant to support this vision yet. We are contemplating on the third round that is out and due next week on putting funding in for the apprenticeship module. We're not 100 percent set yet because we're looking to save the funding because we know that having a specific module on apprenticeship could be expensive, and looking at all around what we want to do with our grant.

So the way that we're leveraging the ASE is really using the requirements of Wagner-Peyser and looking at what we require to be a participant in Wagner-Peyser. And through our registered apprenticeship policy, we actually require every apprentice that is touched by the ASE to be a participant in Wagner-Peyser. And we're also thinking about taking it a step further once the WIPS is completed to requiring that every participant is a Title I participant. So really looking at stepping up our participant level.

And we can do that because we have two apprenticeship – what we call workforce advisors or career planners, that actually case manage each apprentice through their registered apprenticeship program. So from when they're interested all the way up to when they receive their National Occupational Credential. And doing the checking in and having that strong case management throughout the whole entire program.

MS. WELLS: And Amy, a real-time question has just come in from Tyra Copis (ph). Can you just let us know how many staff you have on the ASE grant that do that case management work?

MS. BELLER: Yep. We have two RA case managers, one for our western side of the state and one for our eastern side of the state. And then I'm the program coordinator at 20 percent on this grant.

MS. WELLS: Great. Thank you so much. And I think maybe if you don't mind, just to give people senses – folks might not know. So what is the – like, how many apprentices do you anticipate serving under ASE?

MS. BELLER: Under ASE we –

MS. WELLS: So what kind of size –

MS. BELLER: Yeah. So under ASE we're looking at 200 that are coming from our RA career planners, and then 240 that are coming from our subrecipients.

MS. WELLS: Great. Super helpful. Thank you. And one last quick question. Any challenges you've encountered or lessons learned so far that you would want to share with your peers?

MS. BELLER: Well, one major lesson learned was trying to figure out first how we were going to approach the system. Because when I first applied for the ASE and received the quarterly performance report, my heart did sink a little bit, just because I was like, how are we going to report all this? How are we going to keep all this? I don't know how I'm going to pull it out like I was with the State Expansion Grant.

So I really took a look at what the reporting requirements was through DOL and then looked at our system and asked, is there a way to pull a report that I don't have to actually do something manually to? And can I pull it that it aggregates everything that I need and all I have to do is either count up or figure out how many people we served?

And also on the ASE, one big question that I've gotten from other states is how do you figure out between multiple grants on what is a participant in each grant? And the way that we dissect it within the ASE is our two RA career planners are (marked ?) as case managers on each of the participants, so I only pull reports both those individuals are case managing so I know I'm pulling the participants of our ASE only.

And with our subrecipients, we'll be doing the same thing but they're going to be – our RA career planners will be case managing those individuals. So the subrecipients will have to have each of their participants fill out a Wagner-Peyser application and become a participant in order to receive our ASE funds.

MS. WELLS: Thank you so much for sharing those lessons learned. And I feel like that's such a clever way to use your existing data system to let you tag your participants by a clearly-defined case manager. So thank you for sharing.

And maybe one more quick question from Tyra. She's wondering how many registered apprenticeship programs you have in Iowa. Can you give us just a sense of your scale?

MS. BELLER: Yeah. We have 786 programs throughout the state of Iowa.

MS. WELLS: Awesome. As of today. Right.

MS. BELLER: Well, as of yesterday. So it could have – raised or lowered in the last 24 hours. I hope that we've increased.

MS. WELLS: Well, thank you so much, Amy, for giving us a peek into the work you're doing in Iowa. I'm going to ask Amy to come back in a couple minutes and share just a little bit more when we get a little further into the presentation. So thanks, Amy. Going to let you put yourself back on mute for a few minutes.

We're going to move into more of this conversation about how to apply a case management lens to this work and we'll come back to Amy in a minute.

So we looked at this chart a little bit before. Case management itself is the coordination of services on behalf of the folks that you're serving. And for the purposes of this grant, it's the process of really managing your participants and their grant-related activities and service delivery to maximize their chances for successful completion and program exit of their registered apprenticeship.

I think not every registered apprentices in the state probably has a case management experience because registered apprenticeship is a business-driven solution. But for those apprentices that you're serving with these federal funds, you're supporting their OJT, their OJL, their supportive services, you'll need a case management system in place for them.

And we talked a little bit about these stages. This recruitment, even before they become connected to your program, eligibility determination/intake, the period of time when you're serving them, and the period of time when maybe they might not be getting grant-funded service but they're still in their registered apprenticeship program.

And as Amy mentioned, she was talking – it's not just about having a plan for this, but appropriate written procedures for case management, policies in place, can really help in making all of this happen and in ensuring that you have the data that you need to have in order to report on your grant activities.

So we're going to dig into these phases a little bit. And I want to say, to support your work in this we created a bit of a planning tool for you. So as you see over here in the file share box, there's one link that says "today's PowerPoint." And then right under that, at least for me, I just see "participant" right now. But if you click on that, it's basically a planning tool checklist that leads you through the kinds of questions we're going to be talking about today.

And you can use it as a reflection tool, a planning tool, as you think through how ASE funding will flow for your state, how your case management system will work for your apprentices. This – (inaudible) – reflect on what are your current plans, what adjustments might you need to make to ensure everything is working together seamlessly.

So let's talk a little bit about recruiting participants. When you're thinking about this sort of phase of the participant experience, you have to think about how individuals get connected to your grant-funded services. Are they being recruited through the workforce system? Are businesses recruiting them directly into registered apprenticeship programs? How are they learning about the opportunities?

So you need to think about this and think about which partners or which grant staff are apprentice recruits coming into contact with. Who is connected with them? Who are they forming relationships with? That helps you think about the point at which they're – these individuals are going to be identified as participants in the grant and who they're in relationship with when that happens.

And as part of designing this part of your case management system, you might need to think about ways to align those who are – staff and partners who are working with business on apprenticeship programs to those who are working with participants and potential apprentices. Are they connected? Are these parties – can they equally communicate with each other about apprenticeship opportunities and potential candidates? Sort of how are those connections and potential handoffs working?

So what we'd love to hear about from you all in the chat is what approaches are you taking for recruitment? When you think about the individuals who will receive grant-funded services, well, where are they coming from? Which partners, which staff are connecting to apprentices at the point when they're going to become participants in your grant?

So talk to each other here. Share what you're thinking about. Share about how this is looking in your state.

And while you're doing that, I'll move us to our next slide and just share a little bit – a couple of resources to support you in thinking through this recruitment piece of your puzzle. The first two links are links to resources on the apprenticeship community on WorkforceGPS. And these links lead to a host of other resources to support recruitment.

The last link is a really great tool, the Universal Outreach Tool, which is a map-based tool on apprenticeship.gov that can help you find partners in your community who serve the types of people you may be wanting to recruit in your apprenticeship programs.

So Gemma's (ph) sharing that recruitment is happening through American Job Centers, pre-apprenticeship cohorts, and other government agency partner-funded referrals. Thanks so much, Gemma.

I can see other folks are typing in too. So don't stop. Folks will be really interested to hear kind of how this is working for you. You can see with Gemma's solution that that's several different partners and entities that you'll need to be thinking about in terms of the transition from recruitment into eligibility and intake determination.

Tyra's sharing that recruitment is all hands on deck, American Job Centers, your college systems, several other organizations. And talking about the apprenticeship specialist in the business services section of the job centers. Also working with pre-apprenticeship programs. So we're seeing pre-apprenticeship as a big part of the pipeline here in several of these examples.

And then even an ASE project assistant recruiting in parts of the state and social media.

OK. I'm going to keep us moving, but don't let that stop you from sharing because everyone will love to hear from the specific solutions you are thinking of.

So I want to move into thinking about eligibility determination and enrollment. So your potential apprentice has been recruited and now you need to think about how you're determining eligibility and enrolling them in grant-funded services. So Amy talked about having every apprentice that they served be co-enrolled with Wagner-Peyser using the Wagner-Peyser enrollment forms as a means of collecting data.

You need to be thinking about what does that look like in your state? So how are your funds flowing to support apprentices through on-the-job learning and RTI and supportive services? Are you funding them directly? Are you using subgrants or some contract who is receiving those? How are new apprentices getting enrolled in grant-funded services? Who specifically is doing that eligibility determination and enrollment? What process are they going to use to collect that data and how are they entering that data into your system?

Depending on who you're in partnership with to do this work – Amy was talking about having grant-funded staff do this work. I'm really interested to hear from you all what approaches you're taking to eligibility determination and enrollment. Who is doing that for you? Are they a grant-funded staff position or are they partners? So share that with each other now.

And if you're having any challenges or questions at this point in this case management experience, let us know what challenges or questions you might have around that. In some cases, depending on who might be doing this for you, if it's not a grant-funded staff person, you might need to think about if you need agreements in place to collect this data, whether you might need an MOU.

And for some of you, you might need to be thinking about what does this look like if apprenticeship sponsors are recruiting apprentices? Are there additional conversations or technical assistance or expectations you need to communicate to sponsors if they are a piece of this eligibility determination and enrollment – if they're a piece of that puzzle for you in your state?

So Amy, I wanted to turn back to you again. You gave us a little bit of a teaser about this, but – you let us know that your grant-funded staff folks are doing this work for you, that they're sort of case managing. And then you talked a little bit about how there's some of your participants who are coming directly through them and some are coming through subrecipients. Can you talk a little bit about how that works for you all? And maybe how your subrecipients are in relationship with your grant-funded staff?

MS. BELLER: Yeah. So with our RA career planners, we get recruitment through our AJCs, we get recruitment from community organizations that we have conducted outreach to. From our RA career planners, through our other agencies throughout the state of Iowa – because the governor has a big push on getting apprenticeship up and going for all Iowans – and also through our high schools.

We have a lot of presentations that we do to either start quality pre-apprenticeship programs, high school registered apprenticeship programs, or recruit individuals to go into registered apprenticeship programs from high school.

So once we get that interested individual, we have them go through our RA workshop. Our RA workshop talks about the basics of what registered apprenticeship is, the expectations, and what careers could come from it. So we're all on a level playing field when an interested individual comes in and they know that it's not just a job, it's a career. They're going to have to put some time and energy into it for the OJR and the related training.

And we really want to make sure that they know the whole commitment before we get them working towards that registered apprenticeship program.

So once they get through that workshop, then there's a referral that goes over to our RA career planners, which are the two individuals who are paid for by the ASE. These two individuals are the ones that – they are the ones that mark them or go through the enrollment process within Wagner-Peyser within our data management system. So they are the ones that make that individual a participant.

So then once they're a participant, then we're able to provide participant-level services, such as those one-on-one services. So sometimes we're able to do a mock interview with them. Sometimes it's résumé writing or if they need other supportive services. And that's where we make the referral to Title I services or any other community partner services that might be needed.

So really that RA career planner is that wraparound of everything that that RA – or that jobseeker will need in order to be successful within registered apprenticeship. So we're really looking forward to knowing everything that they need.

Then we are able to make them a participant in the ASE because we actually provide a monetary funding to either the apprentice or to the employer, depending on what we're paying for, in order to help their apprenticeship program. So we either are doing it through a contract, which we have a business incentive letter of agreement, so it's a little softer than a contractor; or we provide it to the apprentice once they provide us with an invoice or a receipt of whatever service they're needing. So if they need us to provide a stethoscope or scrubs, then we just – they provide us with that receipt and then we provide them with the check.

MS. WELLS: Thank you, Amy. So helpful to hear how you've really built this really robust eligibility determination and intake experience for your apprentices' orientations, that you have those systems in place that both ground that participant and really prepare them for success in the apprenticeship and have good supportive and wraparound services for them. But then that you also have these policies and systems in place that ensure that you have good participant data and that you're going to be able to enroll them properly and track that data throughout the course of their participation in the ASE grant.

I want to keep us moving. We have a couple more things we want to talk about today. So we talked about eligibility determination and enrollment and now we want to think about coordinating services to apprentices.

So at this point you're thinking about once your participants have been entered into your data tracking system, you're going to need a good system in place to stay up-to-date on the services they receive, the funding sources that support those services, their status in the apprenticeship program.

So you might need to think about things like what services are you envisioning your participants receiving? Who is delivering those services? It could be multiple parties, particularly if you're co-enrolling them in WIOA, they're getting supportive services. If your project is structured so that it's funding both RTI and on-the-job learning, there just may be many people that are supporting that apprentice and delivering some of those services. You might need to think about how you're gathering information from all those different entities.

Are you in existing relationship with these entities or do you maybe need to think of something new or kind of craft what that relationship looks like? And then sort of how are those services being provided? And how and when is service delivery being documented for your reporting services – for your reporting purposes? So all things you'll need to think about in order to both deliver quality services but also make sure that you're capturing the data that you need to capture.

We'd love to hear from you all. If you have questions about how any of this might be working for you, or if you want to share how you're planning to develop some of this for your own ASE grant, don't hesitate to put it in the chat.

I'm going to keep us moving. We're going to think a little bit about the nuts and bolts of data collection. So some considerations when you're planning an approach for data collection. Have you identified an approach for maintaining contact throughout participation and after? And the example that Amy gave and what's happening in Iowa, clearly the entire service delivery design is built around the idea of case management and a connection point back to the grant and back to the workforce system.

There's many different ways that you all are doing this work, particularly if you're using a subrecipient or if you're working directly with sponsors. Really thinking about how you're maintaining that contact throughout participation in your grant is something that you'll want to spend some time with.

And then who is entering that data? Is it someone who works directly for you or a partner? And are they fully trained both in the importance of data collection, what you're collecting, why you're collecting, the value of collecting it, and the definitions, so that they can have a high degree of accuracy when they're entering that data. Some things to think about there.

So we want to do another poll here on data entry. So we'll pull up our poll now. We'd love to hear from you all what you're contemplating for your ASE grants. Who is going to be entering data into your participant tracking system? Is it your grant staff? Is it other state staff? Is it a partner in the workforce system? Someone in the technical or community college system? Or is it someone else? And let us know in the chat.

I can think of several other entities or partners it might be, so tell us in the chat if you choose "other," because we'll all be curious to understand that. (Pause.)

All right. Looks like partner staff and the workforce system are an important part of your solution. Not surprising, since many of you all are leveraging your WIOA data systems.

Jennifer Foyle (ph) is sharing that it's a combination, so more than one of these partners, which will just add a little bit of complexity to your sort of training and onboarding of folks who are doing your data entry.

Loraine (ph) shares that it's AJC career planners.

(Chuckles.) I see Jennifer's affirmation of complexity.

About 40 percent ASE grant staff here.

So good. That's really helpful. Thanks for sharing. It's good to get a picture of the solutions that you all are thinking about. I think this really brings home that importance of training.

And so we're going to close out this portion of our webinar today with just some tips on data collection and what you need to be thinking about.

So we've talked already – and hopefully at this point it's really clear that an electronic case management system is just going to be critical to your work.

I want to pause for a minute to pull out this question from Chip (ph) because it's a question to all of you. If anyone is contemplating having an apprentice enter their own information. So chime in over here if you're contemplating that or if you have any insight to share with Chip about that idea.

Have your own electronic case management system. Ensure that all of your partners and training participants understand why certain information is collected, where it's sent, and for what purpose. That's so important both for your apprentices, your participants, and anybody who needs to be giving you any of this data. You don't – you want to overcommunicate with them about what you're trying to achieve and why and exactly what you need from them.

You will want to let participants know that you're collecting this information and why. We want to add that language to – and guidance to – whether it's an electronic form or a paper form that you're sharing with apprentices. Again, looking back to that importance of data and being trained on it and ensuring that everybody has that understanding that they need. That this is just critical to quality data and high fidelity to your reporting requirements, so you won't want to skip this step.

And then don't forget to add dates. If you're creating any forms yourself, if you are not lucky enough to be able to leverage somebody else's intake form, make sure you add all the relevant dates and data to your participant enrollment and intake forms so that you're not missing anything that you have to go back and try to collect later. Make sure that you're getting – if there's a point where you're getting information from a participant, make sure you're getting everything you need from them.

So this brings us into our questions. Sorry. I'm having trouble with my mouse. But this brings us into our time for questions. So I know a couple of questions have come in. I don't know, Andrea, if there's a particular one that you want to start with. I tried – those of you who asked questions of each other, I tried to kind of pull on those threads as they were coming in. So I'm just going to take a minute and look through the questions that have come in.

MS. HILL: Sure. Thanks, Gina. I want to make sure that everybody's aware that we've got Marcie Hampton on the phone now.

And I know that this is a lot to take in, just even to think about all this stuff. There are a couple of really good solutions that we've heard today and that we're maybe looking at in some of the chat. There are a couple that I – just from my eye, you might want to discuss a little further with your FPO for some reasons beyond.

But Marcie is also here on the phone to help answer any questions as we begin this sort of general WIPS layout, because she's been through this with a couple programs before. And so a lot of it can seem really daunting and the development of the case management system and really realizing what WIPS is going to be, but at the end it's worth it. So if you have any particular questions about just sort of data in general, go ahead and let's see them; put them in now.

We got one a little bit earlier from somebody, bright and early, that, "If you a fund an individual in pre-apprenticeship and the person becomes an apprentice, do you have to expend more ASE funds to count the person in ASE?" So the TEGL is pretty clear that the only people who count as participants are registered apprentices, and so – and those persons who receive money with ASE as registered apprentices.

However, this pre-apprenticeship is – program costs are an allowable cost. So this is a great example of one of those juxtapositions of how things become clarified over time, because whoever asked that question, that hasn't come up before.

And so it's not responsible for Marcie or I to just sort of give an off-the-cuff answer. There's an internal process that we do – take new questions and go through and run through a bunch of iterations to find out if that's a policy or not, that these grants can support. And so that's one of them. So we will get back to you.

Laura, if you can make sure that we know who that was that asked that question so that we can get back to them, that would be great.

MS. CASERTANO: Yeah. We'll definitely let you know, Andrea.

MS. HILL: Looks like there are a couple there for Amy.

MS. WELLS: So we actually got to the Amy. We've answered the questions that –

MS. HILL: Did we get through all of them? Yeah.

MS. WELLS: I think we did.

MS. HILL: We have that one. That one. Yeah.

MS. WELLS: I wonder, Andrea, if you want to – there's a question here about how to handle PII information and – (cross talk).

MS. HILL: I don't see that one yet. Oh, there it is. It's number – yeah. So the question is, "How do you deal with personally-identifiable information when collecting those pieces from participants? Do you make them sign a consent form or disclaimers?" So there's actually guidance in the interim handbook already on how to handle that.

We do have to let them know – participants know that we are collecting and the purposes that it's being collected for. And there are a couple of sample scripts that are in the interim handbook and will continue in the handbook going forward. So hope that answers that.

Here's a question about RAPIDS. So RAPIDS we talked about quite a bit during the open period for the TEGL. And it's addressed several times I think in the initial FAQ during the open period. But the TEGL is pretty clear that RAPIDS is not a source for grant-related reporting.

I will admit – and everyone will admit – that there are some few data points that do align with RAPIDS, but they're two completely different systems. And so while the QPR does have some additional data, I think that when you see the full universe of data points and how it aligns with other programs across DOL and across the Department of Education, that RAPIDS just doesn't have that. So that's why that was put into the TEGL several times, that RAPIDS just isn't a source for grant-related reporting.

Let's see. Do we have anything else?

MS. WELLS: Yeah. We just got one that came in over here on the – about if we have all the demographic and other data elements to count someone as a participant for our current quarter – (inaudible) – I'm not 100 percent sure I understand your question.

MS. HILL: I can't – let's see. I'm trying to look at –

MS. WELLS: Will we have to report – (inaudible, cross talk) –

MS. HILL: Oh, it's not moved over to the other thing yet. OK.

MS. WELLS: Yeah.

MS. HILL: OK. Let's see. (Pause.) Oh, there it is. OK. Now it's on my – OK.

So, "If we have to have – if we have all demographic and other data elements to count someone as a participant for the current QPR, will we have to reverse some participants from our count if we currently do not have a mechanism to collect the information for WIPS for all our participants?" Potentially, is the answer.

We'll work with you as we roll – as we continue going through this. But we – again, really right now, since everything is not yet approved, we can't really hold you to the full universe of data. So I don't know. Marcie, can you speak to that, how you handled that in your programs previously?

MARCIA HAMPTON: Well, you know, we had sort of an advantage because we had a contractor collecting their data before they went into – (inaudible). So we had access to everything anyway because (FPRA ?) had set it up that way.

I think you probably are not going to hold on that until it's actually in the system. I think it's too hard.

MS. HILL: Yeah.

MS. HAMPTON: So if you haven't been through this process, it's going to take a long time. It's probably going to take a whole year before it actually gets to where you're happy with the data. It's going to take some work and looking at it and trying to figure out why some numbers don't match.

I mean, it's a painful process, but you just need to know that we will help you work through it. When you see things that don't look right, you need to tell us because we can walk you through it line by line and try to figure out where the problems are. So don't panic, because we're not – we're going to be there to help you through it. And Andrea will definitely be there for the interim piece of it.

MS. HILL: So yes. So for interim reporting, I would say what my suggestion just in the immediate would be is that there was the announcement that went out – unfortunately, it was published just a day after the last newsletter – but the announcement went out – there have been two of them – that the PIRL is currently available for review. OMB published it and it's still available for download and review. So check back into your notices from apprenticeship.grants@dol.gov.

If your authorized representative or your point of contact that's on the 424 hadn't forwarded that to the performance staff on the grant team, then see if you can track that down through them. And that would be my immediate suggestion would be to go back and download the PIRL and then see sort of the universe of data elements that are not yet approved, but that's what's made it this far in the approval process. So that can give you a better idea of what it is that we're – of what we're looking at.

And then those that look as though there are many other programs that use them, you might want to consider starting to figure out how to incorporate those within your particular system and whatever iteration that you're using or intend to use sooner rather than later. How's that for a nebulous answer?

MS. HAMPTON: Yeah. (Inaudible) – right away. And I – the person talking from Iowa had some really ideas about getting that process started and trying to lay out what you think the report should look like.

And so take the PIRL elements that are posted. There's going to be very few changes, if any at all. I mean, there's not going to be substantial ones that would make you have to start from scratch. So figure out what kind of things you actually need to get that you don't already do, and where you're going to get them, and start really trying to build partnerships with your data office within the state or whatever you need to do to make sure you're getting those conversations started right away.

MS. WELLS: So it is the top of the hour. I wanted to acknowledge that for folks. There's one more question here, Andrea, from Pennsylvania about how long interim reporting will be permitted. Sort of what the overlap will be between interim reporting and WIPS rollout. Is that a question you can answer quickly or should we follow up with folks afterwards?

MS. HILL: So yeah, that's one of those that we'll have to wait and see. Maybe – let's – maybe this is a good chance to just go ahead and move on then.

We've got sort of – we have another quick poll which we'd love you to start thinking about. And then I'll just continue on with the rest of the slides really quickly. Just moving forward, think about what your top two questions or struggles that you're having around data and participant tracking for ASE particularly are.

If it's strategies for capturing PII during these times of social distancing, aligning and connecting data sets, understanding data elements, or if it's other. And again, if you do choose "other," please share in the chat what that other might be.

So I'm just going to go briefly over next steps a little bit here. Thanks so much for that discussion. As we mentioned earlier, the WIPS reporting package we'd hoped to have finalized earlier – much earlier in the year. But again, we were knocked a little off track. The whole government was knocked a little off track by the coronavirus. And so it's now in the final comment period, again, and we hope to have approval by June.

The package is very similar in both content and number of data elements for this program that other packages for other discretionary programs have, programs like YouthBuild, Youth Career Connect, Ready to Work, SCSEP. There are formula programs and discretionary programs that use WIPS as their reporting vehicle. So that's the first next step.

After we get approval, we will start later in June with our beta testers. And I do want to throw out a shout-out and a thank you to those who have generously volunteered to undergo training and beta testing of the QPR. It's enormously important and extremely helpful. So we're really looking forward to getting into the weeds a little bit and getting to know those of you who have volunteered better.

And then they'll be peers for you to also reach out to, in addition to our TA team that will be dedicated exclusively to WIPS processing.

The best testing itself will continue through September and then, barring any catastrophes, we'll be able to start the WIPS training for everybody in October. So that everybody can get used to WIPS and make the adjustments to their systems, so that everyone will be reporting into WIPS February 14th – for the February 14th, 2021.

One thing I want to point out to everyone is that there's a very limited window in WIPS for revisions of QPRs. So if you can get – the earlier you can get your report in, the more time you're going to have to make the necessary revisions, if any. That's part of the reason that on the interim QPR we have those red edit checks to the right of the actual data column.

So we've got a training that's set to go up very soon on – with a little more detail of how to fill out the interim QPR and the interim QNR. But if you've got red in that far right-hand column or in that first right-hand column, that means there's something kind of wrong with your data. So that's to try and get you used to looking at data validations and data edit checks. So you can go back and revise that a little bit to make sure that things are lining up.

So we'll start to implement not with this report that's due tomorrow – or today. But with the next quarter we'll start to implement a two-week QPR revision, so that if our national office team or the FPOs come back to you with QPR revisions that are required, then we'll need to have that all cleared up within two weeks.

So that means if you're not sure of what it is, then it may need to go back and forth for a little bit. Then all that needs to be done in two weeks because that's all we're going to have in WIPS.

So we anticipate probably February 14th, 2021 we want everyone to report – attempt to report, hopefully, in WIPS. But obviously that first quarter may be a little bumpy for everybody, so we'll just have to take it on a case-by-case basis is the best way that I can answer that question at this time.

So until we get to that point where we're training for WIPS implementation for everybody, please continue to collect the individual level data for all participants and then report those aggregate numbers in the QPR, keeping in mind that we need not just enrollment but also activity for each participant.

Collect the data on registered apprenticeship programs developing – developed, excuse me, using grant funds. And then also those pre-apprentices who are participating in programs that are supported by ASE funds. Again, registered apprentices are the only ones, however, that count towards your performance target.

Get acquainted with the WIPS process as much as you can a little bit. Poke around on WorkforceGPS. Take a look at doleta.gov/performance and just kind of get a feel for it. Download that PIRL and take a look.

Make sure you register at WorkforceGPS and join the ASE community and also the reporting community. That way you will get an automatic email notification as soon as new materials are posted there.

Be sure that you're opening the newsletter. That's – a lot of updates are going in there, so take a look at that and keep an eye on that.

And then as always, direct questions to your FPO.

We've got a slide on the back here with some additional resources for you. And then as always, the recording of this session will be posted in three to four business days. So you'll be able to download these slides that have the links in it, clarify anything that you may have missed.

And we thank you very much for calling in. Stay healthy, everybody. Thanks very much. Laura, back to you.

(END)