- [Cindy] Welcome to our Bidders' Conference for prospective applicants for the HVRP program. I already see one question in the chat asking if this session is going to be recorded. And next slide, please. It is going to be recorded. Here's our disclaimer saying that we are recording this, and once the recording is done, it will be posted on nvtac.org. And we'll post that location in the chat for everyone so you'll be able to access the entire recording later.

Next slide, please. As I said, we've already got some folks who've used WebEx before, but what we want you to do is submit any questions you have through that chatbox. Please select All Panelists in the To line, and then all of your questions will come to us through that chatbox.

Everybody's phones are muted, so the only way to reach us is to use that chatbox. So please do that with any questions that you may have. Next slide, please. If you need closed captioning, there are two ways to access closed captioning for today's session. The first way is to go to the bottom left of your screen. You'll see a little dialog bubble with the letter CC in it.

You can click on that to access the closed captioning. Or on the bottom right of your screen, you'll see three little dots. If you click on those three dots and then select Captions and Highlights, that will be the other way to access the closed captioning for today's session. Next slide, please.

So we have about 90 minutes for today, and we have a lot of things to get through. Here's a brief overview of our agenda for this afternoon or morning, depending on where you are. We're going to do a brief welcome and introduce the voices that you're going to be hearing today. We're going to give a very high-level introduction to the National Veterans' Technical Assistance Center, or NVTAC.

And then we're going to do an introduction to HVRP, the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program. And that includes a little bit of information about the program itself and the purpose of the program. Then we're going to talk about the FOA, the Funding Opportunity Announcement. We're going to go through an overview of the program, which includes participant eligibility, and then a little bit more detailed look into some of the core services that happen when someone is implementing an HVRP program.

Then we're going to talk about applying for funding. And then, at the end, we'll have time for some questions and answers. Please submit all your questions in the chatbox, as I said, and we're going to do our best to get to as many questions as we can today. Any that we're not able to answer, we will be giving at the end of the session...we'll give you an email address to submit any additional questions, and we'll be compiling all the questions that come through the chat as well and passing that on to the Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment Training Service, DOL-VETS.

Next slide, please. So your facilitators for today are the NVTAC team, the National Veterans' Technical Assistant Center team. You can see all of our faces, and names, and titles here on this slide. Today, you're primarily going to be hearing from me, Cindy Borden, and Nicole LaCorte-Klein. We'll be the two speakers, but the whole team is here on the call, we'll be supporting the chat.

So we're all here to help you today. Next slide, please. So before we get into the details of the presentation, just a brief level setting so that we know what today's session is about and what it isn't about. So what we're talking about today is really an introduction to the HVRP program for people who are interested in potentially applying for funding for applying for an HVRP grant.

All of the conversation that we're having today is going to be based on the 2021 FOA. That's the funding opportunity that came out earlier this year and that closed, and those grants have been awarded. So it is based on that 2021 FOA. And we're going to look a little bit about some of the best practices and implementation, and some of the things to think about when you're considering applying for a grant.

As you're thinking about applying for the grant, what does that look like, and what are things you should be thinking about? A couple of things that this session is not, it is not a preview of the 2022 Funding Opportunity Announcement, the 2022 FOA. NVTAC doesn't have any information about the 2022 FOA.

It is not public until it's released. Once the 2022 FOA is published, there will be another session that is hosted that will walk through that 2022 FOA. So just to be clear, whenever in this session we're talking about what the FOA says, we are referring to the most recent FOA, which is the 2021 FOA.

Sorry, that's a lot of numbers to say at once. Next slide, please. So I just want to give you a very brief introduction to NVTAC, the National Veterans' Technical Assistant Center, who's hosting the call today. Next slide. And NVTAC is here to provide training and technical assistance to the HVRP grantees and then to other organizations who may be helping or working with veterans who are experiencing homelessness in the employment realm.

NVTAC is funded by the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service, known as DOL-VETS. And NVTAC can provide informational support to prospective applicants, as long as there is no open Funding Opportunity Announcement. Once the FOA is open and released, we cannot answer any questions or provide any support. And so that's why we're doing this webinar now because there is no FOA that's open right now, so we can answer questions and provide support right now.

Next slide, please. And NVTAC provides a whole array of services in that training and technical assistance services. It includes virtual trainings, in-person trainings when those are allowed, communities of practice, we do a lot of virtual learning classes and webinars, best practices, newsletters, and then, of course, nvtac.org is our website.

And that is the site, as I mentioned, that the recording of this webinar will be posted on that nvtac.org website. Next slide, please. Okay, so now we're going to talk a little bit about what HVRP is. Next slide. And next slide again.

So HVRP is the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program and the Homeless Female Veterans' and Homeless Veterans' with Families Program and the Incarcerated Veterans' Transition Program. So it's three separate programs that are all collectively referred to as HVRP. So throughout today's session, when we talk about HVRP, we are talking about all three of these programs.

And a little bit later when we're talking about eligibility, participant eligibility, we'll talk about the difference between these three programs. But for today, when we're using the term HVRP, we're meaning all three of these collectively. HVRP is a competitive grant that is administered by the U.S.

Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service, known as DOL-VETS. Next slide, please. So HVRP has two purposes or two objectives. The first of those objectives is to provide services to help veterans who are

experiencing homelessness to reintegrate into the labor force, into the competitive labor market, through employment.

The second purpose is to stimulate the development of a service delivery system that is effective at addressing the multitude of challenges and problems that veterans who are either at risk of or experiencing homelessness face.

Next slide, please. So when we're talking about this service delivery system we're really talking about being part of a bigger process, a bigger system that's addressing the many challenges that these veterans may be facing. And so all HVRPs provide a general continuum of services. Each grant is different and unique, but they all provide this general continuum of services that is part of this service delivery system.

So there's outreach and intake, and that includes things like determining eligibility, doing client intake, and then doing assessments, both discreet assessment events and then ongoing assessment while the participant is engaged in the program. It involves addressing barriers, barriers to employment that are identified during that assessment process, and then creating an IEP, an individual employment plan, connecting that veteran to supportive services to address barriers that may have been discovered and to training, both soft and hard skills career technical training that can lead to employment.

And then the sort of last big piece of this continuum of services is around outcomes, both job placements, so placing the veteran in competitive employment, and then tracking their retention in that employment over time.

And we will be going through these different components of this continuum of services in a little more detail a little bit later in the session. Next slide, please. So HVRP, currently, for fiscal year 2022, is authorized at $57.5 million. That $57.5 million includes all the grants, the HVRP grants, those three grants that we talked about.

HVRP is the only competitive federal grant program that is focused exclusively on employment for veterans who are at risk of and experiencing homelessness. So it's the only program of that type. It is also a small piece of two much larger systems. These much larger systems of this service delivery network that we mentioned, and that is both the homelessness system, so that system that addresses and helps individuals who are experiencing homelessness, and the workforce system.

So HVRP is part of both of these systems, the homelessness system and the workforce system. And we'll be talking a little bit about that as we go forward. Okay. Next slide, please. Okay. So now we want to talk a little bit about the Funding Opportunity Announcement, or the FOA, or the FOA, as we'll say.

Next slide. So what is the FOA? The FOA, or the Funding Opportunity Announcement, is a document that's released that provides a whole bunch of different information about that funding opportunity. It includes background information about the program. It identifies who's eligible to apply for that funding as well as who's eligible to be served by that program.

So both eligible applicants and then eligible participants. It includes information about the program requirements, what HVRPs are required to do. It describes all of the documentation, all of the materials that need to be submitted as part of an application, as well as the process for submitting that application.

And the FOA also includes an explanation about how applications will be reviewed, how they'll be scored, and how awardees will be selected. So, as you can see, the FOA has a lot of really important information in there. Next slide, please.

So where can I find the FOA, or the FOA? You need to go to www.grants.gov, and when you go to grants.gov this is a screenshot of what you'll see. Grants.gov is basically a web portal where you can search for and apply for federal government funding beyond HVRP.

It's government-wide. And you can actually search for opportunities. There's a whole bunch of training and tips and resources about applying for federal funding that's available on grants.gov. There's an excellent Online Help feature. And you can also do something, you can register in grants.gov. And if you see that little arrow there that is showing you where it says Register, if you click on that Register, next slide, this is what you'll see.

And this is if you are starting to register for grants.gov, you'll see this slide. There's actually a video, a YouTube video, that explains how you go through the process of registering for grants.gov. It is important that you register for grants.gov because once you register, you can actually subscribe to alerts about funding opportunities that are interesting to you, and you can save your searches.

So if you're looking for HVRP, you can actually search for it, save that search, and also subscribe to an alert when something changes or a new funding opportunity around HVRP comes out. A little bit later in the presentation, towards the end, we'll talk a little bit more specifically about the process of applying, but this is what we're talking about for grants.gov, where you can go now.

Next slide. So if you were to search for HVRP on grants.gov, this is what's going to come up. You're searching for HVRP. The first thing you should know is if you see this red box that's around part of the search function, that particular box says it's...you might not be able to see the detail of it, but it says Opportunity Status.

It is really important that under Opportunity Status, when you search for HVRP, you click Forecasted, Posted, and Archived. If you do not click that Archived button, you're only going to get the current forecast for HVRP 2022, which I'll talk about in just a minute. But by clicking this Archived button, you have access now to HVRP FOAs dating back for several years.

So you'll be able to go back and look at the FY 2021 FOA, which this presentation is based on, but also previous FOAs as well if you get additional information. So it's really important that you click that Archived button. Once you're registered, you can save this search and also then sign up for an alert so if new information is posted, you'll get an alert showing that the new Funding Opportunity Announcement has come out.

So once you're registered, you save your search and you sign up for those alerts. Next slide, please. As I mentioned, if you don't click that Archived button, what you'll see right now on grants.gov when you search for HVRP is the forecast. The forecast is basically a forecast of a planned funding. It is not a guarantee of funding, but it's a forecast.

And what it's saying is this is the plan from DOL-VETS, and you can see here it is that they're planning to post an FOA, a Funding Opportunity Announcement, for HVRP. The forecast date for that posting is January 22nd of 2022. The estimated due date is February 28th of 2022.

Again, these dates are not set in stone, it's a forecast, but it gives you some information to plan for planning purposes, that, you know, this Funding Opportunity Announcement, once it comes out, you'll have about 30 days to

complete it. It also shows the estimated amount of funding that will be available for this FOA, and that's $14 million. The award ceiling, and we'll talk about this in a minute, is $500,000, that's per year.

And it also says in the forecast that there is no cost sharing or matching requirement for HVRP. Next slide, please. So when you're looking at the FOA, and I would encourage everyone who's interested to go into grants.gov and pull up that 2021 FOA and read through it after this session, you really want to take your time and read it because the FOA is where DOL-VETS states very clearly what its priorities are for the HVRP program.

So you need to read it very carefully and very thoroughly and really look out for language and how language is used in the FOA. For example, they'll use things like, "An applicant must explain," or, "The applicant shall do this." So you really want to make sure that you're looking for that language, and when it says must or shall, that you do the things that you must or shall do.

You also want to notice when there's language like required versus requested. In previous years of the FOA, there were required attachments. A required attachment means if you do not include it, your application is not considered because it's not complete, whereas a requested attachment, if you leave out a requested attachment, it could affect your scoring in some cases, the FOA would outline that, but it wouldn't mean that your application wouldn't be reviewed.

So when you're reading the FOA, you want to be really careful and make sure that you look at that language and you understand what the language is saying. You also want to look at the headings and the subheadings that are being used in the FOA, and as you're writing your application, you're going to use those same headings and subheadings. And you want to be very clear to follow all of the instructions that the FOA includes. That includes things like page limits, spacing, naming conventions for the files and the attachments.

Make sure that you follow all of those directions very, very closely. Next slide, please. A couple of things to keep in mind that all federal applications require, so that includes the HVRP FOA. The first is the SF-424, which is the application for federal assistance.

The whole SF-424 package is available on grants.gov. You can actually take a look at it now before the FOA is out and look at it and see what that looks like.

That'll include your project budget, which we'll talk about. It also includes the DUNS number, the DUNS and Bradstreet number, and registration in SAM, the Systems Awards Management system.

The DUNS number is being phased out, but it will not be phased out until spring of 2022. And we just looked at the forecast for HVRP, and that is forecasted to come out in January. So you will be required to have a DUNS number in order to apply. And this is something you can start looking at now.

The link is here. You can start applying for your DUNS number now. Also for SAM, for the System for Awards Management, anybody who has a current application or current funding from the federal government has to have an active SAM registration. And that takes a little while to process as well, so that's another thing that you can start right now. Next slide, please.

So when we're thinking about HVRP eligibility and who can apply for the grant, we're talking about who can apply for this funding, there's a lot of different kinds of organizations that are eligible to apply for HVRP. The FOA includes a full list of everybody who's allowed to apply, but there's some examples here on this slide, that includes nonprofit and for-profit organizations, state, local, county governments, tribal governments, public or Indian housing agencies, veteran serving organizations, organizations that serve individuals who are experiencing homelessness or who have experienced incarceration, workforce development boards, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, all of those things, all of those types of entities are eligible to apply for HVRP.

As I said, the full list is included in the FOA, but one type of organization that is not eligible are 501(c)(4) organizations that engage in lobbying activities. 501(c)(4)s are not eligible to apply for HVRP. Next slide, please. Okay.

So we're going to move into our next section, which is an overview of the HVRP program. Next slide. First, we're going to talk about participant eligibility. So who can HVRP serve? Next slide. So HVRP programs can serve veterans who are currently experiencing or at risk of homelessness, or are participating in a partner program, and would benefit from employment services.

We're going to look at each of these components in a little bit more detail. Next slide. So who does HVRP serve? Veterans. For HVRP purposes, a veteran is a

person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

That means the individual has to have at least one day of active duty, for national guard and reserves, that means they must have been federally activated for duty, not including training, and then they must not have a dishonorable discharge.

Next slide, please. So the next piece of that definition is homeless or at risk of homelessness. For HVRP purposes, homelessness is defined according to the HEARTH Act. And the HEARTH Act has a full list of bulleted items that define someone as homeless.

That includes sleeping in a place not meant for public habitation, being in a temporary shelter, living in a car, in a park, any of those kinds of things. And there's a full list under the HEARTH Act. And when you get these slides, there's a link here that will send you to that full list of definitions.

For HVRP purposes, HVRP defines homeless as anyone who meets those definitions in the HEARTH Act currently or who met that definition at any point in the 60-day period immediately before HVRP enrollment. So either you are currently defined as homeless for the HEARTH Act, or you were defined as homeless in the 60 days before you are enrolled in HVRP.

And just a reminder that anybody who is at imminent risk of homelessness, that means within 14 days, is defined as homeless for HVRP purposes. Now, in addition to those folks who are homeless, HVRP can also serve veterans who are at risk of homelessness.

And for HVRP, at risk of homelessness is somebody who is at risk within the next 60 days. So in the next 60 days after enrollment, they are at risk of losing their residence, and they lack the resources to obtain other permanent housing. In practice, this really applies to veterans who are within 15 to 60 days of homelessness because if they were at 14 or less, they're defined as homeless, they're imminent risk.

But it is important to note for HVRP, there is a limit to 10% of your total enrollments coming from that at-risk category. For example, if a grantee is planning to enroll 100 veterans over the course of the program year, a maximum of 10%, or 10 veterans, could come from this at risk of homelessness

category without getting approval from their grant office or technical representative.

So that's really important. It's homeless or at risk, but only 10% of your enrollments can come from that at-risk category. Next slide, please. If a veteran is not either homeless or at risk of homelessness, they could also be eligible if they are participating in one of these partner services.

That includes HUD-VASH, the HUD-VA Supportive Housing program, or Tribal HUD-VASH. It also includes individuals who are receiving assistance under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996. And it includes individuals who are receiving services under the Department of Veterans Affairs Rapid Rehousing and Prevention program, also known as SSVF.

The authorization uses the term Department of Veterans Affairs Rapid Rehousing and Prevention program, but practically for folks who are serving this population, we know that program as SSVF. So a veteran who is participating in HUD-VASH, Tribal HUD-VASH, SSVF, or getting assistance under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act do not have to be homeless to be eligible for HVRP.

Other veterans who are eligible, other categories who may not be homeless or at risk of homelessness currently are veterans who are transitioning from incarceration or recently released from incarceration. And definitions of those terms will be included in the FOA. Veterans who are in one of these partner services or other categories are not included in that 10% that I just mentioned.

Next slide, please. Okay. So I think that's that section. And I am going to pass things over to Nicole, who's going to lead our next section. Nicole.

- [Nicole] Thank you, Cindy. Good afternoon, or good morning, everyone. We're going to take a few moments now to look deeper into some of the specific services and program implementation. So what HVRP grantees are currently doing. The elements in this section will inform the project narrative section of the application. So as we go through each of these services, we'll highlight specifically how it's connected to the FOA.

Next slide, please. So let's talk about some of the actual services and what the HVRP grantees are currently providing. As what's listed here on the slide,

knowledge of the population, veteran outreach and engagement, assessment, case management or individualized employment plans, training and job development, partnership and collaboration, engaging employers, as well as employment adjustment services, and measuring success.

So these core services, we'll go into some specific detail and give a brief overview of some best practices and some challenges that we've experienced with grantees throughout the years. We'll also include references to the section of the 2021 FOA that discusses each specific component. Next slide, please.

So let's start with the population. Who exactly is an HVRP recipient? Who is in need of services and community providers that will be working alongside of you is extremely important if you are considering applying for HVRP funding.

So understanding the characteristics of veterans who are homeless. Cindy just talked and went through the eligibility criteria, understanding a veteran's age, their race, their gender, their homeless status. Are they also in need of employment? There are many veterans who meet the criteria for who an HVRP program is suitable to serve, however, if he or she is not interested in employment, and we'll talk about what employment looks like and what that means specifically, then HVRP may not be the right service for him or her.

So, again, understanding the need, and unemployment, and poverty, understanding what the individual's barriers to employment, the complexities of what homelessness, again, incarceration, mental health, substance abuse, some of the challenges that a lot oftentimes veterans that are served by HVRP are facing, and understanding your community.

Really doing research of your local labor market. Who else in your community is providing services to this population? And other employment services, including who are existing HVRP grantees, as well as other programs focusing on employment for this population. So really understanding all of these particular areas will be included in your statement of need as you look at the FOA.

Next slide. Common pitfalls, and things to be aware of. Do the number of homeless veterans who are potentially eligible for enrollment substantiate your grant submission? So when you're thinking about, as Cindy mentioned, that $500,000 cap, when you do cost breakdowns and you look at per-placement rates and you look at the need in your community, again, based on other HVRP

providers, based on other nonprofit or for-profit entities, community-based organizations that are providing services, will this impact your ability to serve what you are proposing to in your grant application?

So be mindful of what you're proposing based on the point-in-time count, based on accuracy and other evidence of need in your community, are your numbers justifying the need for a grant, and can you implement the program? So we recommend including the most recent year of data and available resources as you'll highlight that because the FOA, as it states here on the slide, requires evidence.

Promising practices, casting your net widely, and engaging often. Connecting with your local VA medical center, VA clinics, your VFWs, colleges, libraries, where else in your community are services being provided, especially remotely during COVID. Looking at support groups, looking at student veteran associations, colleges that have veteran-run sponsored groups, faith-based organizations.

These are just a few community providers that when we say casting your net widely and engaging will be helpful for you in preparation for submitting your application. So don't try to do it alone. Relationships with existing providers. And, again, who else is doing this work is important to consider.

Next slide. When we talk about veteran outreach and engagement, how are you approaching outreach in your community? And how are you ensuring that all communities in your service region are being representative? Are you out making the rounds and attending your local Continuum of Care meetings? If you are not familiar with your Continuum of Care, certainly encourage you to become familiar with the providers from a housing perspective and other service delivery entities for outreach.

How are you coordinating? How are you partnering with the American Job Centers, with your referral networks? Are you participating in stand-downs? What's the visibility and presence of your organization in the community? What outreach have you engaged in with other state agencies, local government, again, we mentioned the VA, other nonprofit, or faith-based organizations?

So outreach, recruitment, and engagement must include a phase that is non-threatening, that is persistent and consistent over time, that also offers a flexible array of services. There have been providers that have conducted street outreach

that have engaged folks with specific items that other community providers may often have, whether it's blankets or meal cards, or any other services that are currently being provided in your community that you can connect with.

You think about how you can engage individuals who oftentimes have been on the streets for years and who may be choosing to remain there. How are you thinking about writing to the engagement piece around outreach and engaging this chronically homeless population that, again, has been living in the streets for quite some time?

And using veteran service organizations for that information is helpful as well. Next slide. Some outreach and engagement pitfalls and best practices. If we think about visibility and your presence, as I mentioned, attending the Continuum of Care and other community meetings, and repeatedly, you know, how will you set up your program so that the case managers or outreach workers, or however your staffing structure is set up, how are those individuals continually building relationships in the community?

When thinking about turnover, when thinking about COVID, when thinking about all these other challenges in order to build relationships, are you utilizing the staff at the AJCs and other community providers that may have their roots deep into a community? How are you coordinating and maintaining and building these solid relationships? And don't forget about non-veteran organizations who may also have connections and resources that can also benefit the folks in your HVRP programs.

So, again, the strategies to engage veterans with significant employment and personal barriers, the engagement piece is extremely important. How are you going to build relationships? What will your service delivery plan look like, and how will you maintain contact and build relationships in times of uncertainty, such as the current pandemic?

Next slide, please. One of the other core services to think about is assessment, and there are two different types of assessment. And thinking about how and where you will conduct assessments, why you are conducting assessment, what tools will you use, and how will you use these specific tools?

So we don't want to write into your grant about conducting an assessment without backing up how the information from that assessment is going to be used to strengthen your program. So, for example, if we are learning about and

understanding the veteran, not just, you know, what the information is on the intake form, but what are his or her hard or soft skills?

What are their interests and their goals? Where have they been successful? What challenges have they faced, and how have they worked through them? Who's part of their support system? What are their social, emotional, physical needs? What are their limitations? Are they able to articulate and identify these things, or do they have other resources to help them achieve the ability to speak about these particular areas?

So when an assessment is purposeful and it's done well, it builds trust, and it connects you to the veteran. Oftentimes because of the nature of this population, a lot of grantees struggle with maintaining ongoing connection to veterans because of the transient nature of where they're coming from. So we talk a lot about assessment to determine not only eligibility but as a way of collaboration and building trust with a veteran.

Next slide, please. Some of the challenges, again, if you're using tools that have no purpose, or if the purpose isn't understood, for you and for the veteran, it's going to be a challenge in terms of this engagement piece that we just spoke of.

So how does the assessment directly relate to creating an employment goal? So all of the information as you're building trust and developing a relationship, how is all this information being used to assist with identifying some short-term goals? Some I haven't worked in 10-plus years. How do I access the tools I need to maintain employment?

How, if transportation, if medication, if all these other barriers aren't discussed, and full assessment, and taken into consideration to look at the person holistically, you're going to wind up with challenges on the retention side. And we often talk a lot about retention in the trainings that NVTAC does as something that really needs to be flushed out with individuals from the very beginning.

So when you're thinking about your assessment, keep in mind retention. So it's one thing to be able to identify and work with employers and get a veteran a job, it's a totally different ball of wax to help that veteran maintain employment. And if we don't look at, again, the holistic picture, we are going to run into some shortfalls. So one section of the FOA that goes back and forth between

assessment and intake, again, as it says here, the FOA emphasizes assessment for eligibility and services needed.

So the approach should be for both of these areas. Next slide, please. I started to talk a little bit about case management and your individual employment plan. So as a case manager or a service provider, we really want to think about what are we doing? How are you doing it, and why are you doing it?

So if a case manager is engaging a veteran and understanding what strategies and approaches, where I'm coming from, if I'm case managing and I'm working with someone, I want to explain not only the areas of my assessment and why this information is important, but how are we going to work on this together? What engagement strategies are going to work best for myself as the case manager and work best for the veterans that we're serving?

And the plan of capturing all this information will be included in your individual employment plan. So IEP creation and revision, goal setting, including career goals, is ultimately the vehicle for not only engaging veterans and developing these employment goals, but helping them create paths for financial stability moving forward to better their job opportunities as they continue to engage with your program.

Next slide, please. Challenges with case management. If we are not incorporating best practices, if we're not incorporating promising practices when we deliver case management, for example, are we using motivational interviewing techniques? Are we setting up mentors?

Are we utilizing peers that have been through our program or have experienced pieces of what our veterans that we're enrolling have experienced? How are we utilizing all of these potential best practices? Are we operating job clubs? Are we offering career development, again, job placement? Are we continually looking at our IEP, not only to clarify our roles and responsibilities as staff but also as a live document to continue updating once a veteran, even a small step in an IEP, has completed?

How is that being acknowledged, and how is that constantly moving forward and growing and changing to include next steps for veterans? So all of these pieces of case management is ultimately, again, not only inclusive of working towards your career goals, but really identifying small steps and success in order for the veteran to get toward his or her goal.

Next slide, please. Excuse me. Sorry. I just took a quick sip of water. Training and job development. If we talk about the plan for training veterans and placing them in employment, we talk about that it's important to emphasize that apprenticeships are considered training as long as they are subsidized.

So unsubsidized apprenticeships are considered job placement. So this is also...we'll talk a little bit more about this in terms of apprenticeships, but training may be provided directly by you, the grantee, or through partnerships with current training programs in your communities. And a minimum of 80% of the participants that you're going to be enrolling in your HVRP programs must receive training.

So, again, something else to take into consideration when you're deciding about the size of your program, 80% of those veterans you enroll must participate in a training program. Again, examples of training include on-the-job training, apprenticeships, as I just mentioned, customized training, upgrading or retraining, and occupational skills training. They should be customized to meet the needs of individual veterans.

Oftentimes one of the challenges of a HVRP grantee is that they have a limited scope in terms of the identified training track for an individual. So if there's not 20 people on your caseload that are interested in auto mechanics training, but that's the training program that you have the established relationship with or that your agency offers, be mindful that that's not customized to meet the particular need of the veteran.

And is it customized as well to meet the need of the community and the employer? So creating these employment opportunities, creating these training opportunities, becoming more familiar with what is already existing in your community, and/or creating training opportunities under the umbrella of your own organization are all acceptable forms of potential training and job development opportunities with employers.

Next slide, please. And, again, some of the challenges I just started to mention when we're trying to do a one-size-fits-all for all veterans, specifically around training and job development and placement. So describing the array of employment services and job training available. If you're not doing that, you're going to run into some trouble.

Making sure that there's a clear explanation and rationale of the process for providing training to veterans. Again, minimum of 80% of enrolled veterans must receive training, and the FOA emphasizes a connection to the local job market. So make sure you're reviewing strategies described in your service plans that are focusing on employment opportunities that are going to be sustainable.

That training is connecting to what is specifically written in your individualized employment plans and what the veteran states that's what her goals are, how it's connected to labor and local market information in your region, and specifically how training can connect to employment.

What's the placement rates for specific training programs? HVRP, remember, is an employment program. The goal is employment. In previous FOAs, applicants should be aware that placement into an unsubsidized apprenticeship, as I mentioned on the last slide, is considered placement into employment. So keep that in mind in terms of apprenticeships. Next slide.

Partnership and collaboration. So the potential need for eligible veterans, housing providers, healthcare, supportive services, and training, it's too diverse, and the expectation is not for HVRP programs to do alone. HVRP, again, is an employment program.

We are not a housing program. We, however, work collaboratively, as was mentioned, with SSVF and other housing providers in the community to do parallel tracks, finding employment and housing is a critical piece that we often know can go very well, nicely work well together hand in hand. So a strong partnership with an array of agencies to lead to reciprocal referrals, more veterans who are potentially eligible.

Are you connecting with your VA resources, with your HUD-VASH staff, with your employment staff at the VA? More resources to connect you as an agency and the veterans that you're serving, the more beneficial. Partnerships can lead to shared program functions, including employer outreach, veteran training, and collaborative service delivery.

Next slide, please. Some pitfalls and best practices to be aware of. Effective case management. Again, referrals to expand the veteran service team, not to hand them off. How are we collaborating and coordinating services so we are

not providing the same duplicative information, so we're not stepping on each other's toes?

How are you, as an entity applying for this grant, going to think about what your coordination looks like, and how will that benefit and expand for the veterans the array of services provided and offered in your community? Know as much as you can about your partners. And some have been mentioned previously, some are listed here, specifically your DVOPs and your LVERs at the American Job Center, as an example.

All HVRP partners should be aware of and committed to supporting career goals as a priority. And the communication, again, balancing the consistency versus scheduling demands. So there's specific language in the FOA about collaboration and coordination opportunities. And the use of technology, such as Zoom or Teams, or even ongoing text change or chats allows ongoing but socially distanced communication that we often are relying on now with things beginning to open back up, but still, the use of technology has been an incredible opportunity for partnerships and collaborations as many of the meetings in the community have gone virtual.

Next slide, please. Let's talk for a moment about engaging employers. Employers are our other customer, if you will, that we provide services to. So employers are both a partner and a customer for HVRP providers. So understanding the needs of employers, what their hiring process is, have they had experience working with your agencies before or other community providers?

And this is where coordination in your community is important as well. Oftentimes, employers report that they are working with multiple job developers, with multiple social service agencies and have requested the opportunity for some sort of collaboration. So HVRP providers in the past have been part of these networks with VA and other community provider staff.

Time invested in employer engagement and building these relationships is incredibly important to the long-term success of your program. We know that, you know, things happen for the veterans we serve. Oftentimes, jobs may not work out, but the importance of building the foundation and the relationship with your employer so you can continue working with them beyond the veteran that may not have succeeded in that specific position is important.

So at the employer's discretion, they may also choose to host job shadowing, employers have conducted mock interviews. They've spoken with potential candidates about the industry. It's perfectly acceptable and reasonable for HVRP staff to learn about available positions or potentially create customizable opportunities with employers based on their understanding of identifying some unmet needs or what employers in their communities may be looking for, especially with all of the changes now and how employment is delivered, with labor shortages.

Again, encouraging you all to look specifically in your communities at what the labor market-driven demand occupations are and identify how you can connect with those employers. Next slide, please. So again, developing your strategy of how you're going to engage employers, demonstrate your value of what you can bring as an HVRP provider to an employer, as a staffing agency, for example, with significant hiring experience and knowledge of population, as a partner in the community, ensure that employers understand the importance of veteran's choice in employment.

And again, developing strong employer relationships is the foundation for ensuring retention. And there will be language in the FOA that requires a plan of how you will engage employers. And this plan must include both public and private employers. So, again, thinking about your American Job Center, thinking about other community providers as well as private and public employers in your community.

How are you engaging them for potential placements for HVRP participants? Next slide, please. Employment adjustment services. Develop an understanding, as a core service, what the veteran's strengths are, what their preferences and needs are, and anticipate the challenge.

So anticipating, as I mentioned earlier, if you think about retention from Day 1, how are you incorporating that and including that information to create a plan to address some of the challenges prior to placement? Employment adjustment services ensure retention and support career pathways. So, in the FOA, you'll look in the section for project design employment and adjustment services, and you'll speak on behalf of your application of what that will look like to address poor job retention for your veterans.

And last but not least, before I turn it back to Cindy on the next slide. Enlist partners in your community, ensure that needed partner support continue to be available in terms of employers or other community partners. Remember, we're not handing off veterans, we're collaborating. So how are your relationships with both the veteran and the employer?

How do you maintain that for essential support to ensure retention, to further career development, and open up the door for other potential placements? And establishing the expectation of ongoing communication at the outset. How are you being flexible and persistent, and being available to the employer? Again, the employer is your customer as much as the HVRP participant is.

How are you ensuring that the ongoing communication you have with the employer, the expectation that this communication is still there, and it's going to differ significantly based on what you know about the veteran and what you know about the employer. So all of that to say make sure that you are getting to know your employers and you are getting to know your HVRP participants.

So the natural successful will naturally occur. Thank you. And I will turn it back over to you, Cindy.

- Thank you, Nicole. What we're going to do now is we're going to spend a couple of minutes talking about how success is measured in an HVRP grant, and this section applies to...you'll see it in two different parts of the FOA. You'll see it when it talks about expected outcomes and outputs, and that's when you're setting goals for your program.

And we'll talk in just a minute about how to start thinking about what the goals are for your program. And you'll also see it in the past performance section of the FOA, where they're asking you to share your previous performance on similar outcome measures. So this next section kind of has a double whammy. It applies to do two different parts of the FOA.

So every HVRP applicant will establish their own performance goals in their application. So, and as I said, we'll talk about how you start to think about that. But you are establishing those goals, and then your success is based on your ability to meet those goals that you establish.

And for HVRP purposes, you have to get at least 85% of your planned goal in order to be considered successful on that goal. So an easy example, I used

before the idea that if your goal is to enroll 100 veterans in a program year, in order to be successful on that goal, you would have to enroll 85 veterans.

That's 85%. If you enrolled 84 veterans, you would not be successful. So they do not round up so even if it's 84.99999%. You have to have 85% of the goal that you establish to be considered successful for that goal. Now, for HVRP, there are seven different goals or performance indicators, they call them critical performance indicators, that every applicant proposes with their application.

So you establish them yourself, and then you're held to the goals that you establish. The seven indicators are the first one is the number of participants enrolled. The second is the average hourly wage at placement. So when you are placing veterans in jobs, the average hourly wage at placement for the veterans that you place in employment.

The third is the placement rate for all exiters. And that's determined by the number of people employed divided by the number of people exited in a given quarter. The fourth is the placement rate for episodically homeless veterans. The FOA will include the definition of what an episodically homeless veteran is.

It is different than the HUD definition of chronic homelessness. It does not require a disability, but please look at the FOA for that full definition. And that placement rate then is the number of episodically homeless veterans placed in a quarter divided by the number of episodically homeless veterans exited in that quarter.

Those four are all goals that kick in right away immediately, as soon as the grant starts. Goals 5, 6, and 7, as you'll see when I explain what they are, are sort of delayed. You establish that in your application, but you can't measure them immediately because they are all goals that are connected to retention of employment.

As Nicole and I have both said, HVRP is an employment program. So these are the employment-specific outcomes. So number five is the percentage of your participants who are still employed in the second quarter after they exit your program. They do not have to be employed in the same job, but the percentage of participants who are employed in the second quarter after exit.

Number six is the percentage of participants that are employed in the fourth quarter after exit. And then number seven is the median earnings, so not average hourly wage, but the median earnings of the participants who are employed in that second quarter after exit. So those are your seven goals. And as you can see, they are really connected to this idea, this purpose of HVRP that we talked about at the very beginning, which is to reintegrate veterans into the labor force.

And so we're really trying to reintegrate them and then keep them in the labor force. And you can see that specifically in those outcomes numbers five, six, and seven. Next slide, please. So when you're thinking about applying for HVRP and how you would go, remember I said, the applicants set their own goals, and then you're held to the goals that you set.

So how do you think about that? You really want to make sure you're setting goals that are challenging but also realistic. And this is a balance. And in just a minute, I'll give you...the FOA gives you some starting points, but it really is a balance because if you set the goals too high, you may be awarded a grant, but a grant that you cannot successfully implement or achieve, right?

If the goals are just too high, you won't be able to meet them, and you won't be successful. If you set the goal too low, it may affect your scoring in your application, but it also means that you're not serving as many veterans as you could be. And that's sort of the opposite of what HVRP is trying to do.

As you're setting goals, you want to consider the current and future impact of COVID. Nicole mentioned some of the hiring opportunities that exist right now. You are setting the goals based on the environment that you're in, and so you really want to think about what that impact will be on your ability to enroll and place veterans in employment in the current climate.

You also want to make sure that the goals are connected to the need. And that means, again, we're stressing and the FOA stresses research and evidence that includes looking around your community to see what other employment services are available that may include other HVRP grants that exist in part of the service area or all the service area you're looking at.

Again, it includes looking at your local economy and your local job market to see what industries are hiring, what the wages are for those industries, what the

skills required are for those industries, all of those things, and really making sure that your goals are connected to the needs in your community.

The FOA does provide some starting points for goals, and that'll be on the next slide. And so we'll talk... Oh, not yet. Sorry, go back. We'll talk about that in just a second. And, again, I can't stress enough that you are accountable for the goals that you set. If you are successful in your application and your grant is awarded, you can't change the goals at that point.

So you really want to take time and think about setting these realistic but challenging goals because you will be accountable for them and for that 85% performance. Now, next slide. So this is directly from the FOA. And as I mentioned, the FOA provides some starting points for you as you're thinking about setting these goals.

And you can see, it has examples here for some of those goals that I mentioned on the previous slides. So the way that the FOA sets up the starting points is it gives two different options based on the service area. So there's a set of goals for those who are serving an urban area and then those who are serving a non-urban area.

And the FOA usually includes an attachment as to what areas are in that urban area definition, but it's generally the 75 top metropolitan statistical areas in the country. And that is usually included in the FOA as an attachment. If you are applying to serve both an urban and a non-urban area, if 50% or more of your enrollees are coming from an urban area, you would be considered applying for an urban area.

So just think about that. But as you can see, it gives you starting points. So for placement rates, which is the number of participants employed divided by the number of participants exited in a given quarter, you'll see that for an urban area, the starting point is 68% placement rate, and for a non-urban area, it's 72%. These are starting points.

You can deviate from these. These are things to start from, but if you're going to deviate, you need to explain why and give evidence why. You need to give, like, evidence and a rationale. So, for example, perhaps the population that you're serving, that you're choosing to serve, it's a particularly high barrier population, and it may be harder to place those veterans, that might be you the reason why you suggest the lower placement rate.

The other thing that this goal chart does is it gives a starting point for thinking about the budgets. And we will be talking about budget a little bit later, but it's that the second one here on the chart is the cost per enrollment. That's an average.

And you can see, for an urban area grant, the average was $2,223, and for non-urban, it was $2,525. As you're thinking about these goals, you want to be able to explain why you're different from these starting points. They are starting points, but remember to provide evidence if you're going to be proposing something different than these.

Next slide, please. Okay. So we've talked a lot about the different kinds of services that HVRPs are required to do and some best practices and how that connects to the FOA. Now, we're going to get back into talking a little bit more about applying for funding. Next slide, please.

So, again, the Funding Opportunity Announcement will be posted on grants.gov. We've talked a little bit at the very beginning about how important it is to really read that FOA carefully because it's going to give you so much information about what the priorities of DOL-VETS are and what you need to include in your application.

It gives you the background information. It explains all of those core components that Nicole just went through. Talks about the application process and the submission requirements. And, again, it talks about the scoring criteria and how grants will be selected. Next slide, please. So if we're looking at the funding levels available and the period of performance for the HVRP grant, again, based on the FOA from 2021, HVRP grants are funded for a three-year period of performance.

The total amount of funding that's available for new grants varies each year. But an applicant can apply for a maximum of $500,000 per year or a total of up to $1.5 million for the 3-year grant period. The amount of funding that you request must be justified based on your application and your proposed goals.

So there has to be a connection between how much you're asking for and what you're proposing to do and how many people you're proposing to serve. And we'll talk about that shortly. Next slide, please. The 2021 FOA also includes three categories. And if you remember, from the very beginning, we talked about HVRP being a term that we use for three different programs.

And here's where this comes back to play. So the 2021 FOA set out these three priority areas. Category 1 are the HVRP grants. And those are programs that don't fall into Categories 2 or 3, which I'll talk about momentarily, and you...but can serve veterans from any of these categories. So Category 1 is the broadest category and can serve the largest group of veterans for the eligibility requirements that we talked about earlier.

Category 2 is the Homeless Female Veterans' and Veterans with Families Program. If you are applying under Category 2, then 100%, every single participant in addition to meeting all of those eligibility requirements we talked about earlier, all of your participants must be either a female veteran or a veteran with dependents.

And the veteran with dependents is defined in the FOA. And it's from the code from Title 38. And that is a veteran that has a child that's under the age of 18 years old, or a child that became permanently incapable of self-support before the age of 18, or a child who is under 23 and pursuing education.

But those definitions will be included in the FOA as well. So if you're Category 2, 100% of your participants must be either female veterans or veterans with dependents. Category 3 is the Incarcerated Veterans' Transition Program. And for IVTP grants, those 100% of your participants must meet the eligibility requirements mentioned earlier, and they have to either be transitioning from incarceration or recently released from incarceration and at risk of homelessness.

And the FOA does further define those terms. So, again, Category 1 is the broadest category. It includes the most potential veterans. Categories 2 and 3 meet the general eligibility requirements, and then the specific requirements for that program.

Next slide, please. So when you're thinking about the application, there are four big components to the FOA and to the application that are going to have to be submitted. And, again, all of this will be in detail in the FOA itself. But Category 1 is the SF-424 that we talked about at the very beginning. That's your application for federal assistance.

That's where you're going to have to have that DUNS number that we talked about earlier. That's where you're going to have to have your SAM registration. And it also has to be signed by the authorized representative for your

organization. So that's the person who can actually commit your organization to the program. The second section is the project budget.

As I mentioned, that's a $500,000 maximum for the first year of your grant and a total of a maximum of $1.5 million over the 3 years. And that includes the SF-424A, also available on grants.gov, and a budget narrative. And the budget narrative is basically an explanation of each line item that's on your SF-424A, what that budget item is.

This third section of the application is the project narrative. We discussed that a lot as Nicole went through all those different sections and all those different components of HVRP. And then the fourth section is the attachments to the project narrative. And there are both required and requested attachments usually. So, again, you want to look at the FOA and make sure you know which attachments are required and which ones are requested and be able to include those in your application.

Next slide. So as promised, a little bit about HVRP budgeting. So the amount of funding that you're requesting has to be justified in the application and based on your proposed goals. As I showed you a couple of slides ago, the FOA does include some cost per enrollment averages, which are a good starting point to figuring out what your total budget might be for your application.

So in 2021, the average cost per enrollment for urban areas was $2,224, and for non-urban areas, it was $2,525. Those numbers are on that chart from a couple of slides ago, so you don't have to memorize them. So as you're looking at your budget, if your cost per enrollment is higher than that, you should be explaining that and justifying it.

Again, those are starting points, but you need to make sure that if you are proposing based on your budget and the number of veterans that you're proposing to serve, you're looking at a cost per enrollment of, say, $4,000 per enrollment, you need to explain why that might be. Maybe it's higher needs, maybe it's because the labor market locally has a huge demand for very high-skilled jobs and so there's a higher cost of training associated, whatever that might be, we just need to explain that.

You need to make sure that there is a connection between the program and the activities that you're outlining. So if you are talking about training a lot of veterans to get CDL licenses, then your budget should reflect paying for those

CDL licenses or how they're going to be paid for if you're partnering with someone else who's offering them or something like that.

So there has to be this connection between the program and the activities that you say you're doing and the budget to pay for them. That includes the staffing. And it also includes money that you might be spending on participants, like for training, or for work clothes, or for whatever that might be. And the budget that you propose does determine what you can and can't spend for the program. So you really want to be thoughtful about your budget and make sure that you're thinking about what you need to spend and what you would be spending it on.

Next slide, please. The other thing to think about is for HVRP purposes, well, a couple of things, you need to look at 2 CFR 200, that's the uniform code around federal grant awards and what can and can't be charged to a federal grant.

And specifically, there's a lot of information, it's in the FOA, but it's also in the code, around what is an allowable or disallowable costs. For example, construction costs are not allowed in HVRP grants. The FOA has more details about that. What is allocable, so what you can actually charge to a budget line in your grant, and whether expenses are reasonable.

You need to look at all of those things as you're proposing your budget. The other thing to think about with your budget are indirect costs. For HVRP purposes, if you have a NICRA, that's a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, you can use a NICRA for HVRP purposes for indirect costs, or you can take the De Minimis rate for indirect costs, which is 10%.

If you are taking the De Minimis rate, if you're proposing to take that 10% for indirect costs, you need to make sure you read the FOA and make sure you read the information about modified total direct costs because per 2 CFR 200, when you are using the De Minimis rate, you cannot apply that 10% to things like subcontractors, if you have them, or participant support costs.

So that means direct money that participants are using. So you really want to make sure whoever is in your financial department is looking at that to make sure you're applying that rate correctly when you're proposing your budget. Next slide, please. Just a couple of things. We're getting close. We have a couple more slides and then time for questions, so keep those coming.

A few things to consider. We spent a long time telling you a lot about HVRP and about the FOA and things to consider before you apply for an HVRP grant. Generally speaking, you want to think about your organization's capacity to manage a federal grant. It's different to manage a federal grant than a state grant or a private grant.

There's a lot more organizational, administrative, financial, fiscal responsibility and requirements that come with a federal grant. So you really want to think about your organization's capacity to manage a federal grant. You also want to make sure that HVRP is connected to the mission of your organization. If you are a mission-driven organization, does HVRP fit in with what you do?

Does it make sense? Another thing to just know in advance, that grants that are awarded an HVRP grant are required to submit a continuity of operations plan, or a COOP, within 120 days of the award coming out. So you just want to think about your organizational capacity to do that.

From an HVRP-specific point of view, you really want to think about your experience with the population that we talked about, with veterans, with people experiencing homelessness, with veterans experiencing homelessness, what kind of experience do you have with that population? What kind of experience do you have providing employment services?

HVRP is an employment program. So what is your experience there? What is your connection to those two larger systems we talked about at the very beginning that HVRP is part of? That's the workforce system and the homelessness system. What are your partnerships like? What are your relationships like? Nicole talked a lot about that.

So what do you have? And then also looking at the presence of other grants in your community. Are there other HVRP grants in your community that are already operating? Are there other grants that are not HVRP that are operating, that might be serving the same population that you would be targeting? So really thinking about that. And then the last big thing to consider here is what are the gaps in your agency's or organization's experience or expertise when it comes to all of this?

And are there gaps that might be filled by a partner or a subcontractor that you might want to think about as you're applying to apply with a subcontractor to fill in that other expertise that you might lack? Next slide, please. So when

you're applying for HVRP, the FOA actually very conveniently and helpfully includes a checklist.

And there's a screenshot of the checklist from the 2021 FOA right here. And it really is a nice way to help you organize your application, prepare your application, and make sure you don't forget anything. You can see it's very clearly...it doesn't get submitted with the application. It's something for your own use, but just to make sure that you're going through. And what we suggest is you go through now and look at that list and see what are the things that you can start thinking about or start preparing now before the FOA is released, before it's active, that includes some of the things we mentioned earlier, your DUNS number and your SAM registration.

You can also see here that last year's FOA required a letter of support from either a state workforce agency or your local American Job Center. So you want to think about that if that's a requirement, how you're going to start thinking about getting that letter of support. So what are the things you can start working on now? Can you start thinking about your budget?

Can you start thinking about what your program might look like? And, again, remember to go to grants.gov to register and then subscribe for alerts around HVRP. Next slide. This is just a list of resources that'll be available in the slides when you get them just so you have them around applying for funding.

Both general resources around federal grant applications, and then some more specific resources around HVRP itself. Next slide. So we've gotten to that point where it's time for questions. Next slide. I'm going to open up and let my other colleagues help me see what questions we have in the chatbox. We encourage you to keep asking them in the chatbox.

If you have any additional questions around the FOA that we either don't get to today or you think of after this session, please email hvrp@dol.gov, and in the subject line, write FOA Questions. You can submit any questions directly to that email box. However, you can only submit those questions when the FOA is not open.

Once the FOA is released, please don't submit questions to this email box. They will not be allowed to answer it. The FOA will actually include contact information for any questions that you have during the open period. So this is before the open period, please use this email address.

So with that, I'll see if the team has questions from the chatbox that we can address.

- [Ade] Yes. Cori has been trying to answer as many questions as possible in the chatbox. There are some questions in there also for DOL-VETS that we'll be probably sending to them later. Cori, do you have any pending questions that, you know, we want to answer?

- [Cori] There were a couple that I did not respond to just yet. Let me see if I can find that. So okay, we have one here. Does the IVTP portion of the HVRP grant require an episodically homeless measure?

- So that is an excellent question. And we are going to submit that one to DOL-VETS for answer. There are seven critical indicators, and the episodically homeless is one of those. And I think this question is connected to if someone has been incarcerated for longer than the period of the episodic definition.

And so we're going to submit that question to DOL-VETS to get an answer for you.

- And this might fall into that same category, Cindy, and I'm not sure I completely understand the question the way it's written, but it might be clearer to you. I'll just read it as it's written. May the categories deviate from the standards, for example, Category 1 is the broadest, 50% of our existing homeless population are previously incarcerated vets?

- So we were going to that categories... And I'll see if I can remember the slide. Rita, could we go to slide 56 so we'll have a visual for that? So if you are serving any less than 100% previously incarcerated, you should apply for Category 1. If you are serving any less than 100% female veterans and veterans with families, you should apply under Category 1.

So the Categories 2 and 3 are only if 100% of your participants are going to be in that category. So for Category 2, 100% either female or veterans with dependents, and Category 3, 100% either transitioning from incarceration or recently released from incarceration and at risk of homelessness.

Hopefully, that answered the question. And my sense of the question was that if you have 50% that are in that Category 3, you should be applying under Category 1 because Category 3 requires 100% to be in that category.

- And there's one more, Cindy, that we haven't been able to address yet, but I want to defer to Amy and Nicole and others if there are any that I've missed because there were quite a few. I think we are going to need to refer this to DOL, but I just wanted to be sure, you might have more current information than I do.

Are national programs allowed or must it be localized to a specific area?

- So per the FOA, you have to define your service area. That is part of...in your statement of need, you have to define the service area. And the 2021 FOA talked about service areas as counties, independent cities. And so it was not a national service area, the way that the FOA described it, but we will pass that question on to see if there's further clarification from VETS.

- And then there's one more I think we can answer that just came in. One agency can apply for two separate categories.

- So per the FOA, an organization can only apply for one grant per service area. So an agency could apply for multiple categories as long as the service areas were different. That is per the 2021 FOA.

So one grant per agency per service area. If the service area is different, then an agency could apply for, you know, multiple grants in multiple places, but only one grant per service area.

- And then there's a question, just came in. When does the FOA open? I'll take the liberty of answering this. We don't know. It's, as Cindy was talking about, projected to open in January, but we simply will not know that until it's posted publicly.

- And, again, a great point for that is that's why it's so important to register at grants.gov and subscribe to the alerts, save your search, and get a subscription because that way when it is posted, you'll be notified immediately that it's posted. It's also important to do that because sometimes once after the FOA is posted, there are sometimes changes, or corrections, or edits that are made to the FOA, and if you are not registered and don't check back at grants.gov, you could miss something that is important that might change something.

For example, a couple of years ago, VETS used to allow you to mail in your application. A couple of years ago, the FOA was open when COVID first hit.

And so they released an amendment to the FOA saying, "We're not accepting mail applications any longer. You must submit it electronically."

If you were not checking back to grants.gov for version updates or subscribe so that you would get them automatically, you could have missed that and then not known that you couldn't submit it by mail any longer. So it's really important to register, sign up for those alerts. Even once the FOA is open, to check back and make sure that there's no changes or updates.

And that's...anything that changes will be captured there. And it's your responsibility as an applicant to make sure you are responding to...that you have the most recent version or updates. So that registration process and getting on those alerts is really important to help you stay abreast of that.

- I'm not seeing anything else right now. Although, of course, Amy, Ade, Nicole, others. And one did just come in, but if I've missed any that I haven't answered, please feel free to put them up again. In some cases, we might just be referring them to DOL.

We do have a full list of these questions. So we might just be sending them to DOL if we haven't responded yet. And there is one question that just came in, what are the service areas, i.e. states, or are they defined in the FOA?

- They are defined in the FOA. You define your service area in your application, but the FOA includes an explanation of how service areas might be defined. And it says something like county, independent city, something like that.

But you have to look to the FOA, and it will actually explain. Now, you could have more than one, for example, if, you know, you could be serving more than one county or more than one city, but you do have to define that service area, and the FOA explains how they would like you to define that.

- Am I right, Cindy, that tribal areas also count as one of those possible ways to define those areas?

- Yes, definitely.

- Yes. Great. And there is one more question. I think it came privately. Can an organization have more than one DUNS number or SAM's registration?

- That is a question I would actually suggest that that person go to grants.gov. Well, actually go to SAM, go to the SAM registration information to find out. I don't believe you can, but I am not an expert in SAM registration.

So whoever has that question, I would encourage you to go to the help desk at sam.gov and submit your question there around multiple numbers for one agency. I believe the question was connected to the authorized representative not being available, you know, being out of the office on leave during the time of the FOA.

So there may be a way to work around that, but go to sam.gov and ask them that question. Any other questions? It looks like we are exactly at 3:30, which is our time, so.

- Yes. I just wanted to add that the questions, again, we are putting together a Q&A document. The questions we were not able to get to today for some reason, we'll be able to have it published in a week or two so everyone can actually access them, and the questions that are going to be going to DOL, also that, you know, they can follow up with DOL for answers to those ones.

- Thanks, Ade. I did see a follow-up question around the tribal government. A tribal government is an eligible applicant. They are not limited to only serving people within their tribe unless that's what the tribal government chooses to do.

But a tribal government is just one type of entity that is eligible to apply for HVRP. And then based on the service area that they propose, they could serve eligible veterans within that service area, whether they are members or not of the tribe. All right. So we are at 3:31. So we're going to say thank you to everyone for attending.

Here, again, is the email address for additional FOA questions. We appreciate all of you. As has been mentioned, the recording and slides will be posted on the nvtac.org shortly. The PDF of the slides is available in the chat. There was a link to that earlier, so you can get those right away if you need those right away.

We will be hosting another one of these sessions on December 15th. It will essentially be the same session as today, although perhaps with different questions being asked by the audience. So if any of your team members weren't able to attend today, we encourage them to attend on the 15th. And, again, we thank you all for your interest in HVRP. Have a great rest of the day.