Jason: …finance. Sorry about all that clicking. I panicked for a second to make sure we had the right version, but we do. Today is going to be an encore presentation of the AO Conference. It is the presentation we did for AO so the whole financial management community can hear.

We do have a few changes today. This presentation incorporates the guidance that Matt sent out last week about the expectations for the field for execution of FY ‘23 and ‘24. We will also talk about the ARP guidance that came out earlier today regarding the change from the previous guidance. If you have any questions about that, please provide them in the chat and we will respond after.

Before we get into the presentation, I just want to flag again the resources center. We often get a lot of questions that can be answered in a session. If you are a new budget analyst or budget tech, I highly recommend you check out the training. We are going to be putting a future training together. We heard feedback regarding 101 and where to start. What we would recommend is clicking on some of these key trainings. This is everything we have done over the last year. If you look at any training, for example, appropriation’s law, it takes a link to the ORD website where you can watch the video, access the slides, audio, and transcript.

If you do not have time to watch a whole hour video, which I definitely understand you may not, I highly recommend you check out these folders where we have all the slides and other reimbursement. For reimbursements, we have the training from March. We have a lot of information on that about how to track the different information we send. Then in reimbursements, I am also adding the reimbursement reports that come every month. If you want them all for FY ’23, they are here. I know it is difficult to go through all your emails. It is just in the one spot for you.

Then we have \_\_\_\_\_ [00:02:20]. All the training we have done are in here. Some key financial policies and some other documents. We keep updating this all the time, so please look. We are really trying to plug this in many areas if you want. Then communications – all the memos we are issuing are coming out here. The one that just came out last week is here. It is here for FY ’23 budget execution. We are working to clean this up a little bit to make it a little more user friendly. If you have any questions about the website or ideas for improvement, please let us know.

Know your audience. Welcome remarks. Here are some ideas for how we can improve our presentation in this session. Okay, the goal today is to provide an overview of the current and future financial operating environment and the research enterprise. Then provide you an overview of the prior changes and practices in order to achieve our goals and maximize impacts in the veil of wanting to provide medical research that we have \_\_\_\_\_ [00:03:19].

The agenda today will be ORD budgets and fuel training gaps. That will be presented by myself. New financial policies, key financial dates, and deadlines is going to be presented by Matt. John Verweil [PH] is actually on vacation with this family in Spain. We were really trying to get him to be here today, but he said vacation is important. We respect that obviously. Then number three, how to implement the changes from a field perspective. That will be presented by Carrie. Then Tony might chime in. He is on the call too on the speaker panel, so he will be available for questions too.

ORD budgets and fuel training gaps. Thank you to Erin Olsen. She is going to be joining our office as a new budget analyst next week from St. Louis. She is very big on these budget pictures, so she helped me with some of these. Thank you. We are going to need a better budget, and it is very complicated. This is just to get you started here.

ORD budgets in a brief history. I know many of you have been around with VA research for a while and understand the budget. Prior to FY ’23, Congress and administration really prioritized this funding increases for VA research. We saw large increases. Last year we had a very large increase of over 10% or $7 million for $882 million. What happened was we worked with the administration. We really prioritized ramping up. We told our services and the station investigators, ramp up. Ramp up. We need to be ready to spend. What happened was in FY ’23 our budget increase was much smaller. In ’24 the request will be $38 million with a separate amount for the toxic exposure fund. That is creating an issue where we need to be tightening our belts to be able to spend the money better that we have.

Then we have the recissions, which you are familiar with. We are not happy about it. In FY ’20 or ’21 ORD received Congressional recissions that were $70 million. It is $70 million that we could not spend. That is the thing that is really important for you to understand for any funding that you may have. Just because you have it, you have it allocated. Congress, through their prerogative for all sorts of things can rescind the funding. Just because you have it and you allocate for a purpose, Congress can rescind it later. It is always best to get that money obligated as fast as you can to avoid situations like this. Just because you have two years, Congress does not always give you that full two years. They rescind it at times. We need to be prepared for that. Even if we do not know of one coming, we should be prepared in the event that one happens. The best way to do that is to obligate as much as we can.

Then we require you to turn over 4% of your allocation. What that did is we require by mid-January for you to spend it all by mid-January. That really only provides a temporary solution. Basically, we are kicking at the can down the road. Basically, in that first quarter you are just doing hops transfers and getting rid of all the carryovers, which is only going to move that carryover further down the line to the next year. Now we want to work on reducing the historical trend.

Then we have the trend with investigators when they get NH grants or grant-making agencies. They think the funding is a grant. It is not a grant. We do not have five years to use it. It is just appropriated funding, so we need to keep hammering that message to our investigators.

With that, we also have additional complexity and structure. We have the American Rescue Plan funding, which is $30 million in FY ’23. As you saw from the guidance Matt sent out this morning which came from VHA Finance, we now have been instructed to obligate it all by Friday or it could be swept for other purposes. That is why we want that.

Then we have the \_\_\_\_\_ [00:07:25] Exposure Fund. We have $2.5 million this year. The stations that received it have received it \_\_\_\_\_ [00:07:31] and the funding will be pulled back for the 0161A1 funding. That is to support the Pact Act and \_\_\_\_\_ [00:07:38]. We will be having a meeting about that tomorrow at one o’clock about that with policies and such. If anybody else would like to join that meeting, send Maria Anna Grasay [PH] a message, and she will forward the invite to you.

Then the FY ’24 budget outlook. The FY ’24 budget is $938 million, which is a $22 million increase. At the same time, we have investigators, ORD services, and everyone really wanting to expand veteran’s research, but it is very challenging with the increase. It was basically just increased \_\_\_\_\_ [00:08:14]. Then we have the separate request of $46 million for the toxic exposure fund, which is specifically for medical research for military exposures. We were ramping up, and now we are ramping down.

Here is a little snapshot of the president’s budget history in FY ’22. You see in FY ’22 we got a very large increase of $882 million. It was $795 million the year before net of recission. FY ’21 was $815 million with a $20 million recission, so that is $795 million. Then we only obligated $810 million, so we need to get better. This year we are at $916 million, which is a 4% increase. We basically have requirements of about $99 million more than was provided through the Congressional budget and \_\_\_\_\_ [00:09:11] budget process.

The next thing is that in FY ’24 we are going from $916 million to $938 million. That is not a whole lot with inflation. Then we will have a separate $46 million for the toxic exposure fund. As we develop our FY ’24 operative plan, we will be working with the services and the stations to identify any projects that are military exposure and replace that funding from the research appropriation 01621 to the toxic exposure fund, which is 1126 code.

At the same time, we are very much aware of field training gaps and the level of training that you receive at your stations. It is something that we are very aware of from the AO conference, from the survey, from our engagements, talking with the budget analysts, and talking with anybody really. If you want to give us more feedback, please do. In the survey, 62% of the responses reported they were not provided resource in training related to VA budget, financial management, and \_\_\_\_\_ [00:10:14]. 62% still do not consider themselves proficient or expert in the covered training experts VA \_\_\_\_\_ [00:10:21], appropriations law, et cetera. As you will see in the next slides in Matt’s section, we are putting a lot on you. We have a lot of requirements that we want you to do. At the same time, what we are offering is education and training, which you will see in the next slide and you are familiar. We will help you get there. We are very much aware that we are most likely the main source of your education and training of financial management in the VA.

Just to provide you with little snapshots of the survey you completed, 62% of the respondents have not taken classes in financial management function. That is something that we are trying to add through the management concepts class and the CGFM classes to help you get a more broad background of government financial management, the different laws and policies, and circulars that govern it. The most glaring thing to us is that 56% of you have not taken federal appropriations law. During a presentation at the AO Conference – I cannot do it here – I asked for people to raise their hands if they had taken appropriations law. There were very few. We are really working on that. We are offering the courses.

What I would even recommend is that if your station has a need for appropriations law for fiscal, we can connect you with our contact in management concepts. They could even arrange. We are not going to fund it, but they could arrange an appropriations law class for your fiscal and other offices that handle budget at your station to take. That would be more specific to your station, which might be advantageous. If you have not taken appropriations law, you need to take it. Anyone obligating money on behalf of the federal government should take appropriations law to understand. My training and the training we produce is helpful for 101, but a multi-day course is what we recommend.

If you have not looked at our training, please let us know. We are thinking about holding another training – just a one-hour training that I did. If you are interested in that, please also send a note to Reanna Gretty [PH]. If we have enough interest, we will schedule another session. Let us see the other training here. It is still very low. It is something we are working on.

The next slide is field staff, financial skill, and rating. Here are the topics covered in the last training in blue and topics not covered in orange. You will notice that it is a percentage of respondents who say they want more training in these areas. Even when we provide training, there is still a lot more training that needs to be covered. Gathering how it is effective and the impact is very important to us. We generally get pretty high satisfaction, of course, in these trainings. The impact of what we see in the RAFT reports and the overall stage and obligation is not connecting.

Then generally just from the questions we are getting from many of us we are concerned the training may not always be clicking. If you have any feedback on how to improve the training, please let us know. We are doing it for this entire group of the financial management community and the research enterprise.

Section two, all right Matt. It is your section – Einstein.

Matt: I hope that is not a reference to me but thank you Jason. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining this call. I know it is such an exciting finance call to join this late in the day. Right? I really did want to, before I get started, thank all of you for everything that you do to help your stations and help research out. I also want to say thank you to those of you that I had the chance to meet at the AO Conference. It really was a pleasure. I do not think that conference could have gone any better than it did. If you were not able to attend, please make it a priority in future years. I really think there is a lot you can get out of it. I know that I took away so much information, and that often happens with central offices, that we do not get out to the field as much as we need to. That was just a great opportunity for me and some of my staff to be there. Thanks to Tony for everything he did to make that happen. Go ahead and go to the next slide.

This slide is talking about some of the key financial management policies that we are going to implement to maximize research dollars. We are looking at things like for FY ’23 the American Rescue Plan. We will get into that. I know there was some confusion there. I apologize for it. We will go ahead and clear that up in my segment here.

The FY ’23 toxic exposure fund, I provided guidance on that as well. Hopefully you all had a chance to review that guidance. If you have any questions on how to implement it, that is what the purpose of this call is for. Hopefully we can answer those today. There is a guidance memo that was distributed a week or two ago. Definitely if you have not had a chance to review that, take a look at it. Make sure that you are going to be compliant.

The RAFT execution report and the excess funding sweeps. This is something that is ongoing. It has been ongoing for a while. You are compiling all the analytics that go into that RAFT execution report. Please continue to meet the deadline. I think historically we have had 100% participation. I do not think we ever have any time where we are lower than that. That is a testament to you all. Thank you for all your efforts to help get that information in.

Then tracking open obligations and all the things that you would expect to see for FY ’23 to be successful. Then FY ’24 is preparing for the CR. It is always a point of contention for our team. When we look at the other organizations in DEEN [PH] that typically have an advance appropriation and do not have to suffer through the consequences of having appropriation that is bound by the CR, they do not understand it either. I know you all do. What can we do to plan for that? Just do the same preparations that you are used to doing in other years when it comes to the CR. We will continue to feed information down to you all as it becomes available for us.

The 2% carryover goal is something that is a change. If you were understanding what Jason was talking about in one of his earlier slides, which is the situation that we find ourselves in, that is why this 2% carryover goal is necessary for FY ’24 and really for FY ’23 right now. It is looking at our financial position overall for ORD. If you saw those slides that showed the budget was at $916 million last year, and then it is at $938 million for next year, and then even FY ’25 I think was somewhere around there. Those are very nominal increases. When you look historically, maybe this is a slide that we should take a look at, Jason. If you looked historically at what those increases are, we probably would find that they are somewhere between 6% to 10% on average. This allows us to cover inflation, pay increases, operational increases which are mandatory. When we are talking about a 2% budget increase, that is not going to allow ORD to meet our operational requirements. That is why a 2% carryover goal is necessary.

Plus, the message that we are really trying to send to you all is obligate, obligate, obligate. The more you obligate, the less you carry over. The more it counts towards us not getting a recission. As Jason mentioned, we have had to deal with $70 million in recissions. That is $70 million that could have gone to the veterans. I know that is just a top-level idea. It is an idealistic approach, but it is true. That is $70 million in additional research we could have done. That is $70 million that we could have used elsewhere.

Jason: Can I chime in here really quick?

Matt: Is there a question?

Jason: No, it is Jason. One thing, sorry. Just so everyone understands, when we were presenting this budget when we meet with the appropriations staff in this session and talk about our budget and carryover, they do not see it as 105 stations with thousands of staff. They just see one number and how we are actually doing. That is why we need to all work together to try to make it work to get these obligations up as one big team. Thanks.

Matt: Thanks Jason. We appreciate that. He is exactly right. This is where hopefully we are fostering that relationship with you all. We really want to encourage good budget habits and good budget practices. I know that that can make it rather tight. It is a lot easier to hold onto funding. We talked a lot about kicking the can down the road and trying to change that culture. It is a lot easier at the station side to hold onto funds because you do not know what you do not know. You do not know what is coming around the corner. It is nice to have that cushion there. We get it.

Unfortunately, when we are faced with a 2% budget increase overall, we really need every dollar we can. I think that starts with our relationship with you all and basically saying we are going to encourage you to do good budget practices to return excess funding that you do not need. In return, we hope that you will find that we are very agreeable when it comes to, hey, I returned $1 million. Lo and behold, we got this regulatory requirement that just came down, and now we are going to have to staff up. We are going to need $500,000 in order to make this happen. Hopefully, we can accommodate you. I think that is really an arrangement that has yet to be seen, but hopefully I think you guys are going to start to see that as we move forward. All we can do is encourage that, like I said.

Maximizing education. Several folks have come up to me and said how appreciative they are for these financial trainings that we do. That is great. That is telling me that what we are doing is correct. We are not going to stop there. We are going to continue to identify where those training gaps are, what those training requirements are, and work with you to make sure that we are providing that. In fact, if we are providing training that really is not relevant, we want to know that too. Sure, we like good feedback. I consider that good feedback if you say, hey, this is really something that did not connect with me. It was not something that I use on a daily basis. The whole fact that we are having this meeting right now, I do not want to be telling you stuff you already know. I want to be giving you information that you can use. If I am not doing that or if we are not doing that, please let us know.

Appropriation increases. Like I said, obligate, obligate, obligate. We are talking about maximizing our resources and obligating as much as possible so that we can justify those requirements for additional funding that we are going to be requesting. We cannot operate at 2%. Go ahead, next slide.

Prior year funding. There was a guidance memo that I sent out last week. I tried to capture all of the areas that I think are most impactful for each of you and also impactful for us. Hopefully that was helpful. Prior year funding, I do not think there was any surprise here on how this was working. At this point, these funds are on year two of a two-year lifespan. They are set to lapse on September 30, so of course we have to have high attention on this and high alert on what our prior year amount is. We do not want to allow any funding at all to lapse if we can help that. Next slide.

I said we would talk about ARP. In that guidance document that I sent out, we were trying to give you all until June 30 for the ARP funding. Unfortunately, bad timing on this. VHA Finance came down with a mandate this week that said the funds have to be obligated by Friday. It would have been nice for us to have known that information before, but none of us have a crystal ball. Right? At the end of the day, I have to say this comes down to an obligation. When you looked at the obligation percentages for ARP funding on a national scale, we are at 47%. The average for the other areas who got significantly more ARP funding than we did – we had the smallest amount – they were at an average of 93% obligated. Why did this happen? You could argue a few different points, but in my opinion our obligation rate – anytime your obligation rate is lower than your monthly burn rate, you are going to call attention to yourself. That is what happened with us. That is what I think happened.

At a 47% obligation rate with just a few months on a period of availability for that appropriation, the decision was made that they were going to sweep. Now we find ourselves where we are. What we asked is for you all to obligate using expenditure transfers or whatever other mechanism that you have to obligate all of your ARP funding by the end of the week by close of business Friday. We are going to work with you guys. I sent out an email this morning alerting you to this issue. I sent your status of allowance. We will continue to monitor your status of allowance. Then in those situations where maybe you just cannot spend it, that goes back to that good budget habit that I talk about. Have a good budget practice. Let us know. If you are not able to spend it and there is nothing you can do, you have already utilized all your expenditure transfers for some of these smaller sites, that is probably the case. Let us know. We will go ahead. We can pull it back and we can reprogram it. We can meet this deadline by Friday. Like I said, we are here to work with you guys.

TEF execution. That document memo went out. Like I said, if you have not had a chance to look at it, go ahead and read it. Just try to follow it. If you have any questions, feel free to pitch it back to us or send it back to the 14RD finance ORD finance action team. Next slide.

Checking obligations. When you take a look at the lost opportunities here, I think one of these slides really talks a lot about it. I do not see that section here. You can see that in the second bullet, ORD finance will issue a data call for our open obligations on the fourth quarter ’23. We will put that out there to help you guys, but please be reviewing those open obligations. RAFT execution report, looking at the stations with balances prior to year-end to determine if your plan is feasible to obligate 90%, which means you do not have the 2% for the carryover. We will then consider sweeping those funds and reprogramming for other requirements. The funds will not be returned in FY ’24.

Again, this goes back to that situation of kicking the can down the road. We do not want to do that. We want to make sure you have the funding that you need. We also want to make sure that if there is something that really is a surprise, an unplanned, an unfunded requirement, an unplanned event that occurs, we want to be able to work with you. What we do not want to do is just turn a blind eye and have excess funding sitting out at the sites until August or September. At that point, it is just too late for us to do anything with them. Next slide.

Reimbursable accounts. VHA Finance will issue the closeout guidance in August, so be on the lookout for that. That is going to have the cutoff deadlines for reimbursables. You know how to reach out and get in touch with us if you have any questions on how to handle your reimbursable accounts. Next slide.

Prepare for the CR, yeah. This is something that those of you who have been in the job long enough, you understand what you need to do. There are a bunch of different activities. If you have not reached out to colleagues and fellow AOs, that is probably something you should do. If you are new on the job, this is one thing that you could learn a lot from them as far as how to handle that locally. What are the things you can expect?

One of the things we talked about reducing the carryover from 4% to 2%. That is a big change. Again, this is us trying to maximize research resources. The message that we are sending to you and hopefully that you are receiving is obligate, obligate, obligate. Looking at the FY ’24 CR, I do not know Jason if you have any guidance. At this point it is really early. I know we probably do not have any idea. I think it is very likely to expect another CR.

Jason: Yes. We will issue more guidance. We have FY ’23 CR guidance you can take a look at, but we will be issuing an FY ’24 CR guidance. One change will be some information about how to handle when your funding is not loaded right away because you will be in over-commit mode. FMS or the controls will be lifted because none of the funding is loaded – not even the medical error. Nothing is loaded yet because VHA Finance has to do a number of things with the spend plans and everything to load the funding and get the funding loaded down. We will take about a month. There is a lot of misunderstanding that there is a fiscal shutdown. There is not. Things are still operating under CR. The funds just have not been loaded yet. You will be spending money. If you look at your SOA, it will show you are negative. It is because your funds have not been loaded yet. We will communicate your funding with what your ITAs will be so you will have an idea of what that will be.

Matt: Thanks Jason. Yes, we will be distributing that guidance out as well. We will try to target those areas. We did hear a lot about the over-commit situation and try to include some definitive language in there that is going to help you work with your fiscal office and your CFOs to make sure that you guys have what you need and you are able to have access to those control points.

I want to talk quickly about that second bullet on the 24-carryover reduction. On the FY ’23 purchase card orders, they need to be managed to reduce address issues. Reduce address issues with backorders that cannot be reconciled by 9/30. Orders that are not received by September 30 need to be adjusted to FY ’24. I do not know if anyone on the panel wants to elaborate on that, but I know that is a really important thing.

Jason: I can jump in, and then if Tony or Carrie want to comment. We know with backorders and supply chain there is a lot of noise and a lot of issue with orders and when they are received. We do not want you using the prior year for purchase orders once FY ’24 starts. You are going to want to use FY ’24 for your current year. Just like we said before, you might say I have no funding. I do not see it. It is there. It is loaded. It is just not loaded down to your level yet. Trust us. The funds are in the financial system. I know it is a little alarming when you are looking at your stats allowance to see and your spending is negative, but once the funds are loaded it is not going to be negative anymore. It is just part of the process of how the fiscal year starts and VHA Finance. It takes a long time for them to do all the loading of the funds. We are talking about loading funds. VHA would probably be the third or fourth largest agency if it was not part of the Department of VA. It is massive. The budget is $70 or $80 million. It is bigger than Homeland Security. You can understand that it takes some time to load all that funding to all those 160 stations all across the country for all those service lines.

Carrie: I also want to jump in here. There are two separate things. If you are coming up on the end of the year and you are still purchasing in September, chances are you are going to have orders that are not finalized come October 1. They are sitting there in committed. You really need to work with your investigators and shut down your spending earlier in the year. Here in Iowa City in mid-August, we are done taking orders so that our purchasing agents can process all those orders, reconcile, and have very little that might not be committed by September 30. Then on October 1, you do not touch those prior year credit cards. You need to be using your current year fund control points. Definitely work with your fiscal office to make sure those current year fund control points are set up and ready for use for you.

Matt: Thanks Jason. Thanks Carrie. We will have some time for questions at the end too, so let us keep moving. The ITA. This is something that we did in years past. I probably would say five years ago where we would just release the first Q1 and Q2 initially on the ITAs. We are just going back to it once again. It is one of our tools to manage resources. It is one of the changes that we are making for FY ’24. We have not heard too many issues along this line, so if there is any complication that this is going to present, we would love to hear your feedback on that as well. Next slide.

Prioritizing education. This is just maybe a little repetitive based on what I was saying as far as financial management trainings. What are the gaps? What are the learning areas that we need to focus better on? Like I said, I would like to be more specific as far as what specifically we can help you with to do your job better. Jason mentioned things like appropriations law. I know that seems out of the realm sometimes. It is really not.

Understanding time, purpose, and amount, understanding where to find appropriation language, and what is your appropriation language. What is your appropriation response? What is the period of availability for your appropriation? Those are the types of things that you can apply across all government, not just VA. Understanding that is going to help you do your job and it is going to help you be better at your job. That CGFM course, I am actually taking that right now. That is an amazing comparable to the CPA, but obviously not as tough as a CPA. Most of the folks who give the speeches at a lot of these meetings typically have an MBA, a CGFM certification, and a CPA. In fact, our instructor said it is the next hardest thing to the CPA. It is a really great opportunity.

We are going to continue to try and offer these trainings. By all means, if it is something that you have got time for, because there is a time investment involved and it is something you are interested in, feel free to reach out. Sign up. We will continue to try and offer those kinds of things. I think it is a really special offering that we are able to do that.

Then best practice, best guides, and office hours, the mentorship programs, and onboarding training material. Use that already centralized landing page. Like Jason said, you can find some answers to your questions probably pretty easily there as well. Next slide.

Increasing obligations goes back to what I said. Obligate. Obligate. Obligate. That is what we are talking about. That sets the stage for a lot of the decisions that were made about where we are headed in FY ’24. I do not think we need to go into any more information on that. Next slide. I think here I am going to hand it to you, Carrie.

Carrie: All right. Thank you, Matt. All these things that Matt and Jason have been talking about are really going to change things for us in the field. We really need to come up with a way to have a more detailed budgeting approach to truly understand and know where we are standing with our budget. This is especially with the 2% carryover that is coming up.

On the following slides, I am going to give my perspective from the field on how to work to achieve that. The first -- you are going to hear me talk about this a lot – is managing your status allowance. You really need to be balancing at four different levels. You first have the project level, then the fund control point level, the program level, and finally the appropriation. I think we have all gotten a handle on the project level for the most part with the RAFT expenditure reports where we were getting used to our last year looking at our projects at that level.

You also need to look at your fund control points. By balancing your fund control points, you may find that someone is charged to you that should not be, an order might not have been done correctly, or that you are off balance. Why is that? You really need to be looking at those fund control points. At the program level, sometimes we see that, for example, your biomedical program has a huge surplus. Maybe your clinical program has a huge deficit. Why is that? It should not be that way. Maybe people are incorrectly being paid the right fund control points. It really does matter, especially from the ORD perspective.

From that case that I gave you, BLRG thinks that you have way too much money in the field. Clinical is like, why do you have a huge deficit? You really need to look at it from the program perspective. Then finally, the overall appropriation where you stand at achieving that 2%. Doing this will let you see your status at the individual project level, but also really gives you a picture of all the others and a big picture of your overall program status.

If you have not been doing this, it is pretty difficult this late in the year. It does take commitment and a great deal of work, but things will improve drastically for you if you can get to that where you are balancing all these levels to the status of allowance. You can really do it on a daily basis fairly quickly. It will really give you a good understanding of where you are at. On the right side of your screen there, we give some past trainings. Go to that Share Point that Jason showed you at the beginning, and really look at these past trainings on how to balance your status of allowance. Next slide please.

Win RMS. Think about Win RMS. If you have more than ten projects, it is highly recommended that you start utilizing Win RMS. It helps you do all those things we just talked about in the previous slide. You can look at the project level. You can look at the fund control point level. Then from that, you can roll out to the program and appropriation when comparing to the status of allowance. It eliminates the need for manual entries. It can eliminate the errors that you get from manual entries. Salaries automatically download. Your supplies and equipment purchases automatically download. They drop them neatly into the investigator accounts.

If you do have Win RMS, take a look at how you are utilizing it. Are you using it to its full effectiveness? Maybe you have been always doing something a certain way, but there is a better way to do it. Do not get stuck in the, this is the way we have always done it. Attend the Win RMS office hours and ask questions. Speak up. That is what those office hours are for. Then ask for personalized training. If there is a specific thing that you want to know about in Win RMS, whether it is a salary issue or how do you do expense transfers. I want to set up a core facility. I need to be charged how many anum per diem. How do I do that in Win RMS? Feel free to reach out to me, and we can set up individualized training. I would be happy to show you how. There are also again past slides training that we have provided on a lot of this. Next slide please.

Effective communication. I think we are all getting used to this reaching out and communicating with ORD Finance. They really do want to hear from you, and they want to know about issues that arise. Do not be afraid to contact them. Especially they have some examples of when to reach out to them. If you have pending contracts, especially local, they have a good handle on RPOEs. If you are even submitting contracts locally, they might be impacted by prior year sweeps. You need to tell them that. Hey, you are going to sweep prior year, but I have a pending contract. It looks like it is going to get obligated. I have this issue with contracting and getting it done. Talk to them about that. Work that out. If there are modifications that are not being completed, if you have a modification that impacts prior year funding, reach out to them because those need to get done by September 30 or those funds are going to be lost. This is especially if it was a decrease or de-obligation. Do not be afraid to return funds if you are not going to spend them. Let them know and return them.

If you are having struggles with your fiscal office like Matt discussed with the purchase cards, if they are not letting you use your new fund control points for current year on October 1 and purchase with a credit card off those, let them know. Maybe we can reach out and help to kind of communicate what Jason was saying about the loading of the funds and that they are available to use. Ask them questions. They really are here to help. Their contact information is on the last slide. Next slide please.

ARP and TEF funds. I am not going to get too much into ARP because, as you all know, the funds have to be obligated by the end of the week. If you have received ARP, especially now TEF funds, you really need to understand what that means. These funds are not in the research appropriation. They are a separate appropriated funding. They are not going to be nice and neat on the status of allowance like all your research funds right there in that group. You need to locate the funds on the status of allowance and enter those fund control points that have been set out for it into whatever tracking system that you use. This is whether it be Win RMS or Excel. Ensure that you are monitoring these funds, and do not forget about them. They can easily be forgotten about since they are not the normal that we are used to dealing with and looking at.

Cost transfers are also going to most likely be involved since everyone’s salary is going to be coming out of the research appropriation. You are going to have to transfer those costs if you plan on using salary to spend. Work with your fiscal office now. Let them know that we are going to have quarterly cost transfers or however you are going to set that up to spend these TEF funds. Drafting them OU, stating how those are going to be used, and make sure you communicate that with them so you can ensure those TEF funds are being spent appropriately.

We are going to hold a call. Next month’s training in June is going to be on cost transfers. We are going to go into those processes and the different times that you use cost transfers in detail at that June monthly training session. Then all the TEF stations, there has been training in the call that will be held on that. Next slide please.

Finally, make the most of the education opportunities provided. I know we all have a lot going on in the field. I am living it as well. It is tough. Maybe today you did not have that hour to listen to this training. You were focused on putting out whatever fires happened at your station. Go back and listen to it when you do have time. Go back and look at those trainings from the past. They are all there on that Share Point for you to use. Use it. Maybe if you are just looking at it for a certain topic, listen to those few slides or refresh your memory. Really use those education opportunities that ORD Finance is trying to provide you. Next slide.

I think we are ready for questions. These are some of the things that we want you to consider. Go ahead. I will turn it over to Parker.

Unidentified Male: Yes. If you have any feedback on these questions, we will refer to emails too. All right, thanks Parker. I am going to stop here.

Parker: Coming up, we will just have somebody read the questions.

Unidentified Male: The first one is email Maria Anna Gretay [PH] and she will add you to that finance POC list. The AO list would not be added to that too. I think Tony manages that one.

Unidentified Male: Correct.

Unidentified Male: These next three questions are all very similar. Just a warning.

Jason: Okay. Can you just click through all the questions really quick, and then we will take them through ARP? Okay. Matt, do you want to take this, or do you want me to start?

Matt: Go ahead.

Jason: Okay. We have our guidance of ARP \_\_\_\_\_ [00:45:55]. You can use ARP funding for anything that research appropriation is for. We have to kind of change our mindset of how the plan for this funding is. What you want to do is think about how you can not lose that ARP funding you have now. If it is pulled, unfortunately we are not going to be able to replace 0161A1 funding for you. To be frank, we do not have it. What you need to do is perform. Since the funds are allocated in your station, you need to perform an expense transfer for salaries or for some other item to free up that funding in 0161A1. At a later date when you are ready to move on that contract award or you are IPA, you are able to do it. These are desperate extreme circumstances that call for extreme solutions.

Basically, you need to work with us. Let us know any challenges with your fiscal, et cetera. You need to basically find salaries or other costs that have been expended and expense transfer to have to free it up so it is available. We are tracking the balances. We are aware. I think some stations might have gotten the news earlier through your fiscals. Please go ahead and do that. We have a contract, but it will not be obligated by Friday. You need to expense transfer salary and then award that contract 0161A1 funding later to have that funding available. Tony, Matt, or Carrie, do you want to chime in?

Carrie: That is exactly right. That is what they should do.

Jason: Yeah. Expense transfer for something else for salary so you can free up the 0161A1. You can do that contract or the IPA later since it will not be done until September. Carrie, do you want to answer that question?

Carrie: Sure. Do expense transfers at all populate in Win RMS? The answer is it depends. I know for mine, mine do not. When I download my salary fund control points, they do not come over. I do a manual enter. This is where it is important. Every time you request an expenditure transfer from your fiscal office you should verify that transaction in the VSSC by going to the F20 report. There you will get an EW number showing that the transaction was done.

In this case you have to go under two appropriations to get both sides. One is on the research 0161A1, and then also on the 0173RD to see that both sides of cost transfer are done. That will give you the EW number that you can manually enter into Win RMS. If you do a download and you go into your alerts and you see it there, then you can go ahead and drop it into whatever account. It should. It will cause an alert in Win RMS if it does download, because it is not going to have an account number. I do not know why mine is not. I know other people say theirs does, but that is just the way it is.

Unidentified Male: We sent the message to all TEF stations for TEF. If you have not received a message, you likely have not received TEF funds. You also could check in RAFT under your budget reports to see if you received TEF funds. If you have not heard, you likely have not. You also can check on VSSE in the 1126 funds.

Unidentified Male: You can check the status of allowance too. What is the appropriation for TEF?

Unidentified Male: They are 1126RD and 1126R5. If you look in the finance on the communication section of the ORD of our Share Point page. You can see the memorandums and the memos at the stations that received it. I would go check there and look at the memo, and you will see which stations received it. We communicate to all the stations that do. If you are at a station with a question, just ping me after and I will let you know. Tony or Carrie, do you want to answer that one?

Carrie: Sure. Please make sure that FY ’24 guide is specific enough for our fiscal partners to create fund control point ceilings large enough for us to spend through FY ’24. When we are operating in a continuing resolution, we really should be operating as normal. It is based on previous funding levels when you are looking at the CR. You do have to be careful about your large purchases because you cannot let the appropriation go into a deficit. It is something that you need to manage. I mean, especially when they send out the funds for the CR, you need to be operating within that budget as best as you can. If you can do a large purchase, by all means go ahead and do a large purchase. Do not over-commit more than what your CRs are providing you with. As far as a beginning of the year, they need to be able to let you do purchasing. Before the funds arrive on station is the biggest issue. That is where they need to understand that the funds are being loaded into the system. They are coming. We are in the CR. You are supposed to be spending it as normal.

Unidentified Male: I think the other part of that answer is that if you are planning on doing large purchases, they are going to take time to go through. You should put them in, and they should release them with the over-commit on the Invista. If you are having problems with that, you need to contact the finance team in ORD so they can reach out to your finance office and talk to them. Just remember that the money that is sent out in the ITA is based on the number of days and the percentage of that amount that is created. You are not going to get the ITA as a commitment for the whole year. You are getting a percentage. If you are buying things that are beyond that initial percentage, then you need to get them into the system and they will not let you. Have them contact or you contact ORD Finance so they can reach out to the finance people. It could be the acquisition people as well.

Unidentified Male: No, it is not okay. You need to expense transfer them to somebody else on station. You probably should message us. You should probably message us. Send us a message.

Unidentified Male: All they are saying is, can they send the money back? Can they send the money back now because they are not going to need it? The project is closed.

Unidentified Male: I guess send us a note. I guess we will discuss it offline.

Unidentified Male: They do not have an ability to do expenditure transfers locally? If they do not, they can send it back to us and we can do the expenditure transfer.

Unidentified Male: Maybe they can just email Jason after this meeting.

Unidentified Male: Yes. Email Jason or Matt details.

Unidentified Male: That is it for now.

Unidentified Male: Yes, if you have individual ARB questions, I know the guy is difficult. Send us a note.

Unidentified Male: All right. Thank you, everyone.

Unidentified Male: Perfect. Thank you, guys. Thank our panelists. Reminder, everyone just fill out that post evaluation survey. I saw one or two suggestions just for future webinars. If you guys put that in there, it will get to our panelists the best way. Thank you. Have a great afternoon.

Unidentified Male: Bye.