**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**COVID-19 Dislocated Worker Grants: Lessons Learned from Implementation**

**Wednesday, March 24, 2021**

*Transcript by*

*Noble Transcription Services*

*Menifee, CA*

GRACE MCCALL: And welcome to "COVID-19 DWG's: Lessons Learned From Implementation." Without further ado, I am going to turn things over to one of our moderators for today, Stephen Duval, Division Chief, Regions I and II, ETA. Take it away, Steve.

STEPHEN DUVAL: Grace, thank you so much for that introductory words and thank you, everyone, for joining us this afternoon. I am afraid to mention that we have a pole running in the background, and I would strongly encourage you would – love to get your feedback from that pole. We will be talking about the results of the poll in just a few minutes.

So as Grace said, I am Stephen Duval. I work for the ETA administration in Region Two in Philadelphia. I am going to be turning things over to my able colleague, Latanya Lowery, who is a federal project officer with Employment and Training Administration in Atlanta in a few minutes.

But I want to spend a few minutes going over some context for our webinar today. The webinar entitled, "Lessons Learned from Implementation." And we are going to cover a lot more than that. We are in the midst of implementation and we want to talk about the opportunities that still exist for all of you who I assume are ready to participate and get – get things moving with your grant. So we are going to go through a couple of things before we hear from our panel.

First of all, today, what we hope to accomplish is – I will do a quick overview of the dislocated worker grants for COVID. If you are a grant recipient, you already have that information. You know what these grants are for both. It is going to be a quick reminder.

Today's webinar is actually a continuation of two prior webinars that we did where we invited grantees to come and talk to all of us about some of the – some challenges and obstacles and opportunities they faced in implementing their grants, and to use that – that context of their experience as a learning experience for those of you who are having challenges or difficulties.

So these are grantees who will be presenting today who are in the thick of it. They are deep into it, and they are going to share their experiences and hopefully inspire you or give you some advice about how to move your grant forward. It is a facilitated panel. As I said of the time, you will be asking our grantees questions, they will do some presentations. We have got a lot of time at the end of the presentations for questions and answers. So again, will remind you of today's webinar to post your questions in the chat box and we will get it done before the end of the grantee presentation.

So let us look at it this way. It is been about a year since the first round of the DWG grants were awarded; about a third of the grants have been out there for almost a year now. As of April 15th, we had 26 awards. As of today, there are 64 COVID DWG awards totaling, almost 400 million dollars. It is a significant investment, and we are at that halfway point. So it is a critical juncture for us.

The DWGs are basically two, two different types: the disaster recovery dislocated worker grants are intended to provide temporary employment or disaster relief in COVID impacted communities. And there may be an employment and training component of that type of grant. And the other part of the employment recovery grant, which is essentially those individuals who have been laid off from a business or employer as a direct result of COVID.

So this slide, it kind of speaks for itself. This gives you a snapshot of where we are today. Well, as of 12/30, on December 30th at the end of our reporting quarter, and it looks pretty dismal. We are at about roughly 10 percent of enrollment from where we should be at the goal for all of our grantees. We are projecting about 80,000 individuals to get through to these grants. And as of today, or as of December, only 8,073 people have been enrolled. On the expenditure side of things is a little bit a little discouraging as well. We are only 14.4 percent of the expenditures among 64 grants that have been awarded starting in March.

So we have some work to do. Today's webinar is not in any way intended to discourage you any further, but really to give you some opportunity to look at how you might overcome some of the obstacles that you are faced with right now. And looking at the pole seem to be some common trend in and what you are facing for getting things off the ground. It is – what I am saying is primarily outreach and enrollment.

So I know that our folks that you will be hearing from in a few minutes have also had some challenges with getting people to come participate, enroll and participate. And so we hope that you will learn something from them about and what has been successful on their part. And we can also talk about enrollment and outreach strategies. So we will bring that poll up again in a few minutes.

So for now. Let us see, we got some, some pretty – this is what the poll is asking: what are the things that are standing in your way to get you started? Some grantees that had almost no involvement and no expenditures. Outreach is certainly a big factor, enrollment and eligibility, particularly in a COVID environment where people are not coming to their buildings or American jobs centers to enroll, and then partnership. Do you have the right partnerships to get the funds that you have out the door and into the pockets of individuals who are being recruited for these temporary jobs in COVID impacted communities?

What we are seeing and what you will hear from the speakers today are there are two really, really big themes or patterns, and one is the inability to spend money timely and efficiently. You will hear examples of ways in which grantees are over – able to overcome procurement requirements; but some that are in place in states and in counties are very cumbersome. And we will show you some examples of how they are be able to overcome some of the more stringent procurement requirements to get money out the door and where it should be right away, moving funds obviously is of concern. A lot of the statements that were developed in the initial grants have been revised or being changed because of the ever-changing landscape we are faced with in this pandemic environment.

And then just this whole idea of course correction. A lot of you who have received emergency funds were working right after you got those funds on a full application, developing your statement of work, developing your partnerships, grant site collections, trying to get money out of the local areas, all the things that you needed to do to get your grant off the ground and ran into problems. I mean, we have been in this environment where everything is changing. There has been a load of activity of opening and closing guidelines, that has been changing. So modifications are a pretty significant part of what we are dealing with at this point.

And so we are really looking at ways in which we can help you to modify your grant, to make sure your grant is being targeted effectively and within the guidelines that we set forth in our, in our guidance, which is in TW 12-19, and then we were looking for ways in which you can model flexibility. What changes can you make in your grant that do not necessarily require a full-blown modification? So a couple of adjustments here and there.

A lot about you do not know, particularly if you have not had experience working with these grants, how to do that nimbly. And we can – included in this training session through your federal project officer, are ready to help you in any way we can to affect that outcome.

So again, if you have questions as we go through things today, as we hear from presenters, please answer your questions in the chat box and we will answer them or we will take them up toward the end.

So I am now going to turn things over to my partner Latanya, and Latanya is going to introduce our panel, and then we will hear what they have to say. Thank you.

LATANYA LOWERY: Thank you, Stephen, I appreciate that. As stated, I am here to help us segue into our state best practices that we want to share with everyone. And today you should expect to hear from a representative from Rhode Island, their Department of Labor and Training, as well as MassHire, the Department of Career Services, as well as MassHire Hampden County, their workforce board. And, of course, last but not least, we are going to have Workforce Snohomish here to tell us about the best practices in leveraging funds. So we are going to start with Rhode Island. And with that, I will hand it off to Ms. Sarah Blusiewicz, the assistant director for the Rhode Island Department of Labor Training.

SARAH BLUSIEWICZ: Well, good afternoon and morning to those of you in the West Coast. My name is Sarah Blusiewicz, the assistant director at the Department of Labor and Training in Rhode Island. And I want to talk to you guys today about policy changes. So one thing that we struggled with for dislocated workers in both at the, at the emergency grant level and also in our formula grant level was the fact that we felt like we were not being able to capture the amount of dislocated workers that we knew were out there by our current processes.

So what we were finding and just as an example of this, is in our sector partnership program, we one to promote people through the sector partnership training. And on average, we were really finding that about 10 percent of our participants were qualifying as a dislocated worker. Now, this did not match up with what we knew was happening in in the economy, in our state.

So we were one of the last states out of the Great Recession; we knew we had people who are long term unemployed, long term underemployed. And it just did not seem to fit with the fact that when we talk to the sector partnerships, which actually talked to the people, their stories were that we are holding down multiple jobs after leaving our careers. We I was about to lose my job and that I wanted to come here and find the next opportunity. I have been looking for work for months, but I have not had any luck.

And to us, well, that is the quintessential definition of a dislocated worker. How are we missing them in the eligibility process? So that struck something where something is not lining up in our process, something is not lining up in our procedure because the stories of the people are not matching the outcomes for how are we able to place people into these grants?

So what did we find then? We dug into the hole, we did some research, and what we found is we had we had a policy and procedure problem, and this is very common I think we all face this where there could be old policies, there could be policies that have not been updated in a while or there could just be you know, the intent was one thing, but in practice, it is being applied in a different way. And that is generating an issue where we do not have a lot of enrollments because people cannot get through that door.

So what we found was force documentation was just telling us that we had some state and local policies that were very restrictive. So there was the source documentation, attachments to come down in the field. And then we would take those and there would be options. They tended to read that we would always prefer the most restrictive or the most extreme level of documentation. So if there was self-certification was an option, that was almost exclusively ignored in a lot of our policies.

So immediately, right off the bat, you are already into collecting the most difficult to obtain documents as the first step, rather than saying is there an easier way to meet that federal requirement? There was an overall fear of monitoring, indeed of validation. And I would say that both internally as our internal monitoring processes and then externally with U.S. DOL, they are going to come in and they are going to monitor us, or we are going to do data validation, so we are going to fail, and (then they are getting this overhaul ?). So we cannot, and we are just not going to do it.

So it was this fear of in, in fear of monitoring and fear of the finding process. There is an attitude of it is safer to do nothing, or it is safer to exclude people than it is to take the risk or to say, well, hey, maybe the option is that we should look at these policies and procedures so we can (look at that, finding the customer ?). There was this there was a little bit of a inverse incentive structure in place where when in doubt say no, because if we get monitored, at least we will not be wrong.

There was confusion among staff. So we say it is the (people in the legal do the deals ?) in Rhode Island, right. You have Rhode Island general law, you have (two or three years ?) law. You have the statute. You have you know, what is the difference between regulations or policies or laws, state laws, federal laws? There is a lot of intersection that happens in these programs. And so a lot of our hotline staff, counselors we had to go a little bit back to basics. Like what is the difference between the statute versus the regulation versus the guidance versus the state board policy versus the local board policy.

So there was a lot of just how – how to read the amount of information that we have coming at us from all of these different sources and what is those relationships between them. We found our staff did not actually have a good comfort level with the guidance, with the governing documents around these programs. And we really need to dig into that, too. And then there was a lack of policy guidance on other topics because we had such an emphasis on source documentation.

So we found that our policies and procedures were so focused on what kind of ID can you have and what IDs do not count and this and that. And that that was really just a lack of clarification on a lot of other gray areas that staff had you know – they were taking them in the field, but we really did not have good policies and procedures in place to really support them on some of those other areas, because we were really only looking at people in the source documentation topic.

And then again, we were conflating the definition of dislocated with unemployed. So yes, people who collect unemployment insurance, one of the largest categories of dislocated worker, absolutely. Probably not exclusively the only category of dislocated worker. So we were really missing that whole notice of a layoff. Even if you had not collected unemployment yet, if you still had that notice, they could help you or if you were that displaced homemaker or that veteran family.

So we had a lot of you know, there was a little bit of a misconception that you had to be physically on unemployment in order to be qualify as dislocated worker, which just was not true. So a new approach. So what we did recognize in some of these challenges we really had to rethink our policies, rethink our staff training, the engagement process, and also recognizing that fear of monitoring and that that relationship with U.S. DOL was really important. We wanted to do this in collaboration.

And I just want to say a big shout out to Leanna Porter who is on this webinar. She is a great resource to me as we were working through some of these challenges. So instead of saying, oh my gosh, they are going to come in and monitor us reaching out to be proactive. To say, hey, this is a challenge, and this is our idea, and how could this work, and she would give us feedback and then we could move, move forward together, and then it is not a surprise what anyone's doing or when we do come down to get monitored; yeah, they could be clean up things or this case is not quite right.

But it was about moving the whole process forward better and like, yeah, we can clean up as we go, but better off to get people there. So the new approach is really focused on five main topics. So one: pro-eligibility, the idea that people are are granted access to these services by law. It is very lawful and right if they are a dislocated worker to receive services from our system. It is not – like so when you have a pro eligibility approach, the idea is the emphasis is on if you are going to deny someone a right under the law, you should be documenting why they are ineligible, versus having a, no one is eligible until you prove to me otherwise.

So it is a little bit of you are innocent until proven guilty, not guilty until proven innocent. So we think we assume you should be eligible. How do we make sure that that works? And if there is something that says you are not, we should be very clear on why that is and how we document that.

The statute, when you read the actual, yellow definition of a dislocated worker is full of subjective terminology. So that is a lot of wiggle room. And if any of you have been on the webinar with Lisa Birch, to hear the example of the envelope. The federal law is the envelope and what tends to happen in the policy is we get smaller and smaller and smaller and smaller until we only have the size of the postage stamp is the room that we work in. And so what we really took approaches is how do we take a subjective term and really keep those policy levers open and wide to the maximum number of people can access them.

We wanted to also address this underemployment post unemployment issue. So this is a classic thing we see across the nation, across our one stop. You have people, they had a solid career. They as a manufacturer or some you know, family sustaining jobs. They lose that job. They have that employment interruption. And then afterwards they start piecing together low-wage Work. They are working part time at the grocery store. They are working full time as a retailer. They are working three part time jobs trying to make ends meet.

And so (this to work or not ?), but we knew in spirit that person has not recovered from that unemployment or dislocation event; how can we try to help them? So we really wanted to to think through some of that. And again, providing that intense stakeholder education and staff training was super critical and improvising as we went. But we are making these policies as a way to solve a problem, but we need to keep looking at, are we finding more results? Are we, are we doing better?

So a couple of – I have some examples here, but I want to give a shout out that on the resource page of this presentation, there is a link to this policy. So this is just sort of some copy and paste illustrative examples. But the whole policy itself if you want to take a look is included in this presentation towards the end. And so some examples of the narrow or wide approach to suggestive terms. Right.

What does it mean to be sufficient? What does it mean to demonstrate? What does it mean that you had an attachment, what do those terms mean? So for us in Rhode Island just as an example here of the definition requires you to have to demonstrate that you had a a work attachment that was sufficient to demonstrate attachment to the workforce, right? But for us we define that. That is that is something that is not defined by statute, but we define it as policy. Any layoff that performed in any occupation where the employee has worked for two full periods or one month, whichever is less, because, again, employers can pay on the campaign cycle. We wanted to be sure that we were not missing people accidentally based on time.

Similarly, substantial layoff. What is a substantial layoff unless otherwise defined by a policy like our policy, you tend to typically devote to that 50 or more employees. So Rhode Island, over 90 percent of Rhode Island businesses are small. That 50-employee marker is very, is a very big barrier to what is substantial layoff in our economy. So for us, we really wanted it to be it could be as low as the five people or 10 percent of the employer's workforce, because you know what? For a small business, where they might only have five people if you just had a layoff two, that was substantial for that employer, and we should be able to help those individuals. So it was really about, how do we bring this large definition down and apply it into our state.

Other examples are the displaced homemakers. So we had what does it mean to be dependent on an income? Right? So we said, if dependency is around fulfilling your basic need, what do we mean by basic needs? So we define that, but does it mean to be no longer supported? This is really important for us because we thought that it was the removal of that financial or other form of assistance that is provided by that family member to meet your basic need. And then the removal is the removal of assistance, but it does not necessarily mean 100 percent of all assistance.

So we really wanted to do more. How do we make, where someone was dependent on someone for their food, even if they are not homeless, but they need to go out and work now because they have a basic need that is now not being met – we want to be able to help them. So again, it is the approach of, we want to be able to help you. And how can we make our policies strive for that effort?

Our last example here is community. What does it mean by community? Is that a geographic boundary? And our policy means a geographic boundary of our state, or the industry sector and occupation community not drawn by physical location. So for us, this is around the self-employed individual. But if you are self-employed in our state, but the reason why you have now lost your job, was because there was supply chain disruptions in another state, that affected you, so that we can say that is your economic community. So again just trying to think outside the box. It is not so much around your address and your zip code or the city or town you live in. There could be other communal factors that we wanted to be able to explore and incorporate into our policy.

But one of the biggest things that helped us immensely was the issue of when do you cease being a dislocated worker. So we are very clear on the whole, you got a separation or notice of separation, something happened or the dislocation event that occurred and that has now caused you to become a dislocated worker. When do you stop being a dislocated worker, was our question, because they are all silent on that.

So what we really wanted to focus on, and this is how we really tried to adopt an approach that incorporated some of that underemployment issue that we all struggle with, is we actually partnered with our labor market division and our unemployment insurance division to really kind of come up with an approach that we could do this with our own administrative data.

So what we did is we developed an algorithm which compared the most recent wages of the dislocated worker, meaning what is in their quarterly wage record for the last quarter that we have on file, and we compare that to the projected earnings that we then use all my data to say, hey, had that disruption not happened, had you not been separated, based on the wage trends of your industry, what theoretically by proxy should you have been making? And is your current wage rate the same, greater than, or less than what that projected earnings should be?

I mean, what we say is that if you are making less today than what you should have been making, saying all things being equal from that, that first job, and we say you are still suffering that dislocation event. So we pare all that. It is a report that we put together with our I.T. department behind the scenes using administrative data. And what that does is that actually the report runs the algorithm itself.

The counselor does not see the wage records, or the UI claim data or any of that information. They just get the yes/no flag. That makes it very easy. And then, and then I am sure many of you are saying, well, okay, that is very nice that you get a yes/no flag, but how do you document that? What we do is we save those reports. And we rerun them, and so when our FPO comes out to monitor, the report itself is the source documentation. We code that in our MIS systems, we flag that that is the source documentation, and then we have that backup available so if asked, we show that these were the factors, according to this policy, that made that work.

And very rarely we have math formulas and workforce development policies to show if you are getting lower living standards. But in our policy, this is just a picture of the actual formula itself. So we look at the first formula here is the the percent change for the industry rate using the LMI data, and then we multiply that percent change to your day period of earnings from your original bifurcation worker unemployment claim. And then we add that to that that original plan to get your projected earnings. And we just compare again, you have that projected earnings level. We compare that to your current wage record earnings. And if it is less than your – for your current earnings are less than your projected. And we say you are still suffering that dislocation of that, you are still dislocated worker, we can still help you.

And again, if this is helpful for folks who have collected unemployment insurance, but it was a huge population of people who we had been missing. So if you remember at the beginning of my slides, we mentioned that we only had 10 percent of our participants being dislocated. After this new policy, and we started using what we call a pin report, because we are pinning them against unemployment, we saw an increase of up to 60 percent of participants becoming enrolled as a result of that, of that work.

In addition, this is one of the slides, too, that we are updating this current policy to be more relative to COVID. So again, that PUA or other CARES Act unemployment programs, they do count as receiving unemployment assistance, even if it is not unemployment insurance compensation directly. So again, working on that we have, again, COVID-specific events recognizing the governor's declaration of emergency, again, just threading through some of these COVID issues through that policy. So that work is in front of that board now. But that, again, just, just meant to help people who we know are losing their jobs because the COVID and we want to be standing at the ready to help them.

So with that, I am going to encourage anyone with questions for me, please put them in the chat. We are going to answer as we go. And with that, I will turn it over to the Massachusetts team.

SACHA STADHARD: Hi, everyone. Great presentation, Sarah. OK. So I am Sacha Stadhard from MassHire Department of Career Services and the manager of Special Grants and Youth Policy. My colleagues and I are going to talk with you today about the process that Massachusetts used to implement the COVID-19 disaster recovery grant. So I will first go ahead and let my colleagues introduce themselves. Steve.

STEVE TRUEMAN: Hi, I am Steve Trueman, the vice president of Workforce Operations with the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board. We are the primary operator for this grant for the Commonwealth. Melissa.

MELISSA SCIBELLI: And I am Melissa Scibelli from the same organization, MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board.

SACHA STADHARD: Great. So today we are going to cover a lot with you and a short amount of time. We will provide a brief overview of the project, we will talk about the voucher component that is baked into the grant, we are going to go through the master agreement, the fiscal agent master agreement; we are going to talk about the single point of contact. Those are responsibilities, it is really critical to the implementation of the grant. We are going to talk to you about eligibility and verification, we are going to talk about the temporary employment process, and we are going to talk about the SNAPCHEF Onboarding Process. SNAPCHEF is the employer of record for the temporary employment for the humanitary food service component of the grant.

We are going to go through the database and tracking that was used, worksite monitoring and any questions or additional resources that might be helpful from Massachusetts. We will have our email addresses at the end of the overall slides so you can get in contact with us. And so with that, I am just a brief overview of the grant, so Massachusetts was awarded just about seven million dollars for the dislocated worker and dislocated worker funds, and the COVID-19 grant will serve approximately 520 people. And there are three components of the grant.

First is the Humanitarian Food Service Relief Project. We, through the grant, 200 individuals will receive temporary employment. As I mentioned, SNAPCHEF is the employer of record and is the staffing solution that connected eligible participants to food service organizations throughout Massachusetts that were in need of food service workers to package and deliver food for those that were in need due to the pandemic impact.

We will also provide temporary employment for MassHire Career Centers. And so this is for when our career centers open their doors to in-person services. We want to make sure that COVID-19 related precautions and protocols as well as physical security are in place for when those doors open for in-person services. And 340 individuals will also be placed in the career and training services, and so that will be through either receiving an ITA or on the job training or connection to apprenticeship.

So with that, we have really had a robust temporary employment recruitment process and we are going to hear a little bit more about that. But today, we have again, we have met our original projection of serving 200 individuals and placing them into temporary employment. And then we are going to sort of ramp up for recruitment for the temporary security workers. And so that is going to be beginning soon.

So one of the one of the things that we did right off the bat was to develop a web page: so it is COVID-19 Dislocated Worker Guidance and Resource page. And we put that together as a central place where participants and individuals that were working on the grant could go and get information and resources about the COVID-19 grants. They could also get information on who the single point of contact is for each career center that is involved in the grant.

We also posted webinars and training materials that really gave individuals a really good overview of the process that we were moving forward towards implementation for the grant. So that was really critical. And it is a web page that is still currently active and we continue to post resources related to the grant on that page.

Okay, so now I am going to turn it over to Steve Trueman to talk about the mechanism that Massachusetts uses to offset careers center costs per serving additional participants to the grants that are in addition to the regular amount of customers they would usually serve at their career center. Steve, let me turn it over to you.

STEVE TRUEMAN: Thanks Sacha. As Sacha mentioned, Massachusetts has developed a voucher system and this has been in place for a number of years now, and it is really designed to streamline and expedite the ability to make funds available to local areas as opposed to having each of – Massachusetts has 16 areas, and as opposed to the state working with each area to develop a plan and a budget and then enter into direct contracts with them; the state contracts with what we call a primary operator, which is one local area, will manage the grant, and that happens to be the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board for this grant.

We have had some experience with past disaster and other national dislocated worker grants, and what that enables us to do is to provide voucher payments – for this particular grant it is $2,400 for each eligible job seeker that actually gets placed into a temporary food service employment position or is enrolled into career services and provided training, or maybe a combination of the two. They start in a temporary employment and transition into some career services.

And so it really ties the funding to actual enrollments and activity in the grant and allows us to move funds to where the activity is. You know, often areas will develop budgets and their best projection and it will not come to fruition. This model really enables us to, to put the structure in place to develop the funds very quickly and have areas hit the ground running to serve participants under the grant.

Basically, the areas request those funds from us. Melissa is going to talk a little bit later in the presentation about some of the specific operational details. But by having this, this structure in place, it really enables the state to get the funds out, to have the primary operator track voucher requests, expenditures in and other grant activity, so across the state, so that we are not reliant upon 16 areas also reporting that information up. We have at any moment a true understanding of where the activity is and what the progress of the grant is at any particular time.

As I mentioned, and I will not spend a lot of time on this, the master agreement is the vehicle that we utilize as the primary operator we put in place. It outlines grant terms and conditions, the process for each grant. We highlight the eligibility requirements and basically how the local areas are to access the funding based upon their enrollment. And it sets in place the mechanism for us to deliver the funds very quickly. And from the point of the state contracting with us, we can turn around those master agreements in a matter of weeks and were operational within a month of having the grant issued to the state from the Department of Labor.

I am going to turn it over now to my colleague, Melissa Schibelli. Again, as I mentioned, she is going to talk about some of the operational details that have led to the success of this model and certainly the success of, of having putting this grant on the ground.

MELISSA SCIBELLI: Thank you, Steve. Hi, everybody, this is Melissa. I work for the same organization, it is the Workforce Board in Massachusetts, and I really just wanted to mention a couple of the key components to the infrastructure that we feel has really led to some of the success. As everyone is aware, we were fully virtual when this grant took off the ground. So there are many obstacles with career centers working with the employer and our work sites as well as us. I mean, this was all new.

So having a single point of contact, which I will refer to about a couple of times, was critical, our MassHire career centers, every local area, so 16 of them across Massachusetts, had a single point of contact directly related to this grant. Our employer of record, SNAPCHEF, also had a single point of contact for each area and territory. And just to describe some of the roles and responsibilities that they had: our career center, single points of contact were really the people who needed to learn and understand what the types of positions were out there, what to recruit for. They certainly needed to be knowledgeable about eligibility, how they documented, what information they needed to get. And then also how to vet and refer individuals to SNAPCHEF, who is the employer record and then was dealing more directly with our work sites across Massachusetts.

Quickly, I am just going to mention that eligibility has been mentioned from the forefront. I know Steve mentioned this earlier on. More specifically for us the long term unemployed, 27 weeks or longer within a 24-month period prior to temporarily, permanently laid off as a consequence of the disaster, dislocated worker or self-employed who became unemployed or significantly unemployed as a result of the disaster.

This was critical in terms of our communication. We made sure that every individual was deemed eligible under this plan before they were referred to the onboarding process with SNAPCHEF. This way there was no disappointment, and we could really make sure that we were matching the right individuals with the right conditions under this grant. Any of the forms or information that we have mentioned here today too, if you go back to the slide that Sacha talked about earlier, those links provide all of that information there.

This is really the nuts and bolts of the temporary employment process, Steve talked about the master agreement that was really what tied pieces together with our career centers across the state. What we needed to do was do a similar process with our work sites across the state, as I mentioned. So we have our employer records SNAPCHEF, who is really doing the actual direct placement. But we, what we did was a worksite agreement that really solidified what they would be doing, that this was related to COVID, you know the monitoring information, the tracking of hours, all of that.

And the next piece that you see, the actual worksite agreement addendum. This is what tied together the actual job placement. So the eligible candidate, the position, it was the pay rate, it was all of the information that was necessary for us to determine that it was within the guidelines of the grant and also to be able to track the dollar amount and hours and what location on each individual was at.

The Moses' enrollment, that is our database system here in Massachusetts that we use to enroll and track individuals. And this would happen once that addendum process has been completed.

So this is more or less a recap of what I said, the eligibility was confirmed and documented, the worksite agreement addendum is what was completed and executed to be sure that it secured the funds as well as the placement for the individual. You know, you have to remember at the time, there was so much going on, so many positions, there was so much need. And in the beginning, I have to say, there was some challenge trying to identify the right individuals. Once we got over that hump, I have to say that in addition to those spot calls that we had every single week with all of our single points of contact, one of the benefits was really being able to talk through some of those eligibility questions.

You know, how do we market this? What types of events are you doing again? Again, everything was virtual. So again, once that addendum is approved on our behalf, information would go through Adobe E-sign, and that would solidify everything on behalf of the worksite, SNAPCHEF, and that we as the primary operator had approved that.

Quickly, this is important. SNAPCHEF had an ongoing process and what is called a SNAPapp. This made everyone's life so much easier in light of a virtual, you know world. Everything was online. It was responsible for all of the tracking. It actually started with their onboarding process and being able to interview screen and get information they needed. And then it was the key piece of what facts and verified all of the hours. And it was something as simple as an actual app that can be by a telephone or a website.

I know I am running out of time. I am sorry. And that is important because it really it leads us to the database and tracking, which as the primary operator and being responsible for a large grant, we were able to to put this information into our database and tracking system. So I will give it back to Steve to run through that.

STEVE TRUEMAN: Thanks, Melissa, and I do realize the time, but I think that that point's really important, is if you are at the point of where you are looking to procure a employer of record, it really was critical that SNAPCHEF was able to have this portal that recorded time and attendance that they were able to report to us the hours worked that were verified by someone at a work site. And again, just so that we could track the actual hours worked against the invoicing and the payments to the employer of record, again, to ensure proper reporting and to both the state and to the federal government, but also to ensure that only eligible participants were enrolled in the grant and paid through the grant funds.

And then just really quickly, we also provided support services to the participants. Again, we, we provided those as a statewide operator, covered PPE, transportation, and that all followed the local area process. And another important component that was handled by the single point of contact is worksite monitoring. This consisted of supervisor interviews, trainees talking to folks to identify that there was a continuing need based on COVID-19, and also workplace safety, those sorts of things. So that was handled by the single point of contact for their local work sites in their local area.

So again, I apologize for going a little bit over. I think we will now turn it over to Mary Houston with Workforce Snohomish to talk about their best practices.

MARY HOUSTON: And thank you for a great presentation from our colleagues from Massachusetts. Our workforce, Snohomish, is the designee who oversees the American job centers. And I would like to introduce myself and my colleagues. I am Mary Houston, the Director of Service Delivery, for Workforce Snohomish. Ismalia Maidadi is the Assistant Director of Service Delivery. And Cameron Cassidy is the Director of Professional Services.

Today we are going to talk a little bit about a CARES grant that we were issued and how that helped us on ramp our DWG. And we were the fortunate recipient through our county offices, to partner in operating a local CARES grant. We called this CARES Jobs, and we were – the task of this was we had a 90-day grant; we wound up with four and a half million dollars, and had an eight day closure period included in all that. So it was a bit of a whirlwind.

And the goal of this CARES Jobs project was to find and serve the greatest needs in our county, execute the closeout well and on time. And we first received about two and a half million dollars and the need was so great in this. And also, I will talk a little bit about thresholds for eligibility. They were pretty straightforward, and that was all about funding initially was obligated within the first 10 days of that grant. That was so successful that we were granted another two million dollars.

We wound up in the end on this grant having 453 people employed for all or most of the 90 days, and overall wound up being a great success. But looking at this, how can we leverage, and I want to use the word leverage carefully on this. It is really how can we capitalize on this project for the DWG grants? The DWG is like a lot of folks. They were off to a slow start. And we really did this by creating efficiencies for serving jobseekers and deepening our relationships with local employers.

And many of the employers that we are looking at, we decided to have this serve, do the greatest public good, as we do with all grants. But this one, we really realized that our nonprofit partners in the county were really hard hit by the pandemic, along with a lot of for-profit partners. They were really at risk. And so we decided that that was the focus of our employers.

So building on ramps to the DWG grant, did the people matter? Of course they do. This is why we all do this work. And so some of the things that we really looked at was moving from CARES to the DWG. We really needed to figure out was how do we engage with CARES Hires, how do we engage with the people that we were placing on the job and throughout the county.

So some of the things that really, big concerns came up – very similar to DWGs, and I like to make some of those parallels; were there safeguards in place at the workplace? Why would people want to go to work? What if staff got sick with COVID? What happens? And probably most important, what happened to staff and employers after the CARES jobs ended?

One of the things that we did, and Cameron's going to talk about this in a minute, is that we were able to put to this, this project two of our staff navigators, and they were a very big part of that. Those are in-house employees. And Cameron will talk about that in just a minute. We did continually support and outreach to both the participants and also the employers. And then the big thing was capitalizing and planting the WIOA seed.

This was not only a WIOA grant and this eligibility, I will say, was really quite lovely. Anyone who was affected by, had a household job loss of income due to do COVID-19 qualified. And we know that our eligibility for WIOA is much deeper. But we also recognize that if we planted that seed with both the employers and the participants working on the jobs, that they might realize that WIOA can do something for them. So really trying to recognize that. And with that, I will turn it over to Cameron.

CAMERON CASSIDY: All right, well, thank you, Mary. Good afternoon, everybody. As Mary mentioned, my name is Cameron Cassidy. I am the Director of Professional Services here at Workforce Snohomish. I wanted to take a step back and give a little context to how Workforce Snohomish operates. Just to put it in perspective. Over a decade ago, Workforce Snohomish made the determination to create a direct service side to our business, kind of focusing on WIOA funded employment-based projects.

That is the inception of the professional services team. It was created, kind of thinking about it to be the speedboat to the cruise ship, that is, that is the WIOA funding. Our professional services team: we identify, apply for, and provide direct services on federal, state, private funded grants, as well as work on programs through partnerships with community-based organizations, kind of running it all through our nonprofit status as an organization.

Originally, it was designed to fill service gaps, create pipelines and partnerships, and to better serve specific, adversely impacted populations. It additionally, it works as that kind of testing ground for partnerships and service strategies with the goals being to eventually move successful programs and successful things, we learned from these, into the American Jobs Center. Kind of into WIOA standard operations. So just to give a little context to where that comes from.

So through our professional services team and in concert with the CARES program, we were able to identify two really highly skilled direct service staff that we had on our team already who can immediately transition and work as kind of intermediary navigators for the CARES DWG programs. They were able to pick up the program with – without the need to hire, contract, or even additional training other than getting them up to speed on the program, which was so huge in a disaster and emergency related program like this.

So what they did on that, is they were able to jump in and start by recruiting CBOs as work experience employers, as well as recruiting and eligiblizing (sic) individuals for the opportunities, navigating them through the processes setting their expectations for who they will be working with, and how the program will go. They also began building relationships early at this point, with the American Job Center staff just to kind of create that a two way referral pipeline.

And I will touch a little bit more – there was a question about challenges with recruiting people in the services who are on the extended UI. All of that. I will touch on that at the end. But one of the things that worked well in this program was our focus on CBOs, local Community Based Organizations, for these CARES opportunities, because what we could do is utilize them to help with the outreach. We really focus on, starting by reaching out to them, telling them about these opportunities that were work experiences and having them start by looking at people that are volunteering for them, or people who are utilizing their services in the food bank cases. And so we really started by using those types of partners to help with that outreach and working with the navigators to get that eligibility in.

But I will touch a little bit more on some of the challenges and a few of the things that we did to overcome them as much as possible, which certainly was not all the way through. Anyway, as the navigators worked with these individuals getting them in, they then transitioned to those individuals going through the work experience and they moved their focus as navigators to the long-term success of each individual.

We set this up to not be you just come in, get a CARES Act work experience and be done. The idea was: how can we use this as a pipeline into all of the programs so we can make sure these folks do not just get this experience and leave, but they get something to set them off into a full path through getting back into work and self-sufficiency.

So they ended up outreaching directly to all of the CARES participants, and talk to them about next steps, to help them out with what programs are available, what sort of services are available, and started that navigation process of getting them into that job, American Jobs Center, specifically DWG program.

Now, this did not come without its many challenges, starting with we knew with – with the book and the speed of this CARES program that Mary introduced, we knew our subrecipients at the American Jobs Center would not be able to handle a huge jump of 4-500 individuals who are exiting this program. So it is necessary to have these navigation staff setting those expectations with the individuals and working with them and having those communications with them to make sure that they know what they are getting into and starting that initial paperwork, and really making sure that they build that stuff out so that they are providing a really polished referral into the American Jobs Center for these programs.

Somebody who knows what they are expecting, knows what services are available, and wants the services. And as we found out, some of the challenges are some folks just were not interested in the services, and I am sure a lot of areas are facing those challenges as well. So ultimately, we were lucky to be set up in the way that we are, in that we had direct service staff that was very experienced and able to roll on to this right away. And I understand not all areas are set up with that.

But, one of the crucial things that I want to want to make sure is taken away from this is when what we have learned from this is working with these types of emergency programs that move so quick as Mary mentioned, we had 90 days to stand this CARES program up. It needs some sort of – or at least what we found; it needed some sort of inner intermediary. That piece that helps navigate both between the two programs and is essentially act as a filter so that the subrecipients staff, staff often operating on that DWG Direct Services can focus on those services, and – instead of getting lost in these huge amounts of referrals coming in and having a bunch of them saying, no, we are tracking them down during, during virtual services.

So it was really, really important to have that that piece that can set those expectations and build that out when we are combining these types of projects. And so the other thing I wanted to mention, and I will just do this real quick around the challenges for outreach is we did set up a partnership through other programs with our local 2-1-1. And our navigators also work to take in referrals from them, identify, and do that initial filter to find out – get that initial paperwork and give again a good, strong, polished referral.

And so that was something that, that we went through and was helpful. The other thing that we set up around disaster jobs specifically, is we worked with our emergency management. And one of the – we found out that the biggest thing is going to be those sales points. We – what we found that help to get people in after we had an initial push and had a lot of interest, is that the emergency management for the type of position we are putting them in, was putting them on a higher list to be able to get the vaccination right away. And we found that – it was a big sales point.

So my advice would be, as you are working with emergency management or any of those areas to see if that gets somebody faster in line because that worked for us. So anyway, I would like to pass the virtual mike over, over to Ish so he can talk about his stuff. Thank you.

ISHMALIA MAIDADI: Thank you, Cameron. My role in this, I was actually (under Title I under the AGHT ?) when it comes to contracting and setting up the work, what can we do to stop this again? As you can tell, with all these moving parts, you have to develop a process that allows stock recipients to pick up to, to take the baton from the navigator Cameron's team. And so the first thing that we did before we even get to work group. They set up a statement of work at the beginning of the year to take into account all of our funding when it comes to dislocated worker.

We took into account our regular dislocated worker funds and increased employment forms which is for the dislocated workers of Washington state. The disaster, dislocated worker grant, roughly $1 million that we received, in the imprimatur of the grant of more than $1.4 million.

And we wrote a statement of work – (inaudible) – with metrics to take into account – (inaudible) – grants individuals. Everything from enrollment training, paid internship on the job training, supportive services, access to work experience, opportunities. And that was really beneficial because we were able to look at the full picture and provide a justification to put – (inaudible) – who did know how to approach the challenges.

The second thing we did is that we had our – (inaudible) – two step – (inaudible) – specialists, in addition to the employment specialist staff, focus jobs on the employment recorded DWG, and the disaster DWG, and the compliance staff as well. These case staff had, at the subrecipient level, were a part of the workgroup, along with two navigators that Camden spoke of, an advertisement and a business engagement manager that we also hired. And that workgroup was supposed to work as a unit to tackle, give grants to provide services to the businesses and job seekers in the region.

Business engagement manager's role is to develop opportunities with the local businesses to place those jobseekers into paid into work experience, opportunities, on the job training to ensure that unpaid internships and such, and to develop a pipeline into employment for those job seekers. Also, to get intelligence from the businesses that that is what training needed right now for job seekers to be competitive while they complete their training. The navigators were – (inaudible) – really well. The employment specialists, hired by our sub-recipient group, is to work on eligibility and enrollment into the WIOA program, training documentation to get the exact job needed in this case.

So all of that work – to work with employment specialists in the compliance method with overseeing the project is to ensure that (we do not fall through the speed of the process ?) – we do not end up being non-compliant with the regulations requirements in the case.

Of the work and contents regularly, and not just to talk a little bit about our metrics as of October 1st, 2020, as of September 30th, I should say, we have zero enrollment. And October 1st was our first enrollment in what was our Title II grant – (inaudible) – 124 enrollment for the employment equality and 59 for disaster. As of right now, we have 77 enrollment in – (inaudible) – grant, and we are the 38 in the disaster relief grant, and our target for disaster jobs 25. We currently have 22 job seekers and enjoying opportunities. And one last slide – I know I am under the pressure of time. Mary, would you like to talk about this next slide, and I will talk about challenges and answer questions?

MARY HOUSTON: Thank you, Ish. Really quickly, we realized that if we are going to increase enrollments and success, one of the big things was to build a demand side. So get more employers who want to have work experience, subsidized job experience. And that was key. We held an information session for all of the carriers, all fifty-eight of the campus jobs employers. We had over 40 in attendance. Fifty-eight employers total took place in that, in that project.

And we are following up individually. We have reached out to almost every single one of them, and virtually all of them are willing and very interested in continuing this type of work. Not the CARES job, but WIOA and we know that we have on the job training, individualized internships, etc. And Ish, do you want to talk about the challenges for a minute?

ISHMALIA MAIDADI: Absolutely. Thank you. And there was a question in the chat about challenges around unemployment due to unemployment that challenges remain. We have also experienced that challenge. That challenges actually compounded with the virtual service is very difficult, because when the pandemic hit, most of us – and I imagine the callers as well – had to shift from a physical service delivery to a virtual service delivery model. We have not provided physical services in Snohomish County since March of 2020.

So what we did in the case is to overcome that challenge, is we started outfitting directly to the participant in our area. We had access to a staff locally in the American Jobs Center that we send group emails to all 38,000 of those in Snohomish County who are on the unemployment list. On that blast we included information on very high quality, impactful opportunities that were available to them that we could place them into right now. We emphasized that this is a great way for them to get exposed to this new career and to get ahead of the line before the rest of the population try to get into this once we have reopened.

And we also stood up – had standing virtual conference events weekly based on what the local area was doing to back mountain up, something similar that we learned from. And we are once a week in virtual rapid response for job seekers from the area who can just drop in and listen about all these different opportunities and decide whether they – what they can take part in.

For our navigators, wish to over 1,000 people, and only, I am not quite sure, less than a little more than 100 to put provide services for the challenges are we just have to work to overcome them. Thank you very much. Training partners, we do know that we do not have apprenticeships involved in this grant – (inaudible ?). Then how about subrecipients? I think you ought to let Latanya respond to the question. Thank you.

LATANYA LOWERY: OK. Thank you so much, everyone. Now it is time for our grantee panel, and I just want to start off with just again thanking everyone for everything you do for the communities we serve and for taking time out to share your best practices.

So the first question I am going to present to Sarah and some of our attendees would like to know, how do your career advisors get information that is needed as far as documentation so that they can still be considered underemployed? I believe this is dealing with your algorithm.

SARAH BLUSIEWICZ: So the algorithm is that we have a manager who is responsible for getting the report – the report actually lives on our FTP site with a do people run that out of the AS100, which is our UI system, and we have a manager who brings that down and then passes that out to the different local offices who are doing eligibility at any given time. She then holds the reports in the repository, so the staff gets them. They see the yes/no flag, they code that properly in the MIS system.

And then, based on that code, when our monitors or, for example, in our field come down, then based on those files that they select, if that code is there, we would think they were true to that report from the main file, and we are good to go. So there is not a lot of – you do not take screenshots and save it as a as a document. In each case file we just code it, and then that goes back to the report repository.

LATANYA LOWERY: OK. All righty. And I am going to go ahead and direct this next question over to Massachusetts. For grantees who are having trouble getting started, what advice would you give them?

STEVE TRUEMAN: I will take that. This is Steve Truman, I think as far as the temporary employment it is really picking – what benefited us was quickly identifying a job category, right. The governor had identified food insecurity as a major concern as part of the, the pandemic.

So being able to focus on that, really occupation and how to outreach to potential work sites that needed help in delivering that service and then allowing the career centers to then recruit towards folks that would be willing able to participate in that type of temporary employment. I think that was critical for us to really hone in on a specific need that then can guide both your outreach of participants and also your outreach to potential worksites.

LATANYA LOWERY: Thank you. All right, I am going to direct this next question over to our Snohomish team. What are the top two things that you would recommend that you should put in your statement of work?

MARY HOUSTON: Ish, do you to want to take that?

ISHMALIA MAIDADI: Absolutely. Thank you very much. So I am assuming that this question is about a statement about what – (inaudible) – in this case, as far as service delivery. I mean, I think that is part of the question. I would say that the one thing we found useful was designing a statement will take into account all the wonderful, dislocated worker opportunities and making sure that we have all the services mapped out and outcomes and providing adequate resources with subrecipients, including the navigators that the employment engagement manager, to help them to be successful.

Additionally, flexibility in the amount of work that is needed as you encounter challenges as an example of the kind of challenges standing near the -- (inaudible ?) -- I am sure everybody is having the same challenges we do with unemployment benefits extended multiple times, and with that I would say that being able to go back to the drawing board and maybe trying to jump on the job training again, more demands from that side of the equation would be a good way to approach that. So that is -- (inaudible ?).

LATANYA LOWERY: Ok, thank you so much. For this next question. I am going to bring it right back to Sarah. What were the top two challenges that you experienced with implementation and what solutions did you develop to address those challenges?

SARAH BLUSIEWICZ: Well, our largest challenge was making our eligibility and enrollment process fast enough to meet reality. So we were really ready to go day one of our grant in terms of we had a vendor who was doing our temporary – we call a temporary worker but that is disaster employment placement. And so it was the timing of we had a candidate ready to place and we needed to make sure that we could do eligible enrollment all at the same time. And so was just about making our processes, and we were in a virtual setting, so completely disrupted.

So what we ended up doing is we kind of did a custom process where we actually put one of my higher level managers, on – you know, hand holding those eligibility processes as they came through one at a time to check to give them back a, is this person eligible, yes, they are, can they take the job, great let us know, now they can enroll, so it was a very tight process because we had so much communication that need to happen in a very, very tight turnaround.

Normally you have the luxury of time where a person comes into your office, you can do eligibility assessment, you can enroll them. And you start to see who can get them into services. And this one like we needed people in disaster employment, like yesterday.

So we could not – we could not just waste time on, oh, somebody needs to fill out this form and they did not get it back to us in time. So it was very much about, we had not suspended, but basically expedited with a lot of management oversight to make sure that those enrollments and eligibility were happening on time. But that timeline was super compressed.

LATANYA LOWERY: All right, well, thank you. Same question, I am going to go ahead and direct this over to Massachusetts. What were two of your top challenges with implementation? And then what did you do to address it with your solution?

STEVE TRUEMAN: I think, again, this is Steve Truman here. I think one of the top challenges was in the early going was just as a lot of folks have articulated here, the outreach and recruitment. And I really think our – the process that we put in place with the single point of contact and really having a weekly communication as some areas really found what worked as far as targeting UI claimants or specific language in some of the marketing and outreach information that they were disseminating to existing job seekers and potential job seekers to recruit folks into the virtual career center.

I think the sharing of those ideas and as one area found something to be successful, the ability of other areas to kind of piggyback on that and just really have that brain dump every week to say what is working, what is not, strategize and move forward. And I think we really were able to gain some traction early on by building upon successes in particular areas.

SACHA STADHARD: And this is Sacha in Massachusetts. So I will also add to that one of the challenges was also around eligibility documentation and collection of source documents. And so as with everyone else, that poses a real challenge with the pandemic. Again, just doors being closed to in-person services.

And so we really had to revamp our eligibility policies right away and make sure that we had accounted for and added information and instruction related to guidance on virtual eligibility documentation and just make sure that information was communicated to all of the staff that were working on the grant to make sure folks are eligible.

LATANYA LOWERY: Okay, thank you. And before we move on to Snohomish, MassHire: we would definitely get information about the link for the SNAP app. Can you give your feedback, please?

SACHA STADHARD: Sure, I am going to replace it, but I had it in the participant question and comments, but it was some information on it in the link to the SNAPapp. So I do not know if I should put it back in there, put it in the host and presenter area, and then you guys can share it.

LATANYA LOWERY: You can go ahead and put in the whole area. We will definitely get that shared with all of the attendees.

SACHA STADHARD: Perfect. Thank you so much.

LATANYA LOWERY: Not a problem. And then, of course, last but not least, Snohomish, please let us know, what were your top two challenges that you experienced with implementation and what were the solutions that you developed to address those challenges?

CAMERON CASSIDY: Ok, thank you. This is Cameron again. So I would say the number one challenge that I wanted to bring up, it was kind of already echoed a couple of times. But I want to mention it. The easiest way to put this is with these emergency style, fast moving grants and working in partnership with our local emergency management program is they, they move at a different pace. They do not move necessarily at the pace of a nonprofit, as we are essentially accustomed to and used to.

And so keeping up with the changes as they would go and the pace that they were working is very difficult. Whereas when we had our initial plans, for example, working with emergency management for the disaster employment placement, those have have gone through multiple iterations of what they were going to be because the need just changed. It would – we originally had them going in with the food banks and quarantine sites. But as kind of the pace changed and as the care that came in for us to be able to place people through other means and in the food banks, we utilized that in other areas just to hit where the need was.

So that keeping up with that and being able to move as quickly as them was one of the challenges we had to overcome. And I think the way we did that was just keeping as close a communication with emergency management as we could, as well as helping them understand our needs in terms of we, we will not be able to move quite as fast as them and making sure that we have that kind of relationship with them. And I think that that has helped us get to where we are.

The other thing that I would say is number two is just kind of goes along with it. But the changes when we originally put in our plans for both of these, the employment recovery and the disaster DWG, we did not know that we were going to be operating the program that we spoke of earlier with the CARES Act coming in. And so that came in and with 90 days to stand this up, kind of changed a lot of plans than it did for the best. But it meant we had to kind of reconfigure everything and it put a little bit of the programmatic plans behind or ahead, kind of however you look at it.

But what we did is looked at it as how can we utilize these all together? How can we make these better, combine that that synergy with them instead of looking at them as going against each other, butting up against each other just because we want to hit these numbers. So we said let us, let us use this to create pipelines. And that was the success that we had, was looking at it from a community perspective of how can these all come together to help us?

Thank you.

LATANYA LOWERY: Well, thank you so much, I mean, everybody has given such a wealth of information that I am sure that everyone can take back and applied one, if not all of it. So with that being said, if you have additional questions we would like to see them in the chat.

STEPHEN DUVAL: All right, so first of all, let me thank every one of the panelists, and today your information was well received. You could tell from the questions that were asked and the responses that we were able to give people. The generosity of what you have to share in your experiences; we cannot thank you enough.

I think one of the things that struck me was that the start at the beginning of the webinar, we asked in our poll question what our, our, our audience of participants greatest challenges are. And we have more than answers them with examples of how to be nimble, flexible, think outside the box under the circumstances that everybody is working on. So thank you so much for your generosity in terms of sharing and resources.

I think from what I can tell from the chat questions and our responses that we more than answered everybody's questions. There is still seems, still seems to be a lot more that we can do. There is one last call that we have posted on. For those of you who are still with us, we are always trying to find ways to provide the technical assistance that you need, continue to support you. Obviously, these grant funds are meant to be funds that are put in the pockets of the people in your community who are going through a hard time right now. And we want to do everything we can.

So this last call will give us some additional information about how best to meet our technical assistance needs. So if you could get right before you log off from complete the poll, we have ideas about – about what webinars we want to do, but we want to get your feedback to make sure these webinars are meeting your needs.

So the feedback will help to help us with those developing additional training. We have plans for one additional webinar sometime in May, and to bring back some grantees who are having some late successes, meaning they were struggling to get in enrollment expenditures on the way. It took quite some time for them to get there. So in addition to the three panel participants that we had today, we were thinking about bringing some folks in who were, what we call late bloomers, but had really took off with their grants and were able to overcome additional barriers. So the feedback is important.

I want to thank everyone who participated today. We know you are working hard. We know that you are working under extremely difficult circumstances. And we know how much that you are trying to get these resources out to people. So continue your work. Please, please, please. If you have questions, concerns, need any assistance, reach out to your federal project officer. They are there to help. They are there to guide you, and to give you information when you need it so that you are not out there alone struggling. So once again, I want to thank everyone for participating and keep up the good work.

I think if we were to come back in a couple of months and see where we are based on what I am hearing, these participant numbers are going to increase and expenditures are going to increase and we will have great success in these grants.

So thank you very much. Enjoy the rest of your day. Resources, contact information are in the slides. If you did not download them, you can contact one of us and we will make sure that you get a copy of the slides. Thank you again.

(END)