

And then I'm not sure what state it is. JS AHFC. They have a new to the program grantees, where they require backup for every voucher, but only if you're new. If you have previous experience and if you've proven yourself that you can submit vouchers without a backup.

It sounds like Nebraska's a hybrid approach, requiring a list of all expenditures and the backup for select number of expenditures during financial desk monitors. So that is another way to do it. And then Jessica said that their process is for subs to submit general ledgers, so they can reconcile what they're requesting per ESG line item with the amounts they're requesting for disbursement.

They're also looking through the general ledgers to ensure all expenses are eligible. It's prevented a lot of errors, and they're monitoring it as we go along.

Definitely, I'm sure it's prevented a lot of errors. And it's bringing up good training and monitoring issues. I'm curious as to whether-- you know, it's that push and pull, right? Like it's really good to dig into these expenditures because there's always things that you can do better and little things you can identify.

However, at what point is like doing all that extra dig in work and all that staff time counterproductive to spending out your ESG funds and spending your time on maybe some other things as well? So it's just-- it's kind of that delicate balance, right? But it's nice to know how other states are operating.

Because the way you're operating isn't the only way to do it, right? There's other ways of managing this grant. So if you are curious, especially with-- we're getting a lot of responses on how states are managing the voucher submission-- we can connect you to these other states so you can learn more about it. Just let any of us know.

In Michigan, they require documentation for all expenditures, no matter what. They use a special, it looks like, software to-- for subrecipients to upload their documents. Michigan is also broken up into ten regions, and they have four staff that cover document.

Yeah, that's a lot. But that's a lot of subrecipients, too. I'm sure you're managing.

Sarah asked, what are the staffing levels for those that require backup for every-- yeah, are there multiple staff? I would assume, like in Michigan, it takes quite a bit of staff time just to manage that. How about everyone else?

NORA: Just Sarah in Wisconsin.

NATALIE Killing it.

METZGER-SMIT:

NORA: Natalie, while people are responding to that, I just want to-- so like, something I've been thinking about too, as far as-- maybe now's not the time where your fiscal staff is going to feel real comfortable trimming down documentation that you get, especially if you require more documentation.

So maybe another way to approach it is organization of how the information is submitted. Because I was helping a community look through their vouchers, and it is really like page one through page 250, and everything is mixed in there. From timesheets to payroll information.

So even if it's possible, if-- especially if they're uploading-- if it's possible to upload information, maybe put all the timesheets in one subfolder and all the payroll in another one. Or just even a little bit of organization for how the information is being submitted, so you're not necessarily starting at page one and having to go all the way through to page five million and 22.

You can instead look at the various pieces of documentation as you're going through. Just something that might be helpful and useful.

NATALIE

I like that in Oklahoma, you have the same staff people that reviewed those vouchers-- or those vouchers

METZGER-SMIT: submission-- or excuse me, the invoices. They have-- that's the same person who does the monitoring. I think that's a really-- I like that set up quite a bit, because I know in some communities, the person who does monitoring is not the same person who's reviewing a lot of this backup documentation.

There might be a disconnect there. So I like that. Nebraska also has one and a half FTEs. They're the ones that monitor all the subrecipients and annual.

Andrea, the one and and a half FTEs. Is that their main job, to do the review of the invoices and the backup documentation? Or do they have other-- is that all you have managing the entire ESG CV? OK, so not just that. Those are just the folks that are reviewing.

OK. I think this is also good because I know that some states are still trying to staff up. And if they can get a good idea of the staffing levels to do all this work in other states, I think that might be helpful. Especially because we are going to be doing this work for another year and a half.

In Nevada, their analysts are responsible for specific subgrantees, so they do, it looks like, divide it up. And they also require backup for all expenses. All right, so as-- if you are requiring backup documentation for all expenses, I really encourage you to learn and maybe reach out to others that don't-- that do more of a risk-based monitoring and maybe only look at a subset of those subrecipient invoices.

Or maybe they don't look at them at all until monitoring, like in Wisconsin. And so really want you to kind of, if possible, rethink that approach. And reach out to your TA provider if you want to learn more, or if you want some assistance with reviewing that.

All right.

NORA:

All right, I think it's back to me for a couple more slides. Next slide.

I think it's really important to communicate with subrecipients, especially ones who haven't submitted for a while. Maybe either because they're also overwhelmed, which can happen with a lot of-- or they're receiving multiple funding-- like funding from multiple sources.

So maybe they've been submitting billing to someone else, if they're a subrecipient for you and you're not at the 50% deadline I think it's important to communicate with them to say, hey, let's pay some attention to this right now. Because to the benefit of everyone with-- who is funded by the grants and meet the target.

So working with subrecipients, I think, after. And maybe alongside, but definitely after you've gotten your own house in order. I've heard from some subrecipients who have expressed frustration of, OK, our recipient told us to bill. They're sitting on months worth of our bills that haven't been reimbursed.

So it's really difficult to put the onus, to put the-- to push the pressure down if your internal process is experiencing a backlog. So that's why it's important to do, I think, a two-pronged-- I'm going to say pronged-- a two-pronged approach. One, which we talked about, as far as making sure you're in sync and up to date with your internal vouchers, and then draws from IDIS.

And then to communicate with some subrecipients. Either those who you haven't heard from, either about a specific line item or really at all, or others that maybe they've already hit their 50% but a draw, a voucher from them would really make a big difference. And that can also go a long way to helping you meet your deadline.

So you can also work with them, if they are feeling that. Like oh my gosh, I don't even know what to do. That is an area for-- where technical assistance can help. Help them assemble vouchers, just kind of communicate with them, be available to support them if they're feeling like they don't know where to start.

So requesting help through your state coaches or other TA can also occur at the subrecipient level. So remember that that's a resource as well. Next slide.

And I think really important at the state level to communicate with internal partners, program, financial, and also with leadership. That now's the time to focus on ESG CV. We know there are a lot of CARES Act resources, a lot of other resources with a lot of deadlines.

Everyone has been juggling a lot, moving a lot of money. Like managing, like doing amazing efforts. And now's the time to focus on ESG CV. It is the-- it is ESG CV's day. So we wanted to say that, look, Natalie's got-- we were going to-- oh, Natalie, forgot. We were going to start this office hours--

NATALIE Oh, the Rocky.

METZGER-SMIT:

NORA: The Rocky theme. We were going to get you all like hyped up with the, like, Rocky music. So imagine I'm singing the Rocky theme song, which I cannot do because it will torture you. But if you need leverage to communicate with people above you, that now's the time to focus on ESG CV.

You can use this as a resource to do that. You can also pull in TA. You can pull in a HUD if you're feeling like you are like rattling at the doors and they are not paying you much mind. It is ESG CV's day. So remember that we're here to support you to focus on that.

And reach out to TA, to HUD, if that's something that you could use help in in getting that prioritized within your own mechanisms, offices, structures. Next slide.

I think then we go to resources. Yup, there's lots of resources available. IDIS online, the webinar that we've referenced for the state office hours. And then some links to the various Ask a Question, and other things. So that's pretty much my spiel. Do we have any other questions you wanted to cover, Natalie? Or anything that's come in the chat?

NATALIE

Yeah, I was just kind of curious how folks are communicating that 50% spending deadline to subrecipients.

METZGER-SMIT:

Jessica said that they do have an internal spending deadline, that they are holding subrecipients' feet to the fire. Which is good.

I think it's important to keep adjusting those spending deadlines, kind of just how the goalposts keep changing. I know that for some states, they never really change the internal spending deadline. They had it originally in those initial contracts that they had, with that 80% kind of standard in there and they just never really adjusted it.

So I think that maybe making those adjustments are helpful. If you can do it in a way that maybe isn't too much of a bear to amend your contracts.

Jessica, I don't know if you can talk a little bit about how you adjusted those spending deadlines. Did you put them in a contract, or was just this something that was communicated to everyone? Or did you do an amendment to a contract? I think that would be helpful to know, because I know for some states it's-- they're hesitant to make formal changes to any internal spending deadlines officially, because it would create a lot more work, just on the contracting side.

Andrea says that they have three subs that have not expended 50% as a state, but they have. So they're scheduling meetings with the subs that they haven't met. We have subs that would like more funding so they may move funding. I think, yeah, definitely. I think this summer actually, I mean, maybe when the dust settles after June 16.

That'd be really great to just kind of take a step back, re-examine your ESG CV resources based on this kind of new landscape that we're in. Especially if you're going to be reallocating funding within your subrecipients. To really look at what your priorities are. Because, as we all know, things look very different now than they did a year ago.

And with other CARES Act money kind of winding down or getting allocated and focused on certain things, that I think that it's a good time to look at your ESG CV funds when you're reallocating.

Let's see here. In New York, they had an eviction moratorium until the middle of January. Suspending prevention funds and rapid rehousing has been a challenge up until recently. The housing market is crazy. Yeah, rapid rehousing spending is a challenge. I think, though, that one good way to-- and Erica brought up this idea.

Like really pushing your rapid rehousing providers to spend money if they want more money. Because I know what HUD is doing. If you-- you're more likely to be reallocated, and, I mean, awarded additional funds if you've been spending well in rapid rehousing, right?

So you can communicate that to your subrecipients as well. That if you're doing a great job and if you want additional funds, we really want to see that money being spent in rapid rehousing, because then you're more likely to get more funding. So I think if they want to be competitive, that's where it should be pushed. At the local level.

Jessica, with regard to their internal deadlines, they haven't officially changed them but they let them know they'll be relaxed. They're also waiting to see if they'll receive more funds. For now, they've told their subs to spend as much as needed and not to budget out a certain amount each month to stretch it to a new end date.

These are crisis funds. Yes, absolutely. I think that's a really good way to do it as well. And I think we're going to actually talk about this more at the next office hours is, how can we-- like how should we be viewing these funds? Is it-- are we going to be like trying to allocate a certain amount each month to kind of stretch it out, or what the strategy should be.

Like are these crisis funds, and should you just be spending them on that. So that's a really good thing to think about. Andrea, also, we released admin funding earlier this year and most of the fund requests were for shelter. With the extended deadline, rapid rehousing is more in need. Yeah, all right.

And then Linda said they've definitely been pushing rapid rehousing, but it is hard to find affordable units. Yes, right. This is all really helpful information.

Any other last questions, while we have the remaining a couple of minutes? I hope this office hours kind of made you rethink how you're doing business and maybe there's other ways of doing it that aren't so cumbersome for your staff. Give you some ideas on how you can maybe do some more risk-based approach to your financial admin.

So if you do have questions more about that or if you need assistance with making those connections to certain states that you're interested, we're happy to help you do that. So with that, thank you very much for attending today's webinar and I will be sending out a recording and the supporting materials for this out in the next couple of days. Thank you so much.