

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**  
**State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF)**  
**Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)**  
**FOA-ETA-23-09**

**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

**1) What organizations can apply for these grants?**

Eligible lead applicants are States, as defined at 29 CFR Section 29.2. The term “State” means “any of the 50 States of the United States, District of Columbia, or any Territory or possession of the United States.” For the purposes of this FOA, the eligible 54 U.S. States and territories include all 50 States of the United States, District of Columbia, and territories whose Active Apprentices exceeds 100 apprentices, i.e., Guam, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa. Only territories with more than 100 registered apprentices (as of FY 22 data) are eligible to apply for Base and Competitive funds. For those territories not eligible to apply under this FOA (have less than 100 registered apprentices), OA will provide dedicated technical assistance to increase their capacity to apply for future year funding. To view the Office of Apprenticeship’s FY 2022 Data and Statistics, please visit <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/data-and-statistics>.

States (the Governor’s Office) must identify the State agency that will be the grant recipient (e.g., State Workforce Agency eligible for funding under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), State Educational Agency, or an SAA). This entity will have sole responsibility for administering the project and will serve as the grant’s fiscal agent. For States with federally recognized SAAs and where the SAA is not the State agency that will be the grant recipient, the SAA must be included as a partner. Each State is limited to one individual application for consideration under this opportunity.

A letter from the Governor (or chief elected official) must be included in the application to designate the Agency authorized to submit the State’s application.

The FOA enumerates types of state agencies that may be the grant recipient, but it is a non-exhaustive list. States may identify another state agency that is not specifically mentioned in the FOA.

**AWARD INFORMATION**

**2) When are applications due?**

The closing date for receipt of applications under this Announcement is May 1, 2023. 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).

**3) How long is the grant period of performance?**

For this first round of SAEF funding, the period of performance (POP) for the Base Formula Funding option is 12 months. States that are awarded the Competitive Funding will receive a second grant that will have a grant POP of 36 months. States that are awarded both the Base and Competitive funding options will need to manage their grants to ensure that the Base Formula Funding is expended within 12 months of the award

start date and the Competitive Funding is expended within 36 months of the award start date, which is anticipated to be July 1, 2023. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities.

#### **4) Which funding options can applicants apply for under the SAEF FOA?**

The Department expects to award a total of \$85,000,000 to states and territories to increase their ability to serve, improve, and strategically expand the National Apprenticeship system. Of the available funds, the Department intends to award up to \$40,000,000 through 54 formula-funded base grants, also referred to as the Base Formula Funding in this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). The Department will also award an additional \$45,000,000 through competitive funds, also referred to as Competitive Funding in this FOA, to those eligible applicants seeking to receive a combination of both Base Formula Funding and Competitive Funding. Competitive funds will be awarded through 8-10 grants, with individual grants ranging from \$1,000,000 up to \$6,000,000.

In order to receive Competitive Funding, applicants must submit applications for both Base Formula Funding and Competitive Funding. All applicants responding to this FOA are required, at minimum, to submit an application for the Base Formula Funding.

#### **5) What is the amount of grant funding an applicant may apply for?**

For this first round of SAEF funding, we expect availability of approximately \$85,000,000 to fund up to 54 grants awarded with Base Formula Funding described in Appendix B and an additional 8-10 grants through the competitive portion of this announcement described above. You may apply for an amount up to the Base Funding amount determined in Appendix B, or the base amount specified in Appendix B plus a ceiling amount of up to \$6 million for the competitive portion. Awards made under this Announcement are subject to the availability of federal funds. In the event that additional funds become available, we reserve the right to use such funds to select additional grantees from applications submitted in response to this Announcement.

#### **6) What information should be provided by applicants for the Base Formula Funding option?**

In addition to the Application Requirements listed under III.C.1 Application Screening Criteria, all applicants must provide in their project narrative in response to Appendix A, with no minimum page limit and which does not count against the 20-page limit specified in Section IV.B.3 Project Narrative: 1) a description of the activities you intend to implement, 2) a description of your efforts in the community(ies) you intend to reach, 3) your success benchmarks and measures, 4) a description of the specific population(s) you intend to impact, and 5) the names of the organizations with whom you will form partnerships. Your project narrative should detail your plan to expand Registered Apprenticeship and/or pre-apprenticeships leading to RAPs in your State.

If applying for only the Base Formula Funding option, please ensure that you indicate so in the Abstract and your Project Narrative clearly addresses guidelines above and covers all the required activities, at the minimum. The Department reserves the right to change this amount depending on the quantity and quality of applications submitted.

#### **7) How do applicants indicate they are applying for the Base Formula Funding or the Base and Competitive Funding options?**

Applicants will indicate for which funding option they are applying in the abstract(s). Applicants must submit an abstract for the Base Formula Funding option and, if applicable, a separate abstract for the Competitive Funding option. Applicants must complete and submit the appropriate abstract(s) for their application. Please make note of the Funding option in each abstract. Additionally, applicants must submit

separate SF-424, SF-424A, and Budget Narrative for the Base Formula Funding and, if applicable, Competitive Funding.

**8) What if a state only wants the Base Formula Funding? Is this allowable?**

Yes. It is allowable for a state applicant to apply only for the Base Formula Funding option. Applicants may choose to apply for only the Base Formula Funding, as described in Appendix A. Base Formula Funding amounts are specified in Appendix B.

**9) Can a State applying for the Base Formula Funding request a lower amount than what is published in Appendix B?**

Yes, applicants may apply for an amount up to the Base Funding amount published in Appendix B to expend during the 12-month POP.

**10) What if a state only wants the Competitive Funding? Is that allowable?**

No. It is not allowable for a state applicant to apply only for the Competitive Funding option. In order to receive Competitive Funding, applicants must submit applications for both Base Formula Funding and Competitive Funding. All applicants responding to this SAEF FOA are required, at minimum, to submit an application for the Base Formula Funding. Applicants must submit two project abstracts, if they are applying for the Base Formula Funding and the Competitive Funding - one for the Base Formula Funding and one for the Competitive Funding (see Appendix C).

**11) Under Base Formula Funding, are grantees required to use grant funds to provide services to participants?**

No. While States who receive Base Formula Funding may use these funds to provide grant-funded services to participants, it is not required. Further, States who receive Base Funding are not required to provide outcome goals for the number of participants to be served (receive grant-funded services). However, if States do provide grant-funded services to participants, they would report on these outcomes as part of quarterly reporting requirements.

**12) Under Competitive Funding, are grantees required to use grant funds to provide services to participants?**

In addition to the five-year plan, applicants for the Competitive Funding option must plan a project that involves a minimum of two activities. If applicants select required activities that serve participants, then applicants must set targets for Participant and Apprentice Outcomes and Expanding Registered Apprenticeship Program Outputs for the Competitive Funding option. Please see Section IV.B.3.b Expected Outcomes and Outputs and Appendix D Suggested Performance Outcomes and Outputs Table. If applicants select activities that do not directly result in Participant Outcomes or Program Outputs, they must propose targets related to their proposed activities.

**13) Is there an expectation for a certain number of apprentices enrolled relative to the amount of funding requested?**

There is no minimum enrollment requirement. Instead, applicants should draw on their own experiences and calculation of costs to propose to serve the maximum feasible number of participants. Requests for funding must be commensurate with the scope and scale of the proposed project.

**ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES**

#### 14) What is the geographic scope applicants can propose?

Applicants must serve a statewide geographic scope. The geographic scope is the physical service area in which awarded applicants will serve participants.

#### 15) What are required grant activities?

A five-year plan is a required activity for **all applicants**. For this first round of funding, applicants may submit a preliminary version, and within 120 days of grant award, grantees must submit their final, detailed plan.

The five-year plan must include the following:

1. Be designed to include elements that address DEIA, workforce system alignment, and RAP and/or pre-apprenticeship leading to enrollment in a RAP.
2. Consider the State population distribution and how the State can better serve its underrepresented populations and communities.
3. Describe how pipelines to opportunities across industries will be built and how the State intends to reach new and emerging industries and occupational sectors, and how States will build buy-in from stakeholders.
4. Include a detailed description of the first year of activity, charting out quarterly milestones. Subsequent years can be less detailed, providing bi-annual milestones. When an applicant applies for subsequent rounds of funding, they will expand on the details of that year in their plan.

Applicants for the **Base Formula Funding** option, in addition to the five-year plan, must also do the following, at a minimum:

1. Build Statewide capacity to increase the number and quality of RAPs through stronger alignment with the education and workforce systems.
2. For SAAs, implement data sharing, system change, and governance requirements to comply with 29 CFR Parts 29 and 30 and ensure a strong and modernized Registered Apprenticeship system by promoting the standardization of RAPs and committing to building a unified National Apprenticeship system. This includes sharing of data and ensuring that quality programs are registered within the State and align with the five key areas of RAPs: OJL, RI, progressive wages, mentoring, and industry-recognized credential attainment to ensure reciprocity across the National Apprenticeship system.
3. For SAAs, utilize funds to adopt and fully integrate RAPIDS.

In addition to the five-year plan, applicants for the **Competitive Funding** option must plan a project that involves a minimum of two activities from a list provided under Program Activities in Section I.A.:

1. Provide a range of training services that support individuals, particularly from underrepresented populations and underserved communities, enrolled in a RAP, that may include: Related Instruction reimbursement; OJL reimbursement; development of curricula and standards for apprenticeship; online and technology-based learning; accelerated and competency-based training that integrates academic and occupational skills training; and apprenticeship training costs and other supportive services.
2. Provide incentive funding to employers to support new or expand existing RAPs in targeted industries in which they are serving.
3. Establish statewide intermediaries or hubs to facilitate industry adoption of RAPs.

4. Provide direct funding for a range of pre-apprenticeship programs that lead directly to a RAP. Includes pre-apprenticeship activities that support underrepresented populations and underserved communities and increase opportunities to create career pathways for youth and adults.
5. Expand RAP opportunities for youth (between the ages of 16 and 24). Includes establishing and expanding partnerships that commit to expanding RAPs and/or pre-apprenticeship programs that lead to RAP enrollment for youth through coordination with industry, workforce intermediaries, labor organization, SEAs and LEAs, community colleges, youth-serving and community-based organizations, and other stakeholders. This can also include designing and launching a Civilian Climate Corps RAP targeted towards youth apprentices that can be piloted by youth and Conservation Corps groups.
6. Assist industries in creating RAPs in lower wage, entry level occupations across industries that are critical to the nation, but currently do not provide strong career pathways or credentials that encourage people to stay and grow.
7. Assist employers in creating a forward-thinking, specialized RAP that embraces available technology, targeted at addressing people with health conditions and impairments.
8. Build stronger partnerships with the State and local workforce system. Additionally, consider ways to align and support the jobs required to implement the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), CHIPS and Science Act (CHIPS Act), and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). This can include working with employers to increase their awareness of Registered Apprenticeship opportunities in the state and identify opportunities for them to join existing RAPs and/or starting new RAPs.

NOTE: Please ensure that your five-year plan for the Competitive Funding option builds upon the five-year plan for the Base Formula Funding option.

**16) Can applicants propose projects that include pre-apprenticeships that do not lead to RAPs?**

No. Pre-apprenticeship programs funded through this grant must directly lead to RAPs during the grant period of performance. Pre-apprenticeship programs funded under this grant should ensure that the skills and competencies being developed align with industry needs. It is allowable and encouraged for pre-apprenticeship completers to receive grant-funded services in a RAP so they may be a grant participant.

**17) How can applicants consider ways to align and support the jobs required to implement the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), CHIPS and Science Act (CHIPS Act), and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)?**

This can include working with employers to increase their awareness of Registered Apprenticeship opportunities in the state and identify opportunities for them to join existing RAPs and/or starting new RAPs.

**MISC.**

**18) Who can I contact for further questions about the SAEF FOA?**

For further information about this FOA, please contact Matthew Carls, Grants Management Specialist, Office of Grants Management, at SAEF\_FOA-ETA-23-09@dol.gov. Applicants should e-mail all technical questions to SAEF\_FOA-ETA-23-09@dol.gov and must specifically reference FOA-ETA-23-09, 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>.

**19) What data is included on [Apprenticeship.gov's Data and Statistics dashboard](#)?**

There are three sources of data OA uses: RAPIDS, SAA Portal upload, and stick counts. If RAPIDS is a State's

primary case management system, then the data in the Data and Statistics dashboard is current as of March 8, 2023. For those States that upload to the SAA Portal, the data in the Data and Statistics dashboard is a quarter behind, e.g., the dashboard was refreshed March 8, 2023, so the SAA Portal uploads are from FY23 Q1. Lastly, stick counts are not in the dashboard.

**20) What are the reporting requirements for SAEF grantees?**

Applicants must agree to meet DOL reporting requirements and provide individual record-level data that would be made available for evaluation and national reporting purposes. Please refer to Section VI.C. Applicants must provide a comprehensive description of the existing or planned systems and processes that the applicant will use to provide timely and accurate financial and participant-level performance reporting, including the process for tracking participant-level data on participant characteristics, services, activities, and employment outcomes of registered apprentices served through the project to report to the Department during the life of the grant. In addition, the description must detail how these systems will be used to regularly assess progress towards the identified performance goals and that rigorous performance reporting will be taken into account in staffing and budgeting plans.

Additionally, grant recipients are required to participate in all ETA training activities related to grantee orientation, financial management and reporting, performance reporting, product dissemination, and other technical assistance training as appropriate during the grant period. These sessions may occur via conference calls, virtual events such as webinars, and in-person meetings.

Grant recipients must submit Quarterly Financial Reports, Quarterly Performance Reports, and Quarterly Narrative Performance Reports as detailed in Section VI.C. Reporting. For reporting purposes, participants as well as reportable individuals are reported into WIPS.

**21) Are grantees required to participate in a DOL-funded 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.

**22) Is DOL offering discounts for Salesforce since the grant encourages all States to use Salesforce?**

Currently DOL does not anticipate procuring licenses or discounts for Salesforce on behalf of states. However, purchase of Salesforce licenses is an allowable activity under this grant funding.