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U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.
Release Number: 12-1284-NAT

For Immediate Release

June 28, 2012

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US Department of Labor announces \$5 million grant competition to pilot test guidelines to reduce child and forced labor in agricultural imports

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of International Labor Affairs today announced a competitive solicitation for a \$5 million cooperative agreement to pilot test the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s guidelines to reduce child labor and forced labor in imported agricultural products.

Worldwide, an estimated 60 percent of children who work do so in the agricultural sector. The USDA’s 2011 Guidelines for Eliminating Child and Forced Labor in Agricultural Supply Chains lay out the key elements of effective company programs to reduce the likelihood that child or forced labor is used in agricultural products or commodities imported into the United States.

Prospective applicants must represent a partnership that includes a nongovernmental organization and a company that is active in agricultural supply chains. Applicants must demonstrate expertise in areas such as international children’s issues, labor issues and company supply chain compliance programs. The project funded as a result of this competition will involve piloting a program for one or more companies to reduce child labor (and forced labor if applicable) in an agricultural supply chain in one country. In addition, the projects will involve documenting lessons learned and recommendations for future application of the USDA’s guidelines.

Eligible applicants must respond to the entire scope of work outlined in the solicitation. Applications must be submitted by Aug. 20 at 5 p.m. EDT electronically via <http://www.grants.gov> or as hard copies to the U.S. Department of Labor, Procurement Services Center, 200 Constitution Ave. NW, Room S-4307, Washington, D.C. 20210, Attention: Brenda White and Jim Kinslow.

The cooperative agreement award – possibly more than one – will be made by Dec. 31. The solicitation for grant applications is available online at <http://s.dol.gov/T6>.

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