**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Trade Adjustment Assistance: New Hampshire & Massachusetts Best Practices**

**Tuesday, November 14, 2017**

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JEN JACOBS: So again we want to welcome you to today's "Trade Adjustment Assistance, New Hampshire and Massachusetts Best Practices" webinar. And if you haven't already done so, please introduce yourself in that chat window.

Now without further ado, I'd like to turn things over to our moderator today, Susan Worden, supervisory program analyst, performance and data reporting unit for the office of trade adjustment assistance. Susan?

SUSAN WORDEN: Thanks so much, Jen. And welcome to everybody who is here today live for our webinar on trade adjustment assistance, targeting program challenges using case management funds. Very excited to have everybody here. I see a lot of people making use of the chat window. I want to encourage you throughout the presentation, as questions arise as part of the presentation, please do type those into the window. We will be looking at them throughout the presentation, and we will be stopping at different intervals to take on questions, to make this presentation as dynamic as possible.

So with that, I will introduce myself. I am Susan Worden, supervisory program analyst of the performance and data reporting unit. Our unit oversees three distinct data sets, quarterly state reporting on individual participant activities and outcomes through the TAPR, and beginning in 2018 through the PIRL, stay tuned for next month's webinar feature our own Robert (inaudible). Second set is quarterly state fiscal reporting through the ETA 9130 report. And last but not least, OTA's internal management information system on petition investigations and determinations.

As a result of our office oversight of these three data sets, our unit has an opportunity to connect the dots on how different program areas connect in terms of activity, resources, and outcomes. Today we're going to hear the second of two state best practices webinars that OTA is hosting this fall to focus on leveraging case management flexibilities in a compliant manner to address mission critical challenges which we've identified largely through data.

OK. To that end, we're going to begin with viewing the basic rules for case management expenditures, as well as review how much of TAA program funds are getting spent, or unfortunately not spent.

Next there'll be a brief focus on two mission critical needs in the TAA program, focusing on IT processes to expedite eligibility and service delivery processes, and connectivity across different programs and stakeholders. As you've probably already connected, to some degree these two areas are already connected as electronic connectivity plays an important part in program integration and efficiency.

OK. Let's kick off with getting a poll completed, which you already saw in your intro screen window. This question is, hypothetically how much of a TAA program grant can be spent on case management? Give it a couple minutes for everybody to report in so we can get fulsome results before giving the answer.

OK. It looks like we need to move ahead. The answer to this poll is, 100 percent. The question was phrased in an extreme fashion. And while 100 percent is correct, it comes with an important caveat. Currently training is the largest category that states expend of TAA program funds. It's expected that this will continue with as most of our participants need training to become marketable in today's job environment.

We're not expecting to see states spend 100 percent on case management, but the question was posed in this dramatic fashion to emphasize that there is flexibility beyond the minimum stated in statute which is 5 percent, and not be confused with the 10 percent maximum expenditure that is allowed for administrative costs. And here really quickly in case folks like to see the statutory backup for this, is the actual statutory language from which we take these requirements in section 235A of the TAA reauthorization act of 2015.

OK. This is a repeat from last month's webinar, state best practices to leverage case management funds. A reminder that of the FY 2015 funds that expired on September 30th of this year, it's projected that $63 million are going back to treasury. And that's what makes this conversation that we're having in today's webinar so critical. We have critical needs that need to get addressed. And we've got the money to do it. So let's talk about that.

OK. One of the two ideas that we want to talk about today is talking about how case management funds can be used to support connectivity. And below the TAA box on top, umbrella box on top, we've got three different sub-boxes. The first is talking about the Rapid Response slash employer connection, which is obviously really vital for trade. In order to find out that – in order to have eligibility at all, it must begin with petition filings.

And Rapid Response is a key partner in connecting with companies for identifying potentially trade affected workers. Second box is talking about WIOA, largely co-enrollment integration. And underneath that you see we have a special emphasis on the dislocated worker program. Our data shows that over time since 2009 in fact, we have steadily had improved outcomes when co-enrollment with the dislocated worker program occurs.

The last point of connectivity, which will also be a feature of today's presentation, is the importance of UI with TAA. As probably most of the folks connected with the TAA program know, the most substantial benefit which we provided to the TAA program, which is the trade readjustment allowance, is generally administered through the UI state office. And therefore that connectivity cannot be overstated for a variety of different reasons.

OK. And let's follow along with the second poll which you should've seen on your entry screen today. We've identified in our technical assistance that given the complexity of the TRA eligibility process, many states have chosen to operationalize how they identify the eligible workers under the group eligibility through the UI office.

So this polling question is simply a question as to whether or not in your state who administers the actual identification of the worker lists as identified through the group eligibility determination. Does it occur through the workforce side? Or does it occur through the UI side? Or third option, is it other? In which case we'd like to see you specify. So what we'd like to see is just a result here.

For those of you who are responding to the poll, if it's workforce side, if you could go ahead and type into the chat window, say workforce, and then say your state. And the same thing for the UI side. We're asking for this kind of follow up. Because we're actually trying to identify. We know that it will be multiple participants from each state.

And so the poll won't be a one to one correlation with the states. So if you could go ahead and just type into the chat window really quickly. If it's workforce, say your state. If it's UI, say UI and your state. And if it's other, say other and your state. Thank you for this accommodation. This will really help us in terms of providing more targeted technical assistance in the future, to understand how states operationalize these important eligibility requirements.

OK. Please continue to type in. I'm going to move on to the preface to introducing our first state best practice, which is the state of New Hampshire. The slide you see in front of you highlights why we chose New Hampshire. There's a couple of noteworthy data points.

The first is that New Hampshire is about 300 percent of the national average in take up rate. Unsurprisingly this makes them the number one state in the country. This means that out of the total estimated volume of New Hampshire worker groups certified for trade here in the national office, the total estimated counts in each worker group, almost 65 percent of those workers actually walk in the door to be served in the state.

During this presentation, the New Hampshire trade coordinator will be discussing both her human and non-human or IT strategies that have led to these impressive results. Because although IT is critical to maintaining effective and efficient program delivery, the need to build and maintain relationships will always serve an important role.

It's also important to note that New Hampshire spent all of its FY '15 funds that expired on September 30th of this year, including 20 percent on employment and case management. And with that I will hand it over to the TAA programs New Hampshire rock star, Jeri Jewell. No pressure with that introduction, Jeri. Take it away.

JERI JEWELL: I just love it when she calls me a rock star. Hello, everyone. I'm here to talk to you about how we do Trade Act in New Hampshire. I'm the Trade Act coordinator for New Hampshire employment security. Today's objectives, I'm going to talk to you about how we do the petition filing, I'm going to talk to you about the worker notification process which has been extremely automated, how individuals file for trade benefits, and I’m going to talk a little bit about our automated system.

So in the state of New Hampshire we have a Rapid Response coordinator that actually meets with the employers that have significant layoffs. And they have a questionnaire that they talk to them about to find out if it's potentially eligible for trade certification. If they are, the Rapid Response coordinator will give them my contact information, but also reaches out to me to give me the information, and I try to touch base with them.

I found a lot of times employers don't like to have anything to do with Trade Act because of the misconception of negativity. They're afraid that they're going to have to pay for the benefits, or everybody's going to look at them like they're really horrible people for sending the work out of the country, things like that, and I'm able to alleviate a lot of those concerns. And by doing that, they're more apt to file the petition themselves. And when they file the petition themselves, they're more concerned with getting the business data request completed timely, and national is better able to make a timely determination.

So once the company is certified, I reach out to the employer and send them a template of a layoff list. And they respond with all the information I need. I get everything from them, date of birth, the start work date, the last day of work, what the reason for the layoff was, their hourly wage, everything. And once I get that back, I load it into our database.

Overnight notification is automatically sent to everybody who's on the layoff list, advising them of their potential eligibility under the Trade Act program. I then follow up with a letter inviting them all to a benefit information session at one of our local one-stop offices. I bring the case manager for that labor market area with me, and we're able to schedule their initial assessment immediately. By doing that we're more better able to get more people to follow through with us.

MS. WORDEN: Jeri, can I ask you a question?

MS. JEWELL: You sure can.

MS. WORDEN: What kind of obstacles do you come across as you're working with employers to get them to work with you? I'm interested to hear what kind of problems you're encountering to see how much it corresponds to what other folks have to deal with. And how do you deal with them?

MS. JEWELL: I've actually had – the last employer that we got certified, I actually had them tell me that they didn't want anything to do with it because they were going to be charged for these benefits, things like that. And I was able to assure them that wasn't the case. And then of course they were concerned about the negativity that people would feel against them because they're sending their work to another country.

And I said, well, actually it makes you look like a hero, like you really care about your people who are being laid off, by going out and trying to get these benefits and services for your people. And it actually made them look at it a lot differently.

MS. WORDEN: Thank you.

MS. JEWELL: Does that answer your question?

MS. WORDEN: Yeah. I think it's really useful to hear these things because I think the kinds of issues that you're dealing with are probably similar to what they're dealing with in other states. And really talking together on a peer level about how to respond to these challenging dynamics is really useful. Thanks.

MS. JEWELL: Thank you. OK. We have three ways in which we reach out to the workers once we get the information. The first way, I already spoke about, was through our automated benefit system, and secondly through the benefit information sessions, and also by partnering with our neighboring states. We work very closely with Vermont and Massachusetts. Whereas when they have a company that gets certified and they have a lot of people in New Hampshire under that certification, they'll reach out to me and give me that information, so I can contact those folks and see if they want to come into a New Hampshire one-stop rather than drive to Massachusetts for it.

Some of the challenges we had before automation were way too many. We did everything by hand. And for reporting it was really impossible. I shouldn't say this, but sometimes I felt like I was making the information up because it's so hard to track with papers. For instance with our training contracts, it was so difficult to keep track of all the payments. We would just send a little routing voucher up and say, OK, would you pay this school this much money for this person. And it was really difficult to keep track of all the contract costs. TRA, we used to have to count the actual number of weeks because there was nothing in the system to stop us from paying more than what we were supposed to pay.

So it was basically left to us, you know, OK, you've received your 26 weeks of additional or whatever. Implementing the new rules as far as paying TRA before UI, that would have been impossible for us to keep track of, making sure that when they file the new claim they had that option. And I know that there were at least two times when we paid TRA incorrectly due to RTAA rules. And automation's just taken that problem right away. And like I said, it was an absolute reporting nightmare.

So with the automation, if somebody comes in, or files from home, or whatever, to file a claim for unemployment benefits, because they're on that potentially affected worker list, they got loaded into our database, when they open up their claim and get to their home screen, it says, good afternoon Katie, what do you want to do today? Are you going to file for benefits? And then because they're on that PAW list it will also say, file for trade benefits.

And if they click on that, it will then take them to the next screen, that right up above, the blurb explains what trade adjustment assistance is a little bit. And then it tells them, OK, you currently have a trade adjustment TAA claim. Because the system will check if they've already filed for TAA before, it will let them know that you've already done that. But if they're on two petitions, it will allow them to file that second claim.

They also have the option on this one to apply for reemployment trade adjustment assistance. Now if they have their UI claim already in there, it would also let them apply for TRA also. And then once they click on it, it explains the program a little bit to them. That's just a brief overview of how it works.

MS. WORDEN: Jeri, can we just pause for a second, go back to the previous slide? I think this is a really fantastic feature. And I know that New Hampshire is not alone in it, but I really think it's important to draw attention to it, that basically there is a flexibility for case management funds to be used to kind of supplement a feature that could exist in the current UI system that would alert folks that otherwise might not know if they're even eligible for trade, of the existence of the program, and their eligibility, simply through filing a UI claim. So I don't really have a question.

I wanted to double down and draw attention to it, because I think it's probably one of the things that contribute to the take up rate.

MS. JEWELL: Oh definitely. This is by far –

MS. WORDEN: And it's required by the law.

MS. JEWELL: Yes. By far this is the easiest way to pick up people who have fallen through the tracks. Because when you send out a notification telling them that they're potentially eligible for trade benefits, they probably don't even read it. They probably just throw it on the table or something. But everybody is going to file their claim for unemployment benefits.

And if the first thing they see on the welcome screen is, do you want to apply for trade adjustment assistance programs. Everybody likes to click on buttons. I don't know what it is, but I'm going to click on it. And then every screen gives them a little bit more information, tells them what options they have. And by doing that, well as we go on I'll explain more about what works when they do click on that button.

MS. WORDEN: And just to close that out, all UI claimants must be notified of the trade program. Again all claimants. So basically this is in compliance with the law as operationalized through your system. So thanks so much, Jeri.

MS. JEWELL: Oh, you're welcome. OK. So when they click on file for TAA, if they have not already filed for TAA the system allows them to file. And then an alert goes to my workload. And then I will go and process that to determine eligibility. If they're determined eligible or not determined eligible, a determination is automatically mailed out.

But I also follow it through with I look up their information, and I contact the case manager that takes care of that labor market area and tell them to reach out to the worker. So they're getting another phone call or email or whatever to, you know, OK, you filed for the Trade Act program, would you like to come in and meet with me.

Now if they already have filed for TAA, the system will advise them that they cannot file again unless they're covered under more than one petition. If they are covered under more than one petition, an alert comes to my workload that says I must make a petition choice as to which petition they want to receive benefits under.

Filing for TRA, if they select file for TRA, the first thing the system does is it goes through to determine whether or not they've already filed for TAA. If they haven't, then the system will advise them, well, you must first file for TAA. If they have, the system then goes the next step to find out whether or not they have an unemployment claim. If they haven't, the system will advise them that you must first file for UI.

If they have, then an alert goes to the TRA coordinator and the system will automatically attach the UI – attaches the TRA claim to the UI claim that houses the first qualifying separation. And that's done through the PAW screen. When we load that layoff list, I have the layoff date from the employer. So the system will go search out that date, and then find the UI claim that is closest to it, and automatically attaches to it.

So there's a lot fewer errors that way too. And then a monetary TRA determination is automatically mailed out. And it's just the monetary for HCTC purposes. When it comes time for them to actually go on to TRA, then we'll do a second determination to see if they've met the qualifying requirements.

In our automated system we have many issues and alerts that help us process the TRA claim. The first one is no qualifying separation. So when I ask the employer for the layoff list, they'll say, well what if somebody was fired? And I'll tell them that I still want that information, because 9 times out of 10 they're going to come in and they're going to try to apply for benefits. And if I already have that information, then I can process the claim much quicker. And what will happen is, if it's anything other than a lack of work, we get an issue that says no qualifying separation for us to research.

The 26/26 deadline, this alert goes to the TRA coordinator to determine if they actually did meet this deadline, and eligible for two or more petitions, review the qualifying separation. If the system can't determine if it's really close and they can't determine whether or not they met the 26x30 rule, this issue comes up to the TRA coordinator.

Pay TRA before UI, any time they file a new benefit year claim, this issue is created to enable a choice to be made. We contact the claimant and have them make a choice as to whether or not they want receive UI or stay on TRA. Receive RTAA after TRA, the system will automatically – if they've already received RTAA and they file for TRA, an issue is created for us to look at and determine eligibility that way also.

This has made it so much easier for reporting purposes and for being more accurate in the way that we process our benefits. There's much less room for error. And that's all I have, if you have any questions.

MS. WORDEN: So I'd just like to draw attention to a couple of things. First of all I just want to encourage folks that if you have any questions for Jeri, please don't hesitate to type them into the window as I basically tease out some of the important components that I saw in this presentation.

First of all, Jeri, part of what you did was – what the state of New Hampshire did is basically created an electronic means for communicating really key eligibility information between the TRA side, TRA/UI side and the workforce side. In addition, the fact that obviously everything that you just went over here was something that could've been built through case management funds.

One of the things that you've talked about is the fact that you have done this presentation before and that other states have reached out to you. And you've actually had states visit you on site, isn't that correct?

MS. JEWELL: Yes. And they use case management funds to do it.

MS. WORDEN: Thank you. I couldn't have said that better myself. Yes. In fact you can use case management funds to travel and learn for best practices on administering case management in other states. We encourage that. And also I think what we saw in your presentation or also going to see in the next presentation, that there are reporting components of your electronic case management system.

And that's a really important distinction to make, is that even though we specifically reference – the statute specifically references that reporting must be paid for by admin funds, when electronic case management functionalities have reporting implications, they can still be paid by case management funds.

So given the fact that admin has a ceiling of 10 percent and case management funds have a floor of 5 percent, that's a really important distinction to understand. And I see we've got a couple of questions from the state, Jeri. First one is, by what method is the initial overnight outreach performed?

MS. JEWELL: OK. So when the layoff list is loaded into the database, the database will actually create a letter, and it is mailed out the next day.

MS. WORDEN: And I'm really glad somebody drew attention to that, that overnight eligibility, the fact that folks are determined eligible once you've collected the worker list. Because you put it into the system and that the eligibility notification happens overnight. That timeliness is really key as we've identified that the speed of eligibility and notification does have an impact on performance. Second question, Jeri, for you, did New Hampshire complete this automation effort alone? Or was this automation effort a part of a multi-state consortium?

MS. JEWELL: It actually was alone. I believe we got a grant to overdo our whole New Hampshire UI system. And we bought it off the shelf, and then we changed like 90 percent of it, and made the decision to include Trade Act in it. But we have had several states really interested in it. And we share as much information as we can with other states.

MS. WORDEN: That's right. And that's an important reminder, Jeri, that anything that's developed with federal funds is by definition sharable, not proprietary. So no need to reinvent the wheel when there are all these great best practices out there to be leveraged. OK. So if there are no other questions, we're going to move on. Jeri's contact information is available.

And I encourage anybody who has any specific questions for Jeri with regard to her system development, to follow up with her. I'm sorry, one more question. It says, do investigators share info about the program to business during the investigation? My reason for asking is that we also sometimes receive pushback from employers.

Yes. We do. So I think that's a national office question. We do share information about the investigation and the implications. We get concerns about whether or not it's going to cost them through their UI insurance, etc. And we're able to address a lot of those concerns from the national office. And we do make it a priority because we are aware of the fact that businesses are very sensitive to the implications of trade investigations and eligibility determination, especially certification.

All right. And with that we are going to move on to our next best practice, which is the great state of Massachusetts. Massachusetts has a system that is integrated, that in terms of its Title I WIA, now WIOA programs, and Title III Wagner-Peyser programs, have been integrated from an IT standpoint since the creation of the workforce investment act.

We were trying to reach back in our memory banks to know how long it's been around. It's been around since at least 1998. In 2004, Massachusetts added integration with the TAA program, and what used to be the national emergency grants, and is now the national dislocated worker grants. So they really have been kind of a workforce industry standard for system integration for really about 20 years, which is pretty remarkable.

It also discusses an alternative means of automating eligibility between the TAA and UI processes, which is very important. As anybody who administers the trade program knows, that connectivity and immediacy is very important. One of the things that we noted is Massachusetts does not have as high a take up rate with regard to trade group eligibility versus participants served.

But one of the important factors to understand about Massachusetts is that in addition to having a very low unemployment level, they also have really what everybody acknowledges is a really crackerjack Rapid Response unit on the state. They really are kind of the trendsetters of the nation. And as a result of their layoff aversion strategies, 38 percent of those who receive Rapid Response services in Mass never even become an employee. So they're effectively transitioned into new employment before they've actually lost their old job, which is pretty impressive stuff.

And with that, I am going to hand it off to Beth Goguen, a Massachusetts state trade coordinator, to explain their system and how it processes TAA participation effectively. Take it away, Beth.

BETH GOGUEN: Thank you, Susan. So good afternoon, everyone. My name's Beth Goguen. And I am the central and TAA programs manager for the department of career services in Massachusetts. Today I just wanted to share with you our employment and case management system as far as MOSES and how we integrate with the UI system, and give you an overview of how our systems are joined and we make it work for our customer.

So a little bit of background. In Massachusetts the TAA program is administered by the department of career services. And TRA benefits are administered by the department of unemployment assistance. Customers are case managed through our MOSES system, which his supported and maintained by DCS. And this system is utilized by all career centers in Massachusetts. And so through a series of interfaces between MOSES and UI online, we share information regarding petitions, potentially eligible customers, and ultimately our enrolled TAA participants.

So some challenges before we automated, is data entry was manual, emails regarding training approvals went to DUA, and the information was manually entered into what was referred to as a link system that paid TRA benefits. It was hard to track modifications that were done to contracts and people who unfortunately were disqualified from the program.

And it was hard in our MOSES system to keep track of our contract costs, and payments, and such that we shared with finance. And for our customers, the manual paperwork, when it was completed it sometimes went to the TRA – had to be sent into the TRA unit for benefit payments. So obviously forms could get misplaced and snail mail was an issue.

So in July of 2013, the department of unemployment assistance launched their modern web-based UI system to better serve their customers. And as part of that, we decided to integrate and share information in regards to the trade programs, and so that we could share information regarding benefits and process TRA benefits through that system.

So once the company is certified, the certification is entered into our MOSES database. And the interface sends the information over to UI online. In return UI online sends affected workers who have filed a UI claim back to our MOSES system, so that we can immediately send out notification to workers. The affected – on the right hand side is our screen which tracks participants who have been mailed notice. And that is updated regularly. And we also have a methodology to upload lists from the company in order to ensure that we are providing notice to all workers.

So in Massachusetts we direct customers to go to our local career centers to file their eligibility for TAA. We want them to become acclimated with going into the career center, as that is where they will be receiving their services under the trade program.

Applications for TAA eligibility are submitted into our MOSES system at the local career center. And in the evening there's an interface that then sends that information over to our UI online system and goes into a workflow for the TRA unit to process. Notices are automatically issued to the employer and the customer to verify employment and layoff information.

And once the application is approved in UI online, that information will be sent back to the MOSES system. And whoever the counselor was that submitted that original application will be notified that there has been an update to that record, so then they can reach back out to the customer if they haven't already been working with the customer to let them know that their application has been approved. The UI online system also automatically sends notice to the customer, so they can just go into their UI online inbox, and they will have a copy of that determination there for them. If they chose to have documentation mailed to them, it will be mailed to them also.

So our MOSES system tracks all the trainings that are submitted from around the state in one space for us to work. And this is just a screenshot to show you how information is entered, and how we can make determinations, and share this information. So once the career counselor informs the applicants of services and help in determining the appropriate training, the career counselor helps the applicant to complete a comparison of their vendors.

And of these course, a recommended course will be selected, and a budget is submitted only for the recommended course. The career counselor will also submit verification that the applicant's satisfies the six criteria. And that information is throughout our MOSES system. So for example, I don't have screenshots here to show you where they capture barriers or labor market information, but there are places within our system that captures that information to show that a person actually meets these criteria.

And this is just a screenshot showing how we itemize our budget and what costs are included in that person's individual training. And this can be seen by the counselor too. So if they have any questions about how much has been approved, or if they need to increase the amount of money that somebody has for their training, they can do so.

MS. WORDEN: And Beth, if you could just pause back on that previous slide for a minute, I just want to draw attention to the fact that per our dry run conversation, you indicated that this is tracking accrued expenditures with regard to training. And therefore it can be used to line up with [inaudible] requirements that cross-validate between what gets reported in the individual participant record for the TAPR and aggregated up to match against the 9130 report.

So I just want to draw attention to this, that this is a functionality that it has case management implications, it has reporting implications, it has data integrity implications. And I just want to validate the fact that you've got a comprehensive system that is really taking all of that into account and is fully fundable through case management funds.

MS. GOGUEN: Thank you for reminding me of that. So once the training is approved, that information then goes via an interface to the UI online system, so that the TRA unit can then see that information or that individual in their training details. We also send over information via interfaces on waivers. The TRA deadline is also in our MOSES system so our case counselors can refer to it. And that is sent over from our UI online system.

So once somebody submits their TAA eligibility application, they – once it is approved, they will have a link in the UI online system to apply for TRA. This screenshot is also showing you on the right hand side that it is – that it also indicates what law the person is eligible under, what set of laws.

So that is visible for UI staff, so they have an idea of – well first that the person is TAA eligible, so should they have any questions they will know the appropriate staff to refer to. The applications create an issue for review by the TRA staff. And they will store that application for processing. After applying and it's determined eligible to receive TRA, a notification is mailed to the applicant. And the determination would be made on this application after the training for the waiver information is received.

The customers then are obviously attending training. And they will have a weekly certification that they will complete in UI online. And in order to receive their TRA benefits, the responses to the questions determine if the TRA payment is processed. And if there are any issues, if someone for example says that they didn't attend class, it will create an issue. If they indicate they are not doing well in training, it will create an issue.

And those issues then go to the TRA staff's workflow so that they can issue determinations on that. So below, this is just showing you a screen for a trade participant that is enrolled in training. And it will show the different benefits that the person has, and how much their weekly benefit amount is, and the balance that they have left for all the different levels of TRA, including UI.

MS. WORDEN: Beth, can I ask you a question? I apologize if it's in a future slide, in which case you should just wait until it comes in turn. But has any of the slides you've dealt with thus far dealt with how you identify meeting training benchmarks?

MS. GOGUEN: I believe it is further down.

MS. WORDEN: OK. Further down. Great. Because that's obviously a really key component to maintaining that TRA eligibility in the long run, as well as effectively doing oversight on the course of the training as it's happening.

MS. GOGUEN: Right. So once someone is eligible for completion TRA, the completion TRA application will appear in UI online. It is only enabled when the person becomes eligible. And they just have one button to click to submit their application. So once someone is on completion TRA, the benchmarks are tracked in MOSES.

So they are documented in the person's case plan from the beginning of training all the way through. And then in order for completion TRA to be collected, the benchmarks are updated. And if there are any benchmarks that are not being met at any point in time, those will be sent over to UI online to then be matched against the answers that somebody is giving on their weekly certification.

So for example, if we had somebody who was not meeting the benchmark of maintaining satisfactory academic standing, however on their weekly certification they are answering that they are making progress and they are doing fine, it will create an issue to be – an issue will be generated and it will require adjudication by the TRA unit.

MS. WORDEN: So Beth, you saw the question that basically how do you verify attendance and progress with the training provider directly?

MS. GOGUEN: How?

MS. WORDEN: Yeah. So what's your method of basically your contact with the actual training provider to –

MS. GOGUEN: So that is done at the case counselor level. They will get reports either through the benchmarks, either through our official benchmark form, or if they have – if the vendor has a form that answers these questions, then we don't make them reinvent the wheel. We allow them to use whatever they're using. And they will send that into the case counselor.

MS. WORDEN: So the vendor is responsible for giving that to you? Or the participant is?

MS. GOGUEN: The participant is, but in most cases it's the vendor that is sending it to the case counselor.

MS. WORDEN: So the vendor is willing to take on the responsibility in most cases.

MS. GOGUEN: In a lot of cases. Yes.

MS. WORDEN: OK. Great.

MS. GOGUEN: Especially when we have large groups that are attending ESOL, or adult basic education, or high set (ph) types of classes. For example we have a large layoff right now up in the northeast with Polartec. And we have many, many people going to training for that type of training. And so that vendor just – there's one or two vendors and they just kind of like batch them together and send them off to the case counselors.

MS. WORDEN: And I want to give you the props that you deserve. I'm hearing from my regional colleague, ETA colleague, Amanda Ahlstrand, about the fact that the way that you administer training benchmarks is supported by substantial training to local, to document, document, document. So there's a lot that goes on behind the scenes in addition to these processes, to kind of shore up, to make sure things are consistent and compliant with regard to maintaining the requirements for benchmarks.

MS. GOGUEN: Yes. We go out at least once a year around the state to provide training to the counselors. But it's also – I mean although there are differences obviously between TAA and a regular dislocated worker, there are many similarities. And so in some respects it comes natural to the case counselors.

MS. WORDEN: And in addition to that once a year training you do, you also have routine communication with your counselors to reinforce.

MS. GOGUEN: Sometimes I think my email is a chat room. So yes. Regularly. Every day. So we also have an interface for the health coverage tax credit now that it has been reinstated. So we will on a daily basis – and I say we because I work with DCS – MOSES will send to UI online on a daily basis customers who are potentially eligible for HCTC, including our TAA participants.

And UI online will then match for a UI or TRA payment. And that final report is then sent off to the IRS for any customers who matched. And this matching, again like I said, is all done through a series of interfaces. And discrepancies are reviewed and manually adjustments can be made to resend data if needed.

And through this effort, I just thought I'd highlight some other things that have come out of it. We also have some interfaces that support our RESEA program, federal reporting for WIOA and national dislocated worker grants. Future interfaces will include our WOTC program in serving long term unemployed and long term unemployed veterans. This massive undertaking to develop these interfaces has resulted in the elimination of duplicate data entry, timely determinations, benefit payments, and accurate and timely federal reporting. And that's all I have. So if there are any questions.

I will also say that we have had two, and we're going to have a third – with any kind of automated system, there's always things that you have to fix, things that you want to update, new ideas that you come up with. And so we are using reemployment and case management funds to build those ideas and put them together, to then implement and have our systems updated regularly.

MS. WORDEN: I really appreciate your giving that emphasis in terms of future plans, Beth, as everybody should be able to see by now we're really looking to elevate these best practices, to get people to think creatively about how to address our mission critical challenges, leveraging the abundantly available case management flexibilities that are there to serve those mission critical challenges.

And also to say this is another great federally funded system built, that there's no need to reinvent the wheel in terms of thinking through IT connectivity that is really critical given the complexity of the trade program and its interconnection with Rapid Response, with UI, to really expedite not just eligibility, but also service provision and ongoing eligibility processes, as I think Beth documented really well.

That interconnectivity between training and TRA, it's got to move fast. And having these IT processes in place to communicate that instantaneously is really a huge asset that really all states should have. And there's really no excuse not to have that.

So I'm going to kind of continue, if there's no more questions for Beth. Her contact information is available as part of the PowerPoint. I encourage folks to circle back, encourage folks to talk between each other as to best practices. You are the folks in the field. And obviously you're the ones who have to solve the problems. We just make you aware of the flexibility of resources that are available to operationalize those challenges.

OK. So just a reminder again of the existing webinars that we have that address key TAA challenges, starting with eligibility processes that begin with petition filing. Understanding the TAA customer, which was done in conjunction with the TAACCCT program.

Rapid Response reporting options for TAA. The partnership between Rapid Response and TAA is key. Here the focus is on reporting, but part of the reporting factor is the connectivity that's established, that the reporting is kind of the byproduct of, to perform that critical outreach for identifying potentially eligible worker groups.

And last but not least, a presentation that was done in 2013 on TAA fiscal and state best practices, which is really kind of a precursor to what we're trying to do today to really talk about how TAA funds can be leveraged to serve case management needs, and also in combination with other programs in terms of apportioning out what amount can be charged to trade versus other programs when we're developing integrated systems.

The last presentation that was done last month, which I didn't up here, is the Oregon Rapid Response best practice webinar, which is also available via Workforce GPS. If anyone has any problems finding it, feel free to reach out. And here we have the contact information of myself, the facilitator, Jeri Jewell, and Beth Goguen.

And a reminder that if you have any questions about anything having to do with compliance or ideas for using your case management funds in ways that you need to have more clarification or verification from, the first point of contact is your regional ETA coordinator. And the relevant contacts per region are listed here on the screen.

Last but not least, I want to draw your attention to the fact that there will be a – not last but not least. Second to last but not least, in a couple weeks' time there will be a webinar featuring the TAA reporting through PIRL.

The 12/31 quarter, which is the first quarter of FY 2018 – one week from today, excuse me, will be the TAA portion of reporting to the PIRL, the 12/31 quarter, first quarter of FY 2018 will be the first quarter in which states will be reporting exclusively through the PIRL. The PIRL will become the reporting of record. We're moving away from the TAPR effective reporting 9/30/2017 to the PIRL effective 12/31/2017.

So anyone who has any connection to any reporting functionality, please do mark this in your calendar and be available. Although of course, as with these two webinars that we've just completed, everything will be recorded and archived for folks that are not able to participate live.

Last but not least, I'm going to give you a tentative save the date. We are currently aspiring to plan a national office meeting in March here in Washington, DC. I don't have a lot of details. Just to give you a heads up that we are gunning for it and are currently going through approval processes. We hope to be able to realize this. It will be a two-day event. Targeting again, just penciled in, because it's not yet certain, March 21st and 22nd.

And with that, this will conclude today's webinar. Thank you to everyone who attended. And please feel free to follow up with feedback or questions as you have them. And with that I'll hand it back to you, Jen.

(END)