Jason Berlow: Hi. Hi, everyone. Today we're going to be talking about allocations, ITAs, TDA, budget allocations, RAFT, Status of Allowance, VSSC, lots of fun stuff. So in section one, we're gonna talk about the key terms, the key programs, and the funding time frame. A lot of this actually going to be similar to what you saw in the August training.

So we just want to set it up, the key terms, and the key programs, the road, with the funding roadmap. And we talk a little about, about the CR again just so you can, you know how it all flows. But then I did see that Tony now joined the meeting. So welcome, Tony, glad you could you could make it with your travel.

So I I guess, Kari will lead, then Tony might jump in at times, too. So then Kari is going to talk about locating your ITA, your TA and budget allocation according to RAFT. Then we're going to stand – I'm gonna talk about understanding how to find your facility's ITA, and then your TDAs, your budget allocations, et cetera.

We'll talk about your Pink Sheets, which are important, and then RAFT. And then we're going to talk about the Status of Allowance and how important it is to see where your undistributed funds are, and to move them into the correct place.

Alright, so moving into it. And just, this is off topic but adding in here, we we did send out a message. I I sent out a message a few weeks ago about Federal Appropriations Law. We're looking into coordinating a class with management concepts, which you might have taken a class in the past.

I'm tailoring a class to field members Maria Negrete, on our, on our team has, has managed the spreadsheet. So let us know if you're interested, and, well, where we're looking at options, it would definitely be virtual. The class would probably would be two to three days.

And we know how, how busy you are so we're, we're thinking about actually spreading out the class longer. Well, not longer so you're in class for, like, seven or eight days, but just spreading it over, or shorter periods for a lot more days to make it work better. If you haven't taken that class I highly recommend it.

And then, also if you're not, if you're not interested at class, you, I I highly encourage you, you could just look on the, on the Management Concepts website. And you could just sign up for the class individually, also, that's a really great class that we, it's pretty critical to what we do. Another thing is that if you're looking for a certification, the CGFM is a, is a big one.

I know a lot of, of a lot of folks who used to work in DOD, have the the DOD, the later one, the certified DO, Defense financial manager, which is, which is similar. But this is, sort of, the one on \_\_\_\_\_ [00:04:41], which is run by the AGA, which used to the Association of Government Accountants. So it's a, it's a good certification.

So if you're interested in that, also, we could, we could put together a, a meeting to tell you more about it. I have it. It's three courses. It's three tests you got to take. And you have to have one year of financial management experience and a bachelor's degree. So if you're interested in that, just also message Maria, and we can get, schedule a, a session to learn more about that. If you're interested, I could tell you about it. But I think it's worthwhile.

So now, jumping into the training, so getting on the theme from last week, last month with the Avaya [PH] training, we're, we're using the same characters here. But we have all these terms that we're dropping here, which can get confusing. So we always have a glossary so you understand what everything is. So in today's training Kari and Tony are going to be talking about all these terms here.

So here's your cheat sheet that we'll have for the exam after. So an allocation is an amount or portion of your resources assigned to a particular recipient, and your your investigator award. And usually that's an annual amount for the the funding that comes through in your, in your TDA. And then you have your Pink Sheet which is an amount or portion of resources assigned to a particular recipient, Investigator Award.

And they'll show the award amount per fiscal year, and that's a very important thing to show your fiscal. Especially during the CR, to show that that full year funding is, is is agreed upon, and we're, it will be provided. But unfortunately, due to the CR we have to spread it out and only provide it incrementally due to the constraints of the CR. And in that memo we sent out last week, which I'll discuss in a second, about the CR, we talk about to bulk download those Pink Sheets.

And then the ITA, we talk about that a lot. This is the initial allocation to your facility at the beginning of each fiscal year for funding. And this, this, and this ITA may not include new storage, or other funding such as, such as CC101 or special projects. So that might come later in a different allocation as opposed to the individual ITA.

And Tony, correct me if I'm wrong, and if I said anything inaccurate about that. And then your TDA, that's your actual, the funding coming through that's uploaded in the ACS, and then it comes in June in ACS, and then later you find it in FMS.

This is the document that sends or moves money to and from your station. And the money arrives in a place, and in the research program. And it arrives undistributed, and then you need to move it to the proper, appropriate fund control point.

And AACS Automated Allotment Control System, this program is is how you pull TDAs to track budget allocations. And it's really important. I I highly recommend you get access. And if you want to access just message Moana Jackson at VHA Finance. She's the person who manages the, the the signing of the roles to that, so just messenger her. And then RAFT, that's the Resource Analysis Forecasting Tool.

This is a web based software for how we manage the the allocations, and the, the funding, and where you could find the Pink Sheets. So getting access to RAFT, there's a, there's a request form that we have that we can send out after the meeting, and then you just send it to our office. And then our RAFT RDCC contractors will get you access. The main lead is Paul Karnom [PH].

Alright, moving on, so research program funding, here's all the numbers, numbers, numbers, numbers. So 820, first of it's, it's our, our, what we call little ORD, the VACO. And then you also get 820 in your research CC101. And that's, that might be a hot topic today, too. If you have questions about that, Tony is on the line. Then ShEEP, and LAMb, and then 821 to BLRD, the Vet, Veterinary Career Development Awards, et cetera.

And then there's 822 is Rehabilitation R&D. 824 is Health Science R&D. 825 is Cooperative Studies Program. 826 is MVP, and 821 is CSR&D. Now, we're having a, as you know, we're having a large organizational realignment, and our structure is changing.

A lot of these services, we move into one service next year. So some of these, some of this might be changing for FY '24. But we'll keep you posted. Everything you see here is not going to change for FY '23.

Moving on, okay, so here's the fiscal year funding roadmap. So in September we start getting ready for the new fiscal year and we work on our ITA processing. We set the budget limits for each service. This year we set them to 882 million to match our annualized CRMO. That's our FY '22 enactment. And the ITA contains the funding for all ongoing projects based on a multiyear project budget.

Then we work on the TDA processing, October, November. So the delay in getting the TDAs processed is related to the whole process that VHA Finance has to go through to set up a new fiscal year. They need to set up the AACS, the mnemonics, et cetera. Then they also have a whole process for the, I think it's the Resource Allocation Control Board. I'm probably getting the name wrong, but they review the allocations. So they're really reviewing the special purpose and all that by station.

So ours is a little different because we're under CR. But they have a process so they're moving through it this week. So each, each day this week, they've sent a note that they're processing TDAs for some, different appropriations. I believe yesterday was the medical services, and the medical facilities. And then today was medical service and compliance.

So any day now, they'll send a note that they're processing TDAs for medical support, medical research. At that point, we'll be sending the TDA to the, our analyst, and VHA Finance. And, we'll load it, and load those TDAs. So we're, we're hopeful that you should see your funding by next week. But we understand the delay.

So one thing we do want you to know, it's that the overcommit button in FMS has been lifted. So your purchase cards, your payroll, it all can go through. If you checked your bank accounts, I believe you've been paid since FY '22 started. I know I have. So, you can keep spending your money because, just because the funds haven't been loaded, that's an administrative, a hold because of the, all of the requirements to properly load their correct funding amounts the VHA Finance has to do, if they're loading funding for billions of dollars.

So that's, that's the hold up. So and we're just part of the process. So please be patient and keep spending. And if you have any issues with your fiscal, please let us know. We want to loop in there, share within the CR memo. Because we do realize, there's some confusion with the CR because we're the only program office that, that deals with the CR. So we're hoping this memo will help the situation.

So the TDA processing, that's going on. And then the CR goes through December 16th. And then once that ends, there will probably be another CR. And then there will be another TDA processing for that. So that's the roadmap for you to understand, and then track all, all of this. Let me go to the next slide.

So the last thing I am going to talk before Kari and Tony jump in, is that last week we did send out this memo about the CR. So we're not going to spend a lot of time going through that, the whole memo today because we want to get back to the the training. But the important thing to to know is that, two things. First, the overcommit button in FMS has been turned off, so you can spend.

We've gotten notes from stations, for example, that they wanted to make purchase card orders because they had to purchase supplies. So continue to purchase supplies but print your funding because that funding is available. Just because you don't see it in your SOA, it's there at the appropriation level. The funding is there, so keep spending.

And if you have a – and all you need to do is take a, a rough approximation of your ITA for that percentage, which is in this, it's in this memo, to understand that. So the other thing in this memo is, it's really important as it talks about how to, what you can, and can't do during a CR, especially regarding to new starts, which isn't really a term that should be applicable to starting new studies.

And then we're talking about hiring in this section. So if you have any questions, just let us know. We want to really work on collecting all these challenges, so we can document them for our finance initiative. So with that, I am going to stop talking, and I'm going to hand it over to Kari and Mr. Lumbergh [PH]. Thank you, turning it over to you, Kari.

Kari Points: Alright, thank you, Jason. So and thanks for adding some humor to these slides, anyway.

Jason Berlow: Yeah.

Kari Points: It's making me smile. So this section is going to talk about how to actually locate your ITA, your TDAs, and budget allocation reports in RAFT. RAFT is a really useful tool, and I just wanted to go through the different reports so you can see what you can use it all for. And the next slide, please.

So I guess at this section will reveal the tools in RAFT you just successfully identify, determined, and execute your plan for allocating your budget for this fiscal year. At the beginning of each year, we talk about pulling your ITA from RAFT, and we did this session, I believe, the August session where you, you really went into detail about the ITA, and making a budget allocation plan for your salaries, and all other fund control points.

So this is just really going to talk to you about how to find the ITA because there has been some questions on that. And then RAFT provides, it also can provide TDA reports so that you can see what has been allocated to your site. These TDA reports, TDA reports are outside the projects that are part of your ITA. So if you have a new project start, and you receive money in, there is a way to go into RAFT, and see what that funds were sent for.

And then the Pink Sheet, the Pink Sheet, the critical Pink Sheet we always talk about, allows for you to see the funds allocated each fiscal year by project. And we'll go into that in detail as well. Really importantly, I want, just, kind of, I want to emphasize to really learn to utilize the RAFT on the regular basis.

The projects are being updated in the system regularly, and you should be going in there, and pulling out the new information throughout the year. And the next slide, please. So again, there is ITA each fiscal year that's available in RAFT at the end of September, beginning of October, depending on when it becomes available. The ITA will tell you the planned budget allocation for each of your VA funded projects for that fiscal year.

From this report, you can develop your plan for the fund control points where you can distribute the funds as the TDAs come in. So if there is a continuing resolution like we are in right now, you know you're going to have multiple TDAs come in throughout the year for that ITA Report. And so if you develop a plan now, it makes it so much easier to process those TDAs as they come in throughout the year.

So there's the questions about whether or not you're ITA was available this past month in RAFT. And it was. I think some individuals were going into the budget allocation report. And that wasn't available until the past, I want to say last week, I think it became available. And so in RAFT to get to your ITA, when you sign in your homepage comes up on the budget allocation reports side. And you want to get to the ITA. So in the middle of the screen there's a reports option; selects the ITA Reports there.

Once you do that, it will open up the ITA options on the left panel of your screen. The very first one is investigator allocation. If you click on that, it will give you the option in the middle to put in the fiscal year, your medical center. And then you can determine, do you want to pull the ITA Report for a particular program? Or do you want to view all for your site?

And so to view all, you can just leave that blank. And then the clinical transfer budget option you can leave blank as well. And then go ahead, and hit search, and it will pull up your ITAs. The next slide, please.

So here is what it looks like. Here is a screenshot of the ITA Report. It breaks it down by salary, all other, equipment, and travel funds. And you're gonna receive for each of your projects that have been assigned to the ITA. You can export these reports to Excel or PDF. And so you can – I like to pull it to Excel and then I can develop my spend plan based off that report.

Just because the report states that funds are allocated to salary and all other, that does not mean you have to stick with that. You really need to look at the budget for each project and determine what fund control point is appropriate for those funds to go into. The funds will be sent as in the program that it's allocated to, but you can determine if it goes into salary, or all other.

So if you, you can see investigator is supposed to get salary for an individual, but that individual left. And maybe they put somebody on an IEP instead, instead. Well, then you shouldn't be putting the funds in salary. You should be putting it in all other because that's where they're going to be used.

And I just want to point out again, that August training, we went into ITAs in more detail. And there was a template that was sent out with spreadsheets in August, and again last week, so hopefully you have that to use as a tool. The next slide. O

kay, so locating your Pink Sheet, I don't know why it's called a Pink Sheet. It is pink, so that's where it got it's name. You can find that in RAFT as well by going to module, and clicking on Investigator Tracking to pull up the Pink Sheet. Next slide, please.

Once you go under Investigator Tracking, this box will pop up. If you want to view all of your Pink Sheets for your site, you can change the status button to active, and hit search, and all your reports will show up on the screen. At the very top, left part, there is a PDF symbol. If you click on that PDF, it'll generate a PDF of all of your Pink Sheets for your site. You can also pull it up by investigator, which is the next slide we'll show.

So here I typed in investigator name, last name of York. You can pull all other open projects that they've ever had, so all active and closed. Or you can decide to search by just active. In this case I went ahead and searched by all because I wanted to see all of those projects that he's had funded by ORD. And then you can click search. And on the next page, this will come up. The bottom will actually be blank, you need – his name will show up at the top there.

You click on the name and then click on the Projects tab. And all of the projects will open up. And so if you click on the project that you want to view, it will pull up their Pink Sheet. And here you can see that all of his active projects are in red. The projects that have ended are in black, so it does highlight, still the active projects that are currently active for this PI.

And then on the next slide, here's the Pink Sheet. So the Pink Sheet provides a lot of important information. It gives you that Service ID that you're always looking for. It gives the start and end dates for the project. And most importantly, it gives you the funding allocation for each fiscal year of the award. Not only for this fiscal year, but all fiscal years that the award is funded, and how it's broken apart by fiscal year.

So if you submit a project modification, maybe you want to redistribute funds, reallocate them to a, if, maybe submitted a extension on that project, come back into RAFT. And once that project modification is approved and processed, you'll see those updates within Sheet, and you can verify with the investigator, it's been processed. Your funds are allocated as you requested in that project pod. The next slide, please.

There is also a variety of budget allocation reports that are available in RAFT. These just became available, this, I would say within the last week. So if you were looking for these, it does take a little bit in the year before the new fiscal year opens up these budget allocation reports. They are also regularly updated as new projects start, and your project modifications are approved, et cetera.

So I would recommend pulling these reports. I do it on a monthly basis, that seemed to be about right to capture any updates. And there is a project quarterly allocation report that I like to do that I'll talk more about later, too, that I just have sitting next to me on my desk. And it gives a lot of important information. The next slide, please.

So to find your budget reports, if you sign onto RAFT, it's usually where you sign, your homepage is going to have all your budget reports. But if you got into other sections, you want to come back, you can go to Reports at the top of the screen, and select Budget Reports. And then on the left panel all the types of budget reports that you can pull are listed there. Once you search for a budget report and pull that information, it is really nice, you can always export it to Excel or PDF to view it further. And next slide, please.

Okay. So there are two useful reports that I wanted to highlight from RAFT that actually even breaks it down between prior year and current year funds. So let's say you got a ShEEP award and it's sending your prior year funds. This report will break that down for you. It will also tell you the cost center that the funds are coming into so that you can pay close attention to – let's say you have a QUERI project, those funds are going to come in on the medical center side of the house with patient care.

And this report will tell you that. So I have circled the different sections here where you can see the current versus the prior year for each program. And then I also circled, down there in the bottom, the patient care QUERI [PH] so that I know that there are funds coming in that are going to be allocated to the medical center side.

And so this is the summary report for the overall program here in Iowa City. The next slide is the detailed report. You can go ahead and go to the next slide, please. So this is the detailed report which breaks it down further by project. So for each investigator, it gets you the name, the project title, the project end date, but then also what kind of project is it? What is that cost center?

So you can see on this example, there is a variety. It shows me that there was the CSP project, A Million Veteran, I have a research per scientist salary award. There is a QUERI, so that's going to be patient care, 870. And then it also breaks it down by current year or prior year. So you really want to pay attention to that to see; if you're getting prior year dollars for a project, you obviously want to be alert of that, so that you know that you really need to get that spent down quickly.

Jason Berlow: And just the fact that the QUERI is generally 0160 dollars, right, Kari?

Kari Points: Yeah. Yes.

Jason Berlow: Yeah so.

Kari Points: That's an important separation there.

Jason Berlow: Yeah a lot of confusion about that. Yeah that's not, that, that's VRRP dollars. Alright, thank you. Alright, thanks.

Kari Points: So there is a way to actually locate TDAs in RAFT. And I wasn't aware of this myself until I started really playing around with the report and talking with Tony. He informed me of this, there is a way to view the TDAs in RAFT that are not part of your ITA. So if you have your ITA and you're getting TDAs during the continuing resolution based on that ITA, you will still need to go to AACS, or ask for fiscal for the TDA breakdown.

However, if there is a TDA that comes in that is not part of the ITA site; let's say your CC 101 fund, or you have a new project that started on January 1st that you're getting money for. You can pull those TDAs in RAFT. So if you go to the budget memo list on the left panel, the screen will open up, and you can select the fiscal year.

And then which month range do you want to look at? Right now, I just did 2023 of the first quarter but there's no funds that have been sent out as we discussed. But you can pull that information by fiscal year, or by the month range, by the program code if you want to look for a different program, and then by the medical center. And it will pull up the TDAs. So on the next page, I give an example from last year. You can go ahead, next slide.

So this one is from 2022. I pulled the whole report. And you can see some TDAs that came in in January. Two of them are for new projects start, and one was the redistribution of funds where we sent funds back, and asked for them to be reallocated at the end of the merit review award. So again, this is only going to show those that are outside of the ITA, but it is a useful tool.

If you see that you have funds that have come in undistributed, you can go into RAFT, and see what it was for, if you don't have access to AACS or your fiscal hasn't provided you that information. The next slide, please. So there are also a large variety of budget reports in RAFT that categorize funding in a variety of ways.

So my advice to you is to just go into RAFT, and play around with the budget reports, and see what works for you. It's read only access for us in the field. You can't hurt it. And you can't break it. Just go pull report, and find what you like. So I particularly, like I said, like the project quarterly allocation report by investigator. I think it's great, it has my investigator name when I, a service ID, the start, and end date, and that fiscal year's allocation.

I have that right next to my desk so that if someone calls, and asked me, "What are their – what do they have this year for funding, or what's the project end date?" I get those questions a lot. It's just readily available and I can reference it. So just go in and see what, what report works best for you, but definitely go in, I would say on a monthly basis, and look at these allocation reports as ORD is updating the funding for those projects.

The next slide, please. Alright. So how do you know if funds have arrived on station? That's the topic of section 3, how do you locate your undistributed funds? So the status allowance will actually tell you this. So you don't need to know right away. If you don't know that you had a TDA come in, you haven't checked AACS, your fiscal hasn't notified you.

But you think that you have a project that might have received funding. Look at the Status of Allowance, it's going to tell you if you have funds in undistributed that have come in for your facility. Then you can go and reference the TDA, either in RAFT, or the AACS report. And then it will tell you, which program it came in for, and what it's allocated to.

But the SOA is your first clue that you've received money. Because funds that have arrived on-site but have not been processed will show up as undistributed. They will be undistributed by program, so it will come in as program 81, program 82, et cetera. And then it's up to you to allocate them to the correct fund control point. And, best practice, your Fiscal Office should be really asking you where the funds should go, what fund control point?

Because you have that budget plan that you're creating right now, or have created already for this year. And you should know where those funds should be distributed. They must be distributed by program that they have come in under. And you do have flexibility in determining the fund control point, whether it's going to go into salary or all other. The next slide, please.

So here is an example of program 81 undistributed fund. In this example, you can see that we received in $152,000, and it was undistributed from, on the SOA. So we, we saw this report and knew right then that we had funds that came in for program 81. This is an SOA that I get from our Fiscal Office, so it does break it down, right there, by the program for me.

So I know that there's program 81 fund. I need to go find the TDA, and determine what fund control points I had to direct fiscal to put the funding in. So then the next slide shows what we were talking about early in the RAFT. That that SOA that you just saw, it was from July 7th. That was, so on July 7th, I saw that there was undistributed. You can go into RAFT, and I put in the July, to July month to month, their fiscal year 2022.

And I can see what that TDA was for, right there in the RAFT report. And so from this report, I was able to determine that 51,000 should go into salary fund control point based on what the funding came for. And another 101,000 should go into my all other fund control point. But I didn't actually need a TDA report, or go into the ACS, or anything, I could just go into RAFT, and find that information since this was new projects that were funded outside of the ITA. Next slide, please.

So another piece to this is if you receive reimbursement. The SOA will tell you that reimbursements have come on Finance. So if you look under your 0161R1, or 0161X2 funds in the undistributed column, an example here on your screen, it will show you that you have undistributed for that reimbursable. Now, in order to process the reimbursable your Fiscal Office will need to provide you with what's called the F827 General Ledger Report.

That report will break that reimbursement down by the bill of collection number for you. So then you can look at the bill of collection, and determine what the reimbursement funds were for. Fiscal will then move those funds into your reimbursement fund control point, but then you have to close the loop.

Now that you know the bill of collection numbers that those reimbursements are for, you can ask them to do a cost transfer from where the original funds – were the original expenses were, they need to cost transfer those funds over to reimbursements to close those out. You don't want to build up funds in your reimbursables. You want to do that last step to do the cost transfer to pull that out. The next slide, please.

So to be as successful at this, you must be able to pull report independently from VSSC. There is a couple of links here where to pull from VSSC, and the Status of Allowance from that website. So if you're one of those sites where you don't regularly get your SOA, maybe your fiscal is not providing it to you, or it doesn't provide it very often, go to those links, and you can find your SOA there.

There was a website in, or sorry, excuse me. There was a training in June that went over this in detail that you can also view. But the VSSC is another really useful tool that go \_\_\_\_\_ [00:32:49], you can't mess it up. It's read only. So go look at the report that it generates. That there are, there are some interesting, neat things that it, it does provide even at, above the SOA.

Jason Berlow: And, and you don't need the request to access.

Kari Points: Yeah.

Jason Berlow: If if you have, if you're on the, a VA system, you, your access is granted automatically.

Kari Points: Yeah a very good point because there was a lot – I do get questions about getting access to VSSC.

Jason Berlow: Yes.

Kari Points: You, you do have it. You do not need to request it.

Jason Berlow: Yeah and as someone who just got there FMS access re-established, getting an accesses to some VA systems can be, sometimes it can be of, yes, it's, it's frustrating, and you don't want to deal with it because it's, can be a pain. But VSSC is not because you have access. So please use it, and if you have any questions, I would refer to the training, and then always, always ask us. There's a lot of good reports on there besides the SOA.

Kari Points: The next slide, please. So I wanted to also show you an example of the Status of Allowance. So let's say you have, you're getting your Status of Allowance from VSSC. When you pull that report, the undistributed is not nicely placed underneath the program like it was in the report that I get from the Fiscal Office. So here is an example; it just shows up at the bottom of 0161A1 funding. A distribution is undistributed.

So from there, you can still go find your TDA information. Just always make sure that you're putting the funds into the correct program that it was allocated for. You cannot move, move between programs \_\_\_\_\_ [00:34:29] .Okay, move to the next slide. I'll turn it back to Jason for the final takeaway.

Jason Berlow: Okay, well, thank you, everyone. We'll go onto questions next. And hopefully – I can't, when I'm presenting, I can't see the questions coming in, so I'm excited to see them. So we just want you to know that to be a successful, AO/budget analyst, or any, any, anyone else who's going to take on some of these finance roles, you got to, you got to understand the interplay between the ITAs, TDAs, and RAFT.

And that's definitely something that we realized through the Finance Initiative, and our discovery process that it is a challenge with education. So we're hoping this education helps you understand all that. And you can refer back to all these, these great trainings we've been doing over the past few months, and we'll be continuing to be doing. Then you need to understand the key reports in RAFT Fiscal VSSC.

So yeah, again, you can also get access to AACS, and VHA Finance. And then where we are, if you're, if you ever have questions; like, once the TDAs are loaded, we're, we'll export the, the TDAs by fund for the '23, '24, and just send that spreadsheet to the field. It'll be a big file, but we want to, well, we'll send it to you.

And these tools are really critical to help you perform your duties. So just, just try to – I, we know we're all busy, but try to take some time to learn these tools. And because a little time with the training can help you in your position to to be more familiar with all these things, or the very complex role that you all have. With that, I think Parker, are Brandon, or is going to take back the the screen. They were already doing it. And then we're going to jump to the questions. Perfect.

Unidentified Male: Yeah if \_\_\_\_\_ [00:36:19]

Parker Cunneen: Well, just a share reminder to someone to read the question before answering. And that would be –

Jason Berlow: Okay.

Parker Cunneen: – Great. Thanks.

Jason Berlow: I can read them. And how many –? Okay. How many questions do we have?

Parker Cunneen: We have six so far.

Jason Berlow: Good, this is a good question. Now that they have eliminated Internet Explorer from our VA computers – this occurred to me today, and Edge is buggy. I do agree with that, Edge is, yes, it's a little buggy. Do you recommend Chrome? I would let Kari or Tony, but I I think, generally, yes, I do use. Sometimes when I log into RAFT, I do, I do download Chrome. Because I, I think I have found that way if I use Edge for RAFT, when I export reports, it's, sometimes it doesn't always work.

Tony, Kari, do you have anything to add? But we, but we'll, what we'll do on that is we'll talk to Paul Karnom, the, our RAFT contractors, and get their professional opinion on that. But I I do think Chrome is probably better. Kari?

Kari Points: I haven't had problems with Edge, but I have had it with other programs so I always go to Chrome if I can't get Edge to work –

Jason Berlow: Yeah.

Unidentified Male: Yeah.

Kari Points: – So well. Just, unfortunately, that's sometimes the way this is going. But I haven't had a –

Unidentified Male: Yeah.

Kari Points: – A problem with RAFT yet.

Jason Berlow: And and make sure you don't use Netscape with it. No I'm joking, that, and hopefully you get that. And so, anyway, okay, the next question. Just an FYI, I regularly receive requests from fields to update the investigator information that appears on the Pink Sheet; degree, academic rank, et cetera. So it might be helpful to let folks know that the data needs to active, updated locally in e-Promise. It's just a thought. Okay I'm gonna –

Kari Points: Okay.

Jason Berlow: – Shoot that question to Kari.

Kari Points: Yeah. So that's actually a really good point. If you go into e-Promise, you have your investigator profiles. And they may have been generated many, many years ago so it wouldn't hurt when you're working on your IRB IS [PH] report or in training, you're looking at your project data sheets, to also be updating your investigator profiles. So no, that's a good point, they can definitely become outdated.

Jason Berlow: Can you show us how to look at SOA and VSSC? Sure. You want me to do that, Kari?

Kari Points: Sure, either way.

Jason Berlow: I can do it, one second. Alright, I want to reshare my screen. Let's see if we get the right monitor. Alright. Which screen do you see, guys?

Unidentified Male: Yeah that's the right one.

Jason Berlow: Can you see this?

Kari Points: That's the right one, yeah.

Jason Berlow: Okay other one, okay. Well, alright. So we'll send the VSSC link. When, when you get here, you can click, you click here, budget distribution, it's gonna give you, yeah, the Status of Allowance, right down here at the bottom, which you, you'll click this one. Now, the only problem with this demo right here is that, the funding has not been loaded, and at your station.

So I'm going to show you for, two things first. The first, first what I will do is – and, let's just pick one station here. So when you scroll down, actually, I was doing this yesterday. When you see these VISN 0s, don't select those when you get to your station. You gotta, you got to get your actual VISN. I was actually having a problem.

So we'll select VISN 523 Boston. And then when, and then when you click here, you're gonna get all of your funds. So you're, what you're gonna want to do here is select just the fund you want. So what you could do is, there's a lot of funds, obviously. So if you said 016181, that's our main direct appropriation. And then the thing is, is if you want to get your reimbursable, that would be your 0161R1, or your 0161X2.

So I'll just drop all those in there. So then I'll do 23 and 22. And then for program code, I'll select all. And then for ACC, I'm going to select all. Here I'm going to click View Report. So here, I actually brought both, so so here is your 22, 23 for Boston and the carryover. And then ,and it's separated by quarter. And then we have our 20 through 24.

So you'll see here as in, you'll see here is your negatives because that's, and and I don't – don't be alarmed. This is just because the funds have not been loaded because there is no budgeted amounts. And that's why you see these negatives. So it's as soon as the, the amounts get loaded, it'll be, it will, it'll, it will load. So what do I do with this now? So what you can do is expand, you can expand, you could, these are all expandable.

So you could see here the ACC names and the program ACC numbers, and your programs. So what I like to do, and when we, when you get all our e-mails from us when we're giving you, and telling everybody to obligate, we download these. So you can download these a couple of ways. You can download to Excel.

A second, I'll show you what the Excel looks like. Here's your Excel. So you can, you could have, you have all that to see all your programs and undistributed. And, like, Kari mentioned, your undistributed, it's all the way down here so you don't really know how to – you're going to have to, you're going to have to work with your fiscal, and determine how to spread that out.

Now, if you have a lot of data, which is, this is, kind of, a lot, you could also export this to CSV, which is also like an Excel, the data file. Right. So I think it's opening on my other screen, a second, just a second. Where is it? It's here, but I got to drag it over. Anyway, hold on one second, and let me stop sharing one second. And I'll get it over, one second. But it's coming, one second.

The problem was if the two files have the same name. So I had to close the other one. I'll close this one, one second. Alright. I'll share again. Here it is okay. I'm sharing again, sorry about that. Okay. So here's your CSV again, and I, and if you, if you were, and if you're savvy you can do more with this, and create a, you can create a pivot table, which we could show you more later in another training.

If if there's interest in pivot tables, let us know. But you could just, you could put all of your – I would put my ACC names here. Well, I put your, you could put your programs here, and then your ACC names, and then your analysis. It's here so you can do a lot of stuff with the pivot table.

So if there's interest in that just let us know in the survey, and what, we can do something with that. So that's the SOA. I'm going to stop sharing again, and then see what else, what other questions we have? Thanks. Kari, do you have something like that, or –?

Kari Points: Yeah.

Jason Berlow: – Something we could put together?

Kari Points: Yes. So the question is, do you have a grid of cost centers and org codes to try to work with the local HR and Payroll, making sure research employees get charged to the correct cost centers? We can, since there is a spreadsheet out there with the definitions of different cost centers for HR. I saw this question come in, so I I do have it.

I can work with Jason and send that out. It comes with a description for all VHA cost centers. The big thing will be making sure your HR has that cost center available for you to use. They may have to create it into their system, which can take a lengthy amount of time working with them from that. But we can do that.

Jason Berlow: Okay thank you. Thanks, Kari. Muana Jackson of VHA Finance is the person you should message to get access to ACS. Thank you. Do Pink Sheets show of your, all the years of funding granting at the beginning of the grant?

Kari Points: Yes. If you go into your Pink Sheet, the example that I had on this slide, you can see that it has the future years as well. So based on the notice of award, the Pink Sheet will cover all of the years of funding.

Unidentified Male: It will also cover the adjustments made throughout the award period. So, one, the first Pink Sheet may not be the same as the last Pink Sheet.

Kari Points: Yes.

Antonio Laracuente: So if you have, skip a year, or you do a PMO, and you change years out, it will, it will cover that as well.

Jason Berlow: Thank you, Tony.

Antonio Laracuente: Hey, just a point on the org codes.

Kari Points: Yeah.

Antonio Laracuente: Really, you all should be using org code 3010 for research activities. So it will be, for example, 80101 dot 3010. And so those org codes are really critical, and we've been looking at them as part of the centralization HR transition as well.

Jason Berlow: Are there any good forecasting tools other than Excel out there to help us plan spending for projects during the FY? Kari or Tony, do you want to take that one?

Antonio Laracuente: Yeah it's called RMS.

Kari Points: You beat me to it.

Jason Berlow: And they're actually, the RMS, well, Kari is our….

Kari Points: Yes.

Jason Berlow: And and then, and you want to plug your RMS office hours?

Kari Points: Sure. So we are doing office hours the first Tuesday of every month. So hopefully, if you're all invited to this training, you should be invited to that as well. If you're the individual asking this, we do recommend, we don't have a set how many projects you should have before you go to Win RMS, but if, maybe 10 to 15, and then Win RMS will become a really good forecasting tool for you.

So if, whoever asks this question wants to reach out to myself, I can help getting you set up, and using it, if it would work for you. It it is a very useful tool for this purpose.

Jason Berlow: Thank you, Kari. Can we get the memo regarding functioning under CR to a local Fiscal Offices close, close to the end of the fiscal year, or the beginning of the new fiscal to avoid purchasing delays? My, my Fiscal Office does not move forward until funding is received, or they receive info to allow overcommitting of CPs. So will you please send us a note on that individually, whoever sent the question?

Because two things here. No, no. nobody has funding, all the appropriations. So it's, kind of, regardless of CR. Second of all, yes, we can get out the CR earlier. We're hoping this, this memo will, will help alleviate some of the issues but we understand that there's a, can be a a a big disconnect. And we did send this memo out and coordinate with VHA Finance.

We sent it out to the, the VISN CFOs. So we're hoping this memo is getting out. And then please, also share the memo with your, your fiscal. So whoever sent the, this message, please just send us a note so we can understand all of the information. So let's go back to the SOA, no, there's not no funding for FY '23.

Because, like I said we're in a CR. And the funding, it just hasn't been loaded yet. You do have funding. So what you need to do is take your, maybe we need to do a a, a demo on this, too. You need to take your ITA, that, and your, and your Pink Sheets, and then prorate it for the, the CR amount. So let me, let me pull up that, that CR memo really quick, one moment. Are there – before I I do, are there any more questions? How many more questions do we have, Parker?

Parker Cunneen: So, so Jason, I think –

Unidentified Male: The last one.

Parker Cunneen: – I think, sorry, Jason. I I think it's really critical.

Jason Berlow: That's fine.

Parker Cunneen: You really, you've got to make a critical point on this question, which is that you've got to look at your RAFT report, and what your ITA is going to send you.

Jason Berlow: Yeah.

Parker Cunneen: Because if you don't, then you're going to have zeros for at least another couple of weeks. And so you'll see that they're spending for salaries, and so forth. So you'll have negatives, actually, in in your balance accounts. So just be really cognizant that you've got reports you can look at, and take the memo that Jason is about to show you, and go to your fiscal officers, and and tell them, "Look, we're running the same way the facility does. It's just, we'll be in the CR. But, there's money, money's coming."

And so, and and not to put Matt on the spot, \_\_\_\_\_ [00:51:29] and John, but they're gonna, we got to give you pushback, Matt and John can call the stations, and talk to the CFO, the CFO, the CFO.

Jason Berlow: Yeah so actually, I'm gonna share this screen first.

Unidentified Female: Just clarify. Hey, Jason, she just clarified the question.

Jason Berlow: Yeah?

Unidentified Female: She was gonna, asking, it's in reference to the Pink Sheet.

Jason Berlow: Okay.

Unidentified Female: If \_\_\_\_\_ [00:51:57] zero? So yes, that means, right now, there's no funds allocated for FY '23 on the Pink Sheet. That could change. There are sometimes, are special, special purpose funding. So if it's a project that they may later on decide to award some funds, but you do want to periodically go check that Pink Sheet. But if right now it shows zero, that, that, that is, that there's no plan funding for you.

Jason Berlow: Because, because?

Unidentified Male: Right.

Unidentified Female: Yeah but that's what she's asking –

Jason Berlow: But Tony, Tony, right –

Unidentified Female: – About.

Jason Berlow: – But that, because some projects are on hold until there is funding available.

Unidentified Female: Right yeah.

Jason Berlow: \_\_\_\_\_ [00:52:32] for the service grant.

Unidentified Female: But I got some of the –

Tony: Because funding ran out.

Unidentified Female: Yeah exactly.

Jason Berlow: Okay.

Unidentified Female: Yes.

Jason Berlow: Yeah that's an important, yeah, okay. Good, that's an important consideration. I do have the memo on the screen. Were there any other questions before I show the memo in the last minute or two?

Okay. Because one thing was, I was a little surprised when we sent the memo with the, when we blasted it to a couple of 100 people, there weren't that many questions. So you want to get a good amount of questions. If you get a lot of questions, you're concerned. If you get a few questions, you're concerned. So I want to make sure everyone's familiar with it. So so anyway, you can see my screen, right?

Unidentified Male: Now you can.

Unidentified Male: Sir, Yes, sir.

Jason Berlow: Okay. So basically, and in, in the past, we, there were questions with, from \_\_\_\_\_ [00:53:24].

Parker Cunneen: Jason, hold on one sec. Yeah. I can't see it. Brandon, can you?

Brandon: No.

Antonio Laracuente: I can't see it, Jason.

Jason Berlow: Okay. There we go. Got it okay. Okay. Here's the memo. Alright. Okay so, anyway, so last year and part of the finance initiative we got questions about, what's the legal authority to the CR and such? So we're trying to be a little more official here. It's, it's, take note that it's coming from the credo. And then Finance re-wrote it, but we, we're just giving you an update on the appropriation status.

And since this memo was written, there is still no update on the appropriation status. We're going to be in the CR a long time. The election day was yesterday, a lot of things are still unsettled. So lame duck Congress has come back to try to, try to pass the budget. But we'll see what happens. If you want to be safe assume that there will be a CR for a long time. Last year it went through March.

So we're operating \_\_\_\_\_ [00:54:25] requested 916 million. We're operating at 882 million. So there's a lot of confusion about what a CR is. So one big thing is in Appropriations Law, the Red Book, you can learn more about it. But we, kind of, talk about it. And the one big thing to understand is that continuing resolutions are just, are really just short-term appropriations that bridge the gaps that, that occasionally arise between the end of appropriations, and and the next one.

So that's really big. So it's not, it's not a stoppage. We've seen, we've seen messages using terms fiscal shutdown, which that's the last word we want to use. So if you wanted to have an idea of what you're getting once this TDA comes, all you really need to do is take your, your ITA that you pulled from \_\_\_\_\_ [00:55:08] and apply it by 21.1 percent.

Because that's the amount of the percentage of the year through December 16. And that's exactly what John and all, all of the budget analysts did to create those TDAs. So the other big thing is that, like we talked about in the past, is new starts. We talked about this in the August training and some of the previous trainings. So get that term new start out of your head. That's a major program, a major thing that we have in our budget.

It's not a new study. So if you're going to, if you have funding for a new start, a new study, start it, start hiring, et cetera. Don't hold back, if if it, if a project is cleared, \_\_\_\_\_ [00:55:46], get going.

So regarding the obligations, we have some great guidance here about funding new research projects and hiring. Kari helped write this section, and we we set the criteria that you should be familiar with about what you need in order to hire, these three criteria here.

And then IPAs, if you can fund the whole year in the IPA, you can do it. The problem is you may not have enough funding. If you have 21 1 percent of your available funding for the year, you're going to be limited in what you can do Because you got to make payroll and everything else. Contracting, you could, you, right here, you can award contracts that are – and, and you have these clauses.

But again, you're gonna get in the problem, do you have enough money to do it? Probably not, so what we want you to do is put everything, get everything ready. Get everything in force, and get things ready, talk to your fiscal, and and let them overcommit in VistA so everything is ready to go once we do get funding. Because what happened last year was, the funding ee didn't get appropriated until March.

It took another month to get our money. And then as soon as you got your money, you're up against the contracting deadlines. And then as soon as you get your money, we're, we're we're bothering you about spending your carryover. So that's really the issue. And the interagency agreements, you can do those also. But again, you probably don't have enough money, but you can do them.

So the the takeaway of CR is that you could spend, but you probably just don't have enough to spend. So I think in the past, there has been a lot of concern about what, a lot of apprehension, and and we hope this memo will help. So if you have any specific pushback on your fiscal, please let us know.

So this memo, just in terms of vetting, and so you know, it was vetted by our office, VHA Finance, Tony, and Kari, and and ORD Appropriations Law, Lisa Hartzog. So this memo was really vetted. So and we'll, we'll be sending this out annually to help with the process. So I guess we're almost at time here. Were there any more questions? Or are we, are we good, Parker?

Parker Cunneen: A couple of more popped up while weve been talking.

Jason Berlow: Okay.

Parker Cunneen: So give it to Brandon.

Jason Berlow: Alright.

Parker Cunneen: But I think we probably have time for one or two more.

Jason Berlow: Okay. QUERI and other TDAs receive, have, have funding for full year. So they're not, not, it does not appear that funding has been prorated for this year? I'll answer that question. So QUERI is funded out of medical services 0160, 0160 is is what's considered an advanced appropriation, which means that funding is provided for the full year. VA has special authority for advanced appropriation for the other appropriations.

That's your medical services, 0160; your medical support and compliance, 0152; your medical facilities, 0162, et cetera. So yes, QUERI will have your full year funding because they are not under a CR, but we are. So that's why you'll see the full year funding. So that's, if you have QUERI, that's great because you have less concern, so even more reason not to hold up obligating. Next question?

Parker Cunneen: Actually, I think that is it.

Jason Berlow: Yeah and a lot of your, your and then your VRRP dollars, that's all not research. So the one thing, it would happen here is a number of years ago, they, they started the advanced appropriation in in VHA. Because obviously, CRs, and then running VA hospitals aren't, aren't popular, right? Because if there is a government shutdown, you don't want on the news that the hospital is going to shut down.

So that's why they had that advanced appropriation to avoid that. But research does not have advanced appropriation at this time, so we have to operate like the rest of the government. Well, thank you, everyone. I'll, I'll hand it back to Parker to close up shop.

Parker Cunneen: Fantastic, well, thank you to the panelists for being there, and answering all of our questions. And thank you to the audience for attending. I did see a couple of suggestions for topics in the Q&A. Please do submit those in the past webinar survey. And I also saw up at the top, there was a request for the slides.

The slides. are sent out to everyone who registers in advance. If you register last minute, you may not receive them, just depending on when we send them out the day of. But you can find them with the recording in the ORPP&E webinar archive. And and that should be up by the end of the week. So if you need the slides, you'll be able to find them there.

Jason Berlow: And we're also, we're we're working to create a centralized landing page for the, as part of the finance initiative. So we're going to have it all there, too, but it's a work in progress. So for now, the ORP, the ORPP&E website is great. That's where I go and you can get the slides, the YouTube, the everything so you can share with, if you're at a party with your friends, or family, you can give them a sense of what we do. So have a great day, everyone.

Parker Cunneen: All right, have a good one.

Jason Berlow: Thanks. Bye-bye.

[END OF TAPE]