

DOL Critical Sectors Job Quality Grant Program Round 2 Funding Opportunity Announcement

Frequently Asked Questions

May 31, 2024

Grant Program Overview

1. What is the DOL Critical Sectors Job Quality (Critical Sectors) Grant Program?

This grant program will support evidence-based workforce strategies that provide employers a pathway to improve the quality of jobs in these sectors, with a particular focus on workers in underrepresented populations that have faced social, economic, and other barriers to jobs with higher job quality. Using worker-centered sector strategies, applicants must develop and expand the partnerships necessary to ensure individuals are trained for good jobs. To achieve the goals of the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), applicants are required to propose grant projects that address one of the following tiers for this grant program:

- a. Tier 1: Developing New Partnerships and Programs (Planning Grants):** This tier will provide smaller grants (up to \$500,000 for 18 months) to support the formation of worker-centered sector partnerships in local or regional economic areas to design workforce strategies to enhance equity and job quality within the care, climate resiliency, and hospitality sectors.
- b. Tier 2: Launching Effective Worker-Centered Sector Strategy Programs (Implementation Grants):** This tier will provide larger grants (\$500,000 to \$3 million for 36 months) to invest in established partnerships that have a proven history of implementing sector strategies and are ready to implement specific worker-centered sector strategies that will improve job quality within the care, climate resiliency, and hospitality sectors.

2. What is the DOL Critical Sectors Job Quality Grant Program's purpose?

The Critical Sectors Job Quality Grant Program aims to improve job quality and expand training opportunities, leading to good jobs in the care, climate resiliency, and hospitality sectors. These sectors represent a cross-section of occupations critical to our economy's continued growth and vitality (care and climate resiliency) and a sector that provides income and support for the most marginalized populations (hospitality), which was devastated by the pandemic and continues to struggle to rebound. These sectors are vital to the future of work and the American people. However, they historically provide jobs at the

lower end of the pay scale with few benefits, fewer worker protections, and less stability in scheduling and terms of employment.

3. What is considered a good job for the purposes of this grant project?

The Departments of Labor and Commerce have jointly identified eight Good Jobs Principles that support job quality:

- i. Recruitment and Hiring.** Employers that prioritize good jobs are intentional in their recruitment and hiring activities. They actively recruit applicants from underserved communities in recruitment drives designed to ensure equal opportunity as set forth under applicable nondiscrimination requirements. Further, applicants are evaluated using skills-based requirements, which may include nontraditional pathways and an emphasis on prior experience. Applicants and employees with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations as appropriate. When offering good jobs, employers do not require excessive—as defined by industry and occupational standards—educational, credentialing, and experience requirements.
- ii. Benefits.** Employers that prioritize good jobs provide both full- and part-time workers with family-sustaining benefits. These include, but are not limited to, health insurance, retirement plans, workers' compensation benefits, equal access to remote and telework work opportunities, and family benefits (such as paid leave and caregiving support). Further, workers are empowered and encouraged to use those benefits.
- iii. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA).** All workers in a good job are respected, empowered, and treated fairly. DEIA is a core value in the workplace, and individuals from underserved populations (i.e., those adversely affected by persistent poverty, discrimination, or inequality) must not face systemic barriers to advancement. Workers in a good job also receive any necessary disability accommodations without difficulties or additional barriers.
- iv. Empowerment and Representation.** Workers can form and join unions and can engage in protected activity without fear of retaliation. Workers contribute to decisions about their work and organizational direction. Workers are informed of their rights and ways to resolve any issues that may develop on the job.
- v. 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. Workers also have adequate hours and predictable schedules. Workers are also free from harassment, discrimination, and retaliation at work, including at a minimum complying with EEO regulations. Finally, workers are properly classified under applicable laws; temporary or contractor labor solutions are minimized.

- vi. Organizational Culture.** All workers belong, are valued, contribute meaningfully to the organization, and are respected. This may be facilitated via strategies such as regular feedback sessions where workers can communicate with responsive, engaged leadership through a transparent Human Resources infrastructure, including processes for sharing concerns.
- vii. Pay.** All workers are paid a stable and predictable living wage, as determined by the local area cost of living, before overtime, tips, and commissions. Workers' pay is fair, transparent, and equitable (i.e., workers with similar skills and experience are paid the same wage for the same work). Workers' wages grow commensurate with increased skills and experience.
- viii. Skills and Career Advancement.** Workers have equitable opportunities and tools to progress to future jobs. Workers have transparent promotion or advancement opportunities. Workers have access to high-quality occupational training, such as on-the-job training (OJT) and continuing education opportunities.

4. What does it mean to have a worker-centered sector strategy?

Worker-centered sector strategies meet industry needs in the proposed service area while engaging workers in the sector strategy and ensuring that the sector strategy leads to good jobs for workers. This should include, whenever possible, collaboration with unions and worker organizations to develop and deliver training and/or provide supervised work-based learning. The worker-centered approach ensures that workforce development and employment opportunities are accessible to and shaped by historically-marginalized populations and low-paid workers by considering their needs and actively working to address the barriers to good jobs while ensuring that workers have agency and voice and are treated with dignity and respect.

5. What are the core elements that must be incorporated into grant project design?

The Critical Sectors Job Quality Grant Program applicants must address core elements to help grant projects accomplish the program's goals. The four core elements that **both** tiers of applicants must address are Job Quality Strategy, Strategic Partnerships, Industry-driven Workforce Development, and Worker Voice and Engagement. The core elements are described in full on pages 5-10 of [FOA-ETA-23-13](#).

6. What Industries are emphasized in the second round of Critical Sectors?

For Critical Sectors Round 2 grants, ETA intends to commit up to 50 percent of the total available funding to projects that target job quality within the care sector, assuming sufficient competitive applications are received. This includes home care (also known as direct care or elder care) direct support services staff related to employment for individuals with disabilities, and childcare. Applicants must clearly identify **one** industry sector on which to focus, i.e., the care sector, climate resiliency (see FAQ #7), or hospitality. For more

information, please refer to Amendment 2 to FOA-ETA-23-13, page 1, Section I.C. Target Industries and Occupations.

7. What types of training should we consider for the Climate Resiliency sector?

Climate resiliency as a sector supports the ability to anticipate, prepare for or mitigate, and respond to hazardous events, trends, or disturbances related to climate; it includes occupations related to engineering (energy and solar), emergency management, atmospheric and hydrological sciences, and sustainable and renewable construction that **directly supports climate resiliency**. Projects that choose to focus on construction-related climate resiliency training should ensure they target relevant areas of poor job quality, such as health and safety risks, low wages, a lack of diversity, or other detriments.

8. How is the grant program funded?

The Critical Sectors Round 2 grant funding is authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) sec. 169(c) and appropriated under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Pub. L. 117-328, Div. H) for carrying out Demonstration and Pilot projects related to the employment and training needs of new entrants to the workforce, dislocated workers, and incumbent workers.

Eligibility and Partnerships Overview

9. May Round 1 Critical Sectors grantees apply for Round 2 grant funding?

Critical Sectors Round 1 Tier 1 Planning grantees may apply for a Round 2 Tier 2 grant to implement the training models designed with the sector partnership developed through the grantee's Round 1 Tier 1 award. Round 1 Tier 2 Critical Sectors Grantees are not eligible to apply for Round 2 funding. Any applications received from Round 1 Tier 2 grantees or from Round 1 Tier 1 grantees proposing a different sector focus from Round 1 will be considered nonresponsive and will not be scored.

10. Who is eligible to apply for this grant?

Grants will be awarded to the lead applicant of the Critical Sectors Job Quality Grant partnership. Organizations that are eligible lead applicants include:

- **Labor Unions and Organizations, Labor-Management Partnerships, and Worker Centers and Organizations** that represent workers in the identified industries or sectors.
- **Workforce Intermediaries:** organizations for whom a central mission is to bring together partners in the workforce system to support capacity building, development of expertise, and networking; plan, develop, and implement strategies; and raise funds to support these strategies. Workforce Intermediaries could be any of the following: Industry Associations and Business Organizations, Community and Technical Colleges, Non-Profit and Community-Based Organizations, Labor-Management Partnerships, or Workforce Development Boards.

- **State and Local Workforce Development Boards** that administer and provide strategic direction for the workforce investment system established under the WIOA;
- **Native American Tribal governments** and **Native American Training Program entities** eligible for funding under section 166 of WIOA;
- **Education/Training Provider(s)**: One or more public or private non-profit education and training providers, including institutions of higher education as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001), including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs), and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), which include Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Native American Non-Tribal Institutions (NANTIs), Alaskan Native or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions (ANNHI), and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs); community and technical colleges and systems; and non-profit and community-based organizations that offer job training, including those organizations that have been approved as WIOA Eligible Training Providers;
- **Industry-based Intermediaries and Industry Associations**: employer organizations that provide a collective voice for individual businesses within the targeted industries of care, climate resiliency, and hospitality;
- **National or Community-based Non-profit Organizations** affiliated with care, climate resiliency, and hospitality sectors, including non-profit trade, industry, or employer associations representing the identified industries or sectors;
- **State, County, and Local Governments**, including cities, townships, and State Workforce Agencies (the lead state agency responsible for the administration of WIOA Title I activities); and
- **State Registered Apprenticeship Agencies** (if the geographic scope includes part of a state that is a State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) state) that support program sponsors and guide partners on each phase of developing a program, connect businesses to training providers and advise partners on available funding sources to support apprenticeships.

11. Are for-profit institutions of higher education eligible to apply for this grant?

No. The Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 defines Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) separately from non-profit organizations. 2 CFR 200.1 uses the definition of Institution of Higher Education at 20 U.S.C. 1001, which includes as part of that definition that an IHE is "a public or other non-profit institution." Per the Uniform Guidance in 2 CFR 200.1, a non-profit organization is defined as any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization, not including IHEs, that

- (1) Is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest;

- (2) Is not organized primarily for profit; and
- (3) Uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization.

12. Are private institutions of higher education eligible to apply for this grant?

Yes, private non-profit higher education institutions are eligible to apply (see previous question 11).

13. Are for-profit businesses eligible to apply for this grant?

No, for-profit businesses are not eligible to apply for Critical Sectors Job Quality grants.

14. Who are the required partners for this grant?

Tier 1 applicants must identify the organizations they plan to approach to form their worker-centered partnership. Tier 2 applicants must identify these required partner organizations and demonstrate the commitment to the Critical Sectors Job Quality grant partnership. Required grant partners for both tiers **must** include:

- **Labor Unions and Organizations, Labor-Management Partnerships, and Worker Centers and Organizations:** As defined in Amendment 2 of FOA-ETA-23-13, required entities include worker organizations, labor unions, labor-management organizations representing workers, or worker centers that target populations of workers in the care, climate resiliency, or hospitality sectors. Outside of a union, this could include worker associations, coalitions, alliances, guilds, or another similar worker advocacy group that is not considered a formal union. These entities may identify necessary skills and competencies; provide related skills-based training in collaboration with the required education/training provider; work with employer and education partners to develop new or modify existing curricula; advise on recruitment, retention, and advancement strategies within an employer or industry; communicate with current and potential workers within the sector; act as mentors and on-the-job trainers to new workers; and may also provide supportive services. See question 33 for additional information on supportive service provision.
- **Industry and Employer Partners:** A representative group of, and no less than two (2) employer partners who are committed to enhancing job quality, recruiting diverse and underserved populations for training and potential hiring, and actively engaging throughout the grant project. An applicant may meet this employer partnership requirement by partnering with an industry/trade association that represents at least two (2) employers in the service area who are committed to enhancing job quality, recruiting diverse and underserved populations for training and potential hiring, and actively engaging throughout the grant project. An industry/trade association, also

known as an industry trade group, business association, sector association, or industry body, is an organization founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry.

- **Workforce Development Entities:** Entities involved in administering the public workforce system established under the WIOA, including State and Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), American Job Center Operators, and Indian and Native American Program entities eligible for funding under section 166 of WIOA. These organizations have expertise in workforce development and may provide leadership in implementing the following types of activities:
 - (1) understanding and analyzing the need for education and training in the local area, including identifying key employers and industry contacts within the care, climate resiliency, or hospitality industries;
 - (2) addressing hiring needs, identifying target populations, and providing relevant sources of data, including labor market information and other tools or reports;
 - (3) assessing potential participants for the grant program;
 - (4) identifying and referring candidates for education and training in the grant program;
 - (5) developing and delivering training programs;
 - (6) providing additional supportive services;
 - (7) connecting and placing participants with employers that have job openings; and
 - (8) collecting, tracking, and reporting participant data to ETA.

15. Can a lead applicant fill the role of a required partner?

Yes, the lead applicant may fill **one** of the required partner roles. However, the applicant must ensure the partnership includes representation from each of the required partners.

16. How can the applicant identify which relevant unions operate in their service area?

To aid in identifying related unions within the target service area(s), applicants can use the Department of Labor's Office of Labor-Management Standards' (OLMS) Union Search Tool, by which you can search on union type, city, state, zip code, and other criteria to identify labor unions for outreach and partnership. The tool can be found at <https://olmsapps.dol.gov/query/getOrgQry.do>.

17. What is a labor-management organization?

A labor-management organization, also known as a labor-management partnership, allows employers of all sizes to work constructively with the unions representing their employees to tackle important workplace issues that fall within and sometimes extend the framework of traditional collective bargaining. The Department provides information on effective labor-management partnerships and helpful resources at <https://www.dol.gov/general/workcenter/labor-management-partnerships>.

18. Can applicants include additional partners?

Yes, applicants can include additional partners, though these additional partners cannot supplant the required partners. These additional partners may consist of training providers (including public and private non-profit Institutions of Higher Education, as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)); non-profit organizations specializing in one of the three industry sectors; State agencies with the responsibility for supporting public interests aligned with the target critical sectors or that set wage rates or other occupational standards such as state Medicaid agencies; foundations and philanthropic organizations; local, county, or state agencies administering federal funding (such as funding from the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, Commerce, Energy, and Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, or the National Science Foundation); Economics Development Agencies, including the District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); Mental Health and Disability Agencies; Civil Rights Organizations, as well as other community-based organizations that represent and serve historically marginalized populations, such as individuals with disabilities, justice-impacted individuals, and people of color; and organizations that aid immigrant, refugee, asylee and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) populations.

19. Can a lead applicant sub-award grant funds to sub-recipients?

Yes, applicants may sub-award grant funds to sub-recipients. Subrecipient agreements are often an important and necessary part of developing the worker-centered sector partnership required by the FOA. Entities such as state agencies or Local Workforce Development Boards, for example, often – either by necessity or program design – may function as grant intermediaries or administrative entities.

However, the Department expects that the lead applicant has the organizational capacity to implement the proposed program design. The Department strongly 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 sub-recipient).

The use of subrecipients is not an application screening criteria considered (pages 22-24 of FOA-ETA-23-13) nor a factor used to evaluate the technical merit of applications (pages 45-46 of FOA-ETA-23-13). However, applicants who allocate most of the total grant award to one or more sub-recipients will be assessed during the post-award Employment and Training Administration compliance review process to ensure effective grant management and accountability from the awarded lead.

Applicants that include sub-recipients are strongly encouraged to ensure adequate staff and resources are allocated to manage and oversee any sub-recipients.

20. Who can be served through this grant program, and who is the target population?

The Critical Sectors Job Quality Grants will be centered on the needs of workers—designing workforce strategies and providing training that promotes equity, job quality, and worker's voice while supporting improved job quality and availability of good jobs in the care, climate resiliency, and hospitality sectors. This grant program will train participants who are new entrants to the workforce, dislocated workers, or incumbent workers. A participant is any individual determined eligible for and receiving a grant-funded service beyond a determination of eligibility. For the purposes of this FOA, the following definitions apply:

- **New entrants to the workforce:** For the purposes of this FOA, we consider "new entrants to the workforce" to refer 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 and justice-involved individuals. Also eligible, consistent with Federal and state wage and employment laws, are youth who are enrolled in their junior or senior year of high school and who could be employed before or within six months after the end of the grant lifecycle and youth who have dropped out of school and are seeking their first full-time job. In particular, consistent with this FOA's focus on targeting historically marginalized populations and communities, programs serving youth populations should identify and target opportunity youth, as defined in Appendix B: Key Definitions, to align with ETA's Youth Employment Works strategy.
- **Dislocated workers:** For the purposes of this FOA, this term refers to individuals who were terminated or laid off or have received a notice of termination or lay-off from employment; or were self-employed but are now unemployed.
- **Incumbent workers:** For the purposes of this FOA, this term refers to currently employed individuals who need training to secure full-time employment, advance in their careers, or retain their current positions.

Within these eligible participant categories, applicants must specifically target historically marginalized populations and communities within the local or regional economic area served by the grant, especially those that are reflective of the local and regional economic area being served, including women, people of color, justice-involved individuals, individuals with disabilities, or other populations who will benefit from improved job quality and career advancement opportunities within the target critical sectors.

Awards Overview

21. What is the total amount of grant funds that will be awarded?

Approximately \$12 million will be awarded in Critical Sectors Round 2 grant funding.

22. How many grants will be awarded?

The Department of Labor anticipates funding approximately 5-10 grants during the second round.

What is the individual grant amount range for the different tiers? Individual grant amounts for Tier 1 Planning Grants will be up to \$500,000. Individual grant amounts for Tier 2 Implementation Grants will range from \$500,000 to \$3 million.

23. Is there a match or leveraged funds requirement for these grant projects?

There is no match or leveraged funds requirement for these grant projects; applicants for both tiers are strongly encouraged to leverage additional funds to support their projects, but leveraged resources are not required. For both tiers, leveraged resources can come from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, businesses, industry associations, labor organizations, community-based organizations, education and training providers, philanthropic organizations, and/or federal, state, and local government programs. See page 22 of the FOA for information on reporting leveraged resources.

24. How long is the grant period of performance?

Tier 1 Planning Grants have a period of performance of 18 months. Tier 2 Implementation Grants have a period of performance of 36 months. Funding awarded covers the entire period of performance.

25. What is the timeline of the FOA?

The Department must receive applications for the Critical Sectors Round 2 grants by 11:59 p.m. ET on July 15, 2024.

26. Can a lead applicant apply for more than one grant?

No. The Department will consider only one application from each organization that is applying as a lead applicant. If the Department receives multiple applications from the same lead applicant organization for the same application funding round, only the most recently received application that met the deadline for that open period will be considered.

Grant Program Design

27. What industry sectors will be targeted through these grant projects?

Applicants must select **one** of the following three industry sectors on which to focus:

- Care
- Climate resiliency
- Hospitality

More information on these sectors can be found on pages 10-12 of the FOA.

28. Can applicants propose training outside of occupations in the care, climate resiliency, and hospitality sectors?

No. The focus of the application must be one of the three sectors of focus for the grant. Further, please see FAQ #7 for clarification regarding occupations within the climate resiliency sector.

29. How must the applicants embed the Good Jobs Principles in their grant program?

As a component of the core element of the Job Quality Strategy, all applicants must select **at least** two of the Good Jobs Principles on which to focus during the grant period.

Applicants may address more than two principles, and this grant program's goal is that successful applicants will continue to address job quality, furthering all eight principles through post-grant sustainability planning.

30. What is the geographic scope of these grant projects?

All applicants must focus their worker-centered sector strategy on a local or regional economic area that encompasses both the economic region of the target sector as well as the laborshed of the workers. The identified service area should be tied to not just economic factors but also should align with the historically marginalized populations and communities that are the target population for these grants. While Tier 1 applicants must focus on a local or regional economic area for their initial sector strategy convening efforts, Tier 2 applicants may expand their existing sector strategy partnership to a broader region or multiple local or regional areas as long as the chosen sector is in demand within the selected labor markets and the strategic local partners are participating in those regions.

31. What types of activities will this grant program fund?

Tier 1: Developing New Partnerships and Programs (Planning Grants) may propose projects that include, but are not limited to, the following services or activities:

- Convening partners
- Needs assessment and planning
- Designing career pathways
- Other capacity-building activities

More details of the types of activities that may be included in these categories of services can be found on pages 12-14 of the FOA.

Tier 2: Launching Effective Worker-Centered Sector Strategy Programs (Implementation Grants) may propose projects that include, but are not limited to, the following services or activities:

- Convening partners
- Designing career pathways
- Training and work-based learning models
- Other employment-related activities
- Business services
- Participant supportive services
- Incentive payments

More details of the types of activities that may be included in those categories of services can be found on pages 14-16 of the FOA.

32. Can we use grant funds for equipment or renovations?

The purpose of this grant program is to expand job quality in the care, climate resiliency, and hospitality sectors. While training is a key part of this under Tier 2, applicants must demonstrate that any proposed equipment or renovation costs are necessary and reasonable to achieve project and training outcomes within the period of performance. A grant award under this FOA does not constitute prior approval of equipment or renovations. After grant awards are made, grantees must obtain Grant Officer approval before acquiring equipment or proceeding with proposed renovations. The Grant Officer must determine that all proposed equipment and/or renovations are:

- (1) allocable, necessary, and reasonable;
- (2) tied to specific grant-related deliverables and outcomes outlined in the grantee's statement of work (SOW); and
- (3) consistent with the FOA and Uniform Guidance found at 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR 2900.

In their budget narrative, applicants proposing to spend grant funds on renovations outlined in the SOW and budget narrative must demonstrate how these expenditures will support the job quality focus of their proposed project. Equipment purchased with grant funds must be installed and ready to use no later than halfway through the period of performance. All grant-funded activities related to renovations must be completed no later than halfway through the period of performance.

33. Do applications need to include the provision of supportive services?

Yes, successful Tier 2 applicants must have policies and procedures in place governing the provision of supportive services to participants, and supportive services provided under the grant must comply with these organizational policies. See the **Participant Supportive Services** section of the [FOA](#) on page 16 for more information.

34. May Critical Sectors Round 2 projects use grant funds as a supportive service to provide or offset the cost of child care?

Yes. Critical Sectors Round 2 grantees' supportive services approach should align with the joint guidance published by the US Departments of Health and Human Services and Labor ([U.S. Department of Labor Guidance on Supportive Services for Child Care and Long-Term Care | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)) to ensure that program participants in need of child and/or family care are provided the support to be able to complete training, and enter and advance in employment.

35. Can an application focus on a career pathway model that trains and upskills current entry-level workers?

Yes, incumbent worker training models can be included in this grant program.

Performance Outcomes

36. What are the expected job quality outcomes and outputs of the grant program?

Tier 1 applicants must identify the key job quality measures that will be used to track grant progress in meeting milestones, as proposed in their grant applications. Specifically, applicants must:

- identify the expected milestones and metrics that will be used to assess their performance for each Good Jobs principle chosen against the planned project goals,
- describe how the identified milestones and metrics align with job quality improvement within the identified sector, and
- describe the internal process they will use to track targets and goals that relate to the identified minimum of two Good Jobs Principles to be addressed.

Tier 2 applicants must use a collaborative data plan developed through their sector strategy partnership that identifies the key job quality measures they proposed, as well as the required WIOA performance measures, that will be tracked to measure grant success, including hiring and advancement into good jobs for participants trained by the program. Specifically, applicants must:

- identify the expected milestones and metrics for each Good Jobs principle chosen that will be used to assess their performance against the planned project goals,
- describe how the identified milestones and metrics align with job quality improvement within the identified sector, and
- describe how they will use the required data plan to track targets and goals that relate to the identified minimum of two Good Jobs Principles to be addressed.

37. How will grantees be required to report and how often?

Successful applicants who have received Critical Sectors grants will be required to submit program and participant performance information on a quarterly basis. Tier 1 grantees will submit quarterly narrative reports (QNRs) using the ETA-9179 Quarterly Narrative Performance Report Template. Tier 2 grantees will submit both narrative information via the QNR and quantitative participant demographic and outcome data through the Quarterly Performance Report (QPR).

Tier 2 grantees' QPRs will include the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) performance indicators:

- Credential Attainment
- Employment Rate 2nd and 4th quarter after participant exit
- Median Wage 2nd quarter after participant exit
- Measurable Skill Gains

More information about reporting on WIOA performance outcomes will be made available to successful Tier 2 applicants after award.

38. How will past performance be evaluated?

Applicants must have the expertise and experience to develop and carry out a successful project that meets both the needs of the identified critical sector and the target population(s). Therefore, applicants must address their prior experience or successes 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.

Successful Tier 1 applicants will provide evidence of their:

- Background or experience demonstrating the ability to understand and support individuals from historically marginalized populations and communities.
- Demonstration of prior experience and credibility as a sector or strategic partnership convener.
- Prior experience in developing or implementing projects designed to address workforce or economic challenges that reflect the organization's ability to successfully carry out the Critical Sectors Job Quality Grant within expected timeframes and budget.

Successful Tier 2 applicants will provide evidence of how their existing sector partnership has addressed the following:

- Ensuring ongoing engagement and quality leadership of a sector or strategic partnership.
- Identifying and supporting specific needs of individuals from historically marginalized populations and communities.
- Engaging employers and/or worker organizations to address issues related to job quality within specific sectors or occupations.
- Collaboratively designing and delivering in-demand skills training models that successfully result in certifications and credentials for learners with diverse prior experience and knowledge.
- Prior experience in developing or implementing projects designed to address workforce or economic challenges that reflect the organization's ability to successfully carry out the Critical Sectors Job Quality Grant within expected timeframes and budget.

39. How will applications be evaluated for funding?

The Department has instituted procedures for assessing the technical merit of applications to provide for an objective review of applications and to assist applicants in understanding the standards against which applications 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 the FOA has several "section headers." 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 has specific point values assigned. These point values are the number of points possible for the application to earn for the rating factor. Details on Tier 1 criteria can be found on pages 30-34 of the FOA. Details on Tier 2 criteria can be found on pages 34-38 of the FOA.

Application Review Criteria

Criterion	Points (maximum)
1. Statement of Need (See Section IV.B.3.a. Statement of Need)	20 total
2. Project Design (See Section IV.B.3.b. Project Design)	40 total
3. Expected Outputs and Outcomes (See Section IV.B.3.c. Expected Outcomes and Outputs)	16 total
4. Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity (See Section IV.B.3.d. Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity)	12 total
5. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability for Project Success (See Section IV.B.3.e. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability for Project Success)	10 total
6. Budget and Budget Justification (See Section IV.B.3.f. Budget and Budget Narrative)	2 total
Total	100

More information about how applicants will be evaluated can be found on pages 45-50 of [FOA-ETA-23-13](#).