

**Ready to Work Partnership Grants
Frequently Asked Questions
U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration**

Key:

- **Questions 1 through 11 published February 18, 2014**
- **Questions 12 through 15 published March 24, 2014**
- **Question 16 published April 25, 2014**

1) What is the timeline of the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) announcement and funding?

Applications for grant awards will be accepted immediately upon publication of this notice in the Federal Register with a closing date of June 19, 2014.

Applicants will have 120 days to respond to this SGA.

2) Who can apply?

Grants may be awarded to the lead applicant of a public and private partnership of entities that includes:

- 1) the workforce investment system;
- 2) training providers, such as community colleges and community-based and faith-based organizations; and,
- 3) businesses and business-related groups, trade associations, nonprofit business or industry, organizations functioning as workforce intermediaries for the expressed purpose of serving the needs of businesses, individual businesses, or consortia of businesses.

Applications from partnerships that do not include all three types of entities mentioned above will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed.

At least one entity in the primary partnership of required entities or an optional partner will serve the function of what is generally referred to as a workforce intermediary, having expertise and credibility with employers and workers in the H-1B industry(ies) and/or occupations targeted through the project, as well as the capacity to manage a multi-partner and complex initiative. A range of organizations can serve in the intermediary role, including any of the following: Workforce Investment Boards, community colleges, labor unions, industry associations, community-based organizations, non-profit workforce agencies, and state and local government agencies.

3) Are any other partners required?

In addition to the primary partnership, applicants are required to provide documentation that demonstrates the active involvement of at least three employers or a regional industry association with at least three employers representing the industry(ies)/occupations(s) and service areas targeted through the project.

Applicants are also encouraged to collaborate with other partners that may include: economic development agencies; state and local governments; foundations and philanthropic organizations; providers of supportive and specialized services, such as financial counseling and behavioral health; and community-based or faith-based organizations with proven capacity to reach and engage long-term unemployed individuals, such as job clubs, networking groups, professional associations, veterans' service organizations, and congregation outreach ministries.

4) Can I apply for more than one grant?

Applicants may only submit one application as the lead applicant in response to this SGA. Applicants that submit more than one application as the lead applicant will be considered non-responsive, and none of their applications will be considered for funding.

While applicants may only submit one application as the lead applicant in response to the SGA, applicants can serve as an eligible entity (non-lead applicant) in the primary partnership and/or as an optional partner in more than one application in response to this SGA.

5) What amount of funding is available? Is there a limit?

Through this Solicitation, ETA is making approximately \$150 million in funds available, and expects to fund 20 - 30 grants with individual grant amounts ranging from \$3 million to \$10 million. Any grant application with a proposed value greater than \$10 million or less than \$3 million will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered.

6) How long are the grants active?

The period of performance for these grant awards will be up to 48 months from the effective date of the grant. This performance period includes: all necessary implementation and start-up activities; rapid reemployment services; the completion of education/training activities and the award of employer- or industry-recognized credentials, if appropriate; placement activities; and, participant follow-up for performance outcomes.

7) What is the role of employers and industry organizations?

Ready to Work applicants must include employers and/or industry organizations in two ways: 1) as one of the entities included in the primary partnership, as defined in Section III.A Eligible Applicants, and 2) as part of a pre-condition requiring documentation that demonstrates the active involvement of at least three employers or a regional industry association with at least three employers representing the industry(ies)/occupations(s) and service areas targeted through the project, as defined in Section III.E.1 Pre-Condition: Required Documentation of Employer Commitment.

DOL particularly encourage partnerships that include multiple employers in an industry cluster, which is a concentration of interconnected businesses, suppliers, research and development, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field that are linked by common workforce needs. Working with multiple businesses helps ensure that training prepares workers for a range of employer needs in a specific industry, making participants more employable and giving businesses a stronger employee pool.

The roles employers will play can include: defining the program goals and activities; identifying necessary skills and competencies; providing resources to support education/training (such as equipment, instructors, funding, internships, or OJT and other work-based learning activities); providing assistance with program design and implementation; hiring qualified participants who complete grant-funded education and training programs, and helping to solicit employer feedback on the skills and competencies of workers completing training and placed into employment.

8) What can I do now to prepare for the solicitation?

Visit the Department of Labor's Foreign Labor Certification Data Center Web site (<http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/performancecdm.cfm>) for the latest database of occupations approved under H-1B petitions. Through this link you can access a public disclosure file that contains administrative data from employers' Labor Condition Applications (LCA) and the certification determinations processed by the Department's Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC), Employment and Training Administration, between October 1, 2012 and September 30, 2013.

We also encourage prospective applicants to view the online tutorial, "Grant Applications 101: A Plain English Guide to ETA Competitive Grants," available on Workforce3One at: http://www.workforce3one.org/page/grants_toolkit. Prospective applicants can register on www.Grants.gov to access the SGA.

To learn more about the Ready to Work grant program and the President's call to action to support and expand public-private partnerships that are helping long-term unemployed individuals get back to work, visit www.doleta.gov/ReadyToWork. In addition to applicant information, this link provides resources on hiring best practices and promising models for serving the long-term unemployed.

9) Who can be served through the grant?

To be eligible to receive training through projects funded under this SGA, participants must fall under one of the following three categories: (1) long-term unemployed workers; (2) other unemployed workers; or, (3) incumbent workers. At least 85% of the participants served by the project must be from category (1), and no more than 15% of the total participants served from categories (2) and (3). Refer to Section III.E.3 for definitions of long-term unemployed workers; other unemployed workers; and, incumbent workers eligible to be served under this SGA.

10) What are examples of activities that are allowable with this funding opportunity?

Projects funded under this SGA will provide a range of interventions that lead to middle and high skilled employment, including assessment, coaching and counseling, short-term or accelerated training, and longer-term training leading to degrees and/or industry-recognized credentials. All projects will incorporate a strong up-front assessment component, allowing for a customization of services and training along three types of customized intervention tracks to employment, to meet the needs of long-term unemployed workers to become reemployed.

Within these three customized tracks for employment, rapid reemployment and training activities can include a variety of specialized services, accelerated trainings, and related activities.

Organizations may only use grant funds to pay for the wages of participants in three specific activities: OJT, paid work experience, and paid internships.

For additional information on allowable training and service strategies under this SGA, refer to Section I.D.

11) If I am a successful applicant, what will I have to do to monitor and evaluate my progress as a grantee?

The program is designed to ensure that grantees will continuously monitor and improve program performance throughout the grant, monitoring both short-term and longer-term outcomes. As with other DOL and federal programs, we will require grantees to meet performance and financial reporting requirements on a quarterly basis.

In addition to the performance reports required of all grantees, DOL also requires grantees to fully participate in the Department's evaluation of grant-funded programs as a condition of award. Grantees must submit a statement of commitment to participate in a national evaluation initiated by DOL, for the applicant and all partners, including employers or regional industry associations. The evaluation may involve making records on participants, employers and funding available; providing access to program and partner personnel, and participants, and following evaluation procedures as specified by the evaluator(s) under the direction of DOL ETA and the Chief Evaluation Office, including after the period of operation.

Updated March 24, 2014

12) Are national workforce intermediaries eligible applicants under this SGA?

As previously identified in FAQ Question #2, to be eligible for consideration, applications must include at least one representative of each of the following three types of entities: a) the workforce investment system; b) education and training providers; and c) business-related nonprofit organizations, organizations functioning as workforce intermediaries for the expressed purpose of serving the needs of businesses, consortia of businesses, or businesses. At least one entity in the primary partnership of required entities or an optional partner will serve the function of what is generally referred to as a workforce intermediary, having expertise and credibility with employers and workers in the H-1B industry(ies) and/or occupations targeted through the project, as well as the capacity to manage a multi-partner and complex initiative.

A range of organizations can serve in the workforce intermediary role, including any of the following: Workforce Investment Boards, community colleges, labor unions, industry associations, community-based organizations, non-profit workforce agencies, and state and local government agencies. Additionally, this can include local, regional, or national workforce intermediaries that meet this definition.

An organization functioning as workforce intermediaries for the expressed purpose of serving the needs of businesses may act as the lead applicant in response to this SGA

13) What types of individuals can be served under this SGA?

As previously identified in FAQ Question #9, to be eligible to receive training through projects funded under this SGA, participants must fall under one of the following three categories: (1) long-term unemployed workers; (2) other unemployed workers; or, (3) incumbent workers. At least 85% of the participants served by the project must be from category (1), and no more than 15% of the total participants served from categories (2) and (3).

Within these categories, grantees may serve a wide range of individuals, such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, women, ex-offenders, and Indian and Native Americans.

14) How can these grants be used for work-based training, such as Registered Apprenticeship?

Projects funded under this SGA will provide a range of interventions that lead to middle and high skilled employment, including assessment, coaching and counseling, short-term or accelerated training, and longer-term training leading to degrees and/or industry-recognized credentials through three types of customized tracks for employment (Section I.D of the SGA).

Within these tracks, the Department is especially interested in programs that include employer-based activities with an earnings component. These include work-based training that enables earning while learning through models such as on-the-job training (OJT), paid work experience, paid internships, and Registered Apprenticeship models. Incorporating work-based training into these projects will afford employers the opportunity to train workers in the specific skill sets required for open jobs.

15) How can grant funds be used to provide training along a career pathway?

Projects funded under this SGA will provide a range of interventions that lead to middle and high skilled employment in the industries and occupations for which employers are using H-1B visas.

Applicants may propose projects that provide training along a career pathway beginning with training for entry-level occupations in an H-1B industry, however, the intent must be for participants to continue their progression along the career pathway towards achieving industry-recognized credentials that lead to middle and high skilled employment in the industries and occupations for which employers are using H-1B visas. Applicants should not propose projects beginning with training for entry-level occupations where participants are not

intended to continue along a career pathway towards achievement of industry-recognized credentials that lead to middle and high skilled employment.

Applicants that propose to provide training along a career pathway must incorporate into their training plan all levels of the career pathway(s) necessary for achieving industry-recognized credentials that lead to middle and high skilled employment in the industries and occupations for which employers are using H-1B visas. Applicants should not propose projects that only provide training along a portion of a career pathway, where upon completion an individual would not have acquired the industry-recognized credentials that lead to middle and high skilled employment.

16) Are there targeted industries and/or occupations under this SGA?

To position American workers to reduce the need for foreign workers under the H-1B visa program, applicants must design their programs to support industries and occupations which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers. Applicants must also demonstrate that the targeted industries or occupations are in demand in their regional economy(ies). This does not mean that the applicant's employer partners have to have received a visa, but that there is need in the regional economy for workers in those fields.

The Department's Foreign Labor Certification Data Center Web site identifies occupations approved under H-1B petitions, including but not limited to occupations in Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Biotechnology. Attachment A of the SGA includes a list of top industries and occupations that are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers, to help applicants ensure their programs support industries and occupations for which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers. This top occupation list is not exhaustive and applicants are advised to also refer to the Foreign Labor Certification Data Center Web site (http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/performance_data.cfm) for the latest database of occupations approved under H-1B petitions.