Rural Program Recording Transcript (Part 1 of 2)

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Intro Slides of Recording Session

Hi, welcome to the Rural Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Assistance Program Training recording that we provide, talking about how to fill out Rural semi-annual progress reports.

So first, I would like to thank you for accessing our recording. We hope that this training enables you to provide the most detailed and accurate reporting of your grant-funded work on your semi-annual progress reports. Accurate data reporting is important for many reasons. Your quantitative and qualitative data enables VAWA's effectiveness to be measured. VAWA MEI creates reports for OVW using your data and data from grantees across the country.

So the reports that we create are called Summary Data Reports, and those reports support OVW to make requests for increased appropriations and to defend VAWA funding to decision makers. Your data also helps OVW to make sure federal funds are being spent appropriately and to measure the performance of grant programs. Additionally, every two years, the Attorney General is required to submit a report to Congress on the overall effectiveness of VAWA funding. VAWA grantee data makes up a significant part of that mandated report. The more consistently grantees fill out their reports, the more accurately VAWA's effectiveness can be measured through these means.

It is your responsibility as a federal grantee to submit data on your funded program every six months. And in a moment, we will talk further about why your data matters and how it is used. But first, let's go over the reporting process. So first, you're awarded your grant. Congratulations. The moment you become a grantee, you are mandated to complete a semi-annual progress reporting form two times a year. And these forms are due in January and July of each year. And it is due 30 days after the close of the reporting period.

So the January to June reporting period form is due July 30. And July through December's reporting form is due January 30. You will access this progress reporting form in your Grants Management System or GMS account. When you download the report each period, please make sure you are downloading the form for the correct reporting period. Otherwise, you will not be able to successfully submit your form.

We encourage you to download the report to your desktop so that you can work on it in more than one sitting. When you are ready to submit your report, you will validate it, and upload it back into the Grants Management System. Next, your report is reviewed by your Program Specialist. They look over every report that is submitted by all VAWA grantees before they send that information on to us here at VAWA MEI.

If they contact you during their review via a change request, they're asking you to make a change to the report that you submitted. You will need to make the change and then re-upload the form into GMS. Once the program specialists have approved all of the reports, they send the information on to us here at VAWA MEI. At VAWA MEI, we review the data and look for any inconsistencies or questions that pop up.

While we go over the data, we may contact you via email or phone with questions about what you have reported so that we can better understand it. If any changes need to be made when we reach out, we will make them on our end. You do not need to resubmit your report to GMS. And then, once we have finished reviewing all of the data, we create reports for OVW and send them back there. These reports are then also posted on our website.

So let's look a little more into how to best approach the reporting process. As mentioned previously, the moment you become a grantee you are mandated to complete the semi-annual progress report every six months. If funding has yet to be released to your program, or you have not used any funds yet, you are still mandated to complete a report. So if you are not using funds yet for grant-funded activities, you only need to complete the sections of the report that are mandated, such as the General Information, Coordinated Community Response, and the Narrative sections.

You will know if it is a mandatory section by seeing a label at the top of the section that says, all grantees must complete this subsection. We ask that grantees fill these sections out and then also provide narrative information explaining that your organization has no grant-funded activities to report or budget is still pending OVW approval. And so we will see this note and then address the grantee data accordingly.

Once you do begin using grant funds, you will still need to answer the mandatory sections, but now you will also be filling out any sections that relate to activities that are being grant-funded You will not fill out sections of the form that you are not using grant funds for. For instance, if you did not use grant funds during a reporting period for training professionals you would check No at the start of that section and then leave the section blank. It is very important to remember that on this form, you only report on grant-funded activities. Blank sections can be explained in the narrative section if you choose.

So this is something that happens often. What if you submit more than one report in the same reporting period? Though this may be the case if you close out one grant and then begin a new grant within the same reporting period, if this is the case, we ask that you do your best to divide the staff FTEs and activities based on which grant funding supported each. So please do not double count FTEs or activities on both of the forms.

For instance, if a full-time staff person was paid by grant A for three months and paid by grant B for the other three months of the reporting period, their time should be split between the two reports, not reported as full time on both. Once you have determined how you will divide your data between the two reports, OVW and us here at VAWA MEI ask that grantees use the final narrative question to list the project numbers for both awards. Indicate the time periods that each cover and verify that FTEs are pro-rated and that victim services numbers are divided between the two reports.

So this slide shows a few tips for successful data reporting. Before we begin looking at sections of the progress reporting form individually, we ask that you please read the separate instructions. There are many helpful examples to assist you in filling out the reporting form. And throughout the form, there are Other categories listed for many questions. In general, we ask that you use the Other category only as a last resort.

If you can find a way to put the information into a category that already exists, or that is a close fit, please do so. When we aggregate data for reports, often questions in the Other category or answers in the Other category will not get included in the reports. If you do choose to use the Other category, please be as specific as possible. So for example, if you have more than one entry in Other, let us know how the overall total is broken between the two entries.

Following most sections of the form you will find optional narrative questions. Use these sections to talk about the unique successes of your program. Give examples or even provide us information from evaluations or exit interviews with people served by your program or relate a story of a successful intervention. This is the narrative data. And it's super helpful for the reports that we put together, and it's used in the report to Congress directly. We go through all of that. And it helps us when we're doing our data review. So we really like to encourage grantees to use the narrative questions.

We ask that you try not to use acronyms or abbreviations in your data. And if you do use an acronym, please provide an explanation in each question where you use that acronym. Please do not use attachments or extra documents to provide data that is asked for in the report. Only data that is contained in the reporting form itself will be received and analyzed by VAWA MEI.

And lastly, give us a call and send us an email. We're here to provide you with technical assistance and training about how to fill out these forms. And we really want to make this process as easy as possible for you. So send us an email. Give us a phone call. And we're really happy to help.

(Minute 10:30) Section A1 – Grant Information

OK. So we're going to begin going through the form section by section. And the first section is section A1, Grant Information. So in Section A1, you'll provide us with general grant information. In **Question A**, you will fill out the date of the report for when you submit it into GMS.

For **Questions 2 through 4**, those will be pre-populated for you when you download your form from GMS. I also want to quickly note that it's not in this form, but typically when you download the form from GMS, there are little question marks next to each of these numbers. And in those question marks, you would press them and they would provide you with additional instructions about how to complete that question.

OK. So 2 through 4 are pre-populated. **Question 5** is where you indicate the type of lead agency or organization. So you would choose one description that most closely resembles your agency or organization. **5A** is where you indicate if your organization is a faith-based organization. And then **Question 6** is where you provide the point of contact information. So for this question, provide contact information for the person who knows the most about the day-to-day activities funded by your Rural grant. This is the person that if we have questions at all about the form itself, that's who we would reach out to. So typically, it's helpful if they know the most about the grant.

On the next page, **Question 7**, Tribal Populations-- so this is asking, did this grant specifically address tribal populations? So if you indicate Yes to this question, you would go ahead and list the specific tribal populations. Answers such as all tribes in our state or the use of et cetera are not valid responses. So this should not include tribal populations who just happened to live in your service area or if an American Indian or Alaska Native just happens to come in for services. In most cases, if you indicate Yes here, your program's intentions are to focus on a specific tribe or nation, and that would have been included in your grant proposal.

Question 8, Percentage of funds directed to each area. Here, you report the areas addressed by your Rural Program grant during the current reporting period and estimate the approximate percentage of funds or resources committed to each area. And when you're determining the percentage, you should take into account the number of cases or clients, the amount of time spent on a specific type of cases, training activities, the source of referrals, et cetera. Just please know that the total here needs to equal 100 in order for the form to validate.

And then in **Question 9**, what percentage of Rural Program funds were used for prevention activities during the current reporting period? Here you would report the percentage of Rural Program funds that were used for prevention activities during the current reporting period. And it's OK if the response to this question is zero. And it's also OK if your response changes from reporting period to reporting period. We're just interested in what happened during the current reporting period when you fill it out.

(Minute 14:35) Section A2 – Staff Information

So here we have some tips for reporting staff time. So when considering about reporting staff, you should keep in mind to only report FTEs for staff whose salary is provided fully or partially by grant funds during the current reporting period. And that should also include staff time of contracted work. You would report by activity performed rather than job title. So this point is a really important one. When we at VAWA MEI look at sections of the report, we typically compare those sections to the staff information to get a sense of whether or not that information should have been provided or reported there. And we might reach out about that.

So for example, if you reported trainer FTEs in the staff information section, we would typically expect to see some training activities reported in the Training section. So that's just something to keep in mind. Also, since we're reporting by activity performed rather than job title or location, if a staff member falls into two or more categories, as in they're performing more than one job function-- maybe they're performing victim advocacy and they're also training-- you would want to divide those FTEs among the applicable categories. So you would put some of their grant funded FTEs in the Victim Advocate category as well as the Trainer category.

In the section, you report to the second decimal place. And time should be pro-rated if necessary. So this would happen, such as when someone is part-time, was hired partway through the grant period, is a contractor, or someone who is full-time but only partially funded with Rural Program funds.

And then please use the Other category sparingly. For the most part, all activities performed by staff are included in the list of categories. If you do use the Other, please be as specific as possible about the function the person was performing. And in the Other descriptor, correlate each entry with an FTE amount if you enter more than one.

So this slide right here is a little handy-dandy resource for you when thinking about how to calculate FTEs. And calculating FTEs can be rather confusing. So there are two ways to look at it. You can either take the total number of grant-funded hours that the person worked during the six-month reporting period and divide that by 1,040. Or if the person consistently worked a certain number of grant-funded hours a week, you could take that number and divide that by 40. So in the first way that I described, you would divide it by 1,040 because 1,040 is the number of full-time working hours in a six-month reporting period.

And I have a few examples here for us to walk through to kind of get you thinking about how to report in this section. So if you did use Rural funds to support staff, you would go ahead and click Yes here. But if you did not use Rural funds to fund staff time, you would click No. And that would bring you right down to Section B. But say you did support staff time with Rural funds. You would click Yes. And then enter in **Question 10** below.

So in the example I have, this first example, we're focusing on how to report grant-funded personnel only. So say your organization received a Rural Program grant that was used to fund one full-time counselor whose salary is 75% funded by the grant and another full-time counselor whose salary is 15% funded by the grant. So in this case, you would only report Rural Program funded personnel. So the correct FTE under Counselor would be 0.90, which is 0.75 plus 0.15. So that's the 75% plus the 15%.

In our next example, this is to demonstrate that you need to report by job function and not job title or location. So say your Rural grant was used to fund a full-time program coordinator who spends 26 hours per week coordinating program activities and 14 hours per week providing victim advocacy. So in this case, you would divide staff time by function. The correct FTE under a Program Coordinator would be 0.65. And that is the 26 hours divided by 40 hours. And then in Victim Advocate, you would report 0.35, which is the 14 hours divided by 40 hours.

In our third example, we're trying to demonstrate how to pro-rate FTEs for staff who work only part of the reporting period with Rural funds. So say the Rural Program grant you received funded a full-time trainer that was hired two months into the reporting period. So in this case, you would need to pro-rate the FTE to reflect four months of the six-month reporting period. The correct FTE to report under the Trainer Educator category would be 0.67, which is calculated by taking four months divided by six months, because the individual was hired two months into the reporting period, so that means they were supported with Rural funds for four months. So we took the four months divided by the six months.

The last example I have is to demonstrate that you need to convert funding used for contractors or consultants into an FTE for this form. So say the Rural Program grant paid for a prosecutor that was paid for 65 hours of work. In that case, you would need to convert this time into FTEs. The correct FTE under Prosecutor would be 0.06. And that is calculated by taking 65 hours and dividing it by 1,040 hours. And again, that 1,040 hours is the number of available working hours for a full-time individual in the entire six-month reporting period.

(Minute 23:00) Section B – Purpose Areas

So all grantees should complete this section as indicated by the little memo or little sentence right here-- "All grantees must complete this section." So here you should check all Purpose Areas that apply to activities engaged in with Rural funds during the current reporting period. If you are not sure which Purpose Areas apply to your grant program, you should refer to your grant proposal. If some of your Purpose Areas change, you can check them in the question. Please know that your Program Specialist must approve all changes to your Purpose Areas.

In **Question 12**, Program Priority Areas, you indicate Program Priority Areas addressed by your Rural Program grants. Priority areas is in reference to a specific item that OVW would have indicated in the solicitation under which you applied. Some years they include priorities and some years they do not. This is not what you may consider your program priorities in terms of serving victims or survivors. If you are unclear about what your Program Priority Areas are, refer back to the solicitation under which you applied and/or your grant proposal.

(Minute 24:40) Section C1 – Training

So in this section, if you used funds for training activities, you would click Yes and fill out this section of the form. If you did not, you would click No and skip on to the next section. For context, for purposes of this form, training is defined as activities for professional or volunteers acting in the role of a professional to improve their response to victims/survivors as it relates to their role in the system. You would complete this section if grant funds directly supported the training of non-grant-funded people who are professionals or volunteers acting in the role of a professional.

Do not count staff development of grant-funded staff or community education in this section. When you're thinking about whether or not to count something as a training, you should think about your audience. If you are presenting to a group that is typically not seen as professionals that work with victims/survivors or offenders, you should question whether you are providing training or rather doing community education.

In this section, in **Question 13**, Training Events Provided, you report all training events you provided in the current reporting period. In **Question 14**, you report the number of people trained through the training events that were reported in Question 13. Also in this question, you report attendees by discipline. You go through the list of existing categories, and in the appropriate category, report the number trained. Again, do not count grant-funded staff when grant-funded attend a grant-funded training event. This is considered staff development and is not reported on this form.

What would be great if you wanted to include that information is to report it in one of the optional additional information questions, where you can write about what the grant funds were able to help grant-funded staff do. And in that way, you are still able to report that information.

The next question is **Question 15**, Training Content Areas. And here is where you check all content areas that were addressed in the training that you provided during the current reporting period. I'm going to jump back to the start of this section and walk through a quick example of how to fill out the Training section. So again, say your Rural Program grant-funded trainer/educator held 10 training events for professionals this reporting period. Your organization also supported three training events with other funds.

210 professionals attended the grant-funded training events. 45 professionals attended training events provided with other funds. So in this case, you would only report the 10 grant-funded trainings in Question 13 that were supported using Rural funds. So here in this box you would report 10. And then in Question 14, you would report those 210 professionals that attended the grant-funded training events reported in Question 13. And you would report them by discipline.

So here in my example, I have some-- children's advocates, health professionals, law enforcement officers, mental health professionals, so on and so forth, to give me a total of 210. And then what you would do is go to Question 15 and indicate the content areas that you trained on in those training events. So in my example, I said that we trained on confidentiality.

And then there is an Optional Additional Information question in the Training section. So in **Question 16**, that would be a great place for you to talk about those staff development events that the Rural Program funds supported during the current reporting period that you were unable to report in the previous questions. It's definitely interesting information, and it would be a great opportunity in this optional information question for you to provide us with that.

(Minute 30:00) Section C2 – Community Education

So for the purposes of this form, education is defined as providing general information that will increase public awareness of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and child sexual abuse. If Rural Program funds were used for community education during the current reporting period, you would go ahead and check Yes at the start of this section and then continue on filling out the questions below.

If you did not use Rural Program funds to support community education events, you would click No and skip on to Section C3. But say you did use Rural funds to support education activities. In **Question 17**, Education Events, you would report the total number of education events provided during the current reporting period that were either provided by Rural Program-funded staff or directly supported by Rural Program funds.

In **Question 18**, People Educated with Rural Program Funds, you would report the number of people attending the education events that you reported in Question 17 by the category that best describes the attendees. So report only people educated by Rural Program-funded community education events provided during the current reporting period. Use the Other category only if your response does not fit into an existing category. And please be as specific as possible.

For the next question, **Question 19**, Topics of Education Events, you would indicate all topic areas covered in those education events that were provided by Rural Program funds during the current reporting period that you reported in Question 17. OK. And again, I have an example for us to go through.

Say, for example, the Rural Program grant supported three community events and two presentations at a local high school. 475 various community members were reached at the community events and 300 students and 60 educators were reached through the school presentation. In this case, grant funds supported all of the above activities. So therefore, all five education events should be reported in Question 17. And all 835 people educated should be reported in Question 18.

So you can see we have the 475 in the community members, 300 in the middle and high school students, as well as 60 in the educators category. And then you would go ahead, and in Question 19, indicate the topic areas that were covered in those events. Here we have domestic violence overview, dynamics and services, as well as healthy relationships, domestic violence, dating violence prevention for 6th to 12th grade.

(Minute 33:45) Section C3 – Community Coordinated Response

So this section provides a picture of the relationships that you have with other agencies and organizations within your community and the frequency with which you interact with these agencies and organizations. This should include all agencies and organizations you interact with, not just your grant or Memorandum of Understanding partners. Report the different agencies and organizations that you are engaging with in this section.

So all grantees must complete this section which, again, is indicated here. So you would go ahead and report in **Question 20**-- you would report the frequency with which you provide and receive referrals and consultations and/or technical assistance with the agencies and organizations listed in the first section. You would report the frequency with which you meet with the agencies and organizations listed in the first section here.

These meetings are most often associated with system change, so task force meetings, meetings to address changes to specific forms, policies, or protocols. And then in these last columns, you would go ahead and indicate the agencies and organizations with which you have a Memorandum of Understanding, as well as any agencies and organizations that are part of a Rural Program-funded DV homicide prevention team or a sexual assault response team.

And then in **Question 21**, you have another Optional Additional Information question where you can provide narrative data about the coordinated community response activities that you're engaging in during the current reporting period.

(Minute 36:10) Section C4 – Policies

So you would complete this section if Rural Program funds were used to develop, substantially revise, or implement policies or protocols during the current reporting period. You would go ahead and click Yes and answer **Question 22 and 23** if you wanted. If Rural Program funds were not used to develop, substantially revise, or implement policies or protocol during the current reporting period, you would check No. And you would move on to Section C5.

But say you did have to fill it out. In Question 22, you would report only those protocols, policies on which development was completed during the current reporting period. If the policy or protocol is still in the development or revision phase, you should not report the policy or protocol implemented until the period when it is actually finished. By substantially revised, we mean that you spent a good amount of time revising the policy or protocol. Simply adding the name of another group under your underserved populations policy would not constitute as a revision, unless separate protocols around how to serve the new group were included. And then in Question 23, you could provide narrative information about those policies and/or protocols that were implemented during the current reporting period, if you so desire.

(Minute 38:05) Section C5 – Products

If Rural Program funds were used to develop or substantially revise products during the current reporting period, go ahead and answer **Question 24**. If not, you would click No and then skip on to Section C6. But if you did click Yes here, you would go ahead and answer Question 24 by entering the number of developed or revised products, which is usually one; the title and and/or topic of the product; the intended audience; and if it was produced in another language, identify in Other or leave blank if not. Also please know that any products you report here should have been pre-approved by your Program Specialist.

(Minute 39:20) Section C6 – Data Collection and Communication Systems

So if Rural Program funds were used for data collection systems, or communication systems, or for the purchase of hardware or other equipment during the current reporting period, you would click Yes and answer **Questions 25 and 26**. If not, you would click No and skip on to Section C7. If Rural funds were used and you needed to answer Question 25 and 26, for Question 25, you report the use of Rural Program funds for data collection and communication system. And you go ahead, go through the list and check all that apply.

In Question 26, you would indicate the purpose of data collection and/or communication system. And again, you would check all that apply. And if you use the Other category, please be as specific as possible.

(Minute 40:45) Section C7 – Specialized Units

If your Rural Program grant-funded staff were part of a specialized unit in any of the listed categories, or if Rural Program funds were used to directly support a specialized unit, check Yes and answer **Questions 27A and and 27B**. If Rural Program funds were not used to support these activities, check No and skip on to Section C8.

For purposes of this form, a specialized unit is a centralized or coordinated group unit or dedicated staff of law enforcement officers, prosecutors, probation officers, or judges responsible for handling domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or child sexual abuse cases. Specialized units are within the criminal justice system, and they consist of criminal justice personnel.

For Question 27A, you would go ahead and check all that apply for the use of Rural Program funds for specialized units. And then in question 27B, you would indicate the victimizations addressed by Rural Program-funded specialized units by checking all that apply.

(Minute 42:30) Section C8 – System Improvement

If your Rural Program funds were used to support system improvement during the current reporting period, check Yes and answer **Question 28**. If not, check No and skip forward on to Section D. If you did check Yes and the Rural funds were used to support system improvement during the current reporting period, in Question 28, you would indicate the system improvement activities engaged in during the current reporting period with Rural program funds and identify the systems in which the improvement occurred. Please check all that apply.