

Youth CareerConnect (YCC) Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Can I be a partner on more than one grant application?

Answer: Yes, organizations may partner on more than one grant application. An organization (based on its Employer Identification Number) may only be awarded one grant as a result of this competition, but this would not preclude an organization from being the lead applicant on one proposal and a partner on another, or serving as a partner on multiple applications.

Question: How can I verify that my proposed industry/occupation field is one for which employers are currently seeking H-1B Visas?

Answer: Although the YCC SGA provides two links for additional information on industries/occupations for which H-1B visas have been issued, the links can be difficult to navigate. 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, at <http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/performancecdm> (click on the link or type the URL into your browser). Please select the Disclosure Data tab, and then FY 2013 Disclosure File *H-1B_FY2013_Q4.xls* that corresponds to the LCA OFLC program. The file will download as an Excel spreadsheet which can then be sorted, first by "Certified" status and then by LCA Case SOC Code. Any of the occupations approved under an H-1B petition are acceptable to propose in an application to this SGA provided that the proposed occupations meet the requirements as described in Section IV.B.3.a.iv of the SGA.

Question: How is this grant program funded?

Answer: Funding for the YCC program initiative is authorized under Section 414(c) of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (ACWIA), as amended (codified at 29 U.S.C. 2916a).

Question: Will students who enroll in YCC program models that extend beyond high school be required to pursue the same career pathway after high school?

Answer: YCC programs should continue to provide the integrated academic and career-focused curriculum in the identified H-1B industry or occupation throughout the program model, which may extend one or two years beyond high school. After program completion, program participants are encouraged but not required to continue on the identified career pathway.

Question: The YCC SGA mentions several populations of students who should be supported and encouraged to participate. Is a program expected to enroll a minimum percentage of students in each specific population?

Answer: No, the YCC solicitation does not require minimum percentages of certain populations of youth for this initiative. But, the solicitation requires program enrollment be open to all students currently enrolled in high school. Applicants are required to describe how they will seek to ensure that program participants reflect the full diversity of the overall school population and community, and how they will encourage and support the participation of low-income students and students who are traditionally underrepresented in the selected H-1B industry/occupation, such as females, minorities, students with disabilities, and English language learners. Programs may not exclude a student on the basis of the student's prior level of academic achievement.

Question: Are job shadowing and exposure to classroom speakers considered work experience?

Answer: The solicitation requires applicants to describe the work-based learning opportunities that will be offered. This includes describing both work experience opportunities and career awareness activities that will be provided in each academic year. While job shadowing is a type of work experience, programs are strongly encouraged to provide internship opportunities in addition to job shadowing in order to provide maximum exposure to the world of work. Exposure to classroom speakers is not work experiences as it does not take place in the workplace, but this would be an example of a career awareness activity.

Question: The YCC SGA references “small learning communities.” In order to apply for this grant, is our district expected to be or have been a Department of ED Small Learning Community grant recipient?

Answer: No. This is a new grant initiative and does not require prior or current participation in the Department of Education's Small Learning Community grant programs to be considered an eligible applicant.

Question: Are programs proposed under the YCC solicitation required to offer more than one H-1B industry or occupation program of study?

Answer: No, applicants are not required to design a program(s) that focuses on more than one H-1B industry or occupation. Programs are encouraged to offer courses that support the education and training of participants, preparing them for immediate or future careers in an H-1B occupation or industry post-graduation.

Question: Is there a list of Federal funds school districts receive that can be used as part of the match?

Answer: As specified in the SGA, under the definition of match described in Section III.B., other Federal funds may NOT count toward the required match *unless* the statutes governing those Federal funds explicitly allow them to be used as match. Applicants currently receiving Federal funds should review the statutes governing those funds to determine if they are eligible to count toward the required match.

Question: Have there been previous rounds of the Youth Career Connect grant program, or is this the first time this grant opportunity has been offered?

Answer: Youth CareerConnect is a new grant program designed in collaboration with the Department of Labor and the Department of Education. There have been no previous iterations.

Question: One of the Core Elements of the Youth CareerConnect program is “Individualized Career and Academic Counseling.” Is there a recommended ratio of counselors to students or an expected ratio to be met?

Answer: While no specific ratio of counselors to students is required, programs must ensure that a sufficient ratio is maintained to ensure the level of service outlined in the SGA. To facilitate the comprehensive career and academic counseling described, the program should provide dedicated counselors for program participants. Counselors, and/or other designated staff/partners, must meet frequently with each participant individually to assess progress on their career and academic plans and to make adjustments as necessary. The Department encourages program models to use program partners, such as the American Job Centers, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth services providers, and other community resources, to deliver direct career counseling services or augment services provided by the education partner.

Question: Can you explain the Individual Development Plan described in the SGA? What does it entail?

Answer: An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a service and activity plan developed with each youth participant. It is a living document that identifies the needs and goals of the youth and sets a plan for addressing and achieving them. It should be regularly reviewed and revised throughout the student’s participation in the program. Counselors must meet frequently with each participant individually to assess progress on their career and academic plans and to make adjustments as necessary. Students who may have started similar plans before enrolling in the program may incorporate the goals from those plans into the IDP produced through the Youth CareerConnect program; however, plans completed prior to entry into the Youth CareerConnect program may not be a substitute for the IDP established while the student is participating in the program.

Question: Are non-profit Institutions of Higher Education eligible to apply for Youth CareerConnect as lead applicants?

Answer: Yes, an Institution of Higher Education may be able to apply as lead applicant if it is a non-profit organization. To be eligible to apply as a lead applicant, a non-profit organization must have experience implementing high school reform or a youth program that includes a small learning community approach, has integrated academic and career-focused learning around one or more industry themes, and incorporates multiple local partners such as employers. The non-profit must provide a letter on its organizational letter head attesting current non-profit status and affirming and documenting its experience with the described program model, including identifying the school(s), industry of focus, and employer partners. If an Institution of Higher Education fulfills these requirements, it may apply as a lead applicant.