**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**
**Employment and Training Administration**
**Notice of Availability of Funds and Funding Opportunity Announcement for** Disability
Employment Initiative Cooperative Agreements
**Announcement Type**: Initial
**Funding Opportunity Number:** FOA/DFA PY-15-08
**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 17.283

**Key Dates:** The closing date for receipt of applications under this Announcement is **[*insert date XX days after date of publication of the one page notice in the Federal Register*]**. Applications must be received no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

**Addresses:** Mailed applications must be addressed to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Grants Management, Attention: Sara Gallagher Williams, Grant Officer, Reference FOA/DFA PY 15-08, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N4716, Washington, DC 20210. For complete application and submission information, including online application instructions, please refer to Section IV.

**Executive Summary:**
The Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL, or the Department, or we), announces the availability of approximately $15 million in grant funds authorized by Section 169, subsection (b), of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). We expect to fund approximately 8 cooperative agreements to state workforce agencies, ranging from $1.5 million to $2.5 million each. Applicants may apply for up to $2.5 million.

**I. Funding Opportunity Description**
    A. Program Purpose
This announcement solicits applications for Round VI of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). The purpose of this program is to provide funding to expand the capacity of American Job Centers (AJCs) to improve employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities (including those with significant disabilities). The DEI plans to accomplish this by increasing their participation in career pathways systems and successful existing programs in the public workforce system in partnership with community colleges and other education partners, human services, businesses, and other partners. These career pathways systems are capitalizing on the flexibility that the career pathways model provides to use innovative service delivery strategies. Grantees will use their award to support job-driven approaches in their pre-existing career pathway systems and programs to equip individuals with disabilities with the skills, competencies, and credentials necessary to help them obtain in-demand jobs, increase earnings, and advance their careers.

To develop America's talent to meet the recruitment and retention needs for the 21st century workforce, the public workforce system must include individuals with disabilities in its strategies to serve both of its customers -- jobseekers and businesses. Individuals with disabilities continue to be disproportionately long-term unemployed, underemployed, and living in poverty. As of October 2014, the unemployment rate of individuals with disabilities was 11.3 percent,

compared to 5.3 percent for individuals without disabilities.  The labor force participation rate of individuals with disabilities was 20.0 percent compared to 68.8 percent for individuals without disabilities, and people with disabilities are underrepresented in 16 of the 20 fastest growing occupations.[1]

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed into law Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Pub. L. 113-128.  Title I of WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and Title II of WIOA supersedes the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.  Titles III and IV of WIOA also amend the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Wagner-Peyser Act (W-P) respectively.  Congress passed WIOA, the first legislative reform of the public workforce system in more than 15 years, by a wide bipartisan majority.  In doing so, Congress reaffirmed the role of American Job Centers (AJCs) as cornerstones of the public workforce investment system and the importance of integrating employment, education, and training programs.  In recent years, over 20 million people annually turn to these programs to obtain good jobs and a pathway to the middle class.  WIOA continues to advance services to these job seekers and businesses by requiring a comprehensive integrated and streamlined system that develops pathways to prosperity for all.

A number of provisions in WIOA emphasize and increase the requirements for the general workforce development system and the AJCs to meet the needs of jobseekers with disabilities, increase their access to high-quality workforce services, and to prepare them for competitive integrated employment leading to economic self-sufficiency.  DEI strategies advance several WIOA areas of focus.  For instance, WIOA emphasizes coordination and collaboration and the blending and braiding of resources to leverage funding for individuals with disabilities.  The DEI grantees are required to leverage resources from the WIOA "core programs" as well as other program and partner resources.

(WIOA designates four "core programs" in the workforce development system: WIOA Title 1-B Programs - Youth Employment and Training, Adult Employment and Training, Dislocated Worker Employment and Training; WIOA Title II -Basic Education for Adults; WIOA Title III-W-P Employment Services; and WIOA Title IV-Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services.) WIOA requires state workforce development boards to develop strategies to support career pathways, including for individuals with disabilities, to enter and retain employment.  DEI invests in the important connection between the business sector, education, career preparation, and career pathways.  WIOA requires that certification of one-stop centers include an assessment of physical and programmatic accessibility; DEI grantees are expected to become leaders in accessibility.  DEI implements the WIOA call to expand the capacity of the public workforce system to serve individuals with disabilities and other multiple barriers to employment to advance integrated employment of individuals with disabilities.  The DEI projects will be

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[1]  Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014). Table A-6, Employment status of the civilian population by sex, age, and disability status, not seasonally adjusted.  Retrieved November  24, 2014 from http://www.bls/gov/news.release/empsit.t06.htm.  See also Economic Picture of the Disability Community Project, Key Points on Disability and Occupational Projections, a joint initiative between the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, Employment and Training Administration, Chief Economist, Office of the Secretary, and the White House Council of Economic Advisors. Available at: http://www.dol.gov/odep/pdf/20141022-KeyPoints.pdf.

vehicles for driving the implementation of several of the WIOA provisions around disability. The information learned from the DEI projects will provide effective strategies for the public workforce system/AJC network to promote competitive, integrated employment of individuals with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities.

This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) builds upon the DEI that the Department has funded since 2010. Through this FOA, the Department plans to support the development of job-driven, innovative, integrated, flexible, and universally-designed service delivery strategies in existing career pathways systems and programs. The Department believes that such development will increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in career pathways systems and programs. Since 2010, the Department has awarded over $95 million through the DEI to 37 state workforce agencies (WIA-administering entities) in 26 states under the DEI to improve the education, training, and employment outcomes of youth and adults with disabilities by refining and expanding already identified successful workforce strategies. Starting in 2014, DOL required Round V DEI grantees to increase the participation of youth and adults with disabilities in existing career pathway systems and programs implemented in the AJCs. DOL awarded six Round V DEI grants in California, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and South Dakota.

The career pathways approach complements strategies implemented under the DEI by focusing on:
- Developing partnerships and collaboration across multiple service delivery systems;
- Blending and braiding of funds to leverage resources;[2]
- Providing flexible opportunities and access to training and employment of persons, including low-income youth and adults with disabilities and other multiple challenges to employment; and
- Creating systemic change.

The objectives of the Round VI DEI are to use the services of the AJCs, in partnerships with educational institutions, businesses, and other workforce system stakeholders, to achieve the following individual, program, and system level goals:
- Improve the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, who are unemployed, underemployed, or receiving Social Security disability benefits, by refining and expanding services available through the AJCs to connect them to existing successful career pathways programs;
- Provide more and diversified job-driven training opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including work-based training approaches such as on-the-job training, summer youth employment, Registered Apprenticeships, internships, and other paid work experience;
- Increase the number of individuals with disabilities who earn credentials, including high school diplomas, industry-recognized certificates, and two- and four-year postsecondary degrees, that enable them to compete for employment along a career pathway in high-demand and emerging occupations;

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[2] For the purposes of this FOA, the term "blended funding" describes mechanisms that pool dollars from multiple sources and make them, in some ways, indistinguishable. "Braided funding" uses similar mechanisms, but the funding streams remain separate.

- Facilitate academic and employment transitions, including among individuals who may have low literacy and skills proficiency or other challenges to employment;
- Incorporate flexible approaches to designing and providing training, supportive services, and innovative workplace strategies that fit the schedule, learning styles, and life circumstances of all participants, including individuals with disabilities;
- Test customized employment services strategies within the public workforce system to help jobseekers with significant disabilities participate in career pathways programs;
- Build effective community partnerships and collaborations across multiple service delivery systems that leverage public and private resources to improve services to individuals with disabilities;
- Promote more active engagement with the business sector to identify the skills and support that workers with disabilities need and to better communicate these needs to the workforce system and its partners, education and training providers, job seekers, and state decision-makers;
- Promote and document the effective "blending" and "braiding" of resources and cost-sharing across systems to increase and improve services to individuals with disabilities;
- Create systemic change by establishing partnerships, processes, policies, and programs that better connect education, training, workforce, and supportive services to improve employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities in existing career pathways programs; and
- Strengthen the connection between the AJCs and VR state grants through co-location, joint training, and other partnership activities.

a. Career Pathways Strategies

Building career pathways systems has emerged as a promising strategy to help individuals of all skill levels, including those with disabilities, to complete the education and training they need to attain industry-recognized credentials and family-sustaining employment.[3] The career pathways approach aligns the programs and objectives of education, training, health and human services, and the public workforce system to meet the training needs of students, jobseekers, and workers, and the skill requirements of businesses in in-demand industries and occupations.

A career pathway is a series of articulated educational and training programs and services that enable adults and youth, often while they are working, to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in a given industry or occupational sector. Career pathways target jobs in high-demand industries in the local economies. They are designed to create both an avenue of advancement for workers, jobseekers, and new labor market entrants, as well as a supply of qualified workers for local and regional businesses. An important component of career pathways programs is the Individual Learning Plan (ILP), which is both a document

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[3] Recent studies, including *The Tipping Research-Building Pathways to Success for Low-Skilled Adult Students: Lessons for Community College Policy and Practice from the Longitudinal Student Tracking Study*, Washington State Board for Community and Technical College; " (http://67.205.94.182/publications/low-skill-adults-policy.html) and *Tuning into Labor Market: Findings from the Sectoral Employment Impact Study*, Public/Private Venture)Ventures (http://ppv.issuelab.org/resource/tuning_in_to_local_labor_markets_findings_from_the_sectoral_employment_impact_study), document that career pathways systems offer an effective approach to improving the skills, knowledge, and credential attainment of America's workers to meet the skill shortages of business.

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and a process used to identify and define career goals and postsecondary plans and to inform decision-making regarding course selection and other educational requirements.

The United States Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor issued a joint letter in April 2012 supporting career pathways implementation.[4]  Consistent with the letter, the following definitions are used for the purposes of this FOA:

**Career pathways** are a series of connected education and training strategies and support services that enable individuals to secure industry relevant certifications and obtain employment within an occupational area and to advance to higher levels of future education and employment in that area.

A **career pathways program** is a single training initiative that contains one or more of the following essential components:

1) Rigorous, sequential, connected, and efficient curricula that integrate basic education and occupational skills training;
2) Multiple entry and exit points;
3) Comprehensive support services, including career counseling, child care, and transportation;
4) Financial supports or flexibility to enable individuals to meet their ongoing financial needs and obligations during program participation;
5) Specific focus on local workforce needs, aligned with the skill needs of targeted industry sectors important to local, regional, or state economies and reflective of the active engagement of businesses;
6) Curricula and instructional strategies appropriate for youth and adults that make work a central context for learning and work readiness skills; and
7) Offer credit for prior learning and other strategies that accelerate the educational and career advancement of the participant.

A **career pathways system** is a series of connected education and training strategies and support services that enable individuals to secure industry relevant certification and obtain employment within an occupational area, established through the alignment of secondary and postsecondary education with workforce development systems and human services at the local, regional, or state level.

When building a successful career pathways system, applicants must consider the following six key elements[5]:
1) Build cross-agency partnerships
2) Identify sector or industry and engage business
3) Design education and training programs
4) Identify funding needs and sources
5) Align policies and programs

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[4] For more information, refer to Training and Employment Notice No. 36-11, http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=3536.

[5] For more detailed information, refer to "Career Pathways Toolkit:  Six Key Elements for Success," September, 2011, https://learnwork.workforce3one.org/view/2001135442016073646/info.

6) Measure systems change and performance

b. Credential Attainment

One key component of career pathways programs is the attainment of industry-recognized credentials. According to Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 15-10, *Increasing Credential, Degree, and Certificate Attainment by Participants of the Public Workforce System*," credentials within the context of workforce development generally, refers to an attestation of qualification or competence issued to an individual by a third party (such as an educational institution or an industry or occupational certifying organization) with the relevant authority or assumed competence to issue such a credential." There are many different types of credentials, including educational diplomas, certificates and degrees, Registered Apprenticeship certificates, occupational licenses, personnel certifications from industry and other professional associations, and other skill sets or competencies within one or more industries or occupations. Credentials attained through a career pathways program should be industry-recognized, portable, targeted to local area in-demand jobs, stackable, and lead to accreditation. A credential is considered "portable" when it is recognized and accepted in multiple geographic areas, educational institutions, industries, or businesses. A credential is considered "stackable" when it is a part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications and help them to move along a career pathway to a different and potentially higher-paying job.[6]

c. Challenges that Limit the Participation of Individuals with Disabilities in Career Pathways Programs

Individuals with disabilities often lack the opportunity to participate in and benefit from career pathways programs due to the challenges identified below, which can be at the individual, program, or system levels. Although many of these challenges are encountered at multiple levels, they have been placed in the following categories that reflect the group of stakeholders most directly affected in each case:

*Individual Challenges*
- Need for benefits information/coordination for individuals with disabilities.
- Lack of information about and funds for workplace accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
- Lack of accessible transportation options.
- Lack of individualized learning and planning tools, including Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), within career pathways programs.
- Reluctance to self-identify as an individual with a disability.

*Program Challenges*
- Need for career pathways programs to conduct outreach and recruitment of individuals with disabilities.
- Use of assessments by career pathway programs that may inadvertently screen out individuals with disabilities from participation, and the need for integrated alternate assessment processes, if applicable.

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[6] Refer to Training Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 15-10, http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2967.

- Lack of funds for and knowledge of assistive technology and other disability accommodations (e.g., small classroom sizes to facilitate one-on-one attention, voice-to-speech technologies, learning spaces with minimal distractions, hands-on-activities, or printed lecture notes).
- Need to revise curriculum (e.g., creating curricula that are contextualized to occupational pathways and individual learning styles, or seeding innovation of new delivery formats, such as dual enrollment of learning communities).
- Need for flexibly designed training, support services, and workplace strategies that fit the schedule and life circumstances of all participants, including individuals with disabilities.
- Lack of knowledge of necessary support services and models to facilitate meaningful participation by individuals with disabilities.
- Need to provide increased opportunities for on-the-job training, Registered Apprenticeships, and paid work experiences and to avoid setting requirements/policies for these programs that may inadvertently screen out individuals with disabilities.

*System Challenges*
- Lack of knowledge within career pathways systems concerning disability partners, including VR, Mental Health (MH), and Intellectual/ Developmental Disabilities (I/DD).
- Lack of connections between career pathways systems and programs that have a high representation of individuals with disabilities, such as veterans' programs.
- Lack of awareness within the business community concerning how to recruit individuals with disabilities and of the benefits and return on investment of hiring individuals with disabilities.
- Need to integrate systems changes in service delivery design and in relevant programs serving individuals with disabilities (e.g., establishing policies and procedures, describing use of alternate assessments, or implementing flexibility in training models and service strategies).
- Need to align policies, practices, and leverage funding across systems to expand the capacity of the public workforce system and its partners to provide integrated career pathways programs.
- Need to establish measurable goals that increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in career pathways systems and programs.
- Need to develop strong evaluation methods to determine successful outcomes which can be replicated/expanded to the state's larger workforce system after the grant funding ends.

d.  Serving Individuals with Disabilities through Career Pathways and Other Strategies

The Department's previous disability-related grant initiatives facilitated significant improvements in the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities through the public workforce system, including:  increased accessibility of the AJCs; improved employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities; expanded capacity to serve individuals with disabilities; trained front-line and partner staff; use of alternate forms of assessment, such as discovery[7] for individuals with significant disabilities; and increased partnerships and collaboration.  The Department's career pathways systems initiatives promote a framework for

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[7] Customized employment uses the "discovery process."  According to DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), discovery is a process of self-exploration, often facilitated by others, that involves answering questions, reflecting on ideas, and past experiences, and identifying issues and challenges.  Identifying a jobseeker's strengths and uncovering their employment-related goals and experiences is the place to start.

weaving together adult education, job training, and postsecondary education and for connecting those services to businesses' workforce needs. Round VI DEI builds on the previous success of the DEI and other DOL initiatives and seeks to align these investments with existing career pathways efforts to expand access to individuals with disabilities. [8]

This solicitation is intended to fund existing career pathway systems and programs, using the six key elements, to increase their services to individuals with disabilities. This FOA does not support the creation of new career pathways systems and programs. The existing career pathway system and programs may be implemented by the state or by agencies within the state rather than by the Department.

Specifically, this solicitation will fund the following activities:
1) Using the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach to bring together public and private sector representatives at the local American Job Center and community level to integrate services and supports, "blend" and "braid" funds, and leverage resources across multiple service delivery systems,
2) Aligning adult and youth career pathways programs with the use of ILPs, discussed previously, which allow the individual to identify and define career goals and postsecondary plans and to make informed decisions regarding course selection and other educational requirements,[9]
3) Participating as an Employment Network in the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Ticket to Work Program to provide SSA beneficiaries with disabilities with expanded choices regarding services and supports needed to enter, re-enter, or maintain employment and to generate additional funding for service delivery at the AJCs,
4) Fostering partnerships and collaborations at the state and local levels to support the expansion and adaptation of the existing career pathways system to increase participation of individuals with disabilities,
5) Implementing the "Guideposts for Success, a policy and practice framework, which reflects what research identifies as key educational and career development interventions that make a positive difference in the lives of all youth, including youth with disabilities,[10]
6) Implementing customized employment strategies to identify unmet business needs within a career pathway and negotiate a job placement that satisfies both the job seeker with a significant disability and the business,[11]
7) Hiring or designating Disability Resource Coordinators or Disability Program Navigators, *i.e.*, dedicated local-level staff with workplace and disability experience and expertise to implement the strategic approach of the applicant's proposal; and

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[8] For additional information on the DEI visit: https://disability.workforce3one.org/page/tag/dei_project; for information on DOL's career pathways programs visit: https://learnwork.workforce3one.org.

[9] For additional information visit: http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/ImplicationsNTEP_AdultEd.pdf and http://www.ncwd-youth.info/ilp/.

[10] For additional information visit: http://www.ncwd-youth.info/topic/guideposts.

[11] "Customized employment," is a flexible process designed to personalize the employment relationship between a job candidate and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both. It is based in an individualized match between the strengths, conditions, and interests of a job candidate and the identified business needs of an employer, http://www.dol.gov/odep/categories/workforce/Customized Employment/what/

8) Using Universal Design Principles to design service delivery in a way that is most likely to benefit job seekers with a wide range of learning styles, languages, educational levels, intelligences, and abilities, thereby allowing the AJC to meet customers' needs more efficiently.[12]

e.   Allowable Use of Grant Funds

Grantees must use grant funds to implement the grant requirements, and their budgets may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Staff time to facilitate career pathways partnership building, such as formalizing partnerships through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), drafting policies and procedures, consulting with partners, and modifying a state's WIOA state plan;
- Project staff (including subject matter experts or consultants, if reasonable and necessary to the design of the project) required to implement project design;
- Procurement of accommodations, including software upgrades and other assistive technology/equipment, to promote the participation of individuals with disabilities in career pathways programs;
- Curricula revisions;
- Staff time developing and implementing alternate assessment strategies, ILPs, outreach and recruitment to individuals with disabilities, engagement with businesses, and customized employment strategies for adults with significant disabilities;
- Tuition and other training costs, including financial literacy and financial capability training;
- Paid work experience, such as paid internships, Registered Apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and summer youth employment programs; and
- Necessary travel to conduct activities across the state or local workforce development area(s), as well as the travel costs for the state project lead and local area disability resource coordinator(s) to attend one national conference in Washington, D.C.

Grantees may also use DEI funds for other services and program activities for individuals participating, or wanting to access and participate, in career pathways programs (including, but not limited to, employment services, supportive services, case management, or other AJC training services).  However, grantees must use WIOA core programs and other program resources to the greatest extent possible to fund training and employment activities and supportive services for participants.

B.  Program Authority

This program is authorized by Section 169 of WIOA.

**II. Award Information**

A.  Award Type and Amount

Funding will be provided in the form of a cooperative agreement.

Approximately $15 million is expected to be available to fund approximately 8 grants.  You may apply for a ceiling amount of up to $2.5 million.  Awards made under this Announcement are subject to the availability of Federal funds.  In the event that additional funds become available,

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[12] For additional information visit: http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=268.

we reserve the right to use such funds to select additional grantees from applications submitted in response to this Announcement.

The Department intends to award at least one grant in each of three population focus areas: 1) projects that focus on adults (ages 18 and older) with disabilities; 2) projects that focus on youth (ages 14-24) with disabilities; and 3) projects that focus on individuals (ages 14 and older) with significant disabilities. (For purposes of this FOA, individuals with significant disabilities include jobseekers who have physical, sensory, mental, cognitive, intellectual, or developmental disabilities; receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits; and require significant accommodations, supports, and customization of job responsibilities in order to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment[13] at or above minimum wage.)

The Department will provide intensive technical assistance to support the applicant's specific-population focus and other grant-related components.

B. Period of Performance
The period of performance is 42 months with an anticipated start date of October 1, 2015. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities.

### III. Eligibility Information
A. Eligible Applicants
The lead applicant must be the state workforce agency (SWA) that is eligible for funding under Title I of WIOA or for funding under the W-P Act. The SWA and its Local Workforce Development Board(s) (LWDB), identified as a required partner for this grant,[14] must be involved in existing career pathways systems, programs, and partnerships.

Applicants may also include entities receiving funds under WIA Section 166 grants. An eligible applicant is a tribe, tribal consortium, or tribal non-profit organization that receives funds under WIOA Section 166 Indian and Native American Program.

States that received DEI Round V funds are **not** eligible for funding under this FOA.

B. Required Partnerships

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[13] For purposes of this, FOA, "competitive integrated employment" is defined as jobs held by people with disabilities in typical workplace settings where the majority of persons employed are not persons with disabilities, where they earn at least minimum wage, and where they are paid directly by the employer. These individuals may be in jobs without dedicated support, in jobs in which they are supported to learn and perform tasks that are associated with a standard job description, or in customized employment.

[14] The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act ("WIOA", Public Law 113-128) was signed into law on July 22, 2014. Most provisions of WIOA become effective July 1, 2015. Grants awarded under this FOA are authorized by WIOA, and the terms of WIOA will apply to these grants for the life of the grants. Under section 107 of WIOA, the entities called "local workforce investment boards" under WIA are called "local workforce development boards" under WIOA and constituted under slightly different requirements. We understand that states are in the process of establishing their WIOA local workforce development boards (LWDBs). For purposes of this grant, the responsibilities required of the LWDB as a required partner can also be fulfilled by a local workforce investment board, and we expect that once the LDWB is fully established, it will take over those responsibilities from the local workforce investment board

For this FOA, the applicant must show substantial commitment and involvement from the following required partners, as documented by a letter of commitment (see Section IV.B.4 Attachments to Project Narrative for more information about letters of commitment):

1) One or more LWDBs;
2) One or more community college(s), technical institution(s), or four-year colleges/universities that will provide the education and training activities under the grant;
3) One or more businesses or industry partners (such as business membership associations or Chambers of Commerce) that will:  participate in:  defining the program strategies and goals; providing specific resources to support education and training; providing work-based learning opportunities; or implementing innovative employment strategies, when appropriate;
4) One or more public state-level agency(ies) that serve individuals with disabilities (the VR Agency and/or other disability-focused agency(ies)); and
5) For projects that target youth, one or more local education agency(ies) (LEA) to facilitate the development of secondary, post-secondary, and career training.

C.  Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing or matching funds are not required for this program.  Please note that any resources contributed to the project are considered leveraged resources and do not constitute cost sharing or matching funds.  More information on leveraged resources may be found in Section IV.B.2. Applications that include any form of cost sharing or match will not receive additional consideration during the review process.  Cost sharing or match is not one of the application screening criteria.

D.  Other Information

1.  Application Screening Criteria

You should use the checklist below as a guide when preparing your application package to ensure that the application has met all of the screening criteria.  Note that this checklist is only an aid for applicants and should not be included in the application package.  We urge you to use this checklist to ensure that your application contains all required items.  If your application does not meet all of the screening criteria, it will not move forward through the merit review process.

| Application Requirement | Instructions | Complete? |
|---|---|---|
| The deadline submission requirements are met | Section IV.C | |
| If submitted through Grants.gov, the components of the application are saved in any of the specified formats and are not corrupt. (We will attempt to open the document, but will not take any additional measures in the event of problems with opening.) | Section IV.C. | |
| Application does not exceed the ceiling amount of $2.5 million | Section II.A | |

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| Applicant has registered with SAM and maintains an active account | Section IV.B.1 | |
| Signed SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance | Section IV.B.1 | |
| Signed SF-424 includes a DUNS Number | Section IV.B.1 | |
| SF-424A, Budget Information Form | Section IV.B.2 | |
| Budget Narrative | Section IV.B.2 | |
| Project Narrative | Section IV.B.3 | |
| Abstract | Section IV.B.4 | |

2.  Number of Applications To Be Submitted

Multiple applications from an agency are allowed, but applicants may submit only one (1) application for each population focus area described in Section II.A.  If the same agency submits multiple applications for the same population focus area, the most recent application submitted will be accepted.  If the most recent application is disqualified for any reason, we will not replace it with an earlier application.

3.  Eligible Participants
a.  Participants Eligible to Receive Training
   These projects will serve individuals with disabilities.  The Department will not define disability for this FOA, nor ask for documentation of the individual participant's disability.

b.  Veterans' Priority for Participants
   38 U.S.C. 4215 requires grantees to provide priority of service to veterans and spouses of certain veterans for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services in any job training program directly funded, in whole or in part, by DOL.  The regulations implementing this priority of service can be found at 20 CFR Part 1010.  In circumstances where a grant recipient must choose between two qualified candidates for a service, one of whom is a veteran or eligible spouse, the veterans' priority of service provisions require that the grant recipient give the veteran or eligible spouse priority of service by first providing him or her that service.  To obtain priority of service, a veteran or spouse must meet the program's eligibility requirements.  Grantees must comply with DOL guidance on veterans' priority.  ETA's Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 10-09 (issued November 10, 2009) provides guidance on implementing priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses in all qualified job training programs funded in whole or in part by DOL.  TEGL No. 10-09 is available at http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2816.

### IV. Application and Submission Information

A. How to Obtain an Application Package

This FOA, found at www.Grants.gov and http://www.doleta.gov/grants/find_grants.cfm, contains all of the information and links to forms needed to apply for grant funding. Applicants should note that hyperlinks to portions of the FOA are included in various parts of the Announcement. Applicants are required to comply with all parts of the FOA, including those parts found at the hyperlinks.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Applications submitted in response to this FOA must consist of four separate and distinct parts: (1) the SF-424 "Application for Federal Assistance;" (2) Project Budget; (3) Project Narrative; and (4) attachments to the Project Narrative. It is your responsibility to ensure that the funding amount requested is consistent across all parts and sub-parts of the application.

1. SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance"

You must complete the SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance" (available at http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15). 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 is considered the Authorized Representative of the applicant. As stated in block 21 of the SF-424 form, signature of the Authorized Representative on the SF-424 certifies that the organization is in compliance with the Assurances and Certifications form SF-424B (available at http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15). The SF-424B is not required to be submitted with the application.

In addition, the applicant's Authorized Representative's signature in block 21 of the SF-424 form constitutes assurance by the applicant of compliance with the following requirements in accordance with 29 CFR 37.20.

As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under Title I WIOA,[15] the grant applicant assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: Section 188 of the WIOA, which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIOA Title I—financially assisted program or activity; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color and national origin; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on

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[15] As stated above in footnote 14, grants awarded under this FOA are authorized by WIOA, and the terms of WIOA will apply to these grants for the life of the grants. Please note that in addition to the provisions of WIOA, grantees will also be subject to WIOA's implementing regulations when they are finalized and promulgated. Regulations implementing section 188 of WIOA are due to be promulgated in summer of 2015.

the basis of sex in education and training programs. The grant applicant also assures that it will comply with WIOA's implementing regulations when they are promulgated and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the grant applicant's operation of the WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements the grant applicant makes to carry out the WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. The grant applicant understands that the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

**Requirement for DUNS Number**
All applicants for Federal grant and funding opportunities are required to have a 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.  If you do not have a DUNS Number, you can get one for free through the D&B website: http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do.  As authorized under 2 CFR 25, grant recipients authorized to make subawards must be aware of the following requirements related to DUNS Numbers:
   i.   Grant recipients must notify potential subawardees that no entity may receive a subaward from you unless the entity has provided its DUNS number to you.
   ii.       Grant recipients may not make a subaward to an entity unless the entity has provided its DUNS number to you.

**Requirement for Registration with SAM**
Applicants must register with the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting an application.  Instructions for registering with SAM can be found at https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/#1.  A recipient must maintain an active SAM 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 SAM database after the initial registration, the applicant is required to review and update the registration at least every 12 months from the date of initial registration or subsequently update its information in the SAM 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.

2.  Project Budget
You must complete the SF-424A Budget Information Form (available at http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15 ).  In preparing the Budget Information Form, you must provide a concise narrative explanation to support the budget request, explained in detail below.

Budget Narrative:  The budget narrative must provide a description of costs associated with each line item on the SF-424A.  It should also include a description of leveraged resources provided (as applicable) to support grant activities.

Use the following guidance for preparing the budget narrative:

Personnel – List all staff positions by title (both current and proposed).  Give the annual salary of each position, the percentage of each position's time devoted to the project, the amount of each position's salary funded by the grant, and the total personnel cost for the period of performance.

Fringe Benefits – Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, FICA, retirement, etc.

Travel – Specify the purpose, mileage, per diem, estimated number of in-state and out-of-state trips, and other costs for each type of travel.

Equipment – Identify each item of equipment to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit (or if your capitalization level is less than $5,000, use your capitalization level) and a useful lifetime of more than one year (see 2 CFR 200.33 for the definition of Equipment).  List the quantity and unit cost per item.  Items with a unit cost of less than $5,000 are supplies.  In general, we do not permit the purchase of equipment during the last funded year of the grant.

Supplies – Supplies include all tangible personal property other than "equipment" (see 2 CFR 200.94 for the definition of Supplies).  The detailed budget should identify categories of supplies (e.g. office supplies).  List the quantity and unit cost per item.

Contractual – Identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated cost.  If applicable, identify any subrecipient agreements, including purpose and estimated costs.  See Section VI.B.2.f. for more information on the distinction between contractor and subrecipient.

Construction – Construction costs are not allowed and this line must be left as zero.  Minor alterations to adjust an existing space for grant activities (such as a classroom alteration) may be allowable.  We do not consider this as construction and the costs must be shown on other appropriate lines such as Contractual.

Other – List each item in sufficient detail for us to determine whether the costs are reasonable or allowable.  List any item, such as stipends or incentives, not covered elsewhere here.

Indirect Costs – If indirect costs are included in the budget, then include either, a) the approved indirect cost rate with a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), a description of the base used to calculate indirect costs along with the amount of the base, and the total indirect costs requested, or b) if you meet the requirements to use the 10% de minimis rate as described in 2 CFR 200.414(f), then include a description of the modified total direct costs base (see 2 CFR 200.68 for definition) used in the calculation along with the amount of the base, and the total indirect costs requested based on the 10% de minimis rate.  See Section IV.B.4. and Section IV.E.1. for more information.  Additionally, the following link contains DOL-specific information: http://www.dol.gov/oasam/boc/dcd/index.htm.

Note that the entire Federal grant amount requested (not just one year) must be included on the SF-424, SF-424A, and budget narrative.

No leveraged resources should be shown on the SF-424 and SF-424A.  Leveraged resources should be described in the budget narrative.  The requested Federal grant amount listed on the SF-424, SF-424A, and 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.

3.  Project Narrative
a. Preparing the Project Narrative
The Project Narrative must demonstrate your capability to implement the grant project in accordance with the provisions of this Announcement.  It provides a comprehensive framework and description of all aspects of the proposed project.  It must be succinct, self-explanatory, and well organized so that reviewers can understand the proposed project.

The Project Narrative is limited to 30 double-spaced single-sided 8.5 x 11 inch pages with Times New Roman 12 point text font and 1 inch margins.  <u>Any materials beyond the specified page limit will not be read or considered in the application review process.</u>  You must number the Project Narrative beginning with page number 1.

The following instructions provide all of the information needed to complete the Project Narrative.  You should carefully read and consider each section, and include all required information in your Project Narrative.  The Project Narrative will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria identified in Section V.A.  You must use the same section headers identified below for each section of the Project Narrative:

**(1)  Statement of Need**
Applicants must describe, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, the need for the grant award.  Each applicant must identify one of the three populations focus areas described in Section II.A, identifying and providing a justification for the needs of this population with respect to obtaining education, and training, participating in career pathways programs, and entering employment.  Applicants must describe the existing challenges people with disabilities face in obtaining education/training, participating in career pathways programs, and entering employment opportunities (refer to Section I.B.).  Applicants must identify who will be served, including any additional special focus of the project on other populations who also have disabilities such as:  veterans; homeless individuals; Temporary Assistance of Needy Families (TANF) recipients; out-of-school youth; older workers, English Language Learners; or ex-offenders.

Applicants must incorporate relevant labor market information data, including demographic data and participant/beneficiary information for the population identified.

**(2)  Project Design**
Applicants must propose methods that will be used to address the stated needs, goals, and objectives.  Applicants must include a methodology plan in the Project Narrative that includes all of the following required project components:

i.  <u>Proposed Strategic Approach</u>

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Applicants must provide a clear and feasible plan describing its strategies for increasing the participation of, and outcomes for, individuals in the identified population focus area in existing career pathways system and programs, and explain how they will implement these strategies. These strategies must address the challenges described in the Statement of Need. Applicants must outline a workplan that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished, and that accounts for all functions or activities identified in the application.

The strategic approach must also address the six key elements for career pathways: Building Cross Agency Partnerships, Identifying Industry Sectors and Engaging Business, Designing Education and Training Programs, Identifying Funding Needs and Sources, Aligning Policies and Programs, and Measuring Systems Change and Performance.

Applicants must also describe how they will include the following strategies:
- Using AJC career and training services in conjunction with other available resources to increase the number of individuals with disabilities participating in existing career pathways programs;
- Using alternative assessments, individual learning and planning tools (e.g., ILPs), and other strategies (e.g., revising curricula) to integrate and accommodate, if necessary, individuals with disabilities in existing career pathways programs;
- Providing and expanding paid work experience, including mentoring, Registered Apprenticeships, and internship opportunities for individuals with disabilities; and
- Using intensive wraparound services and extensive support services (such as accommodations, transportation, case management, academic and career counseling, college adjustment and retention services, providing information on financial aid, or employment assistance/job retention assistance) to assist individuals with disabilities in completing their education and training, attaining industry-recognized credentials, and finding or advancing in employment providing economic self-sufficiency.

In addition, applicants must address the strategies below that are applicable to the population focus area that they chose.

**Adults with disabilities (ages 18 and older)**
- A career pathways training module resulting in credentials that have labor market value. This includes portable and stackable credentials that are a part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to enhance an individual's qualifications to enable him/her to move along a career pathway to a potentially higher-paying job. For these career pathways approaches there are clear "on-ramps" and "off-ramps" so that adults with disabilities can stop and restart their participation in program components according to their individual needs and circumstances.
- Acceleration strategies, such as contextualized learning, compressed training, awarding credit for prior learning, dual enrollment (students are co-enrolled in integrated adult education and post-secondary occupational training classes), and hybrid learning approaches (online and classroom-based course designs) to facilitate participation by adults with disabilities.
- Increasing outreach and developing innovative programs to assist dislocated workers, disabled veterans, and the long-term unemployed with disabilities.

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- Cohort training of adult students with disabilities, using learning communities and peer-support systems.
- "Career bridge" programs for adults with disabilities, which provide an alternative career pathway to enrollment in one- and two-year industry-recognized certificate programs offered by community or four-year colleges.
- Use of career coaches/career specialists in the AJCs, businesses, and educational institutions, if applicable, to work with the Disability Resource Coordinators (DRC) and the Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) to identify a road map outlining the education, training, and credentials that individuals must complete along with a projected timeline.

**Youth with disabilities (ages14-24)**
- Strengthening "K-14" alignment (i.e., kindergarten through the first two years of college), and building a scalable work-based learning infrastructure.
- Increasing co-enrollment in secondary and post-secondary institutions and youth workforce programming to accelerate academic achievement to leverage WIOA Individual Training Account (ITA) funds.
- Implementing acceleration strategies, such as contextualized learning, compressed training, awarding credit for prior learning, dual enrollment (co-enrollment in integrated adult education and post-secondary occupational training classes), and hybrid learning approaches (online and classroom-based course designs) to facilitate participation by youth with disabilities.
- Promoting professional development for staff.
- Facilitating the successful transition from secondary education (such as high schools, alternative high schools, YouthBuild programs, Job Corps programs, career academies, and secondary career technical education programs) to post-secondary education (e.g., occupational certificate programs offered by community colleges, Registered Apprenticeship programs, and two- and four-year degree programs).
- Incorporating an approach to career pathways programs for youth that implement strategies based upon and consistent with the youth "Guideposts for Success."[16]

**Individuals with Significant Disabilities (ages 14 and older)**
- Applicants selecting this population focus must use a customized employment approach in their existing career pathways systems and programs. Applicants selecting this population must carefully review the requirements for the adult and youth populations, and consider including those which are applicable to this population in their applications.
- Documenting the skills, interests, abilities, and conditions necessary for successful employment of specific jobseekers, as well as identifying businesses, industries, or sectors by using the individual or group discovery process (Refer to footnote # 7) organized though the AJC.
- Documenting the skill and capacity of the individual to accomplish specific tasks associated with the job (including, but not limited to, portfolios that document skill capacity). One or more short-term paid work experiences may be used to observe the customized jobseeker in a work environment and to demonstrate the individual's ability to perform specific tasks the business needs to improve business operations.

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[16] http://www.ncwd-youth.info/topic/guideposts

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- Providing customized employment services designed to assist individuals with significant disabilities' discovery career exploration. Such services must include providing: discovery and individualized career exploration, portfolio development and presentation, and negotiation of specific job tasks within a chosen industry sector or desired career pathway selected by the individual jobseeker. Services may also include such supportive services as job coaching, social support, financial literacy training, and financial capability counseling (According the President's Advisory Council on Financial Literacy, personal financial literacy is the ability to use knowledge and skills to manage financial resources effectively for a life-time of financial well-being. The Center for Financial Services Innovation's definition of financial capability is financial behavior change through the use of appropriate products and services that promote economic stability and long-term financial health. If financial literacy is what an individual knows, financial capability is what an individual does.).
- Providing a clear and comprehensive description of how the applicant will implement career exploration designed to identify his/her strengths, abilities, and potential contributions to the business; facilitate portfolio development and negotiation in the industry areas of interest to the individual jobseeker; and promote the attainment of credentials and employment.
- Providing training (if appropriate to the individual's career goal, as determined through individual or group discovery) designed to alleviate educational and other employment-related challenges and to expedite the attainment of successful employment, including as appropriate to the individual, industry-recognized credentials and employment in high-demand sectors.
- Providing a convincing narrative of how the grantee will design customized employment services, organized via the AJCs, to help individuals with significant disabilities, through an individualized job development process or career pathway to achieve their employment goals through appropriate career exploration.
- Explaining how the applicant will work with businesses to incorporate negotiated employment and career pathways (including customizing a job description to include job carving (when an existing job description is modified-containing one or more, but not all the tasks from the original description) task reassignment, job sharing, negotiating a new job description, job supports, hours or location of the job, using representational materials to showcase the job seeker to the business, e.g., a pictorial portfolio, or specifics of supervision) and individualized career pathways for individuals with significant disabilities.

The Department believes that an individual with a significant disability can successfully enter and retain employment with local businesses or within regional or state high-demand industry sector career pathways using customized employment strategies to identify unmet business needs within a career pathway and negotiate a job placement that satisfies both the job seeker with a significant disability and the business. Results from ODEP's previous customized employment initiatives show that individuals with significant disabilities who obtain their first job through customization often exceed business expectations and can succeed in expanded job duties and responsibilities. It is possible for this vocational growth to eventually qualify the individual for entering formal career pathways activities.

The Department will provide intensive customized employment technical assistance to applicants who select this approach.[17]

<u>ii.   Integrating Resources</u>
Applicants must describe how they will integrate and leverage resources from different programs and systems to promote the participation of, and outcomes of individuals with disabilities in career pathways programs by:

- *Implementing the IRT approach[18] within their existing career pathways system and programs for individuals with disabilities*.  Describe the composition of the IRT, including what agencies and service systems (both general workforce and disability-specific) will participate and how the IRT will coordinate services and leverage funding to meet the employment needs of an individual jobseeker with a disability.  Describe the role of participants in IRTs and how participants will work with IRTs to identify services and resources that can benefit their education, training, or employment goals and enhance their participation in existing career pathways programs; and
- *Integrating resources and services through the blending and braiding of funds and leveraging of resources to promote the participation of individuals with disabilities in their existing career pathways programs*.  Describe how service coordination and resource leveraging will occur between the WIOA four core programs to support grant-related activities for career-pathway activities.  For the purposes of this FOA, the term "blended funding" describes mechanisms that pool dollars from multiple sources and make them, in some ways, indistinguishable.  "Braided funding" uses similar mechanisms, but the funding streams remain separate.  Both mechanisms can provide greater efficiency and effectiveness by leveraging multiple resources to assist the individual customer in achieving his/her employment outcomes.

<u>iii.  Partnerships and Collaboration</u>
State-level partnerships and collaboration efforts can greatly facilitate a state's ability to develop career pathways programs that are inclusive of individuals with disabilities and create systemic change.  Applicants must describe their existing career pathways system partnerships, as well as partnerships with the required partners described in Section III.B.  Applicants must describe how the required partners will support the expansion and adaptation of their existing career pathways system to increase participation of individuals with disabilities.  Applicants must submit letters of commitment from required partners identifying the roles and responsibilities of each partner and any leveraged resources which the partner has committed. (Please see Section IV.B.4 for more information about letters of commitment

Applicants must describe how they will align programs and funding sources, including WIOA Title I-B - Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker employment and training programs, Training Programs; WIOA Title II - Adult Education and Literacy; WIOA Title III - W-P Employment Services; WIOA Title IV-VR Services;  Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006; TANF; Medicaid; Social Security; MH; I/DD; transportation; housing; corrections/justice;

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[17] The LEAD Center, an ODEP funded technical assistance center, has archived webinars, blogs and other information on its Web site at <u>www.leadcenter.org</u> (Search on Customized Employment).
[18] Additional information on IRTs can be found at:
<u>https://disability.workforce3one.org/view/4010927252305244299/info</u>.

aging; Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs; education and training providers; economic development; financial development and asset development entities; community-based and faith-based organizations; and private entities (e.g., foundations).

Applicants must describe how they will foster partnerships and collaboration at the state and local levels, including the inclusion of additional partners, to promote the participation of individuals with disabilities in their existing career pathways system and programs.

Applicants must describe their strategies for working with the business sector to increase its awareness of the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities, encourage them to provide paid work experience, and increase the opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in existing career pathways programs.

Applicants must identify their own and partner resources that they plan to use for the education and training of individuals with disabilities.  Applicants must explain how their strategies for partnerships and collaboration will result in systemic change and promote sustainability and replication of successful career pathways programs developed during the grant period.

iv.  Career Pathways Plan
Applicants must develop and implement a career pathways plan, or modify already existing state and local career pathways plan(s), explaining in detail how they will build on their existing career pathways systems and programs to increase the participation of individuals with disabilities.  The plan is intended to:
   - Assist states in developing/sustaining the state level infrastructure needed to implement a comprehensive, inclusive, and integrated career pathways system for individuals with disabilities that address the six key elements for career pathways;
   - Help to promote coordination and leveraging of resources across multiple agencies and service delivery systems; and
   - Promote sustainability and replication of successful strategies for increasing the participation of individuals with disabilities in existing career pathways programs implemented under the grant through sustained state-level management and coordination.

**(3)  Expected Outcomes and Outputs**
Applicants must clearly identify the expected output(s) and outcome(s) of the project, the likelihood of their achievement, and the anticipated benefits to the participants.  Outputs should be quantifiable and measurable.  Outputs are interim results of the project.  Examples of outputs include the number of training sessions held or the number of service units provided.  Applicants must identify specific changes that will lead to increased participation of individuals with disabilities in existing career pathways systems through systemic change (such as state or organizational policies, partnerships, or agreements) and through changes in career pathways programs (such as modified curriculum, assistive technology, flexible scheduling, and alternative assessments).

Applicants must also include quantifiable measures for evaluating the success of the project, including, but not limited to:
   - Number and percentage of participants who enter training in career pathways programs;

- Number and percentage of participants who complete training in career pathways programs;
- Number and percentage of participants who attain credentials and the types of credentials attained; and
- Outcomes on the WIA Common Performance Measures[19] (e.g., entered employment rate, employment retention, average six months' earnings).[20]
  NOTE:  Since WIOA performance measures will not be in effect until March of 2016, once the WIOA performance measures are finalized, ETA may want to negotiate with the grantees on the final performance measures how to met and report them.

Applicants must also identify an achievable set of anticipated outcomes for serving Social Security disability beneficiaries, including an increased:
- Number of SWAs and LWDBs becoming Ticket to Work Employment Networks (ENs, further explained in section VI.4.d.);
- Number of Tickets assigned;
- Amount of Ticket revenue; and
- Number of Social Security disability beneficiaries participating in career pathways programs.

**(4)  Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity**
Applicants must provide information on their structure, staffing, and relevant experience, and describe how these factors contribute to their ability to implement the program requirements and meet program expectations.  Applicants must describe the overall organizational capacity of the agency by demonstrating the state's capacity to administer the DEI project, including its fiscal and oversight capacity, its capacity to efficiently complete any start-up activities so that services are being provided no later than six months into the period of performance, its capacity to submit quarterly fiscal and program reporting in a complete and timely fashion, and its ability to make participant data available to the Department.

Applicants must discuss their capability to sustain project activities after Federal financial assistance has ended.  Applicants must explain how they will develop specific strategies for sustaining their successful approaches to promoting the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in existing career pathways programs and enhance the education and employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities beyond the end of the DEI grant.  Applicants must also explain how they will replicate or expand the effective practices implemented by the project throughout the public workforce system.

**(5)  Past Performance – Programmatic Capability**
Applicants must describe in detail their existing state-level career pathways system framework and the existing local level efforts of the partner LWDB(s) in the applicant's their existing career pathways programs.  Applicants must:

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[19] Although this grant is authorized under WIOA (see footnote 14), applicants may propose to use the WIA Common Performance Measures to fulfill this requirement of the grant, because they are quantifiable measures for evaluating success of a project.
[20] For information on the common performance measures visit:
http://www.doleta.gov/performance/guidance/tools_commonmeasures.cfm

- Describe the sequence of education and training offerings in identified industry(ies) or occupations(s);
- Identify multiple entry points that accommodate participants at differing skill levels, including those with very low basic skills;
- Identify multiple exit points at successively higher levels of education and employment that are aligned with marketable, portable, stackable credentials earned at these exit points;
- Identify how their existing career pathways programs (including describing existing state and local career pathways plans, if applicable) are currently serving individuals with disabilities; and
- For applications focusing on individuals with significant disabilities, providing a clear and convincing explanation of how its existing career pathways program will be modified to incorporate flexible approaches in order to provide an innovative and individualized career pathway approach for individuals with significant disabilities who require or desire such approach.

The applicant must also describe the overall effectiveness of its existing career pathways system by providing qualitative and quantitative outcomes and outputs. For example, applicants must demonstrate the effectiveness of their programs by including data that compares performance measures, such as those listed below, prior to and after implementation of their career pathways programs.
- Return on investment and cost effectiveness analysis;
- Improvements to performance around Common Measures;
- Increase in the number of individuals with family-supporting jobs that result in economic self-sufficiency;
- Increase in the size of the qualified labor pool;
- Increase in employment outcomes, including wages, benefits, retention, and advancement;
- Increase in credential attainment rates;
- Increase in the effectiveness of collaboration among partners;
- Achievement of sustained funding by institutional systems' partners; and
- Identification of its systemic change outcomes, such as policy changes, program alignments, procedures, and effective practices.

**(6) Budget and Budget Justification**
Please see Section IV.B.2. for information on requirements related to the budget and budget justification.

4. Attachments to the Project Narrative

In addition to the Project Narrative, you must submit attachments. All attachments must be clearly labeled as Attachments. Only those attachments listed below will be excluded from the page limit. Additional materials such as resumés or general letters of support must not be included. You must submit your application in one package because documents received separately will be tracked separately and will not be attached to the application for review. Save all files with descriptive file names of 50 characters or less and be sure to only use standard

characters in file names: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, and underscore (_). File names may not include special characters (e.g. &,–,*,%,/,#), periods (.), blank spaces or accent marks, and must be unique (i.e., no other attachment may have the same file name). An underscore (example: my_Attached_File.pdf) may be used to separate a file name.

**Required Attachments**

The following attachments must be included with the application package and the failure to do so will cause the application package to be screened out.

- **Abstract**: You must submit an up to two-page abstract summarizing the proposed project, including, but not limited to, the scope of the project and proposed outcomes. The proposed project must include the applicant's name, project title, a description of the area to be served, number of participants to be served, the total cost per participant, and the funding level requested. The Abstract is limited to two-page double-spaced single sided 8.5x11 inch pages with 12 point text font and 1 inch margins. When submitting in grants.gov, this document must be uploaded as an attachment to the application package and specifically labeled "Abstract."

**Requested Attachments**

The following attachments are requested, but their omission will not cause the application to be screened out. If the omission of the attachment will impact scoring, such an impact will be noted in the description of the attachment.

- **Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form**: You should submit a Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form (available at http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15). This form is in the grants.gov application package. 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 Announcement. This attachment does not impact scoring of the application.

- **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement**: If you are requesting indirect costs based on a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by your Federal Cognizant Agency, then attach the most recently approved Agreement. (For more information, see Section IV.B.2. and Section IV.E.1.) This attachment does not impact scoring of the application.

- **Workplan and Implementation Schedule**: Applicants must include a workplan and implementation schedule, including staff responsibilities, expected milestones, and outcomes. (A sample workplan, Attachment # 1, is attached to the FOA).

- **Accessibility Policy**: Applicants must attach a copy of their policy that explains how they provide customers with disabilities with meaningful and effective physical, programmatic, and communications access to the AJC services delivery system and all WIOA-funded services.

- **Education Institutions' Accessibility Policies**: Applicants must attach copies of the policies of each community college, college, and training program that is participating as a partner in the project and that receives Federal funds explaining how customers with

disabilities are provided with meaningful and effective physical, programmatic, and communications access.

- **Letters of Commitment**:  Applicants must submit copies of letters of commitment from all required partners (See Sections III.B. and IV.B.3. for more information).  These letters cannot be "form letters;" they must specifically indicate each key 'partner's knowledge and experience about the proposed project activities and understanding of their areas of responsibility and ability to impact the success of the project.  Please note that these Letters of Commitment are <u>not</u> general letters of support for the grant application, which will not be considered in the review process.  <u>Applicants should not include general letters of support with their applications or ask their elected officials to send such letters to the Department</u>.

C. Submission Date, Times, Process and Addresses
The closing date for receipt of applications under this Announcement is **[*insert date XX days after date of publication of the one page notice in the Federal Register*]**.  Applications must be submitted either electronically on <u>http://www.grants.gov</u> or in hard copy by mail or in hard copy by hand delivery **(including overnight delivery)**.   Hard copy applications must be received at the address below no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date.  Applications submitted on grants.gov must also be successfully submitted (as described below) no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date.  You are cautioned that applications should be submitted before the deadline to ensure that the risk of late receipt of the application is minimized.  Applications sent by e-mail, telegram, or facsimile (FAX) will not be accepted.

Applicants submitting applications in hard copy by mail or overnight delivery must submit an original signed application (including the SF-424) and one (1) ''copy-ready'' version free of bindings, staples or protruding tabs to ease in the reproduction of the application by DOL. Applicants submitting applications in hard copy are also required to include in the hard copy submission an identical electronic copy of the application 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 physically submitted by both hard copy and through <u>http://www.grants.gov,</u> a letter must accompany the hard-copy application stating which application to review.  If no letter accompanies the hard copy, we will review the copy submitted through <u>http://www.grants.gov</u>.

No exceptions to the mailing and delivery requirements set forth in this notice will be granted. Further, documents submitted separately from the application, before or after the deadline, will not be accepted as part of the application.

Mailed applications must be addressed to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Grants Management, Attention:  Sara Gallagher Williams, Grant Officer, Reference FOA/DFA PY 15-08, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N4716, Washington, DC 20210.  Mail delivery in the Washington DC area may be delayed due to mail decontamination procedures.  Hand-delivered applications will be received at the above address.

All overnight delivery submissions will be considered to be hand-delivered and must be received at the designated place by the specified closing date and time.

Applications that are submitted through Grants.gov must be successfully submitted at http://www.grants.gov no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern 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.  You are strongly advised to initiate the process as soon as possible and to plan for time to resolve technical problems if necessary.   Note that validation does not mean that your application has been accepted as complete or has been accepted for review.  Rather, grants.gov only verifies that certain parts of an application have been submitted.

We strongly recommend that before you begin to write the application, you should immediately initiate and complete the "Get Registered" registration steps at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp.  You should read through the registration process carefully before registering.  These steps may take as much as four weeks to complete, and this time should be factored into plans for timely electronic submission in order to avoid unexpected delays that could result in the rejection of an application.  The site also contains registration checklists to help applicants walk through the process.  We strongly recommend that you download the "Organization Registration Checklist" at http://www.grants.gov/documents/19/18243/OrganizationRegChecklist.pdf/fc7e7c18-2497-4b08-8d9b-bfac399947a3 and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last minute searches for required information and save time.

As described earlier in Section IV.B.1., you must have a DUNS Number and you must register with SAM before submitting an application.

The next step in the registration process is creating a username and password with Grants.gov to become an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR).  AORs will need to know the DUNS Number of the organization for which they will be submitting applications to complete this process.  To read more detailed instructions for creating a profile on Grants.gov visit: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-3-username-password.html

After creating a profile on Grants.gov, the E-Biz point of Contact (E-Biz POC) - a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM – will receive an email to grant the AOR permission to submit applications on behalf of their organization.  The E-Biz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and approve an individual as the AOR, thereby giving him or her permission to submit applications.  To learn more about AOR Authorization visit: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-4-aor-authorization.html, or to track AOR status visit: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-5-track-aor-status.html

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 an application is submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the AOR on file will be inserted into the signature line of the application.  You must register the individual who is able to make legally binding commitments for your organization as the AOR; this step is often missed and it is crucial for valid submissions.

When a registered applicant submits an application with Grants.gov, an electronic time stamp is generated within the system 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 to provide 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.  Grants.gov will reject applications if the applicant's registration in SAM is expired.  Only applications that have been successfully submitted by the deadline and later successfully validated will be considered.  It is your sole responsibility 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 time before the deadline in case it is necessary to resubmit an application that has not been successfully validated.  Therefore, enough time should be allotted for submission (two business days) and, if applicable, additional 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 enough time is not allotted and a rejection notice is received after the due date and time, the application will not be considered.

To ensure consideration, the components of the application must be saved as .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, .rtf or .pdf files.  If submitted in any other format, the applicant bears the risk that compatibility or other issues will prevent DOL from considering the application. We will attempt to open the document, but will not take any additional measures in the event of problems with opening.

We strongly advise applicants to use the various tools and documents, including FAQs, which are available on the "Applicant Resources" page at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html.

We encourage new prospective applicants to view the online tutorial, "Grant Applications 101: A Plain English Guide to ETA Competitive Grants," available through Workforce3One at: http://www.workforce3one.org/page/grants_toolkit.

To receive updated information about critical issues, new tips for users and other time sensitive updates as information is available, you may subscribe to "Grants.gov Updates" at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/manage-subscriptions.html

If you encounter a problem with Grants.gov and do not find an answer in any of the other resources, call 1-800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035 to speak to a Customer Support Representative

or email support@grants.gov.  The Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.  It is closed on Federal holidays.

**Late Applications:** For applications submitted on Grants.gov, only applications that have been successfully submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date and then successfully validated will be considered.  You take a significant risk by waiting to 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 to the addressee not later than one working day before 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, you should request the postal clerk to place a legible hand cancellation ''bull's eye'' postmark on both the receipt and the package.  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.  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.

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

E.  Funding Restrictions
All proposed project costs must be necessary and reasonable and in accordance with Federal guidelines.  Determinations of allowable costs will be made in accordance with the Cost Principles, now found in the Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), codified at 2 CFR Part 200.  Disallowed costs are those charges to a grant that the grantor agency or its representative determines not to be allowed in accordance with the Cost Principles or other conditions contained in the grant.  Applicants, whether successful or not, will not be entitled to reimbursement of pre-award costs.

1.  Indirect Costs
As specified in the Uniform Guidance 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 is required when an organization operates under more than one grant or other activity, whether Federally-assisted or not.  You have two options to claim reimbursement of indirect costs.
**Option 1:**  You may use a NICRA or Cost Allocation Plan (CAP) supplied by the Federal Cognizant Agency.  If you do not have a NICRA/CAP or have a pending NICRA/CAP, and in

either case choose to include estimated indirect costs in your budget, at the time of award the Grant Officer will release funds in the amount of 10% of salaries and wages to support indirect costs. Within 90 days of award, you are required to submit an acceptable indirect cost proposal or CAP to your Federal Cognizant Agency to obtain a provisional indirect cost rate. (See Section IV.B.4. for more information on NICRA submission requirements.)

**Option 2:** Any organization that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, with the exceptions noted at 2 CFR 200.414(f) in the Cost Principles, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (see 2 CFR 200.68 for definition) which may be used indefinitely. If you choose this option, this methodology must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as you choose to negotiate for an indirect cost rate, which you may apply to do at any time. (See 2 CFR 200.414(f) for more information on use of the de minimis rate.)

2. Salary and Bonus Limitations

None of the funds appropriated under the heading "Employment and Training" in the appropriation statute(s) may be used by a recipient or subrecipient 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. This limitation does not apply to contractors providing goods and services as defined in the Audit Requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance (see 2 CFR 200 Subpart F). Where States are recipients of such funds, States may establish a lower limit for salaries and bonuses of those receiving salaries and bonuses from subrecipients of such funds, taking into account factors including the relative cost-of-living in the State, the compensation levels for comparable State or local government employees, and the size of the organizations that administer Federal programs involved including Employment and Training Administration programs. See Public Law 113-76, Division H, Title I, section 105, and Training and Employment Guidance Letter number 05-06 for further clarification: http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2262.

3. 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 subaward or contract under the grant or subaward; and ii) any rights of copyright to which the recipient, subrecipient 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 recipient 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. Additionally, the Federal government has the right to require intellectual property developed under a competitive Federal award process to be licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution license. This license allows subsequent users to copy, distribute, transmit and adapt the copyrighted Work and requires such users to attribute the Work in the manner specified by the recipient.

If applicable, and a Creative Commons Attribution license is not required, 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 Employment and Training Administration.  The product was created by the recipient and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor.  The U.S. 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 is permissible.  All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner.*

4.  Use of Sheltered Workshops

Organizations that receive grants through this FOA may not use grant funds to contract out with "sheltered workshops" or "work centers."  These terms are used by the Department's Wage and Hour Division of DOL  to refer to entities that are authorized to employ workers with disabilities at sub-minimum wages.  The term has generally been used to describe facilities that employ people with disabilities exclusively or primarily in non-integrated settings.   For additional information visit

http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs39.htm

F.  Other Submission Requirements

Withdrawal of Applications:  Applications may be withdrawn by written notice to the Grant Officer at any time before an award is made.

## V.  Application Review Information
A.  Criteria

We have instituted procedures for assessing the technical merit of applications to provide for an objective review of applications and to assist you in understanding the standards against which your application will be judged.  The evaluation criteria are based on the information required in the application as described in Sections IV.B.2. (Project Budget). and IV.B.3. (Project Narrative).  Reviewers will award points based on the evaluation criteria described below:

| Criterion | Points (maximum) |
|---|---|
| 1.       Statement of Need (See Section IV.B.3.a.(1) Statement of Need) | 10 |
| 2.       Project Design (See Section IV.B.3.a.(3) Project Design) | 40 |
| 3.       Expected Outcomes, and Outputs (See Section IV.B.3.a.(2) Expected Outcomes and Outputs) | 15 |
| 4.       Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity | 15 |

| | |
|---|---|
| (See Section IV.B.3.a.(5) Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity) | |
| 5. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability<br>(See Section IV.B.3.a.(6) Past Performance – Programmatic Capability) | 15 |
| 6. Budget and Budget Justification<br>(See Section IV.B.2. Project Budget) | 5 |
| TOTAL | 100 |

## 1. Statement of Need (up to 10 points)

The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the problem and the contributing factors to the problem by (5 points):

- Providing a clear and compelling justification of the need for a DEI project to serve the population focus area identified, including clear, qualitative evidence of the needs of this population identified with respect to obtaining education and training, participating in career pathways programs and entering employment;
- Providing a clear and compelling justification for any additional special focus of the project on other populations who also have disabilities, such as veterans; homeless individuals; TANF recipients; out-of-school youth; English Language Learners; or ex-offenders; and
- Providing relevant labor market information data, demographic data, and participant/beneficiary information for the population focus area that illustrates a compelling need for services.

## 2. Project Design (up to 40 points)

a) Proposed strategic approach (22 points):

i.) *Overall approach* (10 points): The extent to which the applicant provides a coherent and feasible methodology and workplan by

- Providing a clear and feasible plan to increase the number of, and improve the outcomes for, individuals with disabilities participating in career pathways programs incorporating the six key elements for career pathways;
- Demonstrating how the applicant's overall strategic approach addresses the challenges described in the Statement of Need;
- Providing a clear, comprehensive, and feasible plan to use alternative assessments, individual learning and planning tools (e.g., ILPs), and other strategies (e.g., revised curricula) to integrate and accommodate, if necessary, individuals with disabilities in its career pathways programs;
- Providing a clear and feasible plan of how the applicant will use AJC career and training services in conjunction with other available resources;
- Demonstrating a clear and convincing strategy for providing and expanding paid work experience, including mentoring, Registered Apprenticeships, and internship opportunities for individuals with disabilities; and
- Explaining how the applicant will use intensive wraparound services and extensive support services to assist individuals with disabilities in completing their education and

training, attaining industry-recognized credentials, and finding or advancing in employment providing economic self-sufficiency.

ii.) *Population-specific approach* (12 points): In addition, we will evaluate applicants on the basis of the criteria below that are applicable to the population focus area that they chose, as follows:

*For applicants proposing to serve adults with disabilities* – We will award points for applicants proposing to serve adults with disabilities based on the extent to which the applicant provides a coherent and feasible approach by:
- Describing a career pathways training module resulting in credentials that have labor market value that includes portable and stackable credentials;
- Providing a compelling argument for how the applicant's acceleration strategies, such as contextualized learning, compressed training, awarding credit for prior learning, dual enrollment, and hybrid learning approaches, will facilitate participation by adults with disabilities;
- Providing a clear and comprehensive plan of how the applicant will increase outreach and develop innovative programs to assist dislocated workers, disabled veterans, and the long-term unemployed with disabilities;
- Demonstrating a clear understanding of how the applicant will use cohort training of adult students with disabilities using learning communities and peer-support systems;
- Demonstrating how the applicant will implement career bridge programs to facilitate participation of adults with disabilities; and
- Explaining clearly and fully how the career coaches/career specialists in the AJCs or community colleges/colleges, if applicable, will work with the DRCs and the IRTs to provide a road map outlining the education, training, and credentials s/he must complete and a projected timeline.

*For applicants proposing to serve youth with disabilities* – We will award points for applicants proposing to serve youth with disabilities based on the extent to which the applicant provides a coherent and feasible approach by:
- Providing a compelling argument for the strategy by which the applicant will strengthen K-14 alignment and build scalable work-based learning infrastructure;
- Explaining how the applicant will increase co-enrollment in secondary and postsecondary institutions and youth workforce programming to leverage individual training account funding;
- Demonstrating how it will implement innovative approaches to facilitate the successful transition from secondary education (such as high schools, alternative high schools, Job Corps programs, YouthBuild program, career academies, and secondary career technical education programs) to postsecondary education (e.g., occupational certificate programs offered by community colleges, Registered Apprenticeship programs, and associate's and bachelor's degree programs);
- Promoting professional development for staff;
- Providing a compelling argument for how the applicant's acceleration strategies, such as contextualized learning, compressed training, awarding credit for prior learning, dual

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enrollment, and hybrid learning approaches, will facilitate participation by youth with disabilities; and

- Demonstrating how it will incorporate an inclusive and integrated approach to service delivery in its existing career pathways programs  that implements strategies based upon and consistent with the  "Guideposts for Success."

*For applicants proposing to serve individuals with significant disabilities* (via a customized employment approach – We will award points for applicants proposing to serve individuals with significant disabilities based on the extent to which the applicant provides a coherent and feasible approach by:

- Describing how training will be provided (if appropriate to the individual's career goal, as determined through individual or group discovery) to alleviate educational and other employment-related challenges and to expedite the attainment of industry-recognized credentials and employment in high-demand sectors;
- Documenting the skill and capacity of the individual to accomplish specific tasks associated with the job (including, but not limited to, portfolios that document skill capacity);
- Explaining how customized employment services will be designed to assist individuals with significant disabilities to complete career exploration.  Such services must include providing:  discovery and individualized career exploration, portfolio development and presentation, and negotiation of specific job tasks within a chosen industry sector. Services may also include such supportive services as job coaching, personal, social support, financial literacy training, and financial capability counseling;
- Providing a clear and comprehensive description of how the applicant will implement career exploration designed to identify his/her strengths, abilities, and potential contributions to businesses; facilitate portfolio development and negotiation in the industry areas of interest to the individual jobseeker; and promote the attainment of credentials and employment;
- Providing a convincing narrative of how it will utilize this career exploration to design customized employment services to help individuals with significant disabilities through an individualized career pathway to achieve their employment goals; and
- Demonstrating how the applicant will work with businesses to incorporate negotiated and individualized career pathways strategies for individuals with significant disabilities. These strategies may include customizing an existing job description or negotiating a new job description to include accommodations such as "job carving," task reassignment, job sharing, job supports, modified hours or location of the job, using representational materials to showcase the job seeker to the business, such as a pictorial portfolio, or specifics of supervision.

b) <u>Integrating Resources </u>(5 points)

The extent to which the applicant provides a clear and convincing narrative for integrating resources in its project by:

- Demonstrating a clear understanding of the IRT (IRT) approach and how the approach will be incorporated in the applicant's existing career pathways programs; and

- Demonstrating a clear and convincing strategy to braid and blend funds and leverage resources to support access for individuals with disabilities to facilitate their participation in their existing career pathways system and programs.

c) Partnerships and Collaboration (10 points)

The extent to which the applicant provides a coherent and feasible approach by:

- Describing how the required partners will support the expansion and adaptation of the existing career pathways system to increase participation of individuals with disabilities;
- Demonstrating, in the form of substantive detailed letters of commitment, that required partnerships (as identified in Section III.B.) are already in place, that each partner understands its roles and responsibilities, and that partners fully understand and support the proposal. (NOTE:  Applicants who fail to submit letters of commitment from required partners can earn only a maximum of 8 points for this criterion);
- Describing how the applicant will foster partnerships and collaboration at the state and local levels, including aligning programs and funding sources, to promote the participation of individuals with disabilities in career pathways programs;
- Demonstrating the applicant's business partnerships that will result in increased participation and better outcomes of individuals with disabilities in career pathways programs;
- Identifying partner resources and program dollars that the applicant plans to use for the education and training of individuals with disabilities;
- Describing if and how the applicant will partner with the VR  program on its career pathways approach; and
- Providing a compelling argument that the applicant's strategy for partnerships and collaboration will result in sustainable systemic change and promote sustainability and replication of successful career pathways programs developed during the grant period.

d) Career Pathways Plan (3 points)

The extent to which the applicant provides a convincing narrative for the development and implementation of career pathway plans that lead to increased participation of individuals with disabilities.

3. **Expected Outcomes and Outputs (up to 15 points)**

The extent to which the anticipated outputs and outcomes are reasonable and achievable (15 points), as shown by the applicant:

- Identifying a reasonable set of anticipated outcomes indicating  systemic change, such as state or organizational policies, partnerships, agreements, or processes which will lead to the sustained meaningful participation of individuals with disabilities in the career pathways system;
- Identifying a reasonable set of anticipated changes to career pathways programs, such as modified curricula, assistive technology, flexible scheduling, or alternative assessments, which will result in the greater participation of individuals with disabilities in career pathways programs; and
- Identifying a reasonable set of projections for each of the outcomes for participants with disabilities listed in Section IV.B.3.d.

4. **Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity (up to 15 points)**
The extent to which the applicant provides a clear and thorough narrative documenting its structure, staffing, and relevant experience and expertise, and clearly explains how these factors contribute to its ability to implement the program requirements and meet program expectations (5 points).

The extent to which the applicant documents its overall organizational capability by clearly and convincingly demonstrating the applicant's capacity to administer the DEI project, including fiscal and oversight capability; its capacity to efficiently complete any start-up activities so that services are being provided no later than six months into the period of performance; its capacity to submit quarterly fiscal and program reporting in a complete and timely fashion; and its ability to make participant data available to the Department (5 points).

The extent to which the applicant provides a compelling argument for its capability to sustain project activities after Federal financial assistance ends (5 points) by:
- Identifying and justifying specific strategies for sustaining its successful approaches to promote the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in existing career pathways programs and to enhance the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities beyond the end of the DEI grant; and
- Demonstrating how the applicant will replicate or expand the effective practices implemented by the project throughout the public workforce system in the state.

5. **Past Performance – Programmatic Capability (up to 15 points)**
The extent to which the applicant documents that it has an already existing successful career pathways system and programs (15 points by):
- Providing a clear and convincing narrative describing its current career pathways system and programs in detail to include:
  - o Identifying a well-articulated sequence of education and training offerings in identified industry(ies) or occupation(s);
  - o Identifying multiple entry points that accommodate participants at differing skill levels (including adults and out-of-school youth with very low basic skills); and
  - o Identifying multiple exit points at successively higher levels of education and employment that are aligned with marketable, portable, and stackable credentials.
- Describing the outcomes of its existing career pathways activities, such as sustained funding for career pathways programs; increasing the number of individuals with family-supporting jobs; increasing the size of the qualified labor pool; improving employment outcomes such as those measured by the WIA Common Measures, credential attainment, wages, benefits, retention, and advancement; and increased effectiveness of collaboration among partners.
- For applications focusing on individuals with significant disabilities, providing a clear and convincing explanation of how its existing career pathways program will be modified to incorporate flexible approaches in order to provide an innovative and individualized career pathway approach for individuals with significant disabilities who require or desire such approach.

**6. Budget and Budget Justification (up to 5 points)**
The extent to which the budget is reasonable based on the activities outlined in the project narrative. (3 points)

The extent to which the budget allows personnel to devote adequate time to the project to achieve project results. (2 points)

B.    Review and Selection Process
A technical merit review panel will carefully evaluate applications against the selection criteria to determine the merit of applications. These criteria are based on the policy goals, priorities, and emphases set forth in this FOA. Up to 100 points may be awarded to an applicant, depending on the quality of the responses provided. The final scores (which may include the mathematical normalization of review panels) will serve as the primary basis for selection of applications for funding. The panel results are advisory in nature and not binding on the Grant Officer. The Grant Officer reserves the right to make selections based solely on the final scores or to take into consideration other relevant factors when applicable. Such factors may include the geographic distribution of funds and/or other relevant factors. The Grant Officer may consider any information that comes to his/her attention.

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 http://www.grants.gov, which constitutes a binding offer by the applicant.

C.    Risk Review Process
Every application will be evaluated to determine the risks posed by applicants. Prior to making an award, ETA will review information available through any OMB-designated repository of governmentwide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), Dun and Bradstreet, and "Do Not Pay." Additionally, ETA will comply with the requirements of 2 CFR Part 180 codified by DOL at 29 CFR Part 98 (Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement)). This risk evaluation may incorporate results of the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility (application screening) or the quality of its application (merit review). If ETA determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award. Criteria to be evaluated include:
> (1) Financial stability;
> (2) Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in the Uniform Grant Guidance;
> (3) History of performance. The applicant's record in managing awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, if it is a prior recipient of such Federal awards, including timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements and if applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards;
> (4) Reports and findings from audits performed under Subpart F – Audit Requirements of the Uniform Grant Guidance or the reports and findings of any other available audits and

monitoring reports containing findings, issues of non-compliance or questioned costs; (5) The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on recipients.

## VI. Award Administration Information
A.  Award Notices

All award notifications will be posted on the ETA Homepage (http://www.doleta.gov). Applicants selected for award will be contacted directly before the grant's execution.   Non-selected applicants will be notified by mail or email and may request a written debriefing on the significant weaknesses of their application.

Selection of an organization as a recipient does not constitute approval of the grant application as submitted.  Before the actual grant is awarded, we may enter into negotiations about such items as program components, staffing and 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.  We reserve the right to not fund any application related to this FOA.

B.  Administrative and National Policy Requirements
1. Administrative Program Requirements

All grantees will be subject to all applicable Federal laws, regulations—including the OMB Uniform Guidance, and the terms and conditions of the award.  The grant(s) awarded under this FOA will be subject to the following administrative standards and provisions:
   a. Non-Profit Organizations, Educational Institutions, and State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments – 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards)
   b. Profit Making Commercial Firms – Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) – 48 CFR part 31 (Cost Principles), and 2 CFR Part 200 (Administrative Requirements).
   c.  All recipients must comply with the applicable provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Public Law No. 113-328, 128 Stat. 1425 (codified as amended at 29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.).[21]  Note that section 186(a) of WIOA allows unsuccessful applicants to file administrative appeals.
   d. All entities must comply with 29 CFR Part 93 (New Restrictions on Lobbying), 29 CFR Part 94 (Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)), 29 CFR Part 98 (Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension, and drug-free workplace requirements), and, where applicable, 2 CFR Part 200 (Audit Requirements).
   e. 29 CFR Part 2, subpart D—Equal Treatment in Department of Labor Programs for Religious Organizations, Protection of Religious Liberty of Department of Labor Social Service Providers and Beneficiaries.
   f. 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.
   g. 29 CFR Part 32—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.
   h. 29 CFR Part 35— Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance from the Department of Labor.

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[21] Please see footnotes 14 and 15, regarding the applicability of WIOA and its implementing regulations.

i. 29 CFR Part 36—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.

j. Regulations implementing section 188 of WIOA, due to be promulgated in summer of 2015.

k. 29 CFR Parts 29 and 30—Labor Standards for the Registration of Apprenticeship Programs, and Equal Employment Opportunity in Apprenticeship and Training, as applicable.

l.  General Terms and Conditions of Award—See the following link:
http://www.doleta.gov/grants/pdf/15StandTermsConds.pdf.

2. Other Legal Requirements:

a. 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.  If an applicant organization is a faith-based organization that makes hiring decisions on the basis of religious belief, it may be entitled to receive Federal financial assistance under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and maintain that hiring practice even though Section 188 of the WIOA[22] contains a general ban on religious discrimination in employment.  If a faith-based organization is awarded a grant, the organization will be provided with information on how to request such an exemption.

b. Lobbying or Fundraising the U.S. Government with Federal Funds

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 2 CFR 200.450 for more information).

c. Transparency Act Requirements

You must ensure that you have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the reporting requirements of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Pub. Law 109-282, as amended by section 6202 of Pub. Law 110-252) (Transparency Act), as follows:

- Except for those excepted from the Transparency Act under sub-paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 below, you must ensure that you have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the subaward and executive total compensation reporting requirements of the Transparency Act, should they receive funding.
- Upon award, you will receive detailed information on the reporting requirements of the Transparency Act, as described in 2 CFR Part 170, Appendix A, which can be found at the following website:  http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-22705.pdf

The following types of awards are not subject to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act:

- Federal awards to individuals who apply for or receive Federal awards as natural persons (i.e., unrelated to any business or non-profit organization he or she may own or operate in his or her name);
- Federal awards to entities that had a gross income, from all sources, of less than $300,000 in the entities' previous tax year; and

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[22] Please see footnote 14 above regarding the applicability of  the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

- Federal awards, if the required reporting would disclose classified information.

d. Safeguarding Data Including Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

Applicants submitting applications in response to this FOA must recognize that confidentiality of PII and other sensitive data is of paramount importance to the Department of Labor and must be observed except where disclosure is allowed by the prior written approval of the Grant Officer or by court order. By submitting an application, you are assuring that all data exchanges conducted through or during the course of performance of this grant will be conducted in a manner consistent with applicable Federal law and TEGL NO. 39-11 (issued June 28, 2012). All such activity conducted by ETA and/or recipient/s will be performed in a manner consistent with applicable state and Federal laws.

By submitting a grant application, you agree to take all necessary steps to protect such confidentiality by complying with the following provisions that are applicable in governing their handling of confidential information:

1. You must ensure that PII and sensitive data developed, obtained, or otherwise associated with DOL/ETA funded grants is securely transmitted.

- To ensure that such PII is not transmitted to unauthorized users, all PII and other sensitive data transmitted via e-mail or stored on CDs, DVDs, thumb drives, etc., must be encrypted using a Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 140-2 compliant and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) validated cryptographic module. You must not e-mail unencrypted sensitive PII to any entity, including ETA or contractors.

- You must take the steps necessary to ensure the privacy of all PII obtained from participants and/or other individuals and to protect such information from unauthorized disclosure. You must maintain such PII in accordance with the ETA standards for information security described in TEGL NO. 39-11 and any updates to such standards we provide to you. If you wish to obtain more information on data security should contact their Federal Project Officer.

- You must ensure that any PII used during the performance of your grant has been obtained in conformity with applicable Federal and state laws governing the confidentiality of information.

- You further acknowledge that all PII data obtained through your ETA grant must be stored in an area that is physically safe from access by unauthorized persons at all times and the data will be processed using recipient issued equipment, managed information technology (IT) services, and designated locations approved by ETA. Accessing, processing, and storing of ETA grant PII data on personally owned equipment, at off-site locations e.g., employee's home, and non-recipient managed IT services, e.g., Yahoo mail, is strictly prohibited unless approved by ETA.

- Your employees and other personnel who will have access to sensitive/confidential/proprietary/private data must be advised of the confidential nature of the information, the safeguards required to protect the information, and that there are civil and criminal sanctions for noncompliance with such safeguards that are contained in Federal and state laws.

- You must have policies and procedures in place under which your employees and other personnel, before being granted access to PII, acknowledge their understanding of the confidential nature of the data and the safeguards with which they must comply in their

handling of such data as well as the fact that they may be liable to civil and criminal sanctions for improper disclosure.

- You must not extract information from data supplied by ETA for any purpose not stated in the grant agreement.
- Access to any PII created by the ETA grant must be restricted to only those employees of the grant recipient who need it in their official capacity to perform duties in connection with the scope of work in the grant agreement.
- All PII data must be processed in a manner that will protect the confidentiality of the records/documents and is designed to prevent unauthorized persons from retrieving such records by computer, remote terminal or any other means.  Data may be downloaded to, or maintained on, mobile or portable devices only if the data are encrypted using NIST validated software products based on FIPS 140-2 encryption.  In addition, wage data may only be accessed from secure locations.
- PII data obtained by the recipient through a request from ETA must not be disclosed to anyone but the individual requestor except as permitted by the Grant Officer or by court order.
- You must permit ETA to make onsite inspections during regular business hours for the purpose of conducting audits and/or conducting other investigations to assure that you are complying with the confidentiality requirements described above.  In accordance with this responsibility, you must make records applicable to this Agreement available to authorized persons for the purpose of inspection, review, and/or audit.
- You must retain data received from ETA only for the period of time required to use it for assessment and other purposes, or to satisfy applicable Federal records retention requirements, if any.  Thereafter, you agree that all data will be destroyed, including the degaussing of magnetic tape files and deletion of electronic data.

e.  Record Retention
You must be prepared to follow Federal guidelines on record retention, which require you to maintain all records pertaining to grant activities for a period of at least three years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report. See 2 CFR 200.333-.337 for more specific information, including information about the start of the record retention period for awards that are renewed quarterly or annually, and when the records must be retained for more than three years.

f.  Use of Contracts and Subawards
You must abide by the following definitions of contract, contractor, subaward, and subrecipient:
**Contract:**  Contract means a legal instrument by which a non-Federal entity (defined as a state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education (IHE), nonprofit organization, for-profit entity, foreign public entity, or a foreign organization that carries out a Federal award as a recipient or subrecipient) purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a Federal award.  The term as used in this FOA does not include a legal instrument, even if the non-Federal entity considers it a contract, when the substance of the transaction meets the definition of a Federal award or subaward (see definition of Subaward below).
**Contractor:**  Contractor means an entity that receives a contract as defined above in Contract.

**Subaward:** Subaward means an award provided by a pass-through entity (defined as a non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a Federal program) to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out part of a Federal award received by the pass-through entity. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of a Federal program. A subaward may be provided through any form of legal agreement, including an agreement that the pass-through entity considers a contract.
**Subrecipient:** Subrecipient means a non-Federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a Federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. A subrecipient may also be a recipient of other Federal awards directly from a Federal awarding agency.

You must follow the provisions at 2 CFR 200.330-.332 regarding subrecipient monitoring and management. Also see 2 CFR 200.308(c)(6) regarding prior approval requirements for subawards. When awarding subawards, you are required to comply with provisions on governmentwide suspension and debarment found at 2 CFR Part 180 and codified by DOL at 29 CFR Part 98.

g. Closeout of Grant Award

Any entity that receives an award under this Announcement must close its grant with ETA at the end of the final year of the grant. Information about this process may be found in ETA's Grant Closeout FAQ located at http://www.doleta.gov/grants/docs/GCFAQ.pdf.

3. Other Administrative Standards and Provisions

Except as specifically provided in this FOA, our acceptance of an application 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 Uniform Guidance requires that an entity's procurement procedures ensure that all procurement transactions are conducted, as much as practical, to provide full and open competition. If an application identifies a specific entity to provide goods or services, the award does not provide the justification or basis to sole source the procurement, i.e., avoid competition.

4. Special Program Requirements
a. ETA Evaluation

As a condition of grant award, we may require grantees to participate in a national evaluation. The national evaluation may include an implementation assessment across grantees, as well as an impact and/or outcomes analysis of all or selected sites within or across grantees. Conducting an impact analysis could involve random assignment (by lottery) of eligible participants into either treatment group(s) that would receive program services or enhanced program services, or into control group(s) that would receive no program services or no enhanced program services.

The Department may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation, assess the Return on Investment to businesses, and share their understanding of the overall project impact. If selected as a part of the national evaluation, grantees must agree to: (1) make records on participants businesses, businesses, and funding available ; (2) provide access to program operating personnel, participants, operational and financial records and any other pertinent documents to evaluate program costs and benefits; (3) allow the evaluators to conduct interview, focus groups, or surveys of program staff, participants, and/or businesses; (4) facilitate the

assignment by lottery of participants and/or sites to treatment versus control groups (including the possible increased recruitment of potential participants); and (5) follow evaluation procedures as specified by the national evaluator under the direction of DOL, including after the grant period of performance. Grantees may use funds for activities related to the execution of the program evaluation strategy as determined by DOL, such as staff training in collecting participant and program data.

b. Performance Goals

Please note that applicants will be held to outcomes provided. Failure to meet those outcomes may result in technical assistance or other intervention by ETA, and may also have a significant impact on decisions about future grants with ETA.

c. Technical Assistance

To support grantees, DOL will provide mandated technical assistance to the grants through a Federally funded contractor. The Department will provide intensive technical assistance to support the applicant's specific-population focus and other grant-related components.

d. Employment Network (EN)

An EN is an entity that is approved by SSA to serve individuals under its Ticket to Work (TTW) Program. Once approved by SSA, an EN can accept a Ticket from any individual who qualifies for the TTW Program. All individuals on SSI or SSDI between the ages of 18 and 64 qualify for the TTW Program. The individual has complete choice regarding the EN to which s/he assigns her/his Ticket, and the EN has complete choice regarding which Tickets to accept. When an individual becomes employed at specified earning levels, the EN receives a series of payments from SSA linked to that individual's employment outcomes. Information on SSA's procedures for requesting EN status is available at:  https://yourtickettowork.com/web/ttw/home.

By accepting grant funds, the grantee agrees that the SWA, or at least one of the LWDBs selected to participate in this project, must be an EN or that they will apply to SSA for EN status within 60 days after receiving DEI funds. DEI projects must remain active ENs throughout the grant performance period, according to established SSA performance standards monitored by SSA's contracted Operations Support Manger (OSM). The Department expects DEI grantees to comply with OSM and additional technical assistance guidance through the life of the DEI grant. Once a SWA or LWDB becomes an active EN (i.e., accepts and assigns Tickets), TTW Program resources can be used to facilitate the participation in career pathways programs by individuals with disabilities, including Social Security disability beneficiaries.

e. Key Staff

By accepting grant funds, grantees commit to hiring or designating an individual at the state level who is a full-time DEI state project lead. The DEI state project lead's responsibilities will include, but not be limited to, the following:

i. Identifying and coordinating with the state workforce agency and the identified LWDB(s) to ensure that issues and challenges are addressed and that common goals are achieved (the reference to LWDBs throughout this FOA is not meant to eliminate states with single state workforce areas from the DEI);

ii.  Representing the state in administrative communications with the designated ETA Federal Project Officer (FPO), Grant Officer, and National Program Office.
iii.  Establishing and coordinating partnerships/linkages with other state-level agencies/institutions/partners in activities, often most effectively engaged at the state level, that may be critical to the success of this grant in making modifications to existing AJC and career pathways system programs to include individuals with disabilities;
iv.  Coordinating implementation of TTW administrative activities, such as access to WIOA and W-P individual records and coordination with the SSA or its representatives (e.g., the OSM contractor); and
v.  Facilitating implementation of additional data collection and other processes or actions, as the Department may require, for evaluation purposes.

Also, each LWDB that participates in the DEI grant must commit to hiring a new, or designating an existing, full-time staff person(s) as the Disability Resource Coordinators (DRC) l.  The DRC(s) must have disability-related and workforce knowledge skills, experience (including experience with the employment of individuals with disabilities and the public workforce system's challenges in effectively serving them), and abilities that can be applied to implementing the project design at the local level.  In addition, the DRC must be knowledgeable about career pathways systems and programs.  The Department also encourages LWDBs to hire individuals with disabilities for this position.  The DRC, among other responsibilities, will:
i.  Assist in identifying and leveraging disability-related resources and partners to support collaboration on career pathway efforts;
ii.  Advise the public workforce system on how to effectively promote the participation of individuals with disabilities in career pathways systems and programs;
iii.  Coordinate with career pathway programs' direct service delivery staff, including career coaches;
iv.  Assist LWDB, AJC staff, community college, business, and other partner training (e.g. on such topics as Ticket to Work as a potential source for training funds, accommodations, assistive technology, discovery process, or assessments);
v.  Assist the recruitment of individuals with disabilities to participate in career pathways programs and to utilize AJC services;
vi.  Help expand the workforce development system's participation as ENs under the TTW Program;
vii.  Help Ticket Holders to participate in career pathways programs;
viii.  Help ensure that jobseekers with disabilities access all the different programs and services they need, including career and training services offered through the AJCs to participate in existing career pathways programs; and
ix.  Facilitate an IRT approach to leverage resources needed for individuals with disabilities to fully participate in existing career pathway programs and to achieve their employment goals.

f.  Accessibility

By accepting grant funds, grantees commit that **all** the participating LWDBs and AJCs comply with Section 188 of the WIOA and its implementing regulations when they are promulgated,

including any requirements covering physical, programmatic, and communications accessibility.[23] In addition, all participating community colleges, colleges, and post-secondary training programs receiving Federal funds must comply with the non-discrimination provisions, pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 720 et. seq. and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-325), 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.

C. Reporting
You must agree to meet DOL reporting requirements. Quarterly financial reports, quarterly progress reports, and MIS data must be submitted by the recipient electronically. You must agree to provide the reports and documents listed below:

1. Quarterly Financial Reports
A Quarterly Financial Status Report (ETA 9130) is required until such time as all funds have been expended or the grant period has expired. Quarterly reports are due 45 days after the end of each calendar year quarter. On the final Financial Status Report, you must include any subaward amounts so we can calculate final indirect costs, if applicable. You must use DOL's Online Electronic Reporting System and information and instructions will be provided to grantees.

2. Quarterly Performance Reports
You must submit a quarterly progress report within 45 days after the end of each calendar year quarter. The report must include quarterly information on grant activities, performance goals, and milestones. The last quarterly progress report will serve as the grant's Final Performance Report. This report must provide both quarterly and cumulative information on the grant activities. It must summarize project activities, employment outcomes and other deliverables, and related results of the project, and must thoroughly document the training or labor market information approaches that you used. We will provide you with formal guidance about the data and other information that is required to be collected and reported on either a regular basis or special request basis.

**VII. Agency Contacts**
For further information about this FOA, please contact Ms. Cam Nguyen, Grants Management Specialist, Office of Grants Management, at (202) 693-2838. Applicants should e-mail all technical questions to Nguyen.Cam@dol.gov and must specifically reference FOA/DFA PY 15-08, and along with question(s), include a contact name, fax and phone number. This Announcement is being made available on the ETA Web site at http://www.doleta.gov/grants and at http://www.grants.gov.

**VIII. Other Information**
A. 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 all applications in this grant competition, we will publish the Abstracts required by Section IV.B.4., and selected information from the SF-424 for all applications on the Department's public website or similar publicly accessible location.

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[23] As stated in footnote 15, the regulations implementing section 188 of WIOA are due to be promulgated in summer of 2015.

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Additionally, we will publish a version of the Project Narrative required by Section IV.B.3. for all those applications that are awarded grants, on the Department's website or a similar location. No other attachments to the application will be published. The Project Narratives and Abstracts will not be published until after the grants are announced. 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 (PII). 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.

PII 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.[24]

Abstracts will be published in the form originally submitted, without any redactions. Applicants should not include any proprietary or confidential business information or PII in this summary. In the event that an applicant submits proprietary or confidential business information or PII, 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 PII contained within the Abstract. In the event the Abstract contains proprietary or confidential business information or PII, 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.

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

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[24] 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.

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

Submission of a redacted version of the Project Narrative 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 Project Narrative, 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 PII is contained in the Project Narrative.  If an applicant fails to provide a redacted version of the Project Narrative within 45 days of DOL's request, DOL will publish the original Project Narrative in full, after redacting only PII.  (Note that the original, unredacted version of the Project Narrative will remain part of the complete application package, including an applicant's proprietary and confidential business information and any PII.)

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 PII.  The redaction of entire pages or sections of the Project Narrative 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.  See 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."

B.  Web-Based Resources
A pre-recorded Prospective Applicant Webinar will be available online for viewing at http://www.workforce3one.org after [***insert date XX days after date of publication of the one page notice in the Federal Register]***.  While a review of this webinar is encouraged, it is not mandatory.
DOL also maintains a number of web-based resources that may be of assistance to applicant including:
- Disability and Employment Web site: https://disability.workforce3one.org, provides disability and employment resources for the workforce development system, including promising practices to promote positive employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities and DEI successful strategies and promising practices.  It also has archived materials from the past Disability Program Navigator (DPN) initiative training and technical assistance.
- The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Web site: http://www.dol.gov/odep.

- CareerOneStop portal: http://www.careeronestop.org, which provides national and state career information on occupations.
- The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) Web site: http://nsttac.org/, which provides technical assistance on preparing students with disabilities for transition to education, training and the workforce.
- Occupational Information Network (O*NET) Online (http://online.onetcenter.org), which provides occupational competency profiles.
- America's Service Locator (http://www.servicelocator.org), which provides a directory of our nation's American Job Centers.

C.  Industry Competency Models and Career Clusters

Career Clusters and Industry Competency Models both identify foundational and technical competencies, but their efforts are not duplicative.  ETA supports an Industry Competency Model Initiative to promote an understanding of the skill sets and competencies that are essential to an educated and skilled workforce.  A competency model is a collection of competencies that, taken together, define successful performance in a particular work setting.  Competency models serve as a starting point for the design and implementation of workforce and talent development programs.  To learn about the industry-validated models visit the Competency Model Clearinghouse (CMC) at http://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel.  The CMC site also provides tools to build or customize industry models, as well as tools to build career ladders and career lattices for specific regional economies.

The Department of Education and the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc) support the National Career Clusters Framework.  These 16 Career Clusters link to more than 79 specific career pathways and place greater emphasis on elements needed for curriculum performance objectives; measurement criteria; scope and sequence of courses in a program of study; and development of assessments.  Information about the National Career Clusters Framework can be found at: www.careerclusters.org/career-clusters.

D.  Workforce3One Resources
1.  Technical assistance resources can be found on Workforce3One.org at: https://www.workforce3one.org.
2.  The online tutorial, "Grant Applications 101: A Plain English Guide to ETA Competitive Grants," is available at: http://www.workforce3one.org/page/grants_toolkit.
3.  *Workforce System Strategies* makes it easier for the public workforce system and its partners to identify effective strategies and support improved customer outcomes.  The collection highlights strategies informed by a wide range of evidence such as experimental studies and implementation evaluations, as well as supporting resources such as toolkits.  See http://strategies.workforce3one.org/.
4.  The technical assistance portal at https://etareporting.workforce3one.org/page/financial contains online training and resources for fiscal and administrative issues.  Online trainings available include, but are not limited to, Introduction to Grant Applications and Forms, Indirect Costs, Cost Principles, and Accrual Accounting.

## IX.  OMB Information Collection

OMB Information Collection No 1225-0086,  Expires January 31, 2016.

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 about 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 the 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 ANNOUNCEMENT.

This information is being collected for the purpose of awarding a grant.  The information collected through this "Funding Opportunity Announcement" will be used by the Department of Labor to ensure that grants are awarded to the applicants 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 a grant.

Signed Sara Gallagher Williams, in Washington, D.C. by:
XXXXX
Grant Officer, Employment and Training Administration

Attachment # 1: Sample Workplan

**Attachment:  Sample Work Plan Template**

**STATE:**_____

The work plan must be completed for the 42-month period of performance.  The workplan must be completed for each objective included in the project. The size of the workplan template boxes can be expanded, as needed, to accommodate space for information.

| Grantee Objective: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ACTIVITY** | **MILESTONE** | **OUTCOME** | **TIMEFRAME** | **RESPONSIBILITY** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |