APPRENTICESHIP CONNECTIONS

A Resource for SAE & ASE Grantees

February 2020

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SAVE THE DATES!

March	March
10	**25**
Business Engagement Bootcamp Interest Forms Due	Industry Focus Call on Transportation / Logistics

GRANTS MANAGEMENT CORNER

Preparing for the Final Phase of Your SAE Grant

As SAE grants draw near to an end, SAE grantees may face new programmatic challenges and will want to understand the requirements for grant closeout. On the programmatic front, you may need to plan ahead and "kick it up a notch" to make sure you meet your grant goals. If staff are leaving for other projects, you may want to plan now to handle the workload by cross-training staff or getting agreement for current key staff to remain through closeout on a part-time basis. Partners will wonder about what's next for them, so keep everyone apprised of any other funding sources and sustainability plans. Finally,

you may want to consider how to publicly communicate and frame your accomplishments.

As you look ahead and prepare for closeout, the SMART 3.0 Training module on Records Management and Closeout provides a good overview of the closeout process and timelines used by ETA, closeout package contents, federal and non-federal entities' responsibilities, and common reasons for delays. The following is a brief synopsis:

- **What is closeout?** Closeout represents the end of the grant life cycle and the official end of the grantee's relationship with the federal agency for the SAE grant award. The closeout period is the 90 day period after the end of the period of performance (PoP). During this closeout period, ETA will determine that all applicable administrative actions and required work of the federal award have been completed.

- **What steps can I take to make the closeout process go as smoothly as possible?** The closeout requirements are no different than the normal financial management responsibilities carried out throughout the life of the grant, such as monitor and track grant-related expenditures, produce timely program and financial reports, and maintain source documentation. If you establish effective systems up front, most closeout issues can be avoided.

- **When will grantees receive detailed requirements?** ETA will send a closeout letter to you no later than 7 days prior to the end of the PoP. This letter will contain a link to the grant closeout system where you will be able to download all necessary closeout forms. It provides two separate packages, one for governmental and one for non-governmental. Please note that no new obligations (including staff time for grant closeout activities) may be incurred after the end of the PoP.

- **What are the grantees' responsibilities?** You must submit, no later than 90 calendar days after the end date of the PoP, all financial, performance, and other reports as required by the terms and conditions of the federal award. Unless ETA authorizes an extension, a non-federal entity must liquidate all accrued expenditures and must account for any real and personal property acquired with grant funds.

To learn more, check out the Office of Grants Management (OGM)Closeout Handbook and FAQs, and take advantage of two shortonline courses on the Grant Closeout Process and Audit Resolution. Talk to your federal project officer or coach if you have any questions!

Regulatory Reflections

Prior to the 2014 Federal government implementation of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), Federal grant management requirements governing administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements were found in eight separate OMB Circulars which applied to separate types of organizations. Codified at 2 CFR Part 200, the Uniform Guidance consolidated these OMB Circulars and some other applicable different regulations into one overarching set of requirements to make it easier for grantees to understand requirements of Federal Awards.

DOL's adoption of the Uniform Guidance is found at 2 CFR 2900, which includes a limited number of exceptions approved by OMB to ensure consistency with existing policy and procedures. One of the primary premises of the Federal Cost Principles is that recipients and subrecipients assume responsibility to administer the award in an efficient and effective manner consistent with the terms and conditions of the award and apply sound management [fiscal and programmatic] practices.

For more about the Uniform Guidance, review the OGM Uniform Administrative Requirements overview page and the SMART 3.0 Webinar Training Series.

Apprenticeship Is Back (In the News), Baby!

Did you catch this? Forbes recently announced: "Apprenticeship is back, baby-and it's about time." The article highlights the growing and bipartisan support for apprenticeship, changing public perceptions, and shifts in the types of occupations for which companies are using apprenticeship to create the skilled workforce they need. Another prominent national news source, the Wall Street Journal, praised apprenticeship as a talent solution for entry-level workers in the tech industry.
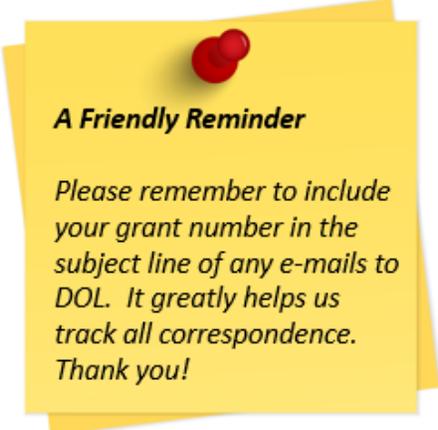
A Friendly Reminder

Please remember to include your grant number in the subject line of any e-mails to DOL. It greatly helps us track all correspondence. Thank you!

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

Back by Popular Demand: Five New Industry Focus Calls

In response to the great interest in the first three industry focus calls, we are extending our industry call series with five more calls exploring apprenticeship in other key sectors. These calls take place at 3 p.m. ET on the fourth Wednesday of each month through June, as follows:

- Retail/Hospitality on Wednesday, February 26
- Transportation/Logistics on Wednesday, March 25
- Energy/Utilities on Wednesday, April 22
- Financial Services on Wednesday, May 27

- Agriculture on Wednesday, June 24

Register today! And remember, you can find all the recordings and summaries (as they are developed) on the Industry-Focus Calls Page in the ASE community.

Business Engagement Bootcamp

Is there someone on your team or in your partner network who would benefit from one-on-one coaching to take their business engagement work to the next level? We are excited to offer individuals or small teams from ASE or SAE states the opportunity to join a new business engagement bootcamp offering individualized training to support your apprenticeship expansion goals. Watch your email for the invitation to register! Interest forms will be due by March 10. See the invitation e-mailed February 28 for more details! Interest forms are due by March 10.

Advanced Manufacturing Resources

Working in the manufacturing apprenticeship space? In addition to the recording, transcript, and summary of the January 28 industry call on advanced manufacturing, a recent survey by the Manufacturing Institute might help. It looked at strategies manufacturers are using to train new workers and upskill their current workforce. More than two-thirds are expanding internal training programs, including about a third that use apprenticeships already. The report also contains insights into manufacturing companies' training strategies, motivations, and obstacles.

Michigan Gets Creative With the Grantee Self-Assessment

Michigan, like many states, is tailoring the self-assessment tool to meet their needs. State grant staff is making small modifications to the tool so that local regions will be able to use it to evaluate the effectiveness of state expansion activities in each region. The results will inform state strategy and technical assistance, and help the state to identify opportunities for peer learning across regions. How are you using the tool to support apprenticeship expansion and integration? Talk to your coach about your ideas and questions!

REPORTING ROUNDUP

Next Reporting Due Date: May 15, 2020

SAE Reporting Updates

SAE Quarterly Performance Report Reminder: For the "Cumulative Total" column, grantees must report cumulative information for Sections I, II, and III based on data from the inception of the grant up to and including data for the current quarter. For the "Current Quarter" column, grantees must report data for the current (i.e., reporting) quarter only. If there is no data to report for a data element, indicate zero (0) in the corresponding cell in the Excel spreadsheet. Please ensure all cells have a numeric value.

ASE Reporting Updates

TRACKING SYSTEMS

Prime grantees are expected to develop/purchase/subscribe to some kind of participant-level data tracking and/or case management system (as are all ETA discretionary grants), and to appropriately collect and manage any sub-award participant level-data as outlined in the TEGL and in your grant agreements. The system must have the capability to be updated, to produce the data for upload into the DOL system, and have the appropriate PII protections required by the grant agreement.

The forthcoming ASE Reporting system is called WIPS (Workforce Integrated Performance System) and is already used by several ETA discretionary programs, regardless of funding source. (Note that ASE funding is not derived from WIOA funding.) WIPS is not affiliated with, nor linked to RAPIDS. Until WIPS is fully operational for ASE grants, grantees report ASE activities utilizing an interim reporting process.

Some grantees are developing proprietary participant data-tracking products, but there are a number of other options available to grantees if they don't want to develop a stand-alone system including partnering with a WIOA reporting agency (Labor/Ed). Some are using commercial grant-award management products. Others subscribe to case management software packages. For reporting into WIPS, grantees could also have an off-the-shelf product modified to a semi-proprietary status (as many other discretionary grantees do).

Some options utilized within the grants community in some capacity among the many available include:

> *Please note that mention of any of the below products does not in any way suggest or imply endorsement of said product or methodology by the Department of Labor, the Offices of Apprenticeship or Grants Management, or any other entity affiliated with the official administration of DOL grants now or in the future.*

- having a database built from scratch;
- BlackBaud;
- eCivis;
- Geo-Solutions on their own, outside of the State consortia agreement/s;
- Geo-Solutions within the State consortia agreement/s context;
- JobLink system consortia;
- Omnipress;
- SmartSimple;
- Submittable

There are other grant-award management packages available on the market beyond

the examples above. But, please remember, RAPIDS does not have the data elements required for WIPS. The assigned FPOs and TA Coaches can help grantees envision what their participant data tracking system should include.

REMINDERS

- **Quarterly Reports**: Quarterly reports consist of two elements, the QNR and QPR. Even if you still have no participants, a QPR must be submitted. Additionally, remember that all data elements must be included for each participant reported.

- **Grant Specific**: When submitting reports for your ASE grant, please ensure you are reporting only on outcomes associated with your ASE grant and not outcomes achieved under other grants. As such, please be sure to report only that activity specific to the ASE grant funding (particularly participants) in the ASE performance reports. Grant activity conducted by/funded by other grants awarded to ASE grantees or other recipients in your state should be reported on those respective reports. However, you are encouraged to report on leveraged resources and co-enrollment efforts beyond those captured in the QPR under Section V of the QNR.

- **Annual Report**: General Statewide activity regarding all grant activity and other apprenticeship activity in your state may be reported in the annual report, due at the end of each ETA Program Year, the first of which will cover activities that occurred July 1, 2019, thru June 30, 2020.

BETA TESTING: Although the Performance Reporting package OMB approval is still pending, we are currently still 'on-track' to go to WIPS Beta-testing in the third quarter of FY2020. However, that time-frame may change depending on when that approval is received.

If you would like to have your grant be one of the Beta-Testers for the OA section of the WIPS system and we have not yet heard from you, please send an e-mail to the apprenticeship mailbox (apprenticeship.grants@dol.gov) with the subject line "BETATEST" and your grant number. The e-mail should outline the experience level of your grant reporting team with automated reporting systems, spec development, and/or technical writing (we will need any bugs clearly documented), as well as a description of the grant participant-level data tracking system currently in-use. Note: experience NOT required! We would like a variety of formats and experience in order to be able to develop the most robust assistance documentation possible. We hope to have at least five more Beta-Testers.

QUICK LINKS TO KEY APPRENTICESHIP EXPANSION WEBSITES

- OGM Closeout Package and FAQs
- Online Courses on Grant Closeout and Audit Resolution
- The ASE-SAE Apprenticeship Expansion Self-Assessment tool
- ASE Community

- [SAE Apprenticeship Community](#)
- [Apprenticeship.gov](#)
- [ETA's Manage Your Awarded Grant](#)

"Great works are performed not by strength, but by perseverance."

~ Samuel Johnson, 18th Century Writer/Critic/Lexicographer