

**Conference Call on Next Steps for WIOA Implementation
with the Departments of Labor, Education, and Health & Human Services**

**Monday, November 24, 2014
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Presenters:

- **Moderator: Portia Wu, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration**
- **Johan Uvin, Acting Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education**
- **Janet LaBreck, Commissioner, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services**
- **Mark Greenberg, Acting Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children & Families**

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time, all participants are in listen-only mode until the question and answer portion of the conference. If you would like to ask a question at that time please press Star 1 on your touchtone phone. You will be prompted to record your first and last name. This conference is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect. Now I'll turn the call over to your host, Ms. Portia Wu. Thank you, you may begin, ma'am.

Portia Wu: Hi. It's Portia Wu with the Employment and Training administration. Good afternoon. I'm delighted to be joined by my colleagues from other agencies in the Administration, the Acting Assistant Secretary for Career Technical and Adult Education Johan Uvin. Janet LeBreck will be joining us, Commissioner for Rehabilitation Services, and Mark Greenberg, the Acting Assistant Secretary at the Administration on Children & Families at HHS. So welcome

everyone. I'm happy to be here today with my colleagues to talk about to all of you workforce systems, partners and stakeholders about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The Opportunity Act envisions an integrated job-driven workforce system that more clearly links our diverse and talented workforce to our nation's businesses and improves opportunities and quality of life. Thank you -- all of you -- for your participation today in webinars, Web chats and town halls to share your ideas, questions and most important recommendations on policy and implementation of this new law.

Many of you have been hosting similar meetings at the state level and we really appreciate your input. We particularly thank you for your cooperation with ETA's regional offices and their assessments and their work to gauge the readiness level of states and local areas to implement the new law.

The feedback and innovative ideas we have received have been invaluable in our work so far. It's been just over four months since WIOA was passed and we've all accomplished a tremendous amount, we've learned a lot. We've done a lot of problem solving and planning but we have a lot more to do and today's call is intended to help us keep moving forward together.

So we just wanted to spend today talking a little bit about the general framework for implementation of a new law and also to talk about some activities states can engage in to really be well positioned when many of these requirements take effect this July 1. So I'll take a couple minutes to talk about the general framework and then turn it over to my colleagues. As you all

know the statute includes a deadline for final regulations in January 2016. The notice for proposed rule-making is scheduled to come out early next year.

So the Department of Labor, we plan to issue a series of guidance documents. Many of them will be what we refer to as TEGs, training and employment guidance letters. They'll contain our vision for implementation and also more details on recommended transition activities. That will include some detailed guidance on operational activities they should take in transitioning which we expect to issue next year. That will include technical guidance, technical assistance as well as guidelines on reporting requirements.

We've also rolled out a new training resource that will go live shortly after this call. It's a series of short webcasts where you can select training modules that meet your needs to use in training your staff, briefing your workforce board members, partners or stakeholders. A link to that resource is available on our Web site at www.doleta.gov/wioa. And with that I'd like to turn it over to my colleagues for their opening remarks. Johan?

Johan Uvin: I thank you Portia for that introduction and thank you to our colleagues at the Department of Labor for organizing this call today and inviting us to participate in a discussion of real implementation with you. We at the Department of Education are very excited to be a partner in this work along with our colleagues at the Departments of Labor and Health & Human Services and we are actually quite pleased to see the increased focus WIOA places on coordination at the federal and state and local levels between workforce development, adult education, vocational rehabilitation and health and human services programs.

So we look at this new law as one with a great opportunity to actually streamline the way we do our work together and shape the nation's employment and training system into one that makes better sense for job seekers, better sense for workers and better sense for employers.

As you know WIOA encourages new opportunities for collaboration across federal and state agencies and indicates a shared commitment to improve training and employment opportunities particularly for individuals facing the greatest barriers to employment. I would like to very quickly point out a number of opportunities from the department's perspective relative to the important work that the agencies can and will accomplish together. Speaking to that specifically from the Title Two perspective which as you know is the program that reaches about 1.8 million individuals per year and helps them develop foundational English literacy skills.

The first great opportunity we see for strong collaboration and alignment is through the provisions of the unified and combined state plans. Won't get into the details of that now but we are very, very encouraged by the provision of the combined state plan in the new law that would allow the governor to include other federal programs including the other program that our office administers - the Carl Perkins Career) and Technical Education Act.

The second area where we think there is great opportunity for further alignment and collaboration between our agencies is around the rethinking of the purpose of Title Two which basically says that high school completion for adults, while it continues to be of primary importance, is simply not enough and it cannot be an end in itself and that it needs to become more of a means to further opportunity whether that's training or employment. We are very

excited about the way that the law speaks about ways of making that happen through the development of career pathway systems and look forward to that joint work.

And there are also some important changes in how the states will make awards to local providers on the Title Two and I want to point out that there's an increased emphasis there on direct alignment of activities under Title Two with the regional needs identified in local plans on the Title One. In addition to that there is greater emphasis on serving individuals with disabilities but I really wanted to make that point of that greater alignment emphasis with the regional plans divided until Title One.

The support for correctional education and reentry is another area where I think great opportunities for agencies to work together are being facilitated. Going forward you can imagine that we have a lot of work to do in preparation for the release of the notice of proposed rule-making but we are also working with our partners to continue to provide technical assistance and develop tools and resources.

For instance, we plan on providing technical assistance on a number of implementation issues particularly as they affect Title Two. Just quick preview; needs have already been identified by many of you around negotiating the adjusted levels of performance, fulfilling evaluation requirements, competing to fund them under the new provisions of WIOA and so forth. So with that let me turn it back to Portia.

Portia Wu: Thank you. I don't know if Janet has joined us already.

Janet LaBreck: I am.

Portia Wu: Janet would you like to say a few words?

Janet LaBreck: Sure. Thank you very much Portia and thank you very much for everyone joining us today on this consultation call. And we're very happy to be partnering with our various colleagues here who are also on the call today and we're excited to be working on the implementation process of WIOA and know that it has a significant opportunity for the disability community as well as some of our other partners who are also covered now under the WIOA legislation.

We really think that this gives us an opportunity to be creative about how we are working with the disability community and vocational rehabilitation as well as looking at the opportunities that we have to partner with our employer partners across the spectrum who are obviously critical to working with us in terms of providing service to individuals with disabilities who are seeking competitive integrated employment.

In addition to that we're also very excited around the possibilities with WIOA that really do cover and expand services to those individuals who are transition age youth and looking at the pre-employment transition services that we have available that we can offer with them and ways that we can also incorporate our partners across all of the agencies and being able to participate in this process. And so we're really looking forward to working with everyone.

We are very heavily engaged in the-in looking at the regulations and implementation process and know that it takes a great deal of consideration and look forward to receiving comments from the community and their suggestions and ideas and certainly anticipate that this will be a very informative process and are very, very happy to be on this call today with everyone. So thank you for inviting us to be a part of the process.

Portia Wu: Thank you so much Janet. Mark, would you like to say a couple of words?

Mark Greenberg: I would, thank you Portia. So first thanks everybody for being on the call. I'm Acting Assistant Secretary at the Administration for Children & Families and HHS. We've got responsibility for a wide range of programs principally affecting low income children, families and communities. We've been working closely with our colleagues at Ed and Labor throughout this Administration on a wide range of areas of shared interest and concern and we are now very, very glad to be closely working with Ed and Labor around WIOA implementation.

We think that WIOA implementation has got important implications for human service agencies across the country. Last week we held a webinar for human service agencies with close to 900 registrants participating in it and we are engaged and will be engaged in a set of activities to both better inform the human services community and to encourage and spur their active partnership at the state and local level.

For us there are some clear statutory provisions relating to both TANF agencies and agencies under the community services block grant and their

engagement in the implementation process and we're doing a lot to highlight those.

We are also tremendously excited by the youth provisions of the new law and the new focus on out-of-school youth and the highlighting the importance of work experience for youth and through the foster care program and efforts around successful transitions from foster care and our runaway and homeless youth program that are actively working with disconnected youth across the country. We hope to actively spur their engagement.

So overall the message that we have been emphasizing to human service agencies is that they will benefit tremendously from active engagements and partnerships and in addition for workforce agencies we feel that the engagement of human service agencies is important as a way of improving outcomes.

For individuals with the greatest challenges and barriers to employment the understanding of their needs, the understand of support services, the ability to provide linkages to related services can all help contribute to better employment results.

So we look forward to our partnership and we look forward to the exciting activities to come. Thanks

Portia Wu:

Thank you Mark. Well let's dig in a little bit more on some of the specific transition activities. We know many of you have jumped in with both feet and already begun planning for the transition but there are some who say we're waiting until the publication of the notice of proposed rule-making. We

strongly advise stakeholders to begin work immediately if you have not already done so. As my colleagues have already flagged, we will make significant changes in how our system operates that require rethinking many aspects of your work.

There may be strategic thoughts, planning, and development of operational processes all in the context of renewed and new partnerships. So to help you think through the list of things that is ahead we've identified some specific transition activities to help ensure everyone is well positioned come next year. First let me start off by really emphasizing the importance of building new and strengthening existing partnerships.

States can -- and many have done so -- start developing strategies to build these partnerships so at the minimum a warm handoff referral is provided for all clients beginning on July 1. An important part of this is engaging in strategic planning conversations across core partnerships so that there is really robust planning as Johan already mentioned in preparation for the unified plan.

That means thinking about new ways to align core and other key programs including registered apprenticeship, Job Corps, TANF, Perkins Career and Technical Ed and other programs our colleagues have mentioned.

This would entail drawing up a vision of how the workforce system should ideally function in your state to best meet the goals of a new law. And of course we encourage you include state economic development staff and look for ways to align workforce and economic development goals.

It's really important that everyone take a close look at the requirements for the unified and combined state plans and assess whether the right partners are at the table and everyone can access the appropriate information to make the decisions required under the law.

Again I'll emphasize that we will have further guidance coming out but the law already lays out many, many specific requirements for what need to be in these plans. And with that maybe we'll go in reverse order this time. Mark, any other additional actions you would like to be sure that people consider?

Mark Greenberg: So what we particularly want to encourage - we've emphasized to human service agencies the virtue of reaching out in their localities and in some instances there are already strong partnerships that are operating but not always. And so we've urged them to reach out. We would conversely urge to workforce agencies that you do the same. There are some places again where the connections to the TANF agencies are very strong. There are other places where they are pretty minimal.

There are also wide ranges in relation to community action agencies. As you think about supportive services the opportunities in linking to early childhood programs and to the child support program are going to be important and then I would particularly say that if you're a locality where in your youth work so far it has been principally focused on in-school youth and you're now making the transition to out-of-school developing those linkages to foster care and to runaway and homeless youth programs so that you can have initial exploratory conversations both about referrals, needed services, perspective on where the needs are greatest and how to best work together.

All of these are conversations which are productive to be having now.

Portia Wu: Thank you. Janet, Johan, would you like to make any additional comments around partnerships and laying that groundwork?

Johan Uvin: Just want to echo what Mark said and encourage people in the Title Two community, people in the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education communities to be proactive in their outreach to the workforce development system at both the state and local levels and vice versa. We are doing our work here within Education.

We are organizing in December a working session webinar with our state directors for Perkins to make sure they will be fully prepared to engage with their counterparts in Health & Human Services and workforce at the state and local levels.

Janet LeBreck: And I would add to that Portia as well that we have since-well since the inception of the legislation folks may not all be aware of the fact that for the VR program this law was enacted immediately upon the president signing the legislation into law and so that we have been working with the VR community to help with guidance around things that they should actually be doing now so that they can have a proactive strategy and approaches to working with their partners.

And some of those things include proactively engaging with the workforce development system in their state so that they can work on developing a unified state plan and developing a strategic plan to develop their unified plan and including the strategic vision and goals for preparing and educating their

skilled workforce and for meeting the needs of employers, so really important. In addition to reviewing their MOAs that they may have with those one-stop partnerships within the state so that they can assess their situations and ways that they can assist with that as well.

In addition to that coordinating with those education partners including those LEAs so that they can participate in a process under the provision under pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities and other transition services with disabilities under that 15% reserve, dialoging with their state rehabilitation counselors for those that are in the state agencies around their plans and developing draft policies and procedures under new requirements such as the new 90-day IPE timeline for revised CSPD requirements, provision of pre-employment, transition services and ensuring that your staff in the state agency levels are familiar with the new requirements.

And then I think finally reviewing with their IT staff to update management information systems in preparation for reporting on new data elements. And I think that those are some of the things in addition to partnering with employers to really expand the knowledge base and partnerships with those employers who have services and supports that they can certainly offer to the VR community. So those are just an example of some of the areas that we have been discussing and encouraging the states to be proactive about engaging in some of these activities and partnerships so they can move forward.

Portia Wu: Janet that's an excellent point. I think moving on to some of the things that need to be done in terms of goal setting. Obviously state partners should be working together to clarify their goals and definition of success and figure out how to best coordinate including with the IT systems. Also reassessing the one-stop delivery system which includes service delivery models, brick and mortar infrastructure, information technology -- et cetera -- in light of the new core and mandatory one-stop partners and new requirements for colocation of Wagner-Peyser Employment Services is absolutely critical.

Doing that now will better position states to develop their plans for infrastructure funding and certification of one-stop. We want to assure you that we're working with our partners to address. I'm sure there will be many questions in this area. Janet already mentioned some of the infrastructure issues from her part. I don't know if Johan or Mark, you wanted to add anything.

Johan Uvin: I mean just to acknowledge Portia that there are indeed a lot of questions regarding infrastructure and infrastructure cost and so forth. But then I also want to emphasize that people understand that our agencies are working so closely together right now to develop guidance to assist all of you at the state and local levels and a lot of our conversations are driven by the input and the questions that you've previously shared with us.

Mark: Yes and I think maybe at the risk of just repeating what Johan has said we are very mindful that there are lots of questions that are coming to us about the infrastructure provisions and as to concretely how they will work. Though we recognize the need for guidance around this and we are very actively involved in those conversations.

Portia Wu: Thank you Mark. A few other items before we wrap up and turn over to Q&A. States should be prepared to reconstitute and certify local boards by the July 1 date and states and locals need to be looking at those requirements. So chief elected officers should begin reviewing those new requirements. State boards should also think about their plans to add members to become compliant with the new law.

So you can use the transition time for planning to meet new board membership requirements and carry out new functions of the state board by July 1. A business majority must be maintained for the transition period and there are some suggested strategies that could be employed to bring board membership into compliance such as establishing standing committees and transition board members and converting youth councils to youth committees. We strongly encourage you to think about this option to ensure youth-serving organizations are aligned and inclusive of the youth voice.

There are also many other activities and transition plans that states and local areas should be engaged in now. Plans should include the dates by which certain activities and benchmarks must be achieved under WIOA and you should also be considering the customer impact such as how current WIA participants will be impacted in the transitioning the new law.

That includes for example preparing for fiscal and program changes for transition and identifying new program elements. So I know Department of Labor for example is planning to issue new uniform guidance in compliance with the OMB uniform guidance and I think it's referred to often as a super circular. And so your financial staff and other staff should become familiar

with the requirements of this guidance and the impact it will have on state system and transition to the new law.

You should also be reviewing eligible training provider list processes and accessing how they need to be updated to reflect new eligibility criteria such as adding new procedures for the automatic inclusion of registered apprenticeship programs and this must go into effect no later than July 1, 2015.

And finally another; we've touched on this briefly but a good example of an area where there might be transition is in youth funding. So new competitions for youth funds should support the 75% out-of-school youth and the 20% work experience expenditure rate goals.

We've heard some questions about contracting at the local level regarding transitioning to this new requirement. We've been working with our federal partners to identify effective approaches for serving out-of-school youth and will provide technical assistance to help with this transition but in the meantime we really recommend that states and local areas work with federal partners to begin developing plans to address this and I think Mark touched well on some really good ideas for outreach that people could be doing now to assist in that transition at the local level.

So we're going to wrap up. I know there will be many challenges and hurdles in implementing this new law but we're excited to work together with you and our federal partners to realize the new vision of WIOA and help everyone come into compliance. Certainly ETA regional offices are prepared to provide support, assistance and guidance to stakeholders as we work through these

issues. We hope you'll continue using our resource page at www.doleta.com/wioa and keep an eye out for additional guidance.

With that I'd like to turn it over again to my colleagues to make any other closing remarks or add any other items they'd like to highlight in transition.
Johan?

Johan Uvin: Thank you Portia. What I wanted to do is maybe elaborate just a little bit on the point I made earlier around technical assistance and guidance. So in addition to the joint guidance that as the agencies we will issue on the vision for the unified and combined plans and the performance accountability system the department is working in coordination with our partner agencies on a plan for providing additional technical assistance on a number of implementation issues that we know will affect the Title Two and VR communities.

One thing for instance we're doing is in December we'll be having a series of regional conversations with our Title Two administrators looking at what does 2015 look like from the transition state plan standpoint.

We're also discussing providing additional assistance and guidance on anticipated performance reporting implications and data collection requirements under WIOA, some written guidance on one-stop partner responsibilities and related responsibilities. All of this to say that we are committed to making sure that all of our partners at the state and local levels will be able to work together towards a robust implementation of this new law.

Portia Wu: Thank you. Mark?

Mark Greenberg: Sure. So I just want to say a word about next steps here. In addition to our continued active engagement with our DOL and colleagues I mentioned we did a webinar for human service agencies last week but we will continue to do periodic ones over time as developments go forward. In addition to that for a number of program-specific pieces of guidance we will be issuing information memoranda and dear colleague letters and other kinds of communication out to the field seeking to address the questions that are coming into us.

We're also going to be building in information in our regular technical assistance and conference activities in the months to come. So what I would encourage for those on the call is that if there are places where you know that questions are coming up and there are places where guidance or information from us would be useful please let us know. We are very aware in our exchanges with human service agencies so far that there is both excitement but also lots of questions about how this works and how it fits with their existing requirements and how it fits with their existing plans.

So we know there is the virtue of further guidance and we want to be as supportive as we can in the coming months.

Portia Wu: Thank you Mark. Janet did you have any final comments and then we'll turn it over to Q&A. I think there might be an option to do it on the phone but also just wanted to call people's attention to in the invitation there was an e-mail address where people could send questions online. Janet any final remarks?

Janet LeBreck: Yes, thank you so much Portia. I just wanted to also thank all of our colleagues today for this invitation and also to let folks know that we

appreciate your interest and the fact that there may be a lot of questions and this is one of the reasons why we're providing this opportunity.

In addition to that we've also just concluded with the vocational rehabilitation community a week-long conference where we had an opportunity to meet with the majority of the states involved with the VR programs as well as other partners in the VR process as well to review some of the information and walk through the bill and raise awareness about some of the activities that I mentioned earlier as well that they should also be engaging in in partnership with the workforce community as well as other partners.

And that we will continue to partner with DOL and Adult Education, HHS and others to provide information and guidance around some of these issues and activities that we're all working on very hard to ensure that the information gets out there. And we will continue also to engage in quarterly calls with the state directors which we are providing a mechanism for them to ask questions as well.

We'll continue that process in providing answers to questions that come specifically from states as well and encourage people to check our Web site, rsa.ed.gov and our colleagues are also linked on our page to the other agencies as well so that you can follow along and submit questions and really appreciate this opportunity today to participate in this. So thank you so much.

Portia Wu: Wonderful, well thank you. Again encourage our listeners to e-mail your questions to dol.wioa@dol.gov. We have gotten some questions in to the Web site. One question I will answer here first is does the Workforce

Innovation and Opportunity Act require the collocation of employment services affiliate sites.

So I can take that one. Even under existing law Wagner-Peyser Employment Services do not stand alone but WIOA states even more clearly that “to improve service delivery”-states to improve service delivery, avoid duplication of services, enhanced coordination of services that they must have Wagner-Peyser Employment Services collocated in one-stop centers.

So employment centers cannot stand on their own; however this does not mean necessarily that states will have to close down centers; it does mean that states will need to look at where they’re locating services and what partners are present in what site. So we urge states to look now at how they can integrate Wagner-Peyser Employment Services into the one-stop center system.

I got another question about what guidance people should be focusing on. I can say from ETA some of the preliminary guidance we’ve already issued includes training and employment guidance letter, which we put out number 12-14 on October 28 earlier this year about allowable uses and funding limits of Workforce Investment Act PY2014 funds for WIOA transitional activities. So we often refer to this as the 2% TEG. That is on our Web site.

And we’ve also put out a training and employment notice highlighting where additional resources can be located. All of these are at our Web site at www.doleta.gov/wioa. I don’t know if our partner agencies would like to say directives to any specific guidance that they’ve put out they want to be sure people look at.

Johan Uvin: We have issued some additional guidance around funding used during a transition year and that initial guidance and any other resources we've developed are available via our Web site.

Mark Greenberg: And this is Mark. I mean for us this will really be less about guidance and more about translation and explanation. So we will of course be deferring to the DOL and the forthcoming guidance but as I mentioned a couple of minutes ago we will be putting out information memoranda and dear colleague letters to help highlight the parts of this which are most directly relevant to human services programs and help in understanding how it applies to them.

Janet LeBreck: And Portia we are doing the same as well. We are currently working on the implementation process of the regulations. We will be putting out guidance based on that as well in addition to providing other additional information and guidance to states as well. So we will be working on those different aspects of being able to provide any type of guidance to states specifically once we get through that process.

Portia Wu: Thank you Janet. Just to add to that we do have some forthcoming guidance. I think I had already talked a little bit about implementation and operations guidance. We do also expect to help people with technical assistance on cost allocation methods to help states and local areas think through how to jointly fund infrastructure cost and shared services, reporting templates which we're required to issue with performance-related changes in July 2015, fiscal and management accountability guidance. We also will have to put out statistical

adjustment model guidance later next year and of course we will have unified plan guidance as well.

I got an e-mail from someone in New York asking-here is the question: You discuss coordination across titles. Does DOL plan to hold different titles individually accountable for hitting their performance measures? So suggesting this might make sense given that different titles bring different strengths to the system and will have a different numerical set.

I will start that answer and welcome my colleagues -- especially Department of Education -- to chime in. We are working on these measures and the larger performance accountability area as I just mentioned of course we will need to have reporting templates that we develop jointly and we issue to the system. Of course agencies will need to review performance measures for their individual program to determine whether those measures have been met but we are going to be thinking together about how we hold programs accountable and the system overall.

So I guess that's a way of saying it's not - we are looking at ways to make sure there really is coordination, it's not everyone still swimming in their own lane. Ed or HHS, do you want to add anything to that?

Johan Uvin: I mean just underscore the importance of what you were saying Portia. I think if we want a system that is more streamlined from the perspective of the customer or the client then it's important that as agencies we think about the accountability for these more streamlined services in a more holistic manner.

Mark Greenberg: And thanks Portia. I agree with Johan's comments and nothing additional to add.

Portia Wu: Thank you. I don't know if we can get questions on the phone. We're not sure about that but operator please let us know if that's the case. We do have another e-mail question from Michigan, a question about the timing and the effect. As I mentioned the final regulations will go into effect in January 2016 but there was a question but wasn't it also said that VR is working under WIOA already. So Janet I don't know if you want to say something about what that means in particular for your piece of the law and your stakeholders.

Janet LeBreck: Yes, we are already working on the inception of the regulations which means that states should already be engaging in those activities that I mentioned earlier in the call so that they can ensure that they are effectively working on the development of some of those areas that are expected now under WIOA and as we get through the regulatory process we will be providing additional guidance and technical assistance around those specific areas.

Coordinator: Ma'am you can get questions online. Your parties just need to press Star 1.

Portia Wu: You'll let us know if anyone has queued up please.

Coordinator: We've had someone waiting for a while if you'd like to take that question.

Portia Wu: Sure.

Coordinator: Certainly. (Robert Hache) your line is open.

(Robert Hache): Thank you. Glad to get in. A couple of questions actually; one, I would love it if you could repeat the Web site or let us know if we will be e-mailed the Web site to which you referred so that we can get a better look at some of the regulations and just a comment that I've been observing as I listen to this. We keep talking about requirements for providers, requirements that people with disabilities have to do. Does WIOA have any new requirements on the employer? That is those who in my book, A, ought to be hiring us, and B, generally speaking would rather not quite frankly. Thank you.

Portia Wu: Thank you for that question. Yes you can access our resources again at the Web site which is www.doleta.gov/WIOA and since your question is specifically about employment -- especially employment of individuals with disabilities -- Janet you might want to put out your Web site. And we do crosslink to each other's Web site so if you go to one you'll be able to find the information to our colleagues as well.

To the rest of your question there are requirements on the system, on the workforce system about coordinating with employers on states and local areas for setting targets to achieve outcomes exactly on employment of individuals, including individuals with disabilities on wages, on helping them gain skills. So there are many new requirements and requirements for engagement with employers as well as regional collaboration. Thank you.

Janet LeBreck: Absolutely Portia and I just want to say also that in case he did not get the RSA Web site it's rsa.ed.gov and you can click on WIOA and it will have information there as well. And just a quick note on the employer piece is that the purpose of the language that it outlined in this legislation around employer engagement is to encourage those partnerships and encourage the VR

community to be working with employers and to partner with them to raise awareness, educate, to bring in those partnerships. And that takes everyone, not just the employer.

It also takes the VR community. It takes the workforce development system and it takes most importantly the consumers in that we all have a joint responsibility in making sure that these individuals are prepared to engage in employment, that they're well trained, that they have the skills, they're motivated and that they are active participants in this process.

There is no single entity under WIOA where the emphasis is just placed on employers or on VR or on the workforce development system. This truly does take a joint effort by all involved. So thank you for the question.

Portia Wu: We have two questions that we have had submitted online I want to share with the people on the call. One is from (Debby) in Tucson, Arizona. Her question is what about the ever-growing population of people who are coming out of jails and prisons and who have that extra barrier of being a felon to surmount when job seeking. I think this is an excellent question and it's actually an issue that Secretary Perez here at the Department of Labor is personally passionate about.

I will notice that people who have been involved with the criminal justice system are explicitly mentioned in the new law. They are certainly an eligible population for services. Many areas already serve this population in creative and innovative ways and we really hope that people will form local partnerships to address their needs because they do have many barriers. And

TANF and the Second Chance Act programs are actually new required partners in this law so we're very excited about those opportunities.

Johan, do you want to add anything to that?

Johan Uvin: Yes. In addition to excitement about those opportunities Portia I think it's important for everyone on the call to know that on the Title Two the support for correctional education including reentry education for returning citizens has been strengthened considerably. The new law supports a range of education and job training activities for incarcerated individuals to promote successful reentry and reduce recidivism.

States can actually now use up to 20% of their allocation if they want to for this purpose and these funds can go to supporting a range of activities with the goal of reducing recidivism, integrating education and training, career pathways, peer tutoring and so forth but here again I want to emphasize that the opportunity for the various systems, workforce, adult education, voc rehab, health and human services here to partner around this particular issue is probably more significant than the fact that an individual title has that provision.

Mark Greenberg: Portia, it's Mark and I actually just want to highlight another area of potential partnership. We also fund a set of marriage and fatherhood programs around the country. The fatherhood programs very frequently have a high share of participants who either have criminal records or are very recent reentrants and we've got a set of dedicated grants that expressly focus on re-entry.

In addition our child support programs in a number of states are paying stronger attention to employment services for non-custodial parents and frequently there is a significant interaction with people who are leaving prison. So as localities are looking at the potential for partnerships around this population we'll be encouraging these and we hope that they will be supportive.

Portia Wu: Thank you Mark. Another question that we have gotten is from (Cheri) in Cincinnati raising concerns about required partners who have been on the board for years but are not required partners for the board now and asking about who the required partners are and whether or not it was intentional that the new law purposely reduced the number of required partners. The innovation act does change board membership in the statute and it's true that not every one-stop partner is represented on the board though all the core programs are.

The intent behind the law was that the reduced board size allowed boards to be more strategic but we certainly agree that it's important for even those partner programs who are not on the board to continue to be very engaged. It's very important that as boards develop their plans that they consult with and engage all of those partners. Boards can also of course establish sub-committees with one-stop partners or find other ways to get input from those programs.

Operator, do we have any phone call questions lined up?

Coordinator: Yes, we have several. The next one coming up is from (Mike Schluntz). Your line is open.

(Mike Schluntz): Yes, hello everybody. I have a question about the designation of the one-stop operator by a competitive process. I think this is something that must be changed in the act. Since the inception of WIA one-stop operators and systems have been in place serving both job seekers and employers. Many business relationships have been established, valuable services have been provided and businesses and job seekers are familiar with the current one-stop operating system and know where to go for assistance.

To make one-stop operators go through a competitive process to continue providing services that they have been providing for the past 14 years is just an example of bureaucracy that has to be removed. This is a type of requirement that makes no sense, not practical in serving employers and job seekers. At least at a minimum the local board and chief elected officials should have the option to bid or not bid the one-stop operator.

If they're satisfied with the current one-stop operator then allow the operator to continue under WIOA, if not then they can bid it out but I think it's just a waste of everybody's time and money to force one-stop operators to jump through hoops when the current one-stop operator will be designated as a one-stop operator by the local board and chief elected officials under WIOA.

Thank you.

Portia Wu: Thank you very much for that comment. We're very aware of this. The new law does certainly underscore the role of competition with the one-stop operators. We've gotten many, many comments and questions about it and our regulations and guidance later next year will be addressing this issue. Next question?

Coordinator: (Mrs. Rodriguez) you may ask your question.

Portia Wu: Actually if you can state where you're from please, thank you.

(Ms. Rodriguez): From Puerto Rico. I'm concerned about the training and employment guidance letter 12-14 allows use of funding limits and 2% for the transition activities. But what happens if we have all the monies compromised and we want for example to develop an intake program for everybody and then we don't have funds. Are you going to make available any funds other than the ones that we have?

Portia Wu: Well yes, thank you for that question. That's a question that's the top of mind for many states and areas. We are getting that question. I will say speak for the Department of Labor. We are looking at what available funding there may be. I will say Congress did not allocate new funds for these activities specifically. There are authorized funds under WIOA but Congress needs to appropriate funds and thus far they have not done so. We certainly will look for opportunities if Congress does provide additional funding or flexibility.

We also will look at the Department of Labor to see what resources and also what technical assistance we can bring to the table. We're excited to hear that people are interested in doing integrated intake and performance management. We really think that's one of the great opportunities in this law and we know it's an important activity that will help everyone really -- policy makers, job seekers, businesses -- to understand better the value and impact of our system. I will say we're also in the process of developing some transition guidance

talking about how WIA funds may or may not be carried over for uses under WIOA.

(Ms. Rodriguez): Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you. Next we'll have a question from (Mark Costa). Your line is open.

(Mark Costa): Good afternoon. This is Mark from Nevada. I had a series of questions regarding the new grants that will be coming out for each program years under WIOA. When will we find out amounts allocated to the states, when will we see the funds and how those funds should be allocated among the various entities like the board and the state and other partners.

Portia Wu: We will be putting that out next year along with the typical schedule. As you mentioned everyone's program year is a little bit different and that wasn't necessarily changed under the statute so I can only speak for Department of Labor funding. We expect that our formula funds for example we put that information out in the spring in youth and we will have other information coming on our timeline. I don't know if our education colleagues in particular want to say anything about the timing for their allocations.

Johan Uvin: We will be on our typical annual schedule which is usually in spring.

Portia Wu: Go ahead Janet.

Janet LeBreck: Oh I'm sorry. And I was just going to say that for the VR community that it will be on the same cycle as they typically would be under the VR cycle so that does not change.

Portia Wu: Thank you. I'd like to turn to we've gotten a number of questions in online too. Janet there was - (Doug) wrote in asking about initiatives for individuals with disabilities. I know you've talked a lot about that but I don't know if you want to speak as well about some of the programs as well as some of the accessibility emphasis under the new law.

Janet LeBreck: Well I think that specifically for individuals depending on whether they're a transition-age youth or an adult under WIOA there are lots of opportunities now under this legislation particularly for transition-age youth to really be partnering with their vocational rehabilitation agency within their respective state, their educational system and any other partners who have an interest or have a stake in this individual's education or employment career path so that individuals can be more self-directed and they can certainly work alongside of other partners that they may not previously have considered.

There will certainly be opportunities for looking at developing future partnerships that the VR programs will be looking at specifically around internships as well as apprenticeship opportunities and more I think uniquely based employment opportunities that may be certainly exclusive to certain states depending on what the landscape of their employment arena may look like.

But under WIOA there are a variety of different initiatives that states will be able to consider engaging in and so we certainly encourage consumers to be very proactive around the discussions, to work with the state agencies to take an interest at the state agency level and engage with them so that they can offer suggestions and comments around some of those initiatives.

Portia Wu: Thank you Janet. I think we should wrap up. I'm going to take one final question here from (Sharazad) in New York asking about specific deadlines for activities that must be in place for transition as well as how people should be connecting at the state level to begin core program coordination. How can you get those contacts and figure out you're coordinating with whoever is connected to the DOL process. Thank for those questions. I refer you to our Web sites as well as our forthcoming guidance about specific deadlines.

In terms of coordination -- state level -- for those who are involved in the Department of Labor workforce programs and working with their local workforce investment boards encourage you to reach out to your regional representatives and offices. They have been doing a wonderful job of coordinating the Department of Labor's outreach with our colleagues on the phone.

Our sister agencies have also reached out directly to those other agencies. So they can assist you in identifying people and they will continue to have forms where they try to help people putting together. I also encourage you at the state level to work with your localities to make sure all those stakeholders are being informed of the need to work together.

You can find the connections to our regional administrators on our Web site, www.doleta.gov. With that I'd like to wrap up the call. Again we want to thank all of you and on behalf of Department of Education and HHS and Department of Labor we really appreciate your questions. Keep your questions and suggestions coming. Please link to our Web sites because there will be a lot of information and guidance forthcoming.

And I think I said earlier we view this law as a tremendous opportunity to improve our workforce system and help the millions of US workers to get stronger skills and connect to the workforce system and help them move into better jobs in the middle class.

So we look forward to embarking on this ambitious task with all of you and stay tuned for more guidance from all of us. Thank you.

Coordinator: This does conclude today's conference call. Thank you for your participation and all parties may disconnect at this time.

END