

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Veterans' Employment and Training Service

Notice of Availability of Funds and Solicitation for Grant Applications for the Veterans' Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) in Program Year (PY) 2012 with a Three Year Period of Performance beginning on July 1, 2012 and extending through June 30, 2015.

Announcement Type: Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA)

Funding Opportunity Number: SGA #02-12 / PY 2012

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 17.802

Key Dates: The closing date for receipt of the application is 45 days from the date of publication in Grants.gov. Application must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

Addresses: Applicants may apply electronically at www.grants.gov. Instructions for electronic applications are in Section IV. C. of this Notice. Applications submitted by U.S. Mail, professional overnight delivery service or hand-delivery must be addressed to:

U.S. Department of Labor
Procurement Services Center
Attention: Cassandra Mitchell, Reference SGA #02-12
200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room S-4307
Washington, DC 20210

For complete application and submission information, including online application instructions, please refer to section IV.

Summary

The U.S. Department of Labor (Department of Labor or USDOL), Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), announces a grant competition under the Veterans' Workforce Investment Program (VWIP) in Program Year (PY) 2012, as authorized under section 168 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. Selected programs will assist eligible veterans by providing employment, training, and support services with an emphasis on implementing innovative approaches that increase the number of veteran participants who complete industry-recognized training programs and who receive occupational credentials and certifications to improve their overall competitiveness in the civilian workforce.

The total funding available for this VWIP solicitation is up to \$12.8 million. It is anticipated that approximately ten (10) to eleven (11) three year awards will be made under this solicitation.

Awards are expected to range from a minimum of \$750,000 to a maximum of \$1,250,000.

Requests exceeding \$1,250,000 will be considered non-responsive and will not be evaluated. If there are any residual program funds, the Grant Officer may select qualified application(s) and award grants up to one (1) year after the initial performance period, which will begin between July 1, 2012 and August 1, 2012, and extending through June 30, 2015, as indicated per the notice of award, unless modified by the Grant Officer. The 1st two months, August 1 through September 30, 2012 will be considered the start-up period.

This SGA provides background information on the VWIP and identifies the critical elements that must be contained within proposals funded under this solicitation. It also describes the application submission requirements, the process that eligible applicants must use to apply for funds covered by this solicitation, and how grantees will be selected. This announcement consists of the following nine (9) sections:

- **Section I. – Funding Opportunity Description** which provides background information, program concept and emphasis on reintegrating eligible veterans into meaningful employment.
- **Section II. – Award Information** which describes the size and duration of the anticipated awards.
- **Section III. – Eligibility Information** which describes who qualifies as an eligible applicant.
- **Section IV. – Application and Submission Information** which provides information on the application and submission process.
- **Section V. – Application Review Information** which explains the review process and rating criteria that will be used to evaluate applications for funding.
- **Section VI. – Award Administration Information** which provides award administration and national policy requirements.
- **Section VII. Agency Contacts** which contains USDOL agency contact and other information.
- **Section VIII. – Additional Resources of Interest to Applicants** which contains supplemental resources that may be useful to applicants in preparing and submitting their application.
- **Section IX. – Other Information** which contains additional information related to the SGA and the execution of the grant after award.

This SGA contains all of the necessary information and forms needed to apply for grant funding. Applicants for grant funds should read this notice in its entirety. It is the applicant's sole responsibility to be aware of, responsive to, and in compliance with all requirements described within this solicitation. In addition, there may be future addenda for this solicitation published in Grants.gov and on the VETS website (www.dol.gov/vets). All applicants are responsible for checking Grants.gov and the VETS website regularly to ensure they have all of the latest information regarding updates to this solicitation.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

WIA section 168, 29 United States Code (U.S.C.) 2913 authorizes the Department of Labor to award grants to meet the needs for workforce investment activities of veterans with service-connected disabilities, veterans who have significant barriers to employment, veterans who served on active duty in the armed forces during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized, and recently separated veterans within 48 months of discharge (under conditions other than dishonorable). Veterans who received a "dishonorable" discharge are ineligible for VWIP services.

USDOL is authorized to competitively award VWIP grants to State and local Workforce Investment Boards (SWIBs/LWIBs), local public agencies, and non-profit organizations, including faith-based and community-based organizations that the Secretary determines to have an understanding of the unemployment problems of veterans, familiarity with the areas to be served, linkages with the workforce investment system and One-Stop Career Centers and other sources of support services,

and the capability to effectively administer a program that provides innovative employment and training related services to eligible veterans.

A. Program Concept and Emphasis

Under this solicitation, VWIP grants are intended to address the following objectives:

- To provide services to assist in reintegrating eligible Veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force;
- To stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems that will address the complex employability problems facing eligible Veterans; and
- To increase the skills and competency level of veteran participants through longer-term training that results, whenever feasible, in industry-recognized credentials for jobs, occupations, and industries that are in demand within a targeted service area.

For this PY 2012 grant solicitation, VETS seeks applicants that will provide services through a case management and mentoring approach and who can demonstrate their ability to collaborate effectively with complementary Federal, state, and local resources and programs. Applicants must propose clear strategies and obtainable goals related to assisting eligible veterans by providing employment, training, and support services. Applicants should demonstrate how their proposed services are designed to incorporate innovative approaches that increase the number of veteran participants who complete industry recognized training programs and who receive occupational credentials and certifications to improve their overall competitiveness within the civilian workforce. Innovative proposals that leverage public/private partnerships are highly encouraged.

VETS expects applicants to demonstrate their ability to incorporate strong and innovative skill building approaches for participants through coordinated enrollment in training programs that include, but are not limited to the following: established pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship training programs, formal on-the job-training (OJT) agreements with specific employers, enrollment in community college or vocational training schools, and/or the incorporation of other formal or voucher-based training programs. Applicants also should explain how each of their proposed training interventions is linked to high-growth jobs and industry sectors within their geographic service area. Links to employers and actual job commitments should be fully presented and illustrated.

More specifically, VETS expects applicants to propose approaches that incorporate the following five critical elements associated with innovation-based programs:

1) Implementation plans that establish innovative linkages within identified civilian workforce sectors, such as:

- Direct linkages with employers in high-growth and emerging sectors, such as energy, environment, and health care, focusing on employer skill needs by applying pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship training, formal on-the job-training (OJT) agreements, and voucher-based training methods;
- Partnerships with training providers and/or certification organizations that have expressed an intent to implement accelerated programs for veterans;

- Enhanced linkages between those workforce programs sponsored by USDOL and those veterans' service and benefit programs sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and,
 - Enhanced coordination among voluntary initiatives focused on veterans, such as those implemented by educational organizations, employer associations SWIBs/LWIBs, and Veterans Service Organizations.
- 2) Implementation strategies that emphasize long-term sustainability of successful approaches and stakeholder networks.
 - 3) Identification of niche approaches that complement existing services and benefits in order to leverage improved outcomes through service integration.
 - 4) Commitment to participate in *ad hoc* program reviews and systematic evaluations and to promote learning among participating stakeholders through an established and active “communities of practice” process which discusses and promotes successful training innovations and networks.
 - 5) Implementation strategies that link with the existing workforce system by establishing a working relationship with the One-Stop Career Center Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and the Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff and calling upon their expertise for job development, job search, and referral to job openings.

The VETS sponsored VWIP will give priority to proposals that clearly demonstrate a link between their proposed academic/vocational training and positive employment outcomes for a large majority of program participants. VETS expects applicants to offer effective approaches to assist all program-eligible veterans, with a special emphasis on strategies to speed and ease the transition of recently separated Veterans from military service into meaningful training and/or employment within the civilian workforce.

Furthermore, VETS expects applicants to be able to provide detailed and active linkages with their local WIA system, in particular SWIBs/LWIBs, and to demonstrate their ability to: a) perform effective outreach and recruitment of eligible participants, reputable training providers and committed employers; b) provide successful job placement services; and, c) leverage the use of other funding and service-oriented programs and resources to enhance veteran employability. Applicants should specifically demonstrate how they will help veteran participants overcome barriers to employment by increasing their opportunities to obtain academic and/or vocational credentials or certifications within the educational system and/or the civilian workforce based on their previous military experience and training.

B. Scope of Program Design

In PY 2012, the VWIP will seek to continue to strengthen development of effective service delivery systems, to provide comprehensive services through a case management and mentoring approach that addresses complex problems facing eligible veterans transitioning into gainful employment, to provide meaningful and longer-term credential based training, and to improve strategies for placement and retention in employment. More specifically, to be found technically acceptable

under this SGA, applicants are required, at a minimum, to demonstrate how their programs will effectively implement the following services:

- outreach and project awareness activities;
- intake and assessments;
- case management and mentoring
- training activities;
- job development, placement services, and retention services;
- quality of linkages; and
- organizational capability and experience.

No specific model is mandatory or required, but successful applicants must design a program that is responsive to the needs of eligible veterans and achieves the VWIP objectives and requirements as described above and presented within the evaluation criteria presented in Section V.A. Under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), Congress and the public are looking for program results rather than any particular standard process.

II. Award Information

One-time, three (3) year grants will be awarded. It should be noted that the selection of an organization as a grantee does not constitute final approval of the grant application as submitted. Before the actual grant is awarded, USDOL may enter into negotiations about program components, staffing, funding levels, and administrative systems in place to support grant implementation. If the

negotiations do not result in a mutually acceptable submission, the Grant Officer reserves the right to terminate the negotiation and to decline funding the application.

A. Award Amount

The total funding available for this VWIP solicitation is up to \$12.8 million. It is anticipated that approximately ten (10) to eleven (11) three year awards will be made under this solicitation.

Awards are expected to range from a minimum of \$750,000 to a maximum of \$1,250,000.

Applicants may propose an amount that is less than the minimum, but not more than the maximum award amount suggested. Requests exceeding \$1,250,000 will be considered non-responsive and will not be evaluated. All available funds will be awarded, and the number of grants will be announced after selections are made. Grants are awarded based on the merit of the applications and the financial amounts proposed by the pool of successful applicants. If there are any residual program funds, the Grant Officer may select qualified application(s) and award grants up to or on June 30, 2012.

B. Period of Performance

The active period of performance will be for a three (3) year period beginning between July 1, 2012 and August 1, 2012, and extending through June 30, 2015, as indicated per the notice of award, unless modified by the Grant Officer. The period from date of award through September 30, 2012 will be considered the start-up period. The follow-up period of performance will be for three (3) additional quarters or nine (9) months after the end of each program year. The final follow-up period will be from July 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016. It is expected that grantees will begin program operations under this solicitation on date of award, between July 1, 2012 and August 1,

2012. All program funds must be obligated by the grantee by June 30, 2015, including funds that will be reserved and used during the required nine-months of follow-up activities and closeout that will occur at the end of the formal period of performance. Applicants will be expected to submit annual plans for their expected performance prior to each program year and to report their actual program results on a quarterly basis during the entire performance period, or through March 31, 2016. Follow-up services must be performed and reported by the grantee for each eligible VWIP participant who enters employment during the active performance period.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

In accordance with the standards below, applications for grant funds will be accepted from SWIBs/LWIBs, local public agencies, and non-profit organizations, including faith-based and community-based organizations. Applicants may include joint labor-management training programs, community colleges and technical vocational schools, and small businesses. Applicants must have a familiarity with the area and population to be served and the ability to administer an effective program that is ready to start immediately upon the first day of the grant award period of performance.

Please note, in accordance with section 18 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-65) (2 U.S.C. 1611), non-profit entities incorporated under Internal Revenue Service Code section 501(c)(4) that engage in lobbying activities are not eligible to receive Federal funds and grants. No activity, including awareness-raising and advocacy activities, may include fundraising for, or lobbying of, U.S. Federal, state or local governments (see OMB Circular A-122).

All applicants for the VWIP must be able to satisfy a “responsibility review” that demonstrates an ability to administer Federal funds. See 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 667.170. Eligible applicants must fall into one of the following categories:

- SWIBs/LWIBs established under Sections 111 and 117 of the Workforce Investment Act.
- Public agencies, meaning any public agency of a state or of a general purpose political subdivision of a state that has the power to levy taxes and spend funds, as well as general corporate and police powers (this typically refers to cities and counties). A state agency may propose in its application to serve one or more of the jurisdictions located in its state. This does not preclude a city or county agency from submitting an application to serve its own jurisdiction.
- Non-profit organizations (including faith-based and community-based organizations). If claiming 501(c)(3) status, a current and valid Internal Revenue Service (IRS) statement indicating 501(c)(3) status approval must be submitted with the application or the application will be deemed non-responsive and it will not be evaluated. The IRS statement should be listed as an attachment to the technical proposal and it will not be counted toward the 50-page limit.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing and matching funds are not required as a condition for application. VETS encourages applicants to leverage additional resources available to the VWIP and its participants through cost

sharing and matching agreements with other funding agents, however, these additional resources are not required and will not impact an applicant's score.

C. Other Eligibility Considerations and Religious Activities

The Department notes that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), 42 U.S.C. Section 2000bb, applies to all Federal law and its implementation. Faith-based applicants that make hiring decisions on the basis of religious belief may be entitled to receive Federal financial assistance under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act and maintain hiring practice. If the applicant is awarded a grant, information will be provided on how to request an exemption related to this practice.

D. Participant Eligibility Criteria

Under section 168(a)(1) of the Workforce Investment Act, to be eligible for participation in a training program administered under the VWIP, an individual must be a veteran who falls within one of the following categories:

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities;
- Veterans who have significant barriers to employment;
- Veterans who served on active duty in the armed forces during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized; and/or
- Veterans who have been recently separated (those within 48 months of discharge).

The term "veteran" means an individual who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable [WIA 101(49)]. Veterans who received a dishonorable discharge are ineligible for VWIP services. VETS expects applicants

to offer approaches to assist all program eligible veterans, with a special emphasis on proposing innovative strategies to speed and ease the transition of recently separated veterans from military service into productive and meaningful employment within the civilian workforce.

E. Other Grant Specifications; Transparency

DOL is committed to conducting a transparent grant award process and publicizing information about program outcomes. Posting grant applications on public websites is a means of promoting and sharing innovative ideas. For this grant competition, we will publish the Abstracts required by [section IV.] and selected information from the SF-424 for all applications on the Department's public website or similar publicly accessible location. Additionally, we will publish a version of the Technical Proposal required by [section IV.], for all those applications that are awarded grants, on the Department's website or a similar location. Except for the Abstract, none of the Attachments to the Technical Proposal described in [section IV.] will be published. The Technical Proposals and Abstracts will not be published until after the grants are awarded. In addition, information about grant progress and results may also be made publicly available.

DOL recognizes that grant applications sometimes contain information that an applicant may consider proprietary or business confidential information, or may contain personally identifiable information. Proprietary or business confidential information is information that is not usually disclosed outside your organization and disclosing this information is likely to cause you substantial competitive harm.

Personally identifiable information is any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as name, social security number, date and place of birth, mother's

maiden name, or biometric records; and any other information that is linked or linkable to an individual, such as medical, educational, financial, and employment information.¹

Abstracts will be published in the form originally submitted, without any redactions. Applicants should not include any proprietary or confidential business information or personally identifiable information in this summary. In the event that an applicant submits proprietary or confidential business information or personally identifiable information, DOL is not liable for the posting of this information contained in the Abstract. The submission of the grant application constitutes a waiver of the applicant's objection to the posting of any proprietary or confidential business information contained in the Abstract. Additionally, the applicant is responsible for obtaining all authorizations from relevant parties for publishing all personally identifiable information contained within the Abstract. In the event the Abstract contains proprietary or confidential business or personally identifiable information, the applicant is presumed to have obtained all necessary authorizations to provide this information and may be liable for any improper release of this information.

By submission of this grant application, the applicant agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the United States, the U.S. Department of Labor, its officers, employees, and agents against any liability or for any loss or damages arising from this application. By such submission of this grant application, the applicant further acknowledges having the authority to execute this release of liability.

¹ OMB Memorandum 07-16 and 06-19. GAO Report 08-536, *Privacy: Alternatives Exist for Enhancing Protection of Personally Identifiable Information*, May 2008, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08536.pdf>.

In order to ensure that proprietary or confidential business information or personally identifiable information is properly protected from disclosure when DOL posts the winning Technical Proposals, applicants whose Technical Proposals will be posted will be asked to submit a second redacted version of their Technical Proposal, with any proprietary or confidential business information and personally identifiable information redacted. All non-public information about the applicant's and consortium members' staff (if applicable) should be removed as well.

The Department will contact the applicants whose Technical Proposals will be published by letter or email, and provide further directions about how and when to submit the redacted version of the Technical Proposal.

Submission of a redacted version of the Technical Proposal will constitute permission by the applicant for DOL to make the redacted version publicly available. We will also assume that by submitting the redacted version of the Technical Proposal, the applicant has obtained the agreement to the applicant's decision about what material to redact of all persons and entities whose proprietary, confidential business information, or personally identifiable information is contained in the Technical Proposal. If an applicant fails to provide a redacted version of the Technical Proposal within two weeks from the date funded grantees receive notice on how to submit a redacted version of the Technical proposal, DOL will publish the original Technical Proposal in full, after redacting only personally identifiable information. (Note that the original, unredacted version of the Technical Proposal will remain part of the complete application package, including an applicant's proprietary and confidential business information and any personally identifiable information).

Applicants are encouraged to maximize the grant application information that will be publicly disclosed, and to exercise restraint and redact only information that clearly is proprietary, confidential commercial/business information, or capable of identifying a person. The redaction of entire pages or sections of the Technical Proposal is not appropriate, and will not be allowed, unless the entire portion merits such protection. Should a dispute arise about whether redactions are appropriate, DOL will follow the procedures outlined in the Department's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) regulations (29 CFR Part 70).

Redacted information in grant applications will be protected by DOL from public disclosure in accordance with federal law, including the Trade Secrets Act (18 U.S.C. § 1905), FOIA, and the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. § 552a). If DOL receives a FOIA request for your application, the procedures in DOL's FOIA regulations for responding to requests for commercial/business information submitted to the government will be followed, as well as all FOIA exemptions and procedures. 29 CFR § 70.26. Consequently, it is possible that application of FOIA rules may result in release of information in response to a FOIA request that an applicant redacted in its "redacted copy."

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. How to Obtain an Application Package

This SGA, together with its attachments, includes all the information and links needed to apply. Additional application packages and amendments to this SGA may be obtained from the VETS website address at www.dol.gov/vets or the Federal Grant Opportunities website address at www.grants.gov. Additional copies of the standard forms can be downloaded at www.grants.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

To be considered responsive to this solicitation the application must consist of three separate and distinct parts: 1) a cost proposal; 2) a technical proposal; and 3) attachments to the technical proposal. The information provided in these three sections is essential for applicants to demonstrate an understanding of the programmatic and fiscal requirements of the VWIP. Applications that do not contain all three parts or fail to adhere to the instructions in this section will be deemed non-responsive and will not be reviewed. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the funding amount requested is consistent across all parts and sub-parts of the application.

To ensure consideration, the components of the application must be saved as .doc, .rtf or .pdf files. If submitted in any other format the applicant bears the risk that compatibility or other issues will prevent the VETS evaluation team from considering the application. VETS will attempt to open the document but will not take any additional measures in the event that there are problems with opening the document. In such cases, the non-conforming application will not be considered for funding.

A complete grant application package must be written in English and must not exceed 50 single-sided pages (8-1/2" x 11"), double-spaced, typed 12-point font, with one inch margins. All attachments, unless specifically noted in the instructions, are included in the 50-page maximum. Any pages over the 50-page total page limit will not be reviewed. Major sections and sub-sections of the application are to be divided and clearly identified (e.g. with tab dividers), and all pages must be consecutively numbered.

Part I. The Cost Proposal

Applicants can expect that the cost proposal will be reviewed for financial appropriateness and reasonableness. No direct evaluation points will be awarded based upon the information contained within the cost proposal; however, applicants must provide the specific information required, or their response to this solicitation may be deemed as non-responsive and thus not evaluated.

The cost proposal must include the following items:

- A fully completed Standard Form (SF)-424, “Application for Federal Assistance” (Appendix A or available at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>) with the original signed in blue ink if submitting in hard copy. The SF-424 must clearly identify the applicant and must be signed by an individual with authority to enter into a grant agreement. Upon confirmation of an award, the individual signing the SF-424 on behalf of the applicant shall be considered the authorized representative of the applicant. The signature of the authorized representative on the SF-424 certifies that the organization is in compliance with the Assurances and Certifications form SF-424B (Appendix C or available at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family+15>). The SF-424B signature page is required to be submitted with the application.

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number for this program is 17.802 and it must be entered on the SF-424 in Block 11. All applicants for Federal grant and funding opportunities are required to have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, and must supply their DUNS number on the SF-424. The DUNS number is a nine-digit identification number that uniquely identifies business entities. Applicants can get a DUNS number free of charge by calling Dun & Bradstreet at 866-705-5711 or by

accessing their website at www.dunandbradstreet.com/. Requests for exemption from the DUNS number requirement must be made to the Office of Management and Budget.

- A fully completed SF-424A, “Budget Information Form” (Appendix B or available at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>). As an attachment to SF-424A, the applicant must provide a detailed budget narrative that includes a cost breakout of each line item on the Budget Information Sheet. Applicants should label this page or pages as “Budget Narrative” and ensure that costs reported on the SF- 424A correspond accurately with the budget narrative. The budget narrative must include, at a minimum:
 - i. Personnel Costs. Applicants must provide a breakout of all personnel costs by position, title, annual salary rates, and percentage of time of each position to be devoted to the proposed project (including sub-grantees) by completing the “Direct Cost Descriptions for Applicants and Sub-Applicants” form (Appendix E).
 - ii. Fringe Benefits. Applicants must provide an explanation and breakout of extraordinary fringe benefit rates and associated charges (i.e., rates exceeding 35% of salaries and wages).
 - iii. Explanation of Costs and Methodologies. Applicants must provide an explanation of the purpose, composition, and methodology used to derive all costs which must include: personnel, fringe, travel, equipment, supplies, sub-awards/contracts, and any other costs associated with executing the grant. The applicant must include costs of any required travel described in this solicitation. Planned travel expenditures may not exceed 5% of the total VWIP funds

requested. Mileage charges may not exceed the current Federal rate. Updated Federal mileage rates may be secured through the General Services Administration's (GSA's) website at www.gsa.gov.

iv. Follow-Up Services. Applicants must describe all associated costs for obtaining and retaining participant information pertinent to the follow-up services required for the three quarters after the active program year performance; including any costs of using state unemployment insurance data to substantiate an applicant's follow-up results, should be included if applicable. Procedures for safeguarding all follow-up information will be provided after the award of the grant is determined.

v. Equipment Purchases. Applicants must provide a description/specification of, and justification for, all equipment purchases, if any, that are tangible, non-expendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. Applicants must specifically identify any and all equipment that meets the conditions described and secure the Grant Officer Technical Representative (GOTR) approval before purchase.

- A fully completed Indirect Charges or Certificate of Direct Costs Form (Appendix I).

Note that the entire Federal grant amount requested must be included on the SF-424, SF-424A and the budget narrative. No leveraged resources should be shown on the SF-424 and the SF-424A. The amounts listed on the SF-424, SF-424A and the budget narrative must be the same. The funding amount included on the SF-424 will be considered the official funding amount requested if any inconsistencies are found. In addition, applications that do not provide an SF-424, an SF-424A

or a DUNS number (or an official exemption) will be considered non-responsive and will not be evaluated.

All applicants must register with the Federal Central Contractor Registry (CCR) before submitting an application. The CCR is the official, on-line registrant database for the U.S. Federal Government. CCR collects, validates, stores and disseminates data in support of agency acquisition and award missions. No payment is required to register in the CCR. Step-by-step instructions for registering with CCR can be found at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/org_step2.jsp. A grantee must maintain an active CCR registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration. To remain registered in the CCR database after the initial registration, the applicant is required to review an update on an annual basis from the date of initial registration or subsequent updates its information in the CCR database to ensure it is current, accurate and complete. For purposes of this paragraph, the applicant is the entity that meets the eligibility criteria and has the legal authority to apply and to receive the award. Failure to register with the CCR before the application submission will result in an application being found non-responsive and it will not be reviewed.

Part II. The Technical Proposal

The technical proposal must demonstrate the applicant's capability to implement the grant in accordance with the provisions of this SGA. The application must focus on and promote innovative approaches to securing meaningful training and job placement for program eligible veterans. Applicants must propose clear strategies and obtainable goals for training and employing participants within high growth jobs and occupations in their local economy.

The specific guidelines for the content of the technical proposal are provided in Section V. The technical proposal is not to exceed 20 single-sided pages of double-spaced 12-point font with one inch margins. Any materials beyond the specified page limit will not be read. The pages used to present the technical proposal count toward the 50-page total page maximum limitation. Applicants should number the technical proposal beginning with page number 1. The technical proposal should consist of a narrative that fully illustrates the following elements: 1) Need for the Project; 2) Overall Strategy; 3) Quality of Linkages; and 4) Organizational and Staff Capability. The associated rating criteria and evaluation points related to each of the program elements contained within the technical proposal is provided in section V. Applications that do not contain a technical proposal will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed.

Part III. Attachments to the Technical Proposal

Applications that fail to contain the required attachments as identified in the SGA will either be determined as non-responsive and not be evaluated or have a significant number of points deducted during the evaluation process. The required attachments must be affixed as separate, clearly identified sections or appendices to the application. Additional materials such as general letters of support will have no impact upon the evaluation. Applicants should not send attached documents (or any other documents) separately, because documents received separately will not be attached to the application for review.

In addition to the other appendices specified in the SGA, the applicant must submit the following as Attachments to the technical proposal:

- An up to two-page abstract or executive summary reflecting the applicant’s proposed overall strategy, timeline, and outcomes to be achieved within their proposed activities is required. The geographic area to be served must identify the congressional district or districts included in that area. No direct evaluation points will be assessed based upon the information contained within the executive summary. This abstract does not count toward the 20-page technical proposal limit, but it does count toward the overall 50-page limitation.
- Applicants must complete the PY 2012 Competitive Grants Planned Goals Chart or Form (Appendix D) with proposed programmatic outcomes, including but not limited to, participants served, placements, and jobs retained. As the first two months of the award are for start-up, 1st Quarter, PY 1 goals should reflect start-up and not program operations. In addition, applicants must complete and submit Planned Quarterly Technical Performance Goals Charts for the two “out years” beyond the first PY (Appendix D). If the applicant fails to provide the specific and required information contained with PY 2012 Competitive Grants Planned Goals Chart or Form, as well as a form or chart for each of the following program years, the grant application will be considered non-responsive and it will not be evaluated. These forms or charts do not count toward either the 20-Page Technical Proposal limit, but they do count toward the overall 50-page limitation.
- All applicants must submit evidence of satisfactory financial management capability which must include a recent financial audit statement for the organization applying for the grant. The audit must have occurred within the last 18 months. This audit does not

count toward either the 20-page technical proposal limit or the 50-page total page limitation. All successful grantees are required to use Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP), maintain a separate accounting for these grant funds, and have a checking account. If an audit is not included, the application will receive zero points in the appropriate section of the review criteria.

- All applicants must include, if available or identified in the technical proposal, a list of all employment and training government grants and contracts that they have had in the past three (3) years. For each grant and contract the applicant must include the grant/contract officer contact information, the size of the award, the planned goals, and outcomes data related to those grants and/or contracts. The Department reserves the right to have an agency representative review and verify this data. This list does not count toward the 20-page technical proposal limit, but it does count toward the overall 50-page limitation.
- A completed Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants (Appendix F) must be provided. . This Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants does not count toward the 20-page Technical Proposal limit, but it does count toward the 50-page total page limitation.
- A completed Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Number 4040-0010 (Appendix L or also available at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>) must be provided. If using grants.gov for submission, this form must be attached under the required forms section.

Please note that this is a standard form used for many programs and has a check box for applying as an individual. Disregard this box on the form as individuals are not eligible to apply for this solicitation. This form does not count toward the 20-page technical proposal limit, but it does count toward the 50-page total page limitation.

- Individual service contracts, memorandums of understanding (MOUs), or other formal agreements which involve service providers not specifically proposed as a part of the applicant's team, but who provide services within the proposed geographic service delivery area mentioned within an applicant's technical proposal. While these formal agreements should be noted and identified in the appropriate place within the applicant's technical proposal, copies of these formal agreements should be provided as attachments to the technical proposal. These MOUs or other formal agreements are not counted toward either the 20-page technical proposal limit or the overall 50-page limitation.
- An organizational chart, staff resumes and/or detailed staff capability statements are strongly recommended and they do not count toward either the 20-page technical proposal limit or the overall 50-page limitation.

Applicants will not be required to provide general letters of support submitted by organizations or individuals who are not identified partners in the proposed project. If these letters are submitted within an applicant's proposal, they will not be considered in the evaluation review process.

C. Submission Dates and Times (Acceptable Methods of Submission)

The closing date for receipt of applications under this SGA is 45 days from the date of publication in the Federal Register. Applications may be submitted by mail, overnight or hand-delivery, or electronically at www.grants.gov. Hard copy applications must be addressed to the Department of Labor, Procurement Services Center, Attention: Cassandra Mitchell, Grant Officer, Reference SGA #02-12, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room S-4307, Washington, DC 20210 and be received no later than 4:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on the closing date. Applications submitted through Grants.gov must also be successfully submitted (as described below) no later than 4:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on the closing date. Applications sent by e-mail, telegram, or facsimile (FAX) will not be accepted.

Applicants submitting proposals in hard copy must submit an original signed application (including the SF-424) and two (2) “copy-ready” versions free of bindings, staples or protruding tabs to ease in the reproduction of the proposal by USDOL. Applicants submitting proposals in hard copy are also required to provide an identical electronic copy of the proposal on compact disc (CD). If discrepancies between the hard copy submission and CD copy are identified, the application on the CD will be considered the official applicant submission for evaluation purposes. Failure to provide identical applications in hardcopy and CD format may have an impact on the overall evaluation.

If an application is submitted by both hard copy and through Grants.gov, a letter must accompany the hard copy application stating which application to review. If no letter accompanies the hard copy or if VETS receives multiple copies through Grants.gov, the latest qualifying submission through Grants.gov will be considered the final version.

Applicants are advised that mail delivery in the Washington DC area may be delayed due to decontamination procedures. Hand-delivered proposals will be received at the address specified above. All overnight mail will be considered hand-delivered and must be received at the designated place by the specified closing date and time.

To be considered responsive, grant applications not submitted through Grants.gov (if an electronic submission is made through Grants.gov, copies are not required) must include:

- An original, blue ink-signed, and two (2) copies of the cover letter. The cover letter does not count toward the 50-page total page limitation.
- An original and two (2) copies of the cost proposal that includes an original, blue ink-signed, Application for Federal Assistance, SF-424 (Appendix A), a Budget Narrative, Budget Information Sheet SF 424A (Appendix B), and original, blue ink-signed, Assurances and Certifications Signature Page (Appendix C), a Direct Cost Description for Applicants and Sub-applicants (Appendix E), a completed Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants (Appendix F), and the applicant's financial audit or audit statement dated within the last 18 months. The cost proposal does count toward the 50-page total page limitation.
- An original and two (2) copies of the technical proposal (see below) that includes a completed Competitive Grants Planned Goals Chart (Appendix D).
- An original and two (2) copies of all required attachments to the technical proposal.

If any documents listed above are missing, the application will be considered non-responsive and it will not be evaluated. No exceptions to the mailing and delivery requirements set forth in this

notice will be granted. In addition, documents submitted separately from the application, before or after the deadline, will not be accepted as part of the application.

Applications that are submitted through Grants.gov must be successfully submitted through Grants.gov no later than 4:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on the closing date and then subsequently validated by Grants.gov. The submission and validation process is described in more detail below. The process can be complicated and time consuming. Applicants are strongly advised to initiate the process as soon as possible and to plan for time to resolve any technical problems that may arise, if necessary.

It is strongly recommended that before the applicant begins to write the proposal, applicants should immediately initiate and complete the “Get Registered” registration steps at www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp. Applicants should read through the registration process carefully before registering. These steps may take as long as four weeks to complete and this time should be factored into plans for electronic submission in order to avoid unexpected delays that could result in the rejection of an application. The site also contains registration checklists to assist applicants through the process. The Department strongly recommends that applicants download the “Organization Registration Checklist” at www.grants.gov/assets/Organization_Steps_Complete_Registration.pdf and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling required information before beginning the registration process will save time and alleviate last minute searches for required information. As described above, applicants must have a DUNS Number and must register with the CCR.

The next step in the registration process is creating a username and password with Grants.gov to become an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR). To read more detailed instructions for creating a profile on Grants.gov visit: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/org_step3.jsp. After creating a profile of Grants.gov, the E-Biz point of contact (E-Biz POC) – a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for the CCR – will receive an email to grant the AOR permission to submit applications on behalf of their organization. The E-Biz POC will then log into Grants.gov and approve the applicant as the AOR, thereby giving him or her permission to submit applications. To learn more about AOR authorization visit:

http://www.grants.gov/applicants/org_step6.jsp.

An application submitted through Grants.gov constitutes a submission as an electronically signed application. The registration and account creation with Grants.gov, with E-Biz POC approval, establishes an AOR. When the applicant submits their application through Grants.gov, the name of the AOR on file will be inserted into the signature line of the application. Applicants must register the individual who is able to make legally binding commitments for the applicant organization as the AOR; this step is often missed and it is crucial to complete a valid submission.

When a registered applicant submits an application with Grants.gov, an electronic time stamp is generated when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. Within two business days of application submission, Grants.gov will send the applicant two email messages about the status of the application's progress through the system. The first email, sent almost immediately, will contain a tracking number and will confirm receipt of the application by Grants.gov. The second email will indicate the application has either been successfully validated or has been rejected due to errors. Only applications that have been successfully submitted and validated will be considered. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure a timely submission. While it is not required that

an application be successfully validated before the deadline for submission, it is prudent to reserve before the deadline in case it is necessary to resubmit an application that has not been successfully validated. Therefore, sufficient time should be allotted for submission (two business days), and if applicable, subsequent time to address errors and receive validation upon resubmission (an additional two business days for each ensuing submission). It is important to note that if sufficient time is not allotted and a rejection notice is received after the due date and time, the application will not be considered.

VETS strongly advises applicants to use the various tools and documents, including frequently asked questions (FAQs), which are available on the “Applicant Resources” page at <http://www.grants.gov/applicants/resources.jsp>.

The Grants.gov helpdesk is available 24 hours per day 7 days per week, but is closed on federal holidays. If applicants encounter a problem with Grants.gov or do not find an answer in any of the other resources, they should call 800-518-4726 to speak to a customer support representative or email their concern to support@grants.gov.

Late Applications

For applications submitted on Grants.gov, only applications that have been successfully submitted no later 4:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on the closing date contained within this SGA and have been successfully validated will be considered. Applicants take a significant risk by waiting until the last day to submit through Grants.gov.

Any hard copy application received after the exact date and time specified for receipt at the office designated in this notice will not be considered, unless it is received before awards are made, it was

properly addressed, and it was: (a) sent by U.S. Postal Service mail, postmarked not later than the fifth calendar day before the date specified for receipt of applications (e.g., an application required to be received by the 20th of the month must be postmarked by the 15th of that month) or (b) sent by professional overnight delivery service no later than one working day prior to the date specified for receipt of applications. “Postmarked” means a printed, stamped or otherwise placed impression (exclusive of a postage meter machine impression) that is readily identifiable, without further action, as having been supplied or affixed on the date of mailing by an employee of the U.S. Postal Service. Therefore, applicants should request the postal clerk to place a legible hand cancellation “bull’s eye” postmark on both the receipt and the package. Evidence of timely submission by a professional overnight delivery service must be demonstrated by equally reliable evidence created by the delivery service provider indicating the time and place of receipt. Failure to adhere to these instructions will be a basis for a determination that the application was not filed timely and will not be considered.

D. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

E. Funding Restrictions

All proposal costs must be necessary and reasonable and in accordance with Federal guidelines. Determinations of allowable costs will be made in accordance with the applicable Federal cost principles listed in section VI.B.1. Disallowed costs are those charges to a grant that the grantor agency or its representative determines are not allowed in accordance with the applicable Federal

cost principles or other conditions contained in the grant. Applicants, whether successful or not, will not be entitled to reimbursement of pre-award costs.

The following specific funding restrictions apply to the SGA:

1. Indirect Costs

As specified in OMB Circular Cost Principles, indirect costs are those that have been incurred for common or joint objectives and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective. An Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) is required when an organization operates under more than one grant or other activity, whether Federally-assisted or not. Organizations must use the ICR supplied by the Federal Cognizant Agency. If an organization requires a new ICR or has a pending ICR, the Grant Officer will award a temporary billing rate for 90 days until a provisional rate can be issued. This rate is based on the fact that an organization has not established an ICR agreement. Within this 90 day period, the organization must submit an acceptable indirect cost proposal to their Federal Cognizant Agency to obtain a provisional ICR.

2. Administrative Costs:

Under this SGA, an entity that receives a grant to carry out a project or program may not use more than 20 percent of the amount of the grant to pay administrative costs associated with the program or project. Administrative costs could be direct or indirect costs, and are defined at 20 CFR 667.220. Administrative costs do not need to be identified separately from program costs on the SF-424A Budget Information Form. However, they must be tracked through the grantee's accounting system. To claim any administrative costs that are also indirect costs, the applicant must obtain an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement from its Federal Cognizant Agency, as specified above.

3. Salary and Bonus Limitations

Under Public Law 109-234, none of the funds appropriated in Public Law 109-149 or prior Acts under the heading “Veterans’ Employment and Training Service” that are available for expenditure on or after June 15, 2006, may be used by a recipient or sub-recipient of such funds to pay the salary and bonuses of an individual, either as direct costs or indirect costs, at a rate in excess of Executive Level II, except as provided for in section 101 of Public Law 109-149.

Public Laws 111-8 and 111-117 contain the same limitation on funds appropriated under each of these laws. This limitation applies to grants funded under this SGA.

4. Intellectual Property Rights

The Federal Government reserves a paid-up, nonexclusive and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use for Federal purposes: i) the copyright in all products developed under the grant, including a sub-grant or contract under the grant or sub-grant; and ii) any rights of copyright to which the grantee, sub-grantee or a contractor purchases ownership under an award (including but not limited to curricula, training models, technical assistance products, and any related materials). Such uses include, but are not limited to, the right to modify and distribute such products worldwide by any means, electronically or otherwise. The grantee may not use Federal funds to pay any royalty or license fee for use of a copyrighted work, or the cost of acquiring by purchase a copyright in a work, where the Department has a license or rights of free use in such work. If revenues are generated through selling products developed with grant funds, including intellectual property, these revenues are program income. Program income is added to the grant and must be expended for allowable grant activities.

If applicable, the following needs to be on all products developed in whole or in part with grant funds: “This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service. The product was created by the grantee and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for non-commercial purposes are permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner.”

5. Use of Grant Funds for Participant Wages

Organizations that receive grants through this SGA may not use grant funds to pay for the wages of participants. Further, the provision of stipends to training enrollees for the purposes of wage replacement is not an allowable cost under this SGA.

F. Additional Submission Information

Withdrawal of Applications: Applications may be withdrawn by written notice to the Grant Officer at any time before an award is made. In addition, applicants must adhere to the following submission requirements:

- Proposals exceeding \$1,250,000 will be considered non-responsive and will not be

evaluated.

- There is a limit of one (1) application per submitting organization and physical location serving the same VWIP participants. If two (2) applications from the same organization for the same physical location serving the same VWIP participants are submitted, the application with the later date will be considered. Please do not submit duplicate grant applications as only one (1) grant application will be considered for funding purposes.
- Due to the limited availability of funding, all VWIP grantees in the 3rd year of the budget cycle that have received funds for a specific physical location serving the same VWIP participants may not submit another application to serve the specific physical location serving the same VWIP participants under this SGA.
- Successful grant applicants who receive VWIP funds and who also receive Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) funds are not authorized to co-enroll participants in both the HVRP and VWIP programs. A grantee may provide employment and training services to eligible participants through either HVRP or VWIP, but not both. If the same grantee provides services under both HVRP and VWIP, it may be considered an audit exception. However, an HVRP grantee and a separate non-affiliated VWIP grantee may coordinate efforts on behalf of eligible veterans.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

This section identifies and describes the criteria that will be used under each category to evaluate grant proposals. Please note that the VETS grant review panel members who will be reviewing all grant applications submitted as a result of this SGA do not have access to any reporting information

systems during the review process; therefore, if an organization presents past experience administering and managing grants, and their final or most recent technical performance reports are not submitted, as specified within this SGA, the grant application will be considered non-responsive. Further, all MOUs or other formal agreements related to any part of the Technical Proposal should be submitted as Attachments to the technical proposal. These MOUs or other formal agreement will not count toward either the 20-page technical proposal limit or the overall 50-page limitation, unless otherwise noted.

In addition to addressing the evaluation criteria presented in the section, applicants will be expected to fully illustrate the measures of success related to their proposed plan. This plan should include a proposed system to monitor the implementation of program activities and achievements of program outcomes. Applicants must indicate their planned level of performance using the reporting methodology as described in the Technical Assistance Guide (TAG) for Competitive Grantees (Appendix H). The TAG includes specific directions related to the proper completion and submittal of the Competitive Grants Planned Goals Chart which must be included as an attachment to the technical proposal. Applications will receive up to 100 total points based on the following criteria: Applications will be scored on the extent to which they provide clear, complete and understandable descriptions in response to the information required by each category/criterion.

Categories / Criteria	Points
1. Need for the Project	10
2. Overall Strategy	45
3. Quality of Linkages	20
4. Organizational Capability and Experience	25

TOTAL	100

1. Need for the project: (up to 10 points)

We will award points on this category based on the extent to which the applicant documents the need for this project, as demonstrated by clearly identifying: (i) the geographic area to be served and the potential number and/or concentration of eligible veterans in the proposed project service area relative to other similar geographic areas; (ii) the rates of poverty and unemployment in the proposed project service area as determined and/or estimated by the U.S. Census or other credible surveys; (iii) the specific barriers within the proposed service area faced by targeted veterans, including regulations or other restrictions related to the recognition of relevant military training by civilian licensing, credentialing, and/or certification authorities, and (iv) the of service gaps in the local infrastructure faced by program participants. Applicants must demonstrate how their proposed program will effectively address the barriers faced and address the identified gaps in service. Applicants should present the specific types of job opportunities and industries or occupations that are in demand within the local labor market and geographical area to be served.

2. Overall Strategy: (up to 45 Points)

Applicants must propose innovative and specific strategies and obtainable goals for employment that focus on providing innovative training and placement/retention services for participants within growth areas in the local economy. These growth areas may include, but certainly are not limited to energy, environment, and health-related occupations and professions. In addition, applicants should be able to demonstrate how they plan to help veterans become more

competitive within the labor market by increasing opportunities for veterans to obtain longer-term training or academic credentials and certifications in the civilian workforce based on their military experience and training. Applicants must submit proposals that clearly provide evidence for why the proposed overall strategy will meet the SGA's stated goals. Examples of evidence are, but are not limited to, results from prior evaluations demonstrating the success of the proposed strategies in achieving employment or educational outcomes, or strategies with local businesses that will train and hire veterans utilizing previous skills attained through the individual's Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), agreements with community colleges that agree to provide new certifications in high growth industries such as renewable energy, and healthcare, and MOUs with (SWIBs/LWIBs) that are developing job opportunities for transitioning (OIF/OEF) veterans, etc.

Applicants must include a detailed description of their approach to providing comprehensive employment and training services, including, but not necessarily limited to the following: outreach and project awareness activities; intake and assessment, including demonstrated case management processes, mentoring and the development and maintenance of individual employment plans; training activities that increase participant skill levels and competitive labor market advantages by leading to meaningful credentials and certifications; job development and placement services that include specific employer commitments to hire; and post-placement retention and follow-up services. Applicants must indicate how the activities will be tailored or responsive to the needs of eligible veterans, especially innovative approaches to serve veterans who have recently transitioned out of military service, and it is strongly suggested that applicants provide a participant flow chart that fully illustrates the sequencing and mix of services. If a flow chart is submitted it does count toward the 50-page maximum page limit.

VETS expects that many of the proposed longer-term and meaningful training interventions may require that participants receive particular training intervention and remain in the overall program longer than one or even two program years. Applicants must present plans that adequately demonstrate how they will manage their program to successfully meet their planned performance goals given the anticipated longer-term training interventions. More specifically, to be found technically acceptable under this SGA, applicants are required, at a minimum, to demonstrate how their programs will effectively implement the requirements presented below as a part of their overall strategy.

Outreach and Project Awareness Activities (up to 10 points)

In order to promote networking between the VWIP-funded program and local service providers (and thereby eliminate gaps or duplication in services and enhance the provision of assistance to participants), the applicant must demonstrate how they will provide project orientation workshops and program awareness activities that it determines are the most feasible for providing information about the VWIP program to other service providers. In addition, applicants should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of and their specific plans to attend other service provider meetings, seminars, and conferences; to out-station staff; and to involve other agencies in the execution of their program.

In addition, program staff who provide outreach services should have direct experience in dealing with and an intimate understanding of the needs of veterans targeted under this SGA. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate their ability to recruit and serve program

eligible veterans, especially veterans who have recently transitioned from military service, immediately upon receipt of the award. In addition, applicants must demonstrate how their outreach activities will be coordinated with other USDOL sponsored programs, as well as other service programs, operating within the proposed geographic service area, whenever applicable.

Intake and Assessment Services (up to 10 points)

Applicants must demonstrate how their proposed intake and assessment services will include preliminary assessments for job readiness. As part in the intake and assessment phase of services, applicants should also demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate referrals to the VA for service-connected disabilities, healthcare, education benefits, compensation, and/or pension benefits, etc.

Applicants must demonstrate their ability to establish and maintain effective case management processes which involve the creation and updating of individual case management files that convey and track all the services and activities that have been provided to each participant under the program. VETS expects that applicants will demonstrate how they will ensure that participants' Individual Employment Plans (IEP) will be fluid documents that are maintained and continuously updated within a participant's case file to reflect the current status and aspirations of each VWIP participant.

As appropriate, applicants must demonstrate their ability to refer their participants to VA or Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) in order to file a claim for compensation or pension.

Successful grantees will be required to track the progress of such claims and report outcomes in individual participant case management records. Furthermore, applicants must demonstrate their understanding of and ability to coordinate their program with the variety of other relevant assistance programs sponsored by the VA, when applicable. These services involve, but are not limited to, referrals, as necessary, to health care, counseling, and other rehabilitative services including alcohol and drug rehabilitation, therapeutic services, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) services, additional mental health services, and services provided to formerly incarcerated veterans. Applicants should also demonstrate how supported employment programs such as the VA's Compensated Work Therapy Program will be incorporated into a participant's service plan, if applicable.

Training (up to 10 points)

An applicant's overall strategy must present its innovative approaches to providing longer-term training for targeted occupations that are locally in demand, have career growth potential, and will provide decent wages to ensure self-sufficiency for their eligible Veteran participants. The applicant must specifically identify both the community colleges and/or other the local vocational training providers and the type(s) of training to be accessed by participants through the proposed programs, as well as, the length and curriculum of the proposed training interventions. Applicants must explain how each of their proposed training interventions is linked to high growth jobs and industry sectors within their local economy and geographic service area. Links to employers and actual job commitments should also be fully presented and illustrated.

VETS seeks applicants that can implement innovative approaches that increase the number of participants who complete industry-recognized training programs and who receive educational and occupational credentials and certifications to improve their overall competitiveness within the civilian workforce. Applicants must demonstrate their ability to incorporate strong skill-building approaches for participants through coordinated enrollment in established pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship training programs, formal on-the-job-training (OJT) agreements with specific employers, enrollment in community college or vocational training schools, and/or the incorporation of other formal or voucher-based training programs. Applicants must be able to propose and demonstrate linkages that leverage public/private partnerships whenever possible.

Provision of or referral to training services such as: basic skills instruction, remedial education activities, life skills and money management training, on-the-job training, Registered Apprenticeship training providers, classroom training, vocational training, and other formal training programs as deemed appropriate to benefit the participant are required. At least 80% of the enrolled VWIP participants must participate in meaningful training activities. VETS will give priority to applicants that propose programs with specific and tested strategies for incorporating longer-term training interventions and for accelerating the attainment of training-related academic and vocational credentials and certifications for participants by incorporating the skills learned during a participant's military service. VETS expects that many of the proposed training interventions may require that participants be enrolled in the program longer than one year. Applicants must present plans that adequately

demonstrate how they will manage their program to successfully meet their planned performance goals given the anticipated longer-term training interventions.

Applicants must demonstrate how all such training services, as well as the support services provided, and the additional job placement and retention activities described below, will be formally noted within an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) to facilitate a grantee's ability to monitor participant progress.

Job Development, Placement and Retention Services (up to 15 points)

Applicants must demonstrate how they will provide directly or refer participants to receive employment services such as: job search workshops, job counseling, skill assessments, resume writing techniques, interviewing skills, job development services, job placement into unsubsidized employment, and job placement follow-up services to enhance retention in employment. Peer-to-peer counseling and mentoring is highly encouraged to facilitate job placement and retention

3. Quality of Linkages: (up to 20 Points)

In addition to the linkages mentioned above under the overall strategy, we will award points on this category based on the extent to which the applicant provides information on the quality and extent of the linkages that their proposed program will have with a wide array of federal, state, and local supportive service programs and their associated agencies and/organizations. For each

service, the applicant must specify who the provider is, the source of funding (if known), and the type of linkages/referral system established or proposed.

Applicants also must describe their linkages with organizations that will be involved in identifying potential clients for this program. Applicants are encouraged to submit a list of their local area network of service providers that offer and provide services to benefit VWIP participants. Applicants must identify and describe any networks or any available resources and/or other programs that serve eligible veterans that the proposed grant will use in meeting the requirements of the grant as specified within the SGA. All supportive services and resources provided by any entity not formally or directly applying for grant funding under this SGA must be indicated.

Supportive services include, but should not be limited to the following organizations and programs: the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA); the USDOL Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), including services funded through the Disability Employment Initiative; the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) including its local Continuum of Care Committees (COC) and the associated agencies and organizations; and the Social Security Administration and its Ticket to Work Program. As a part of the Ticket to Work Program, grantees will be registered as an Employment Network (EN). Applicants also must demonstrate their ability to network, collaborate, and coordinate their efforts with applicable VSOs such as the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Vietnam Veterans of America to ensure their participants apply for and/or receive other Veterans' benefits for which they may be eligible.

Applicants must identify and describe in detail how the proposed project links to the appropriate State Workforce Agency and One-Stop Career Center(s). Applicants must demonstrate how they will coordinate and collaborate with DVOP and the LVER staff, and staff managing other USDOL workforce investment programs. VETS also encourages applicants to secure agreements which allow access to state unemployment benefits (UI) reports to aid in follow up. If such agreements are established, applicants must provide copies of them in the attachments to the technical proposal. Relationships with SWIBs/LWIBs, Community Based Organizations, Faith Based Organizations and the services that will be provided on behalf of eligible veteran participants to be served also must be included.

4. Organizational Capability and Experience: (up to 25 points)

We will award points on this category based on the extent to which the applicants describe its relevant prior organizational experience in operating employment and training programs and in providing services to participants similar to those proposed under this SGA. Applicants also must present and describe the skills, experience, work history, knowledge, qualifications, and educational credentials or certified capabilities of their key operational and management staff and directly associate this information to the activities proposed within their response.

Applicants must provide a detailed organizational chart that identifies all parts of the organization and their relationships to proposed partners that will be involved in and responsible for the execution of the VWIP grant.

The applicant's relevant current and prior experience in operating employment and training programs must be clearly described and listed in the attachments to the technical proposal, if applicable. A summary narrative of program experience and employment and training performance outcomes also is required. If discussed and presented, the applicant must provide information showing the planned goals and outcomes of employment and training programs that it has had in the past three (3) years in terms of enrollments, participants who have been placed into employment, and the cost per participant that was achieved for every grant awarded. An applicant who has operated a VWIP, HVRP or other employment and training program must also include the final or most recent technical performance report as an attachment. Applicants that have operated a prior Department of Labor funded VWIP or HVRP grant that do not submit the final or most recent technical performance report for all grants awarded in the past three (3) years will be considered non-responsive. Recent technical performance reports do not count toward the 20-page Technical Proposal limit, and do not count toward the overall 50-page limitation.

Because prior VWIP experience is not a requirement for this grant, some applicants may not have any VWIP technical performance reports to submit; however, they may have other similar programmatic performance reports to submit as evidence of experience in operating other types of employment and training programs. These reports should be submitted under the attachments to the technical proposal. Further, all applicants must clearly make the case why the proposed model will succeed in achieving the SGA's goals. Proposals that do not have proven evidence that the proposed strategy will work must still provide narrative that clearly makes the case that the proposed model is likely to succeed.

Applicants must also address their capacity for timely startup of the program and their ability to adhere to programmatic reporting and participant tracking guidance. Applicants must describe staff experience and their ability to manage the administrative, programmatic, and financial aspects of their proposed program. Applicants must demonstrate key staff capability such as resumes and staff biographies/position descriptions. Staff resumes, bios, and organizational charts must be provided in the attachments to the technical proposal and do not count toward the 50-page maximum page limit. Applicants should have experienced staff on-hand who are veterans themselves or have direct experience in serving veterans.

Applicants are also required to fully describe how their proposed program can or will outlast the Federal funding being provided under this grant. Evidence such as long-term leases and a strong history of community involvement by the organizations key staff may also be used to present how the program will outlast the proposed VWIP grant funding

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications for grants under this SGA will be accepted after the publication date of this announcement and until the closing date and time. A technical review panel will carefully evaluate applications against the selection criteria. These criteria are based on the policy goals, priorities and emphasis set forth in this SGA. Up to 100 points will be awarded to an application, depending on the quality of the responses to the required information described in Section V. A.

The grant review panel will assign a score after objectively and carefully evaluating each responsive grant application and all responsive grant applications will be ranked based on this score. The ranking will be the primary basis for identifying applicants as potential grantees. The panel results are advisory in nature and not binding on the Grant Officer. The Grant Officer may consider any information that comes to his/her attention and reserves the right to make final selections based on his/her determination of which proposals are most advantageous to the government. The government may elect to award the grant(s) with or without discussions with the applicant. Should a grant be awarded without discussions, the award will be based on the applicant's signature on the SF-424, including electronic signature via E-Authentication on Grants.gov, which constitutes a binding offer by the applicant.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

All award notifications will be posted on the VETS website at www.dol.gov/vets . Applicants selected for award will be contacted directly before the grant's execution. Non-selected applicants will be notified by mail or e-mail; they may request a written debriefing on the significant weaknesses of their proposal.

Selection of an organization as a grantee does not constitute approval of the grant application as submitted. Before the actual grant is awarded, the Grant Officer and/or the Grant Officer's Technical Representative may enter into negotiations about such items as program components, funding levels, and administrative systems in place to support grant implementation. If the negotiations do not result in a mutually acceptable submission, the Grant Officer reserves the right

to terminate the negotiations and decline to fund the application. VETS reserves the right not to fund any application related to this SGA.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All grantees must comply with the provisions of Title 38 U.S.C. and its regulations, as applicable.

All grantees, including faith-based and community-based organizations, will be subject to applicable Federal laws (including provisions of appropriations law), regulations, and the applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars.

1. Administrative Program Requirements

The grants awarded under this SGA will be subject to the following administrative standards and provisions, if applicable:

- 29 CFR part 2 - General Participation in Department of Labor Programs by Faith-Based and Community Organizations; Equal Treatment of All Department of Labor Program Participants and Beneficiaries.
- 29 CFR part 30 - Equal Employment Opportunity in Apprenticeship and Training.
- 29 CFR part 31 - Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Labor - Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- 29 CFR part 32 - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.
- 29 CFR part 33 - Enforcement of Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs or Activities Conducted by the Department of Labor.
- 29 CFR part 35 - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs and Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance from the Department of Labor.
- 29 CFR part 36 - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Assistance.
- 29 CFR part 37 - Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity

Provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

- 29 CFR part 93 - New Restrictions on Lobbying.
- 29 CFR part 94 - Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace.
- 29 CFR part 95 - Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Non-Profit Organizations, and with Commercial Organizations.
- 29 CFR part 96 - Audit Requirements for Grants, Contracts and Other Agreements.
- 29 CFR part 97 - Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.
- 29 CFR part 98 - Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non procurement).
- 29 CFR part 99 - Audit of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.
- Applicable cost principles and audit requirements under OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A-110, A-122, A-133, and 48 CFR part 31.
- 38 U.S.C. Section 4215 - Requirements for priority of service for veterans in all Department of Labor training programs.

2. Other Legal Requirements

Specific information related to Religious Activities, Lobbying or Fundraising the U.S.

Government with Federal Funds and Transparency Act Requirements are contained in section III – Eligibility Information. Please refer to this section for specific guidance related to these legal requirements.

3. Other Administrative Standards and Provisions

Except as specifically provided in this SGA, USDOL VETS' acceptance of a proposal and an award of Federal funds to sponsor any programs(s) does not provide a waiver of any grant requirements and/or procedures. For example, the OMB Circulars require that an entity's procurement procedures must ensure that all procurement transactions are conducted, as much as practical, to provide open and free competition. If a proposal identifies a specific entity to

provide services, the grant award does not provide the justification or basis to sole source the procurement, i.e., avoid competition, unless the activity is regarded as the primary work of an official partner to the application.

4. Special Program Requirements – Evaluation and Requests for Grant Information

VETS may require that the program or project participate in a formal evaluation of overall grant performance. To measure the impact of the grant program, VETS may conduct an independent evaluation of the outcomes and benefits of the projects. By accepting the grant funds, the programs or projects agree to make individual records on participants and funding available to the evaluator(s) under the direction of VETS, as well as to provide access to program operating personnel and participants, as specified by the evaluator(s) under the direction of VETS, including after the expiration date of the grant. Please note that, this evaluation may make use of program Management Information System (MIS) data, local administrative data, and program progress reports. It is critical that the grantee keep this information up to date and accurate for both performance measurement and evaluation purposes.

C. Reporting

1. Quarterly Reporting

All VWIP grantees will enter data electronically and submit their Quarterly Technical Performance Report, success stories, and other job related information into the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service, VETS Operations and Program Activity Report (VOPAR) system. Since the Federal Financial Report (FFR) SF-425 has replaced the SF-269 and the SF-272, all grantees also are required to use and submit the FFR in the Grant Reporting System (GRS)/EGrants. See the VWIP Special Provisions and the Veterans'

Program Letter (VPL) # 02-12 (Appendix K) for detailed requirements regarding quarterly reporting.

Full and detailed quarterly reporting instructions and access to both the VOPAR and E-grants reporting systems will be distributed and authorized to grantees before July 1, 2012.

The applicant's proposal must include a reliable and effective strategy for tracking of program participants that includes the maintenance of case files for each participant. Participant tracking should begin with the referral and assessment process and continue through to placement into employment as well as through the three quarters of the follow-up periods after the participant is placed into employment (retention). Grantees need to budget their follow-up activity so that it can be performed for those participants who enter employment at or near the end of the grant performance period.

Throughout the duration of the grant, grantees will be expected to meet, at minimum, 85% of planned cumulative quarterly goals by the end of each quarter and by the end of each program year for: 1) enrollments; 2) placements; 3) placement rate; and 4) cost per placement outcomes. Consequently, applicants must fully understand and effectively address the challenges and appropriate time-tables associated with supporting and reporting upon longer-term training interventions and the delivery of job placement and retention services to eligible Veteran participants. Upon notification of award, successful applicants will be expected to contact their assigned Grant Officer Technical Representative (GOTR) to ensure they fully understand the performance and reporting requirements and acceptable levels of program performance associated with the grant.

In reviewing performance under this grant, VETS will monitor proposed plans and actual results on a quarterly basis. If a grantee does not meet the performance criteria described above, VETS will expect a grantee to submit a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to their designated GOTR. All issues related to performance which result in a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) during the period of performance must be addressed to the satisfaction of the GOTR to ensure that the grantee complies with all terms associated with their contractual obligations as presented and described in this solicitation (SGA), the grant award document, and the general and special grant provisions. Furthermore, all required quarterly and annual program and financial reports must be verified and submitted by the established due dates and be approved by the GOTR. Failure to comply with the any of the terms presented in this section may result imposing special conditions for award, or awarding the HVRP grant on a reimbursable basis.

Quarterly Financial Reports

No later than 30 days after the end of each Federal fiscal quarter (October 31, January 31, April 30, July 31) the grantee must report outlays, program income, and other financial information on a Federal fiscal quarterly basis using the Federal Financial Report (FFR) SF-425. This financial report must be entered into the E-Grants system and must cite the assigned grant number.

Quarterly Program Reports

Grantees must submit their electronic quarterly fiscal and performance reports via E-Grants and VOPAR, respectively, no later than 30 days after the end of each Federal fiscal year quarter of the program year and for the three follow-up quarters at the end of the grant's

period of performance (see Appendix K). A Planned Quarterly Technical Performance Goals Form or Chart must be submitted to the grants GOTR before to the start of the each program year. For example, for program year 2013, grantees will be required to submit their plans by April 30, 2013.

As a part of the Quarterly Report, grantees must attach, in VOPAR, a Technical Performance Narrative (TPN) which contains the following:

- A cumulative comparison of actual accomplishments to planned goals for the reporting period and any findings related to monitoring efforts;
- An explanation for variances of minus 15% of cumulative planned program and/or expenditure goals; and
- A status of all CAPs that were initiated during the program year. Unlike the previous VWIP, CAPs will stay open until the grant successfully addresses the required corrective actions to the satisfaction and approval of the grant's assigned GOTR.

2. Performance Measures

For purposes of assessing performance under this SGA, VETS will require successful grantees to report planned goals and actual performance results on a quarterly basis. All performance outcomes will be reported using an Internet-based reporting system with access provided to grantees after the award process has been completed. As mentioned above, grantees will be required to collect and report, on a quarterly basis, the following outcomes: number of placements, placement rate, average wage at placement, the cost per participant, and the cost per placement. Applicants will also be expected to report on additional performance outcomes. In

addition, grantees will need to familiarize themselves with procedures for documenting their longer-term training interventions (those training interventions that exceed at least one year in duration) which are explained in the Technical Assistance Guide for Competitive Grantees (TAG) presented in Appendix H. The TAG describes the detailed and specific technical performance procedures and data elements that grantees will be required to collect and report on. Associated definitions and reporting methodologies also are provided within the TAG. To properly respond to the current SGA, it is critical that applicants understand and are able to correctly report their program goals within the Planned Quarterly Technical Performance Goals Form or Chart (Appendix D).

For guidance purposes, in the previous VWIP, the national average cost per placement for PY 2010 was approximately \$2,850. VETS highly recommends that grantees present a plan that contains a reasonably low cost per placement goal. Generally, cost per placement should not exceed \$4,500; however, VETS will consider applications that propose a higher cost per placement, if the benefit to veteran participants can be tangibly demonstrated. Other outcome measures, such as the placement rate should meet a minimum of 67%, while the retention rate should meet a minimum of 65% by the final year of the period of performance.

3. Record Retention:

Applicants must be prepared to follow Federal guidelines on record retention, which require grantees to maintain all records pertaining to grant activities for a period of not less than three years from the time of final grant close-out.

VII. Agency Contacts

All questions regarding this SGA should be directed to Cassandra Mitchell, Grant Officer, at 202-693-4570 (this is not a toll-free number). Applicants should e-mail all technical questions to mitchell.cassandra@dol.gov, reference SGA #02-12, and include a contact name, fax and phone number. For additional information on the Veterans' Workforce Investment Program, please visit the VETS website at www.dol.gov/vets. Individuals with hearing impairments should call 800 670-7008 (TTY/TDD).

VIII. Additional Resources of Interest to Applicants

The Department of Labor maintains a number of web-based resources that may be of assistance to applicants. The website for the USDOL VETS, www.dol.gov/vets/programs/main.htm, is a valuable source of information including program highlights and brochures, a glossary of terms, frequently used acronyms, general and special grant provisions, and slide show presentations on how to apply for grant funding. America's Service Locator website, www.servicelocator.org, provides a directory of the nation's One-Stop Career Centers. Applicants may also review "VETS' Guide to Competitive and Discretionary Grants" located at www.dol.gov/vets/grants/Final_VETS_Guide-linked.pdf. For a basic understanding of the grants process and basic responsibilities of receiving Federal grant support, please see "Guidance for Faith-Based and Community Organizations on Partnering with the Federal Government" at, www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci.

IX. Other Information

A. Public Acknowledgement of USDOL Funding

1. Printed Materials

In all circumstances, the following must be displayed on printed materials prepared by the grantee while in receipt of USDOL grant funding: “Preparation of this item was funded by the United States Department of Labor under Grant No. [Insert the appropriate grant number].” All printed materials must also include the following notice: “This workforce solution and its associated documents were funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service. The solution and its associated documents were created by the grantee and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor and/or the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service. The U.S. Department of Labor and/or the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership.”

2. Public References to the Grant

When issuing statements, press releases, requests for proposals, bid solicitations, and other documents describing projects or programs funded in whole or in part with Federal money, all grantees receiving Federal funds must clearly state the percentage of the total costs of the program or project financed with Federal money; the total dollar amount of Federal financial assistance for the project or program; and the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the project or program that will be financed by non-governmental sources.

3. Use of USDOL Logo

Before using the USDOL logo, the Grant Officer must approve all such use. The USDOL logo may be applied to USDOL-funded material prepared for distribution, including posters, videos, pamphlets, research documents, national survey results, impact evaluations, best practice reports, and other publications of global interest. The grantee must consult with USDOL on whether the logo may be used on any such items prior to final draft or final preparation for distribution. In no event will the USDOL logo be placed on any item until USDOL has given the grantee permission to use the logo on the item.

B. OMB Information Collection No 1225-0086, Expires November 30, 2012

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimated or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, to the attention of Michel Smyth, Departmental Clearance Officer, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room N1301, Washington, DC 20210. Comments may also be emailed to DOL_PRA_PUBLIC@dol.gov. Please do not return the completed application to this address. Send it to the sponsoring agency as specified in this solicitation.

This information is being collected for the purpose of awarding a grant. The information collected through this “Solicitation for Grant Applications” will be used by the Department of Labor to ensure that grants are awarded to the applicant best suited to perform the functions of the grant. Submission of this information is required in order for the applicant to be considered for award of this grant. Unless otherwise specifically noted in this announcement, information submitted in the respondent’s application is not considered to be confidential.

C. Announcement and Award Dates

Announcement of these grant awards is anticipated to occur in June, 2012. Grant agreements are expected to be awarded between July 1, 2012 and August 1, 2012.

D. Post-Award Conference

A post-award conference will be held for PY 2012 VWIP awardees. The post-award conference is expected to be held in July or August 2012 and for each year after. Representatives from each awarded grantee must be present. The site of the post-award conference has not yet been determined; however, for planning and budgeting purposes, applicants should allot four (4) days and use Washington, DC as the conference site. The post-award conference will focus on providing information and assistance on reporting, record keeping, grant requirements, and also include networking opportunities to learn best practices from more experienced and successful grantees. Costs associated with attending this conference for up to two (2) grantee representatives and will be allowed as long as they are incurred in accordance with Federal travel regulations. These travel costs must be reflected in the proposed budget.

E. Appendices

All appendices are available at the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service website address www.dol.gov/vets. Follow the link for the applicable SGA listed under announcements.

- Appendix A: Application for Federal Assistance SF-424
- Appendix B: Budget Information Sheet SF-424A
- Appendix C: Assurances and Certifications Signature Page
- Appendix D: Competitive Grants Planned Goals Form or Chart
- Appendix E: Direct Cost Descriptions for Applicants and Sub-Applicants
- Appendix F: Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants
- Appendix G: Technical Assistance Guide (TAG) for Competitive Grantees
- Appendix H: Indirect Charges or Certificate of Direct Costs
- Appendix I: Definitions and Terms_
- Appendix J: Veterans' Program Letter 02-12
- Appendix K: Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form

Signed in Washington, D.C. this _____ day of _____, 2012.

Cassandra Mitchell, Grant Officer

BILLING CODE: 4510-79P