**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**National Monitoring Training for State Workforce Agencies**

**Digging Deeper: Effective Entrance Meetings and Interviews**

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GRACE MCCALL: Welcome to "National Monitoring Training for State Workforce Agencies, Digging Deeper, Effective Entrance Meetings and Interviews. So without further ado, I'd like to turn things over to one of our speakers for today, Annie Leonetti, United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Region 4 and 6, Deputy Regional Administrator. Take it away, Annie.

ANNIE LEONETTI: Thank you, Grace and hello, everyone. Thank you for joining us today. As Grace said, I'm Annie Leonetti. I am the deputy regional administrator for our San Francisco and Dallas regional offices in ETA. Joining me as a presenter today in the webinar is Nanette Green, our chief of the Division of Unemployment Insurance in our Dallas regional office. We're so glad that you're able to join us today on this very important webinar.

We're just going to quickly go over some of the objectives for today's session. We're going to take a look, starting off with entrance conferences, and take a look at what the important role that it plays in setting the tone for the monitoring review, including we'll identify who should attend the objectives approach, and local area or subrecipient responsibilities in the entrance conference.

Then we're going to take a deeper dive into interviews. We'll identify the appropriate program staff and the participants for interviews and discuss effective interviewing techniques. So let's go ahead and get started. We're going to dive in with just asking a basic knowledge check question regarding entrance meetings, just to find out where we all are from a starting point. So we're going to put up a poll, and let us know which of the following items should be discussed at the entrance meeting.

So the scope of the review, the process used to measure progress, critical issues identified during the pre-monitoring review, and/or the date of the next onsite review. You can select any or all that you think should be discussed. So give just a minute for folks to answer that poll question. All right, I'm seeing a lot of numbers coming in. We'll keep it open for just another few seconds, but it seems that everybody just about thinks that the scope of the review should be discussed.

The process used to measure the progress, get them right around 80 percent of folks, but two thirds of folks thinks that critical issues identified during the pre-monitoring review should be discussed, at about a third folks say the date of the next onsite review. So I think we can go ahead and looks like voting is ending. So go ahead and close that. Thank you, Grace. And I will say that three of those four things should definitely be discussed.

The scope of a review, that is exactly what the purpose, the major purpose of the entrance meeting is, but we want to also be very transparent and clear about what is that process that we're going to use as we're measuring progress. And we're going to – we've received documents and done some pre-monitoring review and we're going to let folks know what critical issues we've already honed in on and we're going to dive into those further in the review. And so we want to cover all of those things in that entrance meeting.

The date of the next onsite review, we're not going to know that yet because this is our review right now. So we will be touching on that down the road, but you don't know that at the point of the entrance meeting. So with that, I'm going to hand it over to Nanette, who is going to take us through this a lot more and share with us what we should be doing in our entrance conferences and how to conduct great interviews. So Nanette?

NANETTE GREEN: Thanks, Annie, and howdy from Dallas. Happy to take you through entrance meetings and interview techniques. We have a lot to discuss; I'm going to get right into it. But when you're thinking about these techniques today, I really encourage you to think of how you're going – if you were in that situation, and you're sitting there and you're actually conveying this communication, how you would go about doing it.

The best way to do these kinds of things are to practice ahead of time to talk through them. These are a practice makes perfect situation. You can't think of everything that you're going to say prior to it occurring, but you can practice with your colleagues. You can practice with your friends, just your interview techniques to make sure that you're conveying it in a charismatic, gentle, but yet comprehensive way. So let's start with the entrance conference.

So the review typically begins with the entrance conference. Often, I'm getting off a plane, or getting out of a – after a long drive and going straight to the stadium agency, where we're going to a large conference room, where the state agency hopefully is not waiting for me, but there have been times when their plane is late, and they are waiting. The entrance conference is the opportunity to manage the grant recipient's expectations by identifying the activities that will be performed during review.

A good reviewer is going to wear several hats though; in addition to monitoring for compliance, reviewers are relationship builders and subject matter experts and driver who is a continuous improvement. At the entrance conference, you're setting the stage. The grantee is going to look to you to set the tone of the review. What you put out there is what you're going to get back.

So you need to be honest and conscientious and congenial. If you put that out there, then that's what you're going to get back. But if you're late, if you're adversarial or you're unprepared, then they know that's the level of the expectation for the response and that may be what you get back as well. Start on the right foot, and you'll get – and you'll end on the right foot.

The reviewer is going to build a relationship with a grant recipient by maintaining open communication, managing expectations and acting in a professional, respectful and responsive manner. So I really work hard at the entrance conference to make it congenial yet professional at the same time. Relaxed, but yet comprehensive so that they understand you're prepared but it's not a formal inquiry, an audit, whether they have to be afraid.

Next slide. During the entrance conference, the reviewer should introduce the members of the review team, reiterate the purpose of the review, share the review agenda, confirm logistics, like what's – parking availability? Do you have a place for me to interview people? Do you have a phone I'm going to be able to use? Do you have a computer if necessary? If you don't have the ability to have your own computer, a quiet space where you can have your own analysis if necessary. Ensure that the recipient understands the reviewers need for access to all the files and staff.

Sometimes, there may be questions regarding confidentiality, make sure you know that – they know that you will be asking things of people and you can't always predict every question you're going to ask ahead of time. And that you will promise them that you're going to be open about that communication, report to them regularly, and the more transparent you can be about the process, the better you're going to get the information flow going.

You should initiate discussions during the entrance conference on any critical issues that you identify during the pre-monitoring document review. That was part of the knowledge check in the beginning.

Generally, before going to a state or grantee, I like to pool their data and look at it from a very macro perspective to look for trends over time. If I see some bigger trends, this is a great opportunity to bring it up and maybe ask some gentle questions for our group discussion. You may not have everybody that's going to be in that room in the same room again until the exit interview.

So if you can bring out those concepts, number one, you're giving them an idea of some things that you want to look at, and you can get a round robin discussion going on and maybe even some technical solutions and discussions right there in the entrance conference.

You need to describe the monitoring process and the timeline for the report and the grant recipient response. I like to lay out what's going to occur. Here's my agenda for the week. Here's when I expected the report go out. Some of those things are outside of my control but here's our goal, as to when the report will come out. This is when you will have to respond back.

I also lay out the elements of the report so that they know what the report would look like. It's going to have findings, it's going to have areas of concern, it's going to have best practices. And what each of those are going to mean, how they're different, and what the grantee or state's response is – responsibility is in responding to each of those elements, findings or compliance issues, there'll be corrective action, areas of concern, just recommended action.

I find it really helpful to put their mind at ease if I see an issue and I let them know if I see an issue I'm going to bring it to your attention. I'm not going to hold issues in my back pocket for a surprise at the exit meeting; that's not my goal.

When I see something, I'm going to say something because this is going to give them the chance to research it, to understand it better, and frankly to digest it before the exit meeting. Nobody wants to come into that last meeting and find out about things that you've known about for a week. My goal – and I think the reviewer's goal should be to show total fairness and that you're not in the gotcha method. Next slide.

So reviewers may use the entrance and exit conference as an opportunity for the group interviews and we discussed that. This is the chance where you're going to have everybody in the room, why not bring up some issues that they can discuss generally, and then they can even take back and have broader discussions while you're conducting your overall monitoring.

So you can use this as an opportunity to gather information from a conversation, discover new issues that may not be apparent in traditional one-on-one interviews, by using effective interview techniques. And also, it's going to provide you an opportunity to let the grant recipient know that you will assist in all technical assistance needs. It's not just about compliance.

While compliance is important, you should all – the reviewer should look for a context that you're assisting in connecting the dots on the data that you've already reviewed and provide technical assistance where there's gaps. So for instance, you've pulled the data and you see that maybe every time in the same time a year, maybe it's around November and December, a state or grantees data slips, their stats fall.

It's probably related to holiday and staff shortages during the holiday, but that's an example of something you can say, seen this, is the staff shortages and it may not be something that they noticed. Maybe they'll go back and discuss it a little more. Maybe you've noticed – (inaudible), who knows? But at least you're bringing it up and then there can be a greater discussion overall, with all of the parties that are applied.

Generally, it's advantageous for you to facilitate the discussion in the group, and focus on open-ended questions during that entrance interview. Those are going to be things like describe, or how. You should advocate for the grantee or the state to treat it like an opportunity rather than an obligation. You've got experience knowledge from outside their unit which can be used to increase efficiency or overcome obstacles.

Here, we have dedicated time during this monitoring, review, or audit to considering an open and continuous improvement environment, how to be even better at what we do, and that's not a bad thing. Often, grantees and states feel like they're the only game in town, but with your experience, you can come in and you can say, here's some outside perspectives maybe you haven't thought about before, here's what I see and here's how we can work on those things.

Regarding the types of questions that I just described, I talked about some open-ended questions. Resource, as in the core monitoring guide, talks more about the types of questions that can be asked and that's on page 187. Next slide. You're going to be setting the tone of the communication, right there in the entrance interview. And I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to make a grantee feel at ease.

If they – there's a likelihood that they – when they hear audit or monitoring, it's going to feel very stuffy, it could feel there's perceptions and myths of people being a little bit, gotcha, a little bit hard to deal with, you want to let them know that you're their partner in everything that's going on and that you're here to help along the way. I recommend if you can, tell them a little bit about yourself; explain who you are and why you're there and smile. Make jokes, be relaxed, but yet professional at the same time.

Communication's going to lay the groundwork for establishing these positive relationships which help ensure productive monitoring environment. The more the reviewer communicates, the more the grant recipient is going to understand and know what to expect and the less apprehensive that they're going to be about that onsite [inaudible]. In most cases, it's not – (inaudible) – to identify findings and their causes just by reviewing the data and the reports and other documents only.

Communication conducted in an open and transparent manner, allows for the sharing information and how to connect the dots by clarifying pre and on-site review questions. Effective ongoing communication throughout the review prevents the grantee from being surprised at the exit conference and when the monitoring report is issued. Managing expectation for communication starts prior to the review and continues through the review and – (inaudible) – post visit activities.

So the goal overall is, if you tell them what you're going to be doing, if you lay it out, you show them the ropes, then they're not going to be surprised. And managing expectations even if you have to do something wrong, not something wrong, something that is going to maybe be some things they don't want to hear or bad news. If you let them know how you're going to do it, it feels better because you've told them exactly what to expect if something – if there's information that they don't want to hear.

The on-site review presents an opportunity for the reviewer to engage with the grant recipient and obtain context to support the data and the information collected. This onsite communication provides for a deeper understanding of the state of the project, the milestone and the challenges. Establishing effective communication also enables the reviewer to identify the real causes of compliance, findings and areas of concern. And thus, develop required actions that communicate not only how to correct the issue, but also how to prevent it from happening in the future as well.

So you lay out exactly – show them the road, tell them exactly how you go about doing it. I tend to make promises to the extent that I say, if I see a pro, I'm going to tell you about it. I may have daily meetings with you to let you know what I've discovered along the way. You'll have an opportunity to take a look at it, and research and get back to me, let me know about things, that way they're not surprised by the process or scared about the unknown. Next slide.

The entrance conference should include the local area director, any department directors and anyone else that would like to participate. I don't believe in the entrance conference being a – I get to choose who's in the room. I believe that the state or the grantee has the right to bring whomever they want in the room. I just let them know the pros and cons that I've discovered along the way, who they want to bring in.

Sometimes, they bring in – (inaudible) – training – (inaudible) – sessions so that their successors can learn how to do these things. Sometimes they want it to be confidential so – and key people that other people working to keep the goal going. It is ultimately their decision. But it is strongly recommended that the program and fiscal leads if you're doing those review, types of reviews, attend both the entrance and the exit conferences.

For unemployment insurance which is my programming expertise, depending on the state and the program as a minimum, I would recommend the program to [inaudible]. But they can have the state administrator attend, UI directory attend, that's what they do. I believe the more the merrier, but having fewer people in the room can add to a more frank discussion.

The overall – the overarching vision for monitoring is that of working together to make the system as effective as it can be for jobseekers and employers. Local monitors that approach this relationship with the staff providers as a partnership are more likely to enjoy transparency and the ability to support problem solving. To that end, the entrance meeting should include a representative from all entities involved in managing the programs.

So that can include the local director, program staff, subrecipients, fiscal agents, MOU one stop partners, others. I often talk ahead of time with the program chief to let them know what's going to happen in the entrance meeting so that they can make an educated decision as to who to bring to the table. Next slide.

MS. MCCALL: Hi. If I could just jump in. This is Grace again. A few people are asking in the chat and that if you could just speak up a little bit? The volume's a little soft [inaudible].

MS. GREEN: Certainly. What I'm going to do is I'm going to take it off my headset and go right into my speakerphone. I hope that works.

MS. MCCALL: All right. Let's see.

MS. GREEN: Is that better?

MS. MCCALL: Sounds a bit louder on my end.

MS. GREEN: All right. I'll go from this. I thought this might happen.

MS. MCCALL: All right. I'll let you continue on.

MS. GREEN: Great. So the local area role in the entrance meeting. It's the subrecipient or state's responsibility to coordinate with staff to ensure the reviewers' needs are met. They also provide the reviewer with a quiet space that has technology access so they can do participant file review, review fiscal books and prepare for each schedule monitoring activity.

Sometimes you have to do confidential interviews in that quiet space. Or you may need to make phone calls, make sure you have something set aside. It doesn't have to be a nice office but any place that you can have a confidential conversation is very important, make sure you make arrangements for that to occur ahead of time.

Failure to plan ahead is going to be a plan for disaster. And the last thing you want to do is not be able to meet with an essential person before the exit meeting. So if you don't have time set aside to meet with everybody that is a part of the program administration, you can end up not having sufficient information to support your findings or your area concern, or have outstanding questions.

And so when you go to the exit meeting, and you're saying, I think there's this issue, if you haven't talked to that one person, that really can confirm it, you're going to be in a bad place. So schedule as much as you can, but let them know that the agenda is flexible.

Personally, I tend to schedule more than I need and then pair it down as I go along. I want to have access to all the materials and interviews necessary to secure my findings and recommendations to the state.

Next slide. Objectives of the entrance conference. Now during the entrance conference, the reviewer reminds the grant recipient that the monitoring review is the process used to measure progress, identify areas of concern, and offer opportunities for technical assistance to help resolve non-compliance issues and ensure that the federal funds have been used responsibly.

I like to call this the standard of review, the tests that I'm going to be using and another way to assess whether or not they've met compliance. You may start with a walkthrough of the schedule, which may have already been confirmed with a grantee on the pre call. You need to ensure that everyone understands what the expectations and the needs are in terms of access to the files and the staff.

During the onsite review, the reviewer looks for compliance with and what we have listed on this slide are the state and federal law compliance that you may be auditing. Some examples are WIOA requirements you might be auditing, 2 CFR Part 200. In UI, are often auditing compliance with the Federal Unemployment Tax Act, the Social Security Act, UIPLs and [inaudible]. I tend to let them know – and handbooks, another example.

I want them to know what I'm going to be using to ensure compliance so that they have those readily available, that makes it much more transparent. Also make sure that they're aware that you'll be looking at the state plan and any policies and procedures. The more that you can let them know the universe of the standard, the better that they're going to understand the process and it's not going to seem so surprising.

But I think it's also important to tell them what you're not reviewing. For instance, in unemployment, we had the Cares Act, we have the Lost Wage Assistance Program. We do not review the Lost Wage Assistance Program because that's a different program funded and reviewed by FEMA.

So I would be very clear, we were not reviewing the Lost Wage Assistance Program, but you did operate it and those – that program could affect some of the programs I'm reviewing, for example, unemployment benefits.

So I would tell – I'd be very clear about where those boundaries lie. The more you tell them, the more transparent and fair it feels. Also discussed during this portion of the entrance, or any critical issues identified during the reviewers pre-monitoring document reviewed, to provide the grant recipient the opportunity to clarify and provide additional information, for instance, I looked at your policies and procedures and I saw that they were – have not been updated since 2003. Is there a newer version that you have available?

That way you're not coming up and asking these questions on the last day of the review and then getting brand new policies and procedures that you have to review in very short time. Last, the reviewer will also identify best practices deemed use for compliant integral part – role in advancing the purpose of the grant. Such practices can be shared in a wider grant recipient community later.

For instance, I noticed that you took the opportunity to put videos on your website about how to file your claims, your unemployment claims, and that's great because it allows for greater accessibility to those who may not have English proficiency or learn in different ways, learn from seeing rather than reading. That might be a best practice; let's look at that a little bit closer. Next slide.

So during the monitoring review, you're going to use different approaches to gain information that's necessary to support your findings, your area of concern your best practices. It's not going to be enough to just tell them the standard review. You need to explain to them the methods that you're going to use to learn about their work. Those different techniques are necessary to be comprehensive.

Letting them know the techniques are going to alleviate any surprise or suspicion when you change methods. Often states and grantees expects you to go and sit at a desk, look at your files may never leave the office. However, no organization is just files, you need to look at everything from soup to nuts to do a true assessment.

This slideshow is going to show you the different techniques you may need to use to collect information and we're going to go through each one by one. You're going to use your monitoring guide, you're going to walk through into a tour, you're going to have interview with staff and participants and potentially partners, subrecipients. You're going to do sample testing, used or potentially a discussion on the various analysis tools that you're going to use to assist in conducting an onsite review is helpful here.

You can use these to identify areas to target and to prioritize when planning an onsite monitoring, but this list is not exhaustive. And there are many more areas that can be performed – that many more ways of analysis that can be performed. Next slide.

So the monitoring tool or guide. The states monitoring guide or tool and for DOL that can be the core monitoring guide should be sent in advance because it allows the local area or the grantee or the state agency to know who will be needed and what's going to be reviewed.

Doing a brief review of the monitoring guide will allow the reviewer to cover the core activities and the objectives with the grantee. The reviewer should reiterate the purpose of the review which is to evaluate the management and administration of the grant, the quality of the program, and the performance of the grant to determine if the program is operating in compliance with the grant agreement and in the manner that ensures achievement of its goals and outcomes.

The guide provides a consistent framework that allows the reviewer to assess the compliance of the grant recipient in meeting the requirements outlined in the grant agreement. Onsite monitoring is one of the many oversight tools that helps in assessing grant recipient technical assistance. The purpose of the monitoring is to measure progress, ensure compliance that federal funds are used responsibly, as well as develop technical assistance plan.

So if you let them know the tool, you let them know the standard, then they can see the path that you're going to be taking them down and they feel that there's complete transparency. It feels fairer overall and you're going to have a better result with your grantee. Next slide. So the walkthrough tour. The walkthrough tour is one of my favorite parts because first you get to meet the staff and you get to see them in action.

They'll see you ahead of time, they know who you are, and so they won't be surprised when they see you walking around the office. But – and I can't overestimate how important this tool is. Some parts of the monitoring like review of policy forms may be done through effectively through remote means. But to understand that the grant or local area or one stop is operating in a way that should be according to the grants agreement, the policies or the laws, nothing is going to replace a walkthrough tour.

Put another way and I can review as many case files as possible during the time, but it's not going to replace me visiting the site to see whether or not they have the proper accessibility for those who are disabled. Or if I go into a room and they have desks and desks stacked with unprocessed applications around processed appeals, I'm not going to see those things just by reviewing case files. I need to see those things by walking around and observing.

I like to confirm and set expectations. I actually put in the agenda. I want to do a walkthrough tour of the different locations is the first thing I do – (inaudible) – meeting. It's critical for me to do this to ensure that the review goes smoothly, and it accomplishes the transparency. And also, I get to shake hands, talk to people, get a concept of who is in different areas that's going to be vital later on when I have questions about the process. Next slide.

Interviews is the next tool. We're going to go into depth about interviews later in this presentation and talking about different interview techniques. For the purpose of right now, let me just point out that the core monitoring guide goes into depth on page 187 about four different types of interview techniques; closed-end questions, open-ended questions, probing questions and reflective questions.

You're going to end up using all of these as well as the order of the questions that you ask in order to be comprehensive in your analysis, but also deep in your analysis. So the types of interviews that you may end up doing range from completely unstructured. Just ad hoc as is needed to highly structured and where you ask a series of questions and you direct the grant recipient staff to limit their answers and comments only as the questions that are directed.

The quality of the data that you're going to collect in an interview depends on your interview design and your skill. It may occur that the questions are not understood. It happens all the time or that the reviewer consciously or unconsciously influences the responses that the grant recipient staff – this in turn can affect the information collected. Interview skills are something you need to practice and learn over time. We're going to dive more into this into the presentation.

Here's a pro tip that I would throw out. If possible, I like to conduct the staff interviews directly at their workstation, if it's in a little bit of a private area. Just like you're going to see in the picture I have here. Often when you ask questions, staff want to show you something, they want to take you through a process or even maybe feel comfortable just looking up an answer.

This will put them in the position to give you more definite information and rather than, I'd have to check that answer. Your interview may end up doubling as a job observation and then you kill two birds with one stone. So if I can sit next to them on their desk, ask them questions and then have them take me through processes, it becomes a much more robust and a useful interview. Next slide.

Sampling is another technique. This often, you're going to see this most often in case sampling. During the entrance interview, I'll provide a brief overview of the sampling although ahead of time, I've already likely sent the sample requests that they have those cases ready for me. But sometimes it's good to talk about why we chose the sampling that we did and how the sample was obtained.

A representative sampling of the total population pool should be used when determining samples for testing. For example, where training is a key component of the grant, reviewers should select a sample from a listing that contains the entire population and consider selecting files for participants not yet in training.

Both participants are long and short-term training options and participants who completed and dropped out of training and those who didn't deny participants from different training providers in the mix of occupations. The idea is to get a cross-section of all those scenarios out there so that you're not missing a potential issue based on a population.

For UI, I like to think about all the various scenarios that can play out in the life of a claim or a program and ask for examples from each. Sometimes that scenario did not play out in the state, but they may say we never had that happen, we don't have a case like that that we can produce and then I like to select backup scenarios.

My goal is to be as comprehensive as possible so that I'm not missing something that's going to be a potential compliance issue later on. So here are some general steps to keep in mind when identifying the sample. First, you need to define the population. Defining the target population should be done in line with the objective of the review.

Therefore, your first step in selecting a good sample is to draw different elements from the database to ensure the target populations were represented. So attain the population pool in the most automated way possible for the sampling. You should look at things like the database spreadsheet of the file and filter by age or years of participation or other parameters – (inaudible) – recipient system.

You should also specify a sampling frame. So the target population is sampled using a sampling frame. Often the units in the population can be identified by existing information, like participant listing, general ledger, listing of contracts, payroll, etc. The sampling frame could also be dollar amounts, for example. You could select costs that are more than a certain dollar amount like cost in excess of $150,000.

You should also specify a sampling method. There are two basic sampling methods. One is going to be random or non-random. Random and non-random are your two methods. There are benefits to both. If the sampling frame is approximately the same demographic makeup as the population, it would be possible to be – probable to be more beneficial to do a random selection of the sample.

A pro-tip; random samples can sometimes lead to cases that don't have much going on in them. So, for example, if I go into a state agency and I open up a file drawer of applications and pull one randomly, it may have been an application that was not completely filled out and it didn't go anywhere. That doesn't give me much meat to know what happens when the claimant was filing weekly certifications, what happened during later on the life. But doing a random sample, lets you see a great cross-section.

I recommend identifying specific types of cases for the state of the grantee to produce and that can give you information on what the state met the compliance in each of those situations. For unemployment insurance, I might ask for – and, for example, in the – (inaudible) – arena, I might ask for a few appeals cases in different types of issues so that I can see how the agency addressed issues both vertically and horizontally. Vertically being up and down the appeals chain and horizontally, meaning over many different types of issues, and during the life of the claim.

Finally, it's important to determine the sample size. Of course, larger samples are going to be better because the larger sample is going to give you a better indication of what's going on overall and it's also going to give you something that's more reliable data. But, of course, we're limited by the time. If a reviewer makes a sample size of 25 participant records, it takes more time than if they only had to go through 10, but the results are going to be stronger.

The reviewer has to make a balanced choice to decide what is most practical use of their time. Sometimes I will pull a larger sample, but I will balance it out by cases that are going to be easier to review, versus ones that are going to take much longer time. And easy case may be a simple issue, for example, an unemployment of whether or not someone's able or available to work. A harder issue may be fraud; those are going to take – it's going to have a lot more data to look through.

Once you know the population, the sample frame, the sampling method and the sample size, you can use all of that information to make an informed decision on your sample. I recommend that you balance out with your agenda, take a look at your agenda, how much time that you're going to have, you don't want to be in a situation where you have no time to look through your cases because – or you are unable to get through all of your cases because you've overcommitted yourself. Next slide.

Analysis. Content analysis is a technique used to gain the meaning of the information provided that uncovers the what, the where, and the when, which enables the reviewer to gain more knowledge about the project. Cross-checking analysis is separate. This analysis goes a step further than content analysis and it asks the reviewer to further analyze and identify how sets of data relate to each other.

Sometimes using additional documents can provide more clarity and/or validate the results of the document. And then there's variance analysis. Variance analysis is conducted to understand the difference between actual and planned data. By nature, variance analysis uses numbers thus documents such as budgets would be ideal when doing a variance analysis.

The analysis highlights the existence and the size of the variance during review period established by the reviewer. The variance analysis can be a trend line that shows differences over a month or quarterly basis, would add significantly to the analysis of the data and may give a financial picture to the overall progress of the grant.

So often I'll do a variance analysis when I pull the data from a macro perspective to show how it changed over time and if I can find a consistent variance and they show me to process changes, or something that is happening in a cyclical manner that I can bring to the state agency's attention and lead to an ongoing change.

Finally, when we're doing our reviews and this is next slide, please, technical assistance. When we're doing our reviews, compliance is at the forefront. But what is also vital and really ends up making the most changes to provide technical assistance. You don't just have to look for the things that are compliance issues that may not meet regulation or law, but it can even be business efficiency techniques to make them overall better and to lead to better opportunities for compliance.

Providing technical assistance is a part of the reviewer role during an onsite monitoring visit. The reviewer may be called to interpret laws and regulations and rules pertaining to the grant and review, but you can also undercover trends or practices that can trigger an immediate opportunity to provide technical assistance. The grant recipients or the state may ask you for help or guidance to improve its service design, delivery, grant operations, or administrative or fiscal management systems.

Some technical assistance can occur there or can inform future technical assistance opportunities. If you've got things going really well, and you've developed a really comfortable relationship with the state of the grantee, they're going to see as this as an opportunity for process improvement, and a way that you can save them time because you're going to be going through their entire processes for them, giving them opportunities for rapid process improvement and recommendations from an objective perspective.

If you can maintain that comfortable relationship, they're going to see it – you as an asset rather than a liability. Next slide. Staff and participant interviews. Generally, just so you know when I'm doing my interviews, I would like to be – to look as good in – as here, but generally, I have a lot of documents and bags with me, so I don't look nearly as good as the lady in this picture. But I do try to be as professional and you always want to maintain that comfort level that you see here but at the same time, the professionalism. Next slide.

Interviewing program staff. So, interview – when you're thinking about your interview and anytime you're thinking about the questions to ask, I always recommend you start broad and you go more narrow. That will help you narrow in on what you need to focus. To be frank, there's so much to cover. There's so many areas that you need to – that you might not have enough time to be comprehensive in the way that you want.

But if you can start broad and then focus in on the issues that seem to arise, then you can dig deeper where there needs to be depth. So I intend to start with leadership that had the broadest knowledge and a big picture of a person. I ask them as much as I can, that's within the scope of my interview. And then areas where there might be a potential issue, I note that. I put this in my notebook and then I narrow in and dive in deeper on those areas when I'm going with more focused program staff. Then I'll talk with the subject matter experts to get better information.

I believe in complete transparency. So when it comes to talking to the larger leadership, the program leadership, I tend to schedule a meeting at the end of every day to report back to that big person – big picture person or a program leader. I like to let them know what I found out, and that it gives them a chance to rebut or research or to give me better information.

It's not good when you come to the exit interview and it's the first time that person has heard this information because they can – they may say no, that was a one-time instance. No, I want to rebut that, no, I need to research and they may not understand the issue completely.

If you're telling them along the way, then they feel as though they're a part of the review, that you're not hiding anything, and that they can respond to us is necessary. Next slide. So interviewing program participants. This is where you're going to interview someone that's actually involved in the program they're reviewing. Often, we're not going to do this currently on unemployment insurance program but in other areas that may occur.

Interviewing participants will provide a unique perspective on the program operations. As you scope out your review, you determine your focus on your participant interviews. Now if you're doing case file review, you interview a program access exiter who can provide perspective on the entire journey through the program.

Interviewing a participant whose file you are reviewing may identify discrepancies or success stories. Be sure to look at a spectrum of participants, including those who have successfully completed all of the program elements and those who have not as well. And be sure to select participants from each of the programs reviewing.

Now unemployment insurance which I tend to go back to because that's my specialty, I would not interview a claimant directly, but I might job shadow and track a specific case through the entire process. For example, I might start by tracking an incoming application from it coming in the door through its initial adjudication, or maybe an initial appeal that came in the door and then track it all the way through scheduling and then track maybe a hearing all the way through decision to implementation.

That lets me see the whole process; that let's me see how touching each – how each person that's a staff member that touches that issue or addresses it or communicates with a claimant is handling it and the consistency in the process overall. But be sure to look at spectrum of participants, including those who have successfully completed all the program, and those who have not and be sure to select participants from each of the programs that you're reviewing. Next slide.

Interview methodology. Provide the interviewee upfront with a clear understanding of the purpose and objectives of the interview, and that's going to set the tone for an effective discussion. It will eliminate surprises and put the interviewee at ease. Take notes sparingly and be transparent about what notes you are taking and set time in your schedule immediately after the interview to write up a quick summary for your reference.

When you're setting the tone, it needs to be casual in nature, but also you're asking enough that they are teaching. Tell them what you're going to be asking, but then tell us – show general interest. Ask them to teach you about what they do into their job. Explain it's not a gotcha situation. People tend to feel more comfortable when they feel as though they are the ones that are providing the information and the one with the greater expertise.

I'd like to remind the person that interviewing because it can be stressful, that nobody knows their job better than them. I just want them to show me how they do it so that I can learn from them. And I also remind them, they don't have to know all the answers there. It's okay, tell me that you don't know. I'd rather you do that than guess.

So if you don't know, that's okay and you can come back to me later. I'll be here all week, folks, I remind them and let me know if you come up with the answer afterwards. That's okay, too. But a very important learning lesson is, never tell a staff member that they give you an answer wrong or to correct them on their answer.

Once they find – they realize that they said something wrong, or there might be a compliance issue or could be done in a different way that's better, one of two things is going to happen. Either they're going to shut down, and they're not going to give you any more answers and they're going to start getting real quiet or it's going to become adversarial, neither of which is going to help you with your interview.

If you hear something wrong when you're talking to a staff member during an interview, hold that information in your head and then later on, you can talk to the program manager or the chief or the – whoever's in charge overall, to discuss about that what you discovered that may be an issue. Remember, you might have just talked to somebody who was nervous in an interview and made a mistake but that's an opportunity for you to dig deeper later, not during the interview. Next slide.

The funnel technique is essential to interviewing. I learned this a long time ago. I use it all the time. It's worked, not only in conducting hearings, but just generally when you're trying to fully develop the record for an issue. When I say record, it's getting all of the information you need to feel secure in the conclusion that you're reaching. So the funnel technique, as you see in the picture here, you start with really broad questions, and then you end up going much more narrow.

So the broad question is the open-ended question. And it starts out with a question like describe, or how, that's where they're giving – they're telling you a story. And as much as you can get them in that broad open-ended question where they're talking and you're listening, the better the situation is.

When they stop talking and you need to fill in the blanks, then you ask the who, the what, the why, the when, the where, those are the more narrow questions. I probably put them somewhere on the slide, the picture you see there in the yellow. Those are the questions that are filling in the blanks.

Then you're going to get into the more probing questions which are like the, did you questions. Those are what I call like admission gaining questions, where I'm asking them to make a conclusion or asking them to assert one thing or another. That closes off to make sure that I've gotten all of the little nuance to details to understand the entire situation.

The final question that I – (inaudible) – to make sure that I have been as comprehensive and as deep as possible is, anything else. Then I keep on asking anything else in a polite and congenial way until they have said no, I think I've told you everything I know. That way I've made sure that I've gotten all of the information that that person I'm interviewing has on the subject.

That's called the closing off the funnel at the end and you can do this over and over again on different subjects to fully ask all the questions or develop the record so that you know you have all information that's available. I think that the funnel technique ends up being particularly helpful when you are in a situation where you want to make sure that you're asking a lot of questions. But at the same time, you're concerned about being – coming off as hostile or being stuffy. This is a way to keep on thinking, I don't know what to ask next. But if I remember the funnel, I just can get more and more gradually specific to ask the hard and the fast questions.

And then, it's in a gradual way, rather than right away go into the probing questions that people can take offense to that, and may shut down earlier on in the [inaudible]. Next slide. Data displayed in charts and graphs is another great way to spring into conversations about challenges or achievements.

Let the interviewee react to and interpret the information and let the conversation flow from there. Often when I come into an interview or do a monitoring, I like to say I come bearing gifts and I have a folder full of charts. It's a great conversation starter and it shows them that I'm there to help, but it also makes the state or the grantee think on a macro basis, and they end up researching the variances and discovering issues that they may not have known before.

I like to also have the program manager walk me through everything like I've never seen it before. For instance, I might say, walk me through your service delivery for participant, and then I'll follow up questions to fill in the gaps, show me how this issue – like I'll say, show me how this issue got set up by the system. Now what are you going to do to resolve that? After that what happens next? I'd like to think of it in another way. If you're trying to think of – (inaudible) – make sure that you fully developed and asked all the questions you can.

Imagine that you're setting the stage, and you're thinking of everything in a logical sequence. If something doesn't make sense to you, then you need to ask that question. Be skeptical. Sometimes asking questions in different ways can help people think through a response. It doesn't just have to be I'm going to ask you the same question again and again and again because that comes off as hostile and it comes off as the person's gave a wrong answer. State a little bit different, put the blame on you.

But don't be afraid to ask the hard and fast questions. Be inquisitive. And when everything doesn't work, take a break and circle back so that your interviewee knows that it's not about taking offense. Like give everybody a time to stop, take a breath, and think about it from a different perspective.

Sometimes, even overnight can help because then they'll reset and then they'll realize the answer was there all along. Next slide. Interview guides or question lists are always a great way to help think through what you're going to ask. I tend to have those questions that some lists set out ahead of time, that helps me when I'm trying to brainstorm. And they're for me, and they're my guides, but they're not for the state to answer or the grantee to answer.

If you're just handing the question sets or your thoughts of what you want to ask to the grantee, they're just filling out a survey. And if you're just going down and writing down their answers, then you might as well just send that to them ahead of time and they can do it at their leisure. What you need to do is adapt and ask questions that flow from their last answers.

That's going to be where your value is added as it occurs and that's what's going to be appreciated more from them because it helps them think through the entire issues rather than just whatever questions you have on your list. If you end up reading from a list, without adapting, the interviewee is going to feel like you're not listening to them, like you're wasting your time and he should have just given the guide to the answer – guide to them and they can mail it back to you.

So remember, your guides are for you to brainstorm in advance but during the review, you're going to use your brain not the guide that you use to brainstorm Next slide. So, as promised, we're going to go through the different types of interview techniques. Their question types are closed-ended questions, open-ended questions, probing questions, and reflective questions. Each of these are described more in the core monitoring guide, as was listed in the previous slides. Next slide.

Close-ended questions. Close-ended questions provide direct answers to questions and leave limited opportunity for detail. These questions generally require the grant recipient to answer yes or no, or provide exact information and precise details that answer the question. And I'm going to phrase these questions with, did you. But I don't recommend making a statement and asking them to agree, that's going to be called a leading question and it doesn't provide you the best information.

If you've watched Law and Order, you've heard about leading questions. Basically, a leading question is one where you make a statement and ask them to agree. The common leading question, although not always, is going to start out with – most often when I've heard someone ask a leading question, they start out with someone make a statement and then say, is that right?

When you're doing that, you're asking someone to agree with the statement you made, and all they're doing is agreeing to your assessment, but it doesn't mean that that's how they would have said the same thing given the opportunity to ask. So an example of a close-ended question that may not be leading is, did you increase youth enrollment in the program year 2017?

Ability that the grant recipient staff responds by saying yes, 50 percent instead. However, in the event this staff answers no, it's going to unlock an opportunity for the reviewer to end – to ask open-ended questions. If I was asking a question on employment benefits review, I might say, did you change your applications and weekly payment requests to incorporate questions specific to COVID?

If they say, yes, great. What questions are there? Describe those questions. Now we're getting more open-ended issues. If they say no, then it opens up more questions. Why didn't you do that? The analysis that you use to make that decision. Next slide. Open-ended questions. Open-ended questions define the topic being reviewed, but also provides opportunities for the reviewer to discuss the topic with open-ended questions.

You're going to have questions that are more like describe and how. It allows for more clarification on response. For example, the reviewer can ask, in the past, how did staff promote youth participation in the program? Chances are that the grant recipient iterates all the practices that lead to participation that you can then pick the reviewer, the monitor could then pick from these answers and probe deeper for further explanation.

For UI, I might ask them to describe the biggest hurdle that they had to efficiency. One of my favorite open-ended questions that I like to ask is called the magic wand question and it tends to get really good information and I learned this from one of my predecessors. The magic wand question is, if there's anything that you could change about the processes that are in your job to make it more efficient, if you had a magic wand and could change something, what would it be?

This lets them describe for me what barriers they have in getting their job done in an efficient or apprehensive way and then it lets me dive deeper about how I might be able to help them fix that solution. Sometimes they're going to tell me things that I can't fix because I don't have a magic wand. But it gives me a – it lets them describe it to me and it makes them use more words which lets me understand overall what it's like in their daily life. Next slide.

Probing questions. So we talked about these. These are going to be where you're going deeper and getting more specific. These can come off hostile if you're not careful. You're going to use these questions when you go – want to go deeper into a subject or answer and get an answer in order to understand the rationale or the reason. Probing gives the grant recipient staff more latitude to provide greater details. I tend to ask questions that are going to test the logic to understand the limits of an assertion.

So during a probing, the reviewer might ask, so you said X and Y, now what's the difference between these two? What would happen if you did something different? Be careful with questions and I can't reiterate this enough. You have to stay charismatic and calm and friendly. Remember to stay in the position of where they're teaching you about their job. If you seem to be a doubting Thomas or if you seem to be doubting the interviewee or indicate that they gave a wrong answer, they're going to shut down.

So I like to tend to reiterate, I'm just trying to wrap my mind around it so that I can understand everything that you do. You said X, is that different than this? If so, why. You can get them to explain all that then you're filling in all of the gaps of what they said before and then you're going to be more understanding of the overall processes that we do – that are affecting your findings in your areas of concerns and your best practices. Next slide.

Reflective questions. Reflective questions require the interviewee to reflect on a situation and describe it. Such techniques allow the interviewee to provide more detail on the cause and the effect of a problem. For example, you could – what other facts or issues do you think are relevant to the low youth participation in your program? The magic wand question that I described before is another example of reflective questions.

It makes the interviewee go back and assess all of the facts that they have that they know to be true and then give you a conclusion that's based on this. That question has given me some of the best information that has made the biggest difference to our states. And sometimes, it can be super small things that really just – (inaudible), that makes a very big difference.

One time I asked a magic wand question and I was told, I would really like to have a fax machine that has a date and stamp so that we can correctly determine when appeals have been filed. It was a simple fix but it made someone's job super – much, much more efficient. And it saved hours of work and then trying to assess when something came in, maybe over the weekend when there was no accurate date stamp available. Next slide.

So the broad take-aways overall, remember that the entrance conference is going to set the stage for the entire monitoring review. People are going to mirror back what you present to them. So you need to be your most professional self, but also be as charismatic as possible to set them at ease. If you are overly stuffy, you're less likely to get more out of them.

The most successful monitoring reviews use multiple approaches to gain information just like everybody learns a different way, you're going to gain information by different techniques. And that's going to allow you to have a more comprehensive report. You've got to see it when you're walking through it. You've got to look at the case files to know.

You've got to monitor somebody from their – in their – and shadow them in their everyday job. You've got to interview them. You've got to ask different types of interviewing questions, sometimes the same question different way too. But the more you can diversify the way that you're getting information, the better information you're going to get in the door, and then you'll be able to confidently say the information that you're providing in your report is accurate.

Use interview techniques such as careful question selection in the funnel techniques to gain the most comprehensive and definitive information possible. If you use that funnel technique and you're always closing off the funnel at the end by saying is there anything else you want to tell me, you know that they can't come back later and say, I didn't get a chance to say, or I wasn't allowed to say or I didn't – I wasn't asked all the questions that I wanted to be asked about that topic. You're letting them tell you all the information. And I'll hand it back over to Annie to see if we have any questions. And I hope that you all were able to hear me. I think it's – I hope it was better. I was on speakerphone the rest of the time.

MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Nanette. First of all, thank you – wonderful information that you shared. We did get a few questions in the chat. And I was able – the sound sounded good so we were able to hear you very clearly. We have only received a few questions so if anybody has questions, please go ahead and put those in the chat but let's go ahead and get started and answering the ones that did come in.

So the first question that came in was, should information like the objective and approach of the entrance conference be outlined in a state's annual or multiyear monitoring plan or in state policies and procedures? And so my first reaction to that is that is the yes and no. So the state monitoring plan procedures may lay out the state's broad approach objectives or priorities for monitoring. But as you dive in and do your pre-monitoring work, you're going to be doing a risk assessment and potentially be what indicated, lead to the review to begin with.

But also, you're going to just be honing in and identifying issues, pre-monitoring and that's going to inform the approach objectives or priorities specific to that individual review. So yes, the state monitoring plan and policies and procedures, will likely lay out the objections and the approach for monitoring in general. But for each individual review is going to vary a little bit and that should be included in the entrance conference. So Nanette, I don't know if there's anything you wanted to add on that response.

MS. GREEN: No. I completely 100 percent [inaudible].

MS. LEONETTI: Excellent. Thank you. The next couple of questions I'm going to turn it over to Nanette. So first, Nanette, one of the – somebody wrote in the chat and was asking about the graph and charts. And can you give us a little bit of an understanding of how really specifically you have used graphs and charts to just start a conversation in an interview. So what types of things have you put in graphs and charts to – as that interviewing technique or to draw information out from folks?

MS. GREEN: This is a great question. Thank you. I'd love to put it up on the screen and share but I don't think that's going to be possible. Plus I wouldn't want to put any one state of grantee out on call to show you my past charts. But here's what I can tell you. I pull out all of the data and luckily in the unemployment program, we have data banks where I can pull it and I can see things like timeliness quality over a long period of time, even in some cases going back to the 80s and the 70s.

I can take all of that data and create charts that show how the states trended over time. And I can use – what I'll do is I'll create those graphs or charts, and I'll bring them to my meetings, especially when I'm with upper management that are looking at a very macro perspective, and show the dips and times – dips over time.

Now, sometimes, for example, in our programs, you're going to see quality or not necessarily quality, but timeliness dips that are going to occur during things like the recession or when there were great sparks of unemployment, certainly during the pandemic, for example. And those are understandable but sometimes we see them in a cyclical fashion that's going to occur every year, or maybe occurred during a one – during one specific time in one year.

If I can identify those, I can ask more questions and here's an example of how I used that. I pulled one chart for a state and said, you and – it looks like around early – I'm making up time. Early 2018, started having way higher numbers than you had in the past. And we know that there were no political or economical changes that occurred during that time period that would cause such an increase, what do you think this was?

And they didn't know offhand. They want to research and found out that that's when there was a computing change that added extra data to a different criteria that hadn't been there before. They fixed it, it evened out their numbers and it provided more accurate data later on. It can also be they might recognize staffing, staffing changes sometimes process changes come about. So looking at things from that large perspective from that great 10,000 mile looking way, can help you narrow in on changes that may lead to compliance overall.

That's specific for unemployment, you can find other types of data, if you can use that ahead of time to create something that gives you a much broader perspective. You can look at trend changes, ask questions, and then they're going to find interest and want to know the answer themselves.

MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Nanette. That was really helpful illustrations of that. Thank you. Our last question and so I will just remind folks, if you have any questions, this is your opportunity. Our last question Nanette is, somebody asked, can you please provide some best practices for taking notes during programmatic interviews, while also maintaining eye contact or connection with the interviewee?

MS. GREEN: Right. And I think that's a great question. This takes practice. I won't kid you. I mean, when you're interviewing somebody, the most important part that I can say is you have your notes in front of you but you're not reading them, you're not reading from them. I like to have a notepad or notebook in front of me and I might write down topics. But let me tell you, once you – once someone sees you writing down that topic, they know it's important to you and they might get nervous that they said something wrong.

So I find key times to write down just the things that are in my head and I might even provide them a caveat of, I'm going to – I'm writing this down but this is just for my memory more than anything else. And that puts them – is the overall goal to keep them at ease. What I tend to do is keep on talking to them and when something strikes my interest, I might write one or two, three words.

After the interview, I might go and fill those words out or even create a list. When I'm doing a monitoring view, I like to have a list of things that I'm going to follow up on later on that I'm going to dive deeper in. And it might be potential issues and as I go along throughout the monitoring review and things resolve, I cross out those issues and know that they aren't real. Then at the end of the review, whatever I have left, that generally is my outline for the monitoring report.

So my recommendation is, chat like your chatting to a co-worker or a friend and when something – if you absolutely need to write it down because you think you're going to forget, tell them – let me just make a quick note, like three words or something, just to remind you what you were thinking about and continue the conversation, fill it out later.

MS. LEONETTI: Thanks, Nanette. I mean, you hit on something so important there is just that the – letting the interviewee feel at ease. Keeping them at ease is so important. And one of the things that I do is I try to be very transparent about the notes I am taking. Like you, I take notes very sparingly and after the interview concludes, I will write up a summary for myself immediately afterwards based on what I remembered at the time, so it doesn't slip their mind.

But during the interview, if I do write something down, I'm always – let the person know what I'm writing down. Because it helps to maintain that feeling of ease, and folks want to know that it's not an interrogation and that they – what they're sharing with you, that you're not writing things down in a gotcha way, you're writing them down because you want to make sure to not – not to keep it in your memory.

So that's one of the things that I do as well. Well, while you were talking, we had a couple more questions come in, and one that's very specifically on the same topic, which is just do you recommend one person doing interviews and someone else taking notes? And so I would – from my response I would say no. I don't recommend that.

Because I think it is really important that – is that relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee and that bringing in an additional person who is in an observer role would probably – could be harmful to that relationship and might not make them feel at ease. Now, it's okay to have two people doing the interview.

But you don't want – anybody that's just in an observer role might be – might break down that trust that you're building with the person you're interviewing. I don't know if you have any other thoughts on that, Nanette. We do have a few other questions that came in so I want to make sure that we answer those.

MS. GREEN: Yes, ma'am. I 100 percent agree with you, Annie. I have done it where I've done multi monitor reviews where we had a group and I've done somewhere with two. We generally would not do it, where there's one person asking questions to one person taking notes. Rather, it's much easier if we're all sitting around and talking in an analytical and congenial way about the issues of the day.

If you are just delegating one person to taking notes, it almost feels like a court stenographer. And I'm telling you, they're going to shut down, your interviewees are going to shut down, they're going to feel like they're on the record. You're start getting – like is this off, you're going to start feeling like, can we can do this off the record? (Inaudible) side and then they'll want them to put it down.

You're much better off if you continue the technique of where you ask questions maybe you make a note and you can even say, I'm going to make notes when you say things that could be best practices too, letting them know that notes aren't necessarily a bad thing, a couple words, go back to the conversation, you're going to have much better results.

MS. LEONETTI: Thank you so much, Nanette. We have a few more questions that have come in, so one is just – the writer is curious, how much time do you allocate for the entrance conference to last?

MS. GREEN: For me, I tend – it depends on the state and how many people I believe are going to be at the entrance conference. If I think it's going to be a larger entrance conference, I may allocate an hour. If I think it's in some states I know, I'm going to see a smaller one, I might do 30 minutes to 45 minutes. I'm okay with the entrance conference ending early, I'd almost give them more time.

And then if I end up – it ends up ending early, then I might ask, let's go straight through the walkthrough. What's in this room? Show me what's going on. Show me your world. But I don't ever want them to feel as though they don't have enough time to ask me everything, they want to ask me about this monitoring review.

MS. LEONETTI: Yeah. I – (inaudible) – say it's going to vary based on the scope of the review and the number of people that are involved and so I don't know there's a set answer. But I think you honed in on those key elements that you want to take into consideration in setting it up. And to your last – one of your points was, it's always okay to give people time back in their day. So they won't mind if it ends early.

Nanette, can you provide some best practices for combining and analyzing information gathered from the staff interviews? So how do you take – after you complete the interviews, how do you combine and analyze the information that you got out of them?

MS. GREEN: All right. So what I like to do and I think this would work, remember, in the staff interview, your attention is on the interviewee. Not taking those but you're making little notes – you're making little statements for yourself that you fill out maybe when the person has left the room. After you have completed all of your interviews and I like to set aside maybe a half hour at the end of the day, sometimes I do this in different places, I will take the pertinent specific issues that I have gleaned from those interviews and put them on one sheet of paper.

Over time, I'm gathering and I'm following up on those issues. So let's say I talk to one interviewee and they said – (inaudible) – they sparked maybe two compliance issues, potentially. Those two compliance issues get transferred to one piece of paper that's my running tally if nothing else. And I know that's the area that I want to follow up on. Sometimes it means I have to go back and do more research on my end to see is this a compliance issue? Is this an area of concern? Do I even want to address it?

But I'm consolidating the specific things that might – that I need to follow up on, on another piece of paper, as I go through and I resolve and I figure out more information on those, I cross them out, and whatever's leftover at the end that I know is definitely wrong and maybe a best practice, it becomes the outline for my exit interview and it becomes the outline of my monitoring report. Because those are the things that I know that are outstanding issues, I know we can fix and I know I want to keep in the monitoring report.

MS. LEONETTI: Thanks, Nanette. We have another question regarding the interviews and the ratio of interviewers to interviewees. So really, like how many interviewers should be involved in an interview with one interviewee? And my office cup would be, one, maybe you're going to have two, but it's really about the trust relationship that you're building with the person you're interviewing.

So what makes sense to maintain that relationship? But there may be times that you have a couple of folks doing the interview because we've got a couple of folks on the review. But the more people you have, the less likely the interviewee is going to be placed at ease. So I don't know if you have any further thoughts on that, Nanette? Do you agree with that?

MS. GREEN: I agree. I think the only thing I would say is with the virtual meeting environment, we've seen that we do more interviewers during virtual meetings than I may do if I was doing an in-person meeting. With a virtual meeting, I may have three people, but it's been so easy for other people to come in and just have the meeting open, the Zoom meeting open and go to other work.

So we're seeing more and more people in there during an interview. Ideally, it would be one on one and maybe two or three on one. But most that's going to be ideal, but with virtual you see more. I don't think that there's that, you just need to be careful to make sure that some person doesn't feel ganged up on. It can be overwhelming and intimidating. So do everything you can to keep them at ease, and if you can limit the amount of people during an interview, better, even better.

MS. LEONETTI: Thanks, Nanette. We have another question that came in. And someone's asking, would it be okay to bring treats for the office? Like doughnuts or fruit at the beginning of the review by way of introduction. Do you have any thoughts on that? I mean, I can say from our perspective, we can't pay for them. If the person bringing them is doing it, you're going to be doing that on your own. But beyond that, do you have any thoughts about that? Is that a technique that you have used? I think I've brought candy before.

MS. GREEN: Well, I think it's important to remember that you're setting the stage and whatever you put out there, you may end up getting back. They're going to mirror you in your technique. So if I bring donuts or fruits or something like that, what if they come back and they bring the same thing for me?

It might be great, but you can't accept gifts potentially either if you're the auditor, and there's a limit there. You don't want to bring gifts and then then mirror back and say, yeah, I brought you a gift, and – or I'm going to take you out to dinner and I'm going to pay for it, where do you draw the line? So I think it's all about setting people at ease but remember, you may get back what you put out and you may have a question about whether or not you can accept it.

MS. LEONETTI: Thanks so much. So we have one last question and we're just about out of time. So the last question, I might need to ask the person who wrote this for a little clarification. But the question is, can you please describe the level of technical assistance a monitor should provide versus a regional advisor?

And I think – go ahead, Nanette, I'll let you answer that. But I think what is being asked is, basically what type of technical assistance should be provided? What level during the review versus an advisory or technical assistance visit or a virtual visit? So how do you know – is there a balance of technical assistance that you tried out not to exceed in a review or tried to reach in a review?

MS. GREEN: I think that it's most important to pay attention to when you can identify ways that will work for the state or maybe that they haven't thought about, that would be more efficient. But not overwhelming them with – everything you're doing is wrong, you should do it differently do it like this other place.

It's identifying simple, potentially even low-hanging fruit that they can change. It doesn't help anybody to go in and say your entire computer system is horrible, get rid of it, do a new one. I know you don't have millions of dollars but go find a new one. Rather, if you can say, look, here – have you thought about switching these roles? Or maybe you have two people doing this role if this person was to change it and to do this or there's a technique that I've seen in another state have you thought about doing this this way?

Little things that you can help along the way to show ways to be more efficient is going to be the better value. So it's picking those things but not so many, that they feel as though their entire process needs to be scrapped. Because then you're going to have a greater problem, they become overwhelmed by the technical assistance.

So I think it is a balance, identifying simple changes that they can make, rather than broad, changing the program altogether. Because if you do that, then you're getting closer to compliance. And you're also getting to a situation where they may not end up taking your advice at all because it's overwhelming.

MS. LEONETTI: Thanks so much Nanette. So that pretty much takes us to the end of our questions. So thank you everybody that submitted questions and we're almost at the end of our time. So before we go, I just want to take a quick moment to remind you of the state monitoring and oversight page on WorkforceGPS, where you can find these webinars, webcasts, and podcasts in this series. So I'm also going to show you, there's the link to that page and be sure to check back there. We are adding resources regularly.

And the last thing I would say is, I want to say big thank you to everybody who participated today. And a big, big thank you to Nanette, and we look forward to seeing you on our next webinar, Effective and Efficient Monitoring Practices and review wrap-up that will be taking place in a couple of weeks on June 2nd. And be sure to mark your calendar – final webinar in this series, a Deep Dive of the Four Cs on June 23rd. With that, I'd like say one last thank you to everybody who's been involved with us and I will hand it back to Grace.

(END)