

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
Employment and Training Administration

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**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

**ANNOUNCEMENT FOR:** Disability Employment Initiative Cooperative Agreements

**ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE:** *Initial*

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER:** *FOA-ETA-16-07*

**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 the date of publication on Grants.gov]. We must receive applications no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time.*

**ADDRESS:** *Address mailed applications to:*

*The U.S. Department of Labor  
Employment and Training Administration, Office of Grants Management  
Attention: Jimmie Curtis, Grant Officer  
Reference FOA-ETA-16-07  
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:**

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The Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL, or the Department, or we), announces the availability of approximately \$15.6 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 (as defined in 2 CFR 200.24) to state workforce agencies, ranging from \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million each. Applicants may apply for up to \$2.5 million of funding.

**I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

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**A. PROGRAM PURPOSE**

This announcement solicits applications for Round VII of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). The purpose of this program is to provide funding to expand the capacity of American Job Centers (AJCs), also known as One-Stop Centers, to improve the employment outcomes of three population focus areas: 1) adults (ages 18 and older) with

visible and non-visible disabilities, including those who have acquired disabilities in adulthood; 2) youth (ages 14-24) with visible and non-visible disabilities, including those who have chronic health conditions; and 3) individuals (ages 14 and older) 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 vocational rehabilitation, community colleges and other education, human service, and business partners. 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. This will further 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: job seekers and businesses. Individuals with disabilities continue to be disproportionately long-term unemployed, underemployed, and living in poverty.

#### 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 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;
- Necessary staff trainings and capacity building to achieve program goals, including but not limited to WIOA Section 188 nondiscrimination provisions;
- Staff time developing and implementing alternate assessment strategies (including but not limited to “discovery” as clarified in footnote 3), Individual Learning Plans (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 and unpaid work experiences, 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) (DRCs) 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 training services). However, grantees must leverage WIOA core programs and other program resources to the greatest extent possible to fund training and employment activities and supportive services for participants.

## Background

This extensive background section below provides greater context on how DEI is currently related to WIOA and other DOL initiatives. However, this background section does not outline requirements for the grant application. Applicants will be evaluated based on the information requested in section IV, using the criteria identified in section V.

As of March 2016, the unemployment rate of individuals with disabilities was 10.8 percent, compared to 4.9 percent for individuals without disabilities. The labor force participation rate of individuals with disabilities was 19.9 percent, compared to 68.6 percent for individuals without disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 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 Wagner-Peyser Act (W-P) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 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 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 a year 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 job seekers with disabilities, increase their access to high-quality workforce services, and to prepare them for competitive integrated employment leading to economic self-sufficiency. For example, State Workforce Development Boards are responsible for aligning WIOA core programs and developing and improving the workforce system through the creation of career pathways. As such, they are responsible for convening stakeholders and WIOA core programs to contribute to the development of the state plan. The policies and strategies of

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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016). Table A-6, Employment status of the civilian population by sex, age, and disability status, not seasonally adjusted. Retrieved April 20, 2016 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>.

the state leadership team regarding career pathways must be consistent with the Unified/Combined state plan required in WIOA.

Pursuant to Section 3(7) of WIOA, career pathways is defined. The term “career pathway” means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training and other services that:

- Aligns with the skill needs of industries of the economy of the State or regional economy involved;
- Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships, registered under the National Apprenticeship Act of 1937;
- Includes counseling to support an individual achieving the individual’s education and career goals;
- Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- Organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
- Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized postsecondary credential; and
- Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Under WIOA, partner programs and entities that are jointly responsible for workforce and economic development, educational, and other human resource programs collaborate to create a seamless, customer-focused AJC delivery system that integrates service delivery across all programs and enhances access to services. The AJC delivery system includes six core programs (Title I Adult, Dislocated, and Youth programs; Title II Adult Education and Literacy Programs; Title III Wagner-Peyser programs; and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program), as well as other required and optional partners identified in WIOA. WIOA emphasizes coordination and collaboration at the state and local levels to enhance system capacity to improve service delivery and the “blending” and “braiding” of resources<sup>2</sup> to leverage funding for services to job seekers, including individuals with disabilities.

WIOA establishes provisions to improve accessibility of the AJCs and strengthen business sector strategies. For example, the State Workforce Development Board establishes certification criteria to be used by local boards in assessing AJCs once every three years in order to be eligible for infrastructure funding. The certification criteria are to relate to continuous improvement, ensure accessibility (including programmatic and physical accessibility for individuals with disabilities), and effective coordination and integration of service delivery. Additionally, WIOA strengthens the requirements for state and local providers to align with regional economic development strategies and sector strategies tailored to their needs.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

The DEI cooperative agreements will be vehicles for driving implementation of several of WIOA's disability-related provisions, and provide effective strategies for the public workforce system/AJC network to promote competitive, integrated employment of individuals with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities. Since Round I in 2010, DEI has 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; strengthened opportunities for training front-line and partner staff; maximized use of alternate forms of assessment, such as discovery<sup>3</sup> for individuals with significant disabilities; and increased partnerships and collaboration.

Another need that DEI cooperative agreements have addressed since the program's formation is a DOL initiative to expand the public workforce development system's capacity to become an Employment Network (EN) for beneficiaries under the Social Security Administration Ticket to Work (TTW) program. Establishing EN status for public workforce programs at the state level is an important factor in successful execution of the EN role because it simplifies and expedites the application and payment processes for employment and training services already provided to Ticket holders. A number of AJC operators have already become ENs and accept Tickets for the provision of training or employment services. Full participation in the TTW program by the public workforce system can provide significant resources for services to individuals with disabilities. Active participation in the TTW program can enhance funding and future sustainability of the DEI projects.

Starting in 2014, DOL Round V DEI grantees received funding to increase the participation of youth and adults with disabilities in existing career pathway systems and programs implemented in the AJCs. The career pathways approach provides a framework for weaving together adult education, job training, and postsecondary education services to address businesses' workforce needs, and reorients existing education and workforce services (including those authorized under WIOA), from a myriad of disconnected programs toward one "seamless" system focused on individuals' postsecondary and economic success. As part of that effort, DEI grantees are required to leverage resources from the WIOA core programs as well as other program and partner resources to promote systems integration. In 2015, during Round VI, two states received funding focused on capacity building and service delivery targeting individuals with significant disabilities for the first time.

This FOA for Round VII 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.<sup>4</sup> Through this FOA, the Department plans to support the

<sup>3</sup> 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 job seeker's strengths and uncovering their employment-related goals and experiences is the place to start.

<sup>4</sup> For additional information on the DEI visit: [https://disability.workforce3one.org/page/tag/dei\\_project](https://disability.workforce3one.org/page/tag/dei_project);  
For information on DOL's career pathways programs visit: <https://learnwork.workforce3one.org>.

development of job-driven, innovative, integrated, flexible, and universally-designed service delivery strategies in existing career pathways systems. Since 2010, the Department has awarded over \$109 million to 43 projects in 27 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.

Subsequent to WIOA's enactment, DOL issued a series of guidance and resources to help implement WIOA's requirements prior to the issuance of final WIOA regulations. This FOA will support the vision as articulated in the respective guidance issued. Two guidance resources are enumerated further below.

#### **a. WIOA Vision Joint Guidance**

On August 13, 2015, the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services jointly released the *Vision for the One-Stop Delivery System under WIOA*.<sup>5</sup> The vision reinforced the partnerships and strategies necessary for the AJCs to provide job seekers and workers with the high-quality career services, education, and training, and supporting services that they need to obtain good jobs and stay employed; and to help businesses find skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce. In alignment with the joint vision, the key objectives of the Round VII DEI have been categorized to help operationalize DEI in the following three key functional areas: 1. Excellent Customer Service; 2. Innovative and Effective Service Design; 3. Systems Integration and High-Quality Staffing. These key areas are described below:

1. AJCs Provide Excellent Customer Service to Job Seekers, Workers, and Businesses.
  - DEI improves 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;
  - DEI provides 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;
  - DEI increases 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; and
  - DEI facilitates academic and employment transitions, including among individuals who may have low literacy and skills proficiency or other challenges to employment.
  
2. AJCs Reflect Innovative and Effective Service Design.
  - DEI incorporates flexible approaches to designing and providing training, supportive services, and innovative workplace strategies that fit the schedule,

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<sup>5</sup> For additional information, refer to Training Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 04-15, [http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr\\_doc.cfm?DOCN=6455](http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=6455).

learning styles, and life circumstances of all participants, including individuals with disabilities;

- DEI tests customized employment services strategies within the public workforce system to help job seekers with significant disabilities participate in customized career pathways programs; and
- DEI tests best practices for Stay At Work/ Return to Work (SAW/RTW) efforts for Social Security beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries (early intervention efforts)
- DEI builds effective community partnerships and collaborations across multiple service delivery systems that leverage public and private resources to improve services to individuals with disabilities.

### 3. AJCs Operate with Integrated Management Systems and High-Quality Staffing.

- DEI promotes 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;
- DEI promotes and documents the effective “blending” and “braiding” of resources and cost-sharing across systems to increase and improve services to individuals with disabilities;
- DEI creates 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 and/or customized career pathways programs; and
- DEI strengthens the connection between the AJCs and VR state grantees through co-location, joint training, and other partnership activities.

## **b. Career Pathways**

### Defining Career Pathways

In WIOA, the development of career pathways is a required function of the state and local workforce development boards and is an important component of the state plan. There have been multiple descriptions and definitions for career pathways, including the WIOA definition that is listed earlier. The term career pathways generally refers to 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. Career pathways are established by aligning secondary and postsecondary education with workforce development systems and human services at the local, regional, or state level. Based on lessons learned from state and local experiences, the following six key elements have been identified as essential for successful career pathways: 1) Build Cross-Agency Partnerships and Clarify Roles; 2) Identify Industry Sectors and Engage Employers; 3) Design Education and Training Programs; 4) Identify Funding Needs and Sources; 5) Align Policies and Programs; 6) Measure Systems Change and Performance.

In April 2012, an interagency letter was released supporting career pathways implementation from the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor, which established the initial framework and outline of career pathways.<sup>6</sup> Some of

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<sup>6</sup> For additional information, refer to Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 36-11, [http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr\\_doc.cfm?DOCN=3536](http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=3536).

the key terms were further updated and expanded in an updated toolkit released on September 3, 2015, by DOL titled *Career Pathways Toolkit: A Guide for System Development*.<sup>7</sup> The latest issuances of joint guidance and technical assistance resources will be used to support this FOA.

### Credential Attainment Strategy to Support Career Pathways

One key component of career pathways programs is the attainment of industry-recognized credentials. According to Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 15-10, *Increasing Credential, Degree, and Certificate Attainment by Participants of the Public Workforce System*,<sup>8</sup> credentials within the context of workforce development generally refer 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.<sup>9</sup>

### Challenges that Limit the Participation of Individuals with Disabilities in Career Pathways Experiences

Individuals with disabilities often lack the opportunity to participate in and benefit from career pathways due to the challenges identified below, which can be at the individual program and system levels.

#### *Individual Challenges*

- Need for benefits information/coordination for individuals with disabilities.
- Lack of information about and funds for workplace and educational accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
- Lack of accessible transportation options.
- Lack of individualized learning and planning tools, including ILPs, within career pathways.
- Lack of opportunities for customized employment assistance, particularly for individuals with significant disabilities.
- Reluctance to self-identify as an individual with a disability.

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<sup>7</sup> For additional information visit: <https://www.workforce3one.org/view/2001523732879857569/info>.

<sup>8</sup> For additional information visit: <https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL15-10.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> For additional information, refer to TEGL No. 15-10, [http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr\\_doc.cfm?DOCN=2967](http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2967).



### *System Challenges*

- Lack of knowledge within career pathways systems of assistive technology; accommodations; disability agency partners, including VR, Mental Health (MH), Medicaid, and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD); and necessary support services and models, including customized career pathways for individuals with significant disabilities.
- Lack of connections between career pathways systems and potential partners 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, including those with significant disabilities.
- Need to integrate systems level changes in service delivery design and relevant programming to make career pathways inclusive (e.g., including people with disabilities in outreach; establishing inclusive policies and procedures; using assessments that do not inadvertently screen out individuals with disabilities, including alternate assessments, such as discovery; revision of curricula contextualized to pathways and individual learning styles; and flexibility in training design and service strategies).
- Need to align policies and practices, and leverage funding across systems, including through blending and braiding approaches, to expand the capacity of the public workforce system and its partners to provide integrated career pathways experiences for individuals with disabilities, including use of assistive technology and other disability accommodations (e.g., small classroom sizes to facilitate one-on-one attention, text-to-speech technologies, learning spaces with minimal distractions, hands-on-activities, or printed lecture notes).
- Need to establish measurable goals that increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in career pathways systems.
- 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.

To address these individual and system challenges, this FOA is intended to build on the WIOA vision and provide funding to facilitate making existing career pathway systems and programs inclusive of individuals with disabilities.

Specifically, this FOA will fund the following activities:

- 1) **Using the Integrated Resource Team (IRT)** approach to bring together public and private sector representatives at the local AJC 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** 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;<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For additional information visit: [http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/ImplicationsNTEP\\_AdultEd.pdf](http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/ImplicationsNTEP_AdultEd.pdf) and <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/ilp/>.

- 3) **Participating as an Employment Network** in the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program to provide recipients of SSA disability benefits 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;<sup>11</sup>
- 6) **Implementing customized employment strategies** to negotiate a job placement and create a career pathway for a job seeker with a significant disability that satisfies both the job seeker's employment goals and the employer's business needs;<sup>12</sup>
- 7) **Implementing financial literacy and other asset development strategies** to allow job seekers with disabilities to meet their ongoing financial needs, including through financial literacy training, benefits counseling and other strategies for building financial capability;
- 8) **Hiring or designating Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) or Disability Program Navigators**, *i.e.*, dedicated local-level staff with workplace and disability experience and expertise to implement the strategic approach of the applicants' proposals; and
- 9) **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 AJCs to meet customers' needs more efficiently.<sup>13</sup>

## **B. Program Authority**

This program is authorized by Section 169 of WIOA.

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION**

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### **A. AWARD TYPE AND AMOUNT**

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<sup>11</sup> For additional information visit: <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/topic/guideposts>.

<sup>12</sup> "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.

<sup>13</sup> For additional information visit: [http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article\\_id=268](http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=268).

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

We expect availability of approximately \$15,600,000 to fund approximately 8 cooperative agreements. You may apply for a ceiling amount of up to \$2,500,000. Awards made under this Announcement are subject to the availability of Federal funds. In the event that additional funds become available, 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 cooperative agreement in each of three population focus areas: 1) adults (ages 18 and older) with visible and non-visible disabilities, including those who have acquired disabilities in adulthood; 2) youth (ages 14-24) with visible and non-visible disabilities, including those who have chronic health conditions; and 3) individuals (ages 14 and older) with significant disabilities.

For purposes of this FOA, individuals with significant disabilities are job seekers 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<sup>14</sup> 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, 2016. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities.

### **III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

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#### **A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

Cooperative agreements will be awarded to a lead applicant, which will serve as the grantee and have overall fiscal and administrative responsibility for the cooperative agreement. This responsibility may not be delegated. 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, as well as the Local Workforce Development Board(s)

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<sup>14</sup> 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.

(LWDB) identified as a required partner for this grant,<sup>15</sup> must be involved in existing career pathways systems, programs, and partnerships. (The reference to LWDBs throughout this FOA is not meant to eliminate states with single state workforce areas from the DEL.)

Lead applicants bear overall fiscal and administrative responsibility for the cooperative agreement, including any performance of subawardees. As part of their responsibility for the cooperative agreements, lead applicants will be:

- 1) the point of contact with the Department to receive and respond to all inquiries or communications under this FOA and any subawards;
- 2) the entity with authority to withdraw or draw down funds;
- 3) the entity responsible for submitting to the Department all deliverables under the cooperative agreement, including all related technical and financial reports, regardless of which partnership member performed the work;
- 4) the entity that may request or agree to a revision or amendment of the cooperative agreement or statement of work;
- 5) the entity with overall responsibility for carrying out programmatic functions of the cooperative agreement, as well as the stewardship of all expenditures under the cooperative agreement;
- 6) the entity responsible for coordinating with the national evaluator; and
- 7) the entity responsible for working with DOL to close out the cooperative agreement.

The lead applicant must also show substantial commitment and involvement from the following required partners and additional partners (to the extent that the applicant proposes to partner with any additional partners). This support must be documented by a letter of commitment (see Section IV.B.4 Attachments to Project Narrative for more information about letters of commitment):

Required partner:

- One or more Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs)

Additional partners may include but are not limited to:

- One or more community college(s), technical institution(s), four-year colleges/universities, or other education partners that will provide the education and training activities;
- 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;
- Other partners that serve individuals with disabilities (the VR Agency and/or other disability-focused agency(ies)); and
- For projects that target youth, one or more local education agency(ies) (LEA) or other partners to facilitate the development of secondary, postsecondary, and career training.

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<sup>15</sup> The entities called “local workforce investment boards” under WIA are called “local workforce development boards” under WIOA section 107 and constituted under slightly different requirements.

Applicants may also include entities receiving funds under WIOA 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. These applicants are not required to partner with LWDBs.

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

**B. COST SHARING OR MATCHING**

This program does not require cost sharing or matching funds. Including such funds is not one of the application screening criteria and applications that include any form of cost sharing or match will not receive additional consideration during the review process. Instead, the agency considers any resources contributed to the project beyond the funds provided by the agency as leveraged resources. Section IV.B.2 provides more information on leveraged resources.

**C. 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.

<b>Application Requirement</b>	<b>Instructions</b>	<b>Complete?</b>
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. <i>(We will attempt to open the document, but will not take any additional measures in the event of problems with opening.)</i>	Section IV.C.	
Application Federal funds request does not exceed the ceiling amount of \$2.5 million	Section II.A	
SAM Registration	Section IV.B.1	
SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance	Section IV.B.1	
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	
Work Plan (Attachment 1)	Section IV.B.4	

## 2. Number of Applications Applicants May Submit

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. Although applicants may submit more than one application, applicants will only be eligible to receive one award under this competition. Should there be a scenario where multiple applications from a single applicant are highly scored for different population focus areas, the grant officer will make a decision about which application to fund. If the most recent application for any population focus area is disqualified for any reason, we will not replace it with an earlier application.

## 3. Eligible Participants

### **a) Participants Eligible to Receive Training**

The intent of this FOA is to fund projects that 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 are 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](http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2816).

## **IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

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### **A. HOW TO OBTAIN AN APPLICATION PACKAGE**

This FOA, found at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) and [http://www.doleta.gov/grants/find\\_grants.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/grants/find_grants.cfm) , contains all of the information and links to forms needed to apply for grant funding.

**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.

You must 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/forms/sample/SF424\\_2\\_1-V2.1.pdf](http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424_2_1-V2.1.pdf) ).
- In the address field, fill out the nine-digit (plus hyphen) zip code. Nine-digit zip codes can be looked up on the USPS website at <https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction!input.action> .
- 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, the signature of the Authorized Representative on the SF-424 certifies that the organization is in compliance with the Assurances and Certifications form SF-424B (available at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424B-V1.1.pdf> ). You do not need to submit the SF-424B 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 38.20.

As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under Title I WIOA<sup>16</sup> , 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—

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<sup>16</sup> The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (“WIOA”, Public Law 113-128) was signed into law on July 22, 2014. Most provisions of WIOA became effective July 1, 2015. Grants awarded under this FOA are authorized by the WIOA, and the terms of the 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.

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 the basis of sex in educational programs. The grant applicant also assures that it will comply with 29 CFR part 37 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 must 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>.

Grant recipients authorized to make subawards must meet these requirements related to DUNS Numbers

- 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.
- Grant recipients may not make a subaward to an entity unless the entity has provided its DUNS number to you.

(See, Appendix A to 2 CFR section 25.)

- **Requirement for Registration with SAM**

Applicants must register with the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting an application. Find instructions for registering with SAM can at <https://www.sam.gov>.

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. If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time the Grant Officer is ready to make a Federal award, the Grant Officer may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award



and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

## **(2) Project Budget**

You must complete the SF-424A Budget Information Form (available at: <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424A-V1.0.pdf>). 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 you expect to purchase 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, not "equipment". In general, we do not permit the purchase of equipment during the last funded year of the grant.

**Supplies:** Identify categories of supplies (e.g. office supplies) in the detailed budget and list the quantity and unit cost per item. Supplies include all tangible personal property other than "equipment" (see 2 CFR 200.94 for the definition of Supplies).

**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 you must show the costs 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 you include indirect costs 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 information regarding the negotiation of Indirect Cost Rates at DOL:  
<http://www.dol.gov/oasam/boc/dcd/index.htm>.

Note that the SF-424, SF-424A, and budget narrative must include the entire Federal grant amount requested (not just one year). [If cost sharing or match is required, include the following sentence.] Applicants must also show cost sharing or match on the SF-424 (line 18b), SF-424A, and budget narrative.

Do not show leveraged resources on the SF-424 and SF-424A. You should describe leveraged resources in the budget narrative.

Applicants should list the same requested Federal grant amount on the SF-424, SF-424A, and budget narrative. If minor inconsistencies are found between the budget amounts specified on the SF-424, SF-424A, and the budget narrative, ETA will consider the SF-424 the official funding amount requested. However, if the amount specified on the SF-424 would render the application nonresponsive, the Grant Officer will use his or her discretion to determine whether the intended funding request (and match if applicable) is within the responsive range.

### **(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. You must number the Project Narrative beginning with page number 1.

We will not read or consider any materials beyond the specified page limit in the application review process.

The following instructions provide all of the information needed to complete the Project Narrative. Carefully read and consider each section, and include all required information in your Project Narrative. The agency will evaluate the Project Narrative 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.

- *Population Focus Area.* Each applicant must identify one of the three population 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.
- *Other Populations.* Applicants must identify 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; ex-offenders; or SSDI displaced workers.
- *Data.* 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:

- a. Proposed Strategic Approach
  - i. Overall approach
  - ii. Population-specific approach (i.e. Adults with disabilities, Youth with disabilities, or Individuals with significant disabilities)
- b. Integrating Resources

c. Partnerships and Collaboration

a. Proposed Strategic Approach

i. *Overall approach.*

- *Increasing Participation and Outcomes.* 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.

The strategic approach must also address the six key elements for career pathways:

1. Build Cross-Agency Partnerships and Clarify Roles,
2. Identify Industry Sectors and Engage Employers,
3. Design Education and Training Programs,
4. Identify Funding Needs and Sources,
5. Align Policies and Programs, and
6. Measure Systems Change and Performance.

Applicants must outline a work plan, as also discussed in section IV.B.4, 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. Applicants are encouraged to refer to the sample work plan template when preparing their work plan (See Attachment 1); however, applicants are not required to use this sample template and are encouraged to use a work plan that fits their needs.

- *Linking Strategies to Statement of Need.* The strategies for increased participation and outcomes must address the challenges described in the Statement of Need.
- *Alternative Assessment.* Applicants must detail how they will use alternative assessments (including but not limited to “discovery”), 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;
- *Other Resources.* Applicants must describe how they will use AJC career and training services in conjunction with other available resources to increase the number of individuals with disabilities participating in career pathways initiatives;
- *Work Experience.* Applicants must describe how they will provide and expand paid and unpaid work experiences, including mentoring, pre-apprenticeships, Registered Apprenticeships, and internship (consistent with state and Federal law) opportunities for individuals with disabilities;
- *Intensive Services.* Applicants must detail how they will use 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;

- *Employment Network*. If already an EN, demonstrating prior success (e.g. accepting Tickets, serving Ticket Holders, achieving successful employment outcomes for Ticket Holders, Ticket revenue obtained) in participation as an EN at the state or local level. Or, if not already an EN, presenting a convincing plan for how the state workforce agency and participating LWDBs will become ENs and actively participate in the TTW program by accepting Tickets and serving Social Security disability beneficiaries who are customers of the AJCs.

ii. Population-specific approach.

Applicants must describe how they will address the strategies below that are applicable to the population focus area that they chose.

**Adults with disabilities (ages 18 and older)**

- *Training Modules*. Career pathways training modules should result in industry-recognized 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*. Acceleration strategies, such as contextualized learning, compressed training, awarding credit for prior learning, dual enrollment (students are co-enrolled in integrated adult education and postsecondary occupational training classes), and hybrid learning approaches (online and classroom-based course designs) to facilitate participation by adults with disabilities.
- *Outreach*. Increasing outreach and developing innovative programs to assist dislocated workers, disabled veterans, long-term unemployed individuals with disabilities, and SSDI/SSI beneficiaries.
- *Cohort Training*. Cohort training of adult students with disabilities, using learning communities and peer-support systems.
- *Career Bridge*. "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 or, as appropriate, offered by training providers.
- *Resources*. Use of career coaches/career specialists in the AJCs, businesses, and educational institutions, if applicable, to work with the DRC and the IRTs to identify a road map outlining the education, training, and credentials that individuals must complete along with a projected timeline, including, as appropriate, through braiding and blending leveraged resources.

**Youth with disabilities (ages 14-24)**

- *K-14 Alignment.* Strengthening “K-14” alignment (i.e., kindergarten through the first two years of college), and building a scalable work-based learning infrastructure.
- *Co-enrollment.* Increasing co-enrollment in secondary and postsecondary institutions and youth workforce programming to accelerate academic achievement to leverage WIOA Individual Training Account (ITA) funds.
- *Transition Strategies.* 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 postsecondary education (e.g., occupational certificate programs offered by community colleges, Registered Apprenticeship programs, and two and four-year degree programs).
- *Staff Development.* Promoting professional development for staff.
- *Acceleration Strategies.* Implementing acceleration strategies, such as contextualized learning, compressed training, awarding credit for prior learning, dual enrollment (co-enrollment in integrated adult education and postsecondary occupational training classes), and hybrid learning approaches (online and classroom-based course designs) to facilitate participation by youth with disabilities.
- *Guideposts for Success.* Incorporating an approach to career pathways programs for youth that implement strategies based upon and consistent with the youth “Guideposts for Success.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Individuals with significant disabilities (ages 14 and older)**

- *Design of Customized Employment Services.* Describe how applicants use a customized employment approach in their existing career pathways systems or will be designed to assist individuals with significant disabilities in completing both career exploration, including discovery, and the individualized career pathway strategies necessary for achieving their employment goals. Applicants must describe the role of AJCs in executing this customized employment approach (including job customization). New partners may be needed to achieve customized career pathways for individuals with significant disabilities. Applicants selecting this population should carefully review the requirements for the adult and youth populations, and consider including those which are applicable to this population in their applications. Applicants must provide customized employment services designed to assist individuals with significant disabilities to engage in discovery, individualized career pathway strategies, and negotiation of specific job tasks within a chosen industry sector or desired career pathway selected by the individual job seeker. Services may also include such supportive services as job coaching, social support, financial literacy training, and financial capability counseling.<sup>18</sup> An IRT can be valuable in supporting the customized employment

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<sup>17</sup> For additional information visit: <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/topic/guideposts>

<sup>18</sup> According to 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. For additional information visit:

process, including through leveraging resources within and across relevant systems, with a goal of employment in a career pathway that is customized to both the strengths and abilities of the individual with significant disabilities as well as the needs of the employer.

- *Career Exploration.* Describe how the applicant will use strategies such as individual or group discovery, portfolio development, and negotiation in industry areas that interest potential participants to document the circumstances (skills, interests, abilities, and conditions) necessary for successful employment of specific participants, as well as the participant's capacity (strengths, abilities, and potential contributions to businesses) to accomplish specific tasks associated with the potential customized job.
- *Training.* Describe how training and/or internships will be provided (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.
- *Working with Businesses.* Describe how the applicant will work with businesses to incorporate negotiated employment and customized career pathways into the pathways model. 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, and other job supports. It can also include modified hours or location of the job, and may use representational materials to showcase the job seeker to the business, such as through a pictorial portfolio.
- *Staff Development.* Promoting professional development and/or inservice training for staff.

The Department believes that an individual with a significant disability can successfully enter and retain employment with local businesses or within regional or state 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 traditional career pathways activities. The Department will provide customized employment technical assistance to grant recipients focusing on individuals with significant disabilities.<sup>19</sup>

#### b. Integrating Resources

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[http://jumpstart.org/assets/files/PACFL\\_ANNUAL\\_REPORT\\_1-16-09.pdf](http://jumpstart.org/assets/files/PACFL_ANNUAL_REPORT_1-16-09.pdf) or  
[http://www.citigroup.com/citi/foundation/pdf/CFSI\\_FE\\_to\\_FC\\_White%20Paper\\_2010.pdf](http://www.citigroup.com/citi/foundation/pdf/CFSI_FE_to_FC_White%20Paper_2010.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> The LEAD Center, an ODEP funded technical assistance center, has archived webinars, blogs and other information on its Web site at [www.leadcenter.org](http://www.leadcenter.org) (Search on Customized Employment).

Applicants must describe how they will integrate and leverage resources from different programs and systems to promote the participation of, and employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities in career pathways programs by:

- *IRT Approach.* Implementing the IRT approach<sup>20</sup> 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 job seeker 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 the job seeker's education, training, or employment goals and otherwise enhance their participation in existing career pathways programs; and
- *Leveraging Resources.* Integrating resources and services through the "blending" and "braiding" of funds and leveraging of resources to promote the participation of individuals with disabilities in existing career pathways program. Describe how service coordination and resource leveraging will occur between the WIOA six 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 blending and braiding can provide greater efficiency and effectiveness by leveraging multiple resources to assist the individual customer in achieving his/her employment outcomes.

c. Partnerships and Collaboration

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.

- *Partners.* Applicants must describe how the required and additional partners as described in Section III.A. will support the expansion and adaptation of their existing career pathways system to increase participation of individuals with disabilities. Applicants must describe if and how the applicant will partner with the VR Program on its career pathways approach.
- *Letters of Commitment.* Applicants must submit letters of commitment from required partners and any additional partners the applicant proposes to work with, see Section III.A., 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.)
- *State and Local Alignment.* Applicants must describe how they will align programs and funding sources to promote the participation of individuals with disabilities in career pathways program in alignment with the state plan. Partnerships can be highlighted with WIOA Title I-B - Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker employment and 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; aging; Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs; education and training providers; economic

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<sup>20</sup> For additional information visit: <https://disability.workforce3one.org/view/4010927252305244299/info>.



development; financial development and asset development entities; community-based and faith-based organizations; and private entities (e.g., foundations).

Applicants must also describe how the activities planned under the cooperative agreement align with the career pathways element of their state plan.

- *Fostering Partnerships with Businesses.* 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.
- *Resources.* Applicants must identify their own and partner resources that they plan to use for the education and training of individuals with disabilities.
- *Systemic Change and Sustainability.* 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.

### (3) Expected Outcomes and Outputs

Applicants must clearly identify the extent to which the anticipated outcome(s) and output(s) are sufficient, as well as reasonable and achievable. Outcomes should describe the anticipated end results of the project. Outputs are measurable results of the project and should be quantifiable and measurable, such as the number of training sessions held or the number of service units provided.

- *Anticipated Outcomes.* Applicants must identify a reasonable set of anticipated outcomes indicating systemic change. This could include state or organizational policies, partnerships, agreements, or processes which will lead to the sustained meaningful participation of individuals with disabilities in career pathways system.
- *Career Pathways.* Applicants must identify a reasonable set of anticipated changes to career pathways programs. This could include modified curricula, assistive technology, flexible scheduling, or alternative assessments, which will result in the greater participation of individuals with disabilities in career pathways program; and through changes in career pathways programs (such as modified curriculum, assistive technology, flexible scheduling, and alternative assessments).
- *Anticipated Outputs.* Applicants must identify a reasonable set of projections for each of the outcomes for participants with disabilities listed in Section IV.B.3 depending on the applicant's focus population (Adults with disabilities, Youth with disabilities, or Individuals with significant disabilities).

Applicants should also include quantifiable measures for assessing 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 for the WIOA core indicators of performance (e.g., employment in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters after exit, median earnings in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, attaining a credential, measurable skill gains, and effectiveness in serving employers).

Applicants should 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 ENs (further explained in section VI.B.4.c.);
- 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:

- *Organizational and Administrative Capacity.* Applicants must provide a detailed description of the lead applicant's capacity to administer the project, including its fiscal and oversight responsibilities, 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. In addition, applicants must provide a detailed description of how the responsibilities will be shared between the lead applicant, partner agencies, and subawardees, if applicable, including a description of how the projects are aligned to the AJC vision and plan for efficient and effective communication between staff and partners at all levels, including how they will complete any start-up activities so that services are being provided no later than six months into the period of performance.
- *Fiscal Capacity.* 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, including individuals with significant disabilities if appropriate, 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 in the state.

#### (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 existing career pathways programs. Applicants must provide details on the following:

- *Sequencing.* Describe the sequence of education and training offerings in identified industry(ies) or occupations(s);
- *Entry Points.* Identify multiple entry points that accommodate participants at differing skill levels, including those with very low basic skills;
- *Exit Points.* Identify multiple exit points at successively higher levels of education and employment that are aligned with industry-recognized portable and stackable credentials earned at these exit points;

- *Outcomes.* Describe the outcomes of its existing career pathways activities such as sustained funding for career pathways; 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 WIOA core indicators of performance, credential attainment, wages, benefits, retention, and advancement; and increased effectiveness of collaboration among partners; and
- *Significant Disabilities (if applicable).* For applications focusing on individuals with significant disabilities, provide 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

Please see **Section IV.B.2.** for information on requirements related to the budget and budget justification.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### (4) Attachments to the Project Narrative

In addition to the Project Narrative, you must submit attachments. All attachments must be clearly labeled as Attachments. We will only exclude those attachments listed below from the page limit.

You must not include additional materials such as resumés or general letters of support. 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 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). You may use an underscore (example: my\_Attached\_File.pdf) to separate a file name.

#### **Required Attachment**

- **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 Abstract 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."

- **Work Plan:** You must include a work plan and implementation schedule, including staff responsibilities, expected milestones, and outcomes. (A sample work plan, Attachment # 1, is attached to the FOA as a possible reference. Although applicants do not need to submit a work plan that matches the format of Attachment #1, if they fail to submit a Work Plan, the application will be screened out and will not move forward through the merit review process).

### **Requested Attachments**

We request the following attachments, but their omission will not cause us to screen out the application. Furthermore, if the omission of the attachment will impact scoring, the description of the attachment will note such an impact.

- **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.)
- **Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form:** Applicants 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.)
- **Accessibility Policy:** Applicants should 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. (This attachment does not impact scoring of the application.)
- **Education Institutions' Accessibility Policies:** Applicants should 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. (This attachment does not impact scoring of the application.)
- **Letters of Commitment:** Applicants must submit copies of letters of commitment from all required partners and proposed additional partners (See Sections III.A. 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. Strong letters of commitment also detail non-binding examples of the partners’ planned contributions to the grant. Applicants should not include general letters of support with their applications or ask their elected officials to send such letters to the Department. (This attachment impacts scoring of the application.)

### **C. SUBMISSION DATE, TIMES, PROCESS AND ADDRESSES**

We will accept applications under this Announcement until [insert date XX days after the date of publication on Grants.gov]. You must submit your application either electronically on <http://www.grants.gov> or in hard copy by mail or in hard copy by hand delivery (including overnight delivery) **no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date.**

Applicants are encouraged to submit their application before the closing date to ensure that the risk of late receipt of the application is minimized. We will not accept applications sent by e-mail, telegram, or facsimile (FAX).

Applicants submitting applications in hard copy by mail or overnight delivery must submit a “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 must also include in the hard copy submission an identical electronic copy of the application on compact disc (CD). If we identify discrepancies between the hard copy submission and CD copy, we will consider the application on the CD as the official 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 <http://www.grants.gov>, 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 <http://www.grants.gov>.

We will grant no exceptions to the mailing and delivery requirements set forth in this notice. Further, we will not accept documents submitted separately from the application, before or after the deadline, as part of the application.

Address mailed applications to the  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Employment and Training Administration  
Office of Grants Management  
Attention: Jimmie Curtis, Grant Officer  
Reference FOA-ETA-16-07  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N4716  
Washington, DC 20210

Please note that mail decontamination procedures may delay mail delivery in the Washington DC area. We will receive hand-delivered applications 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.

Applicants submitting applications through Grants.gov must ensure successful submission at <http://www.grants.gov> **no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date.** Grants.gov will subsequently validate the application.

We describe the submission and validation process 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. 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 the submission of certain parts of an application.

- We strongly recommend that before you begin to write the application, you immediately initiate and complete the “Get Registered” registration steps at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html> .

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 the Step-By-Step Guide to Organization Registration to help applicants walk through the process.

- We strongly recommend that you download the Guide at <http://www.grants.gov/documents/19/18243/GrantsgovOrganizationRegistrationGuide.pdf/be70525d-59aa-45ee-b196-5e8951faca0a> 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.gov** 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, DOL will not consider the application.

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](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](mailto:support@grants.gov) .

The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However, it is closed on Federal holidays.

### **Late Applications**

For applications submitted on Grants.gov, we will consider only applications successfully submitted no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date and then successfully validated. You take a significant risk by waiting to the last day to submit through Grants.gov.

We will not consider any hard copy application received after the exact date and time specified for receipt at the office designated in this notice, unless we receive it 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 and at 2 CFR Part 2900 (Uniform Guidance-DOL specific). 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.) For WIOA grants, all costs charged as a result of the de minimis rate will be counted towards the administrative cost limitation specified below.

## 2. Administrative Costs

Under this FOA, an entity that receives a grant to carry out a project or program may not use more than **XX** percent of the amount of the grant to pay administrative costs associated with the program or project. Administrative costs are for the performance of administrative functions in carrying out activities under Title I of WIOA that are not related to the direct provision of workforce investment services (including services to participants and employers). Such costs include both personnel and non-personnel costs and both direct and indirect costs. Administrative costs do not need to be identified separately from program costs on the SF-424A Budget Information Form. However, they must be tracked through the recipient's accounting system. To claim any administrative costs that are also indirect costs, the applicant must obtain an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement from its Federal Cognizant Agency or be eligible to use the 10 percent de minimis rate, as specified above.

## 3. 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 113-235, Division G, 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](http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2262) .

#### 4. Intellectual Property Rights

Pursuant to 2 CFR 2900.13, to ensure that the Federal investment of DOL funds has as broad an impact as possible and to encourage innovation in the development of new learning materials, the grantee will be required to license to the public all work created with the support of the grant under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY) license. Work that must be licensed under the CC BY includes both new content created with the grant funds and modifications made to pre-existing, grantee-owned content using grant funds.

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 grantee. Notice of the license shall be affixed to the Work. For general information on CC BY, please visit

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0> . Instructions for marking your work with CC BY can be found at

[http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Marking\\_your\\_work\\_with\\_a\\_CC\\_license](http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Marking_your_work_with_a_CC_license) .

Questions about CC BY as it applies to this specific funding opportunity should be submitted to the ETA Grants Management Specialist specified in Section VII.

Only work that is developed by the recipient in whole or in part with grants funds is required to be licensed under the CC BY license. Pre-existing copyrighted materials licensed to, or purchased by the grantee from third parties, including modifications of such materials, remain subject to the intellectual property rights the grantee receives under the terms of the particular license or purchase. In addition, works created by the grantee without grant funds do not fall under the CC BY license requirement.

The purpose of the CC BY licensing requirement is to ensure that materials developed with funds provided by these grants result in work that can be freely reused and improved by others. When purchasing or licensing consumable or reusable materials, the grantee is expected to respect all applicable Federal laws and regulations, including those pertaining to the copyright and accessibility provisions of the Federal Rehabilitation Act.

Separate from the CC BY license to the public, 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 grantee may not use Federal funds to pay any royalty or license fee for use of a copyrighted work, or the cost of acquiring by purchase a copyright

in a work, where the Department has a license or rights of free use in such work. If revenues are generated through selling products developed with grant funds, including intellectual property, DOL treats such revenues as program income. Such program income is added to the grant and must be expended for allowable grant activities.

If applicable, the following needs to be on all products developed in whole or in part with grant funds:

“This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the grantee 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.”

**F. OTHER SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

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

**V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

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**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)(2) Project Design)	40
3. Expected Outcomes, and Outputs (See Section IV.B.(3)(a)(3) Expected Outcomes and Outputs)	15
4. Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity (See Section IV.B.(3)(a)(4) Organizational,	15

Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity)	
5. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability (See Section IV.B.(3)(a)(5) Past Performance – Programmatic Capability)	15
6. Budget and Budget Justification (See Section IV.B.(3)(a)(6) Project Budget)	5
TOTAL	100

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

The extent to which the application demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the problem and the contributing factors to the problem by (10 points):

- Providing a clear and compelling justification of the need for a DEI cooperative agreement to serve the population focus area identified, including clear, quantitative and qualitative evidence of the needs of this population identified with respect to obtaining education and training, participating in career pathways programs and entering employment. In addition, providing a clear description of the existing challenges people with disabilities face in obtaining education/training, participating in career pathways programs, and entering employment opportunities;
- 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; individuals with significant disabilities transitioning from segregated employment settings; or ex-offenders; or SSDI displaced workers; 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 (25 points):

i.) *Overall approach* (13 points): The extent to which the application provides a coherent and feasible methodology and work plan that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished, and accounts for all functions or activities identified in the application 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 (e.g., discovery), 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 and unpaid work experiences, including mentoring, pre-apprenticeships, 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.
- If already an EN, demonstrating prior success (e.g. accepting Tickets, serving Ticket Holders, achieving successful employment outcomes for Ticket Holders, Ticket revenue obtained) in participation as an EN at the state or local level. Or, if not already an EN, presenting a convincing plan for how the state workforce agency and participating LWDBs will become an EN and actively participate in the TTW program by accepting Tickets and serving Social Security disability beneficiaries who are customers of the AJCs.

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 how career pathways training modules will result 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, long-term unemployed individuals with disabilities, and SSDI/SSI beneficiaries;
- 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, businesses, 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 one 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 and viable 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 (ITA) funding;
- Detailing 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 acceleration strategies, such as contextualized learning, compressed training, awarding credit for prior learning, dual enrollment, and hybrid learning approaches, will be used to 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 - 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 customized employment services will be designed within their existing career pathways systems, including the role of the AJCs, to assist individuals with significant disabilities in completing both career exploration and individualized career pathway strategies necessary for achieving their employment goals;
- Using strategies necessary for successful employment of specific participants as well as the participant's capacity to accomplish specific tasks associated with the potential customized job;
- Describing how training and/or internships that will be provided (if appropriate to the individual's career goal, as determined through individual or group discovery) to expedite the attainment of successful employment, including as appropriate to the individual, industry-recognized credentials;
- Demonstrating how the applicant will work with businesses to incorporate negotiated and individualized career pathways strategies for individuals with significant disabilities; and
- Describing how professional development and/or inservice training for staff will be promoted.

**b) Integrating Resources (5 points)**

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

- Demonstrating a clear understanding of the IRT approach how the approach will be incorporated in the applicant's existing career pathways programs; and
- Demonstrating a clear and convincing strategy to braiding and blending funds and leveraging 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 partners will support the expansion and adaptation of the existing career pathways system to increase participation of individuals with disabilities and must include if and how the applicant will partner with the VR program on its career pathways approach;
- Demonstrating, in the form of substantive detailed letters of commitment, that required partnerships and additional partners, as applicable, (as identified in Section III.A.) 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 with additional references to how its aligning with the career pathways element of their state plan;
- Demonstrating how applicant's business partnerships' strategy will result in increased participation and better outcomes of individuals with disabilities in career pathways programs;
- Identifying how their own and partner resources and program dollars will be leveraged to use for the education and training of individuals with disabilities; and
- Providing a compelling argument that the applicant's strategy for partnerships and collaboration will result in systemic change and promote sustainability and replication of successful career pathways programs developed during the grant period.

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

The extent to which the anticipated outcomes, changes to the career pathways system, and outputs are sufficient, as well as reasonable and achievable as shown by the applicant.

**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 lead applicant's capacity to administer the DEI cooperative agreement, including fiscal and oversight capability; the lead applicant's capacity to submit quarterly fiscal and program reporting in a complete and timely fashion; the lead applicant's ability to make participant data available to the Department; and the capacity of the lead applicant, partner agencies, and subawardees if applicable, to efficiently administer the cooperative agreement (5 points).

The extent to which the applicant provides a compelling argument for the lead applicant's 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 lead applicant, partner agencies, and subrecipients if applicable, 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). The applicant provides a clear and convincing narrative describing its current career pathways system and programs in detail to include:

- sequence of education and training offerings in identified industry(ies) or occupation(s);
- multiple entry points that accommodate participants at differing skill levels (including adults and out-of-school youth with very low basic skills); and
- multiple exit points at successively higher levels of education and employment that are aligned with industry-recognized, portable, and stackable credentials.
- 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 WIOA core indicators of performance, credential attainment, wages, benefits, retention, and advancement; and increased effectiveness of collaboration among partners.
- For applications focusing on individuals with significant disabilities, 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 reasonably 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**

### **1. Merit 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.

## 2. Risk Review Process

Prior to making an award, ETA will review information available through any OMB-designated repository of government-wide 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 [Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement)]. 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

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### 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, For-profit entities and State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments – 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards) and 2 CFR 2900 (DOL’s Supplement to 2 CFR Part 200)
- b. All recipients must comply with the applicable provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Public Law No. 113-328, 128 Stat. 1425 (codified as amended at 29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.)<sup>21</sup>. Note that section 186(a) of WIOA allows unsuccessful applicants to file administrative appeals.
- c. 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.
- i. 29 CFR Part 36—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.
- j. 29 CFR Part 38 – Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

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<sup>21</sup> Please see footnote 15 regarding the applicability of WIOA and its implementing regulations.

- 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/2015template.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 this grant solicitation and maintain that hiring practice. If a faith-based organization is awarded a grant, the organization will be provided with more information.

**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 subparagraphs 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:

- (1) 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);

- (2) Federal awards to entities that had a gross income, from all sources, of less than \$300,000 in the entities' previous tax year; and
- (3) 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.
2. 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.
3. 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. Grantees who wish to obtain more information on data security should contact their Federal Project Officer.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
  7. 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.
  8. You must not extract information from data supplied by ETA for any purpose not stated in the grant agreement.
  9. 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.
  10. 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.
  11. 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.
  12. 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.
  13. 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 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

We may require that the program or project participate in an evaluation of overall performance of ETA grants and require the cooperation of the recipient as a condition of award.

#### b) Performance Goals

Please note that applicants will be held to outputs and outcomes provided and 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) **Employment Network**

By accepting grant funds, the grantee agrees that the SWA, and all 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 cooperative agreement must remain active ENs throughout the grant performance period, according to established SSA performance standards monitored by SSA's contracted Operations Support Manger (OSM).

An EN is an entity that is approved by SSA to serve individuals under its Ticket to Work 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>.

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.

**d) 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 DRC(s). 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 job seekers 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.

**e) 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.<sup>22</sup> In addition, all participating community colleges, colleges, and postsecondary training programs receiving Federal funds must comply with the nondiscrimination 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 meet DOL reporting requirements. Specifically, you must submit the reports and documents listed below to DOL electronically:

**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**

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<sup>22</sup> The regulations implementing section 188 of WIOA were promulgated in fall of 2015.

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**

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For further information about this FOA, please contact Ms. Erika Beasley Grants Management Specialist, Office of Grants Management, at (202) 693-3906. Applicants should e-mail all technical questions to [Beasley.Erika@dol.gov](mailto:Beasley.Erika@dol.gov) and must specifically reference FOA-ETA-16-07, and along with question(s), include a contact name, fax and phone number. This Announcement is available on the ETA Web site at <http://www.doleta.gov/grants> and at <http://www.grants.gov>.

## **VIII. OTHER INFORMATION**

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[This section includes any additional information that will assist potential applicants. The inclusion of transparency information is an ETA requirement (letter A). The other information (letters B, C, and D) may be used as applicable. If there is a need to include additional information such as acronyms, definitions, grant plan of action, information about post-award conferences, etc., it may also be added.]

### **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. 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. We will publish no other attachments to the application. We will not publish the Project Narratives and Abstracts until after we have announced the grant recipients. 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<sup>23</sup>.

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. You should remove all non-public information about the applicant's and consortium members' staff (if applicable) as well.

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.)

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<sup>23</sup> 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>.

We encourage applicants 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).

DOL will protect redacted information in grant applications 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**

DOL maintains a number of web-based resources that may be of assistance to applicants. For example, the CareerOneStop portal (<http://www.careeronestop.org>), which provides national and state career information on occupations; the Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) Online (<http://online.onetcenter.org>) which provides occupational competency profiles; and America's Service Locator (<http://www.servicelocator.org>), which provides a directory of our nation's AJCs.

#### **C. INDUSTRY COMPETENCY MODELS AND CAREER CLUSTERS**

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.

#### **D. WORKFORCE3ONE RESOURCES**

- 1. We encourage you to view the information gathered through the conference calls with Federal agency partners, industry stakeholders, educators, and local practitioners. The information on resources identified can be found on Workforce3One.org at: <https://www.workforce3one.org/find/?sr=1&ps=20&sort=5>.**

2. We encourage you 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](http://www.workforce3one.org/page/grants_toolkit).
3. We created Workforce System Strategies to make 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. We encourage you to review these resources by visiting <http://strategies.workforce3one.org/>.
4. We created a technical assistance portal at <https://etareporting.workforce3one.org/page/financial> that 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.

**E. UNIVERSAL ACCESS AND DESIGN**

By accepting grant funds, grantees commit that all the participating Local Workforce Development Boards and AJCs comply with Section 188 of WIOA and its implementing regulations when they are implemented, including any requirements covering physical, programmatic, and communications accessibility. Additionally, all participating partners and programs receiving Federal funds must comply with the nondiscrimination 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. All information computer technologies (ICT) deliverables must meet or exceed accessibility and universal design requirements under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

**F. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

**1. DOL Evaluation**

- a) If selected as a grantee and by accepting DOL funding, DOL grantees must participate in an evaluation if it is conducted by DOL. The evaluation would be conducted by a third-party independent contractor and may include a focus on DEI and/or related grants or may be a broader focus concerning several types of DOL grants or programs.***

**IX. OMB INFORMATION COLLECTION**

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OMB Information Collection No 1225-0086, Expires May 31, 2019.

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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](mailto:DOL_PRA_PUBLIC@dol.gov).

**PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR GRANT APPLICATION TO THIS ADDRESS. ONLY SEND COMMENTS ABOUT THE BURDEN CAUSED BY THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND YOUR GRANT APPLICATION TO THE SPONSORING AGENCY AS SPECIFIED EARLIER IN THIS ANNOUNCEMENT.**

This information is being collected for the purpose of awarding a grant. DOL will use the information collected through this “Funding Opportunity Announcement” to ensure that grants are awarded to the applicants best suited to perform the functions of the grant. This information is required to be considered for this grant.

Signed, in Washington, D.C. by:  
 Jimmie Curtis  
 Grant Officer, Employment and Training Administration

**Attachment #1: Sample Work Plan Template**

**STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

<b>Grantee Objective:</b>				
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>MILESTONE</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>PARTNER RESPONSIBLE</b>

