

CHAT TRANSCRIPT

Title	Scheduled Chat: Communications Within the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program
Date	06/17/2020
Start Time	12:47 PM GMT-04:00
End Time	02:09 PM GMT-04:00
Moderator	Theberge, Timothy

Theberge, Timothy- 1:01 PM:

We'll wait another minute or two to let everyone join.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:02 PM:

Looks like the number has leveled off, so we'll get started.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:02 PM:

Welcome to our 4th scheduled chat! The purpose of this forum is to provide an opportunity to share with your peers on challenges and solutions in the effective operation of the TAA Program – specifically related to communicating with trade-affected workers, training institutions, and firms.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:02 PM:

A couple of ground rules to support multiple conversations occurring at the same time. If you are responding directly to individual comments or questions, please reference the person in question by using an @ sign and then their first name.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:03 PM:

So, for example, if Beth from MA wanted to ask about signatures on IEPs, it would be helpful if she started off like this:

Signatures on IEPs – [Question or statement goes here.]

Then you can reply to Beth like this:

@Beth - [Answer or follow-up goes here]

Theberge, Timothy- 1:03 PM:

As a reminder, we will be issuing a transcript of this chat to all registered participants. The contents of this chat should be considered technical assistance and not official guidance of the Department.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:03 PM:

So, to start off, what methods are you using to communicate with trade-affected workers? Which ones are working? Which ones are not? Have you adopted new strategies in the era of remote services?

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Grant, Kelli- 1:05 PM:

@Tim, in SC we are using snail mail and phone calls, email if it is established that it is a valid/active email address. Some case managers text with their participants...FaceTime is being used some for those who have Apple phones (our agency issues iphones).

Heggen, Aaron- 1:05 PM:

@Tim, phone and email

wolf, steve- 1:05 PM:

Pennsylvania is having our Career Advisors reach out to participants by email. Participants are notified of BRI by snail mail.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:06 PM:

@Kelli - Any idea on what's been the most effective?

Link, Lisa- 1:06 PM:

@Tim, in KY we are using phone, email, and snail mail.

Spencer, Candice- 1:06 PM:

@tim Communicating with trade-affected workers. Montana has been utilizing zoom for many meetings with workers and of course phone calls and text.

Grant, Kelli- 1:06 PM:

all of it really....our tech savvy participants appreciate the FT and texting...our less tech savvy participants are ok with the email, but prefer phone calls

Trapp, Laura- 1:07 PM:

@Tim, SD is setting up teams meetings, phone, email, letters,

Theberge, Timothy- 1:07 PM:

@Kelli - I assume (dangerously) that might fall along age lines?

wolf, steve- 1:07 PM:

PA is working on securing a skype phone application so our staff who are working from home and do not have state issued phones, will have the ability to call participants

Grant, Kelli- 1:07 PM:

@Tim, yes

Link, Lisa- 1:08 PM:

KY is using a combination of email and phone mostly. Due to limited technology access in some areas, we resort to snail mail and phone. Most use email here.

Huhmann, Myra- 1:08 PM:

MO is using phone and email. We had four Job Centers open this week.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:08 PM:

Internet access is a very real issue in many locations still - especially in our more rural areas.

Marquez Rios, Mayra- 1:08 PM:

TN use mail, emails and phone calls but the preferred methods are calls and email.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:09 PM:

For snail mail - I know that MA has had a readability expert look at their materials. Has anyone else looked at the design and content?

wolf, steve- 1:09 PM:

Broadband access in most of rural Pennsylvania is non-existent

Link, Lisa- 1:09 PM:

@Tim yes the location is a problem. Also, in reply to your earlier comment some is user related and yes it relates to age...as much as I hate to say it.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:11 PM:

@Lisa - I only raise it as a question because I think that tech literacy and needs to be something we look at given the median age of our participants (52).

Bevel, Ann-Marie- 1:11 PM:

Wichita, KS (where most acclivity is currently) began in person group enrollments of 5 last week. I think this will help those less tech savvy. I think overall people prefer to meet in person

Link, Lisa- 1:12 PM:

@Tim location--- In Ky we are using the same forms and letters that we used prior to Covid 19 issues. These were already approved by the state level and legal. We have just added option of using email and electronic signatures once we got approval.

Link, Lisa- 1:13 PM:

@Tim tech literacy--This is a major issue in much of KY with our Trade participants. I agree, we need to look at addressing these issues as part of our Trade package of services.

Wentz, Elaine- 1:13 PM:

Many Trade-impacted workers do not own computers.

Bevel, Ann-Marie- 1:13 PM:

Kansas continues to use phone, e-mail, snail mail as we did pre covid. Mails have been slower to go out

because TRA unit has been pulled to work regular UI....in the last week or so more time has been devoted to TRA

Link, Lisa- 1:13 PM:

@Elaine even those with smart phones often don't have the knowledge to utilize the full capabilities.

Link, Lisa- 1:15 PM:

@Ann-Marie--same in KY most of our Trade staff are detailed to UI duties. But we are making headway in pulling them back to Trade at least part time.

Lausmann, Laura- 1:15 PM:

Oregon has purchased Adobe Sign and currently creating templates of our documents that customers and complete on their computers or smart phones.

Wentz, Elaine- 1:15 PM:

@Lisa You are so right.

Bevel, Ann-Marie- 1:15 PM:

@Lias we are split so case managers are TAA and DOL has 1.5 TRA staff but during the height it felt more like 0.25 TRA staff

Lausmann, Laura- 1:15 PM:

Adobe Sign is a very simple easy to use program that does not require customers to download anything.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:16 PM:

Q: Some AJCs have offered technology 101 classes in the past. Is that something any of you provide? If so, is it limited to computer use?

Trapp, Laura- 1:16 PM:

@Laura, we are also in the process of getting adobe sign

Link, Lisa- 1:17 PM:

@Laura--we have found that using Adobe and pdf files has been easier for the participants to work with also.

Bevel, Ann-Marie- 1:17 PM:

@Laura, the problem with pdf is if they open the form in the internet browser they do not have full functionality of the form and some coaching is needed to get them to open for in Adobe. However [our] pdf forms seem to be working well with needed coaching

Bevel, Ann-Marie- 1:18 PM:

@Timothy, I think those programs are available either at AJCs of public libraries however those have been closed or VERY limited in service

Lausmann, Laura- 1:19 PM:

Adobe Sign templates do not require them to have any Adobe software or app on their phone or computer. It is completed in the cloud. Cool thing is that case managers can track forms sent out and set return times on them. We did purchase adobe pro as well - to edit our forms prior to creating template in adobe sign.

Link, Lisa- 1:19 PM:

@Tim--in years past we partnered with WIOA, Adult Ed, and public library service to provide technology classes. This has been prior to Covid 19 but has been put on hold.

Olson, Kathleen- 1:19 PM:

Oregon's Trade Act Case Managers were not reassigned to UI, some of the Technicians and Navigators were though.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:20 PM:

As services return to in-person, it might be worth considering adding a technology 101 session or two as pre-vocational services to Trade participants.

Link, Lisa- 1:20 PM:

Some of the Trade staff in KY now has Adobe Pro, Adobe DC, and other Adobe suits to utilize.

Grant, Kelli- 1:22 PM:

@Tim, when I worked in an AJC center it was limited to computers, like what is a mouse and what is a

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keyboard, how do you turn on the computer. Time permitting the workshop would delve into email and internet browsing....I don't think that has changed, but I am going to inquire....

Theberge, Timothy- 1:23 PM:

Thank you all. Moving on to another group you all communicate with regularly - training institutions. What's working? What's not? What are your challenges?

Link, Lisa- 1:23 PM:

In the past, we have recommended outside free resources to our trade participants to learn more, such as GCFlearnfree.org. This is a wonderful free site that has many tutorials and mini courses free of charge to assist people with everything from math, to how to work an iphone, to computer basics.

Lausmann, Laura- 1:23 PM:

@Timothy - Oregon TAA Case Managers are completing forms on our side for participants while they are on the phone, to assist with low tech skills. It actually saves time in most cases - they are not waiting on return forms.

Link, Lisa- 1:24 PM:

@Laura--in Ky we have also done that as well. We do have limited staff available, so it is a last resort.

Bevel, Ann-Marie- 1:24 PM:

@Timothy current raining challenges is fall semester uncertainty. seems like most schools in Kansas are moving to in person and going online after the fall/thanksgiving break ...tech school that require hands on are a moving target

Grant, Kelli- 1:24 PM:

@Ann-Marie, same here

Lausmann, Laura- 1:24 PM:

@ Lisa - Agreed, Oregon too as last resort.

Grant, Kelli- 1:25 PM:

@Tim, our challenges with training providers is limited availability of staff

Easter, Jody- 1:25 PM:

@Timothy, we have several schools in Nebraska starting early in the fall and will finish at Thanksgiving, so now we need to figure out how to help so they don't have a break of over 30 days.

Grant, Kelli- 1:25 PM:

@Tim, at the training provider

wolf, steve- 1:25 PM:

uncertainty is a big problem.... it seems like every school has a different plan and that stretches our staff pretty thin

Link, Lisa- 1:25 PM:

@Steve same here

Lausmann, Laura- 1:25 PM:

@ Steve, same in Oregon

Link, Lisa- 1:25 PM:

@Kelli same here also

Wentz, Elaine- 1:26 PM:

@Steve same for us

Wood, Tamara- 1:26 PM:

@Timothy - we usually communicate with training institutions via email, and pretty much all school staff have continued working from home and respond as usual. Biggest challenge is some schools didn't offer summer courses, which impacted TRA eligibility.

Grant, Kelli- 1:27 PM:

@All, some of our K-12 schools are starting sports conditioning here, I think that maybe an indicator

Pratt, Melissa- 1:27 PM:

We're having challenges getting books for students at some of the schools and then having the students dropped from classes (by the school) because they couldn't figure out how to fully participate in training online and/or were unable to get their books timely due to the bookstore being closed and not knowing how to order the books online. Lack of staff at the training institutions has been an issue. We've set up on-line purchases and mailing of books with most training institutions.

Grant, Kelli- 1:28 PM:

@Tamara - we struggled with that as well and Adult Ed is not readily enrolling new students in some areas due to uncertainty

Theberge, Timothy- 1:28 PM:

So - it sounds like the bigger issue here is around what a "return to school" looks like over the summer and fall semesters.

Pratt, Melissa- 1:29 PM:

@Tamara, we always struggle with having enough classes available for full time training. In CO, full time for most of our schools is 12 credit hours and most schools just don't offer that many classes. It's been worse this summer.

Pratt, Melissa- 1:30 PM:

@Tim, I think the uncertainty of fall is an issue. I have at least one student who put off taking courses this summer because he struggled with on-line courses and he wanted to take his courses in person in the fall. Now there's a question mark as to whether or not those courses will be in person and if they are, will it be for the full semester.

Easter, Jody- 1:31 PM:

@Tim - We are concerned with our students that require clinicals for their programs, and if it will push back their graduation date past their 130 weeks.

Pettis, Ceanna- 1:31 PM:

i had participants do filler classes.. if regular classes weren't available.. Classes that would make them more marketable so they can remain fulltime.

Pettis, Ceanna- 1:32 PM:

I have a few students that had issues with clinicals but they were able to do online studies to make up for the hours.. not sure if they do this everywhere.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:32 PM:

We've tried to work with the community college system over the years to get them to transition to year round, 4 semester/quarter style scheduling with no reduction in summer load. It's been a challenge.

Lausmann, Laura- 1:32 PM:

@Jody, Oregon - I am working with a community college here trying to get them to do an alternative class to CWE for a couple of participants that the CWE is all they have left.

Lausmann, Laura- 1:32 PM:

CWE - UGHHH

Pettis, Ceanna- 1:34 PM:

We were able to work with some of the schools to ship the books.. I'm worried about how the fall term will be if everything will be online or some in person classes.

Lausmann, Laura- 1:35 PM:

Most of our community colleges in Oregon have already outsourced their bookstores.

Lausmann, Laura- 1:35 PM:

They mostly all order online

Theberge, Timothy- 1:35 PM:

The books issue is not something that we had been aware of - so thank you for bringing that to our attention. I had assumed that nearly all of them had outsourced the bookstores by now.

Link, Lisa- 1:35 PM:

In Ky most have outsource their bookstores too.

Grant, Kelli- 1:36 PM:

@All - Barnes & Noble has taken over most of our tech college bookstores, after a few conversations, we were able to secure a way for students to get their books shipped to them and still provide the back up documentation we need for them to bill us directly, as they normally would

Theberge, Timothy- 1:36 PM:

@Kelli - Great work.

Grant, Kelli- 1:37 PM:

@Tim, if only all things were that easy (enter Staples 'easy' button)

Pettis, Ceanna- 1:39 PM:

@grant.. yes i have worked with Barnes for one of my students

Pratt, Melissa- 1:39 PM:

Barnes and Noble, Akademos and Red Shelf are the primary vendors for a lot of our schools, although we do have a few brick and mortar bookstores on campus that are not affiliated with Barnes and Noble. My billing specialist has done a great job of getting all of the bookstores on board with on-line ordering

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of books, shipping them to the student and billing us directly. The only students who have had issues haven't communicated well with their local counselor or our office.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:40 PM:

Ok. One last group to talk about - employers/firms. Challenges? Successes?

Lausmann, Laura- 1:41 PM:

@Timothy - Success in contacting workers who are laid off with open petitions - we use UI wage data to find them.

Easter, Jody- 1:41 PM:

@ Tim, we have held two in person Trade RR in the last month onsite, they were great in screening people and making sure everyone was spread out.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:42 PM:

@Laura - Is that for initial contact or if they haven't come in after some time?

Grant, Kelli- 1:42 PM:

@Tim, we have a great state level RR team here that TAA has been tight-knit with for many years...they are able to facilitate the introductions needed for us (TAA) to develop the relationship with the affected-firm....its phone calls and emails for us now...

Huhmann, Myra- 1:43 PM:

In MO, we have a promising lead on an OJT to hire 30 TAA workers. Another employer is going to lease / buy the building where the trade-impacted employer was located.

Link, Lisa- 1:43 PM:

@Tim Success. Our employers are working hand in hand with state level RR teams and local Trade staff to ensure we have accurate listings of all employees including contact data, hire dates, and layoff or expected layoff dates.

Lausmann, Laura- 1:43 PM:

@ Tim - challenge as our AJs are closed to public - hard to not have the boots on the ground information regarding layoffs . Both to your question - initial and it's been a while

Wood, Tamara- 1:44 PM:

@Tim - we're conducting several RR onsite meetings, having multiple meetings per day to limit the attendance and allow for distancing.

Link, Lisa- 1:44 PM:

We also have some success in working with other employers who are willing and wanting to hire the Trade impacted workers. Our challenge at the moment is we are closed to the public for the most part. We are working with various employers and partners to have "drive thru" job fairs and possibly a virtual job fair in the near future

Pettis, Ceanna- 1:45 PM:

we are doing virtual job fairs. they have been really nice

Pettis, Ceanna- 1:45 PM:

clients are able to ask questions via Zoom.

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Pratt, Melissa- 1:45 PM:

@Tim - our RR unit has been really busy working with employers. We've been holding virtual RR sessions and video calls with employers.

Olson, Kathleen- 1:45 PM:

Oregon has moved RR and TAIS to Youtube videos and are available on our Facebook page.

Link, Lisa- 1:46 PM:

@Kathleen Are these working well? That is a thought here--using Youtube and Facebook.

Saito, Sarah- 1:46 PM:

Employers: Minnesota emailed all the companies with 'active' (expiration date of 3/1/20 or later) petitions and checked in re: COVID and asked for updated worker lists. We had a great response & even received a worker list from a company that hadn't replied to our original requests :)

Marquez Rios, Mayra- 1:47 PM:

In TN some RR teams in coordination with employers have been doing remote orientation sessions with small groups and that has been working well

Huhmann, Myra- 1:47 PM:

@Lisa - Prior to COVID-19, the community held a town hall meeting for employers to showcase the benefits of the Trade Act program and then later in the day we had a job fair where the workers could meet with the employers from the town hall meeting.

Olson, Kathleen- 1:48 PM:

@Lisa We are doing outreach at time of layoff and then the Case Managers are advising the participants to watch if they haven't already by the time of the Initial Assessment. We have increased our RR and TAIS attendance by having them available online.

Bevel, Ann-Marie- 1:48 PM:

I think RR has been somewhat of a nightmare but not my hat

Link, Lisa- 1:48 PM:

@Myra--prior to Covid 19 we did something similar and it was a success.

Allen, Juliet- 1:48 PM:

@Melissa - We are doing virtual RR and Trade orientations in KY too. It has worked well for those who have tech skills. We use snail mail or staff assistance for the others

Link, Lisa- 1:49 PM:

@Juliet-would you explain what "virtual" entails for your trade orientations? Is it interactive, or video based, or live presentations?

Olson, Kathleen- 1:49 PM:

We will be testing WATSON through IBM.

Allen, Juliet- 1:52 PM:

@ Lisa- we created videos with all partners. It is hosted on our website and Youtube. We send letters and emails to participants to describe process. They watch videos, can access materials, paperwork and more. Staff have cell phones to text, call and video chat if they have issues at any point

Link, Lisa- 1:52 PM:

@Juliet thank you for explaining .

Theberge, Timothy- 1:53 PM:

Ok - Great stuff here for sure.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:53 PM:

We did say we would also try and cover Job Search Allowances and Relocation Allowances

Theberge, Timothy- 1:53 PM:

So, we can pivot to that.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:54 PM:

Any challenges, concerns, successes with those?

Huhmann, Myra- 1:55 PM:

I'd like to know what job search activities other states cover under Job Search Allowance. Thank you.

wolf, steve- 1:55 PM:

@ all - PA Rapid Response busy doing virtual presentations with various platforms. We are exploring doing short videos explaining Rapid Response, Employee Benefits Security Administration, PA Career Link (one-stop), training partners, County Assistance, etc. and sending the employers and affected employees a link to this landing area. Our RRS could then possibly follow-up with a Question and Answer session based on what the audience has viewed.

Bevel, Ann-Marie- 1:56 PM:

In general Kansans don't want to move from their local area. So we don't use a ton of JS or Relocation

Pettis, Ceanna- 1:56 PM:

We do not use a lot of job search allowance wither in New Mexico

Theberge, Timothy- 1:57 PM:

@Myra - We think there are some things that could be done that many are not. You'll be seeing more of that highlighted soon.

Theberge, Timothy- 1:57 PM:

TN provided some feedback during the comment period for the regulations.

Bevel, Ann-Marie- 1:57 PM:

The aviation folks tend to bounce around from OK, WA state and Wichita but aircraft is hard hit across the board so I don't expect a lot of them to use it either

Grant, Kelli- 1:58 PM:

@Myra, SC covers a myriad of job search opportunities after we worked with our regional office about 6 years ago to make Job Search Allowances more accessible to participants....

Link, Lisa- 1:58 PM:

In Ky we use relocation somewhat, but not job search stand alone--only occasionally in my experience. with the local commuting distance set at 30 miles, we expect more in the near future though. Mainly due to the changing workforce demographics in our area.

Pratt, Melissa- 1:58 PM:

Job search and Relocation is pretty feast or famine for us. We'll have several at once and then go for months/years without them. Most of the time they are pretty easy, but the challenges are when they decide to just take off and do everything on their own (despite being told that everything has to be pre-approved) and then expect to be paid. The other issue is sometimes showing that there isn't any suitable work in the area. The law doesn't provide a lot of leeway for workers who want to find work in another state to be closer to family/support system or any other reasons for leaving the state. The first question my FPO always asks is "wasn't there work in CO" when I have one.

Grant, Kelli- 1:58 PM:

@all, could have been longer ago, time has no meaning currently...

Theberge, Timothy- 1:59 PM:

@Melissa - That's odd - since once the employment is outside the commuting area - it doesn't matter whether it is in the state or not.

Theberge, Timothy- 2:00 PM:

With that - we're at 2pm - It's time to ask for what you want covered in our next session. And, when do you want that to be? We've been doing every other week. Too much? Too little?

Bevel, Ann-Marie- 2:00 PM:

@Timothy, I think @Melissa is stating the need to prove they can't find work in their area

Theberge, Timothy- 2:01 PM:

Our next chat would be 1pm Eastern on July 1

Theberge, Timothy- 2:01 PM:

Thank you all for joining us. We hope these chats are helpful. They provide us some great insight to what issues you are dealing with and what topics you need to hear from us and your peers on.

Theberge, Timothy- 2:01 PM:

For those of you looking for the COVID-19 Q&As, they have been moved to the dol.gov site at: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/coronavirus#TAA> If you don't find the answer in the Q&A, please submit it to COVID-19@dol.gov

Grant, Kelli- 2:01 PM:

Thanks Tim!

Theberge, Timothy- 2:01 PM:

And, as always, make sure to check out the resources and other items available at <https://taa.workforcegps.org>

Marquez Rios, Mayra- 2:01 PM:

Thank you!

wolf, steve- 2:02 PM:

Thank you all.... interesting stuff!!

Theberge, Timothy- 2:02 PM:

I'll leave this open for you to add any ideas for the next session.

Pratt, Melissa- 2:02 PM:

@Tim - they are finding employment outside of their commuting area. In some cases they may have found employment in the commuting area but wanted to be out of the commuting area for personal reasons. The end point was that they found work.

Allen, Juliet- 2:02 PM:

Thank You!

Theberge, Timothy- 2:02 PM:

You can also email your suggestions to your friendly Regional Coordinator.

Pratt, Melissa- 2:02 PM:

Thank you!

wolf, steve- 2:04 PM:

how about something on re-engaging potential trade customers

wolf, steve- 2:04 PM:

@ tim above comment for you

Pettis, Ceanna- 2:05 PM:

@wolf i think that is a great idea...

sotelo, michelle- 2:08 PM:

thank you have a great rest of the week!

Theberge, Timothy- 2:08 PM:

Thank you all for your participation. We'll send out the transcript and announce the next topic soon! See you on July 1 at 1pm.