

ORPP&E Webinar

Date: February 25, 2020

Session: VA Research Budget Management Webinar (Part 2)

Presenter: Erin Olson; Jamece Petteway; Renee Chartrand; Tabitha Randall; Tony Laracuate; Allen Dunlow

This is an unedited transcript of this session. As such, it may contain omissions or errors due to sound quality or misinterpretation. For clarification or verification of any points in the transcript, please refer to the audio version posted at

<http://www.research.va.gov/programs/orppe/education/webinars/archives.cfm>

Tony Laracuate: So, thank you and welcome everyone to session number two regarding budget and budget management. I really want to thank_

Unknown Speaker: I'm not seeing your screen yet, Tony.

Tony Laracuate: Okay.

Unknown Speaker: I think there's a delay. It must be a system delay [unintelligible 0:00:14].

Tony Laracuate: Okay. Well the first screen is really just_

Unknown Speaker: [Unintelligible 0:00:16].

Tony Laracuate: Okay. I'll just keep going and then just let me know when you can see the screen. Is it saying, so I really want to thank the team. Okay. Good. So, I really want to thank the team, Diana Powers, Kallie Chauncey, Jamece Petteway, Erin Olson, Tabitha Randall, Renee Chartrand, Kari Points, and of course Allen Dunlow in Central Office. So, just a couple of housekeeping items before we turn it over to the presenters. We are planning a third session sometime in late-March, mid-April for reimbursables. Afterwards we're going to start working on RMS training not the training the RDCC does but a focused training on how to really use RMS and get into the weeds. If you would like additional topics email me or Allen Dunlow so we can start putting together a schedule for the rest of the year. One quick item from the ORD side is to look at your project balances and your prior year money. Remember that we're trying to spend prior year money down by March, by the end of March. Project modifications, please inform your principal investigators that project modifications are like a contract. And that if money is redistributed towards the end, the expectation is that that money will be sent by ORD and the services at the end of the project. So, now I really want to turn this over to the team. We have a lot of information that we want to give to you today. It is two presentations so please hold your questions 'til the end. And Renee, Tabitha, I'm turning this over to you now.

[silence 0:02:08-0:02:22]

Renee Chartrand: Hi and welcome to all.

Tabitha Randall: Good morning, this is Tabitha. And Renee and I will be going through this together with you on the research allocations and distributions. On these first few pages you will notice that we have provided definitions that reference what we will be talking about in this training. If you were able to attend the part one training last week you may have heard some of these referenced and they may be referenced again in the next training slides after this one. Our allocations are an amount or portion of resource assigned to a particular recipient. And the pink sheet shows the amount awarded per fiscal year. Our distributions are the way in which something is shared out among a group or spread over an area. And that's to move the money into the correct Fund Control Points based on the award request or pink sheet. The RAFT is our Research Analysis Forecasting Tool, this is where you will be able to access your pink sheets and the ITA budget memo. And the pink sheet is called a pink sheet because it's pink in the system and this has the information on the award amount, award dates, award title, the PI, et cetera.

Renee Chartrand: Hi.

Tabitha Randall: Next slide, please.

Renee Chartrand: The ITA or Initial Target Allowance, the amount of your ITA depends on the level of funding allocated to the facility research program or your investigator's program at the beginning of each fiscal year. And the amount of the funding the VA received from Congress. So, the amount of funding that we receive each year from Congress depends on the awards that, the investigator awards that were allowed. AACS, Automated Allotment Control System is the program which pulls the list of TDAs from. It's used to track budget and allocations to program offices and VA facilities, as well as VA OIT data centers and business offices. These give a list of TDAs to and from your station. The TDAs or TDA reports can be pulled from the RAFT which Tabitha just mentioned. The TDAs, Transfer of Disbursement Authority is a document that sends and moves money to and from your station. The money arrives and is placed in the research program as undistributed until your work with the fiscal department has been completed to move most of the appropriation, to the most appropriate Fund Control Points. The SOA, there are two different methods on how to obtain a Status of Allowance. And in this session, we'll show FCM which was previously known as RSD or the VSSC system. And depending on your facility and how your budget offices or your finance offices operate is, that depends on what accesses they will allow the research budget analyst to have. And is the key to what processes that you're probably using. The Status of Allowance, SOA, is a document that

tracks and displays records of the summary of funding, obligations, and remaining balances in the Fund Control Point. Fund Control Points are the accounts that you distribute your TDA funds into which include salary, travel, and all other. We'll be walking through those in few minutes. [Unintelligible 0:06:31]

Tabitha Randall: These are lists of different systems that can be used if available to you to check the status of allowances, follow-up on distributions, and checking expenditures such as cost transfers or purchases against your Fund Control Points. The FCM database allows the user to customize the reports to their needs. IFCAP is within VistA and the actions taken in IFCAP are reflected in FMS and VSSC. The finance department and IT must give access to the Control Point Official menu so you can access the Fund Control Points under your control. Next slide.

Renee Chartrand: The research funding programs - there are six main programs that receive funding, 821 that's the BLR&D, Biomedical Laboratory includes administration, Veterinary Medical Unit, the Research Career Scientists, Career and Development Awards, and reimbursables. Program 822 the RR&D, Rehabilitation Research. Program 824, HSR&D which is health sciences that includes COIN and VINCI funding. Program 825 that's our Cooperative Studies Program or CSP as its known. Program 826 Million Veteran Program, 829 which is the CSR&D those are clinical funding programs. There are other incremental programs that receive funding such as the 870 which includes CSP and CSR&D clinical personnel. That also includes special purpose and genomic funding. And then we also have Rural Health, research for Veterans who reside in rural communities. Programs 821 and 822 are primarily animal-based research where the remainder of the programs vary with Veteran participant involvement. Next slide, please.

Tabitha Randall: It is a good idea at the beginning of each fiscal year to run reports from this program, the RAFT to verify funding targets for that fiscal year since they mostly stay relatively the same throughout the merit term. But can change from year to year depending on the PI, the type of merit that was awarded, and the start and end dates of the merit award, as well as project modification requests, as mentioned previously by Tony earlier in last week's presentation. Next slide.

The main report we rely on is the ITA Budget Memo report. You will click on reports on top menu, a dropdown pops up. You will select ITA reports then to your left a list pops up and you will select ITA Budget Memo. Next slide.

You will fill out these options to get your report. Select your fiscal year, you can leave the selection blank and it will bring up all options on the printout or you can select the program you

wish to pull up specifically. Select your medical center and click submit on the right. Next slide, please.

The report will pop up like this. You can export the information to read it better. There are three options on the right to select. I like the PDF version myself, but the Excel version also helps if you are working in Excel to track your funds and you're able to apply your formulas at that point. Next slide.

This will be an example of the PDF file that pops up on your Budget Memo list. As you can see it will list the PI name and which program, their project title, the quarter in which the funding will receive, and the total amount that they should be receiving for that fiscal year. Next slide.

To look at pink sheets you will go to the top menu bar again and click on modules, then select PI tracking. The features box will then pop up. I often search by the PI's last name and then you will select search. Next slide.

The name or several name options will pop up in the top portion of your page. You will select the PI that you were searching for. Then the bottom left corner will populate with information. Click on projects. This PI has one project, but some PIs have several current and previous projects and those will pop up in this section. Next slide.

Select the study you're wanting a pink sheet for. On the right side you will then see information on prior, current, and future years for that study. A box will pop up when you've selected the study as well. Select PDF and click print. Next slide.

A pop up will come up and this is your pink sheet. You can save and print from here. As you can see it is pink. On this page you will find a lot of information you will utilize in your job such as the service ID, the PI's name, the study title, the end and start date, what program the funds are in, and towards the bottom the funding information such as how much is coming in yearly and what categories, salary, equipment, travel, and all other. Next slide, please.

[silence 0:12:20-0:12:41]

Tony Laracuente: Renee you might be muted.

Renee Chartrand: Okay. On this slide we're going to continue with the allocation of our funds. And as mentioned before allocations are a portion or a resource that is assigned as an undistributed dollar figure to a particular recipient program. These program amounts are earmarked by the information on the TDA. And most of us know in the beginning of the fiscal year, sometimes throughout, and throughout the fiscal year we receive funding. And that

funding is the allocation. We can also find this information in the AACS database which we'll be going through next. As you also see on the coming pages the Status of Allowance also known as the 826 report. Within each program there should be three main Fund Control Points used: salary, all other, and travel. And those are also identified on the pink sheets for investigators as to how much funding they get for, are supposed to get for each. The pink sheet shows the award amount per fiscal year, per investigator. And based on the pink sheet and conversations with the PI you should know which Fund Control Point to place these undistributed funds in. These program amounts are also earmarked by information on the TDAs in AACS and of course as I mentioned the pink sheets. It is possible that some programs which are mostly the incremental programs, they may not involve all three Fund Control Points. Next slide, please.

This is the website and you can see the link at the top on the right. That is the address for the TDA access, allotted control system. So, next slide, please.

And here you'll see if we click on the AACS reports it automatically brings another dropdown box which says VISNs, stations, program offices. And depending on your accessibility you can move through there with your cursor and then other, to the right, other dropdown boxes appear. And so, when I go in, this is the system that I use. And when I click on, take my cursor to stations and go over to, it'll come up with TDA listing and I click on that. And next slide, please.

So, then this top portion you'll see it says fiscal year, VISN, facility, appropriation, fund, start date, and end date. Now those all have dropdown boxes so you'll notice below that you can select your fiscal year. You can select one or several fiscal years.

And in the VISN it comes up with all the VISNs, you can just click your VISN. And then on the right you'll see it says select all but if you click select all it'll uncheck all of the stations that are checked and you can just choose your own. Some VISNs budget analysts may have one or two stations that they're budget analysts for. Then here you can choose the appropriation, I have the three listed that I usually choose. Next on the right you'll see choose the funds and there's a whole list. So, I have some medical 0160A1 I choose and then down a little farther where it says 0161A1, 20/21, 22 I usually check that. and then I have general post fund, a small amount of general post fund which sometimes I check those. So, if you are expecting funding in the X2 account you would check that. Next slide, please.

And then here you can choose your, when you get to this point your start and end dates are usually the same. You can change those to modify whatever you need, whatever date or period you need. The start date will always come up with the day that you login though. So, if you notice on the right, I have a start date of 1/17/21 and an end date of 1/29 so that brought up all the TDAs during that period. And if you are clicking 0160 and expecting funds there, you'll often

see those will mix in with your research funds. You can also if you notice it says find next, you can also search and sort by that find next. So, if you're looking for something specific or wanting to just have all the research fund TDAs together, you can put and identify things within that box, and it will help there to minimize what you're looking for. And next slide, please.

Okay so, and here's a list of the TDAs once they've been, once I've identified all the ones I needed. As you'll notice the program code is highlighted in the program, which is the program fund, where the funds belong. And then the ledger is also highlighted. This ledger gives quite a bit of good information as identifying your investigator and what program, if it's salary or travel. And often the TDA listing is not sorted so there can be other TDAs in between. And you can sort those too. Next slide, please.

And here we are, our Status of Allowance. And to the left you'll notice the three main programs: salary, medical, travel, research, and all other. And usually all, if you notice all the programs have those except for the Million Veteran Program that only has the all other and the salary. But you, if you need an additional control point in there you can work with your fiscal office to have that added. Next slide, please.

This is the FCM database where I get my Status of Allowance from. The FCM database can be used to provide many financial reports such as the Status of Allowance, the 887 report, S16s, the 830 report. And it allows the user to customize to the reports of their need. Next slide, please.

Okay. So, after you put your access code in it'll bring you to this page. I click on that E3 and it will bring up the global report list. And I click on the global report list and next slide, please.

And this is what comes up. So, this is what it would look like. So, the username is always your station, then you go over to the right where it says form, I put F826 in there. And it will come up with all the dates listed. And I can, I usually choose the one, the most current one. Because I pull my Status of Allowance every day. But if I missed a day or two or whatever or need to find something I can always go back. Next slide, please.

And so here once everything, once the undistributed funds are placed in the proper Fund Control Points and reflected on the Status of Allowance, then the funds should be assigned or allocated to the control points in your, in the RMS system or whatever accounting system you're using. So, and I have that identified a little bit here. As you can see on the left it says add funds allocation. And then on the right you'll notice it has the TDA reference number. So, I have the investigator account number, the TDA number, and where it says document description initial funds allowance. I also, as I, as we get funding if there is one or two or three additional

fund allowances past the initial one, I identify those as well. It helps keep track of the funding in the investigator's account.

And then we go to the distributing funds after funds are allocated to the facility finance, we'll reach out with a list of TDAs on station and ask where they need to be distributed. And until that's answered the funds remain in the undistributed on the Status of Allowance. After the fund control points are selected the funds then are distributed to the fund and account. And this can be tracked many ways, through emails, through IFCAP, running balances, as well as transaction listings in VSSC. You may also ask your finance department for monthly activity by accounting classification code reports. So, the next slide will show you the Status of Allowance.

And as you know I have highlighted where the undistributed funds sit. Next slide, please.

So, when my finance office reaches out to me this is, they pull the TDAs just like I showed previously. And they'll ask where I want them distributed. If you notice on the right, I have highlighted in red the Fund Control Points that they belong. Now everyone knows ORD allocates funding and we know that it doesn't all come at one time. So, this is a more simple list. Listing the Fund Control Points noted in red as you can see our salary the 003 are salary, 1140 is the all other, and then there's 1192 that's travel. And next slide, please.

So, as you can see on this slide sometimes it's necessary to divide the TDA funds to go to more than just one Fund Control Point. So, if you look down a little, you'll see I have two entries on one TDA so part of that TDA funding is salary and the other is all other. And based on the investigator's pink sheet you should be able to figure out how much goes to each account. And during the fiscal year it can be adjusted if needed. Next slide, please.

And here then our funds distribution is to our investigator accounts. Once you know that the undistributed funds are placed in the proper control points and reflected on a Status of Allowance properly this slide in RMS shows how you would enter those funds or that distribution in RMS. So, on the left you'll see we have add funds distribution. You choose the investigator account. And again, on the right here I have the TDA number, the investigator name, and for the document description the first, it's this first Fiscal Year '21 fund distribution and it shows salary. So, that, it's easier for you to keep track of and the investigator when they're looking at their reports. Because they'll be able to see that description. And next slide, please.

There you go.

Tabitha Randall: And here's the VSSC. The VSSC is another avenue to obtaining the financial information that is needed and comparable to what was just previously shown with Renee. There are advantages to both avenues and I personally use this option at my station. I do not have access to the FCM over at my station. When you click on the main link this page should be the page that pops up. You'll select finance under facility administration. Next slide.

You can see a list of options and you'll select the budget distribution. Next slide.

Then this will pop up and you will click the Status of Allowance. Next slide.

And this is what will pop up and this is your Status of Allowance that pops up for you. What will pop up initially is a blank looking page with the top drops that are very similar to the AACCS options. You will need to fill them in. You'll need to select the answers pertaining to your station. I always select my current and prior fiscal year, as well as '94 because that's what pops up the no year or non-profit money. You can see that the date lists as the most up-to-date information. Then you see your funds listed, non-profit, prior year, reimbursable, and current year. You can click the plus sign to expand the fiscal year selection. Next slide, please.

Options will pop up for you once you expand the fiscal year. This is what it looks like for me. To look at a specific accounting string you'll right click and then open in a new tab. This will take a while to load so you'll need to have some patience. We right click to open a new tab because then you can go back to this screen and open up several at a time to toggle through. If not, you have to continue to go back and forth and taking the time for it to reload every time. Next slide.

And then once you've clicked on that to expand it will then turn into the daily activity by account classification code, this is also considered your F20 daily report. So, this is just an example of what would pop up if you click on one of those, on the right clicking. Next slide.

Renee Chartrand: So, this is our FMS, Financial Management System. In this system I can access many things. We can access 2237s, 1358s, we can see travel here. Many variations. We can see vendors in this system, just many, many things. Next slide, please.

I have an example here of an obligation. It has the PO number, it has the original amount, the amended amount if it's in an accrued status. The PO start date, the last activity, and so forth. And on the right side you'll see, this is a different screen, it's a DXRF which is actually the, this particular allocation is a 1358 and you can see the activity on there, the payments that were made, the accruals, so this is another system I use for many different things. I can see Veteran payments if those were made, the amounts, the dates, along with all my POs my 1358s, 2237s. I can see if travel, if a Veteran travels, if an investigator travels by using the different table codes

in there that's how you're provided with whatever information you need. And it does take a little bit of time to learn the different codes so that you don't always have to look them up. But it's very efficient. It also has a higher level like you can see the Salt table in here, you can see the status of any Fund Control Points in here, as long as you have access to those Fund Control Points. And so, this is the system I use to work with IFCAP.

Tabitha Randall: And this is IFCAP and you will go through VistA, this is another DOS system. Next slide, please.

I use VistA to check our running balances when we've received funding. And follow-up on my 1358 requests. You will go to the running balances option. You will up care it, running balances. Then you would select your fiscal year you want to look at, your quarter, your Fund Control Point. Then you will be able to enter through to see the ceiling, transactions, commitments, obligations, credit card charges, and accruals. Next slide, please.

Here's what you'll see after inputting your information. This is just a crude version of it that I have. You'll see more of this in the next presentation. They'll be able to go into it, there are different codes that you will be seeing. Next slide, please.

And this is our listing for our finance contacts for the different programs. So, you can see that they're listed as research rehabilitation, our director of finance, our CSP, our MVP, our contract specialist, and the different programs BLR&D and CSR&D. Next slide, please.

And here are the links for the systems that we just went through.

Renee Chartrand: Thank you very much for joining us.

Tabitha Randall: Thank you so much guys.

Tony Laracuenta: Yeah, thanks Tabitha and Renee. So, appreciate you guys doing this presentation. And so, we're going to move on to our next presentation done by Jamece and Erin. So, let me get this up and running. And can you see the slides? And if so, go ahead and go.

Jamece Petteway: Yes, we can see it. As you've just now taken that galactic ride with allocations and distributions, we will now deep dive into research's expenditures and fiscal 101. Here are the objectives that we will cover. Next slide.

And regards to appropriated funds, funds that become available, appropriated funds are funds that become available after Congress passes the budget. And VHA gets its appropriation. An appropriation is the authorization for a specific purpose, time, and amount. Next slide.

Now Congress, if Congress is unable to approve a budget by the beginning of the fiscal year the next step they would need to find, pass a Continuing Resolution. What is a Continuing Resolution? A CR allows an agency to spend money to operate within a timeframe authorized. While operating under the CR the agency spending should spend and use it for bona fide needs and within the budget amount of the prior year. Remember to always, always, always, always pay attention to the Dunlow updates. Next slide.

As you know each fiscal year has a 12-month operating period starting October 1st through September the 30th. Part one gave us a snapshot of IFCAP, also known as VistA, where transactions are recorded for the respective Fund Control Point daily. Remember review your running balances daily, look for total funding committed, obligations, and the availability of funding. Next slide.

The Federal Appropriation Law specifically outlines what we can and cannot be legally procured from each type of fund. And these are the type of funds that's listed. Admin, medical services, research facilities, OI&T, and general post funds. Next slide.

Monies are to be spent for the needs within that purpose of the appropriation outlined here, at the here our medical facility dollars. Next slide.

The budget and funding for these appropriations are separate. As such, fiscal provides assistance only in transactional which TDA management and obligations of these funds. Next slide.

Now this is where the rubber meets the road. Research and the budget office manages their funds whereas OI&T and medical services, et cetera, are managed by the fiscal office. Maintain that relationship with your fiscal office. In managing your Fund Control Points ensure that you view fiscal year-to-date expenditures, obligations that are established accurately. Next slide.

Be familiar with your Fund Control Points. It allows you to analyze different circumstances. Communicate any significant excesses or shortages via outlook email and message it through your fiscal. Maintain a relationship with your fiscal office. Next slide.

Deciphering your running balance. This is done through VistA as Tabitha stated in the last presentation where, when you're pulling up your, deciphering your running balance you have your station number, your fiscal year, and it shows you your actual Fund Control Point balance, your fiscal balance, and the total committed but not obligated per quarter. Next slide.

Right here is deciphering your running balances. And you have a list of items in which you have purchased or items that have which have hit your fund control, that respective Fund Control Point. Next slide, please.

Now in this slide, if you notice the first slide of your running balance which is at the top, reflects all transactions processed through VistA or IFCAP. All transactions and payments processed through FMS will transmit back to VistA and list it on the second section, the bottom of your running balance. Next slide.

Here you have transactional codes. These are codes that you would regularly see within VistA and FMS. Next slide.

Notice that when deciphering your running balance there are symbols that identifies where you are in the process. These are the type of codes, asterisk shows that adjustment is pending approval from your Fund Control Point Official. So, on and so forth. Next slide.

Now once an obligation is established, both the committed and the obligated amounts in the columns of the running balance show the total dollar amount of the purchase. Now if a transaction was entered and an approving official accessed the transaction to approve it but did not apply their electronic signature the transaction is no longer available, and it will not show up on the screen for approval. In this situation to access it and approve the transaction the document would need to be edited using one of the following in VistA/IFCAP edit menu. Erin, next slide.

Erin Olson: Awesome, thanks Jamece. So, I'm going to pick it up here for correct costing of all of our expenditures. So, as we're all aware with the last two years recissions on our prior year, it's more important now than ever to really manage our dollars effectively and correctly cost our expenditures where they need to be located. So, correct costing includes all of the following elements listed here, the appropriation, the Fund Control Point, the cost center, and then the budget object code. And I listed here an example of a budget object code for IT peripheral devices. And I want to just kind of highlight this one because this became something that we dealt with at our station when the pandemic hit and folks needed to telework and all of a sudden we needed to buy IT peripheral devices that were non-capitalized such as extra monitors or scanners or things like that. And we were told wait a second those are IT expenditures. You can't use your research dollars to buy those things. And we were able to communicate with our folks in the purchase support program and in our fiscal office that actually, this is, these are items that can be utilized for all appropriation. So, we were able to take care of our researchers and our research support staff during this time. And so, I know that, you know I just want to say at the outset when we kind of get into the weeds here that I

know that there's variance across the enterprise and all the different stations. And you know one of the guiding principles that I have always followed is when I know better I do better. So, for example, if you're a budget analyst or you're an AO at a research station doing research out there in field and maybe you only have a couple of Fund Control Points that you cost everything to. And then you just cost transfer at the end of the year. You know that's okay because that's why we're here as this group and we're here to provide clarity on appropriate costing that you can do throughout the year to help you manage your funds. Next slide, please.

Thank you. So, these are going to look familiar to you because Renee covered these programs broadly. There's five programs within ORD funding. And so, when you receive a TDA like she said you first need to know what program the funding is so you can tell your fiscal where to place that money. Next slide, please.

Underneath the program levels we have our Cost Centers. These Cost Centers help us further allocate funding within a program which is very important for executing our budgets. Now the breakdown I have listed here I pulled from the AO handbook. But you can also go to VA Financial Policy Volume 13, Chapter one, there's an attachment that has all the different cost codes. Next slide, please.

For correct costing of your expenditures, as Renee mentioned earlier, I'm going to get a little bit more in the weeds here. Each program whether it's BLR&D, HSR&D, CSR&D you can see this is a screenshot from my RMS in St. Louis, each one of those programs has a salary, an all other, and a travel Fund Control Point. And since research funding is two-year money, you're always going to have a current year and a prior year Fund Control Point for each program and for each category. So, for example, current and prior year BLR&D salary, current and prior year BLR&D all other, and then we do utilize travel Fund Control Points in St. Louis so we have a current year travel and prior year travel for each program. I want you to pay special attention to your salary Fund Control Points because there's always a prior year and a current year for salary, but those salaries are always going to hit that current year salary Fund Control Point. The only hiccup might be if a research person gets a retroactive step or promotion that may hit your prior year Fund Control Points so you're going to need to pay attention to where those costs are hitting. So, I want to say before we move on to the next slide that salary and all other are going to be very commonly used. If you don't currently have a Fund Control Point for salary with your research employee accosted to that salary you can work with your fiscal, because you should have these Fund Control Points so that you can map your people appropriately. And you have the authority in research to determine that these Fund Control Points that you established for your current year and your prior year will stay the same. So, they wouldn't change over time unless you as a research office determine that there is a reason for doing so. And this is

particularly important about the Fund Control Points for salary mapping, which I'll talk about next. Next slide, please.

So, as Renee mentioned and our deep dive here, for each program you will have a salary Fund Control Point. And this Fund Control Point should only have costs hitting it that are for VA-paid personnel. So, your VA not to exceeds that are working on research studies their costs will be booked here. So, not IPA folks or consultants, those individuals, those salary costs are paid for on the all-other Fund Control Point. I want to spend a minute to talk about this because this is something that I did not do when I first began. But Tony worked with me and I was able to work with my fiscal to generate Fund Control Points for programs for salaries that we previously did not have. Because here in St. Louis, for example, at one time we didn't have an HSR&D funded study. So, we didn't have an HSR&D Fund Control Point. So, that had to be generated. But to make your life easier and to help you execute your funds I want to encourage you to spend some time mapping out your research employee's salary to the correct Fund Control Point. And how this will work will vary probably by station. So, in my station I'm the budget analyst and I have a wonderful AO and so when she puts in, at our station she enters the information herself into MSS. So, you will need to know the ACC codes and the cost codes, the current year Fund Control Point for that information to be uploaded with that hiring action. And then good practice would also be to confirm that the employee is mapped correctly with your fiscal office once the first pay period hits. Another plug for RMS right here, utilizing RMS makes it so easy to manage your salaries yourself. You will be able to, with the click of a button, download and project salaries for the remainder of the fiscal year. So, I really encourage you to take a look at setting things up on the front end this way. Next slide, please.

So, correct costing, the ACC codes for salaries always are going end with a 101, you can see them here. And these are the labor distribution codes for our programs. We know them as the Cost Centers, HR knows them as the labor distribution code. I can tell you that at my station they did not have a couple of these labor distribution codes in their HR system, but they were able to create them for me. So, just make friends with your HR buddies on your station and fiscal and your budget people on your station because really the best practice is to cost salaries where they should hit. So, it's not always easy but it's definitely going to be worth it. Next slide, please.

All right so here's an example, your PI was just awarded an HSR&D merit, she's going to hire two VA not to exceeds to work on the study. She's made her selection and she's ready to onboard. So, you're going to want to cost these new research hires to the current year, HSR&D salary Fund Control Point. So, you're going to provide this information to your AO or have your AO enter this, get this information to HR to enter the program, ACC, cost code, and Fund Control Point for the hiring action. Next slide, please.

Okay so once you've costed your research employee to the correct program and the Fund Control Point with HR you can go in RMS as Renee showed us previously and cost them to the PI's account. So, you simply download your salary Fund Control Points, within RMS there's a VistA download button. Once you download the salary Fund Control Points you can click find employee and then assign the employees to the appropriate project. Next slide, please.

So, now that we've covered what expenditures are paid on the salary Fund Control Points, next up we have the all other category. So, the items that you would cost to all-other Fund Control Points would be your IPA agreements, your equipment, supplies, animals, et cetera, et cetera. Next slide, please.

You are going to want to have a Fund Control Point in current year and prior year for all other, corresponding to each one of the programs that you administer. And so, Renee talked about this earlier but when you receive your TDA, so when you receive that notice. On my station fiscal tells me when they come in and then I go back to fiscal and tell them how I want them distributed. So, I always like to joke that October Erin can be really, really nice to May and June and July Erin by taking the time at the outset and looking at those pink sheets in RAFT and talking to all my investigators and really determining at the outset where I need the monies to be distributed. How much needs to go into salary and how much needs to go into all other. So, that you put the money into the Fund Control Points where those expense are going to be hitting. And then also in RMS or WinRMS however you want to call it, you designate SubFund Control Points to set up accounts for each study. So, you might have one PI that has multiple studies maybe BLR&D and a CSR&D or a CSP you'll be able to cost all of those expenditures to the appropriate Fund Control Point and SubFund Control Point at the time of obligation. And it will be allocated to that project which is on the right Fund Control Point and then you won't have to worry about time consuming expenditure transfers. Next slide, please.

So, let's talk about travel for a minute. The other salary, the other Fund Control Points in addition to salary and all other is travel. Travel, what I have found talking to other stations, the processes really vary by station. And so, you will want to work with your fiscal and your travel and tuition committee however it's handled at your station to forming the most appropriate way to manage the travel funds. One way to do is, is to cost the study travel directly by providing the travel Fund Control Point and ACC code during the actual travel approval process. So, that fiscal will cost those expenses directly. That's how we manage it at our station because we do utilize the travel Fund Control Point. Another way is to cost transfer to your travel Fund Control Point once the travel is complete. But again, I think that there's some variance here with how travel is handled. And the one thing that I wanted to make sure I hit home on the travel is that if you know that your PI is not going to utilize travel funds but they are authorized to have travel and they get travel funds in a TDA you can distribute those travel funds to all

other or to salary, wherever they're going to use it at the outset instead of having to deal with it later. Next slide, please.

Managing obligations. So, one of the most important things I want to notice here is that when we have the new system coming online, iFAMS, things might change as I understand. But for right now when a service line initiates a transaction that's when funds are committed. But the funds are not obligated until fiscal or contracting processes the document and then funds are obligated. So, when a contract is awarded that's when the obligation will hit. We have 2237 purchase orders, the Government Purchase Card, and the 1358s are all different types of the obligations that will hit on your all-other Fund Control Point. Next slide, please.

So, when to establish your obligations. These are mandated by federal regulation and for 2237s and for GPCs they must be entered in IFCAP within one business day. For 1358s you have a little bit more time and flexibility, it's within the first five days for the 1358. Next slide.

Probably my least favorite thing to manage, to handle is a delinquent obligation or an unauthorized commitment. So, a delinquent obligation is when an individual who has the authority procures the goods or services but doesn't record the expense within a business day. And then the unauthorized commitment is when they either exceed their purchasing authority or they don't even have the authority at all. And so, what I have included here at the bottom is just a sample tool that we created and utilize in St. Louis. When a new PI gets funding, we sit down and set up the post award for them. And we go over all of the procedures, how we handle IPAs, how we, how our processes work for ordering and so on and so forth. And we explain to them what a delinquent obligation is, what an unauthorized commitment is, and we explain that only the individual in the research office has the ability to commit federal funds. And so, we have them sign this attestation and we keep it on file. And the example that I always give to the PI is that if a freezer breaks you cannot call it in to get a repair, somebody, you cannot commit federal funds. You just notify us we are on call and we will commit those resources, not the PI. I would say that the unauthorized commitment is not something that you want to have to handle or deal with. It does require a ratification. Whereas the delinquent obligation just requires a memo that notates approval from fiscal, logistics, and your medical center director. But really education, education, education. Head these off at the pass so that you can spend your time being proactive and not have to handle these types of unfortunate situations. Next slide, please.

This is where Jamece is going to pick it up from here.

[silence 0:57:32-0:57:44]

Tony Laracuate: Jamece, you're on mute.

Jamece Petteway: Thank you, Erin. Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Erin. This is where we're going to talk about the 2237 process and managing obligations. A 2237 is a document initiated by the service to satisfy or reserve funds from the Fund Control Point. When a 2237 is processed then it's assigned an obligation number and becomes a purchase order number. So, here you can see that there's different types of obligations, the materials, services, term contracts, or no charge. And if you notice I have a sample of an obligation number where there D45555, four represents the fiscal year of the obligation. And the letter identifies what the services are for. What it's for, for example, research is a D. Next slide, please.

With the 2237 each document must be entered timely. Requested in their respective fiscal year and quarter. Regularly monitored and promptly cancelled. We can, when an obligation number, when a purchase order number is de-obligated it must, you have to remember it must be de-obligated in the fiscal year and the quarter in the fourth quarter. Next slide, please.

Now we're going to talk about Government Purchase Cards. Government Purchase Cards which is called the GPC is a purchasing tool which functions like your own credit card. And it commits funds from the Fund Control Point at an estimated expense. Most flexible type of obligations can be used for materials and services. Once a cardholder inserts and applies their electronic signature to the purchase card order in Vista it remains in a committed status until the charge from the vendor is received and reconciled. We must reconcile to the penny. That's how we do it here at the Durham VA, we always reconcile to the penny. Next slide, please.

Of course, as you know each order must be entered timely, regularly monitored, and orders must be completed and closed within 30 days of the delivery date. Appropriate follow-up should be completed to ensure this timeline is achieved. And also, you have to promptly cancel when needed. Next slide, please.

A Government Purchase Card is at \$3,500, \$2,500 for services, and it can increase up to \$10,000, allowed by law. You can request a memo from your GPC program which includes a justification for a higher cost of the research supplies and equipment. Memo's signatories are the chief of logistics, your chief the research chief logistics, and the station CFO. Once the memo is approved by all parties and returned to the purchase card program they will process and increase the limit of your cardholder. Next slide, please.

In managing obligations for your GPC card, this is an additional tool for reconciliation, and it's called the et-FMS tool. And adjustments to the credit card purchases will show up on the FMS side of the running balance as an ET transaction, electronic transaction. This will cause a

discrepancy in your Fund Control Point reconciliation balance. This will also allow you to type in electronic transaction to obtain the PO number so you can make your adjustments. This is a great tool to use. Next slide, please.

Managing your 1358s. Erin?

Erin Olson: All right. Unmuting myself here.

Jamece Petteway: Thank you.

Erin Olson: Sure. So, managing your 1358s, this just describes the separation of duties. Next slide.

Again, as we mentioned they have to be entered timely, requested in the correct fiscal year and quarter, and then regularly monitored and promptly modified. In a little bit I'm going to talk about the UDO reports. Next slide.

Vendors, invoices, and payments. So, as a budget analyst you're always having requests from your PIs to purchase items. And you might not have a vendor in your system, and you need to get them added. They must have a valid Dunn and Bradstreet registration and they must be in SAM. And they must also be active in your station's system. Next slide, please.

So, you can pull up in VistA, you can look on vendor, search on vendor to see if they're in there. And if they're not you're going to need to send the vendor a VA form 10091 and our station also, it might vary by station, but we also have some additional information that is needed to add them. But this is showing how you can look up vendors in VistA. Next slide.

One thing that I wanted to note, you must have a wet signature on that VA 10091. Even though we're living in the COVID times and folks are working remotely, they will not be processed at least in our experience, they will not be processed without that wet signature. We do see a very, very quick turnaround time on the vendorization, however if you send your completed forms to this email on the slide. Next slide, please.

For payment, this is the address of the Financial Services Center. Invoice payments are processed with, in accordance with the Prompt Payment Act. They are all done via IPPS or as our vendors know it Tungsten. And all of the invoices must have the following information on them to be considered valid for payment. I hope this is helpful to you because most of the time the vendors are used to doing business with the federal government but sometimes they're not and so they don't know what needs to be included in order to have their invoice be considered meeting all of the requirements. So, this is information that I'll often provide. Next slide, please.

Certifying for payment. So, IPPS or IPPS as some folks call it, when an invoice is submitted for payment the certifying official has to validate that those goods and services have been received or reconcile any discrepancies and then move it forward, approving or disapproving. So, there are separation of duties. So, in IPPS you'll have the approving official and then you have the certifying official. If you cannot approve the invoice for payment, you'll want to notate in IPPS the reason why, when the invoice is refused. This will notify the vendor. The vendor will get all that information. One thing I wanted to note about vendors, invoices, and payments particularly for equipment payments, pay special attention when you're processing those because the receiving report must be matched to the invoice. And you're going to want to be friends with your folks in the warehouse at your station so that they can complete that receiving report match. And at that point the vendor can submit the invoice and make sure that it comes in on that correct purchase order in IPPS. There's one thing to note, those can give you some hiccups if you're not careful. Next slide, please.

Here's the website for IPPS. Once you click on it you will see all of the items in your worklist. These will be the items that are on your Fund Control Points that you have the authority to review and approve. You can sort this list on any column, it's very helpful. You can export to Excel. There's a couple other tools that you can utilize in IPPS I'm gonna cover, next.

Okay, open obligations. So, undelivered orders is something I wanted to touch on. In St. Louis my fiscal sends me every month the undelivered orders and I update them. You might provide this information yourself at your station. But one way to do it is to go in IPPS, click on your station. You're going to click on oh it looks like my thing isn't, you're gonna click on station inquiry system. And click on open obligation by transaction type. So, my little red oval got moved but you click on open obligation by transaction type.

On the next slide you select SO and then everything will pop up. And again, you can export by Excel as you wish. Next slide, please.

Another method to obtain open obligations is the VHA support center, VSSC which Renee covered in depth in the first presentation. You can click on FMS obligations, open documents only. Next slide.

A note about prior year. So, as we've all been coming to understand it's very, very important to obligate our prior year accounts, get everything down to zero by the end of Q2, by the end of March. So, some of the tools that we've talked about are cost transfers. Work with your fiscal, help them help you to execute these throughout the year. Execute your contracting actions on prior year Fund Control Points. As long as you make sure that you get those in very early because as we mentioned before those do not become obligated until the contracting action

actually hits. You can obligate your IPAs or your all others on your all-other Fund Control Points out of sync with the actual fiscal year. So, start them July 1st to June 30th. They can span fiscal years. You might have to have some conversations and get to be friends with your fiscal and budget folks, but they cannot exceed one 12-month period, but they can span fiscal years. And that can also help you manage those two-year dollars. With that I'm gonna turn it back over to Tony. Thanks a lot.

Tony Laracuate: All right thanks, everybody. Great presentations and really there's a lot of information there that they kind of skipped over so please read the slides carefully. And you know use them as a reference tool. I think these slides are meant to be at your side so you can access them at any time. Kate do you want to take over and see if we have any questions?

Kate: Yep. And thank you to everyone who submitted their questions so far. You can still submit questions through the Q&A box. I'm just going to take a moment to share this screen. Hopefully, can everyone see that?

Tony Laracuate: Yes. So, as an HSR&D COIN AO can I get/view access to RAFT/pink sheets?

Renee Chartrand: Yes.

Tony Laracuate: The answer is yes you can. And you can just go through the research office, ask your AO, when your ACOS will sign off and there's a process to submit it. Mr. Dunlow will approve it at that point. And so, there is an SOP that we can make available but basically, it's a form and it would be submitted to Mr. Dunlow for approval. Next questions. How can we request access to AACS? Anybody want to take that one?

Renee Chartrand: This is Renee. I asked my finance office and I haven't gotten a reply yet for a few of these different financial databases. So, when I find out the answers to them, I can send them out.

Tony Laracuate: Yeah. So, I've had access for a long time and that went through the chief of fiscal and they did some magic. I believe that there is also a weblink or an email in the AACS website. But I believe it has to go through budget people in fiscal. And we'll provide the link to the site when it becomes available. Next question. I'm a budget analyst at a CSP center, am I able to get access to FSC, RDIS, and other systems? The research offices used to manage their budget. Mr. Dunlow, do you want to answer that one or? I can answer and say that you can, just again work through your research office. FSC is through the budget office at your medical center. RDIS meaning ePROMIS or_

Unknown Speaker: Yes.

Tony Laracuate: 'Cuz in reference to ePROMIS if it's a reference to RAFT you would go through the research office to get access to those. Next question. So, how would we get access to VSSC, is this something fiscal controls? Somebody want to take that one? Don't be shy.

Erin Olson: No, you can just click on the link and input your station information. I did not have to request special access.

Tony Laracuate: Correct. That information's out there for anybody who's in VA.

Renee Chartrand: Yeah. [Unintelligible 1:13:50]

Tony Laracuate: In this side though, you have to be on a VA network to get access to it.

Renee Chartrand: Tabitha sent it to me, and I was able to access it.

Tony Laracuate: Yeah. So, I believe the link is in one of the slides. Next question. If we do not currently use WinRMS who can you reach out to for guidance and support in setting it up? Send me Tony Laracuate, Antonio.Laracuate03@va.gov an email. And I will help you. Kari Points and I are taking the lead on that.

Renee Chartrand: [Unintelligible 1:14:25]

Tony Laracuate: With FMS is it possible to pull all 2237s by end date? Renee?

Renee Chartrand: I have not tried to do that. I would guess that you probably could. I have a bunch of codes that I have not used. So, I can send that list out to people if you have FMS and want that list of codes. [Unintelligible 1:15:03].

Tony Laracuate: So, Erin, correct me if I'm wrong but I believe within the invoice the IPPS you can actually pull the end date. It does tell you. The other, the UDO report definitely tells you in VSSC and if you get your fiscal, like my fiscal service sends me a UDO report every month for me to complete and update. And that definitely has the end date of all open obligations.

Renee Chartrand: Oh.

Tony Laracuate: So, you can go to VSSC, IPPS, or get it from your fiscal from the UDO.

Renee Chartrand: I know it's somewhere.

Tony Laracuate: Can RMS handle when an employee is working for both HSR&D and RR&D? Okay so the, or can you, you can only cost them to one program. So, this is extremely tricky, and this is something that we'll get into the weeds on when we do the RMS training. The answer is, there is a way to do it. It's not straightforward because RMS works off of a Fund Control Point and PAID works off of one Fund Control Point. So, when you download in from PAID into RMS you would download into one, whatever one control point account is, you may have to separate it out. And then you would have to work out with your, if you're gonna cross programs into program 8284, et cetera.

Tabitha Randall: Tony, can I make a comment on that too?

Tony Laracuate: Absolutely. Yes, 'cuz you have the, yes.

Tabitha Randall: So, yeah to add onto that, like Tony was saying is you can do it, but the thing is when you put something in RMS it's not directly going to be taken care of through finance. It's not attached to our finance at all. You still need to make that request to do the cost transfers with their finance department. And you want to make sure that that that was actually done too by getting an EW number. Because you can put in RMS all you want that you did something, but was it actually done. So, I often wait until I have an EW number from finance that it was done before I make that selection in RMS.

Tony Laracuate: Yeah, thank you. So, I think there are ways to track it directly. And then within RMS, but you do have to do the expenditure transfer and track that expenditure transfer across the Fund Control Points. Next question. What is the menu option needed to get running balances or is that a part of the IFCAP menu option? Somebody want to take that one?

Jamece Petteway: Yes Tony, I'll_

Erin Olson: So_

Jamece Petteway: Go ahead.

Erin Olson: You go ahead Jamece.

Tony Laracuate: Jamece go ahead.

Jamece Petteway: I'll take that one. Yes, there is a menu option that's needed and yes, it's part of IFCAP, it's the Fund Control Point clerk menu, you'll be able to get it.

Tony Laracuate: Yeah. So, approving officials and clerks have it.

Jamece Petteway: You'll be able to obtain it, yes obtain it.

Tony Laracuente: So, is it best practice to have a Fund Control Point for multiple projects all BLR&D salaries to a single Fund Control Point versus a single Fund Control Point for each project salary cost, another for each project's all other? So, the answer to that is I live in BLR&D, for example, in BLR&D I have 30 projects and I only use two control points. I use an all other and a salary control point. And the reason is we use RMS and RMS breaks down the control point into sub control points which then become accounts. And so, it is a lot easier to manage overall when you have lesser control points as long as you have the system to manage within the control point, the sub control points, meaning the accounts, for example, in RMS. Next question, please. Would you state the difference between committed but not obligated? This is a great question. So, who wants to take that one on? And it's very important in FMS, so somebody want to take that one on?

Erin Olson: So, when you commit the funds, when you enter the 2237 for your purchase card, for example, it will commit the funds so it will come off your running balance in Vista, but it is not going to hit FMS yet. It doesn't hit FMS until it's or purchase card until it's reconciled or if it's a transaction entry for a contract, until contracting executes the award. So, it, if it's committed you can see it in IFCAP and Vista that your, it's almost, I view it as like you're setting aside this money, it's committed, it's justified but the money is still sitting there in FMS. It's still showing that you have those funds available. And those won't go away in FMS until obligation happens so like I said for contracting it's when the action takes place is when it's obligated. Does that make sense? Was I clear?

Tony Laracuente: Yep. I think another way to look at it is when you write a check you've committed the money for that purchase. But until it's cashed it's not obligated. And so, once it's cashed it shows up in the books. And so that's a way to look at it. I will tell you that Mr. Dunlow and the national people take a look at FMS and FMS is really the bible. And so, you've got to make sure that you've reconciled FMS to make sure that all your accounts are in order. Any more questions, Kate? In your opinion what is the minimum budget-related staffing required for large research program to effectively track and execute the budget using all these tools you've shown? So, this is something that we have been looking at, kind of on a national level. I don't want to put specific numbers out today because we're, I don't think we're ready to do that. I will tell you that you at least need somebody to manage a system like RMS, maybe two people in a large research program. You need people that buy things, you need people to certify invoices, you need people to track accounts you know that kind of thing. And so, at a minimum you need three. Because you have to have somebody who can enter the orders, you've got to have somebody that can approve the orders, and you've got to have somebody who can reconcile the orders and meaning certifying them in IPPS and so forth. 'Cuz you can't

do all three tasks. 'Kay, next question. How 'bout if a vendor doesn't accept government credit cards? Then you've got to go through the 2237, you've got to go through the 2237 process and good luck. Are there, you skipped one. Kate, I think you missed one, you went quick. Oh, from the first presentation who's the point of contact if we cannot utilize TDA listings in AACCS due to the permissions? Send me an email and I'll see if I can work with you guys to try to get that squared away. Next. Allen you want to take this one? Allen? Okay so the answer is, yes. We have been talking to the national people in iFAMS, it's, you know again it's a few years away. We, we're on their list and so, to see how we can transfer data from iFAMS into WinRMS. Paul at the RDCC has provided some information and will continue to work with them to make sure that in one way or another might not be called WinRMS but some, the systems are in place. Next question. Is that it, Kate? Can you list more one fund/FcP appropriation on IPA agreement? i.e., if an employee's working on multiple grant percentages.

Renee Chartrand: No.

Tony Laracuate: I'll let others speak but for my station we can do it. What we don't do is we don't allow it when it goes outside of the research appropriation. So, if it goes into, for example, QUERI money versus HSR&D money we don't allow that. We have two IPAs in place. But if it's Rehab R&D and HSR&D we allow it. And then when the invoices come in, we split the invoices into the appropriate obligations.

Renee Chartrand: Huh.

Tony Laracuate: Anybody else?

Erin Olson: That's how we handle it too. We split the invoices. You have the ability to split in IPPS you can split it right there, right then and there to the two different PO numbers.

Tony Laracuate: Did anybody else wanna chime in?

Renee Chartrand: This is Renee. I was told we can't do that, that I needed a separate IPA for each project.

Tony Laracuate: Yeah. So, I would definitely go back and say you know I'm going to split my projects up and put them into the doctor to use box and put, split the percentages out and so forth and make it clear. You can definitely do it.

Renee Chartrand: Thank you.

Tony Laracuate: Can you, next question. Kate? Do you use the same FCP for prior year and current year salaries? So, the way the FCPs work for salaries is that we maintain the FCP is just based on the budget fiscal year. So, when something hits, I think Erin was the one who said it that it hits, oh hitting current year unless there's something that goes back across the fiscal years. And then in FMS will hit in the prior year. So, you do have to manage it and you have to look out for it. So, I've had a lot of adjustments this year based on our transition to HR Smart and you know steps not being paid in, activated in time and so forth. And so, there's been a lot of retroactive stuff that has occurred this year. But in FMS it's all based on budget, fiscal year, ACC code. Anybody else want to add anything? Okay. Next question.

Kate: And I think this is going to be the last question.

Tony Laracuate: These are great questions everybody, thank you. Okay good. Correction. Can you list more than one FCP/fund on an IPA agreement? I think we just did that one. Oh, we, yeah, we just did that one. Our site has never fully, pull, okay. Yes. So, reach out to me or Kari Points, so our site has never been able to pull salary info into the RMS database, how can we get those two systems to talk? We have worked on some of these problems so reach out to myself or Kari Points in Iowa City and we will help you out. Is that the last question, Kate?

Kate: All right. And that is, yeah that is our last question. That's time for us. Thank you so much again, everyone for all of your questions.

Tony Laracuate: Yeah. So, Allen do you have anything you want to say at the end or I don't know if you're having microphone problems? So, listen everybody, thank you very much. I hope that this has been helpful. We definitely plan on having more sessions focusing, delving down into things like reimbursables in RMS and so forth. Again, if you're interested in RMS give me an email. Send me an email or Kari Points an email. And reach out. We talked about communication last week. Reach out to any of the panelists, reach out to Mr. Dunlow, reach out to me. And we will certainly try to help you out in any ways possible. Thank you very much. And everybody have a great afternoon.

[END OF AUDIO]