H-1B One Workforce Grant Program
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration
Revised November 9, 2020

1. What is the timeline for the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)?

The closing date for receipt of applications under this Announcement is **November 12, 2020**. We must receive applications no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

2. What is the purpose of the H-1B One Workforce Grant Program?

The **H-1B One Workforce Grant Program** is designed to develop replicable, comprehensive workforce strategies for preparing the workforce for middle-to high-skilled H-1B occupations within the Information Technology (IT), advanced manufacturing, and transportation sectors. The purpose of this grant is to encourage states and economic regions to work with industry stakeholders to develop dynamic workforce strategies that train workers and jobseekers for these targeted sectors. These grants will build proof of concepts of innovative training models that can be replicated by the broader workforce system.

Applicants must build support for a common vision for responding to the workforce challenges within their state and economic regions, ensuring that their projects complement and leverage, but do not duplicate, existing programs. By forging public-private partnerships—H-1B One Workforce Partnerships—applicants will bring together industry and employers, education and training providers, the workforce system, state and local government, and other entities that will work collaboratively to align resources in response to employer demand and to offer novel education and job training solutions that generate positive outcomes and results.

3. Who is eligible to apply for this grant?

The following four types of entities are eligible to apply as a lead applicant:
- Businesses, business-related nonprofit organizations, such as industry and trade associations, and organizations functioning as a workforce intermediary for the express purpose of serving the needs of an industry;
- Education and training providers, including community colleges, other community and faith-based organizations, and for-profit educational and training institutions;
- Entities involved in administering the public workforce system established under WIOA; and
- Economic development agencies.

4. Who are the required partners for the H-1B One Workforce Grant Program?

This program will award grants to an H-1B One Workforce Partnership of public and private sector entities. Eligible lead applicants must establish a partnership that includes the following three types of entities:

- Businesses - applicants are required to partner with at least five employers or an industry/trade association;
- Education and training providers; and
- Workforce development entities.

While a lead entity may represent one of the required partners, an entity cannot serve as more than one type of required partner in the H-1B One Workforce Partnership. Additionally, applicants are strongly encouraged to collaborate with other optional partners that can support and advance the work of their selected industry sector(s).

5. Can we include additional partners?

Yes, applicants are strongly encouraged to collaborate with other optional partners that can support and advance the work of their selected industry sectors. Optional partners may include:
- Organizations functioning as workforce and industry intermediaries (including entities such as labor-management organizations, community-based organizations, and industry associations, which help broker local, regional, and national workforce solutions);
- Foundations and philanthropic organizations;
- Agencies administering federal funding;
- State Apprenticeship Agencies;
- State Transportation Agencies;
- Providers of supportive and specialized services;
- For-profit job training organizations; disability service providers; and
- Faith-based organizations.

6. Can I apply as a lead applicant for more than one grant?

We will consider only one application from each organization as a lead applicant. If we receive multiple applications from the same organization serving as a lead applicant, 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.

Organizations may be involved as partners on multiple applications.

7. How is this grant program funded?

The H-1B One Workforce Grant Program is authorized under Section 414(c) of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (ACWIA), as amended (codified at 29 U.S.C. 3224a). These grants are financed by a user fee paid by employers to bring foreign workers into the United States under the H-1B nonimmigrant visa program.

8. What amount of funding is available? Is there a limit?

We expect availability of up to $150 million to fund approximately 15 to 30 grants. Grant awards will range from $500,000 to $10,000,000. Applicants should request funding that is commensurate with the scope and scale of the project proposed.

9. How long is the grant period of performance?

The period of performance is 48 months. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities. These activities include: promoting programs within the targeted H-1B industry and/or occupation(s) on a local/regional, statewide, or national scale; developing or expanding training activities for participants; providing training; and follow-up for tracking and reporting performance outcomes. We expect hiring appropriate grant project personnel and undertaking start-up activities will begin immediately and expect that grantees will begin enrolling participants no later than nine months after the date of the grant award. We strongly encourage applicants to develop their project work plans and timelines accordingly. Grantees must plan to fully expend grant funds during the period of performance.

10. What individuals may be served through this grant program?

This program will train individuals whose employment status, when determined eligible for the program, is unemployed, underemployed, or an incumbent worker as defined in the FOA. Within these eligible participant categories (unemployed, underemployed and incumbent workers), applicants may specifically target veterans, military spouses, transitioning service members, and underrepresented populations in transportation, advanced manufacturing, and IT sectors, including women, people of color, ex-offenders, individuals with disabilities, and other populations with employment barriers that hinder movement into middle- to high-skilled H-1B occupations.

All participants must be at least 17 years of age and not currently enrolled in secondary school within a local educational agency. Training must result in advancement of an individual's skills along a career pathway into middle- and high-skilled H-1B occupations within key industry sectors.

11. What is the geographic scope for these grant projects?

Applicants may choose one of the following geographic scopes:
- Local/regional;
- Statewide; or
- National.

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

Applicants that demonstrate, in their abstract, that at least one census tract within their physical service area is a qualified Opportunity Zone will receive two points toward their overall application score. Applicants will not receive additional points for multiple Opportunity Zones within the proposed physical service area.

For more information on Opportunity Zones, go to: https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-questions.

12. Which industries will be targeted through these grant projects?

This grant program will fund projects that create a pipeline of workers for key industry sectors that lead to well-paying, middle- and high-skilled jobs across a diversity of H-1B industries and occupations in the **transportation**, **advanced manufacturing**, and **IT sectors**. Applicants must design their workforce training program(s) to target one of the following:

Option 1: Occupations in an H-1B industry – Applicants may choose to expand training programs in an H-1B industry. An H-1B industry is an industry in which the Department has certified H-1B visas for occupations in that industry. Appendix A of the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) is a list of H-1B industries that are acceptable for applications. Given the focus of this FOA, these industries are IT and IT-related industries, advanced manufacturing, and professional services that include engineering and surveying occupations important to the transportation sector.

Option 2: H-1B occupations – Applicants may choose to target a specific H-1B occupation(s) for which a significant number of H-1B visas has been certified, even if that occupation is not in one of the identified H-1B industries listed in Appendix A. If this occupation is not within the H-1B industries identified in Appendix A, the application must provide data showing that the H-1B occupation is one for which a significant number of H-1B visas have been certified and demonstrate that this occupation is related to one of the key sectors of transportation, IT, and advanced manufacturing.

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

Applicants must propose projects that comprise all of the following activities:

- Build new or expand existing sector partnerships that develop a workforce strategy across state and regional workforce and related sector agencies, including employers within the proposed sector-based initiative(s) and education and training entities;
- Establish new or expand career pathways in the proposed sector-based initiative(s) that focus on the skills, competencies, and credentials needed for jobs within the targeted H-1B industries and occupations;
- Offer high-quality training options (such as work-based learning training models) to prepare individuals to successfully move into middle- to high-skilled employment within the targeted H-1B industries and occupations;
- Ensure that participants receive the supportive services necessary to participate fully in employment and training activities;
- Develop a new or leverage an existing system for reviewing and collecting data, and monitor results to assess program performance; and
- Create a new or leverage an existing infrastructure to successfully sustain the program components and partnerships after the life of the grant.

Under this FOA, training along a career pathway may start with entry-level occupations, but must lead to employment in middle- and high-skilled positions in H-1B industries and occupations that support the development of the proposed sector-based initiative(s). Projects will provide a range of training and education services such as assessment, coaching and counseling, and occupational skills training models that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials.

Applicants must consider including robust, comprehensive, and customized work-based learning strategies, such as On-the-Job Training; customized training for cohorts; Incumbent Worker Training; Registered Apprenticeship Programs, Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs, and pre-apprenticeship programs that articulate to grant-funded apprenticeship programs; paid work and paid internships; and classroom, competency-based, and technology-based training strategies.

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

Match Funding: This grant program does not require cost sharing or matching funds.

Leveraged Funding: Applicants are required to identify and report leveraged funds equal to at least 25 percent of the total requested amount of the grant award to supplement grant activities. Applicants must count and document as leveraged resources any cash or in-kind commitments. 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, and/or federal, state, and local government programs.

15. What are expected outcomes and outputs of the grant program?

For the purposes of performance reporting, applicants must provide target numbers for six H-1B outcome measures. Grantees will track these outcome measures and report to the Department throughout the grant using DOL's Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS).

Applicants must provide proposed cumulative target numbers for the four-year grant period of performance. These outcome measures are:
1. Total participants served;
2. Total participants enrolled in education/training activities;
3. Total participants who complete education/training activities;
4. Total participants who complete education/training activities and receive a degree or other type of credential;
5. Total number of unemployed and underemployed participants who complete education/training activities and obtain employment; and
6. Total number of incumbent worker participants who complete training activities and advance into a new position (if serving incumbent workers).

Applicants will also provide four-year targets and track two key WIOA outcomes:
7. Employment rate – 2nd quarter after exit; and
8. Employment rate – 4th quarter after exit.

To meet the overarching goals of this H-1B program, grantees will develop these products, or program outputs, which will be the direct result of implementing the grant's proposed program design:
1. A workforce training plan, which will result in a proof of concept; and
2. A sustainability plan.

16. How will past performance be evaluated?

Organizations will receive points based on past performance data. Applicants must provide the applicable past performance information:
1) Full description of the lead applicant's capacity to lead the development or expansion of a workforce partnership within a local/regional, national, or statewide area during the grant period. This could include evidence of the lead applicant or a partner managing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements leading sector partnership engagement strategies, sector work, or other sector-based activities similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project within the last five years, as of the closing date of this Announcement;*
2) Demonstration that partners have experience in developing education and training programs for the target populations identified in Section IV.B.3. Project Narrative, and enrolling participants in training programs, including securing employment placements and/or wage increases in middle- to high-skilled jobs; and

3) Documentation of Past Performance. Applicants must provide past performance data for outcomes achieved in past grant initiatives.

   Assistance agreements include federal grants and cooperative agreements, but not federal contracts.

All applicants must complete a Past Performance Chart that includes the overall objectives of the grant, population served, funding amount, and grantor contact information.

Applicants should provide four performance indicators most similar to the following:

   i. Total number of unemployed and underemployed participants who complete education/training activities and obtain employment;

   ii. Percentage of participants employed in the second quarter after exit from the program;

   iii. Percentage of participants employed in the fourth quarter after exit from the program; and

   iv. Median earnings of participants employed in the second quarter after exit from the program

Section IV.B.3.e provides full information on providing data on past performance – programmatic capability.

17. How will applications be evaluated for funding?

We have instituted procedures for assessing the technical merit of applications to provide for an objective review of the 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 as shown in this chart. See the FOA for the full description of each criterion.

Criterion	Points (maximum)
1. Statement of Need (See Section IV.B.3.a. Statement of Need)	8
2. Expected Outcomes, and Outputs (See Section IV.B.3.b. Expected Outcomes and Outputs)	26
3. Project Design (See Section IV.B.3.c. Project Design)	24
4. Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity (See Section IV.B.3.e. Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity)	6
5. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability	30

(See Section IV.B.3.f. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability)	
6. Budget and Budget Justification (See Section IV.B.3.g. 2. Project Budget and Budget Narrative)	6
7. Bonus Points: (Up to 2 points) **Opportunity Zones** (See Section IV.B.3. Priority Considerations)	2
TOTAL	**102**

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, distribution among industries/occupations, representation among training programs, and/or other relevant factors. The Grant Officer may consider any information that comes to their attention.

18. The FOA requires grantees to make information about credentials and competencies developed and delivered using grant funds publicly accessible in a "linked open data format," and refers to "credential transparency description language (CTDL)." Can you explain what that means and what we will have to do if we are awarded a grant? Also, does this have to be reflected in our application?

Regarding the requirement to make grant-funded credentials and competencies publicly accessible, Section I.E.2 of the FOA (p. 16) states:

"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."

To meet this requirement during the period of performance, grantees will need to describe grant-funded credentials using common structured, linked data formats, and to post this information in a publicly accessible location online. Grantees may need to seek assistance from a specialist in credential and data transparency in their One Workforce Partnership or an outside expert to comply with this requirement. The Department recommends that applicants reflect their proposed efforts to meet this requirement in their work plans and budgets. Below we provide information and resources on credential transparency to help applicants better understand the grant requirement. Note that successful applicants will receive further information and additional technical assistance from DOL on this requirement. Structured data is machine-readable and used by search engines to understand the content of web pages. Linked Data is a type of structured data that links between systems via the Web. When data is both structured and linked, it becomes a powerful tool that search engines and other systems can leverage.

For further information, you may wish to view the credential transparency slides located at https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/skills-grants/h1-b-skills-training that provide more background on credential transparency. You may also wish to view resources from the following examples of open data formats for credentials:

- Comprehensive Learner Record Specification
- Credential Engine's Services and Publishing
- Open Badge 2.0 Specification
- W3C Verifiable Credentials Data Model

NEW 19. I am an applicant that has completed an H-1B-funded grant award within the past five years. The Quarterly Performance Report used for that grant was the ETA-9172 and not the ETA-9136. Should I use the data from the ETA-9172?

Yes. Applicants that used the ETA-9172 on their H-1B-funded grant within the past five years should use data from that form.