Continuity Planning

(March 29, 2018)

Text Transcript

Barbara Reynolds: Hi, good afternoon, this is Barbara Reynolds. Thank you for joining us today on our Program and Commission Continuity Planning webinar. I want to thank you guys for putting your locations on the map as you can see on the screen in front of you. We have folks joining on today from all over ... most of the country, which was very, very exciting.

I also see that a bunch of folks took the time to finish the poll or to complete the poll, asking you about your transition, your continuity, or transition to your organization. So thank you very much for doing that. We're going to transition now to the presentation. Hopefully the screen is being your friend, and you can see the title slide for today's session.

As I said, welcome you guys, this is a monthly webinar that our staff put on for our commission partners and our programs around the country. It's my pleasure to kick us off with a couple of things. First, is a technology check. We just want to make sure that the online, and the audio features are working for you correctly.

So first of all, welcome to Adobe Connect, this is our second time with State and National presenting a webinar with this technology. So it is a delightful experience on the presenter side. Hopefully, for you as well. Hopefully, you're enjoying the features. I want to make sure that you know, that today's presentation is being recorded for two reasons.

One, if you have any problems being recorded, now's a good time for you to sign off to log off. The other reasons so that you know this presentation will be posted on the Knowledge Network. So the speakers today on the audio, you'll be able to hear along with the visuals that you're seeing during today's presentation.

We are going to use the chat box feature a lot today. So you should have that on the left side of your screen, and we'll use that for a few things. First, we'll be asking you questions. You'll see a number of questions that pop up on the slides in front of you and we'll ask you to answer in the chat box.

And then we'll also keep the chat box open and moderated, or monitored rather, throughout the sessions so that you can type in questions as we go along or comments as we go along. I want to do a quick test now of the chat feature, to make sure that you have this, and it's working for you.

Also make sure that you guys are hearing me, so if you could just type a quick greeting into the chat for everyone, just a howdy, how's it going? Hey, what's up? Anything like that, greetings for me and I see it. Thank you. Thank you guys, lots of hellos coming in. I see a lot of greetings coming into the chat box.

Thank you. I really appreciate that validation of that you are hearing our voices, and that the chat box feature is working appropriately for you. All right, so again, just logistically, I want to give a little context for today's session within our overall AmeriCorps State and National CNCS, training and technical delivery plan.

So in general, these webinars are meant to give, to build core knowledge or provide best practices or lessons learned, on important grant or program management areas or activities. So we determine what those topics are based on feedback from you guys from the field. We also determine the topics based on our own staff observation or experiences.

We hope that these sessions give you a nice 60-70-minute break in your week to take a step back from the day to day demands that we all have in our jobs and really think about these bigger picture issues. So today's session is one in the series that will be providing throughout this calendar year.

You can see on the slide in front of you, there are a number of other topics that we'll be addressing in different ways via webinar this year. Today's of course is our Continuity Planning session. We'll be looking at evaluation and data quality management a couple of different ways, looking at some orientation webinars for new staff that programs new staff at commissions.

Looking at some of the basics of compliance with financial management, criminal history checks, so a pretty wide array of topics for this series. Again, as we said, hopefully to give you a chance to take a break and see what you can think about in terms of bigger picture items.

So aside from the howdies, I do see a lot of greetings from around the country over in the chat box. Thank you guys very much for doing that. We want to take a second now and learn a little bit more. So we have three poll questions that we're going to pose to you and I'll ask you just as each one comes up, if you don't mind making your selection, and we'll get a little bit more of a sense of who's in our audience today.

So hang on one second. I'm just going to change the view for you. So, if you could please answer the first question. Hopefully this is visible. Yep, I see some folks are making the selections. So just trying to get a sense of our audience in terms of your relationship to CNCS, so do you represent a commission?

Are you with a tribal program or planning grant recipient? Are you from a national or multi-state program? All right. See a bunch of folks making selections there. Thank you, yeah. I'm going to. Just pause here for a few seconds to give you all a chance to answer the poll question. All right.

Seeing the answers ticking in, we have a good mix I would say I'm from commission staff as well as their national program staff, you guys can see that. All right, so our next question is, we just want to get a sense of how long have you worked with CNCS? So are you relatively new in your position?

Have you been with the organization for more than 10 years? Just take a second and type in your answers to that. Great. Good to see a lot of answers, a lot of different folks coming in. I would say when we are designing our webinars are a lot of our training overall, but definitely the webinar series, we expect that we'll have this type of mixture, right?

That we'll have a combined audience of our commission colleagues as well as our programs stock colleagues, will see, as you guys can see on the screen in front of you, a mix of experienced levels from less than one year. It could be someone who is brand spanking new or someone who's been with the organization working with CNCS for more than 10 years.

So, great, thank you for that. All right, and then the last question, I want to get a sense of what your particular role is in the organization. So again, trying to get a sense of what it is that you individually do, what your job is, how long you've worked with CNCS, and then what types of organizations, what your relationship is with CNCS.

So take a second, if you don't mind, and give us this information. Wonderful, yes. I see a lot of folks typing in answers. You can see there's program roles, there's commission role, others are identified as well. Great, thank you. So again, we expect that they will see the mix of folks on the webinars and definitely I think your responses to our poll questions have validated that.

So hopefully at this point we have returned to the PowerPoint view and so you can see, just as I said for, for today's session, we really are talking to all of our colleagues, right? Our commission colleagues, our tribal program colleagues and our national and multi-state programs.

We look at continuity planning from a few different levels. Obviously the first level is your own continuity planning for your particular organization, whatever type of organization that may be. And then we also think this, this content and these concepts can be useful for you for those of you who are supporting your sub-grantees or your operating sites around the country as well.

So hopefully the content will be relevant in multiple levels. All right, and then my final comment, just again for some framing, we are looking at the ... something that no matter who we are, how long we've worked with CNCS, where we are physically in the country or what type of organization we represent, we know a universal truth in the AmeriCorps world, is that we have transition.

We live in a world, in a marrow world that is filled with transition of many different kinds. So that's really our focus for today and it's my pleasure to turn it over to my colleague Margaret Mattinson.

Margaret Mattinson: Hello. Good afternoon. This is Margaret Mattinson. I've lived in about 17 states in a few countries such as the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, Moldova. I've been onboard with CNCS in DC since 2005. And I've had single and multi-state programs in my portfolio and a few tribal programs. I've worked with really new programs and with seasoned staff.

And what I know for certain is that we can expect and prepare for staff changes. We just can't predict everything, but we can take concrete steps to ensure more seamless transitions.

Brittany Tonning: Greetings, this is Brittany Tonning. I've been with CNCS for just over a year now, and I've been through the very long transition process into CNCS, so it's still fresh in my mind. I've had the opportunity to support a variety of non-profit organizations, including AmeriCorps program, and have served at the Peace Corps.

This experience has given me the opportunity to learn a lot of great ways to onboard staff and volunteers and to also discover areas where organizations can benefit from a more established policies and procedures. And yes, if you're looking at that picture, that is a giraffe just over my shoulder.

Margaret Mattinson: So today we're focusing on an aspect of program management that acknowledges that staffing changes happen at every level. We want to help you to ensure that your programs are well prepared to deal with planned and unplanned transitions. Let's take a minute and imagine that you just won the lottery. The big one. You have cash rolling in the door for life.

Somebody else may be coming into your office to do your job soon. Is it ready? How could there be a seamless transition? We know that program and site staff change more frequently than is ideal, so we developed this workshop after a few years of seeing site turnover, at commissions and national directs, at rural and urban programs, health and education programs, veteran and new programs. Yes, at all of the programs. Staff turnover affects operations at all levels from site supervision to program leadership. This webinar is designed for all types of program and for new and seasoned staff, as Barbara said.

New staff can assess possible gaps in the transition information that they received and in their training, and seasoned staff will fund the material relevant to assess where they are with transition planning and can continue to work on their golden folder or their golden file. This is much more than having CNCS policy and procedures manuals.

The sessions also it's useful to know, we'll not address fundraising and program continuity as it relates to sustainability. That will be covered in part by an e-courses being developed by CNCS. We also know that everybody's really busy and this is an added element, but we believe that thinking about continuity planning, and continuity planning is a process that's worth fitting into your schedule because in the long run it will save more time than it will take.

So, I'll move to the agenda and that's going to include, I always like to know what's going to be coming at us. It's going to include an introduction of the program continuity and staff transition concepts and expectations as they relate to AmeriCorps program management, we'll have an overview of 10 key elements of effective program continuity planning, which are the foundation for our discussion.

We'll be hearing from one of your colleagues about how the commission approaches preparing for and dealing with staff transitions. We'll have a brief exercise and throughout this all we welcome input on best practices, observations and questions, and you can put those into the chat box. We've got three of us here, so one of us is always monitoring it. There should also be time for questions and short comments about best practices at the end, also in the chat box. So Brittany can you take us?

Brittany Tonning: I'm going to jump right into the 10 Elements of Continuity Planning. We have, you will see a list in front of you that includes aspects of basic management such as calendars and money and staff program management and it includes processes, integration of staff, apps and programs. And also data management such as performance measurement, processes, contacts and crucial external support such as your evaluation team and CNCS programs and grants officers.

We acknowledge and it's self-evident in nature that most of the items on this list are important and that none of us are perfect at it. Here at CNCS, we see these challenges all the time with grantees and within our own agency. We want to work together to set up a system so that we can focus our time on supporting AmeriCorps program members and communities and not spending time hunting for passwords or receipts for our financial reports.

These elements will provide the framework for the session. They are the essential elements or categories that we believe will need to be considered as part of the succession planning. And we acknowledge that these are also very flexible and adaptable to fit within your own program. Feel free to add or remove once you start to develop your own plan.

Next, we're going to look at these a little bit more in detail. So, that's going to stay on this slide. Here going through each of the elements ... I want to acknowledge there is a lot of content on this page and you don't have to write it all down or you don't have to absorb it all now because it is available for you later on.

But just kind of starting at the top, managing a timeline and calendar that incorporates CNCS organizational program and sub-grantee level timelines is the first thing we put on our list. Below that is funding, both record system for tracking funding types, amount, sources of program funding, spending status and budget management processes at your organization.

Third is Playbooks. Maintain and ensure written policies and procedures and all program management aspects and AmeriCorps requirements that are current and up to date.

Staff Engagement is next, develop a plan in which operational knowledge is shared by multiple staff at all levels.

Technology. Prepare information on what technology organizations uses for program management. Include troubleshooting content such as like the help desk for information.

Record Keeping. As always programs should strive to maintain complete and client records but ensure that new staff have adequate resources to learn and understand record keeping procedures and requirements.

Performance measurement and reporting. Prepare clear guidance on performance measurement and data collection processes and the instruments that you use. There's a lot of that can be covered under this next point of member management and support. Some of the examples include, processes for recruitment, enrollment and exit deadlines, member onboarding, timekeeping, pending grievances, alumni engagement, I can go on, there's a lot there.

Contacts and relationships. So develop a system or list to describe the contacts and functions that key stakeholders such as board members, funders, media contacts. Again, I can keep going with this. Resources. Outlines the external support available to your program during a transition.

I hope, again, I've gone through all of this and I hope it provides a little bit more of a clear outline of the continuity essential elements that we believe need to be considered while developing a succession plan. I'd like to reemphasize that you can adjust these elements based on your own organization's need and structure.

Margaret Mattinson: So next we're going to go through three of the 10 elements and we're starting with my favorite. My favorite is the timeline and the calendar. It functions like a pivot around which all the other elements revolve. It's critical to have a fairly detailed operational calendar for the entire year that lists key due dates.

And even when you know that those dates will change. Transitioning staff will need to have a sense of what's on the horizon to determine required activities for the first week, the first month, three months, six months after the start. The operational calendar and timeline should include for CNCS deadlines, the NOFO and application deadline, the GPR, the grantee progress reports.

And it's useful to know that not all grants have the same reporting schedule. You've got the federal financial reporting, grantee meetings, regional meetings, the symposium in September. You wouldn't want to miss that. You have days of service. There are probably major times during the year to think about hosting AmeriCorps activities, community outreach, recruiting MLK day, AmeriCorps week and that kind of thing, but this is not just about what CNCS requires.

We're really looking at the local level and we think that there are organizational deadlines that your predecessor will need to know as well. When are the staff meetings? When is the next board meeting? When are check in calls with your CNCS as program officer? When are these scheduled calls and meetings with the sub grantees or with the sub sites?

So then there are program deadlines, which are pretty critical as well. The enrollment period for members. When are the members expected to exit so you can make that 30-day window? Who are the outliers that will need to have a different exit date? When will the performance measure be generated, collected, verified, corrected and tabulated, and then sent to us as part of that GPR?

When is your big donor fundraiser or grant service or your board retreat? And you may want to explore the critical elements of sub-grantee calendars that know of non-CNCS activities that requires staff time during the year, like when are schools on vacation? Or when will the spring break volunteers be appearing?

Or when would you want to have that recruiting fair? And when is the governor's award program expected? So these are elements of the calendar. We're going to shift it next to a question and a feeling of input and our question is, "What programs or strategies are you using to manage and to track your calendars?"

What maybe did I leave out? What might somebody else might want to know about? So strategies and programs to manage and track your calendars. Certainly, one of the strategies would be walking back from deadlines to create pre-deadline deadlines.

Brittany Tonning: There are a couple of people typing. So hopefully we'll get some feedback here in a second.

Margaret Mattinson: And I know that some programs have several massive whiteboards where they put everything so that the whole room can see it an all one fell swoop.

Brittany Tonning: Google calendars, scheduling work time. The paper calendar, Barbara said works very well.

Barbara Reynolds: I meant whiteboard, also kind of the whiteboard.

Margaret Mattinson: Absolutely. Let's go on to… is this, we're good? Let's go on to our next element.

Brittany Tonning: So our next topic that we wanted to cover a little bit more in-depth was funding. Our second element, it really follows the money, making sure that specifics related to funding are available to multiple key staff. And here are some of those important things to consider. Number and types of grants, one thing really that is important on here is to make sure you're including your application IDs.

What is your funding level? For the next bullet point. Match requirements, it is important to understand the match requirement process from CNCS and your particular grant and your organization's policies. There's a lot of things to consider when looking at match. Sources, where is the source coming from? Who are the possible donors and who has supported the program in the past?

How does this impact your program portfolio as a whole? Know your budget period and yearly check points. Your budgeted versus actual, what is your organization's process and how often do you check on draw-downs or the status of the grant spending? Finance staff, who does the processing? What is your operational or states turnaround time?

And then finally, local criteria, where do you keep passive information? When are major fundraisers in the area? There's a lot that can be gathered within here that really relates to the funding process. On the next slide, we're going to have another question for you, just to kind of get your feedback from the field.

So please provide some additional examples of physical elements you might want to record or to keep track of for future staff. And you can go in and put some of that in the chat box just like you did the last one. We got a couple of people typing.

Barbara Reynolds: Yes, there a bunch of good comments made about the calendars by the way as you're going through. Good stuff there, yes. A lot of good feedback.

Brittany Tonning: As we're kind of waiting, so I see a payroll process. Thank you, Erin. Again, I think I mentioned that the grant officer, who was your grant officer? What is their contact information? Thank you, Stacy, for staff timesheets. That is very important. One of the things that I know that we've talked about within my own portfolios, unexpended funding trends.

How does that change throughout each year as we're going on? Just a couple of people, template spreadsheets for budgeting and different kinds of projects. Thank you Brian. Yes, I think we've got some good feedback and we'll continue. You can keep putting those things in that chat box, but we'll go ahead and move on to the next topic.

Margaret Mattinson: Our third element for today is Playbooks. It's a broad element, but a really most successful tool for transitions. We're using sports terminology as playbooks to refer to written guidance and policies and procedures that you have or should have in place to guide your AmeriCorps program management.

As you may have experienced when we came out for monitoring or a technical assistance visit, we've asked to see written policies and procedures to learn about your program management practices. In some cases, we found that how to do things only exist in people's minds and isn't written down anywhere.

And in other cases, required processes are documented, but locally specific notes are not recorded, so your guidance also needs to be easy to navigate and find. People actually need to know where it is or it's like it's not there, and you might consider including some selected board members or staff from another department in this process so people know that you have it and where it is.

At CNCS, we have a transition document that lists critical information for onboarding new CNCS stuff. What you have can be printed as pages in a binder or it can be files in an electric folder. It can be structured based on the 10 elements of program continuity that we highlighted, or it could be some other model.

It can include a summary of current issues that the program's dealing with or that are pending. You would have a list of current audits or past audits, OIG issues and site visits, contact information as Brittany mentioned for program stakeholders, links and instructions and passwords to various technology platforms.

So even while you do this at headquarters or at the commission, it's a best, best, best practice to ask everyone that you're working with to prepare these kinds of documents as well. So we shift to the question, I'm kind of curious to see what kind of playbooks do your programs develop for their own continuity planning?

So take a minute to provide the answer in the chat box. You may know a perspective that's critical only to your program model, but that might work for someone else as well, might related to media or political or school requirements or celebrations or certifications.

Barbara Reynolds: There are a few folks typing in Margaret.

Margaret Mattinson: Oh good.

Brittany Tonning: So Christina mentioned a file of FAQs. That's great. How to use eGrants, very important. We all have that saved in our computers. CHC procedures and policies, OnCorps time sheets procedures, GPR procedures. Like the GPR are kind of popping up a little bit.

Margaret Mattinson: I wonder why.

Brittany Tonning: Thank you.

Margaret Mattinson: We could also have legal processes or school structures, with the superintendent, who to contact on the base if you're working with veterans, alumni criteria.

Barbara Reynolds: Great.

Margaret Mattinson: Or even how to store your documents, this is good. People can keep typing.

Brittany Tonning: Great, we're going to go ahead and move the slides forward. I've had the opportunity to learn myself from people in my portfolio about best practices for staff transition planning and lessons learned. And so I'm very happy to introduce Marie Humenik, from New Jersey. She's going to be speaking with us a little bit about some of the things that she has learned.

She's going to be sharing best practices and lessons learned through experiences with staff transition planning. As Marie is presenting, I want you to please think about any questions that you may have. Again, you guys have been using the chat box already, so that's great. We encourage you to continue to use that chat box if you have any questions throughout Marie's presentation.

Or to hold them to the end of the presentation as well. So, welcome Marie. Marieis a program officer for the New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service. Marie has spearheaded initiative over the past year to strengthen the commission's ability to support program within the state.

She has a diverse background in both the private and nonprofit sectors. While pursuing her bachelor's degree in business administration at Rutgers University, she left her career in Campbell's Soup Company, and then entered the nonprofit sector in 2010, where she has completed her role as an associate director for the volunteer services during the Papal visit to Philadelphia before she became the program officer at the New Jersey Department of State in 2015. So welcome Marie. I'm going to let you take over.

Marie Humenik: Okay, thank you Brittany, and good afternoon everyone. I'll be talking a little bit, like Brittany said, about continuity planning, but specifically as it relates to program staff transition, but first, let me tell you a little bit about our state, okay? So you probably already know that New Jersey is one of only two states, the other one is Oregon, in the country that provide full service gas stations.

We don't pump gas in the state of New Jersey, we’re very happy about that. We're very happy about that. We also have the most diners in the world. They're open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and we have the most shopping malls in one area with seven inches, 25-mile square radius.

We're most proud and this is really important that President Bill Clinton swore in the first AmeriCorps members at Rutgers University, my alma mater in New Brunswick back in 1994. We're really proud of that and that's very relevant to our conversation. Okay, with that, let's look at the actual stats in New Jersey for national service.

More than 6,200 people of all ages and backgrounds are helping to meet local needs and surveying more than actually 100 locations. Over $20 million have been contributed from CNCS and other local funding. Over the years members have earned over 76 million in education awards.

This year because over half of our portfolio is led by either a new program manager or a brand new program, we are working really hard to ensure consistency. We recognize that there is a steep AmeriCorps learning curve and truly believe that teamwork makes the dream work. Here are some things that we have put into place.

In response to this, you know, large program staff transition, our commission took these three different approaches that I'll review. First, we created a mentor-mentee partnership, then we developed an in-person orientation plan and lastly we raised the bar with collaboration and communication.

In order to facilitate peer learning, foster team-building and ensure compliance, we created a mentor-mentee partnership. In this partnership, a new program manager is paired with a mentor who is an experienced program manager. Now we do provide information and expectations for both the mentor and the mentee.

After creating and administering surveys though we learned that the structure was essential to the growth and then to have it mutually beneficial for this partnership. We offered some guidelines and in the guidelines included the frequency and duration of the interactions as well as a sample agenda.

We wanted to deliver some structure and begin the sharing of information during these conference calls. At the end of the year, each mentor receives a personalized framed certificate of appreciation from our state commissions signed by our executive director. We have received very positive feedback from this union of the new and experienced program managers.

Next, to minimize the learning curve and to ensure that all new program staff are familiar with everything related to AmeriCorps, we know there's a lot. We recently created an in-person orientation plan. Now in this plan, we will meet with new program staff individually to review all key aspects of AmeriCorps from law conversions to prohibited activities and everything in between.

We'll provide an overview of the three data systems that they will be working in, which included eGrants. We all agreed that that was really critical, sage and then my service log or the two other systems at least specific to New Jersey.

Our goal is to make all these new staff and programs feel comfortable and confident with the tasks in each of these systems.

This past year we also created a comprehensive program manager handbook. That'll be explained and reviewed too during these orientations. The handbook includes things like the AmeriCorps rules and regulations, terms and conditions, as well as the important fiscal policies and the procedures.

This handbook will be given to them of course, and it will be their takeaway resource. At the end of this in-person orientation, we'll ask them actually to sign and acknowledge that we've reviewed the information and that they agree to reach out to a point person in each topic area and or their mentor when they have questions or concerns going forward.

In this way, we feel that though they will commit to learning and growing in our large world of AmeriCorps. Our last area of support for new program staff is the creation of a collaborative environment with added communication. A few examples of this include, the yearly solicitation of three to five best practices or lessons learned from the staff of each sub-grantee.

Then we receive them all from the program staff, we aggregate them and then the results ... we aggregate them actually based on categories such as member management. And then these helpful tips are shared with the entire portfolio. Every week we typically on a Friday, we also communicate with our sub-grantees via email.

We share important reminders such as progress report or application deadlines. We also provide, either a link to electronic course, like prohibited activities, and then we encourage them, believe it or not, with inspirational quotes like every mountain ... this is one of my favorites. Every mountain top is within reach if you just keep climbing.

Next, our commission created a team, it's called the recruitment and retention team and it's a collaborative effort. It's between the commission and the program staff. The purpose of creating this team is to address the concerns in this area and we all know that, that's been a challenge over the years.

The creation of this team, although has led to the development of a comprehensive recruitment tool that includes strategies, action items, and deadlines, as well as the addition of ... I'm really proud of this ... five new colleges in New Jersey who are committed to providing an education match to our AmeriCorps members.

We're still working on getting these colleges listed on the website, but we're really excited about this addition for our members. In addition to our monthly group program manager conference calls, every month we have program manager conference calls addressing different topics.

This year we just began conducting monthly one-on-one conference calls with each individual program. We have forums and during the calls, we discuss challenges, successes. We also answer their questions and review key AmeriCorps topics like for example, the 30-day rule. These conference calls really have provided a fantastic opportunity for information sharing and to bridge the gap in communication with our programs.

In summary, we pretty much responded to the challenge of a large, really large turnover in program staff. We remediated the risk to the creation of the mentor-mentee partnership, the in-person orientation. We always look to continue to have a collaborative environment and increase our communication back and forth.

Moving forward, our goal is always 100% compliance both for the members and the sub-grantees. We've just actually established a compliance unit within our commission. This unit will focus on compliance-related issues including like the rules and regs and monitoring and criminal history checks. We're really excited about what that's going to produce for us. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have?

I also did provide my contact information for any follow-up questions if you'd like to reach out to me directly.

Brittany Tonning: Thank you. Marie, we had a couple of questions in our chat box, a couple of requests for sharing your program management handbook and the acknowledgment and I think the next slide contains Marie's contact information, so if you would like to email and directly ask for that. We had an additional question from Christina asking how long does the in-person orientation take?

Marie Humenik: Well, we're just working through that now. We anticipate at least one to two days. Yes, but we're just implementing that now so that's to be determined. We may need to adjust it, but we're expecting it to be at least a day or two.

Brittany Tonning: Great. Thank you very much. There's a couple of people that have asked for sharing those resources-

Marie Humenik: I'd be happy to share with them.

Brittany Tonning: Your contact information is right there on the screen, feel free to email her to ask any further questions. And I really appreciate the questions in the box. I also want to thank you, Marie, for taking the time to share what you're doing in New Jersey to ensure continuity with your programs.

We're going to be following your presentation with some activities to bring this whole kind of webinar together. Continue if you have any questions, continue to be in the chat box, but we're going to go ahead and move forward with our case studies.

Marie Humenik: All right, thank you.

Brittany Tonning: Thank you.

Marie Humenik: Bye.

Brittany Tonning: All right, on your screen, we're going to do three case studies and it's just a quick practice with some activities. I'm going to jump right in. You've listened to the presentation about the elements of continuity planning and the examples from the New Jersey Commission. We want to practice what we've learned.

We prepared three case studies, each of them we'll read to you out loud. Each of these case studies will focus on one element where continuity planning would've made a difference. Your task is going to be to pick at least one element that was needed, such as technology or stakeholders and write your answer in the chat box.

Sorry, this is actually going to be under a poll. We've added that in and now with Adobe Connect. There'll be a poll pop up on your screen as you've done earlier in the presentation. For your convenience, we're going to display all 10 elements. If you don't remember from earlier, we'll have a little cheat sheet for you and you can easily reference them as you decide, which element to pick. All right, I'm going to pass it over to Margaret to begin.

Margaret Mattinson: Okay, here we go, Max, is an AmeriCorps member and he was serving with Greenleaf organization. He recently contacted Greenleaf saying that he was suspended, but he'd like to come back and resume his AmeriCorps service. Usually, member reinstatement at Greenleaf is handled by Julie but Julie is on maternity leave, so Julie's colleagues have stepped in to help.

They checked Max's files, but they didn't find any information there and Julie's emails are not accessible. Without knowing the details of Max's suspension, they don't know how to proceed. Which one of these 10 elements was not adequately addressed by the Greenleaf organization?

Brittany Tonning: We're working on getting the poll up for you so there should be an option to pick. There you go.

Margaret Mattinson: We are doing, all right?

Brittany Tonning: Yes, all right.

Margaret Mattinson: Well, this is great. It seems that there are quite a few people that selected record keeping, member management is also appropriate. Good choices. Let's look at scenario two.

Brittany Tonning: All right, moving on to case study two. After a long and difficult search for the backup documentation and Max's file, staff members at Greenleaf were finally able to find the necessary paperwork. Yay. Now Max is ready to be reinstated. However, no one at Greenleaf knows how to do it.

Our second poll question, which of the 10 elements was not adequately addressed by the organization, and the poll should pop up. I'll give you a couple of seconds to submit your answers here.

Margaret Mattinson: There goes the range.

Brittany Tonning: Awesome. You guys are hitting almost everything that we wanted to cover. Member management is what we're looking at as far as how to reinstate this member. Also, it can be covered under playbooks and staff engagement so that the staff will know what they're looking at. We're going to go onto question number three.

Margaret Mattinson: Case study three. This is our last case study. Adam is the executive director of the commission that gave Greenleaf the grant. After witnessing a challenge with trying to reinstate Max, Adam worked hard to ensure, record keeping, and member management at Greenleaf was done at the highest professional level.

He paid attention to every detail and felt very proud of his involvement in the improvements that the organization had made. Adam decided to take a two-week vacation. When he came back, he was shocked to find out that one of the important CNCS deadlines had passed. Which one of the 10 elements was not adequately addressed in this case?

Brittany Tonning: Here we go. Now the poll is open to see if we have any questions there?

Margaret Mattinson: Yes, indeed my favorite element.

Brittany Tonning: It looks like it is also a lot of other people favorite.

Margaret Mattinson: Yes, this one's a little bit tricky as there are many things at play here. We've picked a scenario to emphasize the fact that many of the elements are interrelated. Brittany mentioned that organization's success depends on pursuing a comprehensive approach to the continuity planning.

Both the commission and the sub-grantees and the programs and everybody has a responsibility to watch deadlines, have good record keeping systems, clear processes, engaged staff members for programmatic and fiscal finesse. These cases are self-evidence for professionals in our field and hopefully, the discussion gives you some ideas on what you might want to work on it on first at your organizations and we have a few more tools.

Brittany Tonning: Great, now how to apply to what we've been chatting about. Take the time to assess your own organization. How ready are you for a significant transition? Use these 10 elements that we've discussed to prioritize your development needs. Start to think about when you can address these needs.

You can begin to gather resources and create your own continuity plan during your next staff retreat while onboarding your new employee. In the beginning, we saw that there was a lot of new employees listening in, now might be a great time to start to think about that. Also maybe create a standing agenda item during your monthly staff meetings to address this as we go through because as you can see, it can be quite heavy, to address some of these elements.

Margaret Mattinson: One of the documents that we have attached is a continuity planning self-assessments. This allows for the assessment of your organization's readiness for possible staff transitions and allows you to make concrete steps or plan concrete steps to be more prepared in light of the ten elements.

It can be done from the perspective of your specific role within your organization and that can be used as a group to assess continuity, readiness of multiple roles.

Brittany Tonning: For continuity planning checklist and I do want to mention these are available on the network. Someone just asked, how do you print these slides? These documents will be available for you in more than just slide form so just to let you know that.

Looking at the continuity planning checklists, this might help as you're developing your plan for what to do to ensure successful transitions. You can edit this document to include specific steps, deliverables, timelines, and assign people to those specific roles.

Margaret Mattinson: Another planning, not quite checklists that might be useful for you is the 2017 checklist for new AmeriCorps programs and program stuff, things you need to do and people you need to meet when you're starting your new job. We have this, I think the link is going into the chat and we also have the link in the notes and it will also be attached.

This is really great for assessing CMCS playbooks. Make sure that if you're using this at any time, and especially if you're using it past 2018, that you have the latest updated version of any document that we might have here because things do indeed change.

Brittany Tonning: Again, Barbara and I are on top of it and when we both included some links in that top box for you moving forward. Next slide. We want to look at a transition summary outlines. This transition summary is an example of all the categories of information that an organization may choose to provide in a transition document.

It serves as starting point to develop and formalize your transition process. The document is intentionally broad in nature and should be tailored by type, size, and complexity of each organization. We recognized at the beginning, there was a lot of different people from commissions, from national direct, from tribal grantees.

We know that you're all different and might need to create something that looks different from each other. The main takeaway from this resource is the need for each grantee to have a transition summary to serve as a roadmap for new staff to navigate in their roles and responsibilities. Feel free to check into their program officer for some specific examples as well.

Margaret Mattinson: Before we wrap up our webinar, we want to share with you a couple of basic useful resources that are available on the CNCS website. One is www.nationalservice.gov. Two, are your grant terms and conditions, managing AmeriCorps grants? If you have not looked at this, let me recommend that.

Then you have the National Service Knowledge Network, which is vast, but if you start looking at it piece by piece, you can map your way through it and find some extremely useful tools there.

Brittany Tonning: Great, I want us to take a second to see if there are any questions or comments that you had. Again, if we didn't address anything from Marie's presentation, feel free to ask again now. I don't see anything coming in the chat box, I'm going to turn it on over to Barbara.

Barbara Reynolds: Yes, this is Barbara, as folks are thinking about and getting ready to type in your questions and comments. I just wanted to make a comment. It looked to me a couple of slides ago, like the graph may have been, somehow convoluted in the transition from our PowerPoint to Adobe Connect.

I just wanted to let you guys know verbally, I think we've tried it in the chat a couple times. The slides as well as those ... the tools that Margaret and Brittany were just talking with you or showing to you the checklist, the transition summary.

There should be a link in front of you on your screen, a web link that'll take you to the place on the knowledge network where all of these things live. You should be able to go to that link right now and find the PowerPoint slides and hopefully, their pristine, non-corrupt at state and that's how they look at least on the fence.

Then also the tools, the original word documents or those planning documents that Margaret and Brittany covered as well as pdfs of those. I just wanted to draw your attention to that in case visually you also saw something that looks a little bit wonky a couple slides ago.

Brittany Tonning: I realized that there was a question earlier in the presentation that I took note of and so now's a great time to address that. There was a question about suggestions for writing procedures that change often. Obviously, there is a lot of changes in the field that was from CNCS, from your local, states changes or government changes.

One of the things that we discussed silently here, was making sure to date documents, I know that's, something that we're working on here at since so that you know how long ago was this procedure or this policy written, and does it need to be re-looked and definitely making sure to keep dates.

Margaret Mattinson: You can also put a highlight of things that tend to change so that people know this may be something that has changed. When I saw someone ask about what is GPR, I thought to myself, it would also be very useful to have an acronym list because we all talk in acronyms and I know at your level as well you use acronyms.

Then I had another thought related to Marie's presentation that with the 10 elements and compliance visits, you could actually add a continuity element each month and then check on that or focus on that as you go through the year. It wouldn't be the whole range that you had to work on maybe at a conference or something like that.

Barbara Reynolds: Yes, this is Barbara. I just wanted to chime in on this question as well. I worked before coming to the corporation. I worked at a commission and before that, I was at an AmeriCorps program. One of the things that we did at both of those organizations would have quarterly updates on our playbooks and our calendars.

It's kind of the perfect marriage of Margaret's favorite element, which is calendar and timeline and one of my favorite elements, which is the playbook. We each of our jobs so the director, the program officer at the Commission, the program manager, the program, the outreach manager at our program.

We each had a book, a guidebook that was our job in its entirety. And because we're old school was actually a paper book, but we had the different elements of it chunked out on our share drive.

Every quarter for our own jobs, we will update particular parts of those books. It became over a couple of years, as Margaret said, there were certain things that really did change every single quarter and there were some parts of our job books that didn't change from year to year.

I think that that's, whether it's electronic or whether it's old school, hard copy, setting on your calendar, making it a date to look at your things, that's one way to deal with it because you can't change stuff constantly. If you know it's going to be happening that's quarterly or every six months.

Brittany Tonning: Also, we would just like to reinforce as a new employee of CNCS so the acronym list I reference I think and still referencing and I'm over a year in this position is very, very important for that new incoming staff. I haven't seen any questions come in that chat box, I'm going to go and turn it over, but we can always address more if they come in.

Barbara Reynolds: Thank you, this Barbra [inaudible 00:54:37] I looked away. I'm going to start to transition to closing up our session for today. I see Tara has typed in always use dates on the bottom of policies. Thank you for that. I think also something we used to do, I don't know if this is necessarily as relevant.

We would also put the locations in the footers of documents, for things that were really critical. So, that's another just visual cue that's helpful for folks. We are going to ask you for some feedback on today's session. We just have four short questions, should take very little time.

It's actually a live survey, so it's not going to be in the whole format that we've been using. There should be a link that you see a web link on your screen. You'll see a sentence that just says submit your webinar or feedback. If you guys don't mind, take a minute or two just to give us that.

That would be super helpful as we move forward with the remainder of our series for this year. As I said when we started, we'll have the recording for today and that's synced with the visuals posted on the knowledge network in about a week, week and a half I would say. But in the meantime, while we're waiting for that synced recording, you can access, as I said, the slides, the worksheets, et cetera already on the knowledge network as well and hopefully that link is visible to you on your screen to access the continuity planning documents.

Just want to do a plug for our next session. This is actually for our state services commission colleagues. We're going to talk with you about how to review data plans on April 26. Mark your calendar, of course, we'll be promoting that and remind you about that as we get into April.

Finally, I just wanted to thank you guys very much for your time today. Thank Margaret, Brittney, Marie for sharing all of your wisdom. Again, I hope you were able to step away from your day to day crush, and just think a little bit broadly about sustaining and planning for continuity of your operations and your staff.

It's been a pleasure to work with you today. Thank you so much. We're going to stop the recording. We will leave the Adobe Connect up though if you have comments or questions for a few minutes. As I said, please, please take a minute to submit your feedback on today's session. Thank you so much.