**TAAACS Open Discussion Feedback Notes**

Petition Outreach (Second Tab) New Collection

There was significant discussion around the petition outreach (new second tab) on the collection. There was confusion about the definition of various categories such as the difference between those who applied and those who were determined eligible. A number of states raised issues with the practicality of collecting the number of workers acknowledging notification.

DOL presented some other options such as collecting the date the worker list was requested and the date the first notification went out. DOL also discussed a field to list what the source of the worker list was.

The provider of the worker list field received feedback about the complexity for how to address if multiple sources were used and the group recommended that simply a flag for whether the company provided a worker list was preferrable.

There were mixed reactions about a petition-level breakdown and its difficulty with a number of states indicating that while most of the information was there, it would be a manual report rather than being able to easily export. It was pointed out that the number of workers served was redundant with the PIRL reporting.

Finally, further clarification is needed on the various data fields and the use of notes.

*DOL Changes:*

*The collection of this petition-level information is critical to understanding the barriers and circumstances that affect outreach. It is also critical to assessing promising practices and designing interventions and process improvements to make improvements. DOL also notes that this once a year collection typically will not have a large number of entries for most states.*

*However, in response to concerns about burden, the collection is being paired back to collect a more limited set of data elements with acknowledgement, eligibility, and those served being removed. Instead, the collection will focus on the worker list and the notification stage so that we can understand barriers in those two circumstances. Notes are being added to clarify the fields as well including the use of the notes section.*

State Organization

There was very little direct feedback on state organization during the open discussion time, but clarifications were requested via email. Some states sought better definitions of FTE and merit staff. In the staffing section, positive feedback was provided on the new breakdown of staffing as the table created clearer distinctions. States noted that the reporting staff question in the IT systems section was capturing similar information. The distinction between indirect participant support staff and administrative staff was not clear and the question on FTE associated with the regions seemed duplicative.

Feedback on the non-staffing sections of state organization was relatively minimal, although we received comments asking for additional option on the infrastructure cost allocation methodology and received positive feedback on the more granular breakdown of the centralized/decentralized administration questions.

*DOL Changes:*

*DOL is incorporating the reporting as a line in the staffing table and removing it from the lower section. DOL provided clarification during the call that the difference between administrative and indirect participant support would be whether that work is considered a grant expenditure of administrative or case management. The clarification was incorporated. The redundant question on FTE in the region was removed. Additional clarification was provided.*

*DOL added further infrastructure cost allocation methodologies and clarified some of the language on centralized and localized questions.*

Outreach

Outreach section was substantially rearranged, bringing information from other sections into this area and moving it up to the second section (in a more logical order). States provided numerous positive comments supporting the change away from ranking to categories for everything from petition filing to barriers. One state also noted that which unit requests the worker list should be moved to the outreach section. The highly unpopular question on what percentage of TAA-related layoffs are being captured was removed and replaced with a series of questions on what methods states use to identify layoffs. Other than support for the original question removal, no state feedback was received on the new question.

*DOL Changes:*

*DOL moved the unit question into the outreach section.*

Eligibility and Program Benefits

This section was rearranged and expanded with questions on the delivery of services to participants, a question on participant assessments, and barriers to job search and relocation. During the open session, no additional feedback was provided on this section, although via email there was both a clarification needed on the service delivery question and an additional barrier suggested for collection. One person provided feedback requesting a ranking between major and minor barrier.

*DOL Changes:*

*DOL provided clarifying language on the services and added two barriers to the job search and relocation barriers about documentation and paperwork. DOL added moderate barrier as an option to all barrier questions.*

Integration

The integration section did not have many changes broadly. The rating scale was changed from 1-5 to 1-3 because intermediate values were almost never used. Feedback was provided asking to add a zero for programs where there is no involvement at all. DOL had removed the email method of coordination because it was not meaningful when all states selected yes. Some feedback was provided that above department there should be an “agency” option for states to indicate of those other groups are not in the same agency at all. One commenter noticed that the options for the type of integration were not logical and were inconsistent. A couple of states requested some clarification on the various programs, for example between Adult Basic Education and Adult Education or were not aware of some of the programs listed. Additional comments were received indicating we should ask separate Adult and Dislocated Worker, see if WIOA Adult/DW are in the same agency, ask about integration with LWDBs, and ask about integration with SNAP 50/50.

*DOL Changes:*

*DOL added a zero option for all ratings and adjusted the types of coordination to differentiate between yes/no responses for Same questions and frequency for methods. Agency was added as a category as requested. Some clarifying language was provided on some of the program names as well as some more explanatory information in the pop-up. DOL also added questions on LWDBs and SNAP 50/50 and added agency questions for Adult and DW.*

IT Systems and Reporting

The IT Systems and reporting was rewritten in an attempt to improve clarity, removing questions on specific forms and reducing the number of questions conditional on other questions. Feedback was provided to move the reporting FTE up to the staffing categories (which we did). The revised collection referred to a “tool” and feedback was provided that this was not clear. Some commenters noted that there could be value in adding questions on the use of shared case management systems between TAA and other workforce programs.

*DOL Changes:*

*DOL removed some redundant questions and provided clearer definitions of the types of systems. The questions were restructured to be subcomponents of one question to reduce the opportunity for confusing phrasing and removed additional questions. As with above, additional options were added for IT cost allocation methodologies. DOL added the question on shared case management systems.*

Training for TAA Staff

There were no changes to this section of the collection and no feedback was received on this section.

Barriers and Technical Assistance

The barriers section was substantially modified and renamed to Barriers and Technical Assistance. The barriers themselves were modified to no longer be a ranking, but merely asking states to select whether the barrier was major, minor, or not a barrier. Feedback was provided to ask for a moderate option. Two questions were added asking about being connected with similar/peer states and neighboring states and a few commenters indicated that we might need more granularity than a yes/no. A list of technical assistance resources was added to collect how often states use those resources, but states provided no further feedback on this list. During the open comment session, it was proposed to add questions to this section to allow states to indicate what areas they think additional help would be needed and where they might have best practices. One commenter requested an additional barrier be added for IT resources for TAA-related system upgrades.

*DOL Changes:*

*DOL rewrote the similar/peer and neighboring states questions to further articulate level of interests. An additional multi-part question was added for states to indicate areas they believed they had a promising practice or needed help. Based on another state comment, this allows states to also differentiate between urgent and non-urgent technical assistance needs. We also added the IT resources barrier.*