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ICANN81 | AGM – GNSO: NCUC Issue Forum Work Session  
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ANDREA GLANDON: Hello and welcome to the NCUC Issue Forum Work Session. My name is Andrea and I am the participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When called upon, virtual participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom, on-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. Please state your name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. And I will now hand the floor over to Wisdom Donkor. You may begin.

WISDOM DONKOR: Thank you very much. My name is Wisdom Donkor for the record and I'll step in for Benjamin for this session. As the incoming chair, when I'm properly seated, then we can begin to look at the next phase of NCUC. So, for us not to waste too much time, I just want us to go straight into everything while we are here, having an experimental workshop. And then that is going to be handled by Pedro. So, I'll just want Pedro to pick us through the rest of the session. So, Pedro.

PEDRO LANA: Thank you, Wisdom. A little bit too loud. There we go. I would also like to ask if Michaela could help us distributing the papers while we are

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introducing the session. So, this NCUC Issue Forum, we are trying to do something new. And as we will discuss in the end, we want this to be an ongoing work about something that is very important to non-commercial, which is the Applicant Support Program. And as an experimental workshop, what we would like to do is to try to put ourselves in the place of someone who is being part of this program, who is applying to the program, and checking what will be the challenges, the barriers that one may find, and also try to understand better how the program will work.

We are right now distributing some categories of possible applicants to the Applicant Support Program. And we would like to see if anyone, after receiving the document, would like to think of a real example of the category that it was given, that you received. While we are explaining the sections of the handbook of the Applicant Support Program, we would also like you to start writing down things that you find to be a possible challenge on how your group would apply to the program. At the end, we will try to discuss a little bit of what would be these possible challenges, and see, try to find also some solutions in how this whole program could work so it could achieve its aim. I don't know if anyone would like to share a real example of your category right now. If no--

BENJAMIN AKINMOYEJE:

Thank you. Benjamin for the record. So, a small and local non-governmental organization would be a small community group that's not government-affiliated, a civil society fighting for maybe children

and women rights, just in a local community. That would be a typical small and local non-governmental organization. And they will also probably have a website. Thank you.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

And please share your name too. So, Kathy Kleiman. I've got ethnic groups spread across several nation-states. Okay, so Pedro, I'm not going to quite follow what it says. So ethnic group, I'm thinking of a national group in this case, Ukrainians, who have had to leave their country. So that would be a group spread across several nation-states, many nation-states now, and they're trying to create a community online. So, a Ukrainian diaspora.

PEDRO LANA:

Thanks, Benjamin. Thank you. Thanks, Katie. Can you, if anyone else has, yeah, anyone else has an example?

KATHY KLEIMAN:

Can you guys explain? Let's ask Emmanuel. Anybody? I think Emmanuel.

EMMANUEL VITUS:

Okay, I think I have a good one. I don't think we'll have much problem with a lot of international non-governmental organizations. So possible problems? Probably revenue and cash reserve cap, because the applicant support puts the cash reserve cap to less than \$5 million, but being a very large non-governmental organization, I think it will be

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difficult for some to qualify because their cash is large international non-governmental organizations. Let's say the Red Cross.

MICHAELA NAKAYAMA SHAPIRO: I'm a small enterprise working on social issues. Maybe something like providing water for my local community.

PEDRO LANA: Ken, please.

KENNETH HERMAN: I represent indigenous peoples and tribes. You wouldn't know from looking at me, but that might be the case. Indigenous peoples and tribes have many common issues across the world. There are small groups scattered on every continent, and their ability to work together could maybe be greatly enhanced through a common platform to use to promote their issues and to bring them together and discuss common issues beyond what you would find in a just a plain website.

PEDRO LANA: Thanks, Ken. And there's anyone else? Because I think we can proceed. Oksana.

OKSANA PRYKHODKO: Oksana Prikhodko, a small enterprise working on social issues. I would like to use this opportunity to share information in Ukrainian, because

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a lot of Ukrainians are throughout the world, and it would be fantastic to ensure a Ukrainian platform to communicate.

PEDRO LANA:

Karolina?

KAROLINA IWANSKA:

I'm Karolina Iwańska, and I have one that hasn't been mentioned before, so maybe I'll read it. A non-governmental organization in an authoritarian regime. So yeah, that could be an NGO that is experiencing restrictions in their country. They are experiencing a shrinking or non-existing civic space, which makes it very difficult for them to operate.

PEDRO LANA:

Thanks everyone for sharing. So, with this experimental workshop, what we want to do is also creating new leaders within our community so they can propagate their knowledge and how to apply and how to have a successful application within their groups. We'll have various presenters from all over NCSG with five minutes explanation time each, give an overview of these sections.

We would also like to make some important separations here, that the Applicant Support Program is a program that provides assistance to eligible entities when it applies for a New gTLD. We'll explain the difference right away. And this assistance is divided into two categories, which is financial, mostly related to reduction of fees, but

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there's also bid credits. We will see this afterwards. And non-financial assistance, which is mostly related around guidance and capacity building in different formats.

We need to understand that there are two different applications that you need to do. The first one is about the Applicant Support Program. The second one will be about getting the new generic top-level domains, which is part of the program, the Next Round Program that we all know. And this other program is the one where you actually apply to be registry. And the idea, the purpose of it is diversifying the domain name system, expanding it.

And it's important to note that the ASP, as we can see in the working group recommendation that was in the final report of the SubPro, since the objective is to foster diversity, encourage competition, and enhance the utility of the DNS, the Applicant Support Program is absolutely essential so we could achieve these objectives. If it's not done right, it will be much harder to especially foster diversity in the domain name system. So, with that, I would like to pass the floor to Katie.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

Kathy Kleiman. And let me ask, do we have people participating remotely who are not in the room. Okay. Could you let us know if any hands are raised or comments come in? Thank you so much. Okay. So, thank you for joining our experimental workshop. This is great to see a full room. Makes me very happy. So, as Pedro said, the idea here is that we're working together. And normally the issues forum talks about some lightning rod issue that we want. And Benjamin's been wonderful

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about rebooting this and Wisdom is continuing it to have a place that we can go to tell the rest of ICANN about our issues. You know, something that really concerns us.

So, this is a little different. We're taking a new document, and we'll talk about it in a second. Taking a new document, taking pieces of it, dividing it up, everyone's studying a piece of it, becoming an expert. I'm looking at Frank because we've been talking about this crazy concept of equivalency determination. We'll talk about it. But taking pieces of it, studying them, and sharing them. This is a powerful concept. This is how NCSG, NCUC, NPOC can really move forward. So, I want to say a special thank you to Pedro for organizing his leadership, Michaela, Frank, Houda, Manuel, and Bolu, and Benjamin, and Wisdom for their work on today's session. It's great not to just be delivering having someone come in and lecture to us.

So, the final Applicant Support Program Handbook is out. And the Applicant Program Support Program will open, maybe, expected November 19th. Put some asterisks next to that to see it could fall back by a few days. I want to share that, Bolu, I think you led our comments on the Applicant Support Handbook, staff worked very hard to incorporate not just our comments, but others, that it was fairly very high level. It was written for lawyers, and now it's not. It's written for people. It's readable text, great graphics, useful checklists. Let me ask around the room, our presenters, did you find the document fairly approachable? Excellent. Excellent. This is what we worked very hard for, and Bolu, I think, was up all night writing, finishing up our comments on that.

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So, I just wanted to show you, this is a slide, we're all going to have a slide deck at the end of this day to take with us to our communities. Of course, you don't have to use this slide deck, you can tweak it, but everyone's slides that you're-- the slide deck that you're seeing for anyone who wasn't participating, this is everyone's slides coming together, so I wanted to make sure you had a link to the new Applicant Support Program Handbook.

So, my piece of today's puzzle is an opening question, a framing question. Why would an organization apply for a new gTLD and want to be a successful and sustainable new gTLD registry? And really, just a little bit, just very high level, what it means to be a successful and sustainable new gTLD. Because, and let me ask you, is applying for a top-level the same thing as applying for a second-level domain name? Applying for a top-level string, gTLD string, the same thing as applying for a second-level domain?

No, no, and let's talk about why. When you apply for a new gTLD string, you're applying to be a registry. And what does a registry do, other than meet meetings that are parallel to ours so we don't see what they do? I'm going to briefly, briefly talk about being a registry, what it involves at the technical level, the operational level, the financial level. And again, very briefly.

At the technical level, I wanted to read this to you because I think it encapsulates it so well, and this comes from an ICANN page. The role of the registry operator within the internet ecosystem is to keep the master database of all domain names registered in each top-level

domain and generate the zone file that allows computers to route internet traffic to and from TLDs anywhere in the world. The registry is an integral part of the global domain name addressing system and part of the security and stability of those addresses. This database is the master database of the top-level domain with all of the second-level domains underneath it.

Okay. Question for you. At the operational level, can registries sell domain names themselves? Looking around for answers. Can registries sell domain names? I'm hearing a no, and that is correct. No. Oh, sorry. No, all domain name registrations in the TLD must be registered through an ICANN-accredited registrar.

This is a fundamental principle of the base registry agreement that all registries sign with ICANN. And you have to work with all ICANN-accredited registrars on a non-discriminatory basis. They can say no to you. You can't say no to them. Right? If a registrar in Africa, a registrar in Europe, and 13 registrars in Asia want to work with you, as long as they're ICANN-accredited registrars and really ready to sign your contract agreement, you work with them, which is a good thing.

Okay, this is a big slide, and this isn't all of it, guys, but I wanted to give you a sense of the operational activity of a domain name registry. So, first, domain name acceptance. There are still web hosts and ISPs that default for the old 7, .com, .org, .net, .mil. I could go through them all, but. So, even in English, but particularly in the IDNs, the Internationalized Domain Names, universal acceptance is a huge issue, and I understand that many registries in the new gTLDs spend a lot of

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time working with ISPs and web hosts to get them to recognize their gTLD string. So, this is really important and takes time.

DNS abuse mitigation. We spend a lot of time working on this definition, but it is in the contract that a gTLD registry operator will, must publish who their domain name abuse contact is with accurate contact details, including a valid email address. There can be a web form, a way to contact them, and make it clear who's handling the reports of malicious conduct in the gTLD. You're selling domain names through registrars to the world, and yet you still have a responsibility for what's going on in those domain names, particularly for the malicious conduct as defined by ICANN, phishing, farming, spam, malware, botnets. So, that's big. That's big.

And then monthly reporting. Registries provide detailed reports to ICANN every month and spend a lot of time collecting the data about all the domain names in their gTLD that are created, renewed, transferred, deleted, and more. So, just a bird's eye view that this is a business, this is a process, and it's complex and involved.

Financial obligations. We're going to talk a lot in the next few minutes about the Applicant Support Program and what you get. So, this is now, this is not the Applicant Support Program that I'm talking about. It's not the new gTLD application. It's once you become a registry, you owe a registry fee to ICANN of \$25,000 a year, and you'll pay it in quarterly increments. This is part of what keeps ICANN going. It's part of what pays for these meetings, plus \$0.25 for every domain name you registered. I think that's after you get to \$50,000, but I'm not quite sure.

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Will there be some reduction for the groups that we're talking about? Probably, but I don't think it's going to go down to zero.

So, I just wanted to flag that there are obligations to ICANN because you now become part of the registry program. Registrars also have financial obligations to ICANN. So, technical, operational, financial, this is much, much more than just having a domain name and your web pages, emails, and listservs. A registry will need good plans to be a good, successful, sustainable one. And I pass it to Michaela.

MICHAELA NAKAYAMA SHAPIRO: Thank you, Kathy. Michaela for the record, thank you so much for having me on this panel today. I'm really excited to talk about this. So, now, thanks to Kathy for giving an incredible overview of the responsibilities and the obligations that come with being a registry versus a registrar. So, that was a really helpful breakdown there. So, now, we're all excited. We want to know if we can apply.

So, what I'll be talking about will be who is eligible. So, who are we trying to target with this program? The aim being, ideally, we want to foster diversity, encourage competition, and enhance the utility of the DNS across communities that may not have the means to do so otherwise. So, the groups that are listed here are the five that have been identified as part of this support program. So, these are the usual suspects that we would hope to see to be eligible for a program like this.

So, I won't go into the nitty-gritty of the details because some of my colleagues here will be doing that, but just to say quickly, the nonprofit,

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charity, or equivalent organization, that's one that is particularly close to my heart as representing Article 19 here. Intergovernmental organizations, indigenous tribal peoples organizations, micro or small business social enterprises, and micro or small businesses operating in a less developed economy. So, those are the five categories under this program.

So, why is this important? Why do we care about having these communities represented with a gTLD? So, one thing that I would stress us to bear in mind is this enables organizations and communities to be able to express their affiliations online. You want to be able to have the right to express your opinion and express yourself online, and a gTLD is one way to do that. And we want to be able to encourage those who maybe wouldn't have the financial means to do so to be able to do that.

It also enables new voices to join the internet ecosystem, and it facilitates the free and fair use of domain names, so the right to use all words/names. So, for example, even if you might not necessarily agree with the views held behind this, you could be able to apply for something like a .gay, .community, .Islam. And these are just some of the more potentially controversial gTLDs, but these are also representative of communities that we'd want to make sure have the right to express themselves online.

So, similarly, moving on to the second part of the slide, we also want to increase representation on the internet. So, what this program is trying to do is reduce the financial burden, ensure diversity, and that can mean a variety of things. It could be geographic, linguistic, cultural,

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name it. And that's what we're trying to do in terms of increasing representation on the internet. And a cause that's very close to my heart as well is preventing online censorship. So, by having the ability to have this gTLD, it gives you some more control and power, and that gives you the ability to put forward certain types of content potentially online.

And similarly, we also want to increase competition and provide more choices for end users. So, that way, you are able to have more opportunities and options in the domain name market. There's also financial benefits to doing so as well. It can be a marketing opportunity. It can be a way to promote your brand. So, there's also beyond the human rights implications, there's also financial and market incentives as well. So, it can help in a variety of contexts.

And so, we want to bear that in mind because, of course, our group is focused on these communities that are that often don't have the same resources as potentially a bigger company like, let's say, Amazon, as an example. And a .Amazon is an example that could also be talking about, for example, the rainforest or an indigenous community that's based in that region, or it could also be Jeff Bezos. So, those are the examples that I wanted to bring forth. And so, to give us a bit more detail about the eligibility and equivalency determination, I'll turn to Frank. Thank you.

FRANK ANATI:

Okay, thank you. Thank you, Michaela. So, I'm just going to talk about charity. So, for a non-governmental organization or charity, what are

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the criteria? So, let's look at the eligibility for non-profit equivalency requirements. So, if you're a charity, you need to get a non-profit equivalence requirement if you are not a US charity that's registered. So, first, you have to be a US charity non-profit to enjoy special 501c3 tax exemption status that allows donors to claim tax deductions. So, for non-US organizations, that's where you must prove that you are equivalent to the US 501c3 non-profits, but to be considered eligible under the Applicant Support Program.

So, for the Applicant Support Program Handbook, to be compliant, you need to meet the Applicant Support Handbook's eligibility criteria by providing documents as a recognized non-profit, charity, or similar organization in your country. And if you are a non-US applicant, without local non-profit recognition, you can provide the certified equivalence determination, and we'll look at the process. And also, if you don't fall in any of the categories, you can upload the governing documents that's provided in the ASP handbook as an ASP in the ASP application system.

So, let's look at the steps for equivalence determination. So, the first is it has to be conducted by an alliances US tax practitioner. That's when you are if you are in the US that's what happens. But if you are not in the US and you need a certificate of non-equivalency, you need to go through organizations such as NGO source that will provide you this equivalence determination services to confirm if you are a foreign non-profit organization with purposes and restrictions similar to that of the US 501c entities.

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So, what are the benefits and takeaway for the equivalence determination? So, it establishes credibility and ensures compliance with the ICANN ASP non-profit category. So, once you have this, you'll be compliant with the yes Applicant Support Program non-profit category. It also provides confidence to ICANN and donors that the applicant organization serves a public good and aligns with US charity purposes.

So, where are some of the resources and where you can get all this information? So, the ASP handbook aligns the full application process eligibility and requirements. And also, for equivalency determination providers, you can look at organizations such as NGO source that can facilitate your equivalency determination and enhance the application standings for ASP. So, I hand over to Houda. Thank you.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

Can we go back to the equivalency determination for a second? Many of the groups you're working with around the table won't be United States non-profits. So please go back to the handbook and read the rules. There are ways without going-- You can go to TechSoup, you can go to NGO source, they will do equivalency determinations. I understand they're also particularly expensive.

So, ICANN has created this third route that Frank was outlining that allows groups to upload their documents but read through their pages dedicated to this. The organization has to devote at least 85 % of its resources to its mission. It can't be a political mission supporting candidates. So many, at least in the United States, many political

organizations or non-profits, even if you're a non-profit political organization somewhere around the world, they're not going to accept you into the Applicant Support Program on that.

And you can't be doing a mission that ICANN wouldn't endorse. So, if you're a non-profit group distributing legal pornography, don't even think about applying. So, there are these limits there. I wanted to let you know that they're well outlined in the handbook. And I know we're not allowed to talk about the word pornography. Sorry.

PEDRO LANA:

Thanks, Katie. And we turn back to Houda.

HOUDA CHIH:

Thank you so much. Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining us. I start by thanking all NCUC and NCSG members for this opportunity to present the mandatory first step of our phase 1 of general business due diligence. It is the first mandatory phase before going to the next one about support applicant review panel.

I will share the different steps included in general business due diligence. The first one is about legal complaints check. Next one is complicit documents check. And no, no, no. Just I speak about the list. Yes. Thank you so much. The next one is about organization check of the applicant. And the last one is about background screening.

Okay. Let's start by the first one about legal complaints check is about applicant acknowledgement that ICANN have to follow all applicant US

regulation and laws, including the economic sanction administrated by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of US regulation. Next step is about completeness check is about checking whenever the document of the applicant are fitting with what is required by ICANN. And whenever any missing of any document, there is another possibility to resubmit that missing document.

The next step is about checking the eligibility criteria. It's about next round organization check. Whenever if the applicant has good corporate standing, meeting applicable regulation and laws. Second one is checking if the applicant should not have any conviction of fraud or crimes or subject to any judicial determination. The next checking eligibility is about the applicant shouldn't have any problem related to fines, misuse or taxes issues and the applicant shouldn't have any connection with organization crimes. And it's about checking also about the cybersquatting or intellectual property infringement. The last--

KATHY KLEIMAN:

And it's the applicant. It's also the senior people running the applicant. So, these are going to be big checks.

HOUDA CHIH:

Thank you. The next or the last step is about background screening. It is requested as it is about independent including another third-party assessing risk and to check eligibility confirmation for both individual and organization. It's about also reviewing all the submitted document

and searching for other evidence that could be relevant. The result of background screening ensures that approval or rejection of the application. Thank you so much.

PEDRO LANA:

And with that, we pass on to Emmanuel.

EMMANUEL VITUS:

Okay. Thank you very much. So, I'll quickly take you through two steps regarding the financial needs and the financial viability test. So, the first one is ICANN aware of confirming that the people will not be able to pay the full gTLD application fee and dispose a genuine financial burden on them. And the second one is to prove to ICANN that even if they support you, you'll be able to actually cover the part that ICANN does not cover in this program.

So, for the first one, the criteria. So, applicants must describe that how, I mean, dispose a financial burden on them and why they need it. And they need to justify that paying the full amount, which is about \$250,000, present a financial hardship. So, I give some examples, let's say a non-profit dedicated to preserving indigenous languages through digital archiving. So, with an annual budget of 200,000 from grants, donors, et cetera, this non-profit cannot cover the full gTLD evaluation fee, which exceeds 100% of their yearly funding. So, you automatically qualify.

So, what are the required financial documentation? So, applicants must prove audited financial statements from the last two fiscal years.

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So, this will include the balance sheet, profit and loss statement, cash flow, equity statement, and others. So, the eligible indicator for financial need, the annual revenue should be less than \$5 million, with cash in reserve also less than \$5 million. So, entity must not be owned or controlled by a non-profit organization that exceeds these financial criteria. So, I give other examples, but we'll pass on to the next.

So, the viability test. So, this is to ensure that applicants can cover any unsupported costs associated with the gTLD process. So, ICANN require that the applicant to demonstrate the financial viability. So, the criteria here, applicants must submit a narrative of funding plan explaining how they will fund the portion that the gTLD fee does not cover by ICANN. So, documentation can include revenue sources such as donation, partnership, and internal reserves.

So, I also give example. Let's take a non-for-profit that offers digital literacy classes and rely on local donations. So, they plan to fund a gTLD application through a combination of community donation and partnership with local businesses. So, this, you have to convince ICANN that, well, we are able to make this viable.

So, these are the commitment deposit requirements. So, the indicators. As you can see, one of the key indicators is the ability to clearly outline the funding source of any unsupported gTLD fees and also adherence to the deposit requirement as show of financial commitment and readiness. So, all this is just a way of convincing ICANN that, well, if you give 75% support, the 25% we are able to actually find that. So, the next minute, I pass it to Bolu.

BOLUTIFE ADISA:

Thank you very much, Emmanuel. So, I think this is probably the most important part of the conversation, which is what are the costs involved in this program. As we all know, running a gTLD is a business. So obviously, there would be organizational costs on your part as a company running a business. But other than that, we are here to talk about what is ICANN, to what extent is the ASP covering the costs involved in getting this generic top-level domain.

So, the application fee for the next round is actually estimated to be \$2,000 to \$7,000, which we all agree is a lot for some of these small organizations we talk about. So, what does ICANN provide or what does the ASP provide? I'm going to talk about that in the next slide, but first I want to point out that applying to this program in the first phase does not cost you any payment, which means you can go through the general business due diligence and public responsibility due diligence without making any payment.

However, like Emmanuel mentioned, when you enter into the phase two, under the financial viability criteria, you have to put down a deposit of \$2,500 into the ASP program just to show that you're actually serious and willing to proceed. And this is a deposit actually that applicants have to pay. So, it's important that we keep that in mind as we proceed.

And okay, so the next slide, I would explain a bit more. Yes, so you see a bit of mathematics here, but it's to make us understand better what are the costs covered. So, for the New gTLD Program-based evaluation

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fee reduction, which is offered by the ASP, it ranges between 75% to 85% of the entire cost.

So, initially I had mentioned that it is \$2,000 to \$7,000, right? And 75% of that I put on the right-hand side of the slide is \$170,250 dollars, which is what the ASP would be covering in a case where you get a 75% reduction, which means applicants have to pay \$56,750. So, I think the mathematics is clear. And if you can look down below that, you see for the 85% reduction, applicants will have to pay \$34,050.

So, this is clear, but that is for the application fee for the gTLD program itself. There are other applicable costs that also ICANN covers. So, for example, there are applicable conditional evaluation fees, which you would see in the next round applicant guidebook. I think the final version will contain some of this. Some of these costs may include the process of getting some experts to do a subsequent evaluation.

And the third one also is similar to it. That's where we have the bid credits. This is still a conversation in the SubPro, but the idea of bid credits is that when there is a contention on a certain string. So, a good example is I'm trying to purchase a certain top-level domain. Emmanuel is also trying to purchase the same top-level domain. In that case, ICANN permits you to go into a bidding process. So, we understand that for these small organizations, it would be an automatic loss, being that they are not even that financially capable to compete against large corporations.

So, what this bid credits process does, I think partly ICANN provides four times the original amount. But it's still in discussion, but I think that's

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the idea based on what I discussed with Kathy. Four times the original amount, so we get a chance to actually bid for this process. But I think the final decision will be out with the SubPro decision in this context. So, that's it. I don't know if Kathy wants to add something.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

Yeah, I just wanted to add something briefly. First of all, great, great job. And that box on the right, I just wanted to highlight, really, really important. This is what the Applicant Support Program handbook doesn't give you. So, we're looking at our applicants. If we go forward and let's say we're successful, we still have to come up with between \$34,000 and almost \$57,000 to submit for the new gTLD application.

And the cost, the change of cost has nothing to do with us. It has to do with the number of successful grantees, the number of successful groups admitted to the Applicant Support Program. So, guys, this is a huge variable. This amount of money is still big. And the difference to prepare, you have to prepare for \$57,000. So, something to think about. Bolu laid it out so well, as did everyone who's presented so far. So, thank you.

ANDREA GLANDON:

Kathy, we have a question and a comment in the chat. I don't know when you want to take those, just to let you know they're there.

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PEDRO LANA: Yeah, one of them we already noticed, and we are going to address them at the end. And the second one, I think we can also address at the questions part at the end. Okay.

KATHY KLEIMAN: Well, maybe, but Ken. Ken, is your question related to slides?

KENNETH HERMAN: Yeah, I just, and I think you alluded to it, Kathy. That asterisk is really important because it does indicate that it depends on the number of applicants. But my question really is about, and you may not know the answer, ICANN has a budget, a fixed budget for applicant support. And so, will they then limit the number of successful applicants? In other words, they'll cut it off at a certain point. And if that's the case, is it first in, first out? Or do they wait till all the applicants have applied, and then decide where to cut it?

KATHY KLEIMAN: And I just wanted to tell Ken, for the purposes of our preparation, and we're only going to take a few questions, guys, to stay on, for the purposes of our preparation, we were forward focused. What does the applicant need to do? But these are big questions about evaluation, which is really important. So, Marika for a little bit.

PEDRO LANA: Please, Marika.

MARIKA KONINGS: Yeah, thanks. And for those of you that may not know me, my name is Marika Konings. I'm the lead for the New gTLD Program. I'm here because Kristy Buckley couldn't make it. She's of course the expert on the Applicant Support Program. But to your question, it is indeed first come, first serve. This is what the community determined, or it's our implementation of the community's recommendations to not prioritize either certain types of applicants or regions. There is indeed a limitation in the budget, but the Board has committed to looking at whether additional funding could be made available should we, within the time frame we currently have set aside, fill those, the slots that are available.

KENNETH HERMAN: If I may, Kathy, this is why it's critical, because you cannot wait to get your application in. What she said means that if you wait too long, you could be out of the pool.

PEDRO LANA: Peter.

AKINREMI PETER TAIWO: Thank you so much. I just wanted to follow up on that, because this cost actually covers the evaluation, right? It doesn't cover the operational cost from-- Yeah. Because this is, it's actually important when we're speaking or addressing to non-governmental organizations

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that are interested in applying for gTLD to understand, to sensitize them on the operational cost as well. Why we ask them to apply for gTLD is one is great, and we're telling them that there are costs that ICANN can cover, and these are fees. So, do we have an estimate of cost of running gTLD so we can sensitize non-profit organization? That is one.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

Peter, I think you just volunteered for our Seattle NCUC issues forum. Congratulations, and we will dive deeper, but we have some expert people who want to help us on this very issue. But we were working on the Applicant Support Program and the new gTLD application. You're going further, which is now you've gotten your string, how much does it cost? But you're right, you have to understand that as you go in. Marika.

MARIKA KONINGS:

Thanks, Kathy. As you just assigned homework, I can recommend you to listen to the registry session that took place yesterday on the pros and cons of running a registry. They really spoke through the different registry models, what comes into the picture. So, there might be some useful information there, and I think they are also the parties to ask what does it cost. Of course, from an ICANN side, we have an idea on the obligations they need to meet, but to really run a registry, the Registry Stakeholder Group is probably your best source of information.

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PEDRO LANA:

Thanks, everyone. We actually are going to have another Q&A part of the session at the end, but next slide, please. Just so we can keep on track, we're thinking about doing this small groups discussion. Each of you have received this category at the beginning of the session, and the idea is getting together with people who received the same category and check and point out some of the challenges that you identified while the presentations were being made about what your group would have issues dealing with when applying for the ASP.

So, I think we can have, let me check, 10, 15 minutes on that, then go back for, it's 15 minutes, I think, no, 10 minutes will be enough, because then we go back and get to Marika to give us another explanation, next steps, and we also will have some time left for Q&A.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

Yeah, so talk to the people next to you, form a group of three, two or three, four people, and think through, now your job is basically to file and decide whether your group is going to file an Applicant Support Program application towards a new application. And for the group that you were thinking of when you look at your slides, just to expand what Pedro was saying, what challenges do you see, what questions do you have. Let's talk about it, and then at the end of that session in 10 minutes, decide whether your group is going to apply.

PEDRO LANA:

Hi, everyone. We will have just another minute to wrap up, oh, we have one minute, so don't worry, you can wrap up. Thanks everyone, and

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thanks for participating in such an engaged way. So, for this next step, still on the same slide, we would like to ask you what you think were the biggest challenges you identified with these categories, and it's also a question if it makes sense for the category that you have to apply for a gTLD, and before that to apply for the Applicant Support Program. So, please, want to talk, want to give a first comment?

EMMANUE VITUS:

Okay. So, we wait for Kathy to sit down. So, in our group we discuss examples like non-governmental organization in authoritarian regimes. It's quite difficult for them to get an official recognition as an organization, to have those documentation. And some of them may have that problem even at the early stages of this program, because they have no documentation, and they cannot even go to the regime asking for any official recognition to qualify for that.

We also discuss regarding small organizations or ethnic groups spread across several nations. They are very small, and it would be very difficult for them getting together, I mean from now to November, getting together, putting documentation. Whose documentation are they going to put in the program, because maybe one is in Brazil, the other one is Costa Rica? I mean they are spread across, so that may also pose a problem.

We also discuss small organizations in some parts of the world, and I was giving an example for the existing programs, I take for example, not to blame Google, but the Google for non-for-profit program, for example, in Africa. No matter the country in which you are, even if you

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have all the official documentation, it's usually America and the rest of the world, they don't trust the rest of the world, so they ask you to certify your documentation, for example with TechSoup, and that comes with a fee. So, those small organizations may have even like that financial need of certifying all those documents with third-party organizations, before to even qualify for the first phase of it. So, I don't know, I miss something, I'll let my colleagues.

INES HFAIEDH:

This is Ines Hfaiedh speaking. We just added that in some countries, not only the financial barrier is a problem, but also even having a bank account is so hard to get in some countries, including my country, especially when you're receiving funds from outside the country. And also, when it is an ethnic group which is spread all over the world, where would that bank account be? This is an issue as well.

PEDRO LANA:

Thanks Emmanuel, thanks Ines. Houda already asked, does anyone else want to speak as well? So, Houda, Peter and Bolu. It's the same group? Whatever you prefer.

HOUDA CHIH:

Thank you. Thank you so much, Peter. So, in our group we discussed about the different challenges. The first one is about how to form a coalition of organizations if there is any interest for ASPs. Second one is to reviewing the funding. Because as I participated yesterday in AFRALO meeting and I find that someone asked about the waiver of the

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fees. Third one is about capacity building about application for the support program. And fourth one is about we need clients. So, what's the point behind this program? And I can maybe hand over to Peter to add something.

AKINREMI: PETER TAIWO: Okay, great. And we had an extensive conversation about this, and I will also allow my colleagues to chip in. When we're having these conversations, it comes to mind that we're asking for the challenges, but another question is what is the value propositions that interest international, large international organizations who apply for gTLD. We raised about coalition of group you have to form because this is business.

And that comes back to the question of cost of operation even if you waive the evaluation fees and everything because we know that this also boils down to business. I'm waiving this evaluation. I want you to be in business in registering domain names and so we can recuperate this cost back. Okay. So, there's a lot of things that we need to look into here and what is value proposition for non-governmental organizations is what we need to start discussing. Why we're talking about this cost of business operation, marketing, registrations and different things. I'll pass the mic to Ken.

KENNETH HERMAN: This is Ken for the record. Thank you, Peter. I don't really have much to add. I think we've covered them all. We came up with the collection

that you mentioned about the challenges that confront groups like small groups having to form a coalition and no individual group is going to apply and finding funding for that. And it all boils down to what Peter says is about what is the value proposition for these organizations to do that. And if we think that it's useful to do, it'll be incumbent upon perhaps us or perhaps others to try and assist organizations to understand where this can be useful to them.

**OKSANA PYRKHODKO:** Oksana Prykhodko speaking. I also would like to support Ben's proposition about the case study and add the necessity to check the status of temporarily occupied territories because it's a very important issue. Thank you.

**PEDRO LANA:** Peter please.

**AKINREMI PETER TAIWO:** Just to add to that on the case study and scenario. Can we come up with a case study and scenario on how, why international organization, NGO should apply for these and how that would benefit them? Because sometimes you will read this from tests and like, okay, how can I apply these to my case? So can we come up with a case study scenario cover the old things and let's see reasons why NGOs should apply for gTLD string.

PEDRO LANA:

Yeah. That's a great, great idea. Just to, already we are going to continue to propose that we continue this conversation afterwards. So, it's part of the new, so please just to follow the order. Bolu and then Benjamin.

BOLUTIFE ADISA:

Okay. So, mine will be quick because some of our points already mentioned. So, during our discussion we first highlighted the same point that Taiwo made, which is to an ethnic group or an indigenous people or tribe, why is it important for them to own a gTLD. Because this is a significant amount of investment from their end. So maybe if we can communicate that, then that would be a first step.

And then also these people will tell you that they don't even know how to run a gTLD in the first place. So maybe there's a capacity that needs to be built in understanding the business and how they can run it because nobody puts money in what they don't understand. So, while we are telling people to apply, it's important to also point out the need for it, how does it benefit them and how profitable is it as well for them.

And then we also had a conversation about government opposition. So especially for tribal groups, because we have the ccTLDs being supported by the government in certain countries. Coming up with something with an indigenous group that would also apply to the local market could appear as a competition. And we know in certain countries government just tend to oppose competition to their own interest. So maybe this could also be a challenge and perhaps we should think about it. So, with that I give the floor back.

PEDRO LANA: Thanks, Bolu. Can you introduce yourself?

OMAR SHURAN: Thank you. This is Omar Shuran for the record. In our discussion we have discussed the challenge facing the small and local non-government organizations. As a matter of fact, we think that this is not a good idea for such an organization to apply for this program at all because of a couple of barriers that they can face. Starting from the administrative procedures that we have seen already, there are a lot of prerequisites to apply for this program.

One of them is the alignment of the certification and validation of the certificates of these organizations to the US law, etc. The second is the lack of financial resources. Since they are small, probably they will face a lot of shortage of money to apply even for this small amount of figures that we have seen something like \$34,000 or something like that. The other one, as my colleague said, is the afterward procedures, maintaining this program, how to run this gTLD. It is money, more or less. So, if they are facing from the beginning a lot of challenges in providing the money for applying for the APS, what will happen in the end? This is what we thought of. Thank you.

PEDRO LANA: Thank you. Benjamin?

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**BENJAMIN AKINMOYEJE:** I am a small and local non-governmental organization. Taking small seriously, just in one rural area, talking with rural community, I am dealing with women and children. I don't think I would be interested because even the commission on this money is a jackpot for me. The technical requirements, understanding of these documents really is out of my pay grade, so I won't easily find it. Where am I even going to find registrants or people to apply for to make this business sustainable? It will be pretty difficult, so I will pass. Thank you.

**KATHY KLEIMAN:** Okay. Now, by the magic of ICANN and Pedro, you have all submitted your applicant support applications.

**PEDRO LANA:** Then, after several months of evaluation, you learned that your application was successful, but now that you finally have been selected for the ASP, what comes next? Now, the purpose for it, the reason why we applied for it, end with that.

**KATHY KLEIMAN:** Right, because now you have to go on to writing a new gTLD application, right? These are extensive applications going into ICANN about technical, operational, financial capabilities. I just want to tell you NCSG fought for non-financial resources. I spent six months of my life fighting for those non-financial resources, but we worked with ALAC. We did a lot of work, not just me, others, for what Marika is about to tell you next. What other help can we get, Marika?

MARIKA KONINGS:

Yeah, thanks, Kathy. Then, yeah, congratulations on you all passing your applications. Wonderful. Of course, the first thing you get from us is a letter that says that you are now a qualified applicant. That may also allow you to go out and tell the world and potentially find additional investors that may have an interest in supporting you because you've passed the first hurdle.

Obviously, and I think you all already know this, very important to note, just because you passed the ASP program doesn't necessarily mean you'll pass the New gTLD Program evaluation because you will still need to qualify for everything that is part of that. Again, I know you discussed that and a lot comes into that.

As Kathy said, as part of the program, we're not only providing the financial support, so the reduction in the application fee, but also several elements of non-financial support. One of those, and you may have recently seen an announcement going out, is the pro bono volunteer professional service providers and mentors to assist applicants. We've basically reached out to the community. Again, please help spread the word. Any organizations or individuals that are interested in helping applicants to put themselves forward.

We will maintain a list on the next round website of those service providers that will include information about the types of services that the entity can provide, general business services, application services, and technical services. We're also requesting, of course, that these service providers give priority to applicants that qualify for support.

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That's, again, where your letter will come in handy to demonstrate that you have passed and qualified.

You may also have seen the presentation that we did with the GAC on ASP capacity development work underway. That includes information on the applicant councilor role. We have someone at ICANN available that is able to help specific questions that ASP applicants may have. Again, of course, there's a lot of general information available, but that applicant councilor is really there if there are specific questions that ASP applicants may have. Obviously, that person is not there to tell you how you should write your application, or what you need to put in, but they are able to help with the process and the administration of what needs to be done for you to be able to complete your application.

There's capacity development content planning for three phases of the applicant journey, pre-gTLD application submission, submitting a gTLD application, and post-gTLD application submission. You may have also seen that we've recently posted, and Kristy posted a blog about that, specific materials that also help ASP applicants prepare for the application for the ASP program. That includes a quick start guide, an applicant checklist, and a user guide to the ASP application system. Again, that's before you have qualified, but it may still be helpful to know about those.

Yes, okay. I think Kristy actually has an email that includes all the relevant information, so I'll ask her to send that to you all so we can distribute that and have that all handy. I think you may have heard as well in other venues, most of these documents are also translated in the

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5 UN language, but we also have a Champions Toolkit that is also available just in a PPT, so you can take it, translate it, add in any other information. Because again, I think this is really useful, what you're doing here for the audiences that you're representing. So again, if you help us spread the word, I think that's really helpful.

Then maybe moving on to the outreach and engagement part, and again, I'm standing in here for Chris Mondini and Bob Ching, who you may all know as well, who are leading that part of the effort. So, the current engagement focus is entirely on the ASP program, through the opening of the application window and until the end of this calendar year. We're exclusively targeting ASP eligible entities, so that includes non-profits and NGO. And in response to community guidance, the targets are in underrepresented and developing geographies.

The engagement team has also used data from past campaigns, specifically the work that has been done on universal acceptance and internationalized domain names, to identify those target-rich markets. The regional engagement team, RVPs, and again, I think many of you are familiar with those, and if not, we can definitely send you a list of those, and the respective staff in those regions have also conferred with community members.

So again, many of you may have already been involved in those efforts to identify targets for direct contacts, and that does also include cold calling, because again, we know who we know, but part of this program is also about bringing in diversity and new players, so how can we get to those. And there again, any suggestions you may have, those are

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definitely welcome. So please contact your regional VP from the ICANN engagement team if you would like to help. And again, if you don't know who that is, come and see me.

We're also holding daily toolkit training sessions during the morning coffee break in Istanbul here at the Next Round booth. It's right opposite the GAC room. So again, if you're interested in learning more, seeing what's in the toolkit, how you're able to help, please go there. I think both Bob and Chris are there to help with that.

In relation to the communications part, we're also creating traditional media and social campaign media, for two phases. One is the support specifically for the ASP awareness campaign, but then of course in the next year, that would move into Next Round awareness, preparing for the next round. We have a global communications agency, Burson, that we're partnering with to develop and execute ASP-specific media campaigns in a number of target--

KATHY KLEIMAN:

If I might, we could talk about marketing and outreach, but here we're trying to talk about what resources exist for all the questions that were just raised about those challenges. Can we ask you a few questions about that? I don't want to cut you if you want to finish.

MARIKA KONINGS:

No, and I think it's just to know that there's also media campaigns going on. I think that's all I probably need to say on that one, so I'm happy to pause here and take any questions.

**KATHY KLEIMAN:** Can you tell us more about those application councilors who are going to help people figure out these questions about becoming a registry? Because a lot of the questions in the application are, what are you going to do with it, and how are you going to develop, and how are you going to be a sustainable registry? These are hard questions, as Peter and everyone else pointed out. How much do the application councilors know, and how much can they really--? Because we really push for some real support on this.

**MARIKA KONINGS:** Yes, and that I do want to make clear. The councilors are there to advise on anything in relation to the ASP application. This is not about how you should build your registry or--

**KATHY KLEIMAN:** With the new gTLD application.

**MAROKA KONINGS:** Right, but also in the ASP, it's very much about guiding them through the application process. I think where, indeed, the additional questions, that's more where the mentors and pro bono services come in.

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KATHY KLEIMAN: No, we fought that. We said ICANN promised that they would provide. Pro bono is useless in many, many ways. But ICANN promise some real help and technical, financial, legal considerations for the new gTLD planning and application. And umbrella, they promised umbrella services.

MARIKA KONINGS: Well, umbrella services to help applicants prepare for the application, we have to be very careful as well, because we cannot be in a position to provide anyone legal advice or technical advice. We can definitely point them to the resources needed. And indeed, if they have specific questions on what is needed for me to qualify, what are the expectations for the technical evaluation, what aspects are evaluated there. Those are questions we can help with, but we are not in a position to tell someone how to set up their business or write their application from a substantive perspective. Because again, that's not our role here.

PEDRO LANA: I think we can proceed to questions, because I think Peter also had one. And Ken. Anyone else? Still have nine minutes. Sorry, sorry, sorry, please.

MARIKA KONINGS: Maybe I can potentially screen share. There's a slide I can share that shows what an applicant councilor does and what it doesn't do. So

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hopefully, that may address, and maybe it does meet your expectations, or maybe it doesn't.

KENNETH HERMAN: Yeah, just a quick question. Did I understand that there was financial support for legal assistance at all? I thought I saw a slide somewhere, not here, but elsewhere, that not just financial support for the application, but also for technical and legal.

MARIKA KONINGS: That would be coming through pro bono service providers.

KENNETH HERMAN: Only pro bono. There's no budget that ICANN is providing for legal support.

MARIKA KONINGS: Not that I'm aware of.

PEDRO LANA: Peter? Oh, sorry. Peter?

AKINREMI: PETER TAIWO: Thank you so much, Marika, for this. At least we're getting something. But Katie says that we need more, because we can just rely on pro bono. And that brings an idea to me. I don't know, Katie, is it possible to

explore a universal service fund? Look at something else that we can-- to support international organization NGOs that want to-- I don't know how that-- Because from what we're seeing, I don't think we're going to have a lot of non-profit organizations applying for a gTLD.

And that brings me to another question I want to ask Marika. But what if we don't have any non-governmental organization apply for new gTLD? What happens?

PEDRO LANA:

Katie, if you want to answer.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

I don't know how to deal in hypotheticals. We fought to make sure that what happened in the first round does not happen in the second round. And this was a question in the chat, that there were very few organizations that applied in the first round. And we really fought for many more resources for NGOs of the right size, of the right need, of the right resources, because you have to have some resources to do that, apply. I'd love to hear a little bit about this.

I don't want people to be depressed. We asked ICANN to do more. They are doing more than they did in the first round. We actually were asking ICANN with ALAC and others to set up incubators, exactly, Peter, exactly what you were saying, a group that groups could go to for more ICANN could support. But let's see what's going on, and then we'll see where the gaps are.

MARIKA KONINGS: And just to add obviously, we will review after the program how things went, what was well-received, what was missing, and where can we be more helpful, where can the community help more. But as I said--

KATHY KLEIMAN: Walk us through that second set of boxes, the lower set.

MARIKA KONINGS: So here on the left-hand side, you see what is in scope for the application councilors to assist with. And on the right-hand side is what is out of scope. And as I said, it says here as well, some of those services may be available through pro bono service providers. So, it's managing and maintaining the supported applicant toolkits of information, information about existing published materials and resources on various relevant topics, guidance on understanding costs involved, reinforce understanding of contracting requirements.

So, what is out of scope is legal support for on challenges and appeals, counseling on preparing and writing business, legal or technical parts of the gTLD application, review of application drafts, compare, evaluate, or recommend backend service providers for appropriate fits, and understand obligations under DNS abuse agreements.

KATHY KLEIMAN: So, you guys, a quick round of applause for Marika for coming and sharing information with us. Okay. Could you give us a slide at some

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point? That would be great. Can we go back to our slides for a second? And we might have an extra minute or two, but I wanted to do our last slide.

MARIKA KONINGS: And I'll ask Kristy as well, because there's a deck that talks as well about the other, we presented it also to the GAC, who's also very interested in this with all the services. So, we'll make sure that it's not only this slide, but the whole pack that you have all the information.

KATHY KLEIMAN: I love the GAC slide deck. Okay. So, a question.

PEDRO LANA: Thanks to, Katie, of course.

KATHY KLEIMAN: But is there anything online that you wanted to reference? Any words that you wanted to share? And then we still have some more time for questions, comments.

PEDRO LANA: Well, I would just like to ask to see if there was any other comments or questions around here before commenting on a few of the online comments here. Marika, anything else you would like to ask?

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**MARIKA KONINGS:** No. I would just express my gratitude for inviting me, and I'm really impressed by the work that you've put together. I think this is really, really useful, and I really like the innovative concept. So, thank you for that. Great job, everyone.

**PEDRO LANA:** And if there's no one else who would like to add something, I think that we can conclude our session. And from what I saw, we will continue the conversation in Seattle, right? I see that we had more engagement than we thought. And I would like to pass the floor to Benjamin to make some final words.

**BENJAMIN AKINMOYEJE:** I just want to, first of all, thank everyone that we also pulled this off again, and we gave it another twist. And I can see that Marika is very excited that this is something they would like maybe even other communities to copy. And I want to thank every one of us as we continue to strengthen the issue forum and to keep bringing topical issues up. Thank you, everybody. And thank you, Kathy. We really celebrate you, Pedro, for leading this. Thank you.

**KATHY KLEIMAN:** And my comment, and I think Pedro and I will just, this is more complicated than it looks, right? I think, Peter, you really highlighted, there's a lot of work to run a registry. And you have to think through a lot of that before you apply for the new gTLD, and maybe before you

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apply for the Applicant Support Program. And so, we're beginning that process.

PEDRO LANA: There's still a long way to go.

KATHY KLEIMAN: Yeah.

ANDREA GLANDON: Thank you. You can stop the recording.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**