CURTIS: Okay. I'm going to go ahead and get started here. I apologize for the delay. Welcome to today’s session, Submitting the End-of-Year GPR and Final Grantee GPR. Today’s session will be recorded. Please disconnect at this time if you don’t wish to be recorded. This webinar is one in a series of presentations designed for new AmeriCorps program staff to provide guidance on AmeriCorps program requirements, best practices and resources available to support program development.

Today’s presentation is being recorded and will be posted on the Knowledge Network. Please feel free to use the chat box during the presentation to comment or ask questions. Let’s go ahead now and test the chat feature. Please type a short hello to your colleagues and let me know you can hear me okay. Great, great, great. Thank you for confirming you can hear me. I'm glad to know I’m not talking to myself.

Alright. Thank you again. The purpose of today’s webinar and all of my webinars in general the 2018 AmeriCorps Staff Development Series is designed to build knowledge in core program and grant management areas to support strong service across the network.
The webinars are intended to give commission and program staff a break from the day-to-day demands of grant management and focus on broader, longer term issues.

These are the webinars scheduled for 2018. After today’s session we’ll return to look at financial management in November and then finish out our year with a webinar on data quality monitoring.

Today’s session is designed for State Service Commission, national/multi-state program and tribal problem staff who are new to their jobs and/or are directly involved in preparing and submitting Grantee Progress Reports or GPRs.

Our goal today is to review with you the following areas. The components of the 2017 end of year grantee progress report, discussion of changes from last year, run through program design and data reporting scenarios, cover resources available to you if you need information or assistance and provide time for questions and answers at the end of the session.
Today’s webinar will be brought to you by me, Curtis Cannon and my fellow program officer here at AmeriCorps State and National, Jamie Welch. We’re very excited to be talking to you today.

So why have changes been made and what GPRs are affected? Periodically CSCS, GRP instructions must be reapproved by the Office of Management and Budget or OBM. CSCS takes this opportunity to review GPR questions and evaluate whether the data we request are still useful and relevant. This process includes getting input from ASN staff and inviting comment from the field.

We then incorporate this feedback into revised GPRs. Revisions were made to the 2017 instructions for multiple GPRs, including the midyear, end of year and final GPRs for state and national as well as planning grant GPRs. For commissions revisions were also made to the Commission Investment Fund, Volunteer Generation Fund and Commission Support Grant GPRs for the current year. I’d also like to note that current year GPR instructions for all grant types are now posted on the GPR landing page, on the CNCS website. We’ll share that link later.
The GPR timeline. End of year GPR reflects the reporting period and activities from the beginning of your 2017 grant award through the end of the grant year or September 30th, 2018, whichever date is sooner. GPR is cumulative for the reporting period. GPR’s due October 31st, 2018. If you cannot meet the submission deadline you must request an extension from your PO or Program Officer before the due date.

The End-of-Year GPR has four sections that we’ll cover today. Demographics, Performance Indicators, Performance Measures and Narratives, which are new to 2017. We will walk through the End-of-year GPR on the next few slides. Also please be sure to spend some time if you haven’t already, to review the new instructions.

Again you can find the 2017 End-of-Year GPR instructions on the GPR Landing Page, on the Nationalservice.gov website. There will be a link to this page again at the end of the session. Please, please, please do not wait until a few weeks before reporting the data to review the instructions. If you have questions, reach out to your Program Officer.
A few logistics. Here you’ll see a screen shot of the end-of-year GPR. This is the general information page that you will be directed to when you open your GPR. At the top you will see the four key tabs of the end-of-year GPR.

The Demographics tab captures various indicators CNCS is interested in, such as the number of individuals applying for AmeriCorps positions, volunteers generated, and other demographic information. Performance Indicators tab shows enrollment, retention, 30-day enrollment and 30-day exit rates for the 2017/2018 program year to date. Performance Measures tab contains a chart showing each output and outcome for the performance measure. In the Narratives tab is where National Directs and Commissions will respond to provided narrative props.

I’d like to note a few specific differences, particularly for State Commission reporting requirements. Commissions complete one progress report for each of their prime grants. So that’s competitive cost reimbursement, competitive fixed, competitive EAP, school turnaround, formula cost
reimbursement, formula fixed, or EAP awards providing information as follows. In each prime grant the grantee reports on performance measurement data for that prime grant. State Commissions report on narratives for all grants except school turnaround in the formula cost reimbursement prime GPR.

And for all grantees a word on data quality. This is very important. Data submitted in the products report must one, be valid, i.e., accurately aligned with the perform measure instructions, approved program design and grant application, and, two, must be verifiable, i.e., be able to demonstrate the data are accurate.

Source documentation that supports the reported results must be maintained as grant records. And another reminder Open Amendments. Open Amendments may interfere with data entry in the GPR. If you have amendments currently in process please works with your PO or GO to complete or withdraw them before you begin entering data for your GPR. Also it is best to avoid initiating any new amendments while you are entering data for this GPR. Amendments awarded during the GPR data entry process may result in the need to be re-
entered and all the data re-entered from scratch. You
don’t want to do that.

Feedback and Clarification. For each tab where data
are entered your CNCS Program Officer reviews data and
determines whether clarification is necessary. If
clarification is required the PO checks the
clarification required box on each tab that requires
clarification and returns the GPR to you for rework.
The following text fields for feedback and
clarification appear on all tabs where data are
entered.

PO Feedback. This may contain feedback from the CNCS
PO. But is not always filled out. Grantees are not
required to provide responses to this feedback.

PO Clarification Items. This contains clarification
items from your Program Officer. Grantees are
required to respond to clarification items.

Grantee Clarification. You will use this text field
to enter your responses to the clarification items
that appear in the PO Clarification Items field. The
PO will provide a due date for clarification
responses. After responding to all clarification items you will return the report to CNCS. If the GPR does not require clarification or once all clarification items have been satisfactorily addressed, the PO will mark the GPR status as reviewed. You will then receive email notification and can review any feedback provided in the GPR.

On the Demographics tab you’ll see there are no new indicators that were created. However, you should include prior year data not reported on the previous end-of-year GPR. You also must explain which data corresponds to which program year. You will do this in the Grantee Narrative text box for the Demographics tab. When completing this section, please refer to the Demographic definitions in the GPR Supplemental Guidance that was given with the instructions.

Now here’s one exception to the rule of reporting prior year numbers in the actual fields on the current GPR. If the prior year numbers were from a different legal grant, i.e., the previous three-year grant cycle, in that case the prior year numbers should be reported as part of the Actuals in the Final GPR and not on the next midyear end-of-year GPRs.
On the Performance Indicators tab as you all know the retention rate was changed at 85 percent. The column that reads meet CNCS expectations will be based on this new threshold. Now retention rates below 85 percent will require an explanation.

For Enrollment Rate data any rate below 100 percent is assessed as does not meet CNCS expectations and will also require an explanation. Commissions for Formula Subs an explanation is not required for each sub-grantee, rather the Commission is required to use the Grantee Narrative tab to describe its efforts to improve portfolio retention and enrollment rates. Also as an FYI the Performance Indicator Data is reflected of the first time the tab is open and does not refresh when reopened.

Moving onto the Performance Measures tab. There’s been a change made to what is reportable this year. Now you can include any previous unreported performance measure data in the actual fields themselves, as long as it corresponds to the same three-year grant cycle. This is true even if the prior year data were already reported in the midyear GPR.
Like the Demographics tab before it, there’s one exception to the rule of reporting prior year numbers in the actual fields on the current GPR. Again if the prior year numbers were from a different legal grant previous GPR grant being an example, in that case the prior year numbers should be reported as part of the actual field in the GPR and not the next midyear end-of-year GPRs.

An explanation is required for any output or outcome measure for which one or more of the following is true. The actual is lower than the target value, the actual greatly exceeds the target value, specifically it exceeds by 400 percent or more is what we’re looking for. Program activities and/or data collection are still ongoing for this measure, even if targets have already been met and/or data from the previous grant year that were not reported on the previously end-of-year GPR have been included in the reported actual.

It must be clear in the explanation that no data were double counted and that all data are directly attributable to program activities. To talk a bit
more about prior year data and specifically lower target value if you include performance measurement data from the previous year that were not reported in the prior year, the prior end-of-year GPR, i.e., noted as ongoing on the prior report, due to continuing program activities or data collection it may appear that targets for the current year were met when they actually were not. Explanations should be provided for any output or outcome where the actual value for the current grant year is lower than the target value.

And finally changes to the narratives. The narratives prompts have been revised for the 2017 end-of-year GPR. The analysis of Impact, Member Experience and Impact Snapshots Narrative, narrative prompts have been removed and there are now new narratives required on data quality, performance management and TTA and monitoring.

To further discuss these changes I’d now like to hand the presentation over to my colleague Jamie Welch.

Thank you.

JAMIE: Thanks, Curtis and good afternoon everyone. So I'm going to take us over to the new narrative prompts that we have for the end-of-year GPR. But before I do
that I do want to share a small caveat. So for you, for those that may have already opened up your GPR maybe weeks ago, you may have noticed or when you go to open your end-of-year GPR you may notice that for the narrative section the old GPR narrative prompts are there. We were alerted to a configuration issue with the end-of-year GPR.

We believe that we resolved that, but if for some reason when you go into your end-of-year GPR and you’re about to complete your Narratives tab and you’re like hey, these are last year’s, this is old narrative prompt information, reach out to your Program Office asap. You might even want to take a look at this before you enter any GPR data, because I believe the resolution for this is deleting the GPR and opening up a new one.

So it’s probably most advisable before you even begin entering GPR data. It’s just to check that Narrative tab to make sure it configured correctly. And again if it has not, reach out to your Program Officer. And that would go for anything in the GPR. If for some reason the Demographics tab was incorrect or acting
wonky, go ahead and reach out to your PO and they’ll sort of guide you through that process.

I also want to mention that the Narrative section does have a word limit to 1500 words. So if you need some extra space, if you have a solution for that but just keep that in mind. And you also as you’re clicking through the narrative box it’s always handy to click save for those who may be new to GPR.

Sometimes egrants will time out on you and all that wonderful information that you just put into your GPR disappears. So I encourage you to save often, especially if you’re in there typing some narratives and you’re really into it, I know you don’t want to lose all that work that you just entered. So save often and be cognizant of that 1500 word limit.

You’ll notice that when you save, if you scroll down to the end of the narrative you’ll see right away if you exceeded the 1500 word limit, because your sentence will just drop off at that 1500 or 1500 and one word. So that is a good way to test yourself to see if you’ve actually exceeded the word limits.
Well, so let’s talk about some of the new narrative prompts that we had. As Curtis mentioned data quality, which should be no surprise to the folks on the phone, that we’ve added a narrative prompt around this. This is required for everyone to complete. And here of course the focus is going to be on data and data verification, right?

National Direct/Tribal Grantees. You’ll be laying out the process that you use to verify and make sure that the data that you’re reporting on in those GPRs is accurate. State Commissions, you’ll be doing the same thing, but it’s related to how you’re verifying the subgrantee level data that you’re then reporting on to CNCS. So fairly straightforward, really again just looking at how you as a commission or national direct are making sure that what you are submitting to CNCS is verifiable data.

Looking at the second narrative prompt, which is on perform management. Again a required narrative prompt here. For National Directs and Tribal Grantees this is a two part narrative. The first part of the narrative is really looking at so you’ve collected all this data, how are you using it to make program
improvements? And this again could be performance measurement data, it could be evaluation data. But how are you using all of this information to make program improvements? It’s great that you’re collecting the data, but that next step again, how are you using it? How are you bettering the programs?

And the second part to that performance management question is well, what have you learned, right? Share with us, identify what you’ve learned from these data collection efforts. How are you making changes? Or what are the specific changes you’re going to make through your partner and processes to improve your program outcomes? Maybe what’s really working well.

You’ve done maybe an evaluation or you’ve got some other programmatic data left that comes back and you find that something’s really, really working well. Please share that with us. That’s what we want to know. And that is what we are looking for in terms of performance management as it relates to our National Directs and our Tribal Grantees.

For State Commissions. A little bit different. You have a subgrantee portfolio. So how are you
supporting your subgrantees to ensure that the data that they’re collecting that they’re in fact using it to improve their program? So let’s look at training and technical systems. Maybe it’s one on one support or group level support, consultants that you may have hired to provide some targeted TTA. So how are you supporting your subgrantees?

And then providing examples from your portfolio of subgrantees that are in fact making these changes. We don’t expect as Curtis mentioned earlier that you would provide an example from every single subgrantee. Select the ones that are most relevant or you feel that are most impactful, use your own sort of rubric for that. But we don’t need an example from your entire portfolio. I think that could be a little bit overwhelming and a huge time lift for you all. That is what we’re looking for from the field in terms of performance management.

Moving onto the Training and Technical Systems and Monitoring. If you’re looking at these, which I hope you are right now on the screen, these should look familiar to you. These were previously under the other tab on our now old end-of-year GPRs. And this
section is just in essence been retitled to Training and Technical Systems and Monitoring. So having both our National Directs and our Commissions outline and describing the training and technical systems that you are providing, whether it’s to your sites or your subgrantees during this current reporting period.

In terms of monitoring plans, this will be answered directly by Tribal Grantees and National Directs. We want you to describe how you’ve implemented your monitoring plan. Have you employed a risk based monitoring? Are you doing onsite visits, fast audits, staff training, etc., and discussing any issues or maybe even highlights, trends? I mean, those could be positive as well. But you’ve identified through the year. And, of course, if there are any challenges or issues, how you would be addressing those in the future.

For Commissions, the reasons why you’re not responding to this right now is because this is something that you will be addressing under the Commission Support for Energy. So that is why the end-of-year GPR isn’t the best mechanism to gather that info.
So we do have the other tab that we are now using that if you exceed your character/word limit on the other narrative text boxes you need to provide additional information. This would be the place to do it. So again that little handy trick of click and save after you’ve entered narrative or while you’re entering narrative to figure out if you’ve actually gone over that 1500 word limit, because egrants will just let you type. They’ll let you type to 2500 words and then you hit save and then you’ve just lost your excess word count there. So use that save trick. If you haven’t already I would recommend doing that.

And just to loop back for State Commissions, because things do differ a bit. You’re only entering your narrative responses on the formula cost reimbursement GPR. And your other GPRs you will just enter the text C formula for the narrative responses is perfectly fine. The one exception, because there are always exceptions to the rule is if you have a school turnaround AmeriCorps subgrantee you will complete the school turnaround GPR and complete that GPR for those specific subgrantees there.
Again you know we’re not looking for, we don’t want, we don’t expect Commissions to provide narrative responses and apply them to all your subs and give us all that information back. Rather what we’re really looking for is a high level portfolio analysis that then has relative or relevant examples that you can provide to demonstrate that. Again, just whole portfolio wide assessments for each individual sub is a bit much. So that is what we’re looking for from our Commissions in that regard.

And moving to the next screen if it wants to let me do that. Okay. So I thought we could walk through some examples. I know Curtis and I just sort of threw a bunch of information at you. It’s not new information. I know we’ve shared this last year around about this time and then again at the beginning of this year regarding how the midyear and the end-of-year GPRs will be changing beginning in 2017 and beyond.

But I think it’s always helpful to have some examples. So we’ve provided three examples here that we will walk through with you all. They are not going to be inclusive of every program scenario out there, so if you have questions around a particular subgrantee who
may be off cycle or maybe National Direct, your own program is really off cycle, reach out to your Program Officer and they’ll walk you through what you should be reporting on the end-of-year GPR.

So looking at this first program example, it’s fairly simple and straightforward. You have a program intervention that runs from September to August in that year. And again 2016 program year all members completed their term of service by the end of August. And this gave the program sufficient time to gather up all their data prior to reporting. So at the end-of-year last year, in October of 2017 this program was able to report the full set of 2016 program year level data.

So at the end-of-year for the 2017 end-of-year GPR data you should not and would not be providing any 2016 level data, because you’ve already done all of that for the end of year GPR. You’d only be entering the 2017 end-of-year actuals. So that is I think a simple and as clean as it can get. And that’s probably not everyone’s experience that’s on the phone.
So let’s tackle what maybe some of you experience. And so let’s look at Program Scenario 2. Again your program runs from September to August in that year. Some of your members didn’t finish during that, at the end of August. As you all know and can provide probably a plethora of examples of why members may not finish in August to include maybe it’s some late enrollment, maybe rolling enrollments, you’ve refilled some slots, maybe you had a member that needed to extend their service because of a suspension. I mean, there are a number of reasons, which are all fine that members may still be serving beyond that September/August sort of program year that you’ve set up.

So given this, you know the program wasn’t able to report the full set of data for 2016. And actually what they did last year during the end-of-year GPR was say, hey, you know, we have some ongoing program activities. So what would you do in that scenario? Previously you would just put that information in the narrative form on the GPR.

This year we want that actual level data. So to repeat what you’ve hopefully already done for 2017 GPR data,
the midyear GPR, you’re going to include both your current, right, 2017 program year actuals, what you’re currently doing and living through, and any prior 2016 actuals that you weren’t able to report on again back in October of 2017. Maybe you have this information at the midyear, maybe folks finished up in December and you’ve had a few months now so come April when you’re submitting your midyear GPR you have this data ready and it’s reportable.

Maybe you don’t and at the end-of-year GPR again you’re going to include all of your current program 2017 data actuals and again that prior 2016 actuals again that you did not report at the end-of-year GPR. So if you reported, and again anything at the end-of-year GPR in 2016 you’re not reporting on it again. If you reported on it during the midyear GPR you’re going to carry that data forward to the end-of-year GPR. So just because you reported on it at the midyear GPR don’t leave it behind, bring it forward, carry it forward to the end-of-year GPR.

Of course then what you will do is in the Explanation text box that is next to the output/outcome level data, you will then break out the data from 2016 and
the data from 2017. We expect you to be maintaining this data separately so they don’t end up in one big bucket and you’re then unable to say, well, this data actually came from 2016 whereas this came from 2017. We do expect that you would provide that level of detail in the GPR explanation box.

Alright. And then a slight curveball to everyone. I know Curtis mentioned this earlier, but wanted to take the time to make sure that folks were aware of something that will impact you going forward. Again let’s look at another example. So again you have the same program that’s running from September to August.

We didn’t finish all of our members service in August, they were still serving, which is no big deal, but 2016 also happened to be the end of your three-year grant cycle and the program wasn’t able in October of 17 able to report on that full year because we still had members serving. So again at the end-of-year GPR you would have noted that you have ongoing program activities.

The catch here is in this situation on the 2017 end-of-year GPR, or the midyear GPR for that matter, you
are not including that previously unreported end-of-year data from that previous three-year grant. Instead you’ll have a final GPR that you will then report that information on. And this would include if you, this will most likely impact those revenue cost extensions. So your final GPR would include all of year three plus your no cost extension.

I would imagine this applies to a few folks out there, but just be cognizant of your grant years and making sure that you are reporting on the data in the appropriate GPR. Again if you have questions and you’re not sure if this applies to you, just reach out to your Program Officer and they will clarify what data goes in which GPR.

So Final GPRs. We just talked about Final GPRs. I would say some fairly significant changes in the Final GPR. It’s really been streamlined. For those who are doing a Final GPR right now for their 2016 year this will not be applicable to you. These changes are for 2017 and beyond. So if you’re in the process of completing a final three-year grant cycle GPR for 2016 you will not see these changes. So again 2017 and beyond.
We have changed the Final GPR so that it’s narrative only. There will be no Performance Measure section. So you will not be entering output and outcome actuals in the new Final GPR. Rather what we are asking grantees to do specifically our National Directs and Tribal Grantees is to describe to us what you’ve learned about your theory of change during the whole three-year grant cycle.

So that’s do you feel that your program was able to make a meaningful difference in addressing the problem that you originally identified at the beginning of this three-year grant cycle? And, if so, tell us how, what does that look like? Did you make any changes to your intervention along the way? If so, what were they and why did you make them?

And the final question that we’re looking for in narrative rather in that Final GPR is whether or not you’ve increased your evidence base for your program and to provide some further description around how you’ve done that, if in fact you have.
For Commissions, we’re at sort of a higher level that we’re looking for in terms of a narrative, so we want some description and information around what you’ve learned about your portfolio during the three-year grant period. So how have you supported or rather how have subgrantees in your portfolio addressed their local community problems and needs? Are they making meaningful changes? Have they may be made changes to their interventions? Are they increasing their evidence base over the course of this three-year period? And then provide further description and examples of how that has been executed.

If you were to have additional performance level data, additional output/outcome level data at the end that you didn’t report at the end-of-year GPR for 2016, now you’re doing this in narrative instead of putting it in a performance measure, in a tab, because now that no longer exists.

Again if you have questions on the Final GPR, please reach out to your Program Officer. The instructions, as Curtis mentioned, and we’ll flip over to the Resource tab here, are all on the Knowledge Network. So we have a GPR Landing Page. If you’re not familiar
with it, check it out. All of the instructions for midyear, end-of-year GPR, final GPRs are on the Landing Page, as well as our supplemental guidance. So if you’re unsure of a particular, how we’re defining a term in the Demographics section, you would flip to that supplemental guidance that you would find some new clarity in that guidance.

Those two may be brand new to egrants. We have a GPR tutorial that you can connect to and familiarize yourself a little bit more with egrants in a GPR. Of course the performance measure instructions may be very applicable in this situation. Sometimes Program Officers will say, hey, this doesn’t seem to line up with the performance measure. So if you ever have any questions around how you were supposed to be counting, what some definitions are for the performance measures, this would be the place to go, and as I have mentioned a couple of times clearly your Program Officer.

We will be, this is being recorded, so this will end up, I believe we have a two-week turnaround, so this webinar recording will be posted in October when we
have the exact date, I know that will go out to all of you as soon as we have that information ready.

I know that was a lot of information. It was quite quick. What questions are there? Are there any points that we could circle back to and clarify? Any questions that you want Curtis and I to address? We are happy to use this time to allow for a lot of Q&A. So I already see some folks typing in the box. Utilize the chat box and Curtis and I will address those.

And we also have the PowerPoint presentation is uploaded to this presentation. So if you look in the box that says file you will have the slides right here. They’re right here waiting for you, as well as the links. If you see there’s a little text box that says Web Links. There’s a link to the GPR Instructions. There’s also a link to the Knowledge Network.

And you want me to repost the Links slide? I can do that. But we have some of those links that are living live actually in the presentation that you can go ahead and click on. It’s a nice little feature.
I see some folks typing, so I will hang out and wait for questions. Happy to answer questions now. Of course you can reach out to your Program Officer. So Brandy asks, can you speak to how member experience will be captured moving forward if not in the GPR? Curtis, I don't know if you have some additional information on this piece. I do not have an immediate answer to that, but will ask Curtis. I don't know if we have another mechanism that we are looking to at this particular moment. Curtis?

CURTIS: No, I'm looking at ... I'm looking through everything right now as well and I don’t have another outlet for that information either.

JAMIE: I think when looking at the narratives and addressing what is working well or trends, I think it’s an opportunity there if you like to add aspects that may be working well. I know it doesn’t speak directly as we have in the past. You are right we’ve had some very targeted member experience. Narratives I think there may have even been, the section was titled Member Experience.

So though we don’t have anything explicitly at this point that does that, I think there could be
opportunities in talking about processes, things that worked well and maybe that’s an opportunity to highlight that. But, yes, those do not exist. And I will follow up with folks to, Brandy, and your Program Officer around that and provide you with any additional information we can.

Okay, Rebecca. Let’s look at this Performance Measures and Demographics. Are you stating we should not have these tabs in our GPR template? You should have Performance Measures and Demographic tabs in your GPR template. And you should have all of those tabs. I don't know Curtis if you can click forward to that screen shot that we had at the very, very beginning. I think it was one of the slides that you had. You will see those tabs. You should see all of those tabs. The Performance Measures, Performance Indicators, Demographics. There’s, I think a Grantee general page that you land to.

What I had mentioned earlier is if you open up those tabs, especially the Narratives tabs and they have the old GPR narrative font, such as Analysis of Impact. What were some of the others? Member Experience, Impact Snapshots. If you see those versus TTA and
Monitoring, Performance Management and Data Quality, then reach out to your Program Officer. Did that help Rebecca? I hope that was helpful.

CURTIS: It looks like the next question was answered.

JAMIE: Perfect. Okay. Any other questions out there?

CURTIS: Does not look like it, Jamie.

JAMIE: Okay. Alright, guys. Thank you very much everyone for participating in the webinar call today. Appreciate it. Have a wonderful rest of the week and we will see you all soon in some capacity. Bye everyone. Thanks.

CURTIS: Thank you. Bye bye.