MICHELLE ALVORD: Welcome, everyone. My name is Michelle Alvord. I'd like to just give you a quick Zoom webinar tour. I'm sure most of you have spent quite a bit of time on Zoom, but I'd like to just quickly go through a quick rundown of the interface.

So, this is an example of what the Zoom interface looks like. Starting at the bottom left of the screen, you'll find your Audio Settings menu. You should see the chat box. Then to the center right of the chat box, you'll see a Q&A box where you can put any of your questions for our panelists today.

To the right of that is the Closed Captioning button. It's important that if you'd like to see the captions, that you click on the “Show Captions” button. To the far lower right corner is the red “Leave” button, but we hope you won't use that option today. And lastly, at the upper right is the option to choose “Full Screen” or enlarge your viewing area.

Now, we will go over some of those options in just a little bit more detail. As I said, in the lower left are your audio settings. You can select your speakers or a headset or choose to adjust your volume in that menu. If you're experiencing a lot of audio breakup today, you can select “Leave Computer Audio” and call in by telephone to listen. You can find the phone number in the audio settings menu, or you can find that number in the email that you received from me this morning.

We do have live captions. Thank you, Mary Kay, for being with us today. As I said briefly a second ago, you can enable those captions by clicking the cc icon at the bottom of your screen, click “Show Captions.” You can customize the size of the captions box. You can also move it around on your screen by just holding down on it and moving it. You can also select “View Full Transcript” or in the chat box we have a stream text link for a full transcript as well.

We have our two ASL interpreters with us today-- thank you, Traci and Kaitlin. If you would like to see them in a larger view, you can choose “Swap Video” in Shared Screen at the upper right of your screen. That’s if you want to see them in a much larger, clearer view.

To submit your questions to our panelists, we ask you to use the Q&A box. It's easier for us to track them this way. You can find the Q&A box-- it's the two word bubbles instead of the just one icon. If you're listening by phone and you have questions, you are more than welcome to email those questions to askearn@cornell.edu and someone we'll get back to you with an answer.

Lastly, if you have any technical issues, please put those in the Q&A box as well, and Sam and I will be happy to assist you. If you are on the phone and you're having technical issues getting in, you can email me at msa224@cornell.edu or Sam at sap43@cornell.edu. Now, it is my pleasure to stop the technical slides and turn things over to Jennifer Sheehy, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the U.S. Department of Labor.
JENNIFER SHEEHY: Thank you. I'm delighted to be here today. I'm thrilled that we have so many people participating in this webinar. And I've been looking forward to it for a long time – it's been 20 years since I've been in the Federal Government. And this meeting is all about an Executive Order (EO) that is near and dear to my heart, and certainly very explicitly includes people with disabilities.

And today we're going to hear from one of my favorite colleagues, Dexter Brooks, who is going to lead a discussion on this Executive Order and how we can all contribute to its goals. And Dexter has also a long history supporting federal employees. He is the Director of Federal Sector Programs in the Office of Federal Operations at the EEOC. He has been with the EEOC since 1998 and I think he is one of the biggest champions and advocates for federal employees with disabilities of anyone I know.

Looking at his bio, I noticed that he created the Federal Sector Training Institute and has done outreach to probably millions of federal employees by now. So, he is certainly the right person to lead this incredible opportunity for all of us to ensure that people with disabilities are in the Federal Government, that they get hired in the federal government and then are successful. So, without further ado, I will turn it over to my friend Dexter. Thank you.

DEXTER BROOKS: Thanks Jennifer. It's always a pleasure to work with Jennifer and the team at ODEP. Over the last six years, the opportunity to work on this partnership with OPM and ODEP and under Jennifer's leadership has been a real pleasure. I think we've been able to do some really foundational things in terms of moving disability inclusion and accessibility to heightened levels, and that's why I think we all share this mutual excitement about the President's Executive Order 14035.

And so, today, as the Executive Order was issued at the end of June, and agencies are digesting it and starting to do self-assessments, the White House asked us to reach out to our key constituents to do briefings. And of course, our partnership with the Federal Exchange on Employment and Disability is one of our key stakeholder partnerships. And so, even though we're out of cycle with our usual meetings, we wanted to go through ODEP's and EARN's leadership, in coordination with them, to offer the session today.

Now, during the session we're going to go over the entire Executive Order. We will highlight how it interplays with our work in FEED, but we're going to go through the complete Executive Order and then save some time to answer questions. And so, today we're going to be presenting as a team. We're going to start off with our great colleague, Natalie Veeney from OPM, who is going to set the table for us and explain the Executive Order. I'm going to come back, walk you through some of the individual pieces. And then, some of my colleagues from EEOC, William Torruellas and Wendy Doernberg, are going to close it out and share with you where we're going next in terms of implementation.

So, I'm going to turn it over to Natalie. In some ways, we all work for Natalie now, because she is the driver of this Executive Order. So whatever Natalie decides to shift, we all have to shift with her, because she's been working-- and I don't know, there must be three Natalies at this point, because she's been working so diligently-- so effectively-- in terms of leading us in a lot of the areas that the Executive Order wants to move toward. And so, I'm going to turn it over to
Natalie. She's going to set the table for us, and then we'll take questions. We’ll take questions throughout the chat and probably save a few for the end. So, without further ado – Natalie!

**NATALIE VEENEY:** Hello. So, I am not three people. Somedays, maybe – it depends. But thank you, Dexter, for that. For those of you who don’t know me, my name is Natalie Veeney, and I’m currently Deputy Director of the Office of Diversity Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility for the Government-wide Implementation of the EO for OPM. And so, as Dexter said, we are working collaboratively with the Domestic Policy Council, the EEOC and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). We’re excited to provide this information to our stakeholders so that there's good clear communication and that we can use our collective knowledge to answer the questions and speak from one voice. Next slide, please.

Table setting. So we just wanted to start off with a little bit of framing about the EO including some definitions. Many of you in this meeting have been with us since the previous iterations of Executive Orders around diversity and inclusion in the workforce. And as many of you know, this EO expands those and moves us towards the embedding of equity in our workforce and aligns this with accessibility.

So, we started with some key definitions. Diversity is the practice of including many communities - and I'm going to go through these - making sure that we think about identities, races, ethnicities-- things that may not be on a form or we may not have collected in the past. But really thinking about cultures, religions, beliefs of the American people-- including underserved communities. So it's broad and expansive, but it really puts a focus on underserved communities and ensuring that our workforce is inclusive of all of those communities.

Now equity - many of us have been introduced to equity from the EO 13985, President Biden’s racial equity EO, but that was external facing. And I'll talk about that in a minute. But we really need to think about within the workplace. What about the consistent and systemic fair, just and impartial treatment of all individuals? Race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, all of those things. Including individuals from those underserved communities that have historically been denied treatment. So, those are focused areas.

Inclusion-- we've been talking about inclusion, and that's my favorite topic, or one of my favorite topics. It’s the recognition, appreciation and use of talents and skills of employees of all backgrounds and beliefs. And that doesn't exclude things like belonging and uniqueness, but really valuing the individual and making sure that their talents are being used.

Accessibility-- this is the one for this group that I think is most important. The design, construction, development and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs and services so that all people-- including people with disabilities-- can fully and independently use them. I think that covers what we've been trying to do for 30 plus years, as Jennifer was saying before, and in a way that hopefully will elevate the work that we've been doing through FEED, and our practitioners in the community have been doing, in a way that shows everyone that access really does benefit all. Next slide.

So, let's talk for a minute about historically underserved and underrepresented communities. I want to say it includes everyone - people of color; people with disabilities – and that includes
targeted disabilities, veterans with disabilities, students with disabilities, recent grads with disabilities, etc. – it includes all of our disability population – women; individuals in rural communities; LGBTQ+ individuals; individuals who face religious discrimination; veterans and military spouses; individuals with limited English proficiency; first generation professionals - these are individuals who are entering government for the first time as a professional, maybe the first in their family; college students; immigrants; formerly incarcerated individuals; older adults; parents; caregivers; individuals facing pregnancy discrimination; and persons adversely impacted by persistent poverty, discrimination or inequality. This Executive Order is for historically underserved and underrepresented communities, and this covers those communities. Next slide, please.

As we talked about a little bit before, the Biden Harris Administration had their day one EO on equity. And just so that you understand, that was about affirmatively advancing equity and equal opportunity in the way that we as government serve the American people. So, that was the purpose of it. And then, the outcome of that is that agencies can advance equity for underserved communities using their outward facing policies, programs and tools. So, those of you who are on equity teams have been aligning what you do for the American people as a part of your objectives to ensure that your policies, programs and tools are increasing or advancing equity for the communities.

The DEIA EO is about advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in the federal workforce, so that we can deliver equitable outcomes. So this is, agency workforces typically reflect the diversity of America. We want that outcome. We want to reflect the diversity of America. We want to leverage our inward facing employment policies and practices to ensure that all public servants at all levels – so not just at the entry level, but also in our senior rankings – have an equal opportunity to succeed and to lead. It's all about equity. Next slide, please.

This is my favorite slide, and I say it all the time, because I think it really takes something that could be considered complex and breaks it down very simply. When we talk about how we are advancing equality in engage all parts of the organization, it's really easy to just say that we're advancing equality in people, culture and mission around the DEIA Executive Order. It's how we look at what we're doing for our colleagues in the federal workforce.

Our mission piece is what we're doing to advance equity for underserved communities in our external facing obligations in support of or in service to the American people. People, culture and mission is how we're going to act on this. People ask, “What's the DEIA EO all about?” It's about people, culture and mission. Internal – within the Federal Government – is where the DEIA EO comes into play. Externally, it’s the racial equity EO. And this is where I hand it back to Dexter.

DEXTER BROOKS: Thanks Natalie. And it's great to set the table in terms of explaining that the EO is broad and it wants to look at all potential communities that are underserved and not play them against one another, but to recognize there are many different segments of the population that are not equally participating. So, how do we find a path for everyone?
With that, I'll go through some of the key provisions of the Executive Order. Keep your questions coming and we'll try to answer them via the chat box and we'll try to take some questions as well – we'll read some of them live during the live Q&A. Next slide, please.

So, the first part of the Executive Order talks about a government-wide approach to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. And it requires OPM and OMB to be the two lead agencies to craft a strategic plan that aligns the entire Federal Government around the Biden Administration’s effort towards DEIA. And it brings in key partnerships from the White House - the Domestic Policy Council and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission are the key partners. We're working – these four agencies – very closely in implementing and working towards the government-wide strategy. There'll be more detail on that in a later slide, but the government-wide plan is due in late November, so that’s when you will see the government-wide strategy.

Before we get to the government-wide strategy, we want agencies to do a self-assessment. So 100 days after the signing of the Executive Order, which was on June 25, all agencies are required to assess the current state of their DEIA within their workforce, and identify barriers that employees from underserved communities are facing. And so, that is the first ask. It's coming in two parts, where they're doing a survey, which is due back to OMB by the end of August. And then, by October 4th, they will do the complete assessment, laying out the areas where they're doing really well and some of the areas for growth. It's not coming with the perspective that federal agencies have done nothing, because we know federal agencies have worked in many ways to improve opportunity, but there is much room for growth. We want to pinpoint those areas and give agencies a pathway to creating a workforce that's fully inclusive.

And then finally, it's asking agencies to look for an opportunity to establish a senior official to promote diversity, equity and inclusion within their workforce. And sometimes, folks will say, “Oh, we have a chief diversity officer, we have an EEO officer, we have a CHICO.” And you may have these different roles already within your organization, but looking at the context and the totality of this Executive Order, are you able to accomplish everything that I'm going to go through today? Because the EO goes beyond what we have looked at traditionally in terms of diversity and definitely in terms of equal opportunity. We're looking at areas that I'll highlight as we move forward. Next slide, please.

One of the first efforts is to look at building a diverse pipeline into public service. So, looking at recruitment strategies, and what are the national partnerships that the Federal Government can ensure that they use to bring in a diverse pipeline. Because as Natalie said, when you look at people, culture and mission, then you really have to look at your pipeline. If one of the communities that you serve is citizens with disabilities, do you have employees with disabilities that can help give the broad perspective of that community? And so, building that pipeline to make sure you have access to the complete range of federal employees is essential for this Executive Order.

One of the expanded areas that I was speaking on in terms of being beyond what we traditionally do is the second bullet you see here, which is federal employment for formerly incarcerated individuals. That directs OPM to look at potential barriers for those who were
formerly incarcerated and to consider new hiring authorities and abilities to make sure that population is not left out of the opportunity. Next slide, please.

Pay equity is a centerpiece in terms of fair compensation. One of the things the Executive Order is asking OPM to continue to do, because OPM has done a considerable amount of work on this over the last decade, is to look at the government-wide regulations and guidance on the way we set pay for public servants. And sometimes, we might think of this as only a gender-based assessment, and we will look at it from a gender-based view, but also in terms of the other underserved communities that come in at lower rates.

The second bullet talks about taking steps to prohibit agencies from seeking and relying on the applicant’s salary history during the hiring process to determine the way an agency pays. So, if someone has been out of work for a variety of reasons, whether it’s gender-based, disability-based, or what have you, using that applicant’s past salary history to determine what to pay them today is not always going to reflect market value. So, it’s really looking to eliminate some of those things that disadvantaged groups may face if they have lapses in employment and things of that nature.

And then, the second part of it is to reduce the reliance on unpaid internships. The Federal Government brings in thousands of individuals who come in to gain experience so that they can find a path to opportunity in federal service, and a lot of these opportunities come through unpaid internships. We realize that not all students can afford to take unpaid internships. So, we may be missing large segments of our population by relying on unpaid internships. This is really about directing agencies to reduce the reliance on unpaid internships and find ways to allow for greater opportunity in internship programs. Next slide, please.

In relation to LGBTQ+ public servants, one of the key areas that we’ll be focusing on is ensuring that they have the adequate health benefits for their spouses and children, and that they have access not only to healthcare, but also insurance coverage and employee benefits such as long-term care and sick leave, those things that you would expect in a family unit. It charges agencies to take steps to ensure that federal employees’ gender identities accurately reflect their identity in the workplace, and to explore opportunities to expand gender-neutral restroom facilities and facilities in general within the workplace.

And then finally, the last bullet discusses how all agencies are charged with insuring that employee services are equitably serving LGBTQ+ employees, including supportive services for our transgender employees and non-gender conforming employees, and non-binary employees who wish to legally, medically and socially transition. These are things that we've been working on. OPM is putting out guidance to help agencies understand ways to assist their employees who wish to present themselves as they truly are. Next slide, please.

And then, there's a separate provision about accessibility, and when we say it's a separate provision, this isn't a standalone – this isn't the only section of the EO that applies to individuals with disabilities. The entire EO reflects the population of individuals with disabilities as an underserved community, so everything we're doing with internships and pay equity, everything you'll see that deals with underserved communities is also applicable to individuals or employees with disabilities. But in addition to that, the White House wanted to make sure that
when the “A” for accessibility was added to the Executive Order, that this was done for a purpose – to show that this has not been something that has had the priority in the past like we have wanted. Even though there had been other Executive Orders and other actions, with this EO, we really wanted to elevate this and acknowledge that we, the Federal Government, need to do more in this particular area.

So, the EO charges key agencies across the government to ensure that workplace technologies are accessible, the process for requesting reasonable accommodation is timely and effective, and that employees understand their rights to both accessibility and reasonable accommodation. It's also asking for a review of the Schedule A hiring authority for individuals with disabilities to see how we can improve use of it and leveraging Schedule A to hire employees with disabilities.

Finally, the EO directs the Department of Defense and Department of Labor to elevate the use of the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) for college students and recent graduates with disabilities. And our partners in ODEP are key partners in developing strategies in this area. So, in combination with other internship programs and WRP, there's going to be a real effort to see how we can create greater opportunities for students to find a pathway into federal service. Next slide, please.

So, this slide deals with equity focused training and development. The Executive Order directs agencies to issue guidance to improve collection of demographic data on employees, including employees with disabilities, and how they're able to access professional development and advancement opportunities within their organizations. So really, this is about career development. How do we get folks to the higher levels of Federal Government, all the way to the Senior Executive Service (SES), and how are we developing our employees and making that development equitable. It also directs federal agencies to expand the availability of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility training for their workforce. So how are we building skillsets? How can we make sure managers understand why this is important to the workplace? It's not a “nice thing to do” to have a diverse, inclusive, accessible environment, it's key to having a productive, meaningful workforce that's delivering the results that we expect from a federal agency.

So, we're going to be trying to develop training, but not compliance training. Not “This is what the law says,” but rather these are the things you need to do to maximize the productivity and availability of your workforce. EEOC and OPM are taking the lead in developing training and curriculum to help agencies understand how we move in this direction. Next slide, please.

And then there's a bullet about respectful and safe workplaces and looking at workplace harassment. And so, it's going to require a comprehensive government-wide plan to address workplace harassment, including sexual harassment, but also including disability harassment, which is an issue that's been noted. For many years, EEOC did a study and we know that there is a prevalence of disability harassment within the workplace in the U.S. So, we'll be looking at a broad brush policy on how to address harassment proactively in the workplace. And there's a second provision looking at gender-based violence that we know happens, and it's looking at agency's workplace policies to help prevent and protect employees who are subject to domestic violence, stalking or sexual violence. Next slide, please.
Now, all this is built around a data-driven approach. This is not for us to do guesswork of each agency should be doing the exact same thing. The purpose of a self-assessment is to see where you are within the spectrum of opportunity. Where are you doing well? Where are the areas for improvement? And as we target the areas for improvement, this needs to be based on data, whether it be from statistics, focus groups with employees, talking to your employee advocacy groups or your employee resource groups, etc. Agencies really need to focus on gaining the necessary information to develop a plan of action to move forward with whatever initiatives that are going to implement.

So, you're not going to necessarily see each agency working on the exact same thing, because they may be at different stages or have different issues that are confronting their workforces. And many agencies have different compositions of their workforce, so it will be based on doing a real meaningful self-assessment. EEOC, OPM, OMB and the White House will be helping agencies with their assessment so that they'll know what the drivers are, and what things they need to focus on. This won't be guesswork, it will be based on objective, evidence-based data.

Next slide, please. Now I will turn it over to my colleague, William Torruellas, to talk about where we're going with implementation.

WILLIAM TORRUELLAS: Hi. As all of you here know, the implementation of this Executive Order is going to be a whole government effort. This effort will be coordinated by the White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC) and the implementation of this Executive Order will be coordinated by OPM, OMB and EEOC. These three agencies will have the major role in implementing this Executive Order. In addition, as you can see in this slide, there are other agencies and policy councils that will support this implementation. Next slide, please.

And here on this slide are the key executive order deadlines. Within 100 days of the Executive Order, this will be on October 4, agencies will submit the self-assessment of DEIA practice to DPC and OMB. So OMB, OPM and EEOC will provide more guidance and support on these requirements and will be posting more information on the MAX.gov website. Within 150 days, that is November 23, the DEIA Initiative will issue the government-wide DEIA strategic plan. Within 270 days, that will be March 23, agencies will submit their agency-specific DEIA strategic plans that will need to be aligned with the government-wide plan. And every year, the agencies will submit progress reports. Next slide, please.

Here are things that agencies will be asked to do and things that they will not be asked to do. Within 100 days, they need to submit to DPC OPM and OMB an assessment of DEIA within the agency, including surfacing insights about diversity in the agency's workforce composition, assessing the current state and effectiveness of DEIA programs. Secondly, they need to build on baseline data provided by the DEIA Initiative on the status of DEIA within the agency, using the agency-specific data. Third, they need to include a forecast of DEIA priorities from the secretary or agency head. And lastly, they need to submit reports through a MAX.gov collection site. OPM, OMB and EEOC will be providing more information to complete these self-assessments.

What will you not be asked to do? Duplicate existing reporting channels or respond to the same information request submitted through the equity EO. And we already explained the difference between this Executive Order and the equity EO. And lastly, publish the report, and the report may be subject to FOIA. So, if you have any FOIA concerns, we recommend that you contact
your agency council to get more information. And now I’m going to pass this presentation to Wendy.

**WENDY DOERNBERG:** Hi, I'm Wendy Doernberg. I'm happy to be with you today. So, I’ll be talking a little bit more about implementation. Some of this slideshow is a little bit out of date, but I will just update you as much as I possibly can. So agencies, once this Executive Order came out, we tried to get this slideshow out as soon as possible just to give agencies an idea of where we’d be going. We asked agencies to start looking at workforce data, reports surveys and training capacity when they were starting to think about how they would conduct self-assessment. And many of you in this meeting are familiar with some these reports like MD-715, FEORP, FEVS, etc.

Since then, we have issued information about the self-assessments for the agencies. But even so, the agencies will be reviewing a lot of this information to help them with the self-assessments that we’ve issued. Another thing that we’ve asked agencies to look at in completing the self-assessment is the 2016 Agency Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plans. In addition to that, we’re asking agencies to engage with key stakeholders and that's why we're here with you guys today. But agencies will be engaging with D&I councils, employee resource groups and affinity groups to discuss the DEIA Executive Order and to engage those groups in implementing the EO as the different deadlines come up.

With respect to DEIA implementation teams, just an update on this bullet. Agencies have already submitted information about DEIA implementation teams to OMB and OPM and EEOC is also aware of that, and the Domestic Policy Council as well. One thing that I want to highlight with respect to these DEIA implementation teams is that agencies who are working on this EO are looking for involvement at very high levels with respect to the EO.

If you look at the list of suggested people involved in the implementation teams, you see the chief financial officer, budget office, performance management office and other offices that you would expect, including the EEO office. But I just wanted to highlight that the implementation of this EO necessitates that we use the highest levels of our agencies. And certainly, you also see the Office of General Counsel there, just to make sure that we’re doing everything in the best way we can with respect to legal considerations. Next slide, please.

I've been very impressed with the collaboration with OPM, EEOC and OMB, and also the Domestic Policy Council from the White House. And we’ve already started all of these things listed on the slide – we’ve started weekly office hours, Thursdays from 2-3 p.m., except for this Thursday is going to be a little different. But we're hosting these office hours for agencies in terms of how they can implement their portion of the EO.

We also have a DEIA Learning Community. I think Dexter already put the link in the Q&A for that, just to give folks more information about how this EO will be implemented and the trainings available, etc. We want this to be a success. I've just been really impressed myself with how OMB and OPM have been collaborating to make this as much of a success as possible.

And the last thing I would like to highlight is the DEIA inbox. And I certainly want to give a major thanks to Natalie and her team for setting this up and coordinating it. It’s AskDEIA@opm.gov. You can send inquiries about the DEIA EO to this mailbox. Certainly agency implementation
teams will send inquiries to this mailbox. Natalie and her team are doing a great job of routing those questions to the appropriate people on the teams.

So, that's where we're at in terms of implementation. I've just been really impressed with the collaboration of all the various agencies in implementing this EO. So with that, I will finish up the slide show and we can move on to the next portion of today's agenda.

**DEXTER BROOKS:** So, we wanted to save adequate time for questions, and there are quite a few questions in the Q&A that the team will try to answer. And I'll take maybe the first two, and then I'll pass it to Natalie, William or Wendy, because I know Natalie has marked some that she will take.

**Q.** The first question is about OPM MAX and the ability to have access to the official resource page for the Executive Order.

**A.** So, we didn't provide copies of the slideshow. The slideshow as you see, in the first slide, it talks about pre-decisional deliberative. And so, we are not doing mass distribution of the slideshow. This is a slideshow approved by the White House and they put the version of the slideshow that's available to the public on the OMB MAX website. Now, if you're not registered at the MAX website or don't have access to OMB MAX, you need a .gov or .mail email address to do so because it's only open to federal employees. And so, this EO pertains to federal employees, so that's the community is being restricted to.

So, if you don't have access — because I know some of the information that we've been using for years as a part of our FEED group is also housed on MAX. So, a lot of folks are already familiar with MAX. But if you're not, take a look at the site and register. It's a government-wide site. And that's how you're going to get access to the information that we're sharing today. And beyond the slide deck, there is other information there that will be very useful for you. So, while folks are very focused on the slide deck, and that's there at the site, it's really important for you to get access to that site so that you can see upcoming information on the implementation and where we are with the EO.

**Q.** There’s a question about 508 compliance and GSA’s involvement in the EO.

**A.** Like Wendy said, this is a very comprehensive effort by the White House. So, even though GSA is not — you don't see them highlighted in different portions like you see EEOC, OPM and Department of Labor — and the Access Board is also set apart in the EO — GSA and 508 compliance and their portions of it are very much involved.

So, in terms of executing and implementing, the White House is pulling its staff from around the government that has equities or stakes in a particular area of interest. And so, in terms of accessibility, GSA is definitely involved. And we've already started collaborating on meetings with the larger group looking at 508 compliance. Jennifer and ODEP team are involved. We have EEOC, OPM, GSA, etc. And so, we're all going to be working together and we're going to probably bring in other folks to give different perspectives along the way. So, it's not going to be siloed within just the policymakers.

We're going to actually find ways to get more information from the practitioners. So 508 compliance and accessibility is a centerpiece of this EO, and that's why with acronym, people
were getting used to the ‘D’ and ‘I’ or DIA. Bu the President and the White House are saying, “No, we're going to socialize and move towards DEIA, and make sure folks understand the importance of the A.” So it's not going to be falling out of the process, GSA is going to be involved and this is not just all talking points. This is what the White House is directing us to do. So, I know there may be concerns that 508 has not always been the centerpiece, but it's definitely a centerpiece of this particular EO.

Q: Next question – when a department is a subcomponent agency, is the department required to follow through with the deliverables on the EO or are the department and the subcomponent agency(s) responsible for follow through on the deliverables?

NATALIE VEENEY: So, if we're talking specifically about the best practices survey, and the agency assessment, then, yes, the department and the subcomponents are expected to complete both of those. I think the same would be for any other future deliverables. I mean, agencies are expected to take on everything that's in this EO and motivate it through their agency strategic plan.

These are DEIA EO implementation teams, if we didn't cover that in detail – I think Wendy mentioned it. It's not just the EO office, it's not just the D&I component. They're asking about the DEIA at the agency and the subcomponent level where that makes sense. Sometimes it only makes sense to have it at the agency and not the subcomponent level. But we're asking for the DEIA EO implementation teams to also be broadened. So, it's not just D&I, not just HR, not just EEO, but we're asking for your performance, your strategy for your organization to be involved, to say how this work is embedded into the whole of the organization's goals.

Q. Next question is asking “Are we funding or budgeting any government-wide efforts?”

A. We're asking for strategy to be in there and performance, so that you can-- agency by agency, subcomponent by subcomponent, department by department-- embed this into your budgeting process. It's going to take more resources and more time and more people to complete this in a way that's a whole agency effort. So, we're setting it up for this to be successful. Your general counsel is asked to be involved, your chief financial officer is asked to be involved, etc.

The DEIA Implementation Team should include your whole organization. So yes, agencies and departments should submit their plans, but there should also be internal coordination on those efforts from everyone. We don't need agencies to have their subcomponents or departments not knowing what's going on. We all know how to coordinate within our organizations, but we also want agencies to tell their stories. We as practitioners also understand that most of the work happens at the agency level.

We want to make sure that we have the view of the agency and the view of the department. Which most of the time is the same, but I think we get a little bit more granular detail when we ask agencies some really specific questions, or when they're allowed to provide that information to us in those assessments.

Q. The next question is, “Who gets to see these assessments?”
A. So, this is a coordinated effort between OMB, EEOC and OPM to review the summaries of the surveys as they come in – the responses from agencies. And then, we will also be reviewing the agency self-assessments. Primarily, and the reason why we have these timelines, is so that they can inform the government-wide plan. And then, we'll also be able to see or provide some type of baselines, like where are we as far as use of best practices? Where are we in use of agencies understanding how to assess their organizations and their current state?

Q. The next question is “If your agency is already conducting assessments for other reasons, can that information be included in the self-assessment for the EO?”

A. If your agency already provides current assessments – if you're already assessing your organization – feel free to submit copies of that with the assessment template that we've provided to show that maybe you're assessing other areas of the organization that the template does not. So, this doesn't preclude you from including that assessment information.

DEXTER BROOKS: I want to say this, we won't have all the answers because we're rolling out and preparing for a Government-wide Strategic Plan, but this input that you're providing us through your questions are things that we probably need to explore.

Q. So there was a question from Raquel on pay equity: “In terms of pay equity, will the EO allow for correction of pay for underserved communities already in the workforce? They've already incurred the damage.”

A. I don't have the answer to that question, Raquel, but that's an excellent point for consideration as the pay equity team starts looking at ways in which we need to address pay equity in the federal sector.

Q. There's another question – “How specifically is the administration going to ensure timely decisions made for reasonable accommodations?”

A. This is very important for individuals with disabilities and we already have guidance out, we have requirements. And so, what the administration has asked us to do is look at where we are, identify the critical areas where we're not operating in the optimal way and then move forward. So we're going to identify this, we're going to use the data that's already available to EEOC, OPM and OMB on the reasonable accommodation process and then provide more direction to agencies as to the administration's expectations moving forward.

Q. Here's another question for Natalie – “Is there a plan for a government-wide funding source for parts of the EO, for example for funding paid internships?

A. At this point, I can say that's to be determined. I don't know of any government-wide effort to uniformly pay for all internships, but I do think that the requirement that we increase paid internships requires each agency to figure out how they're going to budget and fund those. That may be through your program offices, it may be an agency-wide initiative, it may be relooking at WRP and our PMF programs and current things that we already have in place to see if we're going to expand those. If there's a government-wide initiative, obviously we would announce it here. That's another one of those to-be-determined responses, but I do think the government as a whole will have to think about how we're going to budget and fund internships or early career programs.
Q. Here is another question, “Say an agency makes all applicants complete a standardized assessment that is given for all positions, and it's focused on skills that may not clearly be tied to a specific job, or has the appearance to weed out many of the underserved communities we are saying we want to include. Any idea why these are still allowed, and are there any plans to conduct studies, or reviews on possible barriers they create for underserved communities, especially those with disabilities?”

A. What a great example of an opportunity to look at your agency’s hiring practices to see if those standardized tests have an effect on those who actually get hired, or do they weed out candidates in a way that makes them not eligible? I think that's where each agency would have to look at their own practices, because everyone uses different testing. So I can't say overall, but it's a great opportunity to look at the standardized assessment your agency is using and ask, “Is this yielding what we need or is this hurting our initiatives and our endeavors?” And maybe and agency needs to modify the assessment they use, but you have to get the data first. You have to look at the data to see if it is or isn't impacting your results, and if so, which communities are affected and which are not and if this is something happening over time. There's a lot of different points that I think you could look at the data to see if this is a barrier or not.

This is what we mean by data-driven decisions. If your organization anticipates that this is a perceived barrier to increasing underserved communities in your workplace, it’s something that they can explore with data that we currently have, or create an assessment to figure it out. These are the types of things I wanted to highlight, even though I don't really have the answers to these questions because this is the type of work that we need to do to ensure that we have inclusive, barrier-free environments.

Q. This is a question from Dr. Horne, “Will we get a template of the self-assessment questions?”

A. A lot of these things, we’re going to refer you to the OMB MAX site for, because that's where all this information will be. If you want the slideshow, access to the assessment questions, the guidance, the deliverables, where can you ask questions, where can you get more information about office hours, it's all there. So that's why we’re directing everyone instead of putting these links up somewhere else. You really should register to get access to OMB MAX and then when you’re in the site you’ll have access to updated information that’s not dated like some things in this presentation. And if your government email doesn't work, I mean if you can't get it to work with MAX, because I know someone put in the Q&A that they have a different type of .gov, there are ways in which you can contact the MAX support team to get access to the site.

Q. The next question is, “Are the baseline data sources available in MAX yet?”

A. For the agencies that have already been made a part of the implementation team, we are ready to start reviewing their self-assessments. And one of the things that I said and that Natalie said and that others have said, is that we want this to be data-driven. OPM is providing agencies with baseline data so that you don’t have to comb through all your data to find that. OPM is making it very transparent for you.

NATALIE VEENEY: Thanks, Dexter. To add to that, we are currently in the process of still uploading that data. It's for 73 agencies. We won’t be posting baseline data for
subcomponents, it will just be at the department agency level, not at the subcomponent level. So, that's one thing. We're still loading it with the language. Most of the information is information that's publicly available, but there are some key elements that are not publicly available. We're making sure that we provide the privacy and the safeguarding of the information. Who's going to get the data? Who has access to it? Those who are listed as your DEIA Implementation Team members will be alerted when that data is available and will have access to it. So, it doesn't go out to everyone in the community, just your DEIA EO Implementation Team members.

Q. The next question is, “Will the chief information officer be a part of the DEIA team?”

A. We're looking for that cross-section of individuals. So, while you might think of your human capital, your diversity, your EEO, your civil rights folks, we are also looking at all the folks that have a part in accessibility and equities for underserved communities. So, your CIO could be a part of it. Definitely your chief financial officer is a mandatory member, because we need to understand what resources are necessary to make this available. So each agency can formulate this. They have to submit names to OMB of their implementation team. I can't remember if one of the required members is the CIO.

NATALIE VEENEY: The CIO is not required, but not prohibited, either. Please note that we have received sometimes 12, 15, 30 different individuals that agencies have identified as part of their team. We are creating a database and our team is typing in all the email addresses and the titles as fast as we can. So, to answer the question, the CIO was not one of the key implementers listed. But if for your organization that makes sense, then please highlight them and place them on the list. Some agencies have sent us 30 different people, because they wanted to ensure that everyone across their organization has access to the latest information. We asked for those specific 10-12 folks to show that we wanted it to be broad and expansive and cover all entities of the organization involved in the work. So, if it would make sense for your organization to have the CIO listed, please do so.

We are still intaking some of those DEIA implementation teams. We have probably about 70 of the 73 reporting. So, most agencies have already turned them in and we had an August 6 deadline. We’ve received, I would say, a good 80% of the implementation teams, so kudos to your agencies for doing that. And like I said, we're compiling the database now, and if you have additions, you'll be able to add them. We're hoping to put it up on MAX so that you can add them yourself. Like Dexter said, we're building this plane and flying it at the same time. If you go to the MAX site, you will always be able to get the most recent information.

DEXTER BROOKS: So, I know there was some follow-up on that point, Natalie, about the implementation team. It's not like where people volunteer and become a part of the implementation team. It's very thoughtful in a sense that it needs to be the senior political leaders. It has to be the folks that are responsible for implementing programs and funding. And then, those teams are going to be the ones responsible or accountable to the White House, OMB, OPM and EEOC in terms of advancing the Executive Order, but that doesn't mean they won't pull in others.
Q. I see in chat that people are asking “How do I get to become a part of my agency’s Implementation Team?”

A. Your agency, as they're starting to look through the different parts of the Executive Order where they strategically need to advance opportunities, will have the opportunity to bring in other folks from the workforce. And one of the reasons why the White House made briefing stakeholders a part of this effort is so things don't happen in the dark and you don’t hear about them. We want you to know about the requirements of the Executive Order. We want you to understand that the White House is directing agencies to provide information here. This is the information to help our organization. So, a part of this White House strategy was to do as many briefings to stakeholders as possible so you will understand what the White House is trying to accomplish and ways in which you might find a path to helping your organization in terms of improving opportunities for underserved communities.

NATALIE VEENEY: For the person in the chat that wanted to know about agency data, that is not a part of what we’re providing as far as baseline data for the agencies. In the chat box, I'm going to put in how you can make agency requests of data from OPM. I think the email is @stat.gov, but I want to make sure and then I’ll post it in the chat box. So, for any agency requests for their agency data, we have one centralized email for that. And I will post that in the chat box in just a moment.

DEXTER BROOKS: Thanks, Natalie.

Q. There are some questions about an even playing field for advancement of employees with disabilities.

A. Of course that's going to be a centerpiece of what we're working on. I see my friend Bram Berger. In terms of your question around pay equity, looking at the probationary terms for Schedule A employees who have a two-year probationary period, some agencies linger with this. And that delays, of course, some things and may be a potential blockage in terms of steps and grade increases because of the way that that probationary period works. This is an excellent point to bring up in terms of pay equity. We need to identify ways to minimize that inequity, so that's a great point. This is the type of information we need to have at the forefront to put before the groups as we're starting to come up with strategies.

Q. The next question is, “Will information about IT systems that are accessible and being used successfully in federal agencies be shared?”

A. One of the things about the self-assessment is that it’s not focused on just pinpointing problems. It’s also asking agencies to highlight areas where you're doing really well, so that we can share that with other parts of the Federal Government, so they can take the learning from one agency and not have to start from scratch. So yes, we’re definitely going to be sharing as many best practices as possible.
WENDY DOERNBERG: Thanks, Dexter.

Q. I saw a question about people being confused about a survey versus a self-assessment. Could you provide a little bit of explanation with respect to that?

NATALIE VEENEY: Sure.

A. So, there are two parts to this. I think it was on August 3, the White House issued a letter to federal agencies and in that letter it asks for your agency DEIA EO Implementation Teams. The letter provided first a template that addresses your current assessment of your organization's DEIA status, which is due on October 4. And then, it had an appendix that was a best practices survey that they are asking agencies to complete by August 31. You access the survey by getting a link to the MAX site. It's an online assessment, just like you do any online survey, but you're responding to some specific questions around your agency's use of best practices. You are reviewing the current state of DEIA in your organization with the template that was provided, and that response is due on October 4, as I said. I hope that makes it a little bit more clear. One is just the best practices you're currently using, due August 31. The other is an assessment of the current state of DEIA in your organization, and it's a template that you complete and submit by October 4.

Q. The next question is “What if we already do assessments?”

A. You can also include those in your submission.

DEXTER BROOKS: I think one of the points was that they didn't see the text of the EO where it talks about the survey. The survey is included within what's being described as the self-assessment. So even though you don't see it, you don't see those words, it's a part of self-assessment.

Q. The next question is, “Is there a strategic plan to create a career exploration program for students with disabilities?”

A. You know that we have the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), and we're looking to expand that. But I think one of the provisions that we went over before is to increase recruitment. It doesn't always have to be WRP, it's not going to be limited to WRP, that is just that one of the key vehicles. But of course, in any internship program, how do we make sure that the underserved community of students with disabilities will be a part of it?

NATALIE VEENEY: Okay, thank you.

Q. I just received a question about the accessibility of the survey on MAX.

A. We did request that it be 508 compliant and reviewed for accessibility. But again, there's a support site listed, so if you do run into any difficulties, we ask that you notify MAX support quickly, so that we can resolve them prior to August 31. A lot of agencies, once they receive the link did go onto the site and tried to preview it. So, if you need to do so, we ask that you do that now, so that if we need to reset it or make any modifications or adjustments, we can do so prior to the August 31 deadline.

DEXTER BROOKS: Thanks, Natalie.
Q. Someone had a question about the role of the general counsel.

A. General counsel has a central role. Agencies before they lay out their strategic plans or completed their self-assessments need to make sure they're doing things within the legal framework. And so, there's a requirement that they consult with their Office of General Counsel.

NATALIE VEENEY: Agency responses on the survey or the assessment will not be made public. We will be using them to aggregate information, but we won't be posting it publicly. It may be used to inform plans, but we don't anticipate publicly posting any agency responses to the survey or the assessment.

DEXTER BROOKS: Yes, thank you.

Q. Angie has a suggestion about using an accessibility officer similar to an ADA Coordinator as a connector.

A. This is a great thing to consider. I can't make any promises, but thank you for that suggestion.

NATALIE VEENEY: A lot of this depends on how organizations are funded. But as we talked about earlier, one of those things we asked you to look at in your agency policies and practices is to identify barriers, and maybe one of the barriers to having an accessible environment is not having that convener, that person, that coordinator that specifically is tied to that initiative. But if that is identified as something that would be an outcome, then that's a definite driver to ask for additional resources for that person to either be elevated if you already have one or staffed if you need to hire for one.

DEXTER BROOKS: Okay, so next question.

Q. “Are you publishing the Implementation Teams on the MAX site?”

A. I don't think we're publishing the list of agency Implementation Teams on the site.

NATALIE VEENEY: No. Good question, though.

Q. How agencies contact the person on their DEIA Implementation Team has come up.

A. We'll have to see if agencies want to identify at least one person, in case they're wanting be some internal coordination. But at this time, it is not public information. But again, thank you for the comment because that spurs thought.

DEXTER BROOKS: We do recommend that agencies consult with the disability rights office. Any folks that have information about potential expansion of opportunity for a particular group should be involved and we definitely will be encouraging agencies to partner broadly within their workforce.

NATALIE VEENEY: I want to remind everybody, this is not a sprint, this is a marathon and we are at the beginning. And we're getting the excitement and we have a lot of deliverables, but we all know that once the deliverables stop, that's when the magic really has to happen. And so, the work that you've been doing will feed into this very nicely. I don't want you to get frustrated with the to dos of today that are necessary. I'm not saying don't do them, I'm saying that we
have to do them, but that this is for the long-term, long range planning and strategic outcomes for your organization.

So, I don't want everyone to get lost in the hustle and bustle of “gimme, gimme, gimme” right now, or “produce, produce, produce” right now or “come up with this or that plan.” Take the time to really think about your agency’s strategic plan now as you’re reviewing those survey questions or items, as you're thinking about the current state of your DEIA program. Everybody should look at those tools on the MAX site. It's not just for your EEO office, D&I office or your chief of staff. Really think critically about what would have the most tangible impact on my organization over the next three to five years. And what is a metric that we can think about establishing that would really show the workforce how we're growing in advancing or increasing the hiring of people with disabilities, advancing equality for individuals with disabilities, increasing promotions, increasing the use of Schedule A, etc.?

I just really want to make sure that we are thinking this way. We at the OPM and Dexter can think of the government-wide gains, but you at the agency level really have a better pulse on your workforce and their needs. And I think, if we really encourage the people here to connect with all of those persons on your DEIA EO Implementation Team, if you are not a member, and let them know about the needs of your community and how the outcomes that we see in the Government-wide Strategic Plan or the agency strategic plan would really benefit your community.

I'm open to taking that information in. I know Dexter is open to taking that information in, because we don't want to create something that's not useful. And so, right now, I just want to say, we're moving. We need all these deadlines met. We have a lot of things to do. But always in the back of your mind, don't lose sight of the goal. And the goal for this organization, or our little community here, is really about increasing and expanding opportunities for employees with disabilities. And so, keep that as a focal point for all of these efforts.

DEXTER BROOKS: I just want to echo what Natalie is saying. There are great questions here, but we're not going to have all the answers. But I have to be honest with you that we're very excited. This is an opportunity that we haven't had for many, many years to really work at this level of senior leadership to have an impact. And I know folks have been vested in this – some of us have been invested in this for over 20, 30 years, and haven't seen the type of progress that we may have expected. And it’s fair to feel that way, but we have seen incremental progress in different times and with different opportunities.

This is a unique opportunity where the White House itself is the driver. It's not an administration passing an Executive Order saying, “OPM, fix it!” Instead, the administration is saying that we all have a role in this, and we're going to own our role as the executive part of it, and bring in OMB to deal with the management and the budget portion of it, bring in OPM to deal with the human capital function and the diversity function, bring in EEOC with our expertise, and look at barriers and things of this nature and try to find a whole government approach by really diving down.

This briefing today is part of this. It was directed to us to go out and make sure the stakeholders aware about this, so this isn't something that's happening in a silo. I know there is some
hesitation and people say things like, “Oh, we tried this in '92. We tried this in 2001.” And I’ve
been there. I was here with a lot of those different initiatives, but I'm more of an optimist. I've
seen a lot of positives comes out of those things, even though we may not have got to the point
that we all may have wanted. But I have to say, the staff at EEOC, OPM, OMB and the White
House are all so excited to work with the community and your voices are really important to us.

If you don't feel like you're getting the opportunity to express what you think needs to happen
at your agency or government-wide, and you don't find the conduits through your agency, you
can leverage your conduits at EEOC and OPM because that's a part of our role, too – to make
sure the stakeholders' voices are heard. So, I see a lot of the questions. I don't think we're going
to be able to get through all of them. I know we went through a lot of information that folks
need to digest.

I think Wendy has shared in her slide that there's a website if there are specific technical
requests. We don't want to pollute the mailbox with questions that are suggestions at this
point, so please no suggestions, just questions. The mailbox is really for technical questions
about the self-assessment. And there will be more information moving forward. The key
deadline is October 4, where we'll need you to get the self-assessments in. The key agencies
are working together to try to create the Government-wide Plan. So, we'll be using our great
membership of FEED to help us get more information as we move forward. This has been
outstanding. We've gotten some great questions that we can take back to the larger
implementation team.

And we really do appreciate Natalie for her leadership, Wendy and William for their
participation and the leaders in this effort as well for on the EEOC side. We really value the fact
that we have this form, the Federal Exchange on Employment and Disability, that gives us the
opportunity to make sure that this portion of the community is heard, and that the
administration is very tuned in to trying to make a significant impact in the time it has at the
White House. And so with that, and I'll turn it over to Natalie to see if she had any closing words
before we turn it back over to our colleagues at ODEP.

NATALIE VEENEY: No closing words, but I have one quick point around reporting. One of the
questions we received today is if we are going to continue to request reporting information
around disability best practices with the FEORP like we have been collecting, because we now
have the new requirement to do the best practices survey and current self-assessment. So, we
don't have an answer to that yet. I just want to say that any time that we can reduce the
burden on agencies, I will be fighting for that. So, this is top of mind already, and hopefully we'll
be coming out with some more information on that soon.

WENDY DOERNBERG: I wanted to add one small thing, and Dexter may already anticipate this.
Any time we've done an outreach like this and taken those questions back, the White House
has read them. I've compiled my list and taken them back. So, you are being heard with OMB,
OPM and the White House and they do appreciate these questions. I'm impressed that
everyone has been very interested in what everyone's saying. I just want to say thank you for
that.
DEXTER BROOKS: And so with that we're going to turn it back over to our esteemed colleagues at ODEP. I think it's Lou who's up with the closing remarks.

LOU ORSLENE: Yes, thank you very much Dexter, really appreciate that. I just want to say that we're just very excited about everybody's interest and passion for moving the needle forward for people with disabilities in the federal workforce. As we have begun talking about the Executive Order, it really provides us with the opportunity to elevate diversity, equity, inclusion and now the accessibility conversation to ensure that the Federal Government is a model employer of people with disabilities.

We're so grateful to our colleagues Dexter, Natalie, Wendy and William for briefing us on the EO. And of course, thankful for their experience, expertise and guidance as we work towards implementing-- and as Natalie said-- socializing the EO through our people, culture and mission. That's the only way that we're really going to truly reach inclusion of people with disabilities. We as ODEP really look forward to supporting these efforts. If you have any additional questions or concerns following the session, please let me know, or my colleague Akinyemi who provides leadership for the FEED group.

We really again appreciate everybody joining us. I appreciate all of your questions and the speakers. And as Natalie was saying, this is in for the long haul. So this is a long-term project that we're all working on. So, we look forward to learning those best practices. We look forward to growing with you all and supporting you in any way that we can. So with that, thanks again for everyone joining us today. It was over 950 people strong. So, a large group of people, lots of interest and lots of excitement. And we just wish you to have a great afternoon. So, thank you again.

[End of Meeting]