

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

1) What is the timeline of the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)?

This FOA was published on November 17, 2015. Applications for grant awards will be accepted up to the closing date of March 11, 2016. Applications must be received no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

2) Do projects have to focus on tech-based or IT industries and/or occupations under this FOA?

No. TechHire grants will fund projects that support well-paying, middle- and high-skilled, and high growth jobs across a diversity of H-1B industries. To meet the legislative intent of positioning American workers to reduce the need for skilled foreign workers under the H-1B visa program, applicants must design their programs to support occupations for which H-1B visas have been certified, or other occupations in industries in which a significant number of H-1B visas are certified. A list of these industries is below. To view specific occupations for which H-1B visas have been certified, visit the Department of Labor's 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.

According to recent data, a wide range of industries may meet these criteria in local and regional areas across the country, such as Information Technology (IT), Cyber Security, and Broadband, as well as a variety of non-IT industries and occupations that require technology skills, including but not limited to advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and financial services. In fact, more than two-thirds of technology jobs are outside of the technology sector.

Applicants should review below the list of industries that are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers to assist your program alignment.

H-1B Industries that are using a significant number of visas to hire foreign workers include:

- IT and IT related industries, such as Cyber Security and Broadband
- Healthcare
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Financial Services
- Educational Services

These are the H-1B industries that we have identified as permissible for applicants to target under this grant competition. Applications that propose to train participants in occupations that do not fall within these industries must show that they are occupations for which H-1B visas have been certified. This may be shown by using the data provided on DOL's Foreign Labor Certification Data Center Web site.

3) Is this grant program specifically designed to fund the TechHire communities?

No. While this funding opportunity supports the broader goals of the White House TechHire Initiative (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/technology/techhire>) there is no preference given to designated TechHire communities. This funding opportunity is open to all eligible applicants identified in Section III.A, Eligible Applicants of the TechHire FOA. Further, applicants may propose to serve local, regional, or multi region (national) areas.

4) Who can apply?

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

- 1) the public workforce investment system;
- 2) education and training providers, such as community colleges, community-based and faith-based organizations, and "bootcamp" style tech programs; and,
- 3) a business-related nonprofit organization, an organization functioning as a workforce intermediary for the expressed purpose of serving the needs of businesses, a consortium of three or more of businesses, or at least three independent businesses.

Applications that do not include all three types of entities mentioned above will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed. An eligible entity cannot serve as more than one type of entity for the purpose of meeting the requirements to include three types of entities in the primary partnership.

At least one entity in the primary partnership 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 occupations and industries targeted through the project, access to and experience with the targeted population(s), 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 Development Boards, community colleges, labor unions, industry associations, community-based organizations, non-profit workforce agencies, and state and local government agencies.

5) Are rural areas eligible to apply?

Yes. Rural communities are encouraged to collaborate through regional partnerships or with other regions to support smaller scale projects that can be aggregated to meet the minimum funding request and participants served requirements.

6) Are any other partners required?

To ensure that projects have strong employer engagement, applicants are required to partner with at least three employers or a regional industry association with at least three employer partners representing the H-1B occupations and industries and service areas targeted through the projects. To satisfy this requirement, applicants must engage three or more independent employers, a consortium of at least three employers, a regional industry association with at least three employers, or provide evidence of designation as a “Manufacturing Community” through the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP).

To demonstrate the active involvement of employers, applicants should provide signed documentation of employer, employer consortium or regional industry association commitments – such as signed memoranda of understanding, an organizational charter, a partnership agreement, or other types of signed agreements – which demonstrate the engagement of each employer or regional industry association. Applicants will be scored based on the inclusion of this documentation, as well as the level and quality of employer involvement in the project in Section IV.B.3, Project Narrative.

Beyond the required partners, we strongly encourage applicants to collaborate with other partners that may include: economic development agencies; state and local governments, including government agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, State Medicare Agencies, State Apprenticeship Agencies, Child Care agencies; foundations and philanthropic organizations; other Federally-funded programs, such as Adult Basic Education, Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants, Social Security disability benefits, Centers for Independent Living, Employment Networks, Small Business Development Centers, as well as other programs administered by the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Commerce, Transportation, and/or Energy; providers of supportive and specialized services; and disability service providers, community-based organizations, or faith-based organizations with proven capacity to reach and engage youth and young adults and individuals with disabilities, limited English proficiency, or criminal records as they are key providers of basic skills training, technical skills training, supportive services, and workforce development services in communities across the country

7) Can I apply for more than one grant?

You may only submit one application as the lead applicant in response to this FOA. However, your organization may submit one application as the lead applicant and be included as a partner in one or more applications submitted as long as your organization is not the lead applicant.

If we receive multiple applications from one organization in which the organization is the lead applicant, only the most recent application submitted will be reviewed. If the most recent application is disqualified for any reason, we will not replace it with an earlier application.

8) What is the amount of funding available?

Approximately \$100 Million is expected to be available to fund approximately 30-40 grants with individual grant amounts ranging from \$2 million to \$5 million. Applicants that request total funding of more than \$4 million must provide evidence for the training approach(es) proposed in a separate attachment that will be evaluated by a panel of experts based on the definitions of strong, moderate, and preliminary evidence in Appendix A. Applicants may apply for a ceiling amount of up to \$5 million.

Applicants that propose projects of more than \$4 million and up to \$5 million must propose to replicate, at multiple sites and/or with the targeted and other populations, strategies that have been shown by prior research to have evidence of positive impacts on education and/or employment outcomes. Applicants that request total funding of more than \$4 million in grant funds and do not provide evidence for the proposed training approach(es) in a separate attachment will not be reviewed.

Of the approximately \$100 million expected to be available, at least \$50 million will be awarded to support projects designated to serve out-of-secondary school youth and young adults (aged 17 to 29) with barriers to training and employment as the primary target population and no more than \$50 million will be awarded to support projects designed to serve special populations

9) Are all applicants required to provide evidence regardless of the amount of grant funds they request?

No. Applicants that propose projects of \$4 million or less are not required to submit evidence of program design as an attachment, and this information will not be reviewed from such applicants.

For applicants that request more than \$4 million and up to \$5 million in grant funds, applications will be assessed along a continuum of innovation and evidence, from new promising ideas to well-tested ideas being adapted to new contexts. Of particular interest are new promising ideas developed through

human centered design methodology and behavioral insight research. We will award up to \$5 million to fund projects that have been tested and are supported by evidence and a maximum of \$4 million for other programs that do not have the level of supporting evidence as described in Appendix A of the TechHire FOA. Applicants that request more than \$4 million in grant funds and do not provide evidence for the proposed training and approach(es) in a separate attachment will not be reviewed.

10) Are there minimum goals for participant service levels based on the amount of funding requested?

Yes. The TechHire FOA sets minimum goals for the number of participants to be served during the grant period, based on the funding amount requested by applicants. These are minimum thresholds to ensure the largest number of participants possible can be served and applicants can and are encouraged to serve more participants that required.

- Applicants seeking funding between \$2,000,000-\$3,000,000 million, must serve at least 325 participants;
- Applicants seeking funding between \$3,000,001-\$4,000,000 million, must serve at least 400 participants; and
- Applicants seeking funding between \$4,000,001-\$5,000,000 million, must serve at least 525-2,500+ participants.

Applicants should propose participant targets based on the FOA requirements and that are appropriate for the scope of the project. Applicants should refer to the scoring criteria for more information on how they will be scored on proposed targets.

11) Is there a match requirement?

No. Cost sharing or matching funds are not required for this program. Please note that any resources contributed to the project are considered leveraged resources and do not constitute cost sharing or matching funds.

However, to help ensure a successful project, applicants are expected to secure leveraged resources equal to at least 25 percent of the total requested funds to support grant activities and accomplish the project's overall goals and milestones. The leveraged resources must be sufficient to allow applicants to meet the proposed performance goals during the grant period of performance. Applicants will be scored on, among other things, the amount and how they will be used to contribute to the projected outcomes for the project as described in Section IV.B.3.(6)(b), Leveraged Resources.

12) How long are the grants active?

The period of performance is 48 months with an anticipated start date of June 1, 2016. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-

up activities. These activities include employment 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. We expect that start-up activities such as hiring appropriate program staff, project design activities, negotiation and implementation of OJT contracts, paid work experiences, or paid internship opportunities, will begin immediately. We also expect that grantees will begin serving participants no later than 6 months after the date of grant award.

13) Who can be served through the grant?

Applicants may propose projects that target one of two types of populations with barriers to training and employment opportunities listed below:

- projects that serve out-of-secondary school youth and young adults between the ages of 17 and 29 who lack education attainment, work experiences and/or skill-level necessary to secure full-time employment in middle or high-skill jobs.
- projects that serve special populations, defined as individuals with disabilities, individuals with limited English proficiency, or individuals with criminal records. These individuals must be at least 17 years of age and out of secondary school.
 - Applicants proposing to serve special populations as their target population must identify the specific population within this category type their project will target.

While we recognize that some individuals may fall within the definitions for more than one of the two types of populations with barriers to training and employment opportunities, applicants should propose projects that specifically target only one of the target populations referenced above.

Please refer to the FOA for complete definitions.

14) What does “out-of-secondary” school mean?

Secondary school generally refers to the last four years of formal instruction. The standard U.S. qualification awarded to students who graduate from secondary school after 12 years of formal instruction is a High School diploma, or equivalent secondary diploma or certificate.

All eligible participants must be at least 17 years of age and out-of-secondary school. Individuals without educational prerequisites and/or prior experience can be served if the applicant can provide evidence that the training program will provide them with the competencies and skills necessary to enable them to enter middle- and high-skilled jobs during the grant period of performance.

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

Projects funded under this FOA 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 that allows for a customization of services and training to meet the needs of the targeted population(s) to become employed, retain their employment, or advance to a new position.

Applicants must incorporate into their program three types of customized intervention tracks that lead to employment.

These tracks are:

- Intensive coaching and other short-term, specialized services culminating in direct job placement into middle- and high-skilled jobs, paid internships, or Registered Apprenticeships;
- Short-term or accelerated training that may or may not result in an industry-recognized credential, but will lead to middle- and high- skilled high-growth jobs in H-1B occupations and industries; and
- Training along a career pathway that leads to an industry-recognized credential and employment in middle- and high-skilled jobs in H-1B occupations and industries.

16) What can I do to learn more about the solicitation?

View the TechHire prospective Applicant Webinar at:
<https://www.workforce3one.org/view/300153455507787249>.

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 Funding Opportunity Announcement.

To learn more about the TechHire partnership grant program, visit www.doleta.gov/TechHire.

Updated March 4, 2016

17) What documentation is required for IMCP Communities Using Their Designations as Documentation of Employer Commitment?

The TechHire FOA requires that projects have strong employer commitment, and in order to satisfy this requirement, applicants must engage three or more independent employers, a consortium of at least three employers, a regional

industry association with at least three employers, or provide evidence of designation as a “Manufacturing Community” through the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP).

For applicants that are using evidence of IMCP designation to satisfy this employer commitment requirement, they should attach evidence of IMCP designation as an attachment to the FOA labeled “Documentation of Employer Commitment” as identified on pg. 39 of the FOA, Requested Attachments.

Applicants will be scored on the documentation of employer commitment of three or more independent employers, a consortium of at least three employers, regional industry association, or designation as an IMCP commitment that includes the signatures from the employer(s) or regional industry association as described in Section III.B, Required Employer Partners, and description of their role(s) and responsibility(ies) in the project. Additional, applicants can show evidence of involvement of their IMCP community in the technical proposal, as it aligns with the scoring criteria.

All attachments must be clearly labeled as an attachment and only those required and requested attachments identified in the FOA will be excluded from the page limit.

Applicants should not send in evidence of IMCP designation as a separate letter of support, as additional materials received separately will be tracked separately and not attached to the application for review.

17) How many applications can an IMCP-designated community support from its region as Documentation of Employer Commitment?

An IMCP community may use its designation to demonstrate strong employer commitment for as many applications as it deems appropriate.

An applicant may only submit one application as the lead applicant in response to the TechHire FOA. However, an organization may submit one application as lead applicant, and in addition may be included as a partner in one or more applications submitted where it is not the lead applicant.

Multiple applications from an organization as lead applicant are not allowed. If multiple applications are received, the most recent application submitted will be reviewed. If the most recent application is disqualified for any reason, we will not replace it with an earlier application.