

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR STATE WORKFORC AGENCIES

Moderator: Amy Leslie
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2:00 pm CT

Operator: Welcome everyone. The conference is about to begin. Please note today's event is being recorded. Please stand by.

Amy Leslie: Good day everyone. The National Association for State Workforce Agencies, US Department of Labor, the National Governor's Association and the National Conference of State Legislatures is pleased to present this online education program.

This program is Reemployment Services, Innovative Approaches to Obligating Funds, Countdown to September 30th. We are very pleased to welcome all of you.

My name is Amy and I will be your moderator for today's seminar. Please note that today's call is being recorded and all participant lines will be muted during this broadcast. If you need assistance at any time today, please press star 0 and an operator will assist you.

For technical support with the web portion of today's program, you may send an email to NASWA@commpartners.com.

Today's presentation will last up to 90 minutes and include specific question and answer periods. During the designated Q&A breaks, you will have the opportunity to ask live questions over the

phone. To do so, please select star 1 on your telephone when prompted. These instructions will be repeated later in the program.

Also, you may ask a question at any time during the webinar through the chat box. Simply type your question into the chat box area and click send. If you have not already done so, please turn off or mute your computer speakers so that you may hear the audio properly over the phone.

Please note that if you have any comments or feedback during the presentation, you may also enter that into the chat box and send to all presenters.

I would like to draw everyone's attention to the Links tab located on the Menu bar at the top of the window. The Links menu contains links to presentation slides and Web sites that are resource information relative to today's program.

Clicking on the links listed will open them in a separate web browser window and will not disrupt the presentation.

And now it is my pleasure to welcome Bob Simoneau, Workforce Development Director and Deputy Executive Director from NASWA to introduce today's distinguished speakers.

Bob Simoneau: Thank you, Amy and good afternoon everyone. Welcome to NASWA's webinar regarding Innovative Approaches to Obligating Funds, Countdown to September 30 of 2010.

Besides NASWA, this webinar is being sponsored by the US Department of Labor, by the National Governor's Association and by the National Conference of State Legislatures. I am - we're pleased to have our partners participating with us.

Today's webinar will focus on the Wagner-Pizer and Reemployment Services that were funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, commonly referred to as Recovery Act. Some people will refer to it as ARRA or A-R-R-A but I can't quite say that so I say Recovery Act.

So for today's webinar, we will be discussing the important dates as far as to obligating the funds and the current status as far as to the report that we've heard for where states are regarding their spending and obligations. And most importantly to get - receive information and suggestions as far as to how the states can be spending the funds between the limited time that we have left.

As Amy had said, my name is Bob Simoneau. I'm the deputy executive director for NASWA. I have several colleagues of mine in the conference room today. I want to especially to recognize Mark Katz who's our congressional and intergovernmental and public affairs director who has orchestrated today's webinar. So thanks Mark for your work on this.

Also in the room today here at NASWA, we are privileged to have our representatives from the Employment and Training Administration for the US Department of Labor.

First off though, I'd like to say that the preliminary announcements announce that Grace Kilbane, the administrator for the Office of Workforce Investment was going to be presenting today but she had a - we had a conflict with the scheduling on that so she was not able to participate, so.

But we are honored to have Chris Ollis in her stead. Chris is the chief of the division of adult services for the Office of Workforce Investment at the Employment and Training Administration. And she's joined by Mary Alice McCarthy who will be talking a little bit later on a community of practice.

We are also very privileged to have our state - some of our state leaders participating in the webinar by webcam or audio conferencing. We have Roberta Gassman, the secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and she'll be presented by webcam from Wisconsin.

Joel Sacks the assistant commissioner for the Washington State Employment Security Department will also be presenting through webcam from Washington.

And finally Charles Amonett from the Unemployment Insurance Program Manager for the Utah Department of Workforce Services and he'll be presenting today through telephone conferencing.

We appreciate everyone for taking their time from their busy schedules to participate in today's webinar. I also want to particularly thank all the participants on the call. I - we know that everybody's schedules are extremely busy and to take time out to sit through a 90 minute - well we're being optimistic that you're going to sit through a 90 minute webinar but we hope you do.

But we realize your schedules are very busy so we welcome you to the webinar and look forward to your participation.

Coincidentally I just want to mention that on March 26 of 2009, which is one year, one month and one week ago kind of, it was last Monday, but that NASWA sponsored a telephone conference on the Implementation Strategies for the Wagner-Pizer and Reemployment Programs funded by the Recovery Act. So it's like been a year ago.

I moderated that telephone conference and we had two ETA regional administrators, Byron Zuidema and Helen Parker participate on that call. And we also heard from state leaders from Wisconsin, Oregon, Minnesota and California who presented information regarding their plans at

that time for implementing Wagner-Pizer and Reemployment Services through the Recovery Act, so.

One of the major points that we stressed during that telephone conference was that in general states have until June 30th of 2011 to obligate and to expand their Recovery Act funds.

However, the major point was that to the - for the Recovery Act, for the Wagner-Pizer and the Reemployment Services, those funds must be obligated by September 30th of 2010, which as you all know is coming very close to this period that we're at right now so, and then spent by June 30th. But you have to have it obligated by September 30th, so.

So the - I think we have the slide up now do we? Okay. NASWA has conducted several surveys to determine where states are in implementing or obligating their Reemployment Services Recovery Act Fund. And according to the last survey that we did, it shows that as of February 28th, some 48 states report obligating the following for Reemployment Services also called RES that some people refer it to.

But the 13 states have obligated zero to 19% of their RES funds as of February 28th, according to our survey. Eleven states have obligated 20% to 39% of the funds. Eleven states were 40% to 59%, four states 60% to 79%. And nine states presented - or indicated 80% to 100%.

Recovery Act funds were first received in the states in May of 2009. And if you had portioned the same amount of funds to be obligated each month from May 2009 through September 30th, the time that you have to obligate it, as of September 30th, states should have obligated 71% of their RES funds. Or if you look at through June 30th for that period of time to spend the funds, it would be 46%.

Of course in reality, it doesn't really work that way but it's a good benchmark to look at as far as to where we should be at, so.

If you look at ETA's official reports as far as to what the - what has been spent to date and everything it's far more grim as far as to what's been spent already. So - and those figures are what's prompted us to conduct this webinar today to ensure that the funds to be - are spent and well obligated by September 30th and spent by June 30th.

So, it's extremely important that all of the Recovery Act funds be spent and by the time that they have to be spent and that they're spent efficiently. The - when we received the news that the Recovery Act had passed, one of the things I first said was good news and bad news.

And the good news is we got a lot more money in the Workforce system. The bad news is that we're going to - we're under pressure, and we as - I'm talking about the entire Workforce system to spend the money and to spend it efficiently. And if we don't, it's going to be trouble getting even the same level of appropriations that we've had in the past. So this is extremely important that we all succeed on doing this so.

The next slide there is the slide provides information on what states have indicated they have used Recovery Act funds to integrate between their WIA, their Wagner-Pizer program and their Reemployment Services. 45% of the states responded that they used these funds for one on one career guidance and counseling. 44% referred train - individuals to training.

35% or 39% rather used funds to develop individual reemployment plans. 30% conducted job search. 28% used funds to assist individuals with job finding and placement services. And 24% used funds or staff to conduct soft skills pre-training services. 18% conducted staff training on technology tools and 15% used the tools for - to assess skills, so.

It's a pretty good myriad as far as to the different ways that the states are utilizing this. And of course on this survey, states could have responded to more than one item.

So this slide here that's up now provides a different view on how states are using the Recovery Act Reemployment Services Fund. The majority of states are using the funds to expand services to unemployment insurance claimants identified through the Unemployment Insurance Profiling System or increasing the number and variety of job search assistance workshop and provide an assessment in career counseling services.

41% of the states say they are integrating ES and UI, IT or information technology to better serve unemployment insurance claimants. 33% they have developed or improved their models that predict the UI exhaustion. And 13% they have developed or enhanced their computer career information. And only 3% have said that they've used their funds or dedicated their funds for employer services. I think one of our presenters is going to talk about employer services in their presentation also.

This next slide provides a breakdown of what technology upgrade states are making to better serve their unemployment insurance claimants. Most technology upgrades funded by the Recovery Act funds are being used by the states to integrate and improve unemployment insurance claimant data between unemployment insurance in One-Stop or Wagner-Pizer Management Information Systems or MIS systems or to implement labor market information tools and to integrate labor market information into strategic decision making or to upgrade their information technology infrastructure to improve efficiency.

Some states are also using the funds to implement or to upgrade the O*NET AutoCoder or the torque for - or other software also.

This next slide, it shows that a large percentage of states report the Recovery Act has enabled them to strengthen the partnership between unemployment insurance and One-Stop services so unemployment insurance claimants are linked to the One-Stop to develop and pursue a reemployment plan.

There's also some statements on there from several states, from Minnesota, Florida, Vermont and New Mexico. So I'll allow you to look at those on your own.

This next slide shows my contact information and that of Mark Katz who I mentioned earlier. Certainly as you're going through this webinar or following the webinar, if you have any questions that we can address, please address that to either Mark or I, so we'd be pleased to provide you information on that so, our responses.

During today's webinar, we will have a few polling questions and the responses. I want to note that the responses on those are anonymous. No one, including us here at NASWA, will be able to determine how any one person or any state responded to that.

And the reason I say that is that in case, you know, you're at the zero spending or anything, you could say that and it's not going to be known by anybody as far as where you're at, so.

I'll be asking a polling question here in a minute, but first I turn it over to Amy who will provide you the instructions as far as to how to ask the - or to respond to the polling questions.

Amy Leslie: Thank you. When the polling question appears on your screen, simply click on the answer of your choice.

Bob Simoneau: All right. The first question here is do you have any concerns about obligating your Reemployment Services funds by September 30th of 2010?

All right. On - see I can't see the results. Amy are they - do we have the results?

Amy Leslie: Yes. 64% yes and 33% no.

Bob Simoneau: All right. So, all right. That shows why we're having the phone call today. So all right, great, so.

The - I would like to now to turn the session over to Chris Ollis, Chief of the Division of Adult Services, Office of Workforce Investments at ETA. And I'm looking forward to hearing Chris's presentation. Chris.

Chris Ollis: Thanks Bob, really appreciate the invitation for being here and inviting ETA to participate in this webinar today. We at ETA feel that the passage of the Recovery Act and the funds that were appropriated is a huge opportunity for us. It's the \$400 million that the Recovery Act provided for Wagner-Pizer really is the first increase in Wagner-Pizer funding in - since the early 1980s.

We know that the system is serving a significant number of unemployed workers. Based on our information as of February 2010, over 3.6 million unemployed UI claimants received RES funds - funded services which is a huge number.

As we've been saying since the Recovery Act was signed, we want you to spend these funds efficiently and effectively with the ultimate goal of improving the reemployment functions and thoughts of the public Workforce System.

But we know that the clock is ticking away and we only have until September 30, 2010 to obligate all of these funds. ETA is working with NASWA in an intense short-term project to ensure that the RES funds are fully expended and the goal is achieved.

Today's webinar is the first in a series of activities focused on this project. We will use the RES community of practice which we will be discussing later in this webinar to identify and share strategies states are using to not only expend their funds but enhance Reemployment Services and systems.

Today you will hear from three states, as Bob said, who have embraced the challenges with a great deal of creativity.

The first slide identifies the three areas that we will be focusing on today. ETA, through our TDL 14-08 that we issued last year, identified a number of strategies for states to embrace in using the RES funds.

Today we are going to highlight three investment strategies that you're probably already using as the survey indicated. And they are technology, job matching and capacity building. Next slide.

And the survey indicated that states are using technology to a great extent. And - but as we all know that the systems have changed, times have changed and UI claimants no longer go to a One-Stop to register for UI. This means that we need to find ways to connect these laid-off workers to the services available in a One-Stop.

States can use technology to integrate and improve the communication and/or data transfer of UI claimant data between the UI office and the Career One-Stop centers. This kind of data sharing and coordination is something we want to continue to encourage.

In fact, we currently have an entire technical assistance strategy around UI, WIA and ES integration which we're working with NASWA on.

Another use of technology is purchasing case management systems that can improve the services provided to UI claimants by eliminating wasteful and redundant data collection.

Using technology to assist in job search is another effective tool. We know that one of the states that sends - one state sends claimants who have registered for UI via the Internet three job opening listings immediately after the claim is received via Internet.

And it's not all about integration. These funds can be used to improve the infrastructure and administrative systems and improve Internet access to improve the efficiencies and overall program operations. I believe Charles will be speaking about how Utah has used technology to enhance their services.

Well another area is job matching, bringing the gap between unemployed workers seeking employment and workers seeking qualified workers is the essence of what we do. And we can always do it better.

We need to get better at using labor market information data and other tools to know what jobs and skills are in demand. We also need to improve our use of skills assessments and career counseling so we can help guide the unemployed toward stable employment.

A number of states have expanded their use of assessments to improve their capacity to match claimants to the appropriate job openings. As you know, there are any number of assessment tools available in the marketplace for you to purchase.

As Bob mentioned, a number of states are implementing O*NET AutoCoder software and other systems in the UI claims taking process and in One-Stop intake operations as a job matching tool. As you know, the AutoCoder converts plain English job descriptions into O*NET standard

occupational classifications or SOC code enabling case managers to quickly evaluate a UI claimant's work history and his or her competitiveness in the regional economy.

Purchasing tools that project job growth in your region will help you to identify those occupations that have the greatest potential for job placement of UI claimants. Actually at ETA we are currently developing a skills transferability tool which will be on our careeronestop.org in the near future, so stay tuned.

I believe Roberta and Joel will both share how they have improved job matching with their RES funds.

And last but not least, investing in our staff is a huge challenge and also a prime opportunity. We know that we are only as good as the folks who actually provide the services in - to the unemployed by our state and local Workforce staff. We need to invest in those staffs, making sure that they can use the latest tools and approaches.

In particular, we want to build the capacity for systems to use data driven approaches to helping job seekers and employers. This requires staff who are able to interpret labor market data, administer and interpret assessments, understand business plans and more.

Building the staff capacity around information technology and data analysis is crucial to our continued success. And this current economic situation has taken all real toll on all of our job seekers. The personal losses of these individuals are exceeding anything that we've seen in recent years. And this requires that our One-Stop staff not only know how to interpret the labor market information and provide career pathways, but they also need to be able to do some of the social work counseling and refer and really help these job seekers navigate the system.

Now I'll turn it over to Bob and so he can introduce Roberta to provide us information about how I believe Wisconsin has used some of these approaches for their staff capacity. Bob?

Bob Simoneau: Great. Thank you, Chris. Excellent information. I do want to mention - before we get to Wisconsin we have a polling question too so. But first off, I'd like to just mention our partnership with the Employment and Training Administration.

We here at NASWA, as well as the states, are very appreciative of the relationship that we have under Jane Oates' direction and all of the leaders from ETA. So it's a very exciting environment that we're living in now and that the - it really shows what can be done when we partner and work together on doing something. So I do want to point that out.

The other part I'd like to add to what Chris has said, and it's just - that was remiss from my presentation, I'm talking about dollars and the importance of spending the money and the ability to upgrade systems etcetera or anything. But of course the bottom line is the services that we're rendering through the Workforce, public Workforce system out there to the unemployed individuals. And that's what the key is behind all of this. That's the most important aspect of it. And through Chris' presentations, you reminded me that I really didn't mention that up front.

So we do care about spending the money. We do care about the One-Stop system as a whole and everything, but we always have the target in mind that the bot- the most important aspect here is to provide the good quality services to the unemployed that are there and especially for the unemployment insurance claimant. So, now if we - we have another polling question and I think we're set on that one.

The question is where at most of your Reemployment Services funds been spent so far? Is it staff, the specimen tools, the information technology infrastructure or other? Please respond.

Like staff is way up there. I'm not sure what percentage, like 90% maybe. So, the specimen tools, it looks like building a little bit in there. And then IT infrastructure is also in there. Do you have the percentages Amy, the actual percentages?

Amy Leslie: Yes. 90% said staff, 1% said assessment tools, 7% said IT infrastructure and 1% said other.

Bob Simoneau: All right thank you. And I guess that's what's listed on the far right hand side. In our conference room, the laptop is like in the middle of the table here. And for an old guy like me it's like okay, it's a test here. Thank you.

All right. Now we'd like to move our transition over to the - our distinguished state speakers and we'll start with Roberta Gassman, the secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. Roberta is also on our Board of Directors and she's also the chair of the NASWA Workforce Employment and Training Committee. So she serves in many roles and we're appreciative of her leadership. So Roberta, I turn it over to you.

Roberta Gassman: Thanks so much Bob. And thanks to all of you around the country who are participating and a huge thank you not just to NASWA but to all our friends at DOL who've been so helpful and to other partners who are working on this webinar.

I will say as I get started that we in Wisconsin as a very heavy manufacturing state, we like many other heavy manufacturing states have been very hard hit by this deep profound recession. And we are so thankful to President Obama and to Congress for the Recovery Act. And our Governor, Jim Doyle, worked really, really hard with the President and his team and with members of Congress to do whatever we could to get that Recovery Act put into place.

And we're very pleased to see the commitment that it has on helping, in our case, put Wisconsin back to work. So what I have for you in addition to this overview slide, I have five other slides.

And in my slides, I will walk you through first how we structured the use of the dollars for what purposes and then my last slide will address the financing of how we have used the ARRA RES dollars and then how we've also used our UI admin dollars as well.

And then in terms of any questions that you may have, I'm glad to answer any of them. And if there are any that I can't answer, I do have with me today one of our top managers who's been helping us implement this important effort for quite a while now. So he will join me if needed.

So you've got the first content slide up on your screens right now. And we, in Wisconsin, did make a substantial commitment to staffing to carry out this enriched set of services to people who are on unemployment insurance.

We did hire 50 project staff, 44 are working in the field all around our large geographic state, and six people in our central Madison, Wisconsin office. Because of unemployment as I'm sure in other states, we were very fortunate to find some very well qualified people who applied for these positions, people who had been HR directors in private industry, people who had been teachers and so were used to teaching and working with folks, former employees of the Workforce system.

So we were able to draw on a lot of talent, veterans as well. And we feel that we put a very, very good team together. And we spent a whole set of weeks actually training people. I myself met with all of them and spent time with them. But we spent a lot of time investing in their training to catch everyone on where the Workforce system is now and what this initiative could do.

Wisconsin was one of the states that was a part and we were very pleased that we could participate in the '05 DOL demonstration grant. And we did see, by the way, that our time on UI went down for participants in RES. We built on the work that we had done in that much smaller demo.

We retained the profiling formula, but we applied some new rules to figure out who are we going to target in this program. And we targeted in terms of who would participate, who we would send letters to and invite to come to sessions at our job centers.

We invited those who we thought would be most likely as well as least likely to exhaust. So those who we thought were going to need some special help and those who were maybe very close and just could use a little bit of assistance.

So with those 50 staff that we hired, the model that we set up, and this is kind of a diagram of the initial central focus of working with people in RES sessions and then the referrals we make also.

On the left side of your screen, this is telling you that the big picture goal here is to connect our UI claimant from those two populations I just described to connect them to employment and training. And we did this through having the staff that we brought on as well as other staff throughout our state system, offering workshops at sites where we have staff now and then we went into additional sites as well. And we worked at being mobile. We worked at being available where there were people who needed these sessions.

Another feature, and in Wisconsin we have set up a really a terrific - we're very proud of it and we did it all in house with our own fantastic technology and employment and training people. We didn't buy a product. We have Job Center of Wisconsin and you can look it up any time you'd like at jobcenterwisconsin.com, but it is a place where you can create a beautiful resume in 20 minutes and you can get connected to job openings and it has some very sophisticated search features.

All of the participants who came into RES, we did require that they go through the process of creating a resume and getting it up on Job Center Wisconsin. And after spending about a month training the new staff we hired, we kicked off the program in July of last summer, 2009.

And so now if you go to the next slide, I'm going to talk with you about a big part of our focus which was to - and is - to use WorkKeys and to get people credentialed using the most needed in the workplace skills that we think the WorkKey system gives us the capacity to assess and prepare people for.

So we made a commitment to WorkKeys. Some of our Workforce Development Boards in the state had been active, but I wouldn't say that we had a uniform commitment in the state. And we've now made a commitment to WorkKeys and also to try to bring people to a level where they could actually earn their NCRC, the National Career Readiness Certificate.

We know that through all of the work that's been done through the WorkKey system, that many, many, many, in fact most jobs, the skills that are required the most, the ones that keep coming up are math, reading and then being able to locate information. And so we focused on the three exams that WorkKeys offers around those three areas with the goal being to move people toward preparing themselves to get ready to earn the credential, the NCRC.

And so all of the people who come through RES can take the WorkKey system, they can earn the credential. We utilized the KeyTrain product which is the kind of the orientation, preliminary WorkKeys products. We have allowed people, and we used some of our dollars to pay for these tools to utilize the KeyTrain product to do almost a preassessment and to figure out where they were in each of these three areas.

All of the people who've come through RES, we give them then with the system a user ID and a password. They get this in an initial RES system. And then our participants get a chance to actually practice and to move toward being able to achieve 80% proficiency. And we allow people to take each of the three tests two times.

Once they pass all three tests then as those of you who know the WorkKey system know, then you get the NCRC credential. In our case we actually mailed a - it looks like it is a horizontal 8-1/2 by 11 certificate. It's signed by our Governor. And we tried to let people know that this has some clout. This is something significant. And I'm on the next slide right now.

This is to share with you in the brief time we have this afternoon what we've been able to achieve. And I also have a little bit of updated information because we've started now and today we have our first results.

We started polling our participants by email. And we now have some feedback from our participants as to how useful they have found this process. And we've gotten so far extraordinarily positive results.

But before I get to that in detail - a bit greater detail, early on when we first - before we started this ARRA funded RES effort, we were doing RES but frankly statewide we were looking at maybe two to three sessions in a week. And maybe statewide we see - we'd see 50 to 60 UI claimants.

With those powerful and helpful Recovery dollars, we've been able to dramatically grow this. And so since the Recovery Act went into effect, we are now with those 50 staff we hired, we are conducting every week all over the state probably 90 sessions a week, and we're seeing every week about 80 - I'm sorry, 800 UI claimants.

So, obviously a dramatic increase, and so we're looking at over 30,000 people already have been through this.

In terms of people using our call center, what kind of data we're collecting from Job Center of Wisconsin, we're getting many - you can see the numbers - lots of users, lots of calls. Employers are responding as well. And as the employers use our call center function, we are seeing many

job orders come in. And we are - we've been able to reach out and actually bring in new employers that were not using the system before we put this increased effort into it.

Our goal, and I think actually went through one of the earlier slides too quickly but you don't have to go back to it. Let's just say that when I had that diagram upon the screen, the claimants come in, they have a session with us and if we think they need of referral we refer them to an agency. If we think they'd benefit by counseling, we can put them into counseling. If we feel they need assessment, we do that. And some we might feel are just work ready and we put them right into work.

And this here on this slide is showing that we have been able to provide counseling in about over 600 sessions. Over 2000 people have gotten some one on one counseling through our investment.

We did just as I mentioned before send an e-mail out to 16,000 of our RES finishers to ask them a set of questions about how helpful was this to you. The first response is we just sent out the e-mail, 16,000 of them. This morning first thing in the morning, and this would be from people who are home, not out at a work site, but we got 500 responses first thing in the morning and 80% of those who responded said that they found the service and what they learned and what they geo very helpful to them. So that is encouraging.

I want to quickly move to the last slide which is on financing because we've - you all who still have to obligate, I just want you to know how we approach this. And I do get calls from other states who've maybe heard some of us speak at other meetings and they wanted to know how did we use this UI admin money.

So here's what we did. First, as all of us did, we got that initial - and in the case of Wisconsin it was \$7.2 million in ARRA money, so we used that and that will all be obligated and spent by the end of this coming September.

But because we knew we were going to be paying staff, and we wanted to be able to pay the staff after September through the life of ARRA, I then directed our unemployment insurance division which is in our state also a part of the same department that runs Wagner-Pizer to take from their ARRA admin money, which I might add we were also very happy to get, to direct some of that admin money for us to use to supplement the RES Wagner-Pizer dollars.

And this is just showing you these four bullets under the kind of turquoise bullet. That's to show you what the ARRA law actually said you can use UI admin dollars for. They said you can use it for the implementation of your modernization, which was, as you know, a different part of the very helpful ARRA UI investments.

You can use it to do outreach. You can use it to do improved benefit tax operations and you can also use it for reemployment services for UI claimants. But we felt it was very appropriate to tell our UI folks, take some of that money and say that and we're going to put it into RES.

This has allowed us to plan to keep those new staff we added through the life of ARRA so we won't have to just stop paying them at the end of September. So they will be here through June 30.

Our plan beyond that frankly is we see this capacity of having these people on board, all that they've learned. As we go through the normal progression of retirements, we are hoping in the state to draw from those who have gone through helping us staff this RES effort to become part of our permanent future Wagner-Pizer workforce. So that's our goal.

So in summary, I'm very proud of the terrific people who work in this department who have done a great job. And if you have any questions either now or after hearing from all of the states, I'm glad to take them.

Bob Simoneau: Great. Thank you Roberta, excellent presentation and lots of great information, so...

Roberta Gassman: Thank you.

Bob Simoneau: ...I would now like to open it up for a brief question and answer period. We'll have about five minutes for each of the state presenters. So we'll start with questions and answers for Roberta. There'll be two ways that you can ask the question and I'll turn it over to Amy to provide instructions there. Amy?

Amy Leslie: Thank you. Just a reminder, to ask a question you may type your question into the chat box area and then click on send, or you may ask your live question over the phone by pressing star 1 on your telephone keypad.

Bob Simoneau: Great. And this is Bob again. We'll start off with a question that we received from the chat room. This is to Roberta. What types of questions are fielded by the call centers? Roberta? The call...

Roberta Gassman: I'm going to ask my colleague, (Bruce Howthwill). And (Bruce) the phone should pick you up. Why don't you tell us the kinds of calls that have been coming in?

(Bruce Howthwill): Sure. Good afternoon folks. To the call center that we have in Wisconsin for our RES customers and beyond, we get a lot of calls for either follow up information after they've attended a session. They've been given that toll-free number as a general inquiry line for general job seeker questions if they need help with our Job Center Wisconsin system, if they were trying to

get some more information about something they heard at the session, if they're calling to - because they need to reschedule, they've been advised we try to do everything through that call center.

So if they've got a conflict, if they want to let us know that they've gotten employed before a session so that they can - we can exempt them in those sort of circumstances. So a lot of just a lot of various employment and training related questions as they after or before an RES session. We put that...

Roberta Gassman: And a lot related to scheduling.

(Bruce Howthwill): And we do put that number in their original letter when they're invited to the session.

Roberta Gassman: Hope that's helpful. Thank you, (Bruce).

Bob Simoneau: Great. Thank you, (Bruce) and Roberta. Any any questions on the phone?

Amy Leslie: There are no questions at this time sir.

Bob Simoneau: All right. I'll ask my colleague here, (Charlie), do we have any? All right. All right then.

We'll move on. We will have a general question and answer period at the end of the call today so that if you do have further questions of Roberta's presentation, we'll still have an opportunity to get those answered, so.

All right. Thank you, Roberta and (Bruce). We really appreciate your presentation and it was very informative.

Roberta Gassman: Great. Terrific. Thank you.

Bob Simoneau: Great. Now we will hear from Joel Sacks, the assistant commissioner for the Washington State Employment Security Department. And we're glad to have you on Joel. Please take it away.

Joel Sacks: Okay thank you and good afternoon from the other Washington. I want to start by thanking you Bob and everyone at NASWA for putting this session together. I think it's great to have the opportunity to get together and do some benchmarking and some comparing of how we're going about implementing some of our programs across the country.

Here in Washington, we were similar to Wisconsin, very thankful that we were able to receive the additional funding from Congress. We were - we've been hit very hard by the recession, a significant increase in the number of people who are unemployed and coming into our One-Stops across the state.

And here in Washington we refer to our One-Stops as Work Source. And so as soon as we received the money, we began sort of putting together a management plan to think about how we can go about using the additional funds in the most efficient way possible. And I think there's a, sort of a couple basic principles that we had to start with.

The first principle was - and we want it to be as integrated as possible. So what we were looking to do is take both the extra WIA funds that were going out to our 12 local WIBs along with the increase in new UI admin funding that we were using to increase our UI staff along with this whole Wagner-Pizer funding and make sure that we were leveraging those - that money wherever possible.

So a lot of what we'll be talking about today really sort of looks at each individual piece but fits into a larger picture.

The second principle was we wanted to steer a - we felt that we were in the middle of a fairly significant change management effort within Washington State, really rethinking and retooling our business model for providing services to customers in our Work Source offices.

And we almost looked at this as if it was a venture capitalist investment. So we had a significant infusion of new money to - that allowed us to speed up the implementation of a business model that we'd already agreed to.

And third, our basic premise was that the most important thing that we could do is encourage unemployed workers to come into our One-Stop office. We had just recently completed a study that really documented that when you compare people, particularly on UI, those who come into our One-Stop offices and those that don't, we were able to show that we have an in - that we're able to help people get back to work quicker and to earn a little bit more money if they actually interact in our One-Stop system.

So we had a lot of confidence that if we were able to help get people in the door, we could actually have an impact. So sort of with that as a premise, what we did is decide to divide the money we received into two buckets. The first was very similar to what Roberta was describing, providing additional services to job seekers. And that's what this first slide talks through.

We invested about \$4.7 million in hiring about 37 new front line staff. And just to put that within context, that's about - that was about a 15% increase in our front line staff. And these are the staff that will specifically sit and meet with job seekers.

We then linked these new staff in with our new business model. And what our - our new business model focuses very heavily on doing an initial assessment for as many people as possible. So someone walks into the door of one of our Work Source offices, we want to speak with that person, go through - it's about a half an hour assessment where we talk about what has your

career history been, what are your skills, what's your knowledge, what are you interested in doing.

And then from there, we have a good amount of information to begin to engage in career planning. And so what we were able to do is significantly increase the number of assessments we were able to do with people walking in the door.

The second piece was an investment in technology. And we bought something called KeyTrain which allows people to do self-assessment a little bit on their own and then do some brush up of their skills.

So, when we - can we jump to the next slide. Good. Second - so what wound up happening is, we just had a significant increase in the volume and the number of people walking in the doors. And this is probably the same thing that you're experiencing in every state in the country.

So, when we compare our data from 2007 to the data since the recession started, we really saw close to a 46% increase and it's just a sheer volume of people walking in the door.

Now what was - what - very - what was very fortunate for us is as a result of being able to put 37 new people out into our One-Stop offices, we were actually able to increase the number of people that we could actually touch and serve because - but rather than having a volume of these folks walking in the door typically going to the - into our resource room and having no human interaction, we were able to touch about an additional 6000 people each month.

And there we're doing both our initial assessments, but also we're doing skills testing, referrals to training, whether it's we or some other programs, and also doing a number of job referrals. And I'll get to that in a moment.

Overall, our - the client base that we're seeing, it's - over 60% of the people walking in the door are UI claimants. Similar to what Roberta said, we are sending out a letter to every UI claimant encouraging them to come into the One-Stop office. We have an introduction to the One-Stop system which is a group class for UI claimants.

But when - once either before or after that session we're trying to do these initial assessments with each - with as many of the UI claimants as possible. Jump to the next slide.

The other piece that we decided to invest in, and I think we may be - we may have lost one of the slides, was an increase in services to businesses. And the decision that we made was the most - one of the most important things that we can do for the majority of the people that are walking into our One-Stops is to help them walk out with a job referral.

Even in this very tough economy, a lot of the labor market information that we have shows that in any economy, there are hundreds of thousands of hiring events that occur each quarter here in Washington State.

There may be fewer new jobs. There may be lots of people being laid off, but there are still people - there is still hiring that occurs. And so what we wanted to do is to find out about as many of those hires as possible and to really work with those employers across the state that would be most likely to hire the people who are walking into our One-Stop offices.

So what we decided to do was to hire 15 new what we call business services staff whose jobs it would be across the state to go work with businesses, encourage them to actually list a job in our One-Stop office and then we would screen applicants for the employers and send them qualified applicants.

In particular what we were targeting are those employers most likely to hire people who walk into our One-Stop offices. This other piece that we are just about ready to get off the ground is a marketing campaign because with the number of hundreds of thousands of employers here in Washington State, we can't touch them all with just 15 new staff.

And so what we've done is a fairly rich data analysis. And we've identified about 30,000 employers across the state who fit the profile of the kind of employer that we're interested in working with. And we're going to start doing a media campaign specifically to those 30,000 employers.

We're going to be sending them postcards, getting them special access into our Web system so that they can list jobs, giving them a specific person that they can talk to and really hoping to get as many jobs listed as possible. If - Bob if we can jump two slides to the - to our results slide.

We have found that increasing our business services staff is just has been outstanding for us. Since May, we've had more than 45,000 job listings which was an increase of 21% over the previous year. And each month we've just seen our numbers increasing dramatically.

The latest data we have is for February. And in February we were able to identify and get listed with us in our One-Stop centers, 4500 job listings. And just to put it within context, that was over 100% increase from what we were able to do the previous February.

Those 4500 job listings came from 1200 employers. And the one piece that I think was very significant for us is about half of those employers were actually new to the One-Stop system.

So these were employers that had not listed jobs with us before but were actually going to be engaging in hiring. And in large part, a lot of the employer - a lot of the employers I think have

been grateful that we've contacted them. And they had a very different sense of what a One-Stop office was.

We had another - again similar to Wisconsin, because of the economy, we were able to hire just first rate new staff. And these are folks in normal economic times we would have never been able to hire. And so they've brought a whole fresh perspective and energy to the departments.

One of the interesting challenges that we're facing now, and this is in some ways maybe a decent indicator of economic recovery is we're seeing more turnover with our newer staff than we're seeing with some of our long-term existing staff. So as the economy's improving, we're beginning to face the challenge of losing some of our newest, most energetic, most enthusiastic staff first.

And so we're now at a place where we're moving from not only a recruitment model but how do we retain some of these first rate staff. So overall I think we've had a very successful effort. We've been focusing a lot of time and energy on closely monitoring and managing our results. And so we have a series of senior level management meetings where we'll talk about both the results within the Wagner-Pizer program, but also what's happening in - within unemployment insurance, what's happening within WIA and how are we ensuring that all of our staff are coordinating and working well together.

We are - I would conclude by saying that I believe this was money that was very well spent. I think we have results to show. And most importantly, we're able to demonstrate that we've actually helped people get back to work which I think is the most important thing in these tough economic times.

So with that let me wrap up and see if there are any questions I can answer at this point.

Bob Simoneau: Great. Thank you, Joel; excellent presentation. I really found it interesting in both yours and Roberta's presentation regarding the increase in employer services. And that was excellent information that you provided. That was very encouraging.

So, I'd like to now open it up for questions either through the chat room or through the telephone.

But I don't think we have any right now in the chat room, but Amy on the telephone?

Amy Leslie: Yes. Just a reminder, in order to ask a live question over the phone, simply press star 1 on your telephone now.

Operator: And Amy, we do have a question. Caller, please go ahead.

(Valerie School): Yes. I - in the presentation that we just heard...

Bob Simoneau: Excuse one second. This is Bob. Would you identify yourself and what state you're from?

(Valerie School): Oh I'm sorry.

Bob Simoneau: Thank you. Thank you.

(Valerie School): This is (Valerie School) from New York state.

Bob Simoneau: Thank you.

(Valerie School): And I was interested in your marketing campaign towards employers. And you referred to the kind of employers that would hire our customers. And could you go into that a little bit more - what kind of analysis you did and the conclusions you came to?

Joel Sacks: Sure. And again, this was linked to a business model that we'd already been adopting. So we've been spending a fair amount of time looking at the knowledge, skills and abilities of individuals when they walk into our One-Stop offices.

So as a result of being able to do these initial assessments, we've been getting a sense of what industries that people come from, what industries are they interested in going into and what are their skill levels.

We then worked on a region by region basis with our local LMI experts to identify firms whose occupations match up with those knowledge and skills and abilities.

So in some ways, we were looking at firms that do a lot of hiring. And in some - but in some ways, we were also identifying particular industries. So in some areas, we would be looking at manufacturing. In other areas, it was a real focus on office work. I mean it really varied because we have 12 different workforce development areas and in each of the areas sure the employment profile rate is very dramatically different.

We've been able to sort of customize the marketing approach. And so we've sort of divided up the 30,000 to each of the 12 areas and said you identify anywhere from 3 to 5000 employers within your particular area that are likely to hire and have a need for, particularly at the entry - at an entry and second tier level, the kind of skills that match the people who walk in the door and the way...

(Valerie School): Now...

Joel Sacks: ...we're testing this in some ways is we're looking at things like O*NET codes and comparing the inventory of people that are currently within our data system to the - to our job listings and trying to make sure that the top four or five occupations actually match.

(Valerie School): Okay. Thank you.

Bob Simoneau: Amy any other telephone questions?

Amy Leslie: There are no further questions at this time.

Bob Simoneau: Okay. We'll wait one minute here or a few seconds here. I think we have another chat room question that's being delivered right now so.

They'd be - the question is how do you refer the 60% of the new customers, unemployment insurance claimants. To the RES staff?

Joel Sacks: That's a great question. And for us, part of the business model that we've been focusing on is really trying to break down some of those barriers, so that - what typically exists. So when you would walk into one of our One-Stops, we wouldn't necessarily have designated RES staff.

So what we did up front is really invest a fairly significant amount of resources into what we call the training academy but the academy was for everyone. And the business model that I was describing of an initial assessment and then an employment plan and then something very specific happening in - with each service you receive, happened for just about everyone who walks in the door.

And so as a result, there's not necessarily an RES staff that just deal with UI claimants. We're trying to have sort of a universal set of counselors that can - that work with everyone who walks in the door.

Bob Simoneau: Great. Thank you.

Roberta Gassman: Bob, this is Roberta. I thought I'd take a stab at sharing a bit of our experience with that as well.

Bob Simoneau: Sure go ahead.

Roberta Gassman: And our staff, (Bruce) might want to jump in after I speak. Our goal in conducting our RES sessions around the state, and again as I mentioned Wisconsin's a very big state geographically, very spread out, very far from south to north in particular.

And our goal was that no UI claimant, no RES participant would have to travel more than 30 minutes from their house to be able to be in a session. And we don't have our staff, our regular staff in locations where people would not have to travel - or would only have to travel 30 minutes or less.

So the new staff we hired, we worked very aggressively to find our itinerant or our not our regular workspaces, whether at libraries, technical colleges, community organizations. We sought out sites around the state where we've been able to hold sessions.

So the matching in our case of where a claimant gets sent to meet with an RES staff, it's linked to the almost the zip code of the claimant. And then we try to put them at the closest place we could connect them with one of our staff.

In either one of our regular job center buildings, which are partner organizations in Wisconsin where in 22 of them we have our regular staff, or in one of these traveling sites where we could get a staff person to a library or community center or a technical college.

And (Bruce), do you want to add anything to that?

(Bruce Howthwill): Nope. That sums it up. But if somebody does come into a One-Stop that hadn't been scheduled for RES orientation but wants it, we have an intake process right at the front end where they will get directed to the RES presenter if they want to participate because many do even if they're not on UI.

Bob Simoneau: Okay. Amy, do we have - thank you very much. That was great responses from both of you. Thank you. Amy, do we have any more questions on the phone?

Amy Leslie: And sir, there are no further questions at this time.

Bob Simoneau: All right. We have another question; this one is addressed to Roberta. The - it says please explain how you're able to retain or maintain the RES staff through June 30th of 2011.

Roberta Gassman: Well through June 30th of 2011, and therefore after this coming September when our ARRA RES funds will be gone, we'll be maintaining the staff by using our UI admin dollars. Then our goal for after the Recovery Act is over in the summer of '11 is that through normal attrition, and we've got a large agency here, through normal attrition as people retire, and we're having many retirements, that the people who have been working for us for what will be two years, would be the ones to then be very well prepared and positioned to get those permanent positions with the agency. So I hope that helps.

Bob Simoneau: Great. Thank you. Great. All right. Again thank you, Joel. That was a great presentation and we appreciate your participation and also of course for Roberta to answering the questions that were posed to her.

So, now we will hear from Charles Amonett, the Unemployment Insurance program manager for the Utah Department of Workforce Services. Charles is participating today via an audio conferencing so there will not be a video for Charles, so. Charles, take it away.

Charles Amonett: Thank you. I think we can put our first slide up for Utah. And let's see if we can find it.

There we go. The reason I was - Utah was invited to participate in this webinar today was primarily for the - a discussion of a technology project we're involved in, the RES Technology Upgrade Project which we are funding with Wagner-Pizer ARRA funds.

In order to understand the project, you have to have an overview of the organization and systems involved. I was asked to kind of keep this real and give states an opportunity to have a little takeaway of how we could really do it ourselves as opposed to go about the system and then everybody wondering how we - how they can apply it themselves.

So basically Utah's Department of Workforce Services manages several programs. Two of those prominent programs are Unemployment Insurance and Employment Services.

Unemployment Insurance is organized in a centralized location. The application system is CUBs. And the service delivery system is only by telephone and by the Web.

The employment services side of the house is staffed in employment centers. There are over 30 employment centers around the state. Their application is - system is UWORKS and their service delivery is face to face and they do have telephone and Web support.

So when I say CUBs from now on, you can think of UI. And when I say UWORKS, you can think of employment services. CUBs is a Versata-based software package and UWORKS is a Java-based software package. We can go onto the next slide now.

Okay. A little bit about the project background. The genesis of the project occurred when I attended the reemployment work summit there in January 2009 in Baltimore. There I heard conversation about integrating unemployment insurance and employment services.

The conversation ranged all the way from one end of the spectrum to a technological integration to the other end of the spectrum which included a brick and mortar integration.

Then came that wonderful day when TEG1408 showed up and there was that passage in there that sponsored the funding of a tech project to integrate a UI and employment services.

The - I made a project proposal in April of 2009 to our top management and our project approval committee. And that was approved. And we started design development in April of 2009. And that went on through September 2009 involving all of the employment services players and the unemployment insurance players.

So basically, we kind of held the process together by cooperation and working for - towards a mutual goal because there was no direct line authority involved in this administering this project.

The programming period started in October of 2009 and continues to the present. The planned implementation is going to be June of this year. So why don't we move onto the next slide.

The - my regional contact with DOL asked me to kind of keep this real and discuss the realities of a large project. And so I included the challenges and the keys to success. The challenges of course were obviously the different systems with different software packages. And then there are the ever present challenges in all organizations of territory, turf, culture and personalities.

Workload demands because the explosion in workload of - due to the economic downturn versus resource availability, that was a huge challenge in moving forward on this project.

But the keys to success, which I think are universal, we had a clear project vision. We had top level management support, best strong project leadership and we have a competent technical team that gives competent technical support. And we can move onto the next slide.

So on a 50,000 foot level, the deliverables are enhanced, reemployment support, improved customer service and increased system integration. And I'd like to take us down to the 30,000 foot level on that overview.

And basically what we are accomplishing is that CUBs claims intake system will gather additional information relevant to UWORKS work registration. CUBs will transfer all relevant information to UWORKS. UWORKS then will recognize UI claimants and require them to provide complete work registration information.

Immediately upon completing a UI claim, a UI claimant then will be able to do a self-directed work search and will receive labor market information specifically relevant to their work history.

Now I'd like to go down to about the 5000 foot level and talk to the idea of what specifics we're putting in this integration. As I said, the applicable information obtained by CUBs during the initial claims process will automatically populate UWORKS. And some information was being transferred but other available information was not.

Even identification number information obtained during a clubs - or a CUBs initial claim will update UWORKS as appropriate. And when I say appropriate, I'm just talking about if the information is already current, then we wouldn't overwrite it.

UI claim base period and lag period employment history will populate UWORKS employment history. If CUBs updates UWORKS employment history for a case managed UI claimant, UWORKS will create a task to notify the worker.

If a UI claimant is deferred, employers won't be able to see a UI claimant's work history in UWORKS. CUBs Web and CUBs manual claims intake will be modified to capture information about a UI claimant's last job. The last job information will include a job description, the last year worked and the number of month's experience.

CUBs occupation search will be modified to let AutoCoder software which we have purchased with this money assign an O*NET code to a UI claimant's last job as identified in CUBs. CUBs then will transfer this AutoCoder selected O*NET code to UWORKS desired occupations.

And then if the CUBs O*NET code already exists in UWORKS as a desired occupation, CUBs - or UWORKS will be updated with the number of months experience as appropriate.

CUBs Web, CUBs manual claims intake and CUBs IVR will be modified to capture veterans' information including veteran status, spouse of a veteran and service dates as appropriate. This information will be transferred to UWORKS as appropriate.

And then UWORKS data gathering processes will be modified and tightened up for UI claimants. And the UI claimants will be required to provide education history information. They will be required to provide education degree information. And they will also have to provide it - at least one work history record to UWORKS. And that will transfer from CUBs of course.

UWORKS verbiage then will be changed to let claimants know - the UI claimants know the importance of their employment history on the resume. What was happening the way the UWORKS system was working, it was, you know, set up for a universal customer so to speak.

And the customer was able to kind of work their way through the work registration process, giving very little information about themselves and leaving out some of the key information thereby producing a resume that employers looked at that was right next to worthless.

So we are enforcing the expectation now that CUBs - or that UWORKS will get complete information from UI claimants so that UI claimants will be represented in their most thorough manner to prospective employers.

The AutoCoder Web service software will supply O*NET code information to the LMI group, Labor Market Information group. And then LMI will use this O*NET code information to provide relevant labor market information to UI claimants in their option center which is now being called the My UI Account page.

And this is where claimants go immediately after they finish their UI claim. And CUBs and UWORKS will use the same database function to call the AutoCoder Web service. And the AutoCoder must automatically select the O*NET code with the highest math score. And then AutoCoder will determine the O*NET code for CUBs Web, CUBs manual intake and UWORKS Employment History and UWORKS Employer Job Orders.

So the significance of what I just rattled over here is that a plumber or an accountant who finishes their claim, then goes into this option center and is immediately presented with LMI information that is tailored to a plumber or to an accountant or to whatever their work background is. And that's by virtue of what information we're gathering from AutoCoder.

Profiled UI claimants and REA UI claimants, Reemployment Assessment UI claimants will be required to complete a UI orientation and assessment. We - that's an online function which we

combine with an eligibility review. Information obtained from the UI orientations and assessments will be made available to UWORKS for use as desired.

And now we have just secured a \$1.3 REA - \$1.3 million REA grant. And we will be instituting an REA system and we'll be using this orientation and assessment in that process.

All UI claimants may complete additional UI orientations and assessments after their initial one and that information then will be made available to UWORKS for use as desired.

At the initial claims filing, all UI claimants including profile claimants will be categorized based on TEGL 1408 classifications. We found that very useful and potentially very helpful for employment counselors.

Then the UI claimant classification data will be made available to UWORKS for use as desired. And the option center page or the My UI Account page will replace the existing CUBs verification page and UI claimants will be required to log into access the option center page so they get the full range of services that are in there.

The options center page then will be accessible at the end of the UI initial Web claim and at the end of the CUBs weekly Web claim filing. And from - it will also be accessible from the UWORKS Web filing.

UWORKS then will provide a link to the options center for UI claimants. And they will - the log in codes between CUBs and UWORKS will be harmonized so that each system will accept the other's log in codes. And that provides a higher level of service.

Then the options center as I've indicated will provide a claimant with immediate access to relevant LMI information and immediate access to do a self-directed work search without any additional qualifications where before the assistants were separate.

So the CUBs or to the UI claimant was going through CUBs, providing a bunch of information then having to go to UWORKS and provide the same information before they could do a self-directed work search.

Then the option center then will be dynamic based on the level of involvement with the UI claimant. That is a new claimant will see the services that are relevant to the new claimant. The ongoing filing claim it will see services relevant to them. And the previous claimant, no longer current in their filing, will be able to access and use services relevant to them.

So that's just kind of an overview and I'm open for any questions you may have.

Bob Simoneau: Yes. The old mute option here. So, thank you Charles. That was great information. One would think that when you're building the computer systems for your ES, your unemployment insurance systems, etcetera and everything that they would be built from the get go to be able to communicate back and forth. But that's certainly not the case in most areas so that's a very good information, so.

The - I have a couple of questions here but I'll throw it open first to Amy as far as do you have any on the telephone call?

Operator: I have a quest ...

Amy Leslie: And we ...

Operator: I'm sorry, Amy. We do have a question. Caller, please go ahead. Please state your name and your affiliation.

(Valerie School): (Valerie School) from New York State. We were curious as to the LMI information that appears on the customer's section of the Web site. What does that look like? What does that encompass?

Charles Amonett: Basically it talks about job openings in their particular field. It talks about transferrable job searches that they could do. Like for instance, let's say an accountant would get openings for accountants and then maybe transferrable skills would be for a budget analyst, so they would see openings for a budget analyst.

And then the entire range of LMI, Labor Market Information, the wage levels for various skills and other information would be presented to them. We have - our option center has three sections. It has the - the top section deals with relevant UI and employment services services. And then the bottom two sections of the page deal with the LMI information allowing them to drill down to whatever level of intellectual exploration they want to go.

(Virginia School): Thank you.

Bob Simoneau: Okay great. Thank you. I do have a couple of more questions that came through the chat room. For the sake of time, I'm going to answer the first one. Is Utah a single workforce investment area?

And the answer to that is yes they are. They were the last one that was approved to be a single workforce area, so. But along with that then I think is the other question, did Utah use existing staff or contract to make the system changes? And I can probably answer the second part here too is - were there any snags in the procurement process?

And when you're dealing with IT systems, there's always snags so. But anyway, Charles if you could briefly answer that because we do need to move on, but if you could answer that question please.

Charles Amonett: Okay. Yes. Utah uses the State Department of Technology Services as a contractor. And we have a close working relationship with them and they are very responsive. And so our procurement process is streamlined by virtue of that association.

The - there was some challenge in getting the AutoCoder purchased but we were able to work the process - purchasing process sufficiently well that we can move the purchasing through that and get the AutoCoder system that we wanted purchased.

Bob Simoneau: Great thank you. That's great. For the sake of time, I'm going to move on the agenda. But if you do have questions, still pose those through the chat room and we'll try to get to them. If not, we'll answer them later, so. Now I'd like to - well first off again Charles thank you very much for your presentation and for the information you provided. It was great.

We will now hear from Mary Alice McCarthy. She's the workforce analyst with Employment and Training Administration. Mary Alice is going to talk about the - or provide some information regarding the community of practice. I think the abbreviated word for that is the COP and not cop. But she'll share some information about that and we're excited to also be partnering with ETA as far as to promoting the community of practice and moving it onward, so, turn it over to Mary Alice and welcome. Thank you.

Mary Alice McCarthy: Thank you, Bob and thanks to everyone here at NASWA for the chance to participate today. And thanks to the state presenters for those excellent and very informative presentations.

I just want to today talk about the reemployment works community of practice and how we are going to link it to this effort to continue to share information about how states are taking advantage of this historic opportunity to invest in their Reemployment Services system.

The Reemployment community of practice is a online interactive Web space that is dedicated to fostering peer networking and information sharing among Workforce practitioner about - around topics relating to Reemployment Services.

We plan to spend the next several weeks to dedicate the site to a particular exploration of this issue of how states are investing their Wagner-Pizer reemployment funds. We are going to be posting materials or log posts from states that detail how they're investing their funds. And we're going to be opening up discussion threads that enable you to ask each other questions and share information and facilitate this sort of peer technical assistance that we know is really tremendously valuable.

If we could go to the next slide, it - if we could just go back really quickly, at the bottom of this slide, you'll see the URL for the site which is hosted on the Workforce 3.1 site. Okay. So if you go to the next slide, here we have a screen shot of the home page of the Reemployment community of practice.

And I would just quickly like to walk through it to familiarize everyone with it before we move on. So on the left side of the site or of the home page, you'll see that there is a blog post there right now. And that's a blog from Rich Hobbie, the executive director at NASWA, and Grace Kilbane, the administrator of the Office of Workforce Investment and ETA.

And their blog posted essentially explaining how the Reemployment community of practice is going to be a vehicle for an ongoing focus on the spend down of ARRA reemployment funds.

Over the course of the next six weeks, we will be featuring blogs from states from Federal practitioners and from other experts analyzing the field about good investments, wise investments of your RES funds.

In the middle of the home page you'll see that there's a section entitled Resources. This is where we post research reports, conference presentations, announcements about upcoming conferences or events, all that relate to Reemployment Services and that we think will be valuable to you as you think about how best to use your funds.

In the third column, we over here on the right of the home page, you'll see that there's a log in prompt. In order to comment or to download information from the community of practice, you will need to have a Workforce 3.1 user name and log in.

You do not need to have a separate user name or log in for the community of practice, just the Workforce 3.1 user name and log in, though we encourage you, if you haven't already, to please sign up for that.

The button below then is a green button that I hope you can see on your screen. And it says Join the Community. In order to join the community, you do not need to do anything extra. You do not have to get any - you don't have - you don't need another password which is always convenient since they're always hard to remember. All you have to do is click on that button and it will immediately make you join.

What joining does is that it gives you a chance to sign up for alerts and to essentially be notified when there's new information on the site that's relevant to you. And it also allows us to track better what sort of information is being downloaded the most and what sort of information seems to be the most in demand so that we can serve you better.

Below that there's a button that says Share Your Content. We really do want to know how you're spending your RES dollars so that we can help share that information and help everyone else make better, you know, make good decisions about how to do that. So please, if you click on that button you'll get some very clear instructions, very easy to follow instructions about how to upload content that can be PowerPoint presentations, PDFs, Word documents, whatever, however you choose to share your information.

And the below that, we have an area called Useful Links. And that's where we upload recent newspaper articles around reemployment that we think are relevant to the company.

Okay. And then at the very top of the home page, you'll see that there's a series of tabs. The first says home and that's the page that we're on right now. The next is the About tab. And that simply provides a little bit of the background of the Reemployment community of practice and what we're trying to accomplish through it.

The next tab says Blog. And that's - you can - all of the blogs that appear on this site are archived to there. So at any time there'll be a featured blog but if you want to see whether or not there have been blogs around specific topics, there is a Search function there and you'll be able to find that.

The next tab is on Resources and the same is true for that. There's always featured resources but you can always search for other resources. And we have been populating this site with resources since its launch last year around the regional reemployment forum. So there's a lot of information there.

And then there is a tab that I particularly want to draw your attention to called Discuss. We have already posted a discussion thread in that part of the Web site called How Are You Spending

Your ARRA RES Funds? And we really hope that you will take the time to click on that and submit a reply.

It's as easy as literally just clicking on the button that says Submit a Reply and then you can type in something, so please do. As I said, we really do want to hear from you.

The next tab is a Wiki. And we are working - we are developing right now what we're calling a Wiki shopping list. For those of you who aren't familiar with the term Wiki, it is a collaborative online document that people can contribute to and add to on the Web. And we're going to be compiling a list of the different investments that states are making.

I think we all know that when you're shopping for something, it's always wonderful to know how other people who are in your same situation are making their investments, what they've learned, what's worked for them, what hasn't. And that's what we're going to try to accomplish through that Wiki shopping list.

Then the last two tabs are a calendar and a map of the different regions. So again, I just want to encourage you to visit us on the community of practice. We're going to be working very closely with NASWA, keep you updated about new information on the site and to be asking you for information and to participate.

We're going to do everything we can to facilitate dialogue among and between you. And we really look forward to seeing you on the community of practice. So thanks so much. Bob.

Bob Simoneau: Great. Thank you, Mary Alice. I don't mean anything negative on this but it's just - with a community of practice and everything, it's worthless if you don't have communication. If people aren't inputting information in there, telling your story, asking questions, responding to that and

everything, so it's very important that you do - we do get the participation. And that's why we're partnering with ETA to promote this.

So we do hope that you do visit the Workforce 3.1 community of practice site and that you sign up and that if you haven't already, and then that you start inputting information into that. So we certainly believe that it has a long of strength and capabilities even though I'm, you know, wearing all these Wiki stickies, all these new terms and everything, so. But, it is kind of exciting.

Right now, our biggest push is the fact on the Reemployment Services. It's so crucial that the money is spent and that's actually obligated by September 30th as we said throughout today's webinar and everything. So that'll be our first push on this so, too.

We heard from the three states today and they had excellent presentations. And that's, you know, through the community of practice, we'd like to see more stories as far as to what you're spending on, ideas, questions that you have, starting a blog on whatever issue that you may want to do. So I think it's very important so we encourage that.

The - so again, thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Mary Alice McCarthy: Thank you, Bob.

Bob Simoneau: We're running short on time here. But I would like to briefly open it up for any questions for any of the presenters. And I'll start with one that was asked of Roberta. Could you tell us how many of your One-Stop centers offer WorkKeys assessment and how much Recovery Act money was obligated for this?

Roberta Gassman: ...me put on my start broadcasting here. Thank you very much for the question. And I'm going to defer on the details of the cost investment of us actually paying for the instruments. It was a certain amount per...

(Bruce Howthwill): Right.

Roberta Gassman: ...prep and per test.

(Bruce Howthwill): Right. Our costs per WorkKeys on a per test cost just give or take it's \$5 a test for each of the three tests and \$5 for the certificate. So it's...

Roberta Gassman: So \$20 a person...

(Bruce Howthwill): Right.

Roberta Gassman: ...is what we budgeted as we planned the...

(Bruce Howthwill): Right.

Roberta Gassman: ...expenditures for it.

(Bruce Howthwill): Correct. And you were asking where is it available as far as our One-Stop locations?

Bob Simoneau: How many of your One-Stop centers offer WorkKeys assessments?

Roberta Gassman: All of them.

(Bruce Howthwill): It's available at all of our job centers.

Bob Simoneau: Okay. Great. Thank you. Amy, any calls, questions?

Amy Leslie: And just one final reminder, it is star 1 if you'd like to ask a question.

Bob Simoneau: All right.

Amy Leslie: And there are currently no questions.

Bob Simoneau: Great. Thank you. (Charlie). There is one question coming in. In the meantime, I'll go ahead and ask another polling question, our final polling question. Does your state need technical assistance utilizing the Recovery or Reemployment Services funds by September 30th? So just a very basic question, if you think you need further technical assistance.

All right. It looks like it's about 100% saying no so that's good. Super. So I - hopefully that's because we answered some of the questions today and that you're - hopefully there is some value as far as to today's webinar. I have one more question if you can handle it.

Nationwide, how much of the Recovery Act funding has been obligated and expended - the question. The - I'm not sure if we have a dollar. Do you know a dollar amount Chris?

Chris Ollis: I don't off the top of my head, no. But we can get that answer to you for sure. The obligations would be as of the end of March, the last quarter. We wouldn't - the expenditures we'd get on a weekly basis.

Bob Simoneau: Okay great. Well my time is right now showing 4:30 which is the 90 minutes that we've allotted to this. The - if we did not get to your question today, we will post questions and to answer those on the community of practice, or you can email Mark or I that we provided the slide.

And that will be available on the print or the what do you call it when it's posted - the posting I guess of the webinar results. And the transcript will be up also, so.

Also if you have any specific questions with that of ETA or of any of our state presenters, you can also email those to Mark or I and we will forward those and get you the answers on that, and then also to post those, so.

Again I want to thank our presenters, Chris and Mary Alice from ETA. We're glad to have you participate today, and our state presenters, Roberta Gassman from Wisconsin, Joel Sacks from Washington State and Charles Amonett from Utah. We certainly appreciate your input and your presentations. It was very informative and I learned a lot going through those - or listening to those myself, so.

The - and then also of course, to our participants in the call, or the webinar today, we certainly appreciate you taking the time to sit through the hour and a half with us. And again, if you have any further questions, we're certainly willing to address those later.

And again the presentation as a total will be - and a transcript will be available as well as the PowerPoint that you can access, so. Again, thank you very much and I think that's the end of our call so have a good weekend.

Amy Leslie: Thank you.

END