

Billing Code 4510-30

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employment and Training Administration

Work Incentive Grants

AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration (ETA), DOL.

ACTION: Notice of availability of funds; Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA).

**THIS NOTICE CONTAINS ALL OF THE NECESSARY INFORMATION AND FORMS
NEEDED TO APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDING.**

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA) announces the availability of \$20 million to award competitive grants designed to enhance the employability, employment and career advancement of people with disabilities through enhanced service delivery in the new One-Stop delivery system established under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The Work Incentive Grant program will provide grant funds to consortia and/or partnerships of public and private non-profit entities working in coordination with a state and/or local One-Stop delivery system to augment the existing programs and services and ensure programmatic access and streamlined, seamless service delivery for people with disabilities.

DATES: Applications will be accepted commencing on the date of publication. The closing date for receipt of applications under this announcement is Tuesday, August 1, 2000, at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) at the address below. TELEFACSIMILE (FAX), TELEGRAPHED, OR ELECTRONIC APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE HONORED.

ADDRESS: Applications shall be mailed to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Division of Federal Assistance, Attention: Ms. B. Jai Johnson, SGA/DFA 00-107, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W. Room S-4203, Washington, D.C. 20210.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Questions should be faxed to Ms. B.Jai Johnson, Grants Management Specialist, Division of Federal Assistance, Fax (202) 219-8739. This is not a toll-free number. All inquiries should include the SGA number (DFA 00-107) and a contact name, fax and phone numbers. This solicitation is also being published on the Internet on the ETA's disAbility On-line Home Page at wdsc.org/disability, or the ETA homepage at doleta.gov. Award notifications will also be published on the ETA homepage.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Authority

Provisions relating to the One-Stop delivery system are at Section 121, 134(c) of the Workforce Investment Act (29 USC 2841, 2864); Wagner-Peyser Act 53(c)(1) (29 USC 496(c)(1)) and Department of Labor Appropriations Act 2000 (Pub. L. 106-113). Regulations governing the Workforce Investment Act are at 20 CFR Parts 660 - 671. An Interim Final Rule was published in the Federal Register at 64 Fed. Reg. 18662 (Apr. 19,1999) with issuance of final rule planned for the summer of 2000.

II. Background

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 establishes comprehensive reform of existing Federal job training programs with amendments impacting service delivery under the Wagner Peyser Act, Adult Education and Literacy Act, the Rehabilitation Act and supersedes the Job Training Partnership Act. A number of other Federal programs are also identified as required partners under the One-Stop delivery system with the intention of providing comprehensive services for all Americans to access the information and resources available to them in the development and implementation of their career goals. The intention of the One-Stop system is to establish programs and providers in co-located, coordinated and integrated settings that are coherent and accessible for individuals and businesses alike in approximately 600 workforce investment areas which will be established throughout the nation.

The Workforce Investment Act establishes State and Local Workforce Investment Boards focused on strategic planning, policy development, and oversight of the workforce system with significant authority for the Governor and chief elected officials to build on existing reforms in order to implement innovative and comprehensive workforce investment systems. Although systemic change of the magnitude envisioned by the Workforce Investment Act is a long term process, State and local planning processes are required to be in place by July 1, 2000. The Work Incentive Grants will facilitate model service delivery for people with disabilities involving coordination of the multiple programs and agencies which frequently impact their ability to achieve self-sustaining employment, skill attainment and long range career opportunities. Recognizing that many One-Stop delivery systems may not currently have the capacity to provide comprehensive services to people with disabilities, the Work Incentive Grant is designed to provide seed monies for the enhancement of service delivery in the One-Stop delivery system.

Many people with disabilities are looking to the new workforce investment system to address their employment and training needs in a progressive, enlightened environment with cutting-edge technologies. They also expect the One-Stop delivery system to provide comprehensive services to meet multiple barriers which frequently limit their access to a productive, economically rewarding work life. These may include, but are not limited to, the availability of basic and skill development; vocational skill training or advanced educational opportunities; apprenticeship and entrepreneurial training; transportation assistance to reach training or employment; housing assistance or advise on retaining

existing housing upon employment; and access to medical health coverage upon employment.

Additional Background Information

There are approximately 50 million Americans with disabilities, 30 million of whom are of working age. Of the latter, many are relegated to lives of poverty and reliance on public assistance and supports. The economic boom of recent years has had little to no impact on the more than 70% of those with significant disabilities of working age who are not employed. In addition, many people have hidden disabilities which may or may not be recognized or officially diagnosed but which impact their ability to obtain, retain or advance in employment.

Approximately 10 million people with disabilities are recipients or beneficiaries of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Many other individuals with disabilities receive public assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The benefits or payments to these individuals are generally at or below Federal poverty income levels.

Generally eligibility for Medicaid, access to subsidized housing and other benefits are automatically tied to receipt of SSI or TANF, while Medicare and some other public supports are closely linked to SSDI benefits. Public policy systems, particularly those related to necessary health coverage, have for many years encouraged dependency on income supports and created many obstacles to employment and economic independence.

The loss of health care benefits and other structural disincentives to working and achieving self-sufficient, living wages have been partially addressed in the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (TWWIA) [Public Law 106-170] which, among other provisions, encourages States to enact expanded and more readily accessible health care coverage for working age individuals with disabilities. Although not authorized under the TWWIA, the Department of Labor intends for the Work Incentive Grant program to further support the employment objectives of TWWIA for SSI and SSDI recipients by enhancing the State and local workforce investment system for all people with disabilities.

The Department of Labor has worked with the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in designing the Work Incentive Grant program, in a coordinated and strategic effort to support the issuance and objectives of separate SSA's cooperative agreement and HHS's grant programs authorized under the TWWIA. The SSA will be awarding \$50,000 to \$300,000 grants for a \$23 million Planning, Assistance and Outreach program to establish the capacity to provide comprehensive information on work incentives to SSI and SSDI recipients throughout each State. Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop systems, among other entities, are eligible applicants for the SSA Planning, Assistance and Outreach Cooperative Agreement program. The HHS Medicaid Infrastructure Grant program is authorized for five years with approximately \$40 million to be awarded annually to State Medicaid Agencies for establishing Medicaid buy-in opportunities for individuals who are working. Each of the three grant programs is administered

separately by its respective agency but are expected to be implemented in Fiscal Year 2000.

The Department of Education also provided input for the requirements of this Solicitation for Grant Application. The Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities, established under Executive Order 13078, facilitated and provided guidance to this multi-agency process as part of their charge to design a coordinated and aggressive national policy that will bring working-age individuals with disabilities into gainful employment at a rate approaching that of the general population.

III. Submission of Applications

Late Applications. Any application received after the exact date and time specified for receipt at the office designated in this notice will not be considered, unless it is received before awards are made and it - (a) was sent by U.S. Postal Service registered or certified mail not later than the fifth calendar day before the date specified for receipt of applications (e.g., an application submitted in response to a solicitation requiring receipt of applications by the 20th of the month must have been mailed/post marked by the 15th of that month); or (b) was sent by the U.S. Postal Service Express Mail Next Day Service to addressee not later than 5:00 p.m. at the place of mailing two working days prior to the date specified for receipt of applications. The term "working days" excludes weekends and Federal holidays. "Post marked" means a printed, stamped or otherwise placed impression (exclusive of a postage meter machine impression) that is readily identifiable, without further action, as having been supplied or affixed on the date of mailing by an employee of the U.S. Postal Service.

Withdrawal of Applications. Applications may be withdrawn by written notice or telegram (including mail gram) received at any time before an award is made. Applications may be withdrawn in person by the applicant or by an authorized representative thereof, if the representative's identity is made known and the representative signs a receipt of the proposal.

Hand Delivered Proposals. It is preferred that applications be mailed at least five days prior to the closing date. To be considered for funding, hand-delivered applications must be received by 4:00 p.m., EST, August 1, 2000, at the specified address. Failure to adhere to the above instructions will be basis for a determination of nonresponsiveness. Overnight express mail from carriers other than the U.S. Postal Service will be considered hand-delivered applications and **MUST BE RECEIVED** by the above specified date and time.

IV. Funding Availability and Period of Performance

The Department of Labor anticipates awarding 20-40 grants ranging from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million. The period of performance will be approximately 30 months from the date of execution by the Department. The grant funds would be available for expenditure until June 30, 2003 when the authority for these funds will expire. The Department may make subsequent grant awards, which would extend grant objectives, to the original grantees based on satisfactory performance and the availability of funds.

V. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants may be a State and/or Local Workforce Investment Board(s) (State Board/Local Board(s)) established under the Workforce Investment Act or other State/local public entities including, Vocational Rehabilitation, Mental Health, Mental Retardation/Developmental Disability, TANF; and/or a private non-profit organization including, but not limited to Centers for Independent Living (CILs), disability advocacy and provider organizations, federally-funded disability grant entities, and other non-profit organizations which provide services and/or advocacy for people with disabilities; or a consortium thereof.

To the extent practicable and possible, the Department of Labor is encouraging consortia of entities to develop and submit applications under this grant program. If the applicant is not the State or Local Workforce Investment Board, the Board(s) must be a partner in the consortium.

Applications can be statewide in scope. Statewide projects must propose strategies for enhancing and improving services to people with disabilities involving all local workforce investment areas in the State. State-wide grant projects should obtain and provide letters of commitment from local Workforce Investment Boards to the extent possible. However, a statewide project must include the State Workforce Investment Board as a consortium partner, with applicable letters of commitment provided in the application.

Indian and Native American Tribal entities, or consortia of Tribes, may apply for Work Incentive Grants. These would involve coordination of services and enhancements to a One-Stop system approach for people with disabilities in a specific Indian community or covering multiple Tribal entities which may cut across multiple States and/or workforce investment areas. In such cases, letters of commitment from Local Boards may not be applicable. Grants to Indian and Native American tribal grantees are treated differently because of sovereignty and self-governance established under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act allowing for the government to government relationship between the Federal and Tribal Governments.

VI. Section Format Requirements for Grant Application

General Requirements - Applicants must submit four (4) copies of their proposal, with original signatures. The Application Narrative must be double-spaced, and on single-sided, numbered pages with the exception of format requirements for the Executive Summary. The Executive Summary must be limited to no more than two single-spaced, single sided pages. A font size of at least twelve (12) pitch is required throughout.

There are three required sections of the application. Requirements for each section are provided in this application package. Applications that fail to meet the requirements will not be considered.

Section I - Project Financial Plan;

Section II - Executive Summary - Project Synopsis

Section III - **Project Narrative** (including Appendices, **NOT TO EXCEED 40 pages**)

Section I. Project Financial Plan - Section I of the application must include the following two required elements: (1) Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance, and (2) Budget Information Form and budget narrative. All copies of the SF 424 **MUST** have original signatures of the legal entity applying for grant funding. Applicants shall indicate on the SF 424 the organization's IRS Status, if applicable. According to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, Section 18, an organization described in Section 501(c) 4 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 which engages in lobbying activities shall not be eligible for the receipt of federal funds constituting an award, grant, or loan. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number is **17.207**. Section I will not count against the application page limits.

The financial plan must describe all costs associated with implementing the project that are to be covered with grant funds. All costs should be necessary and reasonable according to the Federal guidelines set forth in the "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments," (also known as the "Common Rule") codified at 29 CFR Part 97 (97.22), and "Grants and Agreements with Institutes of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations" (also known as OMB Circular A-110), codified at 29 CFR Part 95 (95.27).

The financial plan must contain the following parts:

- ! -Completed "SF 424 - Application for Federal Assistance" (see Appendix A for required form)
- ! -Completed "Budget Information Form" by line item for all costs required to implement the project design effectively. (See Appendix B for these required forms.)
- ! -Budget narrative/justification which provides sufficient information to support the reasonableness of the costs included in the budget in relation to the service strategy and planned outcomes.

Please note: Work Incentive Grant project designs which incorporate development, procurement or implementation of information technologies involving linkage, and/or to assure accessible technologies in the One-Stop setting, must provide a 50 percent grantee match for those Work Incentive Grant funds which will be utilized for this (these) purposes. That is, if an applicant intends to use \$50,000 in grant funds to develop, procure or implement information technology they must identify \$50,000 to be provided by the applicant and/or consortium partner(s). Also, grant funds directed to development, procurement and implementation of these technologies cannot exceed 10% (not including matching funds) of the total grant award. Identification of these funds should be made noted in the remarks section of the Budget Information Sheet and described in the budget narrative/justification, including source of matching funds.

Section II. Executive Summary - Project Synopsis [format requirements limited to no more than two single-spaced, single-sided pages]

Each application shall provide a project synopsis which identifies the following:

- ! •The applicant;

- ! •The type of organization the applicant represents;
- ! •Identification of consortium partners and the type of organizations they represent;
- ! •The project service area;
- ! •Whether the service area is an entire local workforce investment area, more than one local area, and/or all local areas in a State;
- ! •The specific areas of focus in the announcement which are addressed by the project;
- ! •The amount of funds requested;
- ! •The planned period of performance;
- ! •The comprehensive strategy proposed for providing seamless service delivery, for addressing the multi-faceted barriers to training and employment which affect people with disabilities, and for improving access for people with disabilities in the generic workforce system;
- ! •The ways in which the proposal is coordinated with a State HHS grant and/or SSA benefits planner grant;
- ! •How counseling and other support needs will be addressed in the One-Stop Center system;
- ! •The actions already taken by the State or Local Workforce Investment Board to address the needs of people with disabilities in the One-Stop delivery system;
- ! •The extent to which the One-Stop facilities and satellite site incorporate physical access for people with disabilities;
- ! •The extent to which Vocational Rehabilitation is integrated or coordinated with the One-Stop delivery system;
- ! •Data on the extent to which people with disabilities have been served under the prior Job Training Partnership Act program and under the Wagner-Peyser Act;
- ! •The level of commitment the applicant and consortium members have to serving people with disabilities; and
- ! •The extent to which the needs of individuals with disabilities from diverse cultural and/or ethnic groups will be addressed.

Section III. Project Narrative [format requirements limited to no more than forty (40) double-spaced, single-sided, numbered pages]

Section III of the application, the project narrative, must not exceed forty (40) pages for the Government Requirements/Statement of Work section, as described below in the "Required Content for Work Incentive Grant Applications - Program Year 2000." The forty (40) page limit includes any Attachments which are provided by the applicant. Letters of general support or recommendation for a proposal should NOT be submitted and will count against the page limits. However, letters of commitment are required from partner/consortia organizations, including State and/or Local Workforce Investment Board(s) clearly stating their intent to provide services and resources to the grant.

VII. Program Scope and Objectives

The Department of Labor, in consultation with the President's Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities, has designed the Work Incentive Grant program to achieve the following objectives:

- ! -Provide seamless service delivery within a One-Stop delivery system for people with a wide range

of disabilities which may include both documented and undocumented physical, sensory, developmental/cognitive (e.g., mental retardation and learning disabilities, among others), mental and other health related functional disabilities.

- ! -Maintain a referral source of diverse services and information that commonly impact the employability of people with disabilities, such as transportation, housing, education and training programs, access to technology, and health care coverage;
- ! -Provide model One-Stop service delivery through availability of -

comprehensive services and programs designed to meet multiple needs and common employment barriers such as a procedures for identifying those individuals with hidden disabilities through appropriate screening and diagnostic testing ;

state-of-the-art, fully accessible technologies and/or other accommodations that would be available for use in the One-Stop setting as well as establishing a process for the availability of accommodations in training settings; and

- ! knowledgeable, experienced and skilled staff support on a broad range of disability issues.
- ! -Ensure access to knowledgeable benefits counselors who can do the following -
- ! provide information on education and training program options and opportunities available under a broad array of programs such as Adult Education; Individuals with Disability Education Act for those under 22 without a high school degree; Vocational Education and School-to-Work programs;

address the impact of employment on individual benefits such as SSDI, SSI, TANF, Medicaid, Medicare, subsidized housing, and food stamps;

- ! provide accurate information on the availability of Social Security work incentive programs and Ticket-to-Work options available to SSDI and SSI recipients;
- ! make available to employers detailed information on the array of tax benefits and incentives to employers of people with disabilities that provide financial support for workplace modifications and accommodations; and
- ! leverage the diverse range of program resources that may be critical to successful employment, retention and career advancement such as medical or psychological testing or transportation subsidies available to One-Stop customers in local areas, as applicable.
- ! -Establish and carry out extensive and wide-ranging outreach to the disability community, including those with physical, sensory, developmental/cognitive (mental retardation and learning disabilities, among others), mental and other health related impairments, so that core and Title I workforce services are readily available and welcoming to customers with disabilities;
- ! -Ensure linkages and technical assistance to public and private providers of services to people with disabilities such as centers for independent living; State Developmental Disability Councils; State and local mental health agencies; Federal Social Security Agencies, State Medicaid Agencies, Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities Offices, TANF agencies; public special education and adult education programs, private schools and training programs designed to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, and other non-profit organizations which support integration into the One-Stop delivery system and which have knowledge regarding the benefits of employment and training

information and services available through the workforce system.

- ! -Develop One-Stop capacity as a valued provider of choice for beneficiaries of SSDI and SSI, and to facilitate One-Stop eligibility to be an Employment Network provider established under provisions of the TWWIA, which assumes responsibility for coordination and delivery of services under the Ticket to Work program, meets professional and educational qualifications, where applicable, and provides appropriate employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services either directly or by entering into agreement with a qualified entity.
- ! Leverage available funds and services, including TANF and public education resources, currently available to individuals with disabilities under a variety of public and private non-profit resources to achieve the individual objectives of these customers; and
- ! Provides individual customer choice as a primary, key component of program availability and delivery which provide models for how Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) under Title I of WIA, SSA Ticket-to-Work vouchers, Vocational Rehabilitation resources, and other appropriate funding sources can be used to provide seamless service delivery that is responsive to the customer.
- ! -Implement information technologies which may be used to facilitate linkage or consolidation of information or services provided by existing State, local and other Federal program providers; and/or establish innovative accessible technologies in the workforce system to assure universal access to One-Stop information and resources for individuals with disabilities. Please note: Work Incentive Grant project designs which incorporate development, procurement or implementation of information technologies involving linkage, and/or to assure accessible technologies in the One-Stop setting, must provide a 50 percent grantee match for those Work Incentive Grant funds which will be utilized for this (these) purposes. Also, grant funds directed to development, procurement and implementation of these technologies cannot exceed 10% (not including matching funds) of the total grant award.

To the extent appropriate and practicable, the applicant Work Incentive Grant proposals should be developed in coordination with SSA's Benefits Planning, Assistance, and Outreach Cooperative Agreement program and/or HHS's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant program as part of a multi-pronged approach to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities. For example, an applicant for the Work Incentive Grant might consider applying for the SSA Benefit Planning, Assistance and Outreach Cooperative Agreement program, or coordinate with entities who may be applying, with the intent of establishing benefits planning capacity in a One-Stop Center. However, there may be additional strategies to support the Medicaid infrastructure development.

Likewise, the Department is encouraging coordination with formula and competitive Welfare-to-Work grant programs. Coordination should also occur with State/Local five year plans required under Title I of WIA.

The SSA Benefits Planning, Assistance, and Outreach Cooperative Agreement Request for Proposal and HHS Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Request for Application requirements are accessible through ETA's disAbility Online homepage: <http://wdsc.org/disability>. Additional information and resources are also available at this website.

VIII. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring

The Department shall be responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of each competitive grant project in accordance with the provisions of this announcement and the negotiated grant agreement. Applicants should assume that on-site project reviews will be conducted by Department staff, or their designees periodically throughout the implementation of the grant. Reviews will focus on the timely project implementation, performance in meeting the grant's programmatic goals and objectives, expenditure of grant funds on allowable activities, integration and coordination with other resources and service providers in the local area, and project management and administration in achieving project objectives. Work Incentive Grants may be subject to other additional reviews at the discretion of the Department.

Reporting

Grantees will be required to submit periodic financial and participant reports under the Work Incentive Grant program covering the workforce area(s) included in the grant project design. Customer survey information will also be required. Specific reporting requirements have not been established at the time of issuance of this Solicitation for Grant Application. However, data collection will probably incorporate some detailed information about the people with disabilities being served under the grant, by the grant applicant and consortium partners where applicable. To the extent possible, reporting will be conducted electronically through web-based applications.

- ! Financial reports will be required on a quarterly basis. This will be the Standard Form 269 - Financial Status Report (FSR).
- ! Customer Satisfaction Surveys: Customer satisfaction surveys will be required to be conducted with people with disabilities applying for services through the One-Stop delivery system(s) participating in the grant award. The Department of Labor will issue guidelines and reporting instructions related to the Customer Satisfaction Survey process at a later date.
- ! Other Reporting: The Department of Labor may require additional reporting requirements, including implementation progress reports and quarterly narrative and/or data reports on participants served in the workforce area(s) included in the grant for grant management and knowledge development purposes. The Department of Labor will issue guidelines and reporting instructions related to progress, narrative and participant reporting at a later date.

IX. Government Requirements/Statement of Work - Project Narrative

The Project Narrative, or Section III, of the grant application should provide complete information on how the applicant will address government requirements and statement of work provisions outlined here, and not to exceed forty (40) double-spaced numbered pages, including appendices. The application should include information of the type described below, as appropriate.

Description of Service Area and Consortium Configuration