

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Employment and Training Administration

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR: Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) Round 6:
A Grant Initiative for the Appalachian, Delta, and Northern Border Regions

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Initial

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: FOA-ETA-24-08

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER: 17.280

KEY DATES: *The closing date for receipt of applications under this Announcement is 06/20/2024. We must receive applications no later than **11:59 pm Eastern Time.***

Submit all applications in response to this solicitation through <https://www.grants.gov>. For complete application and submission information, including online application instructions, please refer to Section IV.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL, or the Department, or we), announces the availability of approximately \$49,200,000 in grant funds authorized by the by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for the sixth round of Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) Initiative grants.

The funding, as described in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Pub. L. 117-328), will fund projects supporting rural communities in aligning workforce development efforts with economic development plans, serving the following areas hard-hit by economic transition and recovering slowly:

- The Appalachian region, as defined in 40 U.S.C. 14102(a)(1),
- The Lower Mississippi Delta (Delta) region, as defined in 7 U.S.C. 2009aa(2), and
- The Northern Border region, as defined in 40 U.S.C. 15733.

The WORC Initiative provides funding to eligible applicants proposing projects that address the employment and training needs of the local and regional workforce, created in collaboration with community partners and aligned with existing economic and workforce development plans and strategies.

Successful applicants will demonstrate clear strategies to provide needed career, training, and support services to eligible individuals in counties, parishes, or areas currently underserved by other resources, particularly individuals from historically marginalized communities, so they may secure good jobs in stable, high-demand occupations.

Due to unique experiences and circumstances facing communities across the three targeted regions, the WORC Initiative partners—the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), and the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC)—will provide technical assistance to prospective applicants in their respective regions, as well as assistance and support to grantees throughout the life of the initiative, including through sharing of promising practices, curricula and resources developed by existing grantees. Potential

applicants are encouraged to visit www.arc.gov, www.dra.gov, or www.nbrc.gov for more information, including dates and locations for pre-application technical assistance meetings.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. PROGRAM PURPOSE

This announcement solicits applications for WORC Initiative grants serving the Appalachian, Delta, and Northern Border regions.

The purpose of the WORC Initiative grants is to create economic mobility, address historic inequities for marginalized communities of color, rural areas, and other underserved and underrepresented communities, and connect workers who live or work in the Appalachian, Delta, and Northern Border regions, to stable, high-quality, family-sustaining jobs, enabling them to remain and thrive in these communities.

The authorities (see Section I.B. below) for WORC direct the Department to fund projects relating to the employment and training needs of workers in the ARC, DRA, and NBRC counties and parishes (also referred to in this FOA as the “WORC region” for brevity). Accordingly, based on the needs of workers in the WORC region, a paramount goal of WORC Round 6 is funding projects that increase access to stable, high-quality, family-sustaining jobs for workers in the WORC region, including those in critical sectors such as infrastructure and clean energy. Improving access to these Good Jobs will enable these workers to remain within the WORC region. This focus also is consistent with the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to expand access to quality jobs, as defined by [the Good Jobs Principles](#), a shared Federal vision of job quality published by the Departments of Labor and Commerce, and the [Rural Partners Network](#), an all-of-government program that connects rural communities with resources and funding to create jobs, build infrastructure, and support long-term economic mobility.

Good Jobs, for the purposes of this grant program, include those that align with the eight Good Jobs Principles; see **Appendix A** for the full list of the Good Jobs Principles as well as examples of strategies addressing each principle. The Good Jobs Principles describe the elements of family-sustaining work, including pay, which the “Pay” Good Jobs Principle describes as “a stable and predictable living wage before overtime, tips, and commissions” and transparent and equitable wages that rise with increased skills and experience.

Consistent with the “Pay” Good Jobs Principle, this funding opportunity requires applicants to connect and prepare workers for job opportunities paying at least \$15 per hour, for reasons described in more detail in Appendix C. The WORC regions are home to a range of industry sectors including ones with career pathways into high-wage jobs, and a wellspring of talent. This grant seeks to also respond to concerns in the regions in regard to the need to reduce barriers to rural workers accessing higher-wage job opportunities. Among these barriers are child and dependent care, transportation, and access to healthcare and behavioral healthcare.

WORC Initiative Focus Areas

The Department, in coordination with the three WORC Initiative partner regional commissions, has developed this funding announcement to solicit and fund projects that achieve the WORC purpose. To do so, the Department expects that successful applicants will propose projects that

address the identified needs of residents, employers, and communities by designing strategies for aligning workforce training and support services, along with other appropriate activities that are designed to:

- Ensure that residents can attain good job outcomes;
- Prioritize outreach to and enrollment of marginalized individuals or groups; and
- Provide benefits to the community and workers that continue after the end of the WORC grant period.

These three tenets are called the WORC Initiative “Focus Areas.”

Projects under this announcement will demonstrate clear and consistent strategies, activities, partnerships, and results that are built around the three Focus Areas that are central to achieving the purpose of the WORC initiative: Increasing access to good jobs, prioritizing equity, and sustaining impact.

Focus Area 1: Increasing Access to Good Jobs

The first Focus Area is increasing access to Good Jobs. Applicants must demonstrate how they are integrating the Good Jobs Principles into their workforce strategies, including training design, employer partnerships, and supportive services.

All applications must specifically address:

1. The “Pay” Good Jobs Principle by proposing strategies or activities that connect workers residing in the WORC region with training or employment opportunities in industry sectors that pay wages of at least \$15 per hour (see **Appendix C** for background information related to this wage requirement). Applicants must ensure they connect participants to partner employers that pay at least \$15 per hour for any work-based training funded by or reimbursed by grant funds.

Examples of strategies that could meet this pay rate requirement include, but are not limited to:

- Using grant funds to provide participants with comprehensive and appropriate supportive services (see Section III.C.4.b of this Announcement for detailed information on supportive services as defined by WIOA) that address the barriers that often prohibit rural workers from obtaining or retaining jobs that applicant has verified pay at least \$15 per hour. For example, an applicant could propose to use grant funds to arrange childcare or dependent care slots at a provider for participants receiving work-based training (as defined in Section III.C.4.a of this Announcement) or organize regular transportation for apprentices to reach construction worksites.
- Reimbursing costs of partner employers who pay participants in work-based learning opportunities. For purposes of this grant, these reimbursements are only available for employers that pay at least \$15 per hour for such opportunities.
- Developing Registered Apprenticeships or labor-management partnerships where participants earn a starting wage of at least \$15 per hour.

2. One or more of the remaining seven Good Jobs Principles, through proposed grant strategies and activities, that will support WORC region workers' access to stable, family-sustaining employment.

Applicants may address more than two, and it is the goal of this grant program that successful applicants will continue to address job quality, furthering all eight principles, through post-grant sustainability planning. *Examples of approaches to address the Good Jobs Principles, which are meant to be illustrative rather than prescriptive, can be found in **Appendix A**.*

The Department urges applicants to develop projects or strategies that connect participants to employment opportunities created by or related to the generational investments in infrastructure and communities created through the Biden-Harris Administration's [Investing in America](#) agenda.

Focus Area 2: Prioritizing Equity

The second Focus Area of the WORC Initiative is equity. For the WORC Initiative, this means that successful applicants will design programs that prioritize efforts to recruit, enroll, and help employ historically underserved workers adversely affected by persistent poverty, discrimination, or inequality, including, but not limited to, Black, Indigenous, people of color; LGBTQ+ individuals; women; veterans; individuals with disabilities; individuals without a college degree; individuals with substance use disorder; and justice-impacted individuals.

*Examples of activities that might address the “equity” Focus Area are included in **Appendix B**.*

Focus Area 3: Sustaining Impact

The final Focus Area of the WORC Initiative is to ensure that grants are designed to sustain positive impacts for individuals, businesses and community(ies) even after the end of the grant period.

The positive impacts of a project can manifest in various ways depending on the nature and purpose of the project, including but not limited to social impacts (access to basic services/the reduction of social inequalities), economic impacts (highlighting job quality which drives equity), environmental impacts, cultural impacts (preservation or promotion of cultural identity and heritage), or supporting efforts to align services across multiple counties or states. Applicants must identify one or more positive impacts that their proposed project will achieve and demonstrate how such impacts will be sustainable over the five years following the end of the WORC grant period of performance.

*Examples of activities that might address the “sustaining impact” Focus Area are included in **Appendix B**.*

The Biden-Harris Administration has established the [Justice40 Initiative](#), which aims to ensure that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution. The U.S. Department of Labor has designated the WORC Initiative as a Justice40 covered grant program. The White House Council on Environmental Quality developed a [Climate and Justice Screening Tool](#) that includes [a map of all Census tracts that meet the Justice40 criteria to be deemed](#)

[disadvantaged](#). Many communities across the communities covered by the WORC Initiative meet the criteria for a “distressed” designation, a term defined by the regional commissions, but for purposes of the WORC Initiative is synonymous with the term “disadvantaged” and thus in alignment with the principles of Justice40. As appropriate, applicants are encouraged to include distressed communities in their WORC applications.

B. PROGRAM AUTHORITY

WIOA sec. 169(c), as well as the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Pub. L. 117-328, Div. H), authorizes this program.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AWARD TYPE AND AMOUNT

Funding will be provided in the form of a grant.

We expect availability of approximately \$49.2 million to fund approximately 35 grants. You may apply for a minimum award of \$150,000 and a maximum amount of up to \$1,500,000. Awards made under this Announcement are subject to the availability of federal funds. If additional funds become available, we reserve the right to use such funds to select additional grantees from applications submitted in response to this Announcement.

B. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The period of performance is 36 months with an anticipated start date of 09/30/2024. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- State governments
- County governments
- City or township governments
- State or Local Workforce Development Boards
- Special district governments
- Independent school districts
- State or local education agencies
- Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
- Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
- Public housing authorities/Indian housing authorities
- Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)

- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Private institutions of higher education
- Labor unions, worker organizations, or labor-management partnerships
- Hispanic-Serving Institutions
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)
- Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs)
- Minority-Serving Nonprofits

WORC applications are expected to include proposed activities designed to create, improve, or sustain employment opportunities based upon addressing specific workforce needs in the proposed project area(s). Therefore, applicants must demonstrate collaboration with a strong and diverse community-wide coalition that includes:

- At least two employers/industry representatives;
- At least one State or Local Workforce Development Board, American Job Center operator or partner program, (except where such organization is the applicant); and
- At least one community-based organization (except where such organization is the applicant) serving an area or areas covered by the proposed project to ensure that local input is part of the planning and execution of the grant, such as the Rural Partners Network [Community Networks](#)-affiliated organizations.

See Section IV.B.3.c.ii for more information on how this information can be included in an application.

Applicants must identify their institution type in Section 9 of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance. Please note that all elements of 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards) and 2 CFR Part 2900 (DOL's Supplement to 2 CFR Part 200) apply to any entity that carries out a federal award as a recipient or subrecipient. This includes the monitoring and examination of their records. In addition, the entity may not earn or keep any profit resulting from federal financial assistance.

The applicant will serve as the grant recipient, must be the organization specified in Section 8 of the SF-424 Application Form, and will be: (1) the primary contact with the Department to receive and respond to all inquiries or communications under this FOA and any subsequent grant award; (2) the entity with authority to withdraw or draw down funds through the Department of Health and Human Services – Payment Management System (HHS-PMS); (3) the entity responsible for submitting to the Department all deliverables under the grant, including all programmatic, technical and financial reports related to the project, regardless of which partnership member performed the work; (4) the entity that may request or agree to a revision or amendment of the grant agreement or statement of work; (5) the entity with overall responsibility for carrying out the programmatic functions of the grant, as well as for the stewardship of all expenditures under the grant; (6) the entity responsible for coordinating with the national evaluator, including participating in an evaluation and other studies, if selected by DOL; and (7) the entity responsible for working with DOL to close out the grant.

It is the expectation of the Department that the applicant has the organizational capacity to carry out the programmatic functions of the grant, and the Department strongly discourages applications that result in “pass-through” grants (i.e., where the applicant sub-awards the majority of grant funds and operational activities to one or several subrecipients).

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

The checklist below as a guide we urge you to use 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. The checklist contains all required items. If your application does not meet all of the screening criteria, it will not move forward through the merit review process.

Application Requirement	Instructions	Complete?
The deadline submission requirements are met.	Section IV.C	
The applicant eligibility requirements are met.	Section III.A	
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.2	
The SF-424 includes a federal funds request within the range of \$150,000 to \$1,500,000, on line 18.a, Estimated Funding (\$), Federal.	Section II.A	
SAM Registration is current and reflects Applicant Information identified on SF-424, lines 8.a-d.	Section IV.B.1	
SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, is submitted.	Section IV.B.1	
SF-424 includes a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).	Section IV.B.1	

SF-424 includes designation of ARC, DRA or NBRC Region, the primary region under which the application should be considered, on line 15, Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project.	Section IV.B.4.a. and Section III.C.1.	
SF-424A, Budget Information Form, is submitted.	Section IV.B.2	
Budget Narrative is submitted.	Section IV.B.2	
Project Narrative is submitted.	Section IV.B.3	

The applicant must include the Federal funding request within the range of **\$150,000 to \$1,500,000**, on line 18.a on the SF-424. The Federal funding request must reflect the total amount for the full period of performance. Amounts included on separate lines or forms will not be considered.

The applicant information provided in section 8 of the SF-424 must exactly match the applicant's legal name, address, EIN, and contact information listed on their SAM.gov registration. The applicant must include a point of contact for the project (other than the Authorized Representative) on line 8f on the SF-424.

The applicant must also include a "regional designation" on line 15 of the SF-424. This designation identifies the region, either the Appalachian, Delta, or Northern Border, with which the proposed project aligns. If the project area covers counties/parishes or communities located within more than one of these regional areas, the applicant must select just one region—the Appalachian, Delta, *or* the Northern Border region—as applications will be reviewed and funded based upon these regional designations.

2. Number of Applications Applicants May Submit

We will consider only one application from each organization. If we receive multiple applications from the same organization, we will consider only the most recently received application that met the deadline. If the most recent application is disqualified for any reason, we will not replace it with an earlier application.

3. Eligible Participants

Applicants must propose a project that enrolls individuals from one or more of the following three targeted categories: new entrants to the workforce, dislocated workers, and/or incumbent workers. The definitions for each category are as follows:

New Entrants to the Workforce: For the purposes of this FOA, the category of “new entrants to the workforce” refers to those who have never worked before or who have been out of the workforce for a long enough time to make it as if they are entering the workforce for the first time. For example, this may include, but is not limited to, the long-term unemployed, formerly incarcerated individuals, caregivers returning to the workforce, and new Americans such as refugees or immigrants. Also eligible, consistent with Federal and state wage and employment laws, are youth who are enrolled in high school and are currently eligible or will be eligible to be

employed during or within six months after the end of the grant period, or youth who have dropped out of school and are seeking their first full-time job.

Dislocated Workers: For the purposes of this FOA, this term refers to the definition found at Section 3(15) of WIOA. This definition can be found beginning on the bottom of page 7 of the WIOA public law at <https://www.congress.gov/113/plaws/publ128/PLAW-113publ128.pdf> (PL 113-128, 128 STAT. 1425 at 1428). The term generally means someone who was laid off, let go, or lost their job through no fault of their own. Applicants can also work with a local American Job Center or other public workforce development entity that frequently interprets and applies this definition.

Incumbent Workers: For the purposes of this FOA, this term refers to individuals who are employed but need employment and training services to secure full-time employment, advance in their careers, or retain their employment. This could include workers who are “under-employed” based on wages or other factors who would benefit from upgrading their skills to retain employment or advance in their careers, and workers who are currently working part-time.

Grant recipients or a designated partner must establish and document the eligibility of all participants, including incumbent worker participants, and must maintain the necessary records to support grant monitoring.

Within these eligible participant categories (new entrants, dislocated workers, and incumbent workers), applicants must prioritize historically marginalized populations and communities within the local or regional economic area served by the grant, including women, people of color, justice-involved individuals, individuals with disabilities, veterans, individuals with Limited English Proficiency, individuals with a history of substance dependency or other behavioral health conditions, or other populations who will benefit from improved job quality and career advancement opportunities. Applicants may wish to review the Biden-Harris Administration’s [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government](#) for additional information on ways to define or identify historically-marginalized populations or communities that a project proposes to prioritize.

Applicants must demonstrate that they will only enroll eligible participants who live or work in the Appalachian, Delta, or Northern Border regions. Applicants may train eligible participants for jobs that are located outside of the regions, including remote work, so long as the applicant clearly demonstrates that employment in these occupations will not require participants to relocate outside the region. Such jobs must clearly align with the overall intent of the grant application and the statement of need.

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 <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/training-and-employment-guidance-letter-no-10-09>.

The priority for veterans and eligible spouses is a requirement that applies when enrolling participants into an ETA-funded grant, and applies to all awarded grants. It is not a scoring criterion for this FOA.

4. Allowable Activities

All WORC grants will be expected to enroll, and submit performance reporting for, eligible participants; applicants may propose to utilize funding sources other than WORC to provide allowable services to grant participants, but in such cases, participants must meet the eligibility criteria, and activities must be allowable, under the terms of the FOA.

Applicants may propose projects that include any of the following types of activities:

a. Training and Other Employment-Related Activities

Workforce training strategies must be designed to enable the grant to achieve the purpose of the WORC Initiative. Allowable training approaches include, but are not limited to:

- Work-based training such as Registered Apprenticeships, customized training programs, incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, or internships as defined in WIOA, which can be found in [ETA's Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 19-16](#); or
- Traditional classroom or virtual training.

Other allowable employment-related activities include, but are not limited to:

- In-depth participant assessment and evaluation to identify employment barriers and develop individual employment plans;
- Career planning including using labor market information to help participants select training and careers that lead to family-sustaining wages and benefits, job coaching, and job matching services; and
- Employability skills training.

Training costs must be fully covered under the project (including via leveraged resources where applicable) and may not result in debt (including student loan debt) to the participant. In addition, stipends may be provided to encourage enrollment and retain participation in training or other program activities such as Registered Apprenticeships, paid internships, or other. Stipends must be supported by a policy in place that employs sound management practices and adheres to consistent and equitable treatment. The policy should describe the frequency and value in which the payments will be issued, how participants are deemed eligible for stipends, and the types of supporting documentation or other information will be required, as applicable.

Applicants are encouraged to work with a local American Job Center or other workforce system partner who can advise on implementing planned activities in accordance with the requirements of the law.

b. Supportive Services for Grant Participants

The WORC Initiative is designed to help residents of the WORC region to obtain or retain Good Jobs, and in addition to providing valuable training and employment-related activities, applicants are encouraged to propose robust, creative, and thoughtful supportive service strategies that address the needs of rural workers and assist in fulfilling the three Focus Areas of this funding opportunity.

Supportive services include activities or resources that enable individuals to participate in career and training services or other grant activities, or to gain or retain employment. Grant recipients are encouraged to offer necessary supportive services directly or through partner organizations.

Generally, supportive services are customized to meet the specific needs of an individual to help enable them to participate in or complete a workforce development program. Such supportive services may include, but are not limited to:

- Assistance with transportation, child or dependent care, or housing;
- Behavioral health counseling or other mental health services;
- Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, safety equipment, and other items;
- Assistance with laptops or tablets, books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in training, work-based learning, or other elements of the proposed grant project;
- Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications;
- Workforce strategies addressing substance use disorder such as, but not limited to, recovery coaches, job/career coaches, and health navigator services;
- Defraying some of the cost of an employer's reasonable accommodations and/or costs related to direct service professionals who provide assistance to persons with disabilities
- Financial counseling; and
- Emergency assistance to cover costs that interfere in successful participation in training or employment.

All supportive services provided must be aligned with a policy that employs sound management practices and ensures consistent and equitable treatment. The policy should describe how the grant recipient or sub-recipients will assess participant need for supportive services, the frequency or value of such services, and what supporting documentation or other information will be required, where applicable.

c. Employer Services

Applicants are encouraged to provide services to local employers, particularly small and medium-sized employers, to help them in a wide range of areas including improving the quality of jobs, adopting more competitive wage scales, establishing more predictable work schedules, examining how benefits may be offered, creating opportunities for advancement, advising employers on how to adhere to nondiscrimination laws, and adopting practices that enable

worker perspectives to be included in or influence the development of policies and decisions made in their workplace.

Applicants are also encouraged to provide services to employers that already offer good jobs, including those with family-sustaining wages, benefits, opportunities for advancement, and worker voice, to enhance their economic success, growth, or sustainability. This can most easily be accomplished by coordinating with local business services teams at American Job Centers or other local business and economic development partners. Efforts may focus on individual employers or have an industry-based approach for clusters or sectors, and may include activities such as: providing technical assistance materials to support job quality or ensure compliance with nondiscrimination laws; designing/disseminating tool kits and training for employers to develop standards/processes for substance-use disorder or misuse recovery-friendly workplaces or to implement job accommodations to meet the needs of current or future employees; establishing peer coaching, counseling, and worksite mentoring programs; creating, expanding, or enhancing Registered Apprenticeships, internships, and other work experiences, including subsidies of apprentice and intern wages.

d. Strategic Planning Activities

The success and sustainable impacts of WORC grants may be increased through alignment of community, state, and Federal workforce and economic development plans and strategies, and such activities are allowed under these grants, including but not limited to state or local workforce plans and community networks, such as the [Rural Partners Network](#).^[1]

Strategic planning activities may assess the economic landscape to identify new or growing employment opportunities in high-quality jobs, including those which offer family-sustaining wages, benefits, career advancement opportunities and worker voice. Strategic planning processes also involve convening partnerships and assets from across the economic and social spectrum of the community(ies) covered by a proposed project, and may include the workforce development system, industry, community colleges, labor unions and labor-management partnerships, nonprofit community organizations and other stakeholders. Ensuring community involvement in strategic planning is a critically important way to create more inclusive grant activities and more equitable project outcomes.

Examples of strategic planning activities that WORC applicants may propose include, but are not limited to:

- **Convening Community Partners and Leaders:** Organizing a comprehensive group of leaders and partners representing major economic, workforce, education and other community assets and organizations, and companies, research institutions, investors, philanthropists, and labor unions and other worker organizations, and workers, to ensure that all relevant stakeholders have a voice in the project's success. To ensure that workers have a voice in the future of the region, impacted workers and organizations representing impacted workers in the grant area should be encouraged and supported to actively participate.
- **Developing a Vision:** Efforts to achieve sustainable, equitable economic transformation are more successful when they feature a community-led approach that develops a shared vision for the future.

- Conducting Data Analysis: WORC funds may be used to obtain and analyze economic and workforce information, carry out asset mapping, conduct an objective analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and more; and
- Identifying Resources and Opportunities for Sustainability: Developing a plan that supports the identification of resources needed to ensure that the activities, impacts and benefits of a WORC grant may be sustained beyond the life of the grant funding.

Applicants may propose to expend no more than 50% of their grant award, or \$100,000, of a grant award, whichever is less, on planning activities that support a broader implementation plan for a WORC grant.

e. Purchasing Equipment and Making Renovations

Capital expenditures, such as the purchase of equipment or capital improvements, are allowable with prior approval from the Grant Officer, provided they *directly facilitate or address the employment and training needs of enrolled grant participants, including those described in the Focus Areas, as well as needs of dislocated or other workers in the communities served by the proposed project.* These expenditures must follow the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at 2 CFR Part 200, and the DOL supplemental requirements at 2 CFR Part 2900. For capital expenditures and equipment, see 2 CFR 200.439. Following a WORC grant award, a grantee must seek and receive written prior approval from the Grant Officer in a subsequent modification request for all equipment purchases and renovations. The modification must demonstrate how these purchases and renovations will assist in the successful employment and training of participants. Award of a grant under this FOA does not constitute prior written approval of equipment purchase or renovations mentioned in the initial application.

Minor alterations, renovations, or rearrangements of buildings, facilities, or equipment, if specific to the project, are also allowable, provided they facilitate or address the employment and training needs of individuals enrolled in the grant as well as dislocated workers or other workers. Minor alterations, renovations, or rearrangements may include the activities and associated costs of relocating, modifying, replacing, or adding items (e.g. switches and outlets) related to internal environments (e.g. temperature, humidity, ventilation, and acoustics), and installation of fixed equipment (including fume hoods and audio/visual equipment). This could also include structural improvements or upgrades, including the relocation, modification, retrofitting, or enhancement of interior load-bearing walls or interior floors to accommodate training courses or equipment. This could also include implementing and/or enhancing the information technology infrastructure used to provide education and training and related activities. Following a WORC grant award, a grantee must seek and receive written prior approval from the Grant Officer in a subsequent modification request before expending funds on such activities.

Allowable costs also include leasing space that is used for the grant participant education, training, and related activities, as well as the altering or renovating of such facilities (in accordance with the Federal Cost Principles at 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E and the DOL supplemental requirements at 2 CFR Part 2900, Subpart E). Allowable renovations include those related to Federal architectural accessibility obligations requiring facilities to be readily accessible to, and usable by, qualified individuals with disabilities.

Following grant award, grantees must submit a subsequent grant modification request to obtain written Grant Officer approval before acquiring equipment or proceeding with proposed capital expenditures, renovation, or alteration of facilities. The Grant Officer must determine that all proposed equipment, capital improvements, and/or alterations and renovation are:

1. Allocable, necessary, and reasonable consistent with the Cost Principles outlined in 2 CFR 200;
2. Tied to specific grant-related deliverables and outcomes outlined in the grantee's statement of work (SOW), including capacity-building and/or training outcomes;
3. Consistent with the FOA;
4. Aligned with equipment requirements as outlined in 2 CFR Part 200; and
5. Applicants proposing in their SOW to spend grant funds on capital improvements and/or alterations and renovations must demonstrate how these expenditures will support the expansion and/or improvement of their project's education and training programs addressing the needs of dislocated workers and other needs of workers in the Appalachian, Delta and Northern Border regions.

Prohibited activities with regard to capital expenditures include new construction or property acquisition.

Grantees must complete all activities related to capital expenditures and other alterations within the period of performance of the grant.

*All WORC grants will be expected to enroll, and submit performance reporting for, at least one participant; that is, even applicants applying for a small grant and that devote a percentage of their budget to equipment purchases and capital improvements must still enroll participants. Applicants may propose to utilize funding sources other than WORC to provide allowable services to grant participants, but in such cases, participants must meet the eligibility criteria, and activities must be allowable, under the terms of the FOA. Proposed WORC projects **must not exceed 50%**, or \$100,000, of a grant award, whichever is less, on allowable equipment purchases and renovations.*

[1] Locally-led Rural Partner Networks Community Networks help local leaders create partnerships and bring new opportunities and improvements to their communities. View the [full list of Community Liaison Staff](#) to learn more.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. HOW TO OBTAIN AN APPLICATION PACKAGE

This FOA, found at www.Grants.gov and <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/apply/find-opportunities> 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. SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance”;
2. Project Budget, composed of the SF-424A and Budget Narrative;
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 <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family>).

- 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 organization’s legal name on the SF-424 must match its name registered in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) at www.sam.gov. If unsure of the legal name of your organization, visit www.sam.gov to confirm.
- The organization’s Employer Identification Number (EIN) and Unique Entity Identification (UEI) Number should match its information in www.sam.gov. If unsure of the EIN or UEI of your organization, visit www.sam.gov to confirm.
- The organization's Payment Management System (PMS) EIN Account must be included on line 15 on the SF-424 to identify where funds should be distributed if selected for an award.
- The organization must clearly identify the fiscal agent on line 15 or in a supporting document attachment to line 15 and include the fiscal agent's UEI, EIN, PMS EIN for managing funds, Name, Address, type of organization, and contact information for vetting. The fiscal agent information must match its registered information in SAM.gov.
- 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 <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family>). 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 WIOA 188 rules issued by the Department at 29 CFR 38.25, which includes the following language:

As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under Title I WIOA, the grant applicant assures that it has the ability to comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: Section 188 of the WIOA and its implementing regulations at 29 CFR Part 38, which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including

pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship or status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States, or participation in any WIOA Title I—financially assisted program or activity; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color, and national origin; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities; The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs.

The grant applicant also assures, that as a recipient of WIOA Title I financial assistance [as defined at 29 CFR 38.4(zz)], it will comply with 29 CFR part 38 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.

a. Requirement for Unique Entity Identifier

All applicants for federal grant funding must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and must supply their UEI on the SF-424. The UEI is a 12-character (alpha-numeric) code that uniquely identifies all entities. Any entity registering to do business with the government is required to have one. UEIs are issued by SAM.gov and are a part of an entity's record in the Entity Information section of SAM.gov. If you do not have a UEI, you can get one for free at <https://sam.gov>.

Grant recipients authorized to make subawards must meet these requirements related to UEI:

- Grant recipients must notify potential subawardees that no entity may receive a subaward unless the entity has provided its UEI.
- Grant recipients may not make a subaward to an entity unless the entity has provided its UEI.

(See Appendix A to 2 CFR Part 25.)

b. 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 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 grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family). The grant total must be rounded to the nearest whole dollar. In preparing the Budget Information Form, you must provide a concise narrative explanation to support the budget request, explained in detail below.

a. Budget Narrative

The Budget Narrative must provide a description of costs associated with each line item on the SF-424A. The total of each cost category must add up to the entire grant amount. Provide clear and specific detail, including costs, for each item so that we are able to determine whether the costs are necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the project described in the project narrative. The Budget Narrative should also include a section describing any leveraged resources provided (as applicable) to support grant activities. Leveraged resources are all resources, both cash and in-kind, in excess of this award. Valuation of leveraged resources follows the same requirements as match. Applicants are encouraged to leverage resources to increase stakeholder investment in the project and broaden the impact of the project itself.

Each category should include the total estimated cost for the period of performance. Use the following guidance for preparing the Budget Narrative.

Personnel: List all staff positions by title (including individuals hired by an employment contract) including the roles and responsibilities. For each position give the annual salary, the percentage of time devoted to the project, and the amount of each position's salary funded by the grant.

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

Travel: For grantee staff only, specify the purpose, number of staff traveling, mileage, per diem, estimated number of in-state and out-of-state trips, and other estimated costs for each type of travel.

Equipment: Identify each item of equipment (including technology systems) you expect to purchase that 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 Part 200.1 for the definition of Equipment). List the item, quantity, and the 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 the cost of supplies (e.g., general office supplies, desk/chairs, laptops/printers, other specialty items) in the detailed budget per category. Except for general office supplies, list the item, quantity, and the unit cost per item. Supplies include all tangible personal property other than "equipment" (see 2 CFR Part 200.1 for the definition of Supplies).

Contractual: Under the Contractual line item, delineate contracts and subawards separately. Contracts are defined according to 2 CFR Part 200.1 as a legal instrument by which a non-federal entity purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a federal award. A subaward, defined by 2 CFR Part 200.1 means an award provided by a pass-through entity 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.

For each proposed contract and subaward, specify the purpose and activities to be provided, and the estimated cost.

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: Provide clear and specific detail, including costs, for each item so that we are able to determine whether the costs are necessary, reasonable, and allocable. List items, such as stipends or incentives, not covered elsewhere.

Indirect Costs: If you include an amount for indirect costs (through a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or De Minimis) on the SF-424A budget form, then include one of the following:

a) If you have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), provide an explanation of how the indirect costs are calculated. This explanation should include which portion of each line item, along with the associated costs, are included in your cost allocation base. Also, provide a current version of the NICRA.

or

b) If you intend to claim indirect costs using the 10 percent de minimis rate, please confirm that your organization meets the requirements as described in 2 CFR Part 200.414(f). Clearly state that your organization does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, and is not one described in 2 CFR Part 200, Appendix VII(D)(1)(b).

Applicants choosing to claim indirect costs using the de minimis rate must use Modified Total Direct Costs (defined by DOL below) as their cost allocation base. Provide an explanation of which portion of each line item, along with the associated costs, are included in your cost allocation base. Note that there are various items not included in the calculation of Modified Total Direct Costs. See the definitions below to assist you in your calculation.

Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) Definition: To avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, DOL defines MTDC as all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward or subcontract (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards and subcontracts under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and

fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward or subcontract in excess of \$25,000.

- You will also note that participant support costs are not included in modified total direct costs. Participant support costs are defined below.
- 2 CFR Part 200.1 Participant Support Cost means direct costs for items such as stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences or training projects.

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: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/centers-offices/office-of-the-senior-procurement-executive/cost-price-determination-division>.

Indirect-type costs (such as top management salaries, financial oversight, human resources, payroll, personnel, auditing costs, accounting and legal, etc. used for the general oversight and administration of the organization) **must not be classified as direct costs**; these types of costs are recovered as part of charging the de minimis or NICRA rate. Note that the SF-424, SF-424A, and Budget Narrative must include the entire federal grant amount requested (not just one year).

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

Applicants must 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.

3. 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 20 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.

This FOA is structured around three Focus Areas that will demonstrate the applicant's ability to achieve the purpose of the WORC Initiative. The three Focus Areas are described in detail in Section I.A. of this FOA, and a number of examples for activities that may address the three Focus Areas are included in **Appendices A and B**. Applicants will be expected to address each of these three Focus Areas throughout the project narrative, which will support the development or expansion of an equitable economy in the area covered by the proposed project.

Application review will consider not only how well proposed projects address each Focus Area, but also that there is consistency in how project activities are based on the needs, challenges and opportunities described.

a. Statement of Need (Up to 20 Points)

The Statement of Need is the foundation of the application and must clearly explain the reason(s) for the proposed project. In addressing the sections of the Statement of Need, applicants must demonstrate an understanding of and alignment with each of the Focus Areas of the WORC Initiative as described in Section I.A. of this FOA.

*Examples that support the requirements for each of the sections of the Statement of Need below are included in **Appendix B**.*

NOTE: Applicants are expected to provide sufficient details and citations to demonstrate the information provided throughout the Statement of Need and attribute it to a verifiable source; however, applicants are not required to submit additional documentation.

i. Project Service Area, Challenges and Opportunities (up to 8 points)

Applicants must clearly and thoroughly:

- Identify the project service area's communities, with a focus on the barriers faced by residents, businesses, and communities in addressing workforce challenges and achieving sustained economic success. You may use data from the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, available at <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/> to support your description of the community and its needs. (2 points)
- Describe the project service area's current challenges with regard to employment including low wages, educational attainment, workforce demographics, and other factors that the proposed project will address to help develop or sustain good jobs. (2 points)
- Identify one or more industry sectors or occupations that the proposed project will address and include information on why these were chosen as the focus of the project. (2 points)
- Describe how current or prospective jobs in the chosen sector(s) or occupations measure against the eight Good Job Principles, and how improved job quality can positively impact employment in the sector for both workers and employers. (2 points)

ii. Target Population (up to 6 points)

Applicants must clearly and thoroughly:

- Identify and define the population(s) of eligible participants intended to be served through the grant, including why this population was selected. Applicants may review Biden-Harris Administration's [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government](#) for guidance in developing this definition. (2 points)
- Identify and define historically marginalized individuals or communities, in alignment with the Focus Area 2 of the WORC Initiative, to be prioritized for participation in grant activities and outcomes, describe why these individuals or communities were chosen as a focus of the project, and demonstrate how serving this population will address inequalities or other barriers resulting from historic marginalization or exclusion. (2 points)
- Describe the planned approaches for recruiting and enrolling project participants from historically marginalized groups or communities. (2 points)

iii. Description of Workforce Needs (up to 6 points)

Applicants must clearly and thoroughly:

- Describe the current or expected workforce needs of employers and industries in the sector(s) of focus as described in IV.B.3.a.i above. (2 points)
- Describe the current state of job quality within the identified sector, using Labor Market Information or other identified qualitative and quantitative sources to provide a comprehensive picture of the quality of jobs in the identified sector(s) related to the Good Jobs Principles. (4 points)

b. Project Results that Achieve the Purpose of WORC (Up to 30 Points)

Applications must clearly and thoroughly state expected project results in alignment with the three Focus Areas of WORC. Applicants may include any additional results related to activities or strategies included in other parts of an application, as appropriate.

i. Expected Results Requirements

Applicants must propose expected results that are:

- Specific, measurable, achievable, and reasonable according to the project design;
- Consistent with the needs, challenges, or other information identified in the Statement of Need and the activities identified in the Project Description; and,
- Consistent and logical (for example, the total number of participants receiving services should not be lower than the total number obtaining new or enhanced employment).

For purposes of this FOA, the term “results” is inclusive of both outcomes and outputs.

Outcomes refer to both:

- The specific, measurable results of the project, such as the number of people obtaining new jobs or receiving certification; and
- The anticipated positive benefits that a successful project creates and sustains beyond the life of the grant.

Outputs include any tangible products or services that result from the project, such as new training programs or curricula.

ii. Focus Area Expected Results Requirements

For each of the WORC Focus Areas below, applicants will be expected to identify the relevant results that the project expects to achieve.

Examples that support the requirements for the Expected Results section are included in **Appendix B**.

Focus Area 1: Increasing Access to Good Jobs (up to 10 points)

Applicants must clearly and thoroughly:

- Identify the total number of eligible participants projected to be enrolled during the period of performance, and the total number of eligible participants projected to enter Good Jobs or obtain new or enhanced employment as a result of the project. (2 points)
- Demonstrate how successful implementation of the proposed project strategies will result in the creation, expansion or improvement of employment that is aligned with the “Pay” Good Jobs Principle. (4 points)
- Demonstrate that project strategies will result in the creation, expansion or improvement of employment that is aligned with one or more of the remaining seven Good Jobs Principles. (2 points)
- Describe any other results (outcomes and outputs, as described in the Expected Results Requirements section above) addressing Focus Area 1: Increasing Access to Good Jobs. (2 points)

Focus Area 2: Prioritizing Equity (up to 10 points)

Applicants must clearly and thoroughly:

- Address those results that demonstrate the success of the project in recruiting and enrolling individuals from marginalized communities. (4 points)
- Describe the success of efforts to design or redesign programs or services to include a primary focus on equitable enrollment, participation, and outcomes in the communities that the grant expects to serve. (4 points)
- Describe any other results (outcomes and outputs, as described in the Expected Results Requirements section above) that address Focus Area 2: Prioritizing Equity. (2 points)

Focus Area 3: Sustaining Impact (up to 10 points)

Applicants must clearly and thoroughly:

- Describe one or more of the positive impacts that the grant will achieve for the individuals, businesses, and community(ies) served. (6 points)
- Identify results that demonstrate how positive impacts will be sustainable over the five years following the end of the WORC grant period of performance. (2 points)
- Describe any other results (outcomes and outputs, as described in the Expected Results Requirements section above) addressing Focus Area 3: Sustaining Impact. (2 points)

c. Project Design (Up to 42 Points)

The project design is the heart of the project narrative. It must clearly describe the proposed project activities, how the proposed project addresses the need(s) identified in Section IV.3.a. above, how it facilitates the purpose of the WORC Initiative to create economic mobility, address historic inequities, and produce sustainable positive impacts that include good jobs for eligible participants who live or work in the ARC, DRA and NBRC regions, enabling them to remain and thrive in these communities. Additionally, the Project Design must define the partnership(s) that will ensure the success of planned efforts.

i. Project Description (up to 32 points)

The Project Description provides the framework for the proposed grant by clearly describing planned activities and aligning them with the needs identified in the Statement of Need, and with the expected project results. This section contains four separately scored elements, with a maximum point total for this section of 32 points.

Examples that support the requirements for the Project Description section below are included in **Appendix A and Appendix B.**

Project Overview (up to 18 points)

The largest subsection is the Project Overview. To receive full points, applicants must:

- Describe the proposed project strategies and activities, and how they will be implemented to achieve the Expected Results identified above. (10 points)
- Describe how planned activities address the proposed service area's workforce demand and meet workforce needs, and overcome challenges to serve the target population, such as residents for whom systemic barriers have created workforce and economic inequities in their regions and how the project design addresses them. (2 points)
- Ensure the described project activities are represented in the Project Timeline and include details on project milestones. (2 points)
- Ensure that the described activities and planned expenditures are noted in the budget narrative. (2 points)

- Applicants must explain strategies in place to keep activities on track and to achieve expected results, including contingency plans associated with impacts that may affect project design and implementation. (2 points)

Applicants must also address each of the three Focus Areas of the WORC Initiative in the Project Description, as follows:

Focus Area 1: Increasing Access to Good Jobs (up to 6 points)

A paramount focus of WORC Round 6 is funding projects that increase access to high-quality, family-sustaining jobs for workers in the WORC region, which in turn will improve workforce participation among rural workers and allow rural workers to continue to reside within the WORC region. Requirements for meeting this Focus Area are:

- Applicants must clearly and fully describe realistic project strategies and allowable activities that connect workers residing in the WORC area with training for or employment in occupations paying \$15 per hour or more (and promoting working conditions consistent with the “Pay” Good Job Principle). (4 points)
- Applicants must clearly and fully describe any strategies or activities that will address one or more of the remaining seven Good Jobs Principles to further expand WORC region workers’ access to stable, family-sustaining employment. The description must clearly explain strategies to promote, incentivize, or create jobs that provide working conditions consistent with at least one of the seven remaining Good Jobs Principles (see Appendix A). (2 points)

Focus Area 2: Prioritizing Equity (up to 4 points)

The WORC Initiative is further intended to ensure that individuals from historically marginalized populations or communities are able to access, remain in, and successfully complete the kinds of employment and training activities that will enable them to access Good Jobs. To demonstrate that a proposed project includes this focus, applicants must clearly and thoroughly:

- Describe realistic project strategies and activities that are designed to recruit and enroll historically underserved workers. (4 points)

This means that successful applicants will design programs that prioritize efforts to improve the lives of underrepresented workers adversely affected by persistent poverty, discrimination, or inequality, as defined by the applicant in the Statement of Need.

Focus Area 3: Sustaining Impact (up to 4 points)

Finally, WORC Initiative grants are expected to provide positive benefits to the workers, businesses and communities of the WORC region both during the grant period, but also after the end of the grant. Applicants must address the strategies or activities that will be undertaken to sustain the positive impacts of the grant by clearly and thoroughly:

- Describing specific, realistic strategies and activities that support positive, sustainable impacts in the area covered by the grant. (4 points)

ii. Project Partnerships (up to 10 points)

For this FOA, applicants must demonstrate robust partnerships to implement the grant and to sustain activities beyond the grant period of performance. While the applicant is part of this partnership and may fill one of the required partnership roles other than employer/industry representative, the applicant must make sure that the partnership includes representation from each of the required partners.

For applications that include communities that are in more than one of the WORC regions (ARC, DRA, and NBRC), the required partners may be located within one or more regions. It is also possible for an *employer/industry* partner to not be located in any of the regions; however, in such cases the application must make the case as to why these employers were included as partners. If the employer partner is expected to serve grant participants (such as through work-based training, a Registered Apprenticeship, or through unsubsidized employment), the applicant must demonstrate how placement with such employers would not require participants who live in one of the WORC regions to relocate outside the regions. For example, the employer may be seeking skilled employees to fill positions located within a reasonable commuting distance for the area, or to fill positions not requiring relocation (e.g., truck driving or remote work).

First, applicants must include and identify each of the following types of partners (4 points):

- At least **two** employers/industry representatives;
- At least **one** State or Local Workforce Development Board, American Job Center operator or partner program (except where such organization is the applicant); and
- At least **one** community-based organization (except where such organization is the applicant) serving an area or areas covered by the proposed project to ensure that local input is part of the planning and execution of the grant, such as the Rural Partners Network [Community Networks](#)-affiliated organizations.

Applicants must provide documentation that demonstrates active involvement of each required partnership entity listed above. Documentation may include signed letters of commitment, memoranda of understanding, a partnership agreement, email or other form of written commitment as part of the application. *See Section IV.B.4.b. Evidence of Required Partners, for information on requested attachments to the application.*

Second, applicants must provide the following information for each required partner (6 points):

- The name of the employer/industry or organization;
- The type (employer/industry, workforce development, community-based organization) of required partner the entity represents;
- The location/community of the partner;
- The role of the partner in the project; and
- The services and/or resources that the partner will provide for the project's operations in the short term, as well as for the long-term sustainability of the project's impacts.

Applicants may present this information in any manner that best meets their needs, including in a table.

Optional Partners

Further, applicants should consider including additional, optional partners to further support project success. Optional partners may include, but are not limited to:

- Labor unions or labor management partnerships;
- Local and regional employer/industry networks;
- Local economic development organizations;
- Local governments;
- Regional planning organizations;
- Institutions of higher education and other job training and adult education providers;
- Supportive and human services providers; and
- Other relevant community, economic and workforce development partners.

d. Organizational Capacity and Experience for Project Success (Up to 4 Points)

Applicants must demonstrate they have the expertise and experience to develop and carry out a successful project that meets the needs of their target population(s) and the communities where they live or work. To receive full points, applicants must:

- Describe how their organization (which includes key personnel, project staff, partners, and others as necessary) has the capacity and expertise to achieve successful outcomes for their WORC Initiative grant. Information provided should be consistent with information reflected in the requested attachments including, but not limited to, the Financial Risk Assessment Form, Key Staff Experience and Job Description. (2 points)
- Address their prior experience or successes in operating a Federal or other grant program, where applicable, and provide clear and relevant information to support their proposal. Where an applicant does not have specific prior experience, they may provide alternative evidence that they will be able to successfully implement or achieve their programmatic plans, for elements of the FOA. (2 points)

See Section IV.B.4.b below for information on requested attachments to the application that will provide appropriate documentation to support this demonstration of capacity.

Note: This section and the required information are not designed to give advantage to organizations with prior experience managing Federal grants over those without such experience. Where an organization does not have prior experience operating Federal grants, an applicant should provide clear evidence of their capacity to achieve the purpose of WORC and successfully carry out their proposed project.

e. Budget and Budget Narrative (Up to 2 Points)

The Budget and Budget Narrative will be used to evaluate this section. Please see Section IV.B.2 for information on the requirements. The Budget and Budget Narrative do not count against the page limit requirements for the Project Narrative.

- All items included in the budget and budget narrative, including personnel, equipment, and capital improvements, align with the project design as described.

4. Attachments to the Project Narrative

In addition to the Project Narrative, you must submit attachments. You must clearly label all attachments. We will exclude only those attachments listed below from the page limit. The Budget and Budget Narrative do not count against the page limit requirements for the Project Narrative.

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 fewer and use only 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 (e.g., no other attachment may have the same file name). You may use an underscore (example: My_Attached_File.pdf) to separate a file name.

a. Required Attachments

(1) Abstract

You must submit an up to three-page abstract summarizing the proposed project including, but not limited to, the scope of the project and proposed outcomes. Omission of the abstract will not result in your application being disqualified; the lack of the required information in the abstract, however, may impact scoring. See III.C.1 for a list of items that will result in the disqualification of your application. Should you be selected for an award, the information provided in your abstract may be published to a public facing website as a summary of your project. The abstract must include the following:

The Abstract must contain the following information to receive **two (2) points**:

- The applicant's name;
- The applicant's PMS EIN Account where funds should be distributed if selected for an award;
- The designated fiscal agent for managing funds and the fiscal agent's UEI, EIN, PMS EIN for managing funds, name, address, type of organization, and contact information for vetting purposes;
- The WORC region (Appalachian, Delta, or Northern Border) for which the applicant is applying;
 - Note: If the project area covers counties/parishes or communities located within more than one of these regional areas, the applicant must select just one region—

the Appalachian, Delta, *or* the Northern Border region—as applications will be reviewed and funded based upon these regional designations.

- The project title;
- A brief summary of the proposed project including but not limited to the scope of the project and proposed outcomes;
- A list of the industry sector(s) or occupation(s) that the proposed project will support.
- The total number of participants projected to be enrolled **and** the number of participants projected to Good Jobs or obtain new or enhanced employment as a result of the project;
- The funding level requested;
- A list of the counties, parishes, or communities included in the project area as well as a map of the area;
- Intended beneficiaries/eligible participants (e.g., dislocated workers, incumbent workers, new workforce entrants) to be trained; and
- A brief summary of subrecipients and the activities they are expected to carry out under the proposed project (if applicable).

b. Requested Attachments

We request the following attachments, but their omission will not cause us to disqualify the application. The omission of the attachment will, however, impact scoring unless otherwise noted.

(1) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

If requesting indirect costs based on a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by your federal Cognizant Agency, then applicants must 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.

This document must be uploaded as an attachment to the application package and labeled “NICRA.” This attachment does not impact the scoring of the application.

(2) Financial System Risk Assessment Information

All applicants are requested to submit Funding Opportunity Announcement Financial System Risk Assessment Information. See Section V.B.2 for a sample template and additional instructions. This attachment does not impact the scoring of the application.

(3) Evidence of Required Partners

Applicants must demonstrate partnerships by including documentation as an attachment for each of the following:

- two employer/industry representatives;
- one State or Local Workforce Development Board, American Job Center operator or partner program (except where such organization is the applicant); and
- one organization representing the community(ies) (except where such organization is the applicant).

Documentation may include signed letters of commitment, memoranda of understanding, a partnership agreement, or other form of written commitment as part of the application. These letters must provide sufficient information to demonstrate that the partners understand and agree with their role, which should align with the roles described in the application. These letters must be labeled “Evidence of Required Partners.” This attachment impacts the scoring of the application.

(4) Project Timeline

Applicants are requested to submit a proposed Project Timeline that includes a brief summary of planned grant activities and the associated project milestones and results of the grant. The timeline must cover the entire proposed grant period of performance, which may not exceed 36 months. The Project Timeline must align with activities referenced in both the Budget and Project Narratives. This attachment impacts the scoring of the application.

(5) Key Staff Experience and Job Descriptions

Applicants must attach existing staff work experience and job descriptions for all current or planned key personnel who may staff the project. Job descriptions must be included for positions that are planned or currently unstaffed. These positions must be included in the budget narrative. This attachment impacts the scoring of the application.

C. SUBMISSION DATE, TIME, PROCESS AND ADDRESS

Due Date for Applications:

June 20, 2024

You must submit your application electronically on <https://www.grants.gov> **no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date.**

Applicants are encouraged to submit their application before the closing date to minimize the risk of late receipt. We will not review applications received after 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date. We will not accept applications sent by hard-copy, e-mail, telegram, or facsimile (FAX).

1. Hardcopy Submission

No applications submitted in hardcopy by mail or hand delivery (including overnight delivery) will be accepted for this funding opportunity.

2. Electronic Submission through Grants.gov

Applicants submitting applications must ensure successful submission **no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date.** Grants.gov will subsequently validate the application.

The process can be complicated and time-consuming. We strongly advise you 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 by the agency. Rather, grants.gov verifies only the submission of certain parts of an application.

a. How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Read through the registration process carefully before registering. These steps may take as long as four weeks to complete, and this time should be factored into plans for timely electronic submission in order to avoid unexpected delays that could result in the rejection of an application.

Applicants must follow the online instructions for registration at <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>. We recommend that you 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.

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 Point of Contact (POC) approval, establishes an Agency Organizational Representative (AOR). When an application is submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the AOR who submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The E-Biz POC must authorize the individual who is able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of your organization as the AOR; this step is often missed and it is crucial for valid submissions.

b. How to Submit an Application to DOL via Grants.gov

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For a complete workspace overview, refer to <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/workspace-overview>. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/grant-applications/how-to-apply-for-grants>.

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. Grants.gov will send the applicant AOR an email acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) with the successful transmission of the application, serving as proof of timely submission. The applicant will receive two email messages to provide the status of the application's progress through the system.

- The first email 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 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 (24-48 hours) 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 <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-faqs>.

We encourage new prospective applicants to view the online tutorial, “Grant Applications 101: A Plain English Guide to ETA Competitive Grants,” available through WorkforceGPS at <https://grantsapplicationandmanagement.workforcegps.org/resources/2022/05/10/15/23/How-to-Apply-for-a-Grant>.

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 <https://www.grants.gov/connect/manage-subscriptions/>.

If you encounter a problem with Grants.gov and do not find an answer in any of the other resources, contact one of the following:

- call 1-800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035 to speak to a Customer Support Representative or
- email support@grants.gov.

The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week but closed on federal holidays. If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to call the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number.

Late Applications

We will consider only applications successfully submitted through Grants.gov no later than 11:59 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.**

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.

Indirect Costs

As specified in the Uniform Guidance Cost Principles, indirect costs are those that are 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 percent of Modified Total Direct Costs (see DOL's definition below) 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 does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, with the exceptions noted at 2 CFR Part 200.414(f) in the Cost Principles, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (see DOL's definition below), which may be used indefinitely. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as the non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. (See 2 CFR Part 200.414(f) for more information on use of the de minimis rate.)

Modified Total Direct Cost definition: To avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, DOL defines MTDC as all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward or subcontract (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards and subcontracts under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward or subcontract in excess of \$25,000.

Food Costs

Food costs for advisory or routine meetings, entertainment, and incentive purposes are prohibited. Food costs necessary for participants to participate in training activities may be allowable with Grant Officer approval.

Participant Incentives

Costs for participant incentives are limited to 1.5 percent of grant funds for the provision of gift cards or other types of incentive payments to participants to compensate them for their time in

providing information on grant outcomes (such as credential attainment or employment status, etc.) after they complete their training program that are otherwise not easily available through administrative records, for the purposes of accurately reporting performance outcomes to the Department. Grantees are prohibited from utilizing grant funds to provide participant incentive payments for any other purpose. These participant incentive payments must be tied to the goals of the grant. Grantees must have policies and procedures in place governing the provision of incentive payments to participants and the incentives provided under the grant must comply with these organizational policies.

Profit

Profit resulting from the implementation of this agreement is prohibited. As directed in 2 CFR 200.400(g), non-Federal entities may not earn or keep any profit resulting from Federal financial assistance unless explicitly authorized in the Federal award. This prohibition is applied to the subrecipient as well as any subrecipient under this award. The recipient is responsible for monitoring the subrecipient, ensuring that the Terms and Conditions are in all subaward packages and that the subrecipient complies with all applicable regulations and the Terms and Conditions of this award (2 CFR 200.101(b)).

Student Debt

Project activities resulting in student debt are prohibited. For training activities to be allowable in accordance with WIOA Public Law 113-128, July 22, 2014, 128 STAT. 1429, and 2 CFR 200.404, participants must be able to access education, training, and support services without incurring debt to gain said education, including student loans. The Department expects grantees to leverage existing college and workforce system infrastructure, WIOA funding, Federal Perkins and Pell Grants, and other available sources to cover such participant-related costs, where feasible, providing supportive services that will allow individuals to participate in and successfully complete the training.

Sub-Recipient Awards

The Department expects the lead applicant has the organizational capacity to implement the proposed program design. The Department discourages applications that result in a “pass-through” of grant funds to a third-party entity (i.e., where the lead applicant sub-awards the majority of grant funds and operational activities to a single subrecipient). Experience has shown that grant projects where the lead applicant is only nominally involved with operational aspects of the grant, delegating grant administration and operational control to a pass-through entity, increases the risk for compliance and performance-related issues that can negatively impact grant performance and sustainability of the program. Applicants that include subrecipients are strongly encouraged to ensure there is adequate staff and resources allocated to manage and oversee any subrecipients. Additionally, applicants that have allocated a majority of the total grant award to one or more subrecipients will be assessed during the post-award ETA compliance review process to ensure effective grants management.

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 Part 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 ETA programs. See Public Law 113-235, Division G, Title I, section 105, and TEGL number 05-06 for further clarification: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/training-and-employment-guidance-letter-no-05-06>.

Intellectual Property Rights

Pursuant to 2 CFR Part 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 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>.

Instructions for marking your work with CC BY can be found at https://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 grant 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 licensing 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 standard ETA disclaimer 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.”

Credential Transparency

The Department wishes to ensure that individuals, employers, educators and training providers have access to the most complete, current and beneficial information about providers, programs credentials, and competencies supported with these public, federal funds. To this end, the Department requires that information about all credentials (including but not limited to diplomas, badges, certificates, certifications, apprenticeships, licenses, and degrees of all levels and types) and competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) developed or delivered through the use of these public federal funds be made publicly accessible through the use of linked open data formats that support full transparency and interoperability, such as through the use of credential transparency description language specifications. ETA will provide specific guidance and technical assistance on data elements to include in the published open data, such as information about the credential provider, the credential and its associated competencies, delivery mode, geographic coverage, the industry sector(s) and occupation(s) for which the credential was developed, related assessments, related accreditations or other quality assurances where appropriate, costs, and available outcomes.

Participant Stipends

Grant funds may be used to pay reasonable and prudent stipends where established policies are in place for determining the amount and distribution of the stipend based upon defined criteria. Such policies should describe the frequency and value in which stipends will be issued, as well as participant eligibility, applicability, and accountability (supporting documentation, reconciliation, etc.).

Participant Wages

Grant funds may be used to pay reasonable and prudent wages for employment, or for work experiences that lead to employment or credentials and where the objective assessment and Individual Career Plan indicate work experiences are appropriate. For the purpose of this FOA, applicants must ensure they pay wages, or connect participants to work experiences or partner employers that pay wages of at least \$15 per hour, for any activities funded by or reimbursed by

grant funds. The applicant must be able to demonstrate how wages will be supported beyond the life of the grant if necessary to the continuation of the project. Grant recipients will be expected to have policies in place that employ sound management practices and adhere to consistent and equitable treatment; case managers and staff must be trained on such policies to ensure consistent treatment and application across all participants. Such policies should describe the frequency and value in which the payments will be issued, as well as participant eligibility, applicability, and accountability (supporting documentation, reconciliation, etc.).

Grantees must comply with WIOA Section 181 and WIOA regulations detailing the applicable wage and labor standards. When paying participant wages, grantees must maintain documentation of the process for determining the amount of the wage and the distribution. Grantees providing wages to participants should be aware of the implications under IRS provisions. Please consult www.irs.gov for more information.

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

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.

Section IV.B.3 (Project Narrative) of this FOA has several “section headers” (e.g. IV.B.3.a), Statement of Need). Each of these “section headers” of the Project Narrative may include one or more “criterion,” and each “criterion” includes one or more “rating factors,” which provide detailed specifications for the content and quality of the response to that criterion. Each of the rating factors have specific point values assigned. These point values are the number of points possible for the application to earn for the rating factor.

Criterion	Points (Maximum)
1. Statement of Need (See Section IV.B.3.a Statement of Need)	Section Total 20
2. Project Results that Achieve the Purpose of WORC (See Section IV.B.3.b Project Results that Achieve the Purpose of WORC)	Section Total 30
3. Project Design	Section Total

(See Section IV.B.3.c Project Design)	42
4. Organizational Capacity and Experience for Project Success (See Section IV.B.3.d Organizational Capacity and Experience for Project Success)	Section Total 4
5. Budget and Budget Narrative (See Section IV.B.3.e Budget and Budget Narrative)	Section Total 2
6. Abstract (See Section IV.B.4.a.1 Abstract)	Section Total 2
TOTAL	100

Section IV.B.3, Project Narrative, provides a detailed explanation of the information an application must include (e.g., a comprehensive work plan for the whole period of performance with feasible and realistic dates). Reviewers will rate each “rating factor” based on how fully and convincingly the applicant responds. For each “rating factor” under each “criterion,” panelists will determine whether the applicant thoroughly meets, partially meets, or fails to meet the “rating factor,” unless otherwise noted in Section IV.B.3, based on the definitions below:

Standard Rating	Definition	Standard for Calculating Points
Thoroughly Meets	The application thoroughly responds to the rating factor and fully and convincingly satisfies all of the stated specifications.	Full Points
Partially Meets	The application responds incompletely to the rating factor or the application convincingly satisfies some, but not all, of the stated specifications.	Half Points
Fails to Meet	The application does not respond to the rating factor or the application does respond to the rating factor but does not convincingly satisfy any of the stated specifications.	Zero Points

In order to receive the maximum points for each rating factor, applicants must provide a response to the requirement that fully describes the proposed program design and demonstrates the quality of approach, rather than simply re-stating a commitment to perform prescribed activities. In other words, applicants must describe why their proposal is the best strategy and how they will implement it, rather than that the strategy contains elements that conform to the requirements of this FOA.

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, availability of funds, and other relevant factors. The Grant Officer may consider any information that comes to their attention.

The government may elect to award the grant(s) with or without discussion with the applicant. Should a grant be awarded without discussion, the award will be based on the applicant's signature on the SF-424, including electronic signature via E-Authentication on <https://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 various sources, including its own records and any OMB-designated repository of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), and Sam.gov. Additionally, ETA will comply with the requirements of 2 CFR Part 180 codified at 2 CFR Part 2998 (Non-procurement Debarment and Suspension). 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 the following:

- i. Financial stability;
- ii. Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in the Uniform Grant Guidance;
- iii. 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;
- iv. 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;
- v. The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, and other requirements imposed on recipients.

NOTE: As part of ETA's Risk Review process, the Grant Officer will determine the following:

- If the applicant had any restriction on spending for any ETA grant due to adverse monitoring findings; or
- If the applicant received a High Risk determination in accordance with [TEGL 23-15](#).

Depending on the severity of the findings and whether the findings were resolved, the Grant Officer may, at their discretion, elect not to fund the applicant for a grant award regardless of the applicant's score in the competition.

All applicants are requested to submit the following information as an attachment to their application (suggested template below) for ETA to assess the applicant's Financial System. This information will be taken into account as one component of ETA's Risk Review Process. Applicants may use the suggested template or answer the questions in a separate attachment. It is unlikely that an organization will be able to manage a federal grant without the following system/processes in place. Applicants are expected to have these in place before applying for a grant with ETA.

<p>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR -EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION (ETA) FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT: FINANCIAL SYSTEM RISK ASSESSMENT</p>		
		<p>SECTION A: PURPOSE</p>
<p>The financial responsibility of grantees must be such that the grantee can properly discharge the public trust which accompanies the authority to expend public funds. Adequate administrative and financial systems including the accounting systems should meet the following criteria as contained in 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900.</p> <p>(1) Accounting records should provide information needed to adequately identify the receipt of funds under each grant awarded and the expenditure of funds for each grant.</p> <p>(2) Entries in accounting records should refer to subsidiary records and/or documentation which support the entry and which can be readily located.</p> <p>(3) The accounting system should provide accurate and current financial reporting information.</p> <p>(4) The accounting system should be integrated with an adequate system of internal controls to safeguard the funds and assets covered, check the accuracy and reliability of accounting data, promote operational efficiency, and encourage adherence to prescribed management policies.</p>		
		<p>SECTION B: GENERAL</p>
<p>1. Applicant Legal Name (as it appears in SAM.gov):</p>		
<p>a. When was the organization founded/incorporated (<i>month, day, year</i>):</p>	<p>b. Principal Officers Names, Title, Email Address President/Chair Board of Directors: Chief Executive Officer: Chief Financial Officer:</p>	
<p>c. Employer Identification Number:</p>		
<p>d. Number of Employees</p>		

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR -EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION
(ETA)
**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT: FINANCIAL SYSTEM RISK
ASSESSMENT**

8. Does the accounting/financial system include budgetary controls Yes No Not Sure
to preclude incurring obligations in excess of: Yes No Not Sure
a. Total funds available for a grant?
b. Total funds available for a budget cost category (e.g. Personnel,
Travel, etc)?

9. Does the organization or institution have an internal control Yes No Not Sure
structure that would provide reasonable assurance that the grant
funds, assets, and systems are safeguarded?

**SECTION D: FINANCIAL
STABILITY**

1. Is there any legal matter or an ongoing financial concern that may impact the organization's
ability to manage and administer the grant? Yes No
If yes, please explain briefly.

SECTION E: FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Did an independent certified public accountant (CPA) ever examine the financial
statements? Yes No

2. If an independent CPA review was performed please attach a copy of their latest report and
any management letters issued. Enclosed N / A

3. If an independent CPA was engaged to perform a review and no report was issued, please
provide details and an explanation below:

**SECTION F: PAYMENT MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM ACCOUNT**

1. ETA uses the Department of Health and Human Services Payment Management System
(PMS). If your organization has an ETA PMS account, provide the PMS EIN and the PMS
account (e.g., 89X7X) where grant funding should be placed if selected for award.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR -EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION
(ETA)
**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT: FINANCIAL SYSTEM RISK
ASSESSMENT**

**SECTION G:
ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION**

1. Use this space for any additional information (*indicate section and item numbers if a continuation*)

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

All award notifications will be posted on the ETA Homepage at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/>. Applicants selected for award will be contacted directly regarding 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 not to 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 and 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.

- i. 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 Part 2900 (DOL's Supplement to 2 CFR Part 200).
- ii. 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.) and the applicable provisions of the regulations at 20

- CFR Part 675 et. seq. Note that 20 CFR Part 683 (Administrative Provisions) allows unsuccessful applicants to file administrative appeals.
- iii. 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)), 2 CFR Part 180 (OMB Guidance to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement)), and, where applicable, 2 CFR Part 200 (Audit Requirements).
 - iv. 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.
 - v. 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.
 - vi. 29 CFR Part 32—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.
 - vii. 29 CFR Part 35—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance from the Department of Labor.
 - viii. 29 CFR Part 36—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.
 - ix. 29 CFR Part 38 – Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
 - x. 29 CFR Parts 29 and 30—Labor Standards for the Registration of Apprenticeship Programs, and Equal Employment Opportunity in Apprenticeship and Training, as applicable.
 - xi. The Department of Labor will follow the procedures outlined in the Department’s Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) regulations (29 CFR Part 70). 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 generally 5 U.S.C. § 552; 29 CFR Part 70.
 - xii. Standard Grant Terms and Conditions of Award—see the following link:
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/resources>.

2. Other Legal Requirements

a. Religious Activities

The Department notes that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), 42 U.S.C. § 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. As stated in 29 CFR 2.32(a), religious organizations are eligible on the same basis as any other organization, to seek DOL support or participate in DOL programs for which they are otherwise eligible. Guidance from DOL is found at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/grants/religious-freedom-restoration-act/guidance>.

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 Part 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 the Government Funding Transparency Act of 2008, Pub. Law 110-252, Title VI, Chap. 2, Sec. 6202), as follows.

- Except for those excepted from the Transparency Act under sub-paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 below, you must ensure that you have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the subaward and executive total compensation reporting requirements of the Transparency Act, should you 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 <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2021-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2021-title2-vol1-part170-appA.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 (e.g., 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 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 the handling of confidential information: You must ensure that PII and sensitive data developed, obtained, or otherwise associated with DOL/ETA funded grants is securely transmitted.

- i. 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.

- ii. 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.
- iii. 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.
- iv. 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.
- v. 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.
- vi. 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.
- vii. You must not extract information from data supplied by ETA for any purpose not stated in the grant agreement.
- viii. 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.
- ix. 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 be accessed only from secure locations.
- x. 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.
- xi. 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.

- xii. 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 that you 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 Part 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 or local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education (IHE), non-profit 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 Part 200.308(c)(6) regarding prior approval requirements for subawards. When awarding subawards, you are required to comply with provisions on

government-wide suspension and debarment found at 2 CFR Part 180 and codified at 2 Part CFR Part 2998.

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 <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/grants/pdfs/GCFAQ.pdf>.

3. Other Administrative Standards and Provisions

Except as specifically provided in this FOA, our acceptance of an application and an award of federal funds to sponsor any programs(s) does not provide a waiver of any grant requirements and/or procedures. For example, the OMB Uniform Guidance requires that an entity's procurement procedures ensure that all procurement transactions are conducted, as much as practical, to provide full and open competition. If an application identifies a specific entity to provide goods or services, the award does not provide the justification or basis to sole-source the procurement (i.e., avoid competition).

4. Special Program Requirements

a. ETA Evaluation

As a condition of grant award, grantees are required to participate in an evaluation, if undertaken by DOL. The evaluation may include an implementation assessment across grantees, an impact and/or outcomes analysis of all or selected sites within or across grantees, and a benefit/cost analysis or assessment of return on investment. Conducting an impact analysis could involve random assignment (which involves random assignment of eligible participants into a treatment group that would receive program services or enhanced program services, or into control group(s) that would receive no program services or program services that are not enhanced). We may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation. As a part of the evaluation, as a condition of award, grantees must agree to: (1) make records available to the evaluation contractor on participants, employers, and funding; (2) provide access to program operating personnel, participants, and operational and financial records, and any other relevant documents to calculate program costs and benefits; and (3) in the case of an impact analysis, facilitate the assignment by lottery of participants to program services, including the possible increased recruitment of potential participants; and (4) follow evaluation procedures as specified by the evaluation contractor under the direction of DOL.

b. Performance Goals

Please note that applicants will be held to 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. 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 by the 15th day of the second month after 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. For other guidance on ETA's financial reporting, reference TEGL 20-19 and our webpage at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/management/reporting>.

2. Quarterly Performance Reports

The grantee must submit a quarterly performance report by the 15th day of the second month after each calendar-year quarter. The report must include quarterly information on interim indicators and performance goals. 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 performance. Submission requirements will be provided to grantees upon award. We will also provide you with guidance about the data and other information that is required to be collected and reported on either a regular basis or special request basis.

To evaluate the effectiveness of programs the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) requires grant recipients to submit performance data including participant information, the type of services provided, and employment status. WORC grant recipients submit performance reports on a quarterly basis by uploading a participant data file to the [Workforce Integrated Performance System \(WIPS\)](#), and are required to report on data elements specified for Demonstration Grants in the [Participant Individual Record Layout \(PIRL\)](#). The PIRL is available for download on [ETA's reporting webpage](#). [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 14-18](#) provides further detail regarding performance measures and reporting. Grant recipients must maintain source documentation for each grant participant in accordance with federal record retention policies.

ETA grant reporting requires substantial data collection and submission, which can be unfamiliar to new grant recipients. A suite of tools and resources, including the Demonstration Grant Participant Data File tool, are available to support demonstration grant recipient performance reporting is available on [WorkforceGPS](#) (registration required).

Potential applicants should review the Demonstration Grant Participant Data File tool, which includes all of the required data elements to be collected for each participant, as well as other grant reporting resources. The Demonstration Grant Participant Data File tool is Excel based and may be used as a data collection tool during the grant period. This option may be labor-intensive depending on the size and scope of the proposed project. Therefore, ETA recommends that applicants consider the performance reporting approach that best fits their project needs and incorporate necessary costs for collecting and submitting performance data into their proposed application and budget. Please note that only the portion of costs allocable to the project for collecting and submitting performance data may be covered by grant funds. Such costs may include staff time, data collection systems, or vendor contracts to provide such services. Addressing these potential costs in advance ensures applicants have the capacity to meet reporting requirements in accordance with the WORC FOA and their approved grant agreement should they be selected for an award.

The WORC partners ARC, DRA, and NBRC, as well as ETA, conduct pre-application technical assistance sessions for applicants and post-award technical assistance for grantees. Among other topics, this technical assistance provides more detailed information on performance reporting and how applicants should prepare for the requirement to capture and submit the required performance data. To assist with post-award technical assistance, all WORC partners receive copies of approved grant agreements.

3. Quarterly Narrative Performance Reports

In addition to the Quarterly Performance Report, the grantee must submit the Joint Quarterly Narrative Performance Report Template (ETA 9179) progress report by the 15th day of the second month after each calendar year quarter during which the grant is within the period of performance for the award. The report includes quarterly information regarding accomplishments, including project success stories, upcoming grant activities, and promising approaches and processes, as well as progress toward performance outcomes, including updates on product, curricula, and training development.

The Quarterly Narrative Report is a written report of grant program activities, highlights from the most recent reporting quarter, and technical assistance needs. WORC grantees are required to submit Quarterly Narrative Reports through ETA's Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS), using the [ETA-9179 Joint Quarterly Narrative Report Template](#) (OMB Control No. 1205-0448).

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

For further information about this FOA, please contact Sabrina Guerrier, Grants Management Specialist, Office of Grants Management, at DOL-ETA-DWG@dol.gov. Applicants should e-mail all technical questions to DOL-ETA-DWG@dol.gov and must specifically reference FOA-ETA-24-08, and along with question(s), include a contact name, and phone number. This Announcement is available on the ETA website at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants> and at <https://www.grants.gov>.

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. WEB-BASED RESOURCES

DOL maintains a number of web-based resources that may be of assistance to applicants. These include the CareerOneStop portal (<https://www.careeronestop.org>), which provides national and state career information on occupations; the Service Locator function within the CareerOneStop webpage which provides a directory of the nation's American Job Centers, also known as one-stop centers, (<https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/service-locator.aspx>); and the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) Online (<https://online.onetcenter.org>), which provides occupational competency profiles.

B. 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 <https://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.

C. WORKFORCEGPS RESOURCES

- WorkforceGPS at <https://www.workforcegps.org> offers information on workforce resources gathered through consultations with federal agency partners, industry stakeholders, educators, and local practitioners. The website contains online tutorials to assist applicants such as “Grant Applications 101: A Plain English Guide to ETA Competitive Grants,” and “Grants Application 101: Budgetary Forms - SF-424, 424A, 424B, and Budget Narrative” that can be found at <https://grantsapplicationandmanagement.workforcegps.org/resources/2022/05/10/15/23/How-to-Apply-for-a-Grant>.
- Workforce System Strategies at <https://strategies.workforcegps.org> is designed 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.
- A technical assistance portal at <https://grantsapplicationandmanagement.workforcegps.org> 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.

D. SKILLSCOMMONS RESOURCES

SkillsCommons (<https://www.skillscommons.org>) offers an online library of curriculum and related training resources to obtain industry-recognized credentials in manufacturing, IT, healthcare, energy, and other industries. The website contains thousands of Open Educational Resources (OER) for job-driven workforce development, which were produced by grantees funded through DOL’s Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) program. Community colleges and other training providers across the nation can reuse, revise, redistribute, and reorganize the OER on SkillsCommons for institutional, industry, and individual use.

IX. OMB INFORMATION COLLECTION

OMB Information Collection No 1225-0086, Expires July 31, 2025.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 50 hours per response,

including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

Send comments about the burden estimated or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, to the attention of the Departmental Clearance Officer, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room N1301, Washington, D.C. 20210. Comments may also be emailed to: DOL_PRA_PUBLIC@dol.gov.

PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR GRANT APPLICATION TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND ONLY 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 04/04/2024 in Washington, D.C. by:
Jenifer McEnery
Grant Officer, Employment and Training Administration

APPENDIX A

Examples of Good Jobs Principles for Program Design and Expected Results

In 2022, the Departments of Labor and Commerce published the [Good Jobs Principles](#) to foster a shared federal vision of job quality. This appendix explains each Good Jobs Principle and provides examples of approaches that support them. The Department encourages applicants to consider these examples in developing proposals according to the instructions provided in the FOA above.

Recruitment and Hiring: Qualified job applicants are actively recruited – especially those from underserved communities. Applicants are free from discrimination, including unequal treatment or application of selection criteria that are unrelated to job performance. This includes minimizing the use of screening and evaluation criteria that could disadvantage the candidacy of persons with disabilities and other barriers that disproportionately affect historically marginalized populations, such as requiring a driver’s license absent a showing that the requirements are job-related and consistent with business necessity. Applicants are evaluated with relevant skills-based requirements. Unnecessary educational, credentials, or experience requirements also are minimized. **Examples of approaches that support this Good Jobs Principle may include, but are not limited to:**

- Applicant partners with employers who implement hiring strategies meant to intentionally counter conscious and unconscious biases and screening practices that do not eliminate individuals based on solely on potentially exclusionary factors such as an advanced degree.

- Applicant partners with employers who recruit from communities underrepresented in the workforce that take into account cultural competencies that are relevant to these populations' history attaining and retaining jobs.

Benefits: Provide family-sustaining benefits that promote economic security and mobility. These include health insurance, a retirement plan, workers' compensation benefits, work-family benefits such as paid leave and caregiving supports, and others that may arise from engagement with workers. Workers are empowered and encouraged to use these benefits. **Examples of approaches that support this Good Jobs Principle may include, but are not limited to:**

- Applicant partners with employers who provide benefits to full-time and part-time workers.
- Applicant partners with advocacy organizations and worker organizations that promote economic security and mobility for workers in identified sector(s).

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility: All workers have equal opportunity. Workers are respected, empowered, and treated fairly. DEIA is a core value and practiced norm in the workplace. Individuals from underserved communities do not face systemic barriers in the workplace. Underserved communities are those that include persons adversely affected by persistent poverty, discrimination, or inequality, including Black, Indigenous, people of color; LGBTQ+ individuals; women; immigrants; veterans; individuals with disabilities; individuals in rural communities; individuals without a college degree; individuals with or recovering from substance use disorder; and justice-impacted individuals. **Examples of approaches that support this Good Jobs Principle may include, but are not limited to:**

- Applicant partners with employers with anti-harassment policies and trainings.
- Applicant develops materials indicating how partner employers have addressed barriers to the employment and career progression of individuals from underrepresented communities.
- Applicant creates or identifies an active community for participants to connect and share their experiences and perspectives on DEIA in the workplace and identify resources.
- Applicant partners with community organizations that provide diversity trainings for employers on topics such as unconscious bias, cultural competency, and inclusive leadership to create a more inclusive working environment.
- Applicant partners with employers who provide a working environment accessible to employees with disabilities, such as providing facilities, technology, and communication methods designed to meet their needs.

Empowerment and Representation: Workers can form and join unions. Workers can engage in protected, concerted activity without fear of retaliation. Workers contribute to decisions about their work, how it is performed, and organizational direction. **Examples of approaches that support this Good Jobs Principle may include, but are not limited to:**

- Applicant partners with employers that have a collective bargaining agreement.
- Applicant partners with employers with commitments to labor peace.
- Applicant partners with employers that encourage, respond to and incorporate employee feedback.

- Applicant partners with employers with established project labor agreements, community workforce agreements, or other agreements covering work in the targeted occupation(s) in the planned service area.
- Applicant partners with employers that ensure employees from diverse backgrounds are represented in leadership roles within the company and provide pathways for career advancement for all employees.

Job Security and Working Conditions: Workers have a safe, healthy, and accessible workplace, built on input from workers and their representatives. Workers have job security without arbitrary or discriminatory discipline or dismissal. They have adequate hours and predictable schedules. The use of electronic monitoring, data, and algorithms is transparent, equitable, and carefully deployed with input from workers. Workers are free from harassment, discrimination, and retaliation at work. Workers are properly classified under applicable laws. Temporary or contractor labor solutions are minimized. **Examples of approaches that support this Good Jobs Principle may include, but are not limited to:**

- Applicant partners with employers that have developed employee handbooks and other human resource practices.
- Applicant partners with employers that have created established policies on electronic surveillance.
- Applicant increases participants' awareness of employment protections and procedures to submit complaints regarding employment violations.
- Applicant partners with employers that invest in employees' professional development through training programs, mentorship opportunities, and education assistance, which can lead to increased job security and career advancement.

Organizational Culture: All workers belong, are valued, contribute meaningfully to the organization, and are engaged and respected especially by leadership. **Examples of approaches that support this Good Jobs Principle may include, but are not limited to:**

- Applicant partners with employers that review and put into practice best practices on widely adopted methods that foster healthy workplace cultures in the target occupation(s).
- Applicant partners with employers with commitments and policies promoting healthy workplace cultures.
- Applicant partners with employers that foster a culture of employee engagement by involving employees in decision-making processes and recognizing and rewarding their contributions.

Pay: All workers are paid a stable and predictable living wage before overtime, tips, and commissions. Workers' pay is fair, transparent, and equitable. Workers' wages increase with increased skills and experience. **Examples of approaches that support this Good Jobs Principle may include, but are not limited to:**

- Applicant partners with employers that have fair and equal pay schedules.
- Applicant partners with employers that have average salaries for new hires in the target occupation(s).

- Applicant partners with employers that ensure that there is pay equity within the organization, meaning that employees are paid fairly regardless of their gender, race, or other characteristics protected by law.

Skills and Career Advancement: Workers have equitable opportunities and tools to progress to future good jobs within their organizations or outside them. Workers have transparent promotion or advancement opportunities. Workers have access to quality employer- or labor-management-provided training and education. **Examples of approaches that support this Good Jobs**

Principle may include, but are not limited to:

- Applicant partners with employers that have established career ladders or schedules and criteria for regular opportunities for promotion for their employees.
- Applicant partners with employers that have skills and training opportunities for their employees.
- Applicant partners with employers that provide employees with access to career coaches or mentors who can offer guidance and support as they navigate their career paths within the company/organization.
- Applicant partners with employers that prioritize internal candidates for job openings and promotions, which provides employees with opportunities to advance their careers without having to leave a company/organization.

APPENDIX B

Examples to Support WORC 6 Project Design

This Appendix is designed to support potential WORC Round 6 applicants in designing projects that meet the requirements of the WORC program.

The first section of the Appendix covers the Statement of Need (see section IV.B.3.a. of the FOA); the Appendix contains the required elements for each section of the Statement of Need, as well as some examples of information to meet the requirement, resources that might be useful in developing an application, and other examples as appropriate.

The second section of the Appendix covers the three Focus Areas of the WORC Initiative, providing examples of possible activities as well as some examples of Expected Results that may help in developing the other portions of the Project Narrative as described in Section IV.B.3.b and IV.B.3.c of the FOA.

Please note that these examples do not establish any requirements on applicants, but are meant to be illustrative of ways that projects could be proposed to meet the requirements of the FOA.

I. Statement of Need

Project Service Area, Challenges, and Opportunities

FOA requirements:

- Identify the project service area's communities, with a focus on the barriers faced by residents, businesses, and communities in addressing workforce challenges and achieving sustained economic success. You may use data from the Climate and Economic Justice

Screening Tool, available at <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/> to support your description of the community and its needs.

- Describe the project service area's current challenges with regard to employment including low wages, educational attainment, workforce demographics, and other factors that the proposed project will address to help develop or sustain good jobs.
- Identify one or more industry sectors or occupations that the proposed project will address and include information on why these were chosen as the focus of the project.
- Describe how current or prospective jobs in the chosen sector(s) or occupations measure against the eight Good Job Principles, and how improved job quality can positively impact employment in the sector for both workers and employers.

Examples of information that may be useful to provide for this section might include:

- The impact of any declining legacy industries in the area of the grant.
- Geographic isolation.
- High rates of unemployment, substance use, or pollution.
- Outdated or insufficient infrastructure including lack of public transportation, poor internet accessibility, or absence of higher education or training facilities.
- Or other factors the applicant deems relevant to demonstrating such challenges.

Target Population

FOA requirements:

- Identify and define the population(s) of eligible participants intended to be served through the grant, including why this population was selected. Applicants may review Biden-Harris Administration's [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government](#) for guidance in developing this definition.
- Identify and define historically marginalized individuals or communities, in alignment with the Focus Area 2 of the WORC Initiative, to be prioritized for participation in grant activities and outcomes, describe why these individuals or communities were chosen as a focus of the project, and demonstrate how serving this population will address inequalities or other barriers resulting from historic marginalization or exclusion.
- Describe the planned approaches for recruiting and enrolling project participants from historically marginalized groups or communities.

Examples of information that might be useful to provide for this section include:

- Utilizing demographic data or resources such as those developed by the US Census Bureau (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/data/interactive-maps.html>) or through the websites of the three regional commissions (www.arc.gov, www.dra.gov, and www.nbrc.gov).
- Defining the priority population based on the data and by partnering with community organizations or members of the priority population to ensure use of culturally appropriate language and activities.
- Involving members of the priority population in developing outreach strategies.

- Hiring members from the priority population for roles on the grant including outreach and enrollment.
- Partnering with local organizations serving the priority population(s) to support outreach and recruitment efforts.

Description of Workforce Needs

FOA requirements:

- Describe the current or expected workforce needs of employers and industries in the sector(s) of focus.
- Describe the current state of job quality within the identified sector, using Labor Market Information or other identified qualitative and quantitative sources to provide a comprehensive picture of the quality of jobs in the identified sector(s) related to the Good Jobs Principles.

Sources for obtaining such information include:

- Partnering with an American Job Center (<https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/AmericanJobCenters/american-job-centers.aspx>), Local Workforce Development Board (<https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/WorkforceDevelopment/find-workforce-development-boards.aspx>), or Rural Partners Network (<https://www.rural.gov/>) to access employment data or other relevant information.
- Labor market information and other economic data from the US Department of Labor: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/labor-market-data>.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The BLS provides employment data by major industry sectors. <https://www.bls.gov/emp/>.

II. Project Description: WORC Focus Areas

Focus Area 1: Increasing Access to Good Jobs

Examples of activities that could meet the requirements for Focus Area 1, as well as examples of Expected Results that a grant might achieve, are described in the table below. The table also highlights the Good Jobs Principle(s) that might be addressed through the example activity.

Example Activity	Example Expected Result	Good Jobs Principle(s) Addressed
Providing transportation assistance to help participants access job opportunities that may be located in areas with limited transportation.	10 participants were able to get to work-based training opportunities due to transportation assistance.	Benefits DEIA
Offering childcare support to help participants overcome barriers due to childcare responsibilities.	15 participants were able to remain in grant-funded services due to childcare assistance.	Benefits DEIA

Develop a new Registered Apprenticeship program	100 workers/trainees awarded an industry-recognized credential or obtained increased wages after training	Pay Skills and Career Advancement
Conduct employer-focused trainings on substance use conducted	15 employers hired individuals with or recovering from substance misuse.	DEIA
Conduct outreach to companies to support career pathways to promote opportunities for increasing job quality.	5 employer partners implement career pathways programs that include wage increases.	Pay Skills and Career Advancement
Establish partnerships with employers offering benefits to both full-time and part-time workers.	4 employer partners will offer benefits to program participants whom they hire.	Benefits

Additional examples of activities that might meet the requirements for Focus Area 1:

- Using grant funds to provide participants with comprehensive and appropriate supportive services (see Section III.C.4.b of this Announcement for detailed information on supportive services as defined by WIOA) that address the barriers that often prohibit rural workers from obtaining or retaining jobs that applicant has verified pay at least \$15 per hour. For example, an applicant could propose to use grant funds to arrange childcare or dependent care slots at a provider for participants receiving work-based training (as defined in Section III.C.4.a of this Announcement) or organize regular transportation for apprentices to reach construction worksites.
- Incentivizing employer partners to commit to paying participants at least \$15 per hour in wages during subsidized work-based learning opportunities.
- Developing Registered Apprenticeships or labor-management partnerships that place participants in positions that pay at least \$15 per hour.
- Connecting workers in the projected service area to employment opportunities consistent with the additional Good Jobs Principle(s), implementing strategies for developing or improving access to Good Jobs in the WORC region, or improving working conditions in certain occupations in the applicant’s intended geographic service area.

Focus Area 2: Prioritizing Equity

Examples of activities that could meet the requirements for Focus Area 2, as well as examples of Expected Results that a grant might achieve, are described in the table below.

Example Activity	Example Expected Result
Establishing a commitment to identify and actively recruit participants from marginalized communities.	10% increase in participants from identified

	marginalized communities each year of the grant.
Ensuring that sufficient grant funds, or resources available through partners, are allocated to providing appropriate and necessary supportive services to enable individuals to participate in and successfully complete grant-funded activities.	50% of grant participants receive some sort of supportive service while enrolled.
Providing assistance to partner employers in removing unnecessary degree requirements and deploying skills-based hiring strategies—which could help with recruiting historically underserved populations and meet the Recruitment and Hiring Good Jobs Principle.	5 employers eliminate degree requirements where not specifically necessary to the job.
Counseling or assisting partner employers paying \$15 per hour to establish hiring practices and workplace structures that improve the chances the employer will hire and retain individuals recovering from substance use disorder. In addition to meeting the pay requirement of Focus Area 1, this could also meet the Recruitment and Hiring Good Jobs Principle and remove systemic barriers aligned with the DEIA Good Jobs Principle.	15 new recovery-friendly workplace agreements are developed as a result of the partnerships and grant activities.
Working with a partner employer paying at least \$15 per hour with starting onsite childcare services. This would both increase rural workers’ access to higher-wage work and improve working conditions in alignment with the “Benefits” Good Jobs Principle.	3 employer partners begin offering on-site childcare services with hours aligned to the work hours of the employees.

Additional examples of activities that might meet the requirements for Focus Area 2 include:

- Creating and executing outreach initiatives that are culturally and linguistically tailored to attract and enroll individuals from priority populations, aligning with the guidelines in the Statement of Need.
- Using grant funds to provide participants with comprehensive and appropriate supportive services (see Section III.C.4.b of this Announcement for detailed information on supportive services as defined by WIOA) that address the barriers that often prohibit rural workers from obtaining or retaining jobs that pay at least \$15 per hour.

- Ensuring that activities focused on strategic planning that will be undertaken are intentionally designed so that all grant activities prioritize equitable outreach, enrollment, and program design customized to the specific needs of the historically marginalized populations that will be prioritized for enrollment.
- Assisting an employer paying at least \$15 per hour with developing stable or flexible work schedules better aligned with the needs of commuting rural workers. This would both expand access to higher-wage work and improve working conditions in alignment with the “Job Security and Working Conditions” Good Jobs Principle.

Focus Area 3: Sustaining Impact

Examples of activities that could meet the requirements for Focus Area 3, as well as examples of Expected Results that a grant might achieve, are described in the table below.

Example Activity	Example Expected Result
Identifying new or ongoing sources of funding for projects developed under the WORC grant.	1 charitable foundation partner commits to funding for some or all of the project activities after the end of the WORC grant.
Establishing new degree programs.	3 educational institutions create degree programs to ensure sustainability of the project.
Creating or expanding Registered Apprenticeships funded by industries or employers, community partners, labor unions, labor management partnerships, workforce development resources, or others	5 new Registered Apprenticeship programs that align with the Good Jobs Principles are created due to the partnership efforts and successful activities undertaken by the WORC grant.
Expanding partnerships to increase resources, expand a project’s footprint across additional counties or states, and identify new or emerging industries or occupations that may provide opportunities for Good Jobs	1 new industry sector agrees to participate in activities following the success of the original grant.

Additional examples of activities and results that might meet the requirements for Focus Area 3 include:

- Increased revenue generated by counties/towns as a result of job creation and/or employment.
- Increased industry/employer and labor organization participation and investment in workforce development planning, or integration of an existing labor-management training program into grant-funded activities or the public workforce system.
- Workforce development activities are more closely aligned with and support new or existing economic development or diversification strategies.

- Increased employment opportunities in sectors addressing clean or renewable energy (including development, transmission, storage, etc.), infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, the care economy, or other priority industries or sectors.
- Decreased employee turnover rates as a result of more supportive work environments and improved awareness about substance misuse.
- Leveraging resources for new training facilities or programs.

APPENDIX C

WORC Grant Minimum Wage Requirement: Background Information

Among the requirements of this grant is that applicants must propose a project that provides or connects workers to a \$15 per hour wage, as evidence strongly suggests that many workers in the WORC region struggle to access employment opportunities that meet the “Pay” Good Jobs Principle. ARC, DRA, and NBRC classify nearly half of the more than 700 counties and parishes in the WORC region as economically distressed,^[i] with median incomes and poverty rates that tend to be notably lower in more rural counties in the WORC region.^[ii] Wage growth has lagged or been nonexistent^[iii] in portions of these regions even with worker productivity gains^[iv] or marked sector-specific growth.^[v]

Additionally, even with billions of new public and private investment, several states within the WORC region have among the lowest workforce participation rates in the country.^[vi] Many factors affect the ability of the region’s rural workers in obtaining and retaining high-quality, family-sustaining jobs. The cost of traveling to work is likely to be higher for rural residents of the WORC region.^[vii] In rural areas within the region, health and behavioral health issues—some correlating with populations earning lower wages—have been linked to lower labor force participation,^[viii] with these problems complicated by diminished access to care.^[ix] These areas also are more likely to have a shortage of quality and affordable childcare, creating barriers for parents—especially women—entering or re-entering the workforce.^[x]

No single project will fully address the barriers faced by workers in the WORC region or completely alleviate the complex, generational factors that have led to wages remaining low in parts of the region. Generally, though, wages tend to be “sticky”—meaning that it can be difficult for wages to increase in a labor market even with high demand for workers.^[xi] In requiring grantees to connect participants to jobs or training opportunities for jobs that pay at least \$15 per hour, DOL intends to highlight higher wage-earning opportunities for rural workers in this region and help them overcome “stickiness”^[xii] that might provide a barrier to a “stable and predictable living wage” as described in the Pay Good Jobs Principle.^[xiii] By requiring additional steps to promote Good Jobs, DOL intends for this grant to impact the broader range of barriers to rural workers’ workforce participation and access to good-paying jobs.

References

^[i] Each of the three regional commissions assess distress on annual basis. At the following links, you can find the most recent materials on distressed counties and parishes for each commission: [ARC](#), [DRA](#), [NBRC](#).

[ii] See Kevin Pollard, Sara Srygley, and Linda A. Jacobsen, [The Appalachian Region: A Data Overview from the 2017-2021 American Community Survey](#) (June 2023). More than 80% of the DRA region counties and parishes [are economically distressed](#), as assessed in part that the per capita income in these counties are 80% or less of the national per capita income. NBRC [classifies](#) approximately two-thirds of its counties as distressed, factoring in poverty levels, unemployment, and median household incomes.

[iii] All of West Virginia falls in the WORC region and “along with no job growth, West Virginians saw no wage growth over the past decade.” West Virginia Center on Budget & Policy, [State of Working West Virginia 2022: A Lost Decade and a Path Forward](#) (Dec. 14, 2022).

[iv] In Louisiana, where most parishes are within the WORC region, low-wage jobs are “on the rise,” and despite greater worker productivity, wage levels have remained largely stagnant over the past 40 years, particularly for Black workers. Louisiana Budget Project, [State of Working Louisiana: February 2023](#).

[v] Since the 1990s, Alabama has seen significant growth among automobile manufacturing in two ARC counties (Tuscaloosa and Madison) and in Montgomery County, which shares a boundary with four counties in ARC or DRA, including some counties served by both regional commissions. However, when adjusted for inflation, these autoworkers’ real wages have fallen by \$7,700 since 2002, even as workers in other sectors saw significant gains for the same time period. See Alabama Arise, [State of Working Alabama 2023](#) (Nov. 30, 2023).

[vi] In December 2023, the national labor participation rate was 62.5%, but all but six of the WORC states had participation rates below the national rate and around half of the states in the WORC region had participation rates below 60%. Mississippi—approximately half of which falls within the WORC region—had the lowest labor participation rate in the country at 53.6% and West Virginia—all of which falls in the WORC region—had the second lowest rate at 54.7%. Seven other states in the WORC area had labor participation rates below 60%: Alabama (57.4%), Arkansas (56.8%), Kentucky (56.6%), Louisiana (58.4%), Maine (58.6%), South Carolina (56.7%), and Tennessee (59.2%). See Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, [Labor Participation Rates: December 2023](#).

[vii] A [report](#) by the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, which covers portions of five states touched by the WORC region, found that rural households in its district spent 32% of their income on transportation costs, as compared to urban households, which spent 22%. Sierra Latham et al., “Employment Barriers in the Rural Fifth District,” *Econ Focus*, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond (2022) [hereinafter “Barriers Report”]. This report also observed the significant impacts of health issues—including substance-use disorder—on labor force participation in the region.

[viii] See [“There Still Aren’t Enough ‘Good Jobs’ \(Interview with Zeynep Ton\).”](#) Harvard Business Review IdeaCast (Dec. 21, 2021) [hereinafter “Ton Interview”]; Barriers Report.

[ix] In the Southeast, 10% of rural counties lost one more or hospitals due to closures between 2007 and 2018. Nearly half of these closures left a county without a hospital, requiring patients travel further for emergency or other care. [“Nearly 10% of rural counties in the South are losing hospitals,”](#) Rachel Morrow, *Front Lines*, University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health (July 18, 2023). Complicating this worsening trend of diminished healthcare access, research shows that rural Americans are more likely to die prematurely from the leading causes of death of the United States, be at greater risk of deaths from car crashes and drug overdose, and due to long distances to grocery stores, can lack access to fresh food options that

could reduce the chances of cancer and heart disease. “[Health in Rural America: Connecting to Care](#),” *NIH News in Health*, National Institutes for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (March 2022). In the ARC region, “[r]ates of disability and poverty are significantly higher in rural Appalachia than they are in other rural areas of America.” Evan Smith, “[Human Rights in Appalachia: Socioeconomic and health disparities in Appalachia](#),” *UAB Institute for Human Rights Blog*, The University of Alabama at Birmingham Institute for Human Rights (Jan. 6, 2021).

[x] Rasheed Malk and Katie Hamm, [Mapping America’s Child Care Deserts](#), Center for American Progress (Aug. 30, 2017). In eight states touched by the WORC region, more than half the population lived in childcare deserts.

[xi] Renee Haltom, “[Jargon Alert: Sticky Wages](#),” *Econ Focus*, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond (2013); Ton Interview.

[xii] Keeping with their “stickiness,” wages tend not to decrease once they have increased; however, a benefit of better-paying work and conditions of work is higher productivity, lower worker turnover, and better customer retention. *See* Ton Interview.

[xiii] Opening more pathways to jobs paying at least \$15 per hour could have a profound impact on workers in the region—especially women—as well as align with other efforts by the Biden-Harris Administration to ensure fair and equitable wages for jobs associated with federal projects. Rural residents are [more likely to have a high school diploma or less](#), and in many counties in the WORC region, [between 80% and 90%](#) of residents between the ages of 25 and 64 do not have bachelor’s degrees. Earnings overall are [55% lower](#) for individuals with only a high school diploma and can be dramatically lower for women in WORC states at this education level. According to Census data, the annual median income is between \$25,964 and \$29,504 for women with only a high school diploma in eight of the nine WORC states with the lowest workforce participation rates at the end of 2023 (Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia). Only one of these eight states (Tennessee) has a median wage for this population greater than \$28,000 (\$29,504). A \$15 per hour wage produces \$31,200 in individual annual gross income.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX F

APPENDIX G

APPENDIX H

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX J