**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**RETAIN 2 Award Orientation**

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GRACE MCCALL: And welcome to "Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) Phase 2." So without further ado, I'd like to turn things over to one of our speakers for today, Andrea Hill. Take it away.

ANDREA HILL: Thank you so very much, Grace, and welcome, everybody. Thanks for joining us today. We're here for the Phase 2 orientation. So congratulations to all of you who are here.

If you haven't entered your name and where you are already, please keep doing that. But if you would for just one moment, too, take a brief respite from that and let us know what role you play and in your RETAIN 2 project, whether you are a prime awardee and you're the authorized representative or the project director, primary investigator for the prime awardee, or if your financial folks at the prime awardee level, if you're a subaward official, if you're a return-to-work coordinator or a health care provider, employment services provider, if you provide other services related to the RETAIN 2 project or if you're an employer partner or you are a performance or data analyst.

So I'll keep talking. If you guys could fill out that little poll for just a minute, and then when you're done filling out the poll, continue to give us your name and where you're from in that welcome chat.

And, again, my name is Andrea Hill. I'm from the Office of Grants Management at the Employment and Training Administration here at the Department of Labor, and I will be serving as your moderator today.

One thing to keep in mind for today's presentation as we go through is that the materials are geared towards prime awardees. So some of the information may not be directly applicable to you if you are a subawardee, but there's still stuff that you can pick up for the sub. So that's why you were invited.

And, hopefully, this will be able to benefit all of you as you work through your RETAIN 2 projects. There's a lot of resources that are available and information that is going to be here today. So let's get going. Thanks so much for entering that poll, and we'll keep on cranking along.

We've got a bunch of great people here to speak to you today. Again, myself, the moderator, Andrea Hill. We have Sheldon Serkin, David Rosenblum, Chris McLaren, Meredith DeDona, who are all from ODEP here at the national office, to provide you with some information for that.

We have our grant officer, Charles Cox, who's here on the line. And then we have representatives from our three funders who were here. These awards are funded by three entities, two within DOL and then also for the Social Security Administration. So Jackson Costa is here from the Social Security Administration. Steve Rietzke is the division chief at the Office of Workforce Investment in the Employment and Training Administration.

And I'm very excited to turn it over now to Jennifer Sheehy, the deputy assistant secretary at ODEP. Jennifer?

JENNIFER SHEEHY: Thank you so much, and I'm really excited about this orientation. We've been waiting for this for a long time. In fact, this was kind of our vision in -- I think in 2013 we started our return-to-work research project and community of practice. And we thought, someday, someday, if we are able to do a demonstration to really have strategies so that we can make policy recommendations to get coordinated health and employment services and really good return-to-work outcomes for individual Americans across the states, we thought that would be the ultimate. And here we are.

So congratulations. We're super excited. I think you'll hear that from everyone today. And we know the hard work is just starting. We -- you all did an amazing job over the pilot phase -- the planning and pilot phase, putting together partnerships, trying to figure out what was going to work, figuring out how to recruit participants. And all that hard work paid off, and I just want you to know that we're here with you.

The Social Security Administration, our wonderful partners in ETA, and our partners and AIR and Mathematica, we're going to help you. We're going to probably give you more help than you ever wanted. So -- but I want you all to know that this is a true partnership, and we're here for you. We want to know when we can help, how we can help, and we're all rooting for your success.

So with that, I will turn it back over to Andrea. Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thanks, Jennifer, so much. We really appreciate you taking the time to be here. Let's see. Jackson from the -- Jackson Costa from the Social Security Administration is here today too. Jackson, did you want to say hello?

JACKSON COSTA: Sure. Thank you so much. I mean, we want to echo our excitement to work with you all on Phase 2. As Jennifer said, we know you all have been working so hard to get to this point, and we're really looking forward to seeing your projects grow. There's been so many challenges along the way and so many changes to adapt to those challenges, and you all handled it so well. And so, now, you're ready to go into this full implementation mode.

And while Phase 1 has gotten you ready to expand your programs and learn the best practices and really kick off your projects, you're still likely to face some new challenges in Phase 2. And I just want to remind you that we, the evaluation team, as well as our partners and implementation team and everyone else on this call, is really here to help you get through those road bumps as well. So, please, don't hesitate to reach out and ask questions.

On the valuation side, your contacts within SSA and Mathematica will mostly be the same. In fact, your respective evaluation leads will be in contact with you soon on how to get things started. But until then, like I said, we're still available should you have any questions or excitement you'd like to share. And I guess I'll just end it here by congratulating you all again. And so let's get the real show started. I believe I'm passing it back to you, Andrea or Steve.

MS. HILL: Thanks so much, Jackson. Great to have you here today. And last but definitely not least, Steve Rietzke from OWI.

Steve Rietzke: Thanks, Andrea. Thanks, Jennifer and Jackson, for your comments.

I'm really going to echo what Jennifer and Jackson already said. At ETA, we're certainly also excited as you are beginning this next phase of your RETAIN journey. This partnership -- our partnership with ODEP and SSA is definitely an important one for us. And I think we've done a lot of great work together at the federal level.

And you all have done great work in your spaces in your states. And really, I want to congratulate you on coming back for Phase 2. Like Jennifer said, in some ways your work is just kind of getting started. But I think we've been really excited about RETAIN from ETA's perspective in the sense that this is really kind of an approach for the workforce system and a set of partnerships with the workforce development system included that's really kind of changing the way that you might look at individuals with disabilities in your approach to serving them as you try to help them either stay at work or return to work.

So we're excited about the partnerships that these projects are driving between the workforce system, the health care system, and other systems like voc rehab. We're excited about the evidence that you all are building that we hope will continue to grow and continue to inform the approaches that the whole system takes toward serving people with disabilities and making sure that they have equitable access to services and access to job opportunities.

So welcome, again. I know this is -- we're calling this an orientation. For some of you, this may be a refresher, but we know it's hard work to be a grantee. And, hopefully, you find the content today helpful and just know that you have a whole team here at the national level to support you throughout the project. So congratulations and welcome.

MS. HILL: Thank you so much, Steve. Really great to hear everybody who's here today.

So really quickly, we've just got a brief agenda. We're just going to kind of -- we've done the welcome and introduction. We're going to give you a little overall view of DOL and then go through some of your responsibilities that we're talking about but then also in ways that we're going to help you continue on with those responsibilities.

So first, we'll start with the DOL offices. This is a graphic that shows you just a little bit how DOL is kind of set up, and these are set up for those of you particularly who are new. We'll talk a little more about communication plan coming up a little bit later on in the presentation.

But, as I said, there are two agencies at DOL here who are involved with these awards in a funding capacity, the Office of Disability Policy here, which will serve the program office function in this diagram, and ETA, the Office of Grants Management, where I'm located. We serve as sort of the legal and administrative entity for these awards, and it is the office where both Charles and I are located.

Your grant officer and the program officer on the back end here, we talk to each other quite a bit. And then we also talk to your FPO, who serves in many ways as the face of both offices to you at the prime awardee level, as well as your TA provider, which we'll talk a little bit more about those folks in a minute too, which is not to diminish the SSA portion of this. They are talking to everybody on the back end as well.

And then for subawardees, your contact is primarily the prime grantee. So the prime grantee is the one who talks most of the time to DOL.

With that, I'm going to pass it over to Charles Cox, the grant officer, to talk a little bit more about the rest of the office and the roles they serve. Charles?

CHARLES COX: Thank you, Andrea. Good afternoon, everybody. And let me add to the growing list of congratulations. I know that all of our offices are looking forward to working with you. You won this award. You won this award in a competitive environment, and so you have demonstrated that you have the ability to take RETAIN to the next level.

And so at this point, I want to introduce you to some of our offices. The Office of Grants Management serves as the legal entity authorized to grant awards on behalf of the U.S. government and specifically the secretary of labor. So I am, in essence, a agent working for Secretary of Labor, Secretary Walsh.

So if you look -- when you look at your notice of award or NOA in the grant agreement, you'll see that I am the one who will sign your award and, as such, am the only person who can approve a change to the grant agreement itself. And this change to the grant agreement is called a modification.

The Office of Grants Management conveys information primarily through the FPO rather than with the awardees directly, except when we send you copies of your official documents.

And as you'll see from this slide, the program office will -- serves multiple functions outlined, and they will guide the FPO policy implementation and work to support the FPO. The program office will be collecting your performance data and driving your technical assistance events and content.

So as you will see, you've got the supporting FPOs with program policy implementation, provide policy clarification and guidance, as well as provide technical assistance, creating career -- peer learning opportunities, collecting performance data, as well as review some grant modifications prior to OGMs review and involvement.

As you will see on your -- on this slide, your federal project officer is critical to the success of your grant program. The FPO's role is basically a triad. First, they conduct oversight and review of grant performance. They provide you with compliance assistance, and assist you on grant administration matters.

And in Sheldon Serkin, he will be your FPO. So he will be really your first point of contact when dealing with the grant.

Ultimately, all of us are here today because we want to help you succeed. Part of that is providing technical assistance. So I am now going to pass this -- the next section to Chris McLaren, who will go over some of the types of support that will be provided over the next four years. Chris?

CHRIS MCLAREN: Great. Thank you, Charles. And hello, everyone. My name is Chris McLaren and I'm part of ODEP's RETAIN team and I manage the technical assistance with the American Institutes for Research.

So I'm going to give you a broad overview of TA for Phase 2, but I'd like to start first with a poll question. And it looks like it's -- you should see a poll up there already.

So what are your two biggest programmatic concerns going into Phase 2? Developing new partnerships, outreach, recruitment for -- and strategies for participants, outreach, recruitment, and training strategies for new health care partners, engaging with employers, collecting and using data, participating in the evaluation, and also please feel free to share any other area of concern you might have in the chat. You can click on the other option, or you can just enter.

(Inaudible) – looks like it's the most common – (inaudible) – so far. Developing new partnerships in expansion areas, and then we have to – (inaudible) – and they were – (inaudible) – strategy for participants. OK. And looks like Gary, we have one other – (inaudible) – term sustainability plan. That's a good issue to bring up. Thanks for adding that.

So it looks like -- so it's very, very helpful for responding to this, and it's really interesting that the engaging the employers is clearly the biggest concern. We're always to be looking out for top for TA to try to provide timely and effective help to you. And you'll, of course, continue to be informed of any upcoming events, and we're going to do our best to provide the right TA at the right time. So I'm going to continue on.

So TA can be provided in a number of ways, virtually and in person. And, hopefully, it looks like we may be able to schedule some onsite visits at some point in the near future – (inaudible) – during Phase 2.

TA can be as simple as answering a quick question or as complex as an onsite monitoring review. Each of you can receive TA on core program design elements through many avenues as well. These include your FPO, the program office team, and the RETAIN technical assistance provider.

So while we're focusing on the program side of things today, you also have the ability to receive evaluation related TA from the evaluation team themselves. The bottom line is that we want to provide the support you need to build capacity in your staff and ensure that you achieve the goals you outlined.

So there there are various types of TA as well, including newsletters, webinars, and communities of practice, site visits, and there will be an annual RETAIN conference that you will receive more information about, as well as special topic cohort calls that we're actually really looking forward to those.

There are also some grants management training that Andrea will describe in more detail in a few minutes.

During Phase 2, you will continue to receive one-on-one coaching with a dedicated TA liaison who will provide personalized support to address the challenges you face and to help you develop a targeted plan to overcome those challenges. And you're likely familiar with these, but on the right-hand side of the slide, there is a general ODEP RETAIN email address. It's SAW-RTW@dol.gov, and also a link for the web address for the RETAIN TA website, which is also known as the RETAIN Online Community. And I'll talk about that more in just a few minutes.

So there are a number of reasons for TA. First and foremost, TA is there to help you implement your programs and systems. As I think we all learned in Phase 1, developing stay-at-work return-to-work programs is complex. There are often many challenges some may have anticipated and others that were completely unexpected.

TA builds strong relationships with open communication between all of us, meaning you all as the grantees, the FPOs, ODEP's RETAIN team, and of course, the programmatic TA provider and the evaluating. We're all in this together, and we want you to be comfortable reaching out with questions or to get support or advice.

TA also cultivates a holistic learning experience. We want to serve as thought partners with all of you in RETAIN so that TA can also be useful, effective, and timely, whether it's through the more universal TA provided in webinars and communities of practice to the targeted TA resources on specific topics, to the one-on-one TA.

And we're excited to continue learning from all of you as well and the innovations you come up with to serve newly injured and ill workers because, at the end of the day, that's what this is really all about, helping workers with the new injury or illness to transition back to work.

So you are all providing a critical service to these workers who would not have that assistance otherwise. And we will do what we can to support you in achieving that goal.

As I mentioned earlier, you may get TA from different sources. This slide provides some examples of the type of TA or guidance you may get from your FPO compared to your TA liaison.

So the FPO focus is primarily on matters of legal compliance, while the TA liaison can help you envision building out your program and then implementing those visions.

So, for instance, if you have a fiscal question about allowable expenditures and budgets, that would fall under the FPO, while strategies about training, design, implementation would fall under the TA liaison.

But I do want to stress that we have a no wrong door policy. We had that in Phase 1, and it certainly continues into Phase 2. If you have a question or you want guidance about anything, don't worry if you aren't sure who to reach out to. Just reach out, and we'll make sure that your question gets to the right people.

So I somewhat alluded to this already, so it's not really a surprise, but we at ODEP are thrilled to have the American Institutes for Research to continue providing programmatic TA to all of the RETAIN Phase 2 grantees. You will continue to have the same TA liaisons for Phase 2. There will be some additional liaison support from AIR with each grantee, however. So that will be a slight change, and more details on their involvement and support will be provided in each state's programmatic kickoff meeting.

OK. Finally, before I hand it back up to Andrea, I'd like to briefly go over the RETAIN Online Community, also known as The ROC. This is a virtual platform that houses a range of TA tools and resources. It has blog posts, communication tools, podcasts, webcasts, TA resources, and more.

I'm sure many of you are familiar with The ROC, whether it's just that you have an account or that you use it frequently. If you ever miss a webinar or TA event, it is available on The ROC for you to watch on demand. I also know many of you receive lots of emails. So if you ever missed a particular resource that was sent out by email, you can also find that here on The ROC.

If you have not visited the platform for a while, I would recommend going back. There have been some organizational improvements, but the best way to learn how to navigate is really just to spend a bit of time familiarizing yourself with the platform.

There are also a number of options for discussion boards as well. In Phase 2, we plan to use this more actively, as it can be a place to discuss ideas, challenges, and successes in a collaborative environment.

So thank you. And, now, I'm going to hand it back over to Andrea to talk about some WorkforceGPS and grant management TA resources. Andrea, back to you.

MS. HILL: Great. Thanks so much. So I just want to introduce you here to WorkforceGPS, which is basically The ROC, but it's The ROC for the workforce system and for ETA discretionary grants that are funded across the entire Employment and Training Administration, grants as diverse as YouthBuild, a number of apprenticeship grants, and even UI and other sort of formula grants are -- have a presence, I guess, there on WorkforceGPS in a community.

This slide, you can see a number of the communities that are there. Since one of the goals of these awards is to help further integrate these sort of equity policy within the workforce system, it's a great place for you to go and maybe make some connections, double check, maybe have some lightbulb moments about other grants and ways that you could partner with other programs to further both of your goals.

So want to point that out. It's WorkforceGPS.org. This is the platform that you're visiting right now. This is where we're hosting this orientation webinar as well. There is a disability and employment community there that's hosted by the -- actually, Steve's office has a division within his office, and they have a presence there, too. So please do check that out. Register, perhaps -- and you register and get updates of new materials that are posted on a regular basis to you across the entire workforce system.

Additionally, I want to introduce you to SMART trainings which are located on the WorkforceGPS community. It is a series of financial trainings. Finance is not -- shouldn't be limited to just the finance folks. Everybody working on awards should be kind of aware of some of the rules and regulations generally requiring oversight for financial rewards.

And another brand-new tool that was just published the other day is the WorkforceGPS playlist where there's a list of a number of audio and webinar resources. So all of the grants post webinar trainings throughout the communities. So it should be a really good resource there on WorkforceGPS and these two sub areas for you as well. But, again, the SMART trainings is something that everybody, particularly subs, should be paying attention to.

In the area of grants management, the states generally have a pretty robust financial system. So everybody knows pretty much what they're doing, but we're going to go to talk a little bit more about grants management. And so I'm going to pass it back over to Charles.

Charles Cox: Thank you, Andrea. Appreciate it. I'm going to talk about grants management, and we're going to kick off this portion with another poll.

So if we could, we have -- the basic question is, what area of grants management are you most interested in receiving additional guidance or assistance? And I see we're getting some responses.

OK. Looks like the top one at this point is developing proper written policies and procedures, financial or program, and that seems to be followed closely by either coordination of partnership organizations and financial tracking requirements for federal grants.

So we've got some fairly standard areas of concern and seeking additional guidance. And we have the resources to address those concerns and provide you with the guidance and assistance. So I think we've got a good sense of what you're needing and what you're looking for from us. And if we could now close that out.

And so at this point, we'll talk about the fact that every authorized representative for the -- for these grants, as well as the point of contact indicated on the application, should have received from our office a grant notification letter.

We had hoped to have your award package to you last week, but there's a DOL computer system which wasn't talking to another department. And we are very close to having that situation resolved. We anticipate the agreements being transmitted this week. If you hear me say grant agreement during this presentation, know that for this orientation purpose, cooperative agreement and grant agreement are the same thing.

The agreement itself consists of your grant award letter, the actual grant agreement, which is a great resource for ETA grants, and the grant award letter labeled PMS Letter contains information about the payment management system and passwords and PINs for online security when accessing your accounts. And the entire grant agreement will be contained in that transmittal package.

Now, the grant agreement includes the notice of award followed by the condition of award page, a table of contents of the grant terms and conditions, the -- any attachments that are associated with that, which include the application for federal assistance, also known as your SF-424, the budget, which includes the SF-424A and budget narrative, the statement of work and, if applicable, the indirect cost rate agreement.

Now, the grant award letter contains important information about how to access your funds via the payment management system, or PMS, which is operated by the Department of Health and Human Services. These systems require two separate PINs and passwords. Additional information and forms for the PMS system can be found at the website on your screen, www.doleta.gov/grants under manage your awarded grant.

At grants.gov you'll find information about the grantee fiscal reporting system and the federal financial report form, also known as the ETA 9130. Your passwords and PINs are sent separately after you supply the necessary information. Once you receive it, please do not lose it.

Now -- sorry. OK. And let me -- the notice of award. So what you'll see here is your NOA contains the grant recipient's identifying information, which is the name of your organization, the address, EIN and DUNS number. It also contains the federal award identification number or FAIN, otherwise known as the grant number. The period of performance, award amount, uniform administrative requirements, and cost principles and signatures are also included in this document.

Nowhere in the grant agreement is this stated, but I would like to point out that these competitive grants are discretionary money funded by ODEP, ETA, and the Social Security Administration. I know that many of the partner organizations and subawardees are also governmental agencies, and it's very important that everyone understands that discretionary grants are project grants and the money should not be treated as general operating funds but tracked and expended only for the benefit of this grant's activities.

The period of performance for these starts May 17th, 2021, and ends on May 16th, 2025. These are odd dates, it's true, but we had some very problematic database issues which didn't allow us to award prior to this. And we want to allow you to get started on Phase 2 as soon as possible and not to have to wait until the beginning of the next quarter on July 1st.

This will result in your having to submit a performance report on this short quarter, which Chris and David will talk about later. But, again, we wanted to be able to get you on your way as soon as possible.

The NOA then calls for the administrative requirements and cost principles to the attention of your awardees. We'll talk further about these in a minute.

Then there is a signature block. Note that by submitting the SF-424 into grants.gov, DOL does not require these awards to be countersigned in order to be active.

Sorry. I -- okay. Had the right slide. I apologize.

As grantees, you are required to fully comply not only with this grant agreement but also all applicable statutes, regulations, and cost principles in performing your responsibilities under this grant agreement.

Cost principles that are set -- are a set of government-wide rules that apply to all ETA grantees and are outlined in 2 CFR or Code of Federal Regulations, also known as the Uniform Guidance. 2 Code of Federal Regulations 2900 contains the Department of Labor exceptions, which define the conditions under which grantees may charge costs within federally funded grants.

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

With regard to incremental funding, first, I'd like to point out that the award amount, in case you noticed on previous slide, each of the Phase 2 awards are utilizing incremental funding, which means each award received -- will receive an initial $14,543,706 rather than the fully requested amount at this time.

We fully anticipate that Congress will appropriate the additional funding and that your initial performance on this award will proceed well. So at this time, there is no need to revise budgets or statements of work. However, DOL is not at this time obligated to award the remaining money from your requests.

OK. And I want to -- okay. Apologize.

Now, in your conditions of award, it says after the NOA page of the award agreement is the condition of award pages. An initial review may have turned up some minor budget variances that need to be rectified. Any questions, responses to requests for clarification, and/or revisions for modification related to the COAs must be submitted to the federal project officer assigned to your grant within 30 days of receipt of the compliance review package.

If there are conditions already present aside from the compliance review, you should discuss those with your FPO as soon as possible. Note that a substan- -- a submittal of revised documents does not, in and of itself, constitute approval by ETA. If a modification is required, final approval must be given by the grant officer through the grant modification process. Your FPO will walk you through that process.

Once approved, the revised document or documents will comprise the official modification to your grant agreement, as appropriate, and the COAs will be resolved and marked closed.

Questions pertaining to your submission, responding to these conditions, and/or the compliance review should be directed to your federal project officer.

With regard to program compliance notification, in addition to those COAs, there are also -- there was also a general program compliance notification. The conditions of award pages specifies that these awards will be undergoing an initial compliance review.

ETA and ODEP staff will work to review the specifics of the proposed statements of work, identifying areas of concern within the submitted applications that required either clarification or modification from the grantees. This process will take a few weeks, and you will get a letter which outlines any revisions that you'll be expected to make within the time frame indicated in the letter, typically 30 days.

Federal staff are still conducting an initial compliance review of the awards, but, absent anything that may cause serious deficiencies or findings later on, will not initiate any revision or modification processes. The notification outlines key areas where we have identified potential compliance issues and indicate areas where grantees should pay particular attention as you further develop and roll out your projects, which include some performance items, some program items, and some financial items.

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

Submission of the requested information specified in either the conditions of award or the initial compliance review noted therein does not in and of itself constitute approval by ETA. Should the provided documentation be found satisfactory, the revised information will be incorporated into the grant agreement as an official modification, statement of work revisions, clarifications, budget revisions, and clarifications.

Now, we come to specific terms and conditions. Your grant award package also included the terms and conditions of your grant, starting with the order of precedence, which is utilized if there is any conflict in what federal laws require. This is followed by any other applicable federal statutes and their implementing regulations and, finally, by the terms and conditions of the award.

Next, is the reference to the funding opportunity announcement, or FOA, followed by other pertinent grant information. I would like to point out that, since the FOA is incorporated by reference into the grant agreement, that entirety of -- that entirety of the requirements outlined in the FOA are now a part of your grant agreement.

A couple of grant terms of note. First, pertaining to subawards and really all of the terms of the prime agreement applies to subawards.

PII. The FOA required a submission of data protocols and plan where PII security should have been included, but want to stress that PII protection is the responsibility of everyone involved with this award in any way.

Intellectual property rights. This is federal money. So any resulting intellectual property can be utilized by the federal government, and any materials need to declare that a source of the funding -- the support funding in full or in part is the Department of Labor and, in this case, also the Social Security Administration. We have provided some sample language for you within the grant agreement as well as within the FOA.

I do want to point out that the Department of Labor funding appropriation also has a requirement that the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the program or project funded with federal money and the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the project or program funded by nongovernmental sources also be included in publications, RFPs, press releases, and the like. That requirement is indicated in grant term 14.a. We'll share some augmented sample language with ODEP top share out with other grantees at a later time, if need be.

Now, we get to look at the quarterly financial reporting, and that is a term -- excuse me -- 14.m. One of the terms of condition -- terms and conditions of your award has to do with reporting, and since you are all returning recipients, nothing is changing. All RETAIN recipients use the SF-425 quarterly financial form to report expenditures charged against the grant using the grantee reporting system available at etareports.doleta.gov.

The quarterly report is due within 30 days from the end of the quarter. And as a reminder that the FSRS or for Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act subaward reporting system, reports which are submitted by prime awardees are due for each sub-grant or subcontract over $30,000.

With regard to the budget and statement of work, Attachment A, B, and C of the grant agreement contain the SF-424, the SF-424A, and budget narrative, respectively. All three of these documents were taken from your proposal.

Just a quick note about financial management. All expenditures should be directed towards the specific activity of this grant and be not only allocable and allowable but also necessary to the successful execution of the grant and reasonable. That means that an expenditure would not seem either excessive to any degree, large or small, to a reasonable person.

For instance, if I wanted to buy a tube of toothpaste, I could reasonably expect to pay between $3 and $6. But if I tried to report that I spent $317 on a single tube of toothpaste, that would not be considered a reasonable expenditure of federal funds.

Attachment D of your statement of work, commonly known as the SOW, this also comes from your application and includes the project narrative and all required attachments, such as the abstract, project work plan, timeline, key personnel, and documentation of partnership commitment.

For key personnel identification, only the first page of the resumes were included and were redacted to provide -- to remove any PII.

And, next, the indirect cost rate agreement. For those applicants claiming indirect costs, Attachment E includes the negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, also known as the NICRA. If you claimed indirect costs and did not provide a NICRA from your federal cognizant agency, you were put on a 90-day temporary billing rate. If that is the case, please send your approved indirect cost rate agreement to your FPO.

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

Once ETA receives the NICRA or CAP, ETA will issue a grant modification to the award to remove the 10 percent restriction. We'll discuss grant modifications later during this orientation.

With regard to responsible grants management, not -- this is not explicit in the grant agreement, but included with the FOA is a limitation on the amount of funding that can be used for incentives. The FOA also spells out what does and does not constitute incentives, which brings us to a point I'd like to make that this entire program is a project award which the prime awardee is a state organization.

This money cannot be used for costs of government to run the government. As with any discretionary award, the money cannot be utilized for lobbying purposes, nor can it be used for advisory group expenditures. So it's very important that those working on this award treat it as a project award and not formula funding coming from the government.

Grants and award management is a little different from a typical project too. So be sure that you and your team learns about the processes involved with discretionary funding of grants management.

And at this point, I would like to turn it over to Meredith. Now, I'm going to pass it to Meredith to go over some of the Phase 2 programmatic and policy requirements. Meredith, please take it away.

MEREDITH DEDONA: Thanks so much, Charles. Everyone, it's so wonderful to finally be kicking this off, and we're so thrilled to keep working with each and every one of you and your teams.

So, as you know, DOL awarded or will soon finalize the awards of $103,118,509 worth of Phase 2 funding, and five of our wonderful Phase 1 grantees made it through to the Phase 2 of the project. You all know who you are.

We know that the awards range from $18.8 million up to the maximum of $21.6 million. And we've already talked a bit about the period of performance. So I do think it's worth jumping into a little bit of detail, though.

You have a total of 48 months, and I know we shared several timelines over the past six to nine months with you. And the one that we are sticking with, for now anyway, is that you have six months to complete startup activities, followed by 30 months of program operation, during which time you will need to enroll a minimum the required amount for the evaluation purposes. Six months after that, you will be able to continue providing services to any enrollees who enrolled right toward the end, and then there will be a six-month administrative closeout period.

This is not to say that, if you are ready to start your program operations before six months, you can't do that. You absolutely can start earlier, if you are ready.

So these should look very familiar here, the RETAIN goals that we established in the Phase 1 FOA, and they carry straight through to Phase 2. Our two primary goals are, number one, to increase the employment retention and labor force participation of individuals to acquire and/or are at risk of developing a disability that inhibits their ability to work.

And, secondly, in the long-term, to reduce work disability among project participants, including the need for SSDI and SSI.

Put a slightly different way, sort of a visual layout of the first goal, if our goal -- our overall goal is to increase employment retention and labor force participation of our target population, we expect that you all will accomplish this through outreach and engagement in your targeted communities, and especially in historically excluded or underrepresented populations, through cross-systems training, through the early identification of individuals in need of intervention, emphasis on the early there, close coordination between health care and workforce systems, and, of course, data collection, sharing, and analysis both for the independent evaluation and also for your CQI.

We'll do a quick review here. And we'll go over some of these in greater detail in your individual kickoffs, but just for the sake of covering everything today, to be eligible to participate in the program, participants must be employed or, at a minimum, in the labor force at the onset of the injury, illness, or condition which may be work-related or non-work-related.

And they may not include individuals who have applications pending for SSDI or SSI or who are already receiving those benefits at the time of the onset of their injury on this.

New for Phase 2, we codified what we mean by early and the required amount of participants. So at least 80 percent of enrollments must occur within 12 weeks of the onset of work disability. Beyond that, you were allowed to propose your own criteria.

And just for grins, we did a quick comparison, pulling together basics from a skim of your abstracts. So you can see up on the screen the majority of states flung the doors open to all diagnoses. We have a mixture of focuses of either off the job exclusively or both on and off the job. Most of you all are going statewide, and then we've got various target sample sizes.

OK. We all know there is an important role for the RETAIN leadership team, and in the Phase 2 FOA, there were three entities required, a state entity with responsibility for labor, employment, and workforce development, the state workforce development board, and health care system or systems that are practicing coordinated care and population health management.

We recognize that most of your leadership teams are broader than that. So any other partners who advance mission are encouraged to participate.

There are seven required strategies that must be implemented by all of your programs. You detailed in your proposals your plans for implementing each of those. So I'll just real quickly go through the highlights of those.

Basically, first and foremost, you must have a return to coordinator -- sorry -- return-to-work coordinator role. Now, it may be called something different across the states but someone who's coordinating the service delivery across the health and employment systems.

You must recruit health care providers and, importantly, train them in those occupational health best practices. You must determine what incentives are necessary to get those health care providers to actually participate, as well as other important stakeholders.

Early communications among the stakeholders is very -- another very important strategy. And our last three are workplace-based interventions, retraining or rehabilitation for workers who can no longer perform their prior job, and, finally, tracking and monitoring of the medical and employment progress of our participating workers.

Other required activities. We really want you to participate in our learning community. Demonstration projects are not just opportunities for you all to develop and implement innovative programs. It's an opportunity for all of us to learn. And I specifically include the Department of Labor in that. We are learning right alongside you, as is the Social Security Administration. So please join us. Share your challenges and your successes with us, and we'll be right there alongside you.

Conduct your continuous quality improvement. I'm a big fan of CQI. Join and get involved in those spectacular TA activities that Chris talked about sooner -- or earlier in the presentation today.

We know that you all are so interested in collaborating directly with other Phase 2 states, and we have lots of plans to help you accomplish that. And, of course, you're also welcome to collaborate without us. And, of course, you are required to continue your active participation in the independent evaluation.

This is a quick success factor framework. It's a puzzle that's put together with different elements that we believe will help you achieve success, everything from aligning your policies, engaging those underrepresented and underserved populations, building the right partnerships, using data to inform your decision making, CQI and things like that, leveraging the resources you have available to you, and not just financial resources, other resources as well, and, of course, engaging with industry and employers.

And with that -- excuse me -- I'm going to turn it over to David to talk about performance reporting. David, over to you.

DAVID ROSENBLUM: Thanks, Meredith. Again, I'm David Rosenblum. I'm going to talk about performance reporting, which should be fairly easy since this isn't dramatically different from Phase 1.

First, I want to stress a number of benefits for reporting. A number of specific ones are listed here, but I wanted to go over a few more general categories. First, performance reporting is helpful to both of you, the grantees, and to the Department of Labor for helping you make informed data-driven decisions to improve program design to meet the needs of your participants. Of course, in Phase 2, as in Phase 1, you'll engage in CQI, continuous quality improvement.

Performance reporting is also important for documenting the results of your protected program design models and service delivery strategies. It will allow us at DOL to provide information on success of programs to our stakeholders, which include Congress and the administration, and, similarly, allow you the grantees to report to your own stakeholders on your successes.

And, additionally, performance reporting is vital for demonstrating the impact of grant programs, which of course will eventually be conducted as part of the independent evaluation. And for all of these reasons listed here, report -- tracking your program metrics are a key component of managing your grants.

So moving on to the process of quarterly reporting, as in Phase 1, quarterly progress reports are doing no later than 30 days from the end of each quarter. For each quarter, program activities that occurred through the reporting quarter, although for QPR Appendix A, as in Phase 1, it is essentially cumulative for enrollment information.

Now, there is a wrinkle in Phase 2, which was mentioned earlier, and that's in the first reporting quarter, you're going to report all activities that occurred from the start of the period of performance, the last day of this quarter, so just May 17th through June 30th. So it is a fairly short period, but that is still necessary to do the usual reporting. And, as in Phase 1 – (inaudible) Phase 1, the first report will, therefore, be due no later than July 30th.

So moving on to the various reporting requirements. Again, the basics are the same as in Phase 1. Quarterly progress reports consist of the QPR narrative, QPR Appendix A, and the quarterly financial reports, which were already covered earlier by Charles.

Appendix A, as in Phase 1, will be submitted via DOL secure FTP sites due to the sensitivity of the data. Now, many of you might have been sending notifications, emails to your FPO asking them to send you a link or an e-mail through the FTP site. In Phase 2, you can simply send an email to anyone on ODEP's Phase 2 RETAIN team. That could be me, Chris, [inaudible], Meredith, Sheldon, or anyone I'm forgetting.

As in Phase 1, the narrative is where qualitative activity is reported, sometimes less sensitive than Appendix A. It's not necessary to submit that through the FTP site, although that is an option, or you can simply send it through email or however you were going about that in Phase 1 already.

Now, you should already have prepared in large part for Phase 2 reporting via your reporting in Phase 1, although there will be various differences. And, of course, you'll continue tracking a large variety of early-level data. And we do want to stress that, again, as in Phase 1, when these quarterly progress reports were being sent to DOL as distinct from the transmissions data to SSA and Mathematica and independent evaluator, it is important to remove all personally identifiable information, PII, for that enrollee level data.

Now, we will provide you with a new QPR templates. In particular, there are revisions to QPR Appendix A. As we discussed about half a year ago, we're adding a section on individual level provider data. And, furthermore, we're going to remove entirely the aggregate level data sections. We had mentioned that [inaudible]that down substantially. And we found in the end we were left with only about 10 data elements, which we can now -- which we're still going to ask for, but those are going to be -- those are – (inaudible) – data elements are going to be shifted to the QPR narrative.

Those consist primarily of the elements asking about satisfaction surveys. That was something that was really mentioned in the Phase 1 FOA but was dropped -- effectively, dropped as a requirement for Phase 1 and will, again, be a requirement in Phase 2. And so you'll see in a QPR narrative template a table for about half a dozen elements relating to the satisfaction surveys of enrollees, employers, and service providers.

And then, additionally, we're also going to ask – (inaudible) – QPR narrative just for a few items, not the number of return-to-work coordinators and training provided to them. But there will no longer be any aggregate level data sections in the QPR Appendix A.

Now, furthermore, as we discussed, there are a number of modifications and deletions and also a few additions to the individual level enrollee data sections in QPR Appendix A. And then, furthermore, we have proposed some additional extra additions.

We're going to have a meeting to discuss all of these changes, those that have already been addressed half a year ago and those proposed new changes that you haven't heard before in a meeting that's been scheduled for a week from today. That's May 25th from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. So please save the date. We'll be discussing all of those changes that we've agreed on already and soliciting feedback on those proposed extra changes.

Now, there's an important notification for any grantees that still have a Phase 1 no cost extension underway. Now, unfortunately, if there's overlap between your Phase 1 activities and your Phase 2 activities, you need to track and report on these activities and expenditures separately for each phase. Again, in July, you'll have to issue quarterly reports for those two phases separately.

And it's important to remind everyone that any participants who are enrolled in Phase 1 cannot transition into Phase 2 or be enrolled in Phase 2 at a later date. And, of course, just -- this is in Phase 1. Your program team is working alongside you, and we do encourage you to be candid in your QPRs. It helps us in providing oversight. It helps both you and us improving our programs. And then, of course, when it comes to the data that's being collected, it is vital that that be as complete and accurate as possible, not only for a program oversight but also because that data is being transmitted to an independent evaluator and ultimately used in impact analysis.

And, again, we just want to encourage all of you to save that date a week from today, 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. EDT. And, now, I'll turn it over to Andrea Hill for discussing grant modifications.

MS. HILL: Great. Thanks so much, David. Just want to remind you all that, if you have any questions, we're going to have a few minutes for questions in a little bit. So be sure and put them in the chat. You may not be able to see them, but I promise you that we can.

Modifications. Nothing is really changing here. What is a modification? Well, it's a mechanism to change the terms of the grant agreement. Charles went over the components of your proposal that are currently in the grants agreement.

But, again, if you have a compliance review finding that you will get within a few weeks or if you have conditions of award or if at any point during the period of performance you have something that you need to change, such as the key personnel change, you want to add a service area, or there's a budgetary realignment that needs to take place for whatever reason.

We can even do a change of scope, but that happens very rarely and generally only minor changes will be considered.

The way a modification works is that you'll submit the request to your FPO, who will go through a series of steps to analyze the modification. The ultimate goal, though, too, is what benefit is it to the program at large and to the government? And look at the grant performance, the quality, and the efficiency, and then get back to you.

The documentation that you have to submit for a modification, again, doesn't have to change. But just to remind you that from the prime awardees to the Department of Labor, the request needs to be submitted on the organization's letter and signed by the authorized representative, which is why it makes it very important to make sure that your authorized representative is kept up to date in our records.

You must provide the purpose of the modification and why the modification is necessary to the current statement of work. I've kind of got a frog in my throat. Excuse me. But, ultimately, how the change will benefit the program. Excuse me.

And then the appropriate documentation to support the modification. So if you have a budget modification, to be sure that you're submitting all the budget documentation again.

So the steps that you're going to follow is, first, you want to discuss with your FPO if a mod is necessary. And, if so, maybe how to craft it because your FPO's going to have some ideas about how to possibly craft that. You want to write the formal letter of request. You want to include the modification type.

Make sure that you put the grant number. Particularly for those of you who have some longer extensions to your Phase 1, you want to make sure that that we're looking at the modification for the right award when it gets to us. And then the justification for the request.

You're going to submit all that documentation package to your FPO, and then the FPO is going to review it. And if everything is okey-doke, he's going to submit it further on up the chain to OGM.

So we have a little quiz for you instead of a poll this time. Let's say that you want to expand your target geographic area behind -- beyond what your application proposed. Which answer provides the best response that describes the process for submitting a grant modification.

Are you're going to go ahead and sign the MOUs with the new organizations in the expanded area and begin enrolling participants first? Are you first going to write the letter to the grant officer, which provides the justification, and then send it to the grant officer? Are you going to reach out to your FPO first, or are you going to go through and are you going to verify that existing partners have the capacity to serve additional participants and tell them to go ahead and enrolling participants?

Exactly. So everybody got that, looks like. Everybody got it right. You want to reach out to the FPO first. Now, that doesn't mean that you want to verify with your partners that they have the capacity because, of course, you do want to do that, but you want to talk that through with your FPO first.

So really quickly, I want to pass it on to Sheldon to talk about the communication plan as we go forward, and, hopefully, we'll still have some time for some questions. Sheldon?

SHELDON SERKIN: Yes. Thank you. We thought we would take some time to go over the formal communications as to what you should expect and what we would require.

As you can see, when we go forward, there will be a little bit of redundancy built into this so that we can -- we have larger teams now. We have more people involved, and we want to make sure that the communication is efficient and effective.

One thing to remember is that the person who signs your SF-424 is your authorized representative. Communications from DOL will go to that authorized representative or the point of contact. It is then the responsibility of that representative to communicate with the project team and/or consortium members as appropriate based on the information that's provided. So we need to really make sure that information flows.

If the individual who signs the SF-424 changes for any reason during the course of the grant, please notify us immediately, and we must do a grant modification for that. In addition, there's a little reminder here regarding key personnel. Anytime there is a change in your key personnel, we will need that information in advance of that change to approve it.

We have many ways of staying in touch with each other. We have our meetings. We have the phone. We have our mailbox. We have our direct emails. We're here to help you, and we need you to help us. Together you will find that we will have effective communication and, in turn, be successful in our activities as we move forward.

Here's a little bit of summary about what you should be familiar with. Charles, Andrea, and others have covered many of the things that you need to be aware of. There are things that are unique to your state. There are things that govern federal grants, the Uniform Guidance.

Here are generally accepted accounting principles or GAP. There's a record retention policy associated with the records for this grant. There's the personally identifiable information protection policies, which are included in the terms and conditions. And then there may be other aspects of grant management, since it is not a science but more of an art, that may come into play during the course of your grant.

If you need help, feel free to reach out to me, to others on our team, and there is also some grant management training available. We do not specifically endorse entities, but we do mention that other resources are available to you. If you do not know, there is a list of individuals and you heard some of the websites that were available, as you can see from this slide, and that will be available to you.

If you are the prime awardee and you are contacting Department of Labor, you should contact the FPO and copy the return-to-work and stay-at-work mailbox.

If you are a member of the project team or subaward, the prime is the entity that you should go to first. The prime can then elevate that question to Department of Labor.

If you have any questions regarding performance reporting, send an email to the mailbox. We all have access as a team at ODEP to go to that mailbox, to look at the emails, and then, in turn, to decide how we will respond. And you should always copy the FPO on that communication as well.

If you have any questions regarding financial reporting, and I think many of you are familiar with the SF-425 and how we approach that, but if you have specific questions, you can turn to me, and we will be covering that in our individual presentations.

If you do have any questions regarding the independent evaluation, your evaluation liaison would be the individual to contact.

And I will – (inaudible) – now for questions.

MS. HILL: Thanks, Sheldon. So we do have a series of next steps coming up, additional slides. I want to point out to make sure that, if anybody has any questions, that you put them in the chat that's over there.

But I do want to point out that, if you have any questions or want to go back and double check any of the slides, we have a copy of the PowerPoint, as Grace said before, available for your download down in the file share box, as well as a copy of the general grant agreement for training purposes only.

Again, as Charles had talked about, we're going to get them out to you as soon as we can, but we have that little data glitch going on. But you're all, as far as the federal perspective, awarded, and the period of performance started yesterday.

So if we could really quickly -- Grace, if you don't mind pulling up poll number one. Poll number one, we had up at the beginning, and we didn't have a whole lot of people on right then. So we just want to make sure that everybody has a chance to give us a concept of who is here on this award today, what your role is in the RETAIN 2 awards.

And we do have one kind of question that came up. So somebody asked that, "Based on the Phase 1 work and the Phase 2 application, what TA topic areas do you think are most critical for states to focus on as we start out?"

So, Chris, I'll give you that. That one's kind of a doozy to start out with.

CHRIS MCLAREN: Yeah. No. It's actually -- it's a great question. I don't think that there's necessarily a one-size-fits-all answer at this point. And I will note that the ODEP RETAIN team, we're all still reviewing the applications. We weren't part of the selection panel, and so we're going to be following up shortly with each of the states to talk about their specific plans and identify some areas.

I would say, as a general response, though, would be to make the most of the six-month administrative start-up period to do what you can to get your program infrastructure in place to support your expansion.

I think any of the issues you might have had in Phase 1 are going to be magnified in Phase 2. So if you -- something wasn't developed in Phase 2, as you grow, that problem will be magnified. So any work you put in now will benefit in the long run in Phase 2. Things like the partnership agreements, defining partner roles, responsibilities, data sharing agreements, staffing, information sharing.

I think you all noted that employer engagement was one of your biggest concerns in Phase 2, and we can certainly address that through TA. There's also the big issue of the effectiveness of services. This is going to be an ongoing challenge and something that will require constant review through CQI.

But the bottom line is for Phase 2, can you get everything up and ready to go so when the enrollment period starts, you're more of a well-oiled machine and maybe, basically, able to get people in the door and provide them with effective services?

And I know this isn't a specific answer, but it's a big question. And I will note that AIR is in the process of developing an update to the operational planning and implementation guide for Phase 2. So this was something they did for Phase 1, but they're updating it. And this will be released soon. It's going to cover a broad range of program issues that you can use for planning and identifying areas that you may need to focus on.

So I hope that gives some answer. But it's a great question and -- but, like you said, Andrea, kind of a -- it's a doozy. It's a big one.

MS. HILL: Well, at least, while it was a doozy, it was the one and only question that we got.

So we'll go ahead and continue on to next steps. If anybody has any questions, that doesn't mean that you can't still put them in the chat, but we may not be able to get to them since it looks like we're really pushing the time. So, Meredith, over to you.

MS. DEDONA: Thank you. We can always count on Ohio to keep us on our toes and make sure we're all paying attention.

So, next up, we're ready to get going; right? So some quick reminders for you. We recommend that you have your entire team read the agreement. We will finish our reviews of your proposals, and you'll receive some information that you'll be expected to respond to, as well as any other conditions of award.

Review the performance reporting requirements and DOL fiscal training tutorials. There are a number of training series available to you, as Andrea mentioned earlier. Stay tuned. We will be in touch very soon about the individual state-specific kickoff calls. And these meetings will also include the RETAIN TA provider and details about their role.

We might cover -- we likely will cover other topics as well. But -- let's see. We have a number of links, again, to a number of resources around grant management that we recommend you check out. And, finally, we have a handy dandy form that you can fill in with all of your relevant information, to keep it handy as you need to access key individuals within the program.

With that, I think we can wrap it up. I don't see any other questions, but I will turn it back over to Andrea to close us out.

MS. HILL: OK. Great. Thanks so much, Meredith. So, again, make sure that you download today's PowerPoint. All the links that are in the PowerPoint are live in that PDF for you.

Your grant agreements will be coming to you shortly. But, again, they -- as far as we're concerned, the period of performance started yesterday, and that's what's going to be reflected on your grant agreement. We apologize for the sort of situation going on, but we're getting them out to you as quickly as we can.

Again, any questions get to your FPO or any of the team, as everyone has said. And with that, we want to thank you very much for joining us today. And I'll hand it back over to Grace.

(END)