**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant Continuation Funding**

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JENNIFER JACOBS: We want to welcome you to today's "State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant Continuation Funding Updates" webinar. If you haven't already done so, please introduce yourself in that welcome chat.

Now, without further ado, I'd like to turn things over to our moderator today, Chad Aleshire, team lead, Division of the Investment, Operations, and Performance for the Office of Apprenticeship at the U.S. Department of Labor. Chad?

CHAD ALESHIRE: Jen, just a quick volume check. Can you hear me OK?

MS. JACOBS: Yeah. You sound good.

MR. ALESHIRE: All right. Good afternoon, everybody. Thanks for joining us. As Jen mentioned, this is the state apprenticeship expansion continuation funding update webinar. Just wanted to share with you some information around the continuation funding opportunity and letter that you just received.

Our presenters today will be Mike Qualter, the division chief, as Jen mentioned, the Division of Investment, Operations, and Performance in the Office of Apprenticeship; my colleague Gabrielle Aponte Henkel, a program analyst with the same division; and then Melissa Abdullah out of the grants office, our grant officer for this project. And then as Jen mentioned, I will be your moderator today.

So I'm going to go over quickly today's objectives. So the objectives for today's webinar will be we're going to give you an overview of the opportunity for the continuation funding. We're going to share more on ETA's vision for that continuation funding and the continued apprenticeship expansion, requirements for the funding.

We'll also discuss allowable activities and we'll review the timeline for submission and awards and then we hope that we have some time to respond to your questions. I know some of you have submitted questions in advance. Throughout the presentation we will try to cover those. Those we don't cover, feel free to ask them again at the end. If we don't get to your questions today, we will be following up. We do have your questions and e-mail. So we appreciate it.

So with that I'll stop. I'm going to turn it over to Mike Qualter, our division chief. He's going to give you a little bit more on the vision for this continued – this continuation funding around the expansion grants.

MIKE QUALTER: Thank you, Chad. And congrats to all 37 states, and thanks to our FPOs and apprenticeship staff. A lot of work over this past year and a half. We've accomplished a great deal to expand registered apprenticeship through these grants. The numbers right now look really great. We have 46,000 apprentices who have been touched by these funds, 485 new registered apprenticeship programs with 645 registered apprenticeship programs being expanded.

Over I think five or – I think we're about 5,000 businesses engaged at this point. So we are really using these funds for the intended purpose, which is to extend that circle to bring more employers and partners into the fold to work on registered apprenticeship. I believe that our ability to continue this work is in large part due to the case that you've been able to help us make, and we've really built I think a really sound foundation over the past year and a half to show that these funds make a big difference in the states.

In a bit of news – a bit of a news flash, I guess, I think the vote of confidence, we've seen it extend to Congress as they just recently enacted a budget and provided beyond what we received in the past couple – over the past couple of years, which has been $90 million and $95 million over the past two years.

They provided $145 million for apprenticeship grants in the FY '18 budget. So we're really excited about that opportunity, and we know states will continue to advocate with their leadership in the states, on the Hill, and other places to make it known the impact that these funds are making.

For the next slide, given everything we've accomplished so far, we really do have – we have a ways to go. We've made a big dent, but to fully integrate registered apprenticeship into the state economic development, workforce, and education systems, there's a lot more we have to do to break down those silos. I think we are getting there. I think this funding is helping us to break down those barriers, but we continue to see some places where that needs to take fuller effect.

But our ultimate goal for these funds is to build on this work of the past year and a half to develop an enduring, sustainable apprenticeship system within the United States, to support well-paying middle- and high-skilled and high-growth jobs across the entire range of industries, and we've seen a number of different occupations pop up, new programs for a regulatory affairs specialist, aerospace engineer, instrumentation and control tech, fiber technician, bank branch manager.

So you see the breadth and depth of this kind of expansion that we've envisioned really taking effect as we've been able to see a number of these new occupations approved. Just really a ton of these are just coming in in the last three months, never mind the last 18 months.

So we want to continue to share with you the best practices that are happening in the states so that the best ideas can be replicated, and we'll share those through venues such as these but also in-person venues which we hope to get off the ground and have more to share with you over the next month or so when those plans become a little bit more solid.

Just a quick note on some of the things that we've seen that are – that have been remarkable. Alaska, for example, has already exceeded their grant goal creating new healthcare apprenticeships. It's about 40 percent to its goal for the aviation apprenticeship program, which they've also targeted for expansion. Connecticut's first cohort of aviation techs have graduated, and two more starting in – started in December and another one in March.

Ohio's grant focuses on expanding the role of community colleges in apprenticeship, and six new colleges have registered an apprenticeship – as apprenticeship sponsors. I'll also mention a couple more states. Maryland's effort to make direct contact with every inactive sponsor in the state is yielding results with eight programs reactivated so far.

So this is a really great example of how employer engagement can kind of take many different shapes and forms. Idaho had eight new programs registered just in the last quarter, including apprenticeships in healthcare, critical care nurse, and IT for information assurance specialist. So I'm going to stop there. I could go on for every single state. That's just a handful that I want to mention to illustrate the great and amazing work that's happening as a result of these funds.

So I want to extend my thanks to everybody, but we still have a significant goal in front of us and a lot of expectations here in this building, on the Hill. I know within your states you're feeling the pressure too. We encourage you. We want to make technical assistance available to you to make sure that you have every opportunity to be successful, to leverage your FPOs and the apprenticeship staff within your states and here in the national office.

We know this is going to be a great success over the next couple of years as we work with you all. Please continue to share your successes in your quarterly reports and other places where you have an opportunity to make your voice heard.

With that said, I will get into handing it back to Chad to get us to the nuts and bolts of this application process for the year two funds.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thanks, Mike. I appreciate it. Yeah. As Mike mentioned, the momentum and the support is there from the administration. We'll get into the technical assistance, the structure we've set up to provide you TA and to help support your efforts later in this webinar. Thanks, Mike. We appreciate it.

I do want to get into – Melissa Abdullah and myself are going to run through the requirements for funding. We're going to start with performance goals. Now, we received a few questions about this in response to the webinar invite. We had put out the request for Qs, and some questions came in. We want to cover some of those.

You'll note on the slide we talk about proposed activities that must lead to 15 percent growth of registered apprenticeship. That's 15 percent over the baseline number of apprentices that were identified at the start of this project. We had a goal of 5 percent for the first round of funding and then an additional 10 percent for the second round of funding. I want to point you – we did have some questions on that, and there was a little confusion. So we want to clarify.

On page 43 of the FOA – if you don't have it in front of you, just mark – just note that it's page 43 of the FOA. When we initially published the FOA, we requested from the grantees or applicants at that time an overall plan for three funding cycles with an oval – with an expectation goal or goal, I should say, of an overall performance increase of 25 percent over your baseline.

We want to make sure we're clear. In the notification letter it reiterated 25 percent at the end of 2020, which is the overall target, but we do want to be clear. At this time entering the second round of funding the target is 10 percent above that initial 5 percent. It's 15 percent total above your baseline by the end of that second round of funding.

That period of performance is 30 months, and Melissa Abdullah will touch on that period of performance a little more. So I'm actually going to stop there. I'm going to let Melissa pick it up. She will cover that period of performance and some of the other special conditions and the compliance review findings and other application procedures.

MELISSA ABDULLAH: Great. Thanks, Chad, and hello, everyone. Before touching on your new funding, I just wanted to go back to your original award and make you aware that you might have had some special conditions that were placed on your grant award.

And everyone had one condition, which was the general compliance review, but you might have also had other conditions of award, such as a budget or statement of work condition. And if you find that these conditions have not yet been met, please work with your FPO to solve these conditions as soon as possible.

So all of these awards underwent a compliance review after these were awarded, and, as I said before, in addition, there may be conditions of award that were listed on your grant agreement. Now, where you will find these is on the special conditions page, which is located after the notice of award, and if you find that you have not met these conditions, please, again, work with your FPO to resolve these. And resolving these conditions may include submitting a modification to your grant in order for your grant to be in compliance with the award.

All right. So now, I will go over the process and the timeline for the submission and award for this new funding. The funding level for the continuation funding is predetermined, and the spreadsheet that was included with the announcement letter contains the amount of funding for each state. This amount is just the amount for the continuation funding. It's not your new total award, and this – the amount for the continuation funding should be listed on your SF-424 and 424A.

And we did have a question about if these funds needed to be tracked separate from the original award. These are going to be added to your original award. So you only have to do one report for – well, progress – or performance report and a financial report. They don't have to be tracked separately there.

And for the period of performance, as Chad said, for the second round it will be about 30 months, and depending on when we do add those – that funding in, which should be probably in May sometime, the end date will be 30 months from then, and that will occur in the fall of 2020 at some time. You'll receive the mod that has the new end date for the grant and the funds added once that is complete.

So here is what you must submit in order to apply for this continuation funding. You need to submit the Standard Form or SF-424 application for federal assistance, the SF-424A is budget information form, your budget narrative, and your continuation project narrative. Links to the standard forms are contained in the letter transmitted to grantees on Friday, March 23rd and also in the follow-up e-mail from OA.

Your budget narrative must provide a description of costs associated with each line item on the 424A. And the project narrative should include the elements outlined in the letter. Please note that the continuation project narrative is not to be an altered version of your original proposal but a new document which clearly separates the new proposed work from the changes to the existing work, and it should address all the elements outlined in that letter.

So for a proposal submission you must submit your proposal by April 23rd, 2018, and this will be via e-mail to ogm@dol.gov. And if you could include your current grant number in the subject line, that would be great, and also you need to copy your assigned FPO on your submission.

So for the award, the applications will be reviewed by both OGM and OA. There may be some revisions required before we award the funding, and that can include revisions to the standard forms or your budget narrative or even the project narrative. Be sure to clearly indicate items in the narrative that apply to the existing statement of work and items that are new. If you're requesting a change to the existing statement of work that is not new, it would be a modification.

And once all the documentation is approved by both offices, a modification to the existing award will be executed by me in OGM. It will incorporate the additional funding. It will modify the statement of work and incorporate the new elements, and it will either release you from your special conditions or say that all your special conditions are addressed or it may add new special conditions.

And the modification, it will be transmitted to the authorized representative and your point of contact, per standard procedure. Also, your FPOs are also copied on your mod.

OK. And that's it for me. Just bring it over back to Chad.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thanks, Melissa. Sorry, folks. We're just moving some microphones around. Thanks, Melissa. We appreciate it. And I'm noticing in our screen in our chat window we do see questions coming in. We appreciate that. We are cataloging the questions, and we'll try to get through as many as we can at the end. So I'm going to keep moving through the continuation project narrative and just speak a little bit more on the required elements.

On your project narrative, we'll start with the justification of need. I think it's important to just remind you the continuation narrative should speak to those new work items which you intend to fund with the additional funds, above and beyond what you were already doing with the first round funding.

We are able to accept some changes to your existing statement of work, as Melissa mentioned, but to make sure you clearly delineate between the existing and new in your narrative. Want to make sure we're clear on this, that the – the new narrative, if you will, will be an addendum to your existing statement of work, which does remain in effect throughout the entire award period. Any changes you may wish to request need to be clearly separated, as Melissa mentioned.

The new narrative must also contain several elements, the first of which is justification of need for additional activities and funding which will lead to apprenticeship growth. As outlined earlier, the growth rate is based on the FOA and the baseline number of registered apprenticeships for the second segment of funding will be a total of 15 percent over the baseline, 5 percent from the round one funding and an additional 10 percent for the round two funding.

So obviously to achieve this goal we need to continue to develop and implement quality program designs and retention supports to help ensure that apprentices not only enter but also successfully complete an apprenticeship program and enter meaningful well-paid employment as a result.

On the next slide we're going to cover the proposed expansion activities. The narrative needs to address the plans to develop this additional capacity and capability – excuse me – to develop additional capacity and capabilities, such as core functions, which include promotions, such as outreach to businesses, underrepresented populations, program approval oversight, technical assistance, and support for potential and existing employers and program sponsors.

Also, continued training and support for frontline staff that promote both innovation and quality in registered apprenticeship programs. And then also, continued engagement with industry to develop multi-employer programs and program templates to assist targeted industries in establishing sustainable talent pipelines that offer a viable career path for those workers. And then, additionally, support of industry efforts to establish and implement apprenticeship programs.

All right. I also want to – actually, I think jump ahead one slide. We're going to back up a slide, folks. Oh, you know what? I apologize. That's my fault. I'm jumping ahead.

We're going to now work – move into the sustainability plan to advance strategies that institutionalize these activities over and beyond the 30-month continuation funding period of performance. In the continuation narrative we want to make sure you clearly outline the sustainability plan, including changes from lessons learned so far.

Important pieces of that sustainability plan include supporting integrated statewide apprenticeship strategies and capacity to engage industry and meet demand for new programs in both traditional and non-traditional industries – and again, this is mentioned directly in the FOA – traditional and non-traditional industries, such as IT, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, the building trades, cybersecurity, and business services.

We also want to ensure that these new programs exemplify high standards, include instructional rigor, inclusion, and diversity and quality training which leads to solid careers and include strong employment outcomes for apprentices, including high completion and retention rates.

And then, additionally, again, from your FOA we want to focus on catalyzing state innovations to significantly increase registered apprenticeship opportunities for all – excuse me – particularly underrepresented populations in apprenticeship, including opportunity youth, women, communities of color, Native Americans, and persons with disabilities and taking steps to facilitate the successful, as we mentioned before, completion of an apprenticeship program.

There was one other note we did want to make, and I am going to touch on it. And we apologize. There was – there's honestly – oh, there. We do have it up. Good. I'm sorry. There was a little bit of confusion on the slide deck. We're sorry.

So we do want to touch on – throughout the course of this effort, you have been identifying companies and industries which may have training programs that provide a high level of work-based learning and on-the-job training that may not be registered programs. Through this continuation funding, one of the pieces we want to do is have you help us identify those unregistered programs.

Again, you're already engaging industry partners and employers, and as part of that effort we want to just begin to continue and track unregistered programs that may be ripe to become registered apprenticeships.

Now, I know some of you, we've already gotten questions on how that tracking would be. I'm going to throw it to my division chief, Mike Qualter. He's actually got some updated info we want to share around that.

MR. QUALTER: Sure. And I think there's a blurb in the letter that actually articulated this a little bit as well. I think the idea behind this is really trying to get a better sense of the landscape of the work-based learning that's occurring out there that's maybe informal, certainly outside of our registered apprenticeship system.

And this is part of a larger effort as we're trying to – we're working with the researcher here in the national office in D.C. to develop a very brief survey to start to kind of get more information around the broader work-based learning that's happening across the country, including those that could be eventually, maybe with some work, identified as apprenticeship programs. So we are going to be working with that researcher, providing a very brief and easy template, just a few data elements that they'll need to help supplement some of their work.

So you guys are really contributing to data that you're kind of – have access to at the state level as you do that outreach and just being able to capture it and provide it to us here in the national office. We will be handing that off to our research teams to help, again, provide that better picture of unregistered apprenticeship programming that's happening in the states and at that point really across the country.

And it really dovetails with this administration's focus to look at work-based learning more broadly. This is not to say that this changes the emphasis on how you're going about developing the programs that you are now engaged and working on that is in a registered apprenticeship context.

Really I don't see this as very much different than what you already do in terms of outreach and trying to bring more employers who may have some training already occurring who want to become formalized apprenticeship programs. It's just a way to document what you're seeing a little bit better so we have a sense of that broader engagement.

So more to come on that. We'll definitely have a separate communication as we engage the research team and find out a little bit more about what they're going to be looking at and see how you can contribute to that broader initiative. Thanks. Back to you, Chad.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thanks, Mike. And yeah. We apologize, folks. There was a little bit of a glitch in the rotation of the slides there. So we skipped ahead a slide or two. So we apologize. So we'll get back on track.

Around the project narrative we want to focus in on activities that develop state systems, including state system alignment, capacity, subject matter expertise to embed apprenticeship as a – (inaudible) – training vehicle for employers within the state.

And then we also want to see program administration. Within your narratives we want to see how you're working to increase program administration around these projects to improve program efficiency, program quality, outcome measurement, such as project management, data collection, and grant reporting, and then grant monitoring and evaluation. And additionally, around modernizing IT systems and data collection.

States may use a portion of these funds to enhance data collection capabilities and reporting of individual records for both registered apprenticeship – or excuse me – registered apprentices and program sponsors and then also activities that increase apprenticeship enrollment and, as we mentioned a few times, completion rates for those enrollees.

So with that I'm going to stop. I'm going to hand it to my colleague, Gabrielle Aponte Henkel. She's going to cover more on activities around direct support to apprentices and sponsors.

GABRIELLE APONTE HENKEL: Thank you, Chad, and greetings, everyone. Just want to preface my comments. We're talking about allowable activities here. These are activities that directly support apprentices and sponsors. These are activities that provide a range of training services to individuals enrolled in registered apprenticeship programs, including classroom occupational training, development of curricula and standards for apprenticeship, online technology-based learning, accelerated and competency-based training that integrates academic and occupational skills training, and apprenticeship training costs and other supportive services.

Allowable activities also include providing financial supports and incentives, such as supportive services to apprentices, state apprenticeship training funds, and state-level incentives credits for registered apprentices. Some examples of incentives include covering the cost of related technical instruction, funding supportive services for apprentices, and providing funds to employers or intermediaries to cover the staff costs of developing and operating registered apprenticeship programs.

And now, related to allowable activities, we're going to talk about activities that build up demand for apprenticeship. These can be outreach and communication to support strategies for engaging employers, parents, educators, underrepresented populations, and other critical stakeholders and state residents, explaining the benefits of apprenticeship, and further generating support across the state.

Other activities include partner, industry and workforce intermediaries, and employer engagement, such as convening state and regional industry roundtable events, peer-to-peer exchanges, state apprenticeship institutes, secondary and postsecondary partnerships, and apprenticeship training and consultation.

Please keep in mind that meeting and convening costs should always be double checked against the Uniform Guidance and your FPO for allowability. Another allowable activity are pathways to a registered apprenticeship opportunity, such as career awareness model for underrepresented populations, career pathways development activities, and quality pre-apprenticeship and career pathway programs as defined in the Training and Employment TEGL.

Now, I'm going to turn it back over to Chad to talk about ongoing technical assistance.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thank you, Gaby. Yeah. As Mike mentioned earlier, we are really excited about what the future holds for these grants and for apprenticeship expansion in general. There are a lot of eyes on these projects.

Obviously, there's a lot of support for these projects and, as Mike mentioned, additional funding around the larger apprenticeship expansion effort. So we are excited about that. And to really make sure that we work with you, well, really from the start of these grants, we've tried to put together a technical assistance team that is really there to support you and be a resource to you as you move these projects forward.

As I mentioned, technical assistance has been available through our TA team from the start of these grants. So we want to make sure that you just continue to stay in contact with your TA team, work closely – and work closely with the Office of Grants Management and the Office of Apprenticeship. And we just want to make sure we get you as much support as you need to make these awards successful.

Couple notes on that. Your primary point of contact for these grants from the start has been your federal project officer. Your FPO is available to discuss performance goals, confirm your baseline registered apprenticeship numbers, and discuss any special conditions or unresolved compliance findings that you may have that – as Melissa mentioned earlier.

Your FPO and your OA consultant should be working together and staying in communication with you to provide support. If that's not happening, we at the national – we here at the national office, reach out to us. Let us know if you don't feel like you're getting the support you need. We've worked really hard to put these TA teams in place. We want to make sure we work with you and continue to keep those communication lines open.

Also want to remind you that your OA consultant is really a great resource to you in addition to the FPO. They can really help you on the apprenticeship program development – (inaudible) – this project and also help with your larger apprenticeship expansion strategies. So the next slide.

I want to call your attention also to – through this project from the start we've put together, I mentioned, a pretty robust technical assistance team. Along with your FPO and your Office of Apprenticeship OA consultant, which is an OA staff person available to work with you, we also ensured that we've got a TA coach assigned to each of your projects. I think by this point you all know them well. We just want to encourage continued communication with them. N

ow, after this webinar your TA coaches will be reaching out to you to schedule a conversation about your vision and strategy for this – for the continuation funding and continued expansion across the board. The purpose of this conversation is to help the states identify current gaps and future opportunities in their expansion efforts and to connect them with resources and peers, as it says here on the slide, that can strengthen their strategic planning.

Just keep in mind your TA coaches are available to assist you with strategies and goals pertaining to the larger expansion efforts around your projects.

So I know we've thrown a lot at you. All of us are here in the room. We are going to take a minute to have you provide any questions you may have. We're going to do our best to work through the questions.

Keep in mind, if we don't get to your question, we are logging all of these questions and we will either, A, respond to you directly via e-mail if you've submitted something. But also we do have – we've catalogued all the questions here, and as the webinar team archives – this webinar is being recorded. So as they archive it and we share out the links to that archived webinar, keep in mind we're also capturing all of the chat information.

So if we don't get to your question today, we'll make sure to get back to you with answers on questions we didn't touch on. So with that we'll stop, and we're going to give – Jen, I'm going to turn it over to you. You want to give a little explanation on submitting questions? I know I see several so far but for the larger group?

MS. JACOBS: Yeah. Of course. So in the middle of your screen you'll see a Q&A box. At the bottom there is an area where you can type in. So go ahead and type your questions in there. Just so you know, other folks won't be able to see your questions, but the presenters will be able to see your questions. So go ahead and submit them in there, and we'll go ahead and answer them.

MR. ALESHIRE: All right. We got a question that came in I'm going to point over to – I'm looking over to Melissa to answer. It's, "For the extension, do we submit a total award for the total first round and second round funding or a separate budget narrative for" – yeah. I'm going to turn to you, Melissa.

MS. ABDULLAH: Yeah. So for these funds it would just – it would be a separate budget narrative for the amount listed on that spreadsheet. So your budget and budget narrative is just going to be for this round of funding. It's not for the total.

MR. ALESHIRE: OK. Thanks, Melissa. OK. And yeah. Someone's double checking about the second round of funds, that they won't be available before May.

MS. ABDULLAH: Highly unlikely. They're due the 23rd, and then we need time to review them. I do not think they would be available before May.

MR. ALESHIRE: OK. Thanks. Thanks, Melissa. The questions are coming in fast and furious, you all. We're going to keep moving. We want to try to knock out as many of these as we can.

MS. ABDULLAH: Yeah. There was a question about a page limit for the narrative. We didn't set one. So it's – I mean, it shouldn't be too long, but as long as you have all the elements in there, we do not have a limit of the number of pages.

MR. ALESHIRE: OK. I'm going to take – let's see. "Since the two periods of performance overlap, how do we distinguish between the period of performance to avoid double counting?"

MS. ABDULLAH: Well, it is kind of funny because we talk about to period of performances, but this is one grant award. It's all in the same grant award. So it's really only one period of performance. So you shouldn't be double counting.

MR. ALESHIRE: OK. Yeah. And I know, folks, we do mention the second round of funding, which does come with its own time period. But we don't want to confuse things in terms of period of performance. There will be technically no overlap there.

All right. Bear with us here. We are just cataloging the next question. "Is this additional money only for the base grant project?" The asker mentioned, "We have a cap breaker project as well." I'm going to turn it over to Mike Qualter for that.

MR. QUALTER: Yeah. So those folks who received cap breaker awards the first time around can certainly integrate those strategies into your budget narrative for these continuation funds, to the extent that you want to continue some of that work and that these additional resources will help you be good to target those for this effort, that they'll have good impact. You guys are seeing which strategies and which areas are probably taking shape best.

So I think those with cap breakers have that additional project to kind of lean on in terms of how you think about using these continuation funds for maximum effect. So feel free to include those. That's certainly allowable within the context of the grant.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thanks, Mike. Similarly related, "How should states who initially received cap breaker funds incorporate this into our narrative?" I think Mike sort of spoke to that in that the cap breaker projects from the first round funding, the continuation funding is a great opportunity to support those efforts and continue those efforts.

There's nothing stopping you from incorporating the use of the continuation funding to support those original cap breaker projects. I hope that helps.

All right. So let's see. We're just gathering the next question. "Allowable activities seem to be much broader under this solicitation. Why the expansion of activities to include employer or sponsor incentives and direct funding?" Not that they're complaining and questioning whether or not maybe it's a result of us getting an earful from you folks across the country.

MR. QUALTER: So incentives were part of the cap breaker. Yeah. There's been no change in the FOA since the first time around. So, essentially, what you saw in the FOA is – in terms of outlining allowable activities, we certainly had a number of different examples. Activities that you identified in your initial plans were obviously accepted. In terms of incentives, those were more played up as part of the cap breaker projects, and we had a little bit more detail there.

So there may have been some clarification that we're making sure that we allow you to carry forward that strategy to the extent that you think it's helpful. Many times when we talk about incentives, we're talking about on-the-job training, contracts with employers that allow for their reimbursement to the employer for the extraordinary cost of training. That's the form it typically takes shape in.

We've provided some guidance to you all on that subject, and that's something, as we go forward, to the extent that you identify places where these types of incentives or supports to employers are identified, we're going to want to make sure we have a conversation with you to ensure that it's done in such a way that it makes it allowable. Like I said, OJT, reimbursement contracts with the employers are typically the way it's done here.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thanks, Mike. Yeah. And I think some of the confusion may be we did reference it within this webinar as the incentive funding. But again, those were allow- – everything that we've addressed were allowable costs from the start of this project.

If I point you back to slide 27 where we did cover those, covering the cost of related technical instruction, funding, supportive services for apprentices, providing funds to employers or any intermediary to cover staff costs, and/or the development and operation of registered apprenticeship programs, those were allowable costs from the beginning. So I think it's just the terminology. There's a little confusion there, but appreciate the question.

All right. Good question coming in. "If we need to address some changes to the existing statement of work as well as describe new elements, can we submit this in a single document?" I'm going to look to Melissa on this.

I think the answer is yes, that we did mention earlier just about the delineation between the new and existing in your – in the project narrative. Am I capturing that correctly, Melissa?

MS. ABDULLAH: Right. So your continuation project narrative, that's just one document, and if you have changes from your existing statement of work, just like we said before, make sure you indicate that it is a modification to the existing or, if it's a new element, indicate that it's new in that just one document.

MR. ALESHIRE: And if you still have questions on that after this webinar, don't hesitate to reach out to me directly, and, as always, I'm happy to bug Melissa as needed for clarification. Thanks, everybody.

All right. We still got a few minutes. The questions are flowing in. We really appreciate you being active on this webinar. Makes our job a lot easier. "So since the additional funding will be added onto the original funding, does that mean any balance we have from round one will actually be extended through the fall of 2020 also?"

MS. ABDULLAH: I would say technically, but you should be spending your round one money first.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thanks, Melissa.

MR. QUALTER: I think that's one we'll – we should clarify with the group in writing. I think that's a good one to have because I think that does make a difference in terms of managing those funds. So we'll make a commitment to the group to answer the – a number of these important ones in writing as well, including that one.

MR. ALESHIRE: Yeah. Absolutely. Thanks, Mike. I think that's a good idea. So, folks, we will circle back with some clarification on some of the stickier questions we're getting, the good questions. We don't want to give you the quick answer here and move on. We'll make sure we circle back with you to give some more – the complete guidance there.

So another question coming in. "Can expansion grantees use existing expansion subgrantees for the continuation funding?"

Yeah. I think as long as you write it into the – you write the intent of how those grantees will – the subgrantees – excuse me – will support the project, I think, by all means, if you're having a successful relationship with that subgrantee and you know – you see ways where the continuation funding could expand and increase the impact of that relationship, by all means.

All right. So, "The grantee notices indicate that we must show a 25 percent growth in apprenticeship. Chad indicated a 15 percent growth over the baseline. What is correct?"

I'm going to take a crack at this. I got my division chief here to back me up, if I go astray, or Melissa. But in the first round of funding, the goal was this. 5 percent increase above your baseline. For the second round of funding, it is an additional 10 percent above the baseline, equaling 15 percent.

When the FOA was originally written, it was written with the idea of three rounds of funding, the first requiring a 5 percent growth over the baseline, a second round of funding requiring a 10 percent over the baseline, and then, if and when we are able to manage a third round of funding, that was the intent originally.

If we reached that third round of funding, it would then be a 15 percent increase over the baseline. So if you think about it, 5, 10, 15 percent. We're beginning the second round of funding. So if you take that 5 percent, then the additional 10 percent in round two, 15 percent growth by the end of the second round of funding, which we've targeted for, as Melissa said, fall of 2020.

And we also want to point you back to slide nine to clarify that a little more. I know there was a little bit of confusion there. Good question, though. Thank you, and we're sorry for that. We were ambitious in our FOA writing.

All right. We're just reviewing questions here, and we do still have a few minutes. So keep them coming, folks. "Are there any restrictions on the project narrative format, for example, font size, margins, layout, subject headings, et cetera?"

MS. ABDULLAH: I mean, we didn't put any in there. So technically, there aren't any, but I would say use a reasonable font. I mean, we normally do Times New Roman 12 point font, one inch margins, something like that.

MR. ALESHIRE: Yeah. And I would back Melissa up by saying also, as you do submit your applications for the continuation funding, I would try to keep the information you provide to what's pertinent as we review it for your continuation – how the continuation funding would support and further your existing projects, how you would use the continuation funding to continue the expansion of apprenticeship.

Obviously, try to keep the narrative and the information you provide pertinent to what we would need in that review. So we appreciate that.

All right. We're still reviewing. We do have a question coming in. "Are pre-apprentice and youth apprenticeship programs allowable?"

Yes. They have been allowable from the start of these grants. Nothing changes there. If you have existing pre-apprenticeship and/or youth-targeted programs, the continuation funding is a great way to expand or – to expand on or increase the impacts of those programs. Obviously, throughout the first round of funding, if you found opportunities to support pre-apprenticeship programs and/or youth programs, obviously the continuation funding could be used to support those efforts as well.

And just bear with us, folks. We apologize. The silence is we're just pulling the questions off of the chat here. Let's see. Some of these we've already answered. Incentives. Let's see if we can take a crack at this one. "Incentives. Funds to employers or intermediaries to cover staff costs of developing and operating registered apprenticeship programs. Can this include a flat amount to the employer after an apprentice has been on the job as an apprentice for a certain period?"

MR. QUALTER: That's a little bit of a paid-for-performance kind of model where you're looking at the training has started and after some period of time, or in some cases completion, you're looking at rewarding that employer for that training. I think we do have some flexibility.

I think we'd want to be able to document very well what we're – we are requiring of that employer, particularly as it relates to the kind of training that they're providing that person as they kind of move through the ladder of skills and at what point are we doing that? So we want to make sure that there's rigor in that that makes sense from that standpoint.

So we do have some additional guidance that we can provide of kind of best practices we've seen in terms of how we can work out some of these financial arrangements to support, especially as it relates to the on-the-job learning that happens with an apprentice on a job site. So we can try to get that out. It includes this idea of incentives broadly but other means and methods we've used with other grant programs that we feel like are good, solid ways we can justify these incentives.

So I guess I would just say that, again, we'd want to make sure we have really good documentation around that.

MR. ALESHIRE: Thanks, Mike. All right, guys. We are close to the end of the hour here. We've worked through a lot of your questions. I'm looking now, and I think most of these – I do see a question coming in around, "Can we do some runs around your current baseline numbers?"

I don't want to confuse the use of baseline numbers here on this – on the webinar because I'm not sure I completely am grasping where you're headed there. Whoever's asking us that question about running – updating your baseline figures as of the most recent available quarter, could you please e-mail that directly to me? It's Chad Aleshire. I think you all know me. Shoot me an e-mail on that so we can give it it's due. I don't want to brush that one off, but I want to make sure I – we absorb it better.

MR. QUALTER: Let me just say this. We do have the baseline documents that were created initially. So we can certainly share that, and we should probably share the last quarter's worth of data in terms of active apprentices for each of the states.

MR. ALESHIRE: Yeah.

MR. QUALTER: So let's make sure that we provide that as a follow on. I think that's a good idea.

MR. ALESHIRE: Yeah. And again, whoever e-mailed me that, could you just – as a nudge, could you please just send us an e-mail on that specifically? I want to give you sort of the personal touch that question deserves. As Mike mentioned, we'll work to get the baseline numbers out. I think most of you have them. We'll work out a mechanism for providing that information and then, as Mike mentioned, the up-to-date information.

All right. I want to clar- – there is one additional question. I think we're going to have to wrap it up. "I want to clarify that this new round of funding is for 30 months, even though our original proposals" – excuse me – "proposals included build-out activities over three consecutive eight-month periods."

Yeah. What I can tell you is that the second round of funding, we have identified a 30-month period of performance, again, to run through roughly May of 2020. If you still have questions on that, again, don't hesitate to reach out directly, and I'll respond.

So with that I'm looking at the clock. It's the end of the day here on the east coast. I want to thank all of you for joining us today. I want to make sure I thank our speakers. Melissa, thank you for joining us.

And then also I want to point to this – you'll see on the slide now contact information for the grants management specialist Kia Mason. If you have any questions regarding this continuation funding opportunity, you can reach Kia Mason at ogm@dol.gov. Again, we have recorded this and archived – we'll be archiving this webinar, and we'll share out the link.

With that I'm going to stop and turn it back to Jen to close us out. Appreciate everyone joining us, and thanks again to our speakers.

(END)