

H-1B Grants for Innovative Approaches to Connect Individuals with Barriers to Good Jobs in Technology and Other In-Demand Fields

Today the Administration is announcing the commitment to make a \$100 million available through the Department of Labor to support innovative approaches to moving lower skilled workers with barriers to training and employment on the fastest paths to well-paying information technology and high growth jobs in industries like healthcare, advanced manufacturing, financial services, and other in-demand sectors. The grant will focus on providing workers the skills for a pathway to the middle class while providing employers with the skilled technology workers they need to grow and expand. This grant will serve people with barriers to accessing training including those with child care needs, people with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, and disconnected youth, among others. It will serve both unemployed and low skilled front line workers. Grants will pilot and scale innovative partnerships between employers, workforce boards, training institutions, non-profit organizations, and cities and states across the country. These partnerships will support the implementation of job-driven training strategies to help workers complete basic and technical skills training using evidence-based strategies such as accelerated learning, work-based learning and Registered Apprenticeships. A solicitation for applications for these partnerships will be available this fall and awards will be made next year. These grants will reward partnerships with the following key features:

- ***Increase Access to Training Opportunities.*** This grant program will provide opportunities for front-line workers or people that are currently unemployed to increase their skills and job prospects by addressing barriers that prevent them from taking advantage of training. Each grantee will agree to develop strategies that serve one or more groups of individuals with barriers to employment. This grant will encourage successful job-driven programs to focus their strategies to more effectively increase skills and employment prospects through partnerships that include community organizations with experience assisting these populations. The grants will fund assessments, job placement assistance, training, mentoring and supportive services such as transportation, financial counseling, and child care. At least \$25 million will be dedicated to addressing barriers to training faced by those with childcare responsibilities.
- ***Employer Engagement Resulting in Accelerated Learning, Work-Based Learning Opportunities and Commitments to Consider Hiring Qualified Participants.*** Training programs funded by these grants must address the skills and competencies demanded by employers in high-growth industries, and lead to the employment of qualified participants. Preference will be given to applicants with employer partners that are using strong work-based learning strategies such as Registered Apprenticeships and On-the Job Training and have a strong record of hiring new entrants from training programs, or make a commitment to consider candidates who successfully complete programs developed. Upskill/backfill strategies that increase skills of incumbent workers to attain mid-level jobs while creating entry level opportunities for new entrants in H-1B occupations and industries will also be encouraged. Finally, the grant will preference training for high-quality jobs with higher wages, benefits and paid leave.

- *Accelerated learning strategies to provide the fastest path to good jobs.* Programs funded through these grants will be encouraged to implement strategies to rapidly train participants for employment such as:
 - Well-articulated career pathways that move learners directly into in demand occupations
 - Competency-based programs that give participants credit for skills they have already developed and allow participants to move through coursework based on mastery of skills
 - Innovative programs, such as coding bootcamps, that prepare those with little technical know-how to get entry- to mid-level jobs in software development in less than six months

This grant program is designed to provide unemployed workers and frontline workers with the specialized services leading to rapid employment in occupations and industries for which employers use H-1B visas to hire foreign workers. 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. This program was authorized under Section 414 (c) of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (ACWIA), as amended (29 USC 2916a). Grant awards will be made only to the extent that funds are available.