**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**H-1B Ready to Work Performance Reporting Roundtable Discussion**

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LAURA CASERTANO: Again, I want to welcome everyone to today's H-1B Ready to Work performance reporting roundtable discussion webinar. And if you haven't done so already or if you're joining a little bit late, just make sure you introduce yourself in that chat on the bottom left-hand corner of your screen.

And now, I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Ayreen Cadwallader. She's a workforce analyst for the U.S. Department of Labor. She's going to kick off our first polling question. Ayreen?

AYREEN CADWALLADER: Great. Thank you so much, Laura, and welcome, everyone. I'm so excited to hear from the Ready to Work grantees on this second roundtable call. We had had this polling question up on just trying to identify who is on the call today, and it looks like the majority of you are program managers and directors of your Ready to Work grant programs. Do see an authorized representative as well as some IT managers and staff.

So welcome and thank you again for taking the time to join us for today's what I hope to be a very lively discussion on performance outcomes. Looks like we have two authorized reps. Perfect. And with that, if we could go to the next slide.

I just want to say again performance reporting is very near and dear to my heart, and as grantees are moving into your fourth and hopefully final year of the grant, looking at your performance outcomes numbers should certainly be a part, if not a monthly activity, a quarterly activity with your partners, those that are involved in tracking and reporting participant-level data.

And certainly also performance reporting technical assistance is very much near and dear to my heart, and really happy to turn it over to our partners with High Impact Partners, both our performance lead Kevin Mauro as well as Angel Harlins also for technical assistance for the Ready to Work grants and your TA coach Kisha Toppin. So with that I'll turn it over to Angel.

ANGEL HARLINS: Thanks, Ayreen, and good afternoon, everyone. So today I'm just going to provide you all with our objectives. So today we are hoping that Ready to Work grantees will learn a little bit more about their performance status. This will give you guys an opportunity to showcase the grant nationally, and also we're hoping to bring to light some more significant challenges as we kind of discuss your guys' performance data for quarter ending 3/31, which is the most recent quarter that you guys have submitted to the program.

So today's agenda, we're just going to be doing a welcome. We're going to set the stage. We're also going to give you guys an overview of the grantee performance outcome measures. This will be overall outcome measures and then also your individual outcome measures, which is measured against your own personal goals for your grant programs.

From there we'll have a facilitated discussion, a few questions from our TA coach Kisha Toppin, and then we'll end with a wrap-up and closing remarks. We do want this conversation to be very lively.

So we have unmuted the lines for you all, but if you're not speaking, just please mute yourself. You guys can ask questions throughout the slides and presentation. We want to make sure that this conversation is fairly interactive and we answer any questions you guys have pertaining to performance.

Another thing to know is that – so we'll be showing you guys the overall goals of the grant program, and then we'll also be showing, of course, the individual grantee numbers. Now, these numbers are for years one through three only and not the entire grant period.

So the target percentage for years one and three would be somewhat around 100 percent, and then of course the actual percentage of the grant to date information for each grantee will be shown through the 331 data. We did have this roundtable discussion in January, and many of you have asked us to continue to do these roundtable discussions so you can see how you measure up against other grantees.

Not only just how you measure up against other grantees, but how are you doing globally with the grant program? We also know that many of you are making great strides towards meeting your measures and probably have updated your information. So we encourage you to share not just your data but any strategies that you have implemented to improve your performance numbers over the last several months.

So with that being said, I'll hand it on over to Kevin who's going to give us an overview of your grantee performance outcome measures.

KEVIN MAURO: Hi, everyone. Thank you for taking the time to join us this afternoon. As Angel said, I'm going to go over the sort of aggregate numbers at the Ready to Work program that all the grantees have managed to put together both in terms of your overall targets and just as a grant program, show you how many people have been served through your various programs. And then I will go into a little bit more specifics in terms of where all the grantees fall as measured against their own targets that were set at the beginning of your grant.

So we'll show you sort of a leaderboard of who is where and where you're at, and hopefully a lot of you will see where you fall and maybe, if you thought that you were struggling a little bit, you'll see that you have some good company around you or at least give you a little context in terms of where the other grantees are at the same point in the grant.

If we look at the first slide, I've put together this graphic just to show you. The blue lines are your targets, and the orange lines are your actual numbers served. And this is for a number of your performance metrics going from your total participants served to the people who began training, completed training, who earned a credential, and who ultimately were able to enter employment.

And this is overall for the entire grant. This is all the grant programs aggregated together, all the targets, and all of the outcomes. And you can see that the – sort of what you would expect to be the earlier metrics are close to their targets, and you are in the third year of your grant program. So that's to be expected.

It's also to be expected that some of the outcomes are going to lag behind because of the way that the grant programs are structured. So that's not surprising, but you can see that there's significant progress has been made and almost 4,000 people have entered employment thanks to all of your hard work through these grant programs.

This is just another chart to show you again where the total targets are, which is your – the blue line at the top. The red line shows the years one through three targets. You may remember that the grant programs were asked to give individual targets for every year of your program, and so what I've done is add those up for all the target numbers that the grantees have given me for year one, year two, and year three, added them up, and that's where you get that red line number.

And you can also see that the actual numbers of individuals served who have completed training, who began their training, and who've earned credentials, they're also following that same sort of linear path. The number of participants who began training is I would say relatively close to that year one through three goal, and we're only about halfway through the first year. So I would say that's a good sign, and you all should be particularly proud of the work that you've been doing.

All right. This chart just breaks down the numbers – the types of individuals that are being served by your grant. Again, the blue line is your overall target in terms of the long-term unemployment, unemployed, and incumbent workers that have been served. The grant as a whole have served a lot of long-term unemployed individuals, which is – I mean, I would say if – you're so close to that overall goal now.

I would be very surprised if you aren't able to meet that goal. You can say the same thing for the unemployed participants as well, and I know that the incumbent workers, that has not been a priority for most of your grants yet. It may be a time – if you have set a goal to serve incumbent workers going into this last year and a half of your grant, now might be a time to start thinking of how to meet those numbers.

This pie chart just goes to show you – I like to kind of give a sense of the participants who began training as opposed to the percentage of participants needed to hit 100 percent of your aggregated targets. And you are 72.3 percent toward meeting those three-year target goals. Again, this is just for the first three years, and so again, this chart just shows that, in terms of where as a whole you'd like to be, I think the grant program looks like it's on target to meet that goal by the end of the third year of the grant.

This chart shows you, again, the same sort of breakdown between the target number remaining of the targets that all grantees have set and the actual number of participants who have already completed their education and job training activities for those first three years.

And you can see that so far it's a little under half of those goals, and if you are having any issues meeting or reaching some of those goals as far as getting your participants to complete education or job training activities, it's a good time to maybe reach out to your coach and to your FPO and to see if there isn't a way to start meeting those goals in a little more robust way and serving those participants.

MS. HARLINS: And, Kevin, we kind of talked about this a little bit. We talk about how some participants are actually getting jobs before they're able to complete their training. So I'm just kind of curious to know if you guys have been noticing any of those trends with your grant programs and your participants. Have they been getting jobs lately, and that's why they're not able to finish their job training? Or are the job training programs too long?

So if you guys have any questions pertaining to this number, feel free to send an update in our main chat, or you can also unmute your lines and speak to this as well. I know that a few grantees have mentioned that a lot of people are indeed getting jobs, and that's why they're not completing their training activities.

MR. MAURO: Sure. Thanks, Angel. And I would also say that I have been talking to several grantees during hub office hours, and if you haven't been taking advantage of hub office hours around the reporting – performance reporting deadlines up to this point, I then strongly encourage you to call in. I'm on the line usually for maybe three days before the performance reporting deadline just to answer any questions that you might have.

And in this case I've been hearing from a lot of grantees who are wondering – they thought that their completed numbers should be higher, and it is a function of the way a hub aggregates your data that someone – a participant has to complete the entire training program in order to be considered a completer. So you may have folks who have completed some training or completed a training, but if they haven't completed the whole program, that number won't be aggregated in this metric yet. And again, if anyone has any questions about that, I'm happy to go into a little more detail.

MS. HARLINS: So I'm seeing from Denver here, they said a small percentage have obtained jobs before their training completed. And then also Susan, she mentions that her program it's been OJT and apprenticeship. So their participants actually go right to their jobs. Looks like Allie mentioned, "Yeah. Some of our trainings are so long that our participants are getting jobs in the meantime," which normally that does happen.

Looks like Yvonne said, "Yeah. We have some that are getting employment before completing." Great. And then looks like Laura here says, "We're facing that challenge and would love to hear tactics other grantees are employing to deal with this." Another program, we're having – it's kind of small for me to read.

MR. MAURO: "Another problem we're having is that a series of trainings may be required to test for the credential, and clients only take some of the trainings in the sequence." I see.

MS. HARLINS: OK. Well, yeah. Absolutely, and if there are other grantees that are doing things that are particularly keeping these people in these programs, please feel free to offer those tactics to Laura. I know that that's something that – thank you. I know that that's something that we have heard grantees mention, especially on our feedback tools and of course through the coaching calls that that is indeed an issue that they're having. OK. So, Kevin, you want to move on or –

MR. MAURO: Yeah. And –

MS. HARLINS: There's a few more people typing. So I'm not sure if we want to –

MR. MAURO: I'll move on to the next slide, and I think once I get through the first set of charts and data, which I believe is everyone's favorite part of every presentation, we'll open the lines a little bit for sort of general questions and hopefully answer some of the things that you've added into the chat box.

MS. HARLINS: OK. Oh, looks like Nancy said, "We have participants who are approved into the program and never took the training." Interesting. OK. All right. OK.

MR. MAURO: Well, this next slide demonstrates how many of the participants who've completed their training and obtained credential, and again, this is showing for the years one through three target goals. And it looks like two-thirds of your targets are still remaining, and again, this sort of goes back to what we were talking about earlier in terms of some – that grantees wouldn't be counted in this metric until they completed the entire program.

So if they've completed some training but not completed the entire program yet, even if they've earned a credential, if they're working on another credential or something like that, that would not be swept up in hub as it's aggregating for this metric.

MS. HARLINS: OK.

MR. MAURO: This last chart, this is your entered employment numbers, and you can see your targets goals, it looks like you got about 8700 or 8800 for years one through three, and you've already put almost 4,000 people into employment, which is about half of those targets. And again, this is another one of those outcomes that seems to be back-loaded in all of your grant programs, and so I would expect those numbers to catch up quickly in the last sort of year and a half of the grant program.

Again, you can look at the outcome numbers for the incumbent workers. There are 34 incumbent workers who have advanced to new positions, which is fantastic. Hopefully, in the next few quarters we will see that number rise to meet these 390 that have been set as your aggregated target.

MS. HARLINS: Absolutely.

MR. MAURO: And one final slide. This is just to show you for grantees who are aware of which region they're in and the other grantees in their region, I just sort of broke out your began training, completed training, and earned credential numbers by region.

It just goes to kind of show you where you guys are in terms of your regional peers and the other folks who are part of the same network or area of the country. It doesn't really show too much but I think that's interesting and you can see where your region stacks up.

So at this point I'm going to open things up for questions either about any of the aggregated data that we talked about or any of the other issues that we've touched upon already. And if you've put a question into the chat, now would be a good time to sort of bring it up to the group, and we'll see if we can't get either one of us or some of the other grantees to jump in and help out with that.

MS. CASERTANO: And just a note that right now everyone's lines are muted. You just need to hit \*6 on your phone's keypad to unmute your line.

MS. HARLINS: And looks like Memphis Bioworks actually has some strategies for our question we had about training before. So when we do get to the question and answer segment, Memphis, if you would love to offer those strategies to our grantees, that would be great, and then we'll just move forward from there.

OK. All right, Kevin. Take it away.

MR. MAURO: OK. The next sort of part of the presentation I'm going to share with you is a series of charts that show each individual grantee as measured against your own personal targets for a number of the sort of metrics that we've already talked about today in the aggregate. And it will just give you a sense of where you are percentage-wise in terms of what percentage of your targets you've been able to meet and also in relation to your other grantees, sort of where they're at, and where you're at.

And it will give you an idea of where everyone is at and where you sort of fall on that spectrum. So the grantees are listed from top to bottom in increasing order based on the percentage of combined years one, two, and three targets that have been achieved for each outcome.

And as I said, we'll be talking about your participants served, the number of participants who began training, and we're really going to focus on sort of the last three, how many participants have completed training, have entered employment, and of those completers, how many of the people who have completed the program and entered employment, how many of them have been training-related, which is really one of the sort of core things that we want to talk about.

So this first chart shows you how many participants you've served in relation to your years one through three targets, and you can see that there's a large spread from about 43 percent to 601 percent. I'll leave this chart up for just a moment to see if you can – where you can find yourself on the chart and where you are in relation to some of your peers.

MS. CASERTANO: And for everyone looking at the PowerPoint right now, if you look at the top right of that PowerPoint window, there are four arrows, up – left, right, up, and down. If you click that icon, it will expand your screen so you can see the PowerPoint more clearly and large – more large.

MR. MAURO: OK. And like I said, I just wanted to give everyone a chance to take a quick look at it, and like I said, this presentation, including all the data, will be available to download now and after the presentation. So I'll move on to the next outcome, which is the number of participants who began training.

And again, you can see there's kind of a wide range in terms of the years one through three, anywhere from 27 percent all the way up to 145 percent. What we do at the national office in terms of looking at these numbers and trying to do more or less a risk assessment or see who might need some technical assistance is we'll look at these numbers and sort of come up with different bands of the percentages.

And we do have – one of the documents that you're able to download from this presentation today goes in extreme detail to explain how we set those bands and where the cutoffs are. And we – I didn't put that into the presentation today just to keep everything visually simple, but if you were wondering sort of where you fell in terms of the – what your risk is in terms of meeting your goals, that document might go a little bit further in terms of being able to show you which band you'd fall in.

MS. HARLINS: So, Kevin, kind of looking at both of the graphs, I see that a lot of people are – (inaudible) – quite a bit of participants but going into the actual beginning training, you'll see that the numbers and the grantees kind of shift in that area. So just kind of looking at that, do you have any suggestions for how we could really make sure that these participants are entering these training programs at the beginning when they first get served or any other tips like that?

MR. MAURO: I think that that is a question that maybe some of the coaches could answer or maybe Kisha might be able to jump in. But in terms of different strategies, certainly your FPO or your coach would have the best advice in terms of how to produce more outcomes, at least in terms of these metrics.

KISHA TOPPIN: I can jump in. I hear an echo. One second. Hi, everybody. This is Kisha Toppin. I think you all were asking about the low number of individuals beginning training. I would recommend to grantees that where you see this is the case, that you sort of backtrack the period of time it takes to begin training and try to pinpoint if there are any barriers to beginning training. Sort of doing the research behind the numbers that way is what I would recommend without knowing much else.

MR. MAURO: OK.

MS. HARLINS: Thank you, Kisha.

MR. MAURO: And like I said, we'll have things a little more opened up in just a couple slides for a more robust discussion. So I'll move on to the next chart. Again, I really just want to give everyone a chance to sort of see where they are on the chart and sort of in relation to some of the other grantees or where you are in terms of the whole. So this chart shows the percentages of participants who've completed training.

And again, I've ranked them according to the years one through three targets as opposed to the overall targets, although you can see on the right-hand side of all of these charts that your total targets are also included as well. But this is a range that goes from 3 percent to 142 percent. So there's quite a bit of diversity in terms of where all of the grantees are from top to bottom.

This chart is demonstrating the year employment outcomes, how many of your participants have entered employment. Again, a fairly large spread in terms of 7 percent all the way up to 215 percent. And this is ultimately one of the goals I know that you all are focused on in terms of results for your participants.

So again, I just wanted to give everyone a chance to sort of see where they were at. And again, if you notice that you are higher up on the scale or further down than you thought you would be, it's absolutely appropriate in a discussion to ask some questions or see if there's anything that we can do to help you out in terms of facilitating some technical assistance.

MS. TOPPIN: Hey, Kevin?

MR. MAURO: Yes.

MS. TOPPIN: It's Kisha again. I was talking on the last slide you had up, but I was muted. I just want to mention something about the last slide that you just did, the training. I thought it would be interesting if you all could indicate in your chat if in fact you don't get credit or you don't claim an outcome for completed training until the participant finishes the entire program.

If that is the case, could you just indicate in the chat that you do in fact count it as an outcome and count training as an outcome after program completion? I think that would be interesting to just see as we're progressing along.

MS. CADWALLADER: This is Ayreen. I do have a comment to make about this slide in terms of the participants completing training from your programs, and it is really a wide range. I feel like grantees are at different stages, and it very well might be because of the different types of training, the training design that you've proposed, and also the industries that you're serving.

Some may have longer training program completion than others, and so I think this – these outcomes by no means from our end is an immediate cause for alarm. However, we just do – like I said, do take those things into consideration knowing that grantees proposed varying lengths of time for their training.

MR. MAURO: Right. Thank you, Ayreen. That's an excellent point, and we do keep in mind that every program is unique. And one of the things that I often tell the grantees when they call into hub office hours or write into the Ready to Work mailbox is to make sure that you use your narrative statement as a tool.

If there are outcomes that aren't being captured on your QPR or if there's things happening in your program that the numbers just don't show, your QNR, your narrative statement is going to be your best opportunity to sort of let us know what's happening and to also have a record of any unique circumstances or program design that, if all of your participants are going to complete in four years, that's important to know because, obviously, it's not going to show up before then.

So please just keep in mind that the narrative statement is a powerful tool that is available to you.

MS. HARLINS: Yeah. And it looks like Allie says that she does not – they do not count a completed training until the entire training track is complete.

MR. MAURO: Right. And that is how hub is going to treat it as well.

MS. HARLINS: OK. All right. I'll move along.

MR. MAURO: All right. This is the final chart that I have for you today, and this is just showing, of your participants who have completed training, this shows the percentage of training-related employment that those participants were able to engage in. And again, anywhere from 6 to 99 percent. A very, very wide range, but one final sort of piece to let you take a look at and to see where you are in terms of your peers and also to see – just to get a sense of where everyone else is as well. This was the final chart that I had prepared for you all today. So I'll leave it up for just one second, but we'll transition into the discussion right after this.

MS. CADWALLADER: And this is Ayreen again. I wanted to note that, for the Ready to Work grantees, you are able to report employment outcomes at any time during the length of the – your program. So if you have participants that at intake you determine they just needed help finding a job, that employment outcome can be reported and does not have to enroll in additional training.

And then it could also range from individuals being in your training program but also getting a job. Those you can report. However, going back to this slide, training-related employment, this calculation is really based on those that completed a training in the same reporting quarter, and so this was our measure to ensure that the jobs that participants are getting is related to the training programs that you've proposed.

MS. HARLINS: Absolutely. It looks like Omar mentioned that they have a number of participants in two and four-year degree program. These would not be counted as completed until their full degree program is completed.

MR. MAURO: Right. And that is correct.

MS. HARLINS: Absolutely. OK. So I will hand it over to Kisha Toppin who is going to lead us in our discussion questions. And at this point we hope that you guys can unmute your lines. If you'd like to talk, you can press \*6, and then also you can use the main chat to answer any of these questions that Kisha may have. Go ahead, Kisha.

MS. TOPPIN: Thank you. And hello, everyone, and thank you for being here today. Just wanted to open it up by just reiterating what other team members were saying about your numbers and reporting and using your narrative statement as a tool.

Kevin, you took the words right out of my mouth, but looking at your numbers it's important that you are telling the story behind your numbers, whether you're doing it first and foremost in your narrative but also when you're speaking with your FPO and giving updates and during visits when you're sharing your program but also working with your coaches, that we know some of the nuances about your program.

So to the extent that you can tell what's not in the numbers or evident by looking at numbers, please make sure that you do so because it is educational for everybody involved in the grant.

And we know we're looking at the quarter that ended in March. We are almost through another quarter. So we know you are further along than what is here. So we anticipate the numbers to continue to improve, and congratulations on how far you've come already. And having said that, I'll get to the first question.

What best practices do you attribute to the outcome measures that are meeting or exceeding the goals? And I want to just go ahead and shoot right over to Memphis because, Memphis, you wanted to share a strategy. We were talking about dealing with participants securing employment before they actually finish the training, and you wanted to share your strategy. So whoever's there from the Memphis team and wants to speak on this, now is the opportunity.

Q: OK. Hi. This is Christy Davis (ph), the program manager.

MS. TOPPIN: Hi.

MR. MAURO: Hello.

Q: One of the things that we do for our training partners, especially those programs that are lengthy in time and for me I'm thinking at least 12 months or so, is that we establish a matrix which highlights points of exits. So what we do is we work in conjunction with whoever the dean or the director is over a particular program, and I can give you an example for the computer information technology program.

After a participant has been in class for at least a trimester, that's 216 hours that they've completed, an 18-month program. At that point they are eligible to sit for an A+ or a CNA IT certification. So if that participant decides that, OK. I finished this and I've obtained that certification and they get a job, then they are a completer with a certification. If they go the entire 18 months for the program but they don't require any Microsoft credential, they're still going to obtain a diploma in computer information technology.

So they are still a completer and they are still have a credential and they still have enough knowledge to get a job, if they haven't already gotten one. So what we try to do is, again, look at those points of exit where they will have gained enough information to be able to sit for a credential, depending on the program, and they still have enough information to go out and get a training-related job. So the matrix is just a part of our policy.

Q: And also that the exit points were based on employer input as well.

Q: Right. Right. And those exit points were based on employer input from our employer advisory committee. So if they're in need of participants for CCNA or whatever that is, we make sure that they will at least get to that point, or some training partners may reverse their curriculum and teach to that because they know that the students can get done in three months, get a certification, and then get a job.

MS. TOPPIN: Great. Thank you. Are there any questions from anyone else on the call in regards to what Memphis has shared? OK. Thank you, Memphis. Let's – and thank you, Christy.

Let's look over to – let's look at the next question in the chat box.

MS. HARLINS: It looks – hey, Kisha. It looks like Lorena said that she had – Nebraska has a strategy that they can share as well on successful entered employed rate – entered employment rate. So if you just push \*6 on your phone, Lorena, you can share your strategy with us as well.

Q: Hi. Thanks. Yeah. So in Nebraska with our connect grant, our H-1B program, we've taken an approach with employers and businesses that's what we call a "no wrong door." So we really try to incorporate ourselves into the local workforce system, the local American job centers, working with WIOA, voc rehab, the community colleges, our training providers, and become a part of the business solution.

So anybody that's talking to IT employers or businesses with an IT workforce need, they're aware of our grant and our program, and they help to foster reverse referrals. They promote what we do. So it's not just on the shoulders of our grant staff to try to engage employers for our placement rates. We are really leveraging the other workforce systems and workforce partners, and our biggest partner has really been our non-traditional training providers who have structured their short-term training programs around internships and OJTs and work-based learning experiences with local area employers.

So the student has direct real-world on-the-job experience as a part of their training program, and most of them are getting hired by that employer upon completion of their training. So I think that's one of the big successes that's contributed to our entered employment rate.

MS. TOPPIN: Thank you for sharing that, Lorena. Any other best practices someone on the call would like to share? So meeting or exceeding your outcome measures?

MR. MAURO: Kisha, I just wanted to jump in for one quick second. I say Jeannette had a question about the common measures.

MS. TOPPIN: Yes.

MR. MAURO: She was asking how the common measures were being captured and reported, and is some of that data available already? The answer is yes. Yes with a "but," and that is in terms of the data is collected by the Department of Labor on your behalf using Social Security numbers and date of birth and a few other of the markers that are used to make sure an individual is the same person as a participant in your program.

And the measures that are collected are done through wage records that are collected by the national office. That being said, there are some of your common measures available. However, because of the way they are collected, there can be up to a three quarter lag on the collecting and displaying your common measure data in your QPRs. So you may notice that, if you had created a QPR for the 3/31 quarter, the common measures section was not yet filled in. That's because that's filled in at a later date. I

'm sure if you go into a QPR that you generated a year ago, you would see those common measures reported. So it is a constant process of updating those, but unfortunately, there is somewhat of a la in terms of when they are displayed in your QPR in terms of – and that just has to do with the process of collecting them and some other factors that are just administrative. But hopefully, that answers your question.

If I didn't, just let me know and – or send another question into the chat box or unmute your phone. And otherwise, Kisha, I'll turn it back to you.

MS. TOPPIN: OK. Thank you, Kevin. I wanted to just give an opportunity for a grantee to share on a best practice as it relates to meeting your goal for participants served, and I know that one of the grantees I work on is – work with is on the call. San Jacinto, if you could just share as you have exceeded your goal, shed some light on what worked for you to meet this goal because we have many grantees that are still in the throes of recruitment, planning, and getting folks in the door and through the program? Nancy, may I call on you?

Q: Kisha, can you hear me?

MS. TOPPIN: Yes.

Q: Can you all hear me?

MS. TOPPIN: Yes.

Q: OK. Great. Thanks.

MS. TOPPIN: Thanks, Nancy.

Q: Thank you. Yeah. What the best practices we have is some of our partnerships that we have with other organizations, the biggest one being the workforce solutions people, and that's what I think you all referred to as your one-stop shop. That's the place where everybody goes that gets unemployed and goes for help, and so they're referred to – we're partnered with three other colleges, Lake College, College of the Mainland, and Brazosport College.

And so they go refer to one of the colleges for training. So we get a lot of referrals that way. They also have the whole database for the state of Texas so they can do some e-mail blasts out to the people who are collecting unemployment to advertise our training. So that's been helpful. The other thing is there's an employment magazine called JobSparx around here, and they take this hard-copy magazine to every job fair around the Houston Area they can find and pass it out.

And that has brought in a lot of interest when we put an ad into that paper, and the phones start ringing off the wall when that goes out. And we're fixing to put another ad that starts the end of this month. So we'll see what happens then. That and then word of mouth. Once the people get in the program and they like what they're getting, the treatment that they're doing, they start telling their friends, and their friends come in and apply.

MS. TOPPIN: Thank you, Nancy. OK. We're going to go ahead and go to the next question.

Which challenges do you attribute to the outcome measures that are not meeting the goals, and might there be some implications around timing? And I think we talked about it – that already a little bit with counting training completions after program completion. But now is your time to sort of share what your challenges are and perhaps get some good feedback from fellow grantees.

Who would like to kick us off? Let's see. It looks like Denver is ready to go. Denver?

Q: Hi. This is the project administrator for Denver Lives, and I've got the team here. I think one of the challenges that we had with our unsubsidized employment and tracking it are a couple different things. One is trying to get information back from our customer on their employment. A lot of times when they're employed, they're so excited. They kind of forget – they forget that we're still here.

That's one of the challenges. We can use our state unemployment benefits system to get some information, but that's a five- to six-month lag as well. So some of the areas that we have that we know that the number isn't as accurate as we would like it to be, we don't necessarily use incentives here. They have the gift card incentive just because our job average wage is $63,000 and we have some higher up and it's not – they're not really incented by a $25 gift card. So we've tried to look at some options and encouraging people to get us the employment information.

We're also looking for some ideas around that. We heard that there was an access – a different kind of a program where you can access Social Security numbers and get more real time information on employment with individuals. That's what we've heard. A couple people have mentioned it around here, but we really don't know anything about it. So we were open to some recommendations on tracking that without always having to go back to the customer or even the employer to get that information.

MS. TOPPIN: Does any- – thank you. Does anyone on the call, another grantee want to share how they address the challenge of tracking those in unsubsidized employment, how you get the individuals to actually follow up with the program?

MS. HARLINS: Well, to piggyback a little bit on Denver, I'm glad that they're using incentives to – or this is just a reminder to everyone to – that you can use incentives to track your employment outcomes. We did mention this on our last webinar with our success stories just so that you guys are aware that the use of incentives are for the Ready to Work program.

MS. TOPPIN: OK. Thank you. Yvonne James says, "We use the work number, that resource to find out people who are working." And Laura Lee says, "We've had some success with incentive payments as well." Thank you.

Anything else that you all are doing to get that information because it's true? Once they get the job, it's kind of like they're moving on with their lives, but how do you get them to stay connected long enough to communicate their success back to you? Anyone else doing something that's working? Yes.

MS. HARLINS: And just to piggyback on that, are there anyone that's using social media or LinkedIn as well. Jeannette, looks like we have looked people up on LinkedIn. OK. Great. OK.

MS. TOPPIN: Others are typing. I know that incentives do work. They do help out. OK. Susan trying to talk. OK. We're going to pause now and try again.

MS. HARLINS: If you push \*6 on your phone, you can be – you'll be unmuted.

Q: Hello?

MS. TOPPIN: Yes. Hi.

Q: Hi. OK. That's better. I'm sorry. Anyway, what I wanted to mention was, again, because we do OJT and apprenticeship, we have the connection to the employers. So every quarter we call the employers, if we don't talk to the individuals, and say, hey, who's there? Who isn't? What happened, blah, blah, blah?

But in terms of if you don't have that luxury – I know in the training fund with experience having people go to training and then we don't hear, you're always going to have a certain number that you're not going to hear from, unfortunately. But I think you can reduce that number of people if you make it very clear up front that a requirement for getting into the program is they've got to be agreeable to stay in touch, update their information, and call you for a year or whatever time frame you want to set on that.

MS. TOPPIN: Thank you.

Q: Yeah. We've had people sign something and, again, it doesn't solve the entire problem but it helps. So they know up front that it's a requirement of being in the program.

MS. TOPPIN: Right. Thank you. Thank you for your feedback. Nancy – well, Lee also mentioned Facebook, LinkedIn, and e-mail and text.

Nancy Pierce (ph) has asked the question, "Can employment be counted with a verbal from the individual, or do we need to have a pay stub or employer letter for verification?" Of course whenever you have a question like this, you always want to run it by your FPO, but since we have other grantees on the call, who on the call would like to share how they – what they use for – to document employment? Anyone? Other than if you're using a pay stub or employer verification letter. Anything else you're using?

Denver, you do verbal verification as an interim tracking. Got you. And you have a form, Denver. OK. So you might get that verbal first; right? Then you get the form filled out is what it looks like; is that correct, Denver? And Jeannette says, "It is all self-reported by the participant or we document that we found them on LinkedIn." Yeah. Either or.

Lee, "My opinion on documentation, if we are eventually going to pull from the wage records, the verbal should suffice as a leading indicator for now." Anybody else on the team want to weigh in on this? I'll keep going otherwise. Laura Lee, "We've used wage records and some self-attestation forms because the employers haven't been very responsive." And Brian says, "Our participants have to fill out a document prior to receiving their incentive." All right.

Do any of you provide any type of activity where they can come in maybe for the first time after working to provide verification? Sort of maybe it's an activity to get them to share with you how it's going but also provide an incentive for coming to the activity? Anything like that? OK. Thank you, everyone, for responding to that question. We will move on to discussion question number three.

How often do you and your subcontractors or partners review this data together? Are you looking at it more often now than you did in year two? What do you think, or what do you do?

MR. MAURO: And remember anyone can hit \*6 to unmute and join the conversation.

MS. TOPPIN: So I know that Rhode Island's on the call. Rhode Island, what do you all do? Are you all looking at the data more often or about the same as you were in year two? Can I get you to get the conversation going, Laura Lee? And if you need to type it in, that's fine if you can't unmute.

Q: Must have read my mind because I was cursing, how do you unmute? How do you unmute? She said Rhode Island. We have been monitoring a lot more recently, and I think it's been productive for us and the sub-grantees as well just because it's just that constant feedback. I think it shows in the outcomes, and it's been helpful all around.

MS. TOPPIN: Great. Thank you, Laura Lee.

Q: You're welcome.

MS. TOPPIN: Other feedback? Susan says, "Quarterly advisory board meetings where we share aggregated data but outcomes for each employer participant. I would be glad to share a set of my slides with people." Thank you, Susan. And Jeannette says, "We send a report on outcomes and expenditures to subcontractors monthly and have a conversation, if necessary. Yes. We are definitely watching the data more closely now as we are nearing the end of year three."

Nancy says, "We have a monthly partner meeting to review outcomes and performance predictions for how to fulfill the rest of the grant." And we had talked about this, Nancy. She's – they're actually asking all their training providers, their colleges to map out how they intend to roll out the rest of the grant and what their performance predictions are for that period of time.

MS. HARLINS: Yeah. And it looks like Denver reviews theirs monthly as well on their project team calls, and Brian said they do a week – bi-weekly meeting with their project manager.

So I did have a follow-up question. How do you all promote your outcomes with your employer partners?

We see a few people –

MR. MAURO: And it looks like we have a lot of people typing. So again, \*6 will put you live.

MS. HARLINS: Yeah. You guys can unmute your line. I definitely want to hear from you as well. OK. OK. "We have a monthly partner meeting to review outcomes and perform predictions for how to fulfill the rest of the grant." Susan says, "We have a set of literature." That's interesting. "We can share information with – we share information with our advisory council," Denver. OK. "We communicate at our monthly subcommittee meetings." Great. It looks like Jeannette says they share employer testimonials with their other employers.

So yeah. Those are some great ways to make sure that you're contacting your employer partners and you're keeping them in the loop of what's going on with your program and also for them to provide you with feedback as well.

MR. MAURO: And I would just take this brief segue, which I think is totally smooth, to remind everyone that we are having a contest for folks to send in a success story, and we are keeping that contest open a little bit. I know that Angel has some of the details, but there is still time for you to send your success story in through the Ready to Work mailbox.

MS. HARLINS: Yeah. So – and actually, the success story competition deadline will be on June 26, and we do encourage you guys to send in your program success stories. I mean, we're hearing some great stuff right now on the call, some things that you're doing with your employer partners. We definitely want to showcase that information here at the DOL as well.

Q: Hi. This is Lorena with Nebraska.

MS. HARLINS: Hey, Lorena.

MR. MAURO: Hi.

Q: Hi. So one of the things that – one of the ways that we kind of promote our successful employment rate is not as a stand-along number, not as a metric of the grant, but we really promote it through our training providers and kind of their employment placement rate for their skilled students that they have.

Because our employers and our businesses recognize our community colleges and our training providers as a core component of the community, and so rather than us as a new stand-alone grant coming out and talking to them, we really – we sort of mask it and camouflage it through our training provider numbers that, yes. 98 percent of these students get placed because of their skill level. Don't you want to be one of the employers that hires them?

MS. TOPPIN: All right. Thank you.

MR. MAURO: Yeah. That's really excellent, and we would also love it if there was a way for you to sort of share that with us in a written way.

MS. HARLINS: Absolutely.

MS. TOPPIN: One more question as a part of this question. As you're reviewing the data with your subcontractors or partners, are you doing it one on one or as a group? Do you find value in them seeing where they are beside each other like we're doing in this format, or do you find it more valuable and more effective to do it sort of one on one with each one? Anyone feel one way or another about it?

Looks like the most of you who have shared in the chat are doing it in a group format.

MS. HARLINS: I like the group idea. I learn from other people. I think it's good.

MS. TOPPIN: OK. Thank you. And see. This is what I was looking for. Jeannette, you said, "Review one on one since they all have a different focus." So it all depends on, again, how your model is laid out and how your program works. Yeah. Thank you. Let's go to the next slide.

Q: If I can interject just before you go to the next slide, this is Ted Neilson (ph). I'm a program administrator with Denver. One of the things that we do with our sub-recipients is we also – we put together a Power BI presentation where we can bring it down to the level, the local level or have it as an aggregate so that everyone can kind of see how they're contributing to what we're doing.

And that allows us to make sure that everyone is looking at their own metrics on a monthly basis and allowing them to go back and forth as far as where do they need to – where the strengths and the areas of concern for themselves.

MS. TOPPIN: Right. Thank you.

Q: Hi. Can you hear me?

MS. TOPPIN: Yes. Hello.

Q: This is Casey (ph) from Worksystems in Portland, Oregon. And just to expand on that point, we've had a lot of success with our sub-recipients not only looking at the monthly performance broken down by each sub-recipient as well as the region, but we've asked each one to develop their own sort of performance plan.

And they review that and submit it on a quarterly basis, and it kind of gets them thinking about where are we doing well, where do we need to do better, what are our strategies to do better in those areas we're underperforming. And I found it's very helpful because they actually – they own their own plan, and they work their own plan.

MS. TOPPIN: Exactly. Thank you. Next slide. Want to give a quick shout out to Lyell Newman (ph), another TA coach who's on the call. Lyell, feel free to jump in if you have any wonderful expertise or comments to share.

The next question is, are there any new or different strategies that you have implemented in year three that have proved to be successful in meeting the goals? So something that you're doing because of where you are in the grant or the phase of the grant, focus of the grant during year three that you didn't do in prior years that's working really well.

So one example that comes to mind for me is perhaps you are enrolling participants now in certain types of training that are shorter so that they can finish in time for the grant ending. That was one thing that came to mind. Another way of phrasing it or – is perhaps you've taken a change in direction with your strategies as a result of your performance. So you've come up with some new strategies. I hear someone unmuting their phone.

Q: Hi. This is Casey again. We have a very individualized program model. So I would say earlier in the grant we were recruiting participants that could potentially go down any number of training and employment tracks in our target occupations, but now, we're trying to do more cohort trainings where we're recruiting people for the specific training. So it's much more targeted, and what we end up with is a lot more training-ready individuals instead of participants who have to work through a lot of other barriers before they're ready for training.

MS. TOPPIN: Right. Thank you so much. Susan says, "We have increased our geographic territory. We also discovered that some of our potential hires are called by different job titles." OK. Thank you for that feedback.

Are any of you, based on your performance outcomes and where you are, shifting staff roles? Perhaps you have met your enrollment goal or your number served goal, and now staff need to focus more, say, example, on employment placements. Is anybody doing that sort of thing internally with your teams to focus more on the priority for year three and four?

Q: Hello?

MS. TOPPIN: Yes.

Q: Hi, Kisha. It's Nancy Pierce.

MS. TOPPIN: Hi, Nancy.

Q: Hi. Yeah. We've kind of refocused our strategies to look at more of employment, the incumbent, and the internship part. And in fact, I have in the room a new person that we've brought on board from the workforce solutions, and they are concentrating on the employment piece and contacting employers, seeing what jobs they have available, and trying to give our students first chance at applying to those jobs. And they're also talking about our internship programs, and that just began within the last month.

And also have refocused some of my staff to totally concentrate on reaching out to employers, getting them incumbent training and internships. We find if you start out with that incumbent training and they start to get to know you and you give them good customer service, then they start trusting, and then they say, well, OK. Maybe we will try the internship. And that's – what we did in the last quarter, we were like – had only one incumbent. In the last quarter we got about 30 incumbents in by doing that, and it just – all of a sudden it just took off.

MS. CADWALLADER: Hi. This is Ayreen. I'm really excited to hear that to – in terms of the way you are using your incumbent worker training as a way to engage your employers to then participate in some of your other training programs.

Again, this is something that we've seen with the Ready to Work grantees in that the focus really being on the long-term unemployed, grantees have really made a huge effort in meeting those outcomes and then – but in other previous H-1B grants incumbent worker training was really a huge part. And perhaps now that we are moving towards our final year of the grant program, this is really trying to get those incumbent worker outcomes could certainly be another way to continue to engage your employers with the other parts of your program as well. So thank you for sharing that.

MS. TOPPIN: Yes.

Q: This is Liz in Denver. There's a couple things here that we've had for this year. One, we've done more of a reverse referral, working with the local training providers and tech boot camps to provide referrals for people that potentially could be eligible for the program.

We determined eligibility. So that partnership has really helped us to increase our outreach of the type of participants that we need to engage with. We're also working more with some of the training providers that have employer relationships and do support the post-training employment job search activities. So that has helped us to increase that in this year three.

The other thing we've done locally is we're partnering to establish – we have established an IT sector partnership, and that's really brought a number of tech companies to the table as well as our main tech association, Colorado Technology Association are called. So we've aligned with the Tech P, which has outreach and supports adults, with their tech talent group that's focused on youth to create a comprehensive employer engagement.

And that is starting to help us get a lot more visibility with companies that were not on our advisory council and that are actively looking at the hiring challenges that they're facing in Colorado. So those two things in this year I think are really going to help us to push forward in meeting our goals by next year.

MS. HARLINS: Absolutely. And thank you so much. Thank you so much for sharing. Looks like Kisha got disconnected, but she'll be calling back soon. It looks like Lee said, "As we – (inaudible) – down training starts, our college liaisons are helping us to recruit college students and recent completers for direct placement in OJTs. We're also looking at doing a budget realignment to hire additional staff to assist with outreach and placement during the last year of the grant."

Absolutely. That's great information. Of course that discussion will be had with your FPO about any budget alignments and whatnot. Looks like Brian said, "We have organized the participants still in job search by field of interest and have attempted to facilitate our own training through a local certified partner." Absolutely. That's a great strategy to use for implementing these as well.

OK. Kisha, looks like you're back on. I basically just read off the main chat right there from Lee and from Brian's response as well.

MS. TOPPIN: And I wanted to – thanks. Thank you, Angel, and I wanted to make sure you mentioned also that any changes, any different strategies you're implementing, that, grantees, you're running it by your federal project officer as well.

Next question. Oh, go ahead.

Q: Yeah. No. I was just going to say we actually met with him and went over a few different things, two of which were approved. One he just said at the get go, no. I don't think so.

MS. TOPPIN: Yeah. That's always the best route, first route.

Q: Yeah. No. Well, and I knew what his logic was. I had no problem with it. We just thought we would try anyway.

MS. TOPPIN: Great.

Q: Trying to add an occupation with the argument that it was on a high-level career path even though it was a low step. He said, no. No. He – that was just one he wouldn't do, and that's fine.

MS. TOPPIN: Thank you for sharing that.

What type of – we're on the next question. What type of technical assistance or information would assist you in meeting your year three goals? Now, this is a feedback for us wanting to support you towards success by the close of year four. What kind of TA, or have we got it covered? We're doing pretty good.

OK. Ayreen, I think later – Angel, I think later on you're going to be speaking to some upcoming things we have planned or going on.

MS. HARLINS: Yeah. Absolutely.

MS. TOPPIN: OK. And last discussion question. Are there any additional or new strategies you plan to implement in year four? Now, this may sound like the other question about year three, but now, as we shift, we're three months – approximately two, three months out from starting year four. Anything in particular that you're going to do differently in year four where of course the main focus is training completions; right, with credentials and employment?

I see Denver is typing. I like the idea that San Jac is actually asking their providers for what the plan is for year four, so getting the partners to think ahead of how they plan to finish strong. Denver has a new staff person that will focus on post-training support and soft skills training. I know with some of the grantees I work with there's a stronger emphasis on really looking at the data, looking at trends, and what – the story that the data is telling about the program and where the gaps exist. Anyone else? Year four? OK. I see Casey is typing.

At this time we want to open it up for any questions that you might have as we close out the session. Casey, wrapping – Casey says, "Wrapping up random assignment." You would like TA with that, Casey? Other – OK. Got you. Got you. OK. But that's what – that's some of what you're focusing on in year four. Got you. All right.

So, Angel, I will hand it back over to you.

MR. MAURO: Sure thing. And like I said, we wanted to – we have about 15 minutes, a little bit less left – and this is Kevin – with the time that we'd allotted this afternoon. And this really is a time, if there are any questions that you might have, remember you can unmute yourself with \*6. And if there's any other questions maybe you asked and we might have missed somewhere in the chat, please just let us know. Now is the time to bring it up.

MS. HARLINS: Yeah. And I just wanted to follow up a little bit with Casey. Are there – and this is just for the evaluation grantees in general is do you guys want to continue to have a TA call again? I know we had a call with the randomized assignment grantees to kind of go over outreach and recruitment. Is JVS on or RochesterWorks? Do you guys have any – would you like any further TA on –

MR. MAURO: Right. And if there's an opportunity for the evaluation grantees, if you would like, we can certainly break you four out and have a small group discussion just among yourselves to talk about some of the unique challenges that you're facing with the evaluation.

I'm not sure if there are representatives from those grantees logged in today, but if you are logged in, if you are part of the evaluation and if you would like a small group discussion or at least an opportunity that we can facilitate for you to talk amongst yourselves, we would be happy to do that. Either let us know now, or as always, you can write to us through the Ready to Work mailbox.

MS. HARLINS: OK. Looks like Lee mentioned that they're not sure if they would need another call, but they recommend we wait a few more months and see. Absolutely.

And just another rule of thumb as well as I think of course grantees are planning their sustainability for the grant program, but just to remind you guys going into year four, making sure that you have those sustainability plans developed for how you'll maintain your numbers and/or increase your numbers as well.

MR. MAURO: And it is never too early to start talking about, thinking about, and implementing your sustainability plan.

MS. HARLINS: Absolutely. Looks like Casey said, "Not sure either for outcomes. I believe training completions don't show up in hub until the participants have then completed their entire grant program."

MR. MAURO: And that is true. Yes.

MS. HARLINS: Absolutely.

MR. MAURO: Are there any other sort of lingering questions or anything else that we might have missed?

MS. HARLINS: And looks like Denver said, "IT sector partnerships will establish sustainability." Interesting.

OK. So we are at 3:21. Looks like Susan might be typing something. "We also have other grants." Absolutely. OK. And then so just coming up, updates. We do have our upcoming LTU subject matter expert series coming up on program retention. Also, we have our deadline for the success story competition, which will end on June 26.

So we do want you guys to submit your program success stories, as Kevin mentioned earlier in our presentation, those great numbers that you have mentioned, those employer partners who have done great things with your program. We definitely want to highlight those here at the Department of Labor. As always –

MS. CADWALLADER: This is Ayreen. I just did want to share perhaps to let grantees know that we do work very closely with our partners, with High Impact Partners on developing technical assistance plans on a quarterly basis, and we are looking very closely as we end towards the end of the grant program to really ensuring that our topics are relevant to what your needs are.

So please continue to report those in your quarterly narrative report, and certainly sector strategies, sector partnerships, and regionalism are topics that we're eyeing from our end here as it relates to sustainability. So thank you for sharing that, but again, we do welcome your feedback on any TA topics for us to address in the next coming months.

MS. HARLINS: Absolutely. Thank you, Ayreen. And just to follow up, all of our resources can be found on our community of practice on the WorkforceGPS site, if you guys do want to go back and look at any other resources that have been developed for Ready to Work. As always, we have our LinkedIn open for you as well, if you'd like to chat with other grantees. There will be eventually a chat box open on the community of practice, which we'll roll out a little bit later on in this year.

As always, you can contact your Ready to Work grantee mailbox at rtw@dol.gov and also reach out to your FPO and your technical assistance providers if you have any questions on policy and modifications.

So at this time we're going to turn it over to our post-webinar feedback tool. We want to thank you all for participating in our H-1B Ready to Work performance reporting roundtable discussion. Of course if you guys have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to e-mail us. And if you could, fill out these great questions at the end, and we thank you so much for participating in this call and all the feedback that you provided for us.

MR. MAURO: Thank you so much for spending your time with us this afternoon.

MS. HARLINS: The full an hour and 30 minutes. So absolutely.

MR. MAURO: And again, if you have any other questions, don't hesitate to follow up with us through the mailbox.

MS. CADWALLADER: And have a great day.

(END)