**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Strengthening Community College Training Grants Program Grantee Orientation**

**Wednesday, March 3, 2021**

*Transcript by*

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LAURA CASERTANO: With that, I'm going to get myself right out of the way.

Again, I want to welcome everyone to today's "Strengthening Community College Training Grants Program Grantee Orientation" webinar.

And, again, if you haven't done so already, please introduce yourself in that chat on the bottom left-hand corner of the screen.

And I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Cheryl Martin. She's a program manager, Competitive Grants with Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Cheryl, take it away.

CHERYL MARTIN: Thank you, Laura. And hello, everybody. Welcome. We are so excited and hope you are as excited as we are to be kicking off the Strengthening Community College Grants. It's just great to see names and affiliations down there. And yeah. We are really excited.

We have a lot of people to tell you a lot of things today. So we're going to get going. We have Robin Fernkas with us, who is the deputy administrator and division chief for the Division of Strategic Investments, both of those things.

We have Melissa Abdullah with us, who is the grant officer for your grant, and we'll be talking about all of these roles a little bit later. We have Eugenie Agia, who is the Strengthening Community Colleges program lead for this grant, and Steven Canger, who is the grants management specialist, and Ayreen Cadwallader, who is our colleague in the Division of Strategic Investment, who's helping us out with performance.

Today's agenda is going to include a grant program overview, an introduction to your federal team, an award package overview, information about grant modifications, performance reporting guidance, and technical assistance information, and then some information about communication methods.

So, as I said, we have a lot to cover today, but we wanted to start by asking what your biggest concerns are right now. So, please, in the chat box, just type what are your biggest concerns are right now. And we will see – try to make sure that we cover those. Sometimes we might actually answer a question in the chat, and sometimes we will – we know that we're already going to answer it later in one of our many slides.

The slides are available right there in the file share download box, and you also – it says today's PowerPoint, and you also see – this is while you're typing. I see a lot of people typing, typing. You'll also see a copy of the ETA Grantee Handbook there, which is a really useful guide. It answers a lot of your questions. Sometimes when you ask us questions, we will tell you, have you looked in the grantee handbook?

OK. I saw some other people typing, but you must have really long questions. I'm going to give it one more minute here because we really do want to know. OK. Understanding the reporting needed. Yes. That's always a really big question, and we have a whole section on that. And we'll be offering additional technical assistance after this one. During this webinar we'll basically give a high-level overview of that, but we'll be doing a whole series of webinars about that in the coming weeks and months.

So okay. Well, I'm going to keep going here, but please keep typing your questions in the chat and we will, like I said, either respond there in the chat or definitely a lot of these questions are going to be answered as we go along.

So let's keep moving to the grant program overview, and here I would like to ask you a quiz question. So, Laura, if you can put the quiz up here.

We wanted to know what resources have you already reviewed prior to today's webinar? Did you look at the grants award package? Have you looked at the grantee handbook? Check all the apply; right? Did you look at the RISE Module, which is a reference guide for competitive grant programs? Or did you look at all of the above?

OK. A lot of folks have looked at their grant award package, and a few people have looked at the grantee handbook. The RISE Module is a helpful thing as well. So, obviously, we have those there because we consider them important things for you to look at.

So now, I'm going to turn it over to Robin Fernkas to give us an overview of the grant. Robin.

ROBIN FERNKAS: Great. Thanks, Cheryl, and good afternoon and welcome, everybody. We are truly delighted to roll out this new Strengthening Community College Grant program, and our team is really looking forward to working with all of you.

So I'm going to spend a very short time walking through the program's purpose because, we know as successful grantees, that you're fully aware of what we were trying to accomplish with this grant program. But we wanted just to remind everyone collectively what we're about.

So the Strengthen Community Colleges Training Grants we're going to refer to throughout as either Strengthening Community Colleges for short or SCC. So if you see that SCC, you'll know we're talking about Strengthening Community Colleges.

This is a capacity building project, and so a lot of you have been grantees with us for a lot of our job training efforts. And while we are still focused on workforce development here, we are really looking at building the capacity of your institutions to collaborate with employers and the public workforce development system to meet local and regional labor market demand for a skilled workforce.

So, as this is a really critical time for you all and for our nation to be starting this program, we're looking at recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and we see you as really critical to working with our public workforce system in helping retrain the workforce and building a pipeline of workers in health care, logistics, and other industries that are going to continue to face shortages following the current health crisis.

So these investments may also support the skill development needs and investment in industry. We had called several things out in the FOA kind of future focused, like looking at occupations that are impacted by artificial intelligence or quantum information sciences, really looking at kind of emerging occupations in biotechnology and advanced manufacturing. So we're excited that a lot of you really heard the call to do that and are focused in those areas.

This grant program aims to increase the capacity and responsiveness of colleges to address these skill development needs, as I was saying. It also is looking to offer a spectrum of workers and other individuals accelerated career pathways that are going to enable them to gain the skills and transition from unemployment to reemployment and hopefully on a pretty fast schedule.

We're looking to address new challenges associated with the pandemic and looking at what changes you all are going to have to make to your curriculum and to your colleges to social distance or expand your online and technology enabled learning. We know a lot of you have already pivoted and done those things we think probably. If you're like the broader workforce system, you did it more quickly, and now you're looking at strategic opportunities to how you do these things long-term.

I'm going to go to the next slide – here we go – and just tell you a little bit about who you are, our grantees.

We did award $40 million. We awarded it to 11 grantees who are the leads. And we understand that represents a lot more colleges than just the 11 grantees because seven of you are consortia grants and four of you represent single institutions.

Our award range was from $1.6 million for our single institutions and $5 million for the consortia. Some of that was really driven by our legislation that created the program.

We are looking for a period of performance that's 48 months, and that's from February 1st, 2021 to January 31st, 2025. And really for this we won't – we tried to give you the maximum amount of time for what the funds would allow, and so there won't be any room for extensions there because we gave you the time up front. So we did want you to be aware of that.

We are looking for you to leverage your resources and particularly looking at the broader workforce system and looking at other federal programs, state programs to support your work. So really looking at items such as tuition, support services or student supports, and on the job training and how you might be able to to bring together – thread together a lot of different resources to support your grant project.

You are really supporting a diverse set of industries. So two of the grants are focused on advanced manufacturing, two on health care, one on the IT sector, two that are looking at all three of those sectors, one that's looking at advanced manufacturing and cyber, and one that's looking at technology, health care, and education, and then one that's really focused on the public sector, as well as one focused on shipbuilding and construction.

So we will – to the extent it's helpful, we'll try to connect you to grantees that are focused in those industry areas, either within the program or maybe within some of our other investments that we have.

Here's the overview of the list of organizations. And so you can see that you are a pretty diverse group and located in various geographic areas throughout the country.

You do have a federal project officer assigned to you, and we're going to talk throughout this orientation about the important role that our federal project officers play and that they really are your first point of contact. And so several of them logged into the webinar too.

So this just shows you – this is the same just showing you in a picture kind of how you're spread out.

And at this point, I think I'm going to turn things over to my colleague, Eugenie Agia. And I just wish you much success with your program and let you know that we're here to help in any way that we can for you to succeed in what you propose to do. So Eugenie.

EUGENIE AGIA: Thank you, Robin. And hello, everyone. Now, as you know, the eligible lead applicant under this FOA is a community college that is a public institution of higher education or IHE. Lead applicants applied either as a single institution lead or the consortium lead representing a consortium of IHEs.

While single institution grantees will undertake capacity building at the institution, consortium grantees will undertake systems change with one – within one state or across one or more community college districts within a state. Of the seven consortium grantees, five are working statewide, and two are working district wide.

Now, both consortium and single grantees must partner with the workforce development system and with employers to form an SCC partnership. These required partners include one or more publicly funded workforce development system entities, which are state and local workforce development boards under WIOA or the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and Native American program entities eligible for funding under WIOA and an industry or trade association or a consortium of at least three employers.

In addition, consortium grantees must partner with an IHE consortium and an IHE coordinating entity. So see description of the composition of these entities on the slide here.

We also strongly encourage grantees to collaborate with other partners that can support and advance the work of their SCC partnership. These optional partners include the entities and organizations listed here.

Given SCC's capacity building focus, the performance outcomes in your grants are different than those for other ETA grants. In addition, SCC identified different sets of outcome measures for single institution and consortium grantees.

Single institution grantees will report on three capacity building performance outcomes and track participant performance outputs and outcomes for a cohort of participants using DOL's Workforce Innovation Performance System or WIPS, which we'll talk about a little later in the webinar.

Consortium grantees will report on eight quantitative systems change performance outcome targets. They will not track and report on participant outcomes.

Now, please keep in mind you were required to develop outcome targets that are specific to your grant. The examples provided in the FOA are for illustrative purposes only, and your performance outcome targets and the related outputs, milestones, and deliverables in the work plan form the basis of the department's assessment of grantee performance.

The chart here, which we include for your reference, compares key FIA requirements for single and consortium grantees. Next, we'll discuss additional FOA requirements that apply across grantees.

And this slide provides a snapshot of the required components of your SCC program design. Regarding the core elements, note that for consortium grantees who must undertake core element five, innovative systems change, all chose option A, accelerated learning pathways.

Under this FOA, the definition of eligible participants is broad. It includes a spectrum of adult workers, dislocated workers, incumbent workers, and new entrants to the workforce, as well as older youth who are new entrants to the workforce. Within these categories, you may serve a wide range of individuals, including those listed on the right-hand side.

Please note that the category of new entrants to the workforce includes, but is not limited to, long-term unemployed individuals and formerly incarcerated individuals, as well as youth who meet the description provided on the bottom of this slide.

Grantees may undertake a wide range of capacity building activities to support their work, from developing learning resources to expanding career guidance programs, to conducting outreach to stakeholders, and strengthening collaborative partnerships and a whole lot in between. A non-exhaustive list of such activities is found on pages 24 to 25 of the FOA.

The department anticipates that the majority of grantees will include several specific types of activities in their work, which are listed at the top of the slide here.

Allowable capital expenditures and equipment are discussed on pages 25 to 26 of the FOA. We reference key requirements related to these expenditures on the next slide.

Finally, note that participant related costs are allowable, but the department expects that you will leverage college or federal and state resources to cover them. Participant related costs include those associated with the activities listed at the bottom of the slide, as well as in the FOA.

Here we highlight some key deadlines related to capital expenditures and equipment purchases, categories that we will discuss later in this webinar. Note that you will be subject to all uniform administrative requirements that apply to this FOA, including the contracting provisions that apply to any equipment or capital improvements that you purchased through contracts. Please see pages 25 to 26 and 77 to 78 of the FOA for additional information.

We want to stress here that writing an equipment or capital expenditure expense into your grant does not mean that it is approved. You must separately request a written approval before incurring any such expenditure.

The SCC FOA requires that you make publicly accessible credentials and competencies that you develop or deliver using federal funds. FAQ Number 20 of the FAQs that we issued in September, 2020 provides additional clarification regarding this requirement. DOL will provide further information and technical assistance on this requirement. So please stay tuned.

Regarding your required third-party evaluation, we first would like to emphasize that the third-party evaluation is a contract, not a subaward. Please see pages 38 to 39 for definitions of these term.

Second, as we clarified in our recent email, you may submit the first deliverable, the procurement work plan, by the end of month two, so by March 31st. Note that the other milestone deliverables listed both here and on page 23 of the FOA will remain the same.

Now, the detailed procurement work plan can be simply the process that you will use in order to conform with your institution's requirements, as well as those in the uniform guidance section 2 CFR 200.318 and the anticipated timeframe. We do not expect you to have your evaluator in place by 60 days, given that you have to compete this.

Melissa, can you remind us of the uniform guidance requirements, please?

MELISSA ABDULLAH: Sure. So the general procurement standards in the uniform guidance are listed at 2 CFR 200.318. That basically says that grantees should have and use documented procurement procedures consistent with state, local, and tribal laws and the regulations and the standards of that section of the uniform guidance. So your document procurement procedures must conform to the procurement standards identified in the uniform guidance at 2 CFR 200.318 through 200.327.

MS. AGIA: Thank you, Melissa.

So, finally, in terms of writing your RFQ, DOL will offer a webinar during early April on what a good implementation study looks like and what a good developmental evaluation looks like, as well as procurement tips to help you widen your pool of eligible applicants and more. So now, I will pass things over to Cheryl.

Cheryl? Cheryl, are you on mute?

MS. MARTIN: You're right. I am. Thank you. The bane of COVID existence; right?

Anyway, we had a lot to cover there. Thank you all for that. And we've got a little quiz for you right now.

So let us know, for your grant, when do you anticipate hiring your project manager or your person who's going to be in charge of this on a day-to-day basis? Is that person already in place, or do you think you'll have them in place by – oh, good. One is already in place. And six of you say by March 31 and eight of you say by April 30.

Of course, I realize that there's a number of people on this grant – I mean, on this call from each grant. So we might be getting multiple responses from various people, but it looks like the biggest answer is by April 30, and the next biggest is by March 31. So that's great.

We do encourage you to really take that seriously. It does require a lot of attention and focus to make these grants work. So having somebody who's really responsible for it is is really important.

OK. We are going to move to talking about your federal team. And I am going to – so we can go to the next slide.

Some of you have never had a Department of Labor ground before. Others have had grants in the past, and a few of you are veterans and worked with us many times over the years, I think, maybe even a lot. But whatever stage you are in, we are all part of one team, and we're all here to help you succeed.

So your federal team includes the following. First of all, your federal project officer or FPO, who I think most of you have already met by phone. Should have anyway. That is your primary point of contact for your grants. Those people work out of our regional offices around the country. So back – in the future when we're back to traveling or something, they might even be able to come out and visit you in person.

Your grant officer, Melissa Abdullah, who we will be hearing from shortly – is Melissa Abdullah, and we will be hearing from her shortly. Melissa works in the Office of Grants Management, which is responsible for the administration of your SCC grant program and will work with you and your FPO on any grant related issues, such as the budget or program modifications.

In partnership with the grants office and your FPO, then you have the Division of Strategic Investment, which is the lead program office for the Strengthening Community Colleges Grant program, and we provide grants program management support, program policy guidance, and technical support.

So that includes on this call people like Robin, who is over our whole division. I'm on that team. Eugenie is on that team. Ayreen is supporting that team, and there may be some additional people in the future. For the most part, though, you will be communicating directly with your FPO and our team in the Division of Strategic Investment.

Also, as you may recall, as part of the grant award, all grantees agreed to participate in a national evaluation, if conducted. Currently, we don't know if there will be a national evaluation, but if there is, we will work with the Chief Evaluation Office and their staff to determine the nature and the scope of that. And we would definitely notify you well in advance if we decide to conduct that kind of evaluation. Obviously, you're all doing your third-party evaluations yourself.

OK. Let's talk a little bit about your FPO.

A federal project officer has already been assigned to you, as we mentioned. The FPO is identified in your grant package, as well as earlier in the presentation on the slide. The role of your FPO is to assist you and serve as a resource in all grant related matters. FPOs are your primary point of contact for all technical matters and the person with whom you will have the most frequent and direct contact in terms of Department of Labor.

They are responsible for providing compliance assistance, conducting oversight and review of grant performance, and delivering or arranging technical assistance to assist you in reaching your outcome goals. Your FPO plays a critical role in the success of your grant program. Communication with your FPO is key. If you have a question or concern about your grant, raise it with your FPO.

And I'll say one more thing, and that is that our experience has shown us that often the little problems that later grow into big problems starts when you don't communicate with your FPO. So that is a good person to be in a lot of touch with.

OK. Let's talk a little bit about your grant officer

The Office of Grants Management, or OGM, conducts grant competitions and makes the selections for the award. So that part, of course, has already happened here. And after, now that the grants are awarded, all the official grant documents are maintained in the grants office. There's a regional grants officer that's separate from Melissa. That person can approve budget modifications and equipment purchases.

But the national grant officer, which is Melissa Abdullah, is the only one who can approve changes to the grant agreement. They also review and approve more complicated modifications, such as statement of work changes and changes in signatory and indirect cost rates.

Other staff in the grant's office, such as Steven, the grant specialist that you'll be hearing from today, provide guidance on important policy issues and training on the fiscal and administrative requirements of the grant.

So just remember, though, always start with your FPO first.

Now let's move to the program office staff.

So the Division of Strategic Investments for DSI serves as the program office for the SCC grant program. What does the program office do? Well, the DSI has several functions to ensure the success of your grant. We support your FPOs and all other ETA staff involved in your grant. We also provide policy clarification and guidance on the grant program, as well as technical assistance.

Technical assistance, or sometimes called TA, may be provided in a number of ways, either to all grantees on universal topics such as performance reporting or training delivery or engaging employers, that kind of thing. We also provide customized TA to grantees, to the extent we're able, to address specific aspects of your grant. Some of this TA includes creating peer networking opportunities so that you can learn from one another, which is really important.

Another key role that the program office plays is in performance management. We work with our DOL colleagues and contractors to collect the performance data for your grants and track your overall progress. This data is used to generate the progress reports that you submit each quarter, which we will touch on later in this presentation. Additionally, we review specific grant modifications in coordination with the grant officer and regional offices.

Please note that we are often asked to report on grant outcomes by the White House, the Office of Management and Budget, the Government Accountability Office, and others. So we may on occasion request additional information regarding your grant outcomes. We appreciate your timely response to these requests for information when needed. This is especially true now with the transition to the new presidential administration.

OK. Let's see. Do we have any questions about what we have talked about so far?

So I see a couple of questions that we have. One is somebody wanted to make sure that we covered the financial reporting for reimbursements, and that will be touched on during an upcoming session of the – of the slides. And if we don't get into the level of detail that you need on that, please talk to your FPO. That's a great question for your FPO to answer.

We also had a question about, are we required to compete if we have selected a state university and in turn does not require a competitive bid?

As Melissa mentioned, there's sort of two sets of requirements that you have to abide by with your procurements, and one of them is your own university or state or whatever requirements count for you locally at your institution. But, secondly, is the CFR reference that Melissa put into the main chat, 2 CFR 200.318 to 327. So please take a look at those and make sure that what you're doing is going to abide by those as well.

And, again, if you have questions about how those apply to you, you can start with your FPO. And there's plenty of people that can help support answers to those kinds of questions.

Let's move to – next to the grant management overview, and I'm going to turn things over to Melissa Abdullah, followed by Steven Canger from the Office of Grants Management.

MS. ABDULLAH: Great. Thanks, Cheryl, and good afternoon, everyone. As stated, I'm the grant officer for the Strengthening Community Colleges Grants. Congratulations again on receiving your award. Today I will be going over your grant award package.

So every grant's authorized representative and point of contact indicated in the application should have received from our office a grant award package, which consists of your grant award letter, the actual grant agreement, and the grant handbook.

The grant award letter is labeled as the PMS letter, and it contains information about the payment management system that's ETA's grantee fiscal and reporting system and passwords and PINs for online security when you're accessing your accounts.

The grantee handbook gives you specific instructions on how to navigate the ETA grants management process. And, finally, your entire grant agreement was also included in the grant transmittal email.

The grant award letter contains important information about, one, how to access your funds via the payment management system or PMS, which is operated by the Department of Health and Human Services, and, two, how to access DOL's grantee reporting system for financial reporting. These systems require two separate passwords and PINs.

Additionally, information and forms for these systems can be found at www.doleta.gov/grants under manage your awarded grant. And there you'll find information about the grantee fiscal reporting system and the federal financial report form, also known as the ETA 9130. Your passwords and PINs are sent separately after you supply the necessary information. And once you receive it, please do not lose it.

The grant agreement contains the notice of award, or NOA, followed by the condition of award page and the program compliance notification. A table of contents of the grant terms and conditions and attachments, which include the application for federal assistance, also known as the SF-424, the budget, which includes the SF-424A and the budget narrative, the statement of work, and, if applicable, the indirect cost rate agreement.

The NOA contains the grant recipient's identifying information, which is the name of your organization, address, EIN, and DUNS number. It also contains the federal award identification number or FAIN, otherwise known as a grant number, the period of performance, award amount, uniform administrative requirements, and cost principles and signatures. The NOA page also outlines the requirements to resolve the funding restriction for grantees that are conditionally approved. And I'll discuss what conditionally approved means in a bit.

As grantees, you are required to fully comply with not only this grant agreement but also all applicable statutes, regulations, and cost principles in performing your responsibilities under this grant agreement. Cost principles that are a set of government wide rules that apply to all ETA grantees and are outlined in 2 CFR 200, known as the uniform guidance, or UG, and 2 CFR 2900, which are the DOL exceptions. They define the conditions under which grantees may charge costs within federally funded grants.

These regulations provide guidance to help you determine whether specific planned expenditures are allowable and allowable or allowable with conditions. Additionally, you should refer to the terms and conditions of the award for other requirements imposed.

After the NOA page of the award agreement is the condition of award pages. The Office of Grants Management conducted reviews of the grant award packages, identifying areas of concern within the submitted application that required either clarification or modification from grantees. Those areas of concern were noted as conditions of award or COAs and were listed in your grant award.

Any questions, responses to requests for clarification, and or revisions for modification relating to the COAs must be submitted to the federal project officer, your FPO, assigned to your grant within 30 days of receipt of your grant award. If you have not discussed COAs noted in your grant award with your FPO yet, you should do that now.

Note that a submittal of revised documents does not, in and of itself, constitute approval by ETA. If a modification is required, final approval must be given by the grant officer through the grant modification process. Your FPO can walk you through that process, and we'll also go through that process a little later in this presentation. Once approved, the revised documents will comprise the official modification to your grant agreement, as appropriate, and your COAs will be resolved.

OK. As I mentioned, not all grantees have this condition, but I'd like to highlight conditionally approved funding.

Grantees that have not received a grant from ETA before receive conditionally approved funding. This means that these grantees have a partial notice to proceed and are placed on a drawdown restriction and can only access up to $80,000 of their grant funds until they have resolved this condition. This condition is noted on the NOA and specified on the condition of award page in the grant agreement. The release of additional funds up to the amount approved for the project will be based on the grantee's ability to address the condition.

The mission of the requested information, again, does not, in and of itself, constitute approval by ETA. The restriction will be lifted when the condition is resolved. If the provided documentation is sufficient to resolve this condition, a full notice to proceed will be incorporated into the grant agreement as an official modification, and the drawdown restriction will be lifted. Please review your grant award agreement for more information on this. And, again, questions pertaining to your submission responding to these conditions should be directed to your FPO.

So in addition to those DOAs, there was also a general program compliance notification. Federal staff are still conducting a review of the performance outcome targets and work plans but, absent anything that may cause serious deficiencies or findings later on, will not initiate any revision or modification processes. The notification outlines key areas where we have identified potential compliance issues and indicate areas where grantees should pay particular attention as you further develop and roll out your project, which includes some performance items and some program items.

This notification conveys the responsibility of the grantees to manage their award in compliance with this grant agreement and the FOA but also in compliance with all federal regulations. This means that all grant staff should read the grant agreement, and the organization should become familiar with the standard grants management process as they pertain to federal awards, learn the nuances of the program, and then looking with a critical eye to your own project and being proactive in identifying potential issues and address them with your FPO.

Can you move my slide – can't really do it right now – someone? Sorry. I lost my network for a minute.

MS. MARTIN: We're on slide 44. Is that the correct slide?

MS. ABDULLAH: Yes. Thank you. I can't see but [technical difficulty]. Your grant award package also included the terms and conditions of your grant, starting with the order of precedence if there's any conflict in what federal laws required. This is followed by any other applicable federal statutes and implementing regulations. And, finally, are the terms and conditions of award.

Next is a reference to the funding opportunity announcement for FOA, and amendment one, followed by other terms of your award. Next slide.

So one very important term of your grant deals with equipment purchases. ETA defines equipment as any tangible personal property, including information technology systems, with a per unit acquisition cost of $5,000 or more and a useful life of more than one year. Grantees must receive prior approval from the grant officer to purchase any equipment.

Even if their request to purchase equipment is already specified in your statement of work and/or budget, prior approval is still required. You are to submit a detailed list describing the equipment you plan to purchase for your program to your FPO for review as early as possible in the period of performance.

In addition, some [technical difficulty] improvements and [technical difficulty] alterations, renovations, and rearrangement specific to the project are also allowable with prior approval. Please see the FOA for information regarding [technical difficulty] improvements and renovations.

Your FPO will review requests for equipment and renovations and submit them for approval. A modification to your grant will be processed, approving the equipment purchase and/or renovations. Next slide.

So another important term in your grant has to do with reporting. All ETA grant recipients are required to submit quarterly financial progress reports. I'll briefly go over the quarterly financial report and the program team will talk about the others in a bit.

All recipients must use the ETA 9130 quarterly financial form to report expenditures charged against the grants. The quarterly report is due within 45 days from the end of the quarter. As a reminder, you will access the ETA 9130 through the ETA financial reporting system, which is separate from the ETA performance reporting system that grantees will use. Instructions for accessing the financial reporting system are found in the PMS letter that I talked about earlier. Next slide.

After the terms and conditions in your grant agreement, there are five attachments. Attachment A, B, and C of the grant agreement contain the SF-424, SF-424A, and budget narrative, respectively. All three of these documents were taken from your proposal. Attachment D is your statement of work, commonly known as the SOW. This also comes from your application and includes the project narrative and all required attachments, such as the abstract, project work plan, performance outcomes table, and documentation of partnership commitments. Next slide.

Finally, for those applicants claiming indirect cost, attachment E includes the negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, also known as the NICRA. If you claim indirect cost and did not provide a NICRA from your federal cognizant agency, you were put on a 90-day temporary billing rate. If this was the case, please send your approved indirect cost rate agreement to your FPO.

Please note that until a negotiated agreement – excuse me – is received, spending on indirect costs will be limited to the lesser of either total indirect cost or 10 percent of the personnel budget. The remaining funds you claimed as indirect costs, which have been awarded for indirect costs, are restricted and may not be used for any purpose until the awardee provides a signed copy of the NICRA or cost allocation plan.

Once ETA receives the NICRA or CAP, ETA will issue a grant modification to the award to remove the 10 percent restriction. Next slide.

Let's just pause for any questions, but I can't see if there's any questions.

MS. MARTIN: That's okay. I can handle that. We do have – we do have a question about, "How long should we expect to get back official acknowledgment of our approved conditions of award modifications?"

MS. ABDULLAH: [technical difficulty]. I mean, it depends on when your FPO submits the modification. So you could be working on it with your FPO for a while, but once you have a good modification and your FPO submits it, we like to say it's about – that you receive the modification – approved modification within 30 days.

MS. MARTIN: OK. Thank you. So this individual said, "I have already been notified by my FPO that they have been forwarded for approval. So that process, once the FPO has sent it forward, should be within 30 days; right?"

MS. ABDULLAH: Yes.

MS. MARTIN: OK. And then there's another question here. "Does each grantee within a consortium need to submit a quarterly report or just the lead of the consortium?"

And the answer to that question is only the lead. The lead is responsible to package up everything that's required for those quarterly reports and to submit that one time to cover everybody.

MS. ABDULLAH: Right.

MS. MARTIN: So okay. So I think we're turning it over to Steven now to discuss grant modifications. Is – or did you have anything else, Melissa.

MS. ABDULLAH: No. That's it for me.

MS. MARTIN: OK. Thanks. Steven?

STEVEN CANGER: Thank you, Melissa and Cheryl. OK. So let's discuss grant modifications.

The process for modifying a grant, as they just said, can take anywhere from 30 to 60 days to complete. Please note that the requested changes cannot be implemented until the final approval from the grant officer is provided. During the next few slides, I'll outline grant modification to help you understand this process.

As grant recipients, you should always be monitoring the performance of your grant in order to make adjustments as needed. Knowing when a modification is necessary is vital in this process. So my goal today will be to review what, why, when, and how so you can initiate the proper actions.

This leads us to the question, what is a modification or a mod? A modification is a tool used to respond to conditions of award or to make a change to your grant agreement. It initiates the discussion between you, the grantee, the regional office, and the national office in the resolution of the current issue, which takes us to why one would submit a mod.

Section 4 of your grantee handbook is solely dedicated to modifications focusing on the primary modification types. Today we'll review a change of scope, a.k.a. statement of work modification. The first thing you should always do is contact your assigned FPO to discuss your request. Your FPO will provide input on how to submit the request based on the specific circumstances and advise you on what documents to include with your request. We'll go over a few of those in just a moment.

Your scope of work is based solely on the requirements outlined in the FOA. This is how you competitively won this grant. You should note that a change in scope is rare and not always approved. So what are some indicators to know when a change of scope is needed? Ask yourself, is – are there a change in service area? Are you expanding or shrinking the area to be served?

A change in partners, especially the required partnerships? Your partnership structure is crucial to the success of your grant. So if something happens to any of these partners, let us know immediately.

Changes in the project management? If things have changed with key personnel, let us know immediately. For example, if the contact person or authorized representative listed on the SF-424 changes, this will require an administrative modification to incorporate the new information. So, again, it's imperative to not only monitor the performance of your award but know when to take action.

Once the FPO receives a request for a mod, they will conduct an analysis to determine several factors, such as the grant quality. How will services and staffing be impacted? Is the change effective and beneficial to the grant program? The grant performance, what about the enrollment and expenditures? Are they on target? If not, why not? Does the change conflict with the requirements of the FOA, and are the allowable changes per 2 CFR 200.308?

For modifications to the statement of work, the program office must first concur with those changes prior to submitting the modification to either the national grant officer or the regional grant officer for approval. I encourage everyone to review Section 4 of your grantee handbook for the specifics in how to submit your modification request.

Once you are ready to submit your official request, all requests must be submitted on your organization's letterhead and signed by the authorized representative at least 30 days prior to the effective date you are seeking. The cover letter should include the modification type, if it's an SOW or budget realignment, why the modification is needed, how the change will benefit the program, and, last but not least, the supporting/required documentation for the modification itself.

For example, if the modification is to change the authorized representative, also known as AR, the letter should not come from the new or incoming AR. The appropriate documentation will include a letter from either the departing AR or someone in a supervisory or oversight role over the authorized representative, such as the board chair or an educational institution as the president of the university.

Or if a budget realignment is submitted, a budget realignment modification – excuse me – is submitted, you are required to provide a revised SF-424, an SF-424A, and a budget narrative. The budget narrative provides a concise narrative explanation to support this modification request. Budgets are reviewed for allowability, reasonableness, necessity, and mathematical accuracy.

The grant officer must be able to recreate how totals were derived, as well as understand valuation of any matching funds in order to approve the mod. This goes back to identifying any changes with your partnerships and their involvement with the match requirement. The amounts listed in the budget narrative should match the amounts listed for each line item on the SF-424A. When in doubt, always consult your FPO for guidance.

Let's recap. To submit a modification, you should reach out to your FPO first. Your FPO will instruct you to submit the formal request on the organization's letterhead addressed to your grant officer for his or her FPO analysis. The letter should include the modification type, grant name, and award number, and the justification for the requested modification. Additional edits from your FPO may be needed.

Once your FPO has completed its analysis, the letter signed by your signatory will then be forwarded to the grant officer. Please note that while under review, additional information may be needed by their grant officer or staff. If additional information is needed, this must – this may result in a delay in the processing of the request.

Once the modification has been approved, the grantee, the FPO, and appropriate program mailbox will receive an electronic copy of the executed modification via email. I encourage everyone to utilize the modification checklist as a basis when submitting a modification request found in your handbook.

OK. Time for a quiz. You would like to add a new industry or occupation to your grant. Which answer provides the best response that describes the process for submitting a grant modification? Please take a moment and make your selection and we'll reveal the answer shortly.

OK. We're getting some B's and C's. The correct answer is C. Always reach out to your assigned FPO first to discuss your request. Your FPO will provide input on how to submit the request based on the specific circumstances.

Are there any questions about the modification process?

MS. MARTIN: I don't see any in the chat, and that is the way that we have to answer questions. So if you have questions about the modification process, please put them in the chat, and we will try to catch up with those a little bit later.

MR. CANGER: Sure. Now, I'll turn it over to Ayreen Cadwallader to discuss performance reporting. Thank you.

AYREEN CADWALLADER: Great. Thank you so much, Steven, and good afternoon, everyone.

Performance management is certainly something that is a key component of managing your grants. Grantees are required to provide quarterly reports to the Department of Labor in the form of qualitative reports or updates to your grant's proposed program design and implementation and quantitative reports for participant-level data.

Performance reporting is both important – is important to both the Department of Labor and each of you for a number of reasons. For our team here at DOL, we want to report on the success of these programs to Congress and the president, along with the Office of Management and Budget and the Government Accountability Office by demonstrating the impact of these grant investments. We also want to document the results of effective program design models and service delivery strategies so that we can inform future investments.

For grantees, we know that you also want to demonstrate the success of your programs by highlighting your performance achievements to key partners and stakeholders in your community. This includes illustrating the return on investment or ROI to your employer partners and to build additional strategic partnerships and leverage resources for long-term sustainability of your program.

Lastly, we do know that performance data will help you make better informed, data driven decisions to help improve your program design and meet the needs of your participants.

As part of your awards, strengthening community college guarantees are required to submit performance progress reports or quarterly performance reports to ETA. Each grantee must submit their performance progress report, which includes a quality – which includes a quarterly performance report and a quarterly narrative report. This is dependent on the lead grantee's organization type.

For single institutions, you're required to report on participant-level data through the Quarterly Performance Report or the QPR. Consortium grantees are not required to submit a QPR. However, both grantee types are required to submit a QNR, including the suggested customized outcomes report, which we'll talk about later in this presentation.

Lastly, all grantees must submit a final performance report at the end of the grant period of performance, which will summarize your grant's overall achievements and final performance outcomes.

So grantees will be submitting your quarterly progress reports into DOL's web-based reporting system, also called the Workforce Integrated Performance System or WIPS. As we mentioned in the previous slide, single institution grantees – for single institution grantees, the QPR is created in WIPS using a data file upload that contains information on all participants served through the end of the reporting quarter.

Both single institution and consortium grantees, a QNR will be submitted, which contains updates on the implementation and progress specified in each of your statement of work. This will also include the suggested customized outcomes report.

For those single institution grantees, let's take a deeper dive on what is required for submitting your QPR for the select cohort of students that you have selected to report to the department. As noted in the SCC Funding Opportunity Announcement, the performance output measures that individual institutions must track for its participant cohort are defined as follows.

The first is the participant cohort of students that begin training and education. This is defined as those students who are enrolled in a selected program of study and have become – and have started education and training activities.

Next, we will look at students who complete the cohort program of study, as well as those students who complete the cohort program of study and received a credential. Credentials received by students enrolled in the cohort program of study measures credentials, not the students. Credentials may be earned before or after program completion, and students may earn multiple credentials.

The next output is those students who enter unsubsidized employment. This is the number of nonincumbent students who enter employment at any time after enrolling into the cohort program of study.

For the last outcome measure, these are students who enter training-related – oh, not the last. These – for the training-related employment, this is the number of nonincumbent students who enter training-related employment after completion of the cohort program of study.

And then the last – second to the last is the incumbent workers that retain their current position and the incumbent workers that advance to a new position.

We do want you to remember that these performance output measures are the aggregate result of the participant-level data that is uploaded in WIPS. Grantees will track and report participant-level data using DOL's participant information record layout or PIRL schema. This is a number of data elements that grantees will be required to track for each participant, which include demographic information, services and training activities that participants received, and any credential and employment outcomes, including employment retention, as a result of your grant's program design.

So the customized outcomes for single institution grantees, single institution grantees were required to report on core elements one to four with a specific focus on the areas 2a, 3a, and 4a to report on these specific outcome measures.

For Consortium grantees, you're also required to report against core elements one through five with the same outcome areas 2a, 3a, and 4a, plus the additional outcome areas of 2b, 3b, and 4b, as noted in the slide.

And then, lastly, here are the two options for core element five where a grantee is to have the option to report against option A, accelerated learning pathways, or option B, statements data integration – sorry – statewide data integration and usage. Again, as Eugenie said earlier, grantees proposed specific outcomes as it relates to these core elements and areas of reporting focus, and the program office will develop a suggested template that grantees will use to report against to report on the customized outcomes that you've identified for your grant program.

So here is our interim reporting guidance for the quarter ending March 31st, 2020. Grantees will submit a quarterly narrative report to ETA. This report will cover program activities from February 1, the start of your grant, to the end of the reporting quarter, which is March 31st. And so the OMB approved QNR template is separate from the suggested customized outcomes template, and we'll be providing more training and technical assistance on how to report against the QNR.

We do ask grantees to submit your QNR by email to your FPO and the SCC grant mailbox at scc@dol.gov no later than the performance reporting deadline of May 14th, 2021.

So this is the interim reporting guidance for the quarter ending March 31st. We do have a rollout plan that will provide different reporting guidance of what we'll expect and what will be required for this first year of your grant.

So additional reporting guidance for the quarter ending June 30th, 2021. Just to give you a preview, it will still be an interim reporting guidance, but we will issue grantees access to the WIPS system. We'll provide, again, the guidance on reporting your customized outcomes for those core elements using the suggested template. And then we do ask that the QNR and the suggested customized outcomes report will be submitted in WIPS.

For the quarter ending 9/30/2021, this is the reporting – the official reporting policy guidance that you'll use for all reporting quarters, and that the QPR, the QNR and the suggested customized outcomes template will be submitted in WIPS.

And then we do want to remind you, again, for those single institution grantees, you must still collect participant-level data as it aligns with the required reporting elements for all participants served as of the start of the grant. However, the first QPR will be submitted for the quarter ending September 30th, 2021.

And no. I haven't got a chance to look at the questions just yet, but I know there's going to be a lot of questions as it relates to what is this participant level data? How do we – when will we get a chance to know what these are so that we can start collecting them? And, again, we'll start to, again, provide additional guidance and technical assistance as we get closer to these in these next two reporting quarters.

Here is a snapshot of what I just showed you for the quarter ending March 31st. Again, a QNR is what we're expecting due May 14th, submitted via email. Quarter ending June 30th, that's the QNR plus the suggested template due August 15th, submitted in WIPS. And then for the quarter ending September 30th for the single institutions only is the QPR. For all grantees, the QNR and the suggested template, this will be due November 15th and submitted in WIPS.

And, again, after September 30th, 2021, all quarterly progress reports will be submitted using the WIPS system.

And here is just a reminder of when quarterly progress reports are due. They are due no later than 45 days after the end of the quarter. And, again, more information and technical assistance will be provided.

And it looks like a lot of the questions have been answered in the chat, but, Cheryl, if there's anything else that you'd like us to clarify?

MS. MARTIN: I do not see other additions in the chat – questions in the chat at this point in time. But I will just add to what Ayreen said, that, if you had another DOL grant and you're used to doing the whole QPR with participants and the QNR in a certain way, this one's going to be different.

You already knew that when you applied because you saw the customized outcomes that we asked you to provide and the fact that consortium grantees don't report on participants and single grantees do. So we just wanted to keep everybody on their toes. No. I'm kidding.

But, anyway, just know that it's different and that we will be giving a lot of TA and support on that. And throughout the whole period of performance, we have regular office hours every quarter and things like that. So there's – we'll have a grant performance handbook that we will send out to you. So there will be a lot of support for this particular area of concern, I think.

All right. Since I don't see any other questions there – one is being typed, but we will come back to that in just a little bit – I'm going to turn it over to Eugenie to need to talk about communication.

MS. AGIA: Thank you, Cheryl. OK. So communication. Let's talk about our communication plan. ETA wants to keep in close contact with you throughout the entire period of your grant.

All right. As you begin to hire staff, it is important to provide the staff contact information to ETA as soon as possible. We recommend that you have at least one primary project point of contact or POC. One of the most important members of your team is the individual you designate as your primary POC. This is because they will receive all future communications regarding training webinars, policy guidance, or other important information as it pertains to the program aspects of your grant award.

The POC is also responsible for communicating with your partners. If the project POC changes, please be sure to provide updated information to both your FPO and the program office by email. Please note that the POC is an additional staff person or persons to the grant's authorized representative who is officially listed as the grant's authorizing representative. Changing the authorized representative of your grant requires a formal modification.

Now, let's review the communication plan. You should always contact your FPO first, if you have questions. Check workforce GPS for resources, and, if you are the grant lead, email your FPO.

If you have questions or difficulty accessing the WIPS performance reporting system, this is the URL listed here.

If you have questions or difficulty accessing the financial reporting system, email the address listed here and copy you FPO and the SCC mailbox.

If you have questions about the third-party evaluations, email the SCC mailbox with a copy to your FPO.

As the grantee, when you need to contact ETA or the national office, you should do so by contacting your FPO first and copying the SCC mailbox. Remember to include your grant number and lead grantee organization name, describe your question and issue in detail, and please be patient.

Typically, ETA will contact you through your FPO and the SCC mailbox for specific requests and information. FPOs in the national office regularly send out email blasts to you. So please make sure that your email system does not confuse our email communication as spam. One way to do this is to send an email to scc@dol.gov, which can help your system recognize emails coming from our mailbox as legitimate communication.

In addition, we will share information on the community of practice on WorkforceGPS, which is called College Connections. You should visit this site often at the link here for pertinent information.

I'm now going to pass things back to Cheryl for a note on technical assistance. Cheryl?

MS. MARTIN: Thanks, Eugenie.

So, as I mentioned before, we will be providing technical assistance. We want to – the compliance review process provides us an opportunity to identify potential needs, as well as other areas that we already just know, like grantees often need help with this kind of – with these kinds of questions, like we talked about with performance.

So we will be developing a technical assistance plan for the grant over the next quarter, and we will have some TA resources for that. There's s a little bit of insider baseball there on that point. But, anyway, we'll have staff people in the program office, and we will have a small TA contract that will help with that. And there will be some coaching that will be available to grantees.

We will assign more – we will provide more information on TA as that is developed, but we would really like to know from you if there are topics that you would feel are valuable to you as grantees. I know we're flooding you with a lot of information already. So – but that is just to say that, if you ever have a thought about, it would be really helpful to have some information about X, Y, Z, just shoot it in an email to your FPO and copy the SCC mailbox. And we would be happy to consider that.

And another way to do it is to put something in the chart right now. If there are TA topics that you would like to see us cover, just put those in the chart. I'm going to invite you to do that while I'm going on to the next slide, which is to recap the next steps that we – that you should all be taking because there's a lot of things to remember. So we thought we would give you a little summary here.

So if you have any conditions of award in your grant award package and you haven't already responded – I know some of you have – please respond to those ASAP and send to your FPO.

If you – you should review the DOL fiscal training tutorials from the SMART 3.0 webinar training series. These are really useful, especially as you onboard somebody new throughout the grant or something like that. That's why we provide it this way, so you can always just go back and look at those. You can look at them more than once too. There's a lot of information there, particularly if you are in the situation of being a new grantee.

You should definitely review the grantee handbook and that RISE Module that we included in the chat.

The FOA is a really important thing to look at. We have sometimes had a situation where grantees way down the road say, well, I didn't know that. And we're like, well, it's right there in the FOA. And then they say, what's the FOA? So I would not expect any of the grantees in this cohort to say that, but if you need to take a look at the FOA, the link in this slide will take you directly there. And we will also have other ways of sharing. It's on the SCC page on dol.gov as well.

You should start to familiarize yourself with the DOL performance reporting requirements just from these slides. That's what you've got for now. We – as I said, we'll be providing more on that soon.

And if you get a new program manager or a program director on board, provide that contact information to your FPO and to the SCC mailbox so that we can make sure that we're reaching out to the right people. Otherwise, we'll just be reaching out to the authorized rep and the point of contact that's listed on your SF-424. And as we all know, sometimes those are not the people that need the information on a daily basis. So we would definitely like to know the name of the needs to know on a daily basis person.

So, also on this checklist, once again, we would encourage you to get to know your FPO and to ask questions of them.

Let's see. Do we have any more questions now? I don't see that we have any more in the chat. We've got a note that said, "This is very helpful." So thank you. I'm really glad to know that this has been helpful to you.

We are at the end of our presentation slides here. So I do want to just give one more second. I see somebody typing. Laurie is typing. So we're going to hang on and see what Laurie has to say in case she has a question and anybody else as well.

Thank you, Laurie. I'm glad you could join us. We had a really high attendance for this today, and we really appreciate that because it is a sign of grantees who are on top of things and getting off to a great start. So we are – we appreciate that.

And I'm going to say – I see people typing. I'm going to just hold off a little bit here and see if there are any more questions coming in.

Great. Somebody is saying they have already met with their FPO. That is awesome. FPOs will be calling the grantees, and you can always reach out to them as well. As we said, the information is in your grant package.

And so we really look forward to more opportunities to meet you, to talk with you, to help you talk amongst yourselves, with each other. Those are all things that we will be doing soon. And so, for now, we'll give you back – I'm going to turn it back over to Laura who has a few more things to say before we end the webinar today. Thank you so much.

(END)