

**Limited Competition Opportunity
Workforce Innovation Fund
Supplemental Justification**

Supplemental Supporting Statement A: Justification

The Labor Department, Employment and Training Administration (ETA) is preparing a Limited Competition Opportunity soliciting applications for Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grants. This request seeks OMB approval of the FOA in light of the Paperwork Reduction Act.

The Limited Competition Opportunity will announce the availability of approximately \$34 million in grant funds. The Department anticipates awarding approximately 6-8 grants through this limited competition and will accept proposals ranging from \$3 to \$6 million. Applicants must dedicate 15 percent of grant funds to support evaluation activities.

This Limited Competition Opportunity will use WIF grants to promote system reforms and innovations that facilitate cooperation across programs to improve employment outcomes, cost effectiveness, and delivery of customer-centered services to job seekers, youth and employers. Awarded grants will focus on Job-Driven system alignment and implementation of a fully integrated workforce development system. It is designed to complement other federal efforts such as the implementation of the President's Job-Driven Training Agenda, Job-Driven National Emergency Grants (NEG), and previous rounds of WIF grants. Additional information on the President's Job-Driven Training Agenda is available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/skills_report_072014_2.pdf. Additional information on the WIF can be found at http://www.doleta.gov/workforce_innovation.

Evaluation: As with the prior WIF grants, all grantees in this round are required to evaluate the effectiveness of their project, using part of their budgets for an independent evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that states gain meaningful information about whether their approach worked well and which aspects worked best, and to inform other states' future workforce system changes. This round of projects will focus on exploring innovative service delivery or system reforms through non-experimental means (similar to the methodology in "Type A" projects in earlier rounds).¹ The projects can be related to innovative strategies or interventions, whether new, expanded in size, scope or scale, or significantly changed from what was previously tested or implemented, either by the applicant or others. All projects will still need to be based on a "logic model" and proposals also will need to include a short Preliminary Evaluation Design, Budget and Procurement Plan (described in section below on required attachments). As in previous rounds of WIF grants, a qualified third-party evaluator must be used, and high-quality data and evaluation practices will continue to be required.

¹Previous WIF grants followed a tiered evidence approach (which is not being used here) and permitted three types of evaluations and projects including: Type A: Process/implementation studies on new or emerging structural and/or service delivery ideas, with limited evidence of effectiveness; Type B: Quasi-experimental studies of promising ideas, adapting proven ideas not previously implemented (by the grantee) that have some evidence of their effectiveness; and Type C: Experimental studies, using random assignment, of approaches supported by strong evidence, previously implemented by the grantee, but adapted or implemented at a larger scale.

Funds will be awarded no later than September 30, 2015 with a period of performance end date of September 30, 2019. The 48 month period of performance will include up to 12 months for start-up activities, at least 24 months for implementation, and up to 12 months for completing the evaluation.

Applications will include the following information collections: (1) Letter of Interest; (2) SF-424 “Application for Federal Assistance”; (3) Project Budget and Budget Narrative; and (4) Attachments.

Electronic availability:

The Limited Competition Opportunity will be available electronically at: <http://www.grants.gov/>. Based on past DOL experience, the Department anticipates that 80 percent of responses will be submitted electronically.

Small Entities:

This information collection will not have a significant impact on a substantial number of small entities.

Assurances of confidentiality:

These grant solicitations do not offer applicants assurances of confidentiality.

Special circumstances:

This Limited Competition Opportunity implicates no special circumstances.

Burden:

Based on past experience, the DOL expects to receive approximately 75 applications from an equal number of respondents. ETA estimates public reporting burden for the information collection to average 20 hours per response for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining needed data, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

75 applications x 20 hours = 1500 hours.

DOL has increased the October 2013, average hourly earnings in the professional and business services industry of \$30.38 by 40 percent (total \$42.53) to monetize this burden. *See The Employment Situation—December 2013*, DOL, Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit_01102014.pdf, at 35.

1500 hours x \$42.53 = \$63,795.

The DOL associates no other burden costs with this information collection. In addition to the application, each grantee will be required to submit quarterly financial, performance, and narrative reports to the ETA. Those information collection requirements will be cleared under a separate control number.

Total burden: 75 respondents, 75 responses, 1500 hours, \$0 other cost burdens.

Supplemental Supporting Statement B: Statistical Methods

This information collection does not employ statistical methods.