Question #1
Have you experienced any challenges spending grant funds in the following categories?

A. Administrative Cost

✓ [Grantee] We haven't had as much trouble with administrative or program coast as we have with Participant Wages Fringe Benefits (PWFB). Just a limited number of participants back to work is our biggest struggle and keeping administrative and program costs in perspective with enrollee wages and fringes.

> *[Facilitator's question]* *Can you tell me what you mean by keeping in perspective?*
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> *[Grantee's answer]* *Keeping it in perspective within the percentages; 75%, 13.5% and 11.5%; just making sure we're staying under those as a state and then also for each of the Sub-grantees.*
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> *[Facilitator's question]* *Do you find that you've had to augment any of the administrative costs through outside grants? I know some people had talked about getting money for other types of service, so I just wasn't sure if we're not spending so much on wages.*
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> *[Grantee's answer]* *Not so much outside, just keeping a closer eye on our spending.*

✓ [Grantee] We haven't had as much trouble staying within the limits.

B. Participant Wages Fringe Benefits (PWFB)

✓ [Grantee] We are having issues spending down PWFB funds, because the pandemic means we haven't been able to recruit as many people. When we do get people in, we try to maximize the hours.   It's harder to get people in, and people continue to exit. We've raised the [participant] hours in some places. There are more outflows than inflows that has been a strain on a lot of our places. Curious to hear if other Grantees are like that as well.

> *[Facilitator's question]* *What region are you in and are you seeing that across the board?*
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> *[Grantee's answer]* *We are in Region 5, but we've have programs on the East Coast, West Coast and Midwest. So it's pretty much across the board everywhere.*
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> *[Facilitator's question]* *So are you seeing this same deficiency everywhere; is there any place that is doing better or not?*
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> *[Grantee's answer]* *Well one place that did better was Alabama, but I'm not sure they knew it was a pandemic going on. They've been pretty much open most of the time. But other places we've just gotten back online like New York and Phoenix. It just depends, but we've had some places that went back to the Host Agencies and then the numbers rose, and we had to pull everybody back. We're finally getting people back to Host Agencies in our Chicagoland Area; about 2 weeks ago, so we'll see how that goes.*
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> *[Facilitator's question]* *Do you mean like when you first started 3rd Quarter or you mean like right here at the tail end of the Quarter?*
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> *[Grantee's answer]* *At the tail end of the Quarter, we finally got people back into the actual Host Agencies. We've had them training at home on worksheets and online, but getting them back into a Host Agency and setting them up, is kind of a heavy lift; making sure all the precautions are in place; that they have space; they've got masks and the Host Agencies are going through all the protocols to keep our folks safe.*
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> *.*

✓ [Grantee] We agree, same issues the previous Grantee described. Mask mandates were county by county, not statewide. In rural areas, we have so few Host Agencies (HAs) and some of them just didn't survive. So being able to place our people in those agencies, wasn't the easiest way. We're not going to be able to do it, we're going to have to come up with other solutions. Recruiting has been a mess. Getting HAs to allow participants back, has been difficult, and participants are nervous about returning to a shared space at a HA. Recruiting has picked up quite a bit, we did 13 this month, which is pretty fair comparing to what we used to do. The vaccine has helped a ton, but it may be too little too late for this grant money. We had another issue unrelated to the pandemic; a long term Sub-grantee person retired and the agency no longer wanted to provide service. So in the middle of the pandemic, we had to put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the grant for a different agency. So while that was going on, no recruitment was taking place as well. So for that particular piece from that Sub-grantee, we're going to have some issues meeting PWFB. There were a ton of vacancies and we can't make it up fast enough by the end of the grant year. So as far as the PWFB, I think we're going to struggle trying to meet that part of the grant.

> **[Facilitator's question]** *Because of these struggles, have you thought of any types of responses?*
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> **[Grantee's answer]** *We increased our hours as much as we thought we could. The new Sub-grantee we brought on, can do virtual training and the state has work now. We worked with the Department of Human Services (DHS) for the State to allow DHS offices to become HAs. Our participants can work virtually and receive a lap-top from the state. We're just getting that going; our first participant will come on board with DHS in the next couple of days, but we have plenty of room to do more of this. The first person will be a test sample. We've increased hours; made our own state government a HA and they're several offices that we can use. Every level that I know how to pull and I've only been doing this for 2 years, we are pulling.*

✓ [Grantee] I agree with the previous Grantees. Our biggest issue is finding older adults to enroll in the program. Our exits are outweighing our enrollments 3 to 1, and we're still getting some job exits so that's great. But we're having a hard time filling positions when they're empty. Recruiting continues but more people are leaving than are coming in. All the traditional recruiting efforts are continuing; social media, monthly orientation sessions on-line, and that's keeping our spending where it needs to be. Because we're under enrolled in certain areas, it's been tough. We think we're still going to make the 75%, but definitely it's something that we're monitoring very closely and increasing hours when we need to. Finding people in certain areas has been tough. Recruiting individuals who can be SCSEP participants has been our biggest challenge. As long as someone is eligible, we are approving them very quickly.

> **[Facilitator's question]** *Did you see that change sometime at the end of the 3rd Quarter?*
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> **[Grantee's answer]** *We've been having a recruiting issue throughout the pandemic, but early in PY19 and into PY20, we had a waiting list, but that's gone now. Right now as people are applying; assuming that they are eligible and appropriate and have a training need, we're enrolling them pretty quickly.*

C. Other Programmatic Costs (OPC)

   ✓ No Responses received.

Question #2
Have you reviewed the SCSEP COVID FAQ?
https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/coronavirus#SCSEP

If so, what strategies were developed to address the loss of host agency supervisory hours for In-Kind/Match?

✓ [Grantee] We are concerned as everyone else is about getting the 10% [match]. We think we will probably not get there. We mostly relied in previous grant years on the supervisor's hours; that was enough. We are documenting in-kind for all volunteer time, monthly virtual participant meetings and capturing the speakers time for in-kind. Staff are home working remotely servicing SCSEP participants, we are capturing a small part of their internet cost as part of in-kind. Also participants are training remotely and a lot of them are using their own internet and we are able to capture a small portion of this. We think we will make the administrative requirements but not the in-kind requirements.

> *[Facilitator's question] So you understand what Steve explained earlier about the request and a detailed explanation?*
> *[Grantee's answer] Yes, we have created a bunch of forms to collect this stuff. When it's time, our finance team will be putting some stuff together to show what we're capturing. It's not big dollars, but we are trying to diversify the strategies of what we are collecting.*

✓ [Grantee] We are working closely with Sub-grantees to meet the [in-kind] match. Mapping out all the things that are state funded. We will not make the match but grateful to the Department of Labor (DOL) for guidance.

✓ [Grantee] It will be difficult to make the match this year with host agencies being closed and whatnot. With participants not being able to train in person it's a big hole to fill.

✓ [Grantee] We will make the [in-kind] match because Sub-grantees have become very creative. They utilized other staff members within their organization to fill in gaps; making phone calls, coming up with virtual training opportunities and doing weekly check-ins. We'll be using that time as in-kind. They've also been putting into their in-kind internet use for social media and the costs of their office space that is being used by SCSEP. We have Sub-grantees who have exceeded their in-kind amount already for the year and I think that will close the gap for the ones who are not making their in-kind this year. I am hopeful, but you never know how it will end up.

[Question #3
Did you experience any challenges and/or successes implementing your OSR(s)?

- ✓ [Grantee] On the Job Experience (OJE) has been a challenge for us. Some employers just can't wrap their heads around OJE. We're still getting some placements, many adults did not want to leave home, especially before the vaccines started being rolled out, they wanted to mitigate their risk. Staying on SCSEP seemed to be safer for them.

  We have an Additional Training and Support Services opportunity (ATSS) and that's going fine. The other thing is, that more businesses are going remote and working from home. Their situation has changed and so has their business model so there are less opportunities that work within their current model to place SCSEP participants.

Question #4
Have you been paying infrastructure-funding cost during the shutdown?

1. If so, have you been able to access the resources at the AJC's?

   - ✓ [Grantee] Most of the AJCs we've been working with are still virtual and by appointment only. Because of this, we have not seen the benefits of cost-sharing at AJCs.

   - ✓ [Grantee] We're paying into the system but not really getting much back, given the virtual nature of the AJCs.

   - ✓ [Grantee] Recruitment has been hurt by virtual AJCs because there's no "soft-handoffs," or the physical things available like copiers or phones etc. There have been some mass exits because people are scared with COVID-19. Maybe some of the money they [DOL] give to AJCs could go to advertising? With more emphasis on outreach, recruitment might be more helpful. As it is now, most referrals are word of mouth, so some branding might also be helpful.

   - ✓ [Grantee] The previous Grantee is right. What we're missing is we pay for time in the AJC, and they're missing out on that while the AJCs are virtual or closed. Even if it is just meeting space, we aren't getting that.

   - ✓ [Grantee] We've talked to a lot of AJCs and in multiple states they are long-term planning on doing a lot more things virtually and less in-person. This is a specific problem for the older worker population.

   - ✓ [Grantee] Agreed, speaking to our own AJCs, it seems like they're going toward "unemployment and a check" and not about serving the public as a job center. We're worried about a shifting mission.

   - ✓ [Grantee] Agreed, because that model (unemployment and a check) does not serve the SCSEP population.

✓ [Grantee] We are going to have to reimagine SCSEP. The pandemic has forced us to do that. We're going to have to reimagine how we're going to be able to partner successfully with AJCs. We are basically getting 0 now. They obviously have to be our number one partner and so we just have to figure out how to make that work based on whatever their models are. I guess only time is going to tell and it may be different from state to state too. So those of us that are operating in multiple states, you may see different things in different states. But I think the traditional model of a one stop, where someone could go in and use the fax machine or use the phone and get those resources, may go away.

> **[Facilitators' question]** *Has there been any discussion about not paying the AJCs this year?*
> **[Grantee's answer]** *We are not paying in some areas but that is not due to the pandemic. The places that we are paying, there has not been any discussion about giving us a year off or giving us a break.*

2. What type of resources have been available at the AJC's?

✓ [Grantee] Everyone is remote. There are some times for appointments only, but it's like digital job fairs and nothing really in person at this point. They [AJCs] are doing the best they can in the current situation.

✓ [Grantee] They're [AJCs] are doing some financial literacy as well. We're getting some placements, and the AJCs are getting more creative; hope that creativity can continue. There's definitely a technology barrier, especially in more rural areas

> **[Facilitator's comment]** *The longer we are in this, if you are not already doing something, you're kind of behind the trend here. I will admit I was one of the people who thought we'd be back to work in 2 weeks. Now a year into it and you really see what it's like; it's not temporary. We need to transition into a sustainable model.*

Question #5
Additional challenges?

✓ No responses received.

Question #6
Successes/promising practices?

> **[Facilitators' question]** *The last time we talked someone mentioned a virtual job clubs and virtual job fairs.*

✓ [Grantee] We entered into an agreement with Accenture Skills to Success, to offer a pilot with our largest Sub-grantee. It's a really cool, interactive program that walks you through 3 different scenarios on job interviews. It can be very small things like the tone of your voice or the way you're looking or how fast you're talking. It's free and we're looking for opportunities like that. Once our Sub-grantee completes the pilot and if they like it, we're going to send it out to all of our projects. What I really like about the product is it will actually let the project director know what modules they participant has done and completed; how successful they were and they can count those hours as in-kind. Looking for opportunities to keep it fresh for our people. It's all on-line. You know there are areas where we're still having problems with getting the technology or teaching our participants how to use technology. The participants who can do this, I think will be successful.

Shared through TEAMS Chat:

- ✓ Facilitator's comment - So just one point on the leveraged training; it's free training that is provided through libraries and outside agencies; Community colleges or anything like that, count towards in-kind match.

- ✓ Grantee comment - we were not sure how to count the training hours as providers could not give exact times involved.

- ✓ Grantee – we had some participants take on-line training. Providers could tell us if a training was completed, but not if they failed to complete, or how long it took, we have no way to track or monitor it.

- ✓ Facilitator's comment – I Will take that information down and see if there was additional information that can be provided, related to a plan to estimate hours based on training hours.