

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
2011 SCHOLARS PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT
APPLICATIONS DUE FEBRUARY 28, 2011**

I. Summary

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor (the Department), Mathematica Policy Research is pleased to announce a competition to fund one or two highly qualified researchers to carry out research projects that are relevant to the Department's policymaking. Proposed projects should contribute to the Department's mission of fostering, promoting, and developing the well-being of wage earners, retirees, and job seekers. Subject areas of interest include (but are not limited to)

- Employment and training
 - Impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
 - Public workforce system services to targeted populations (for example, veterans, persons with disabilities, migrant and seasonal farm workers, or Native Americans)
 - Advantages and drawbacks of on-the-job training as both a workforce development strategy and a pathway to stable employment
 - Links between One-Stop Career Centers and community colleges
 - Adult learning and addressing the unique needs of employed learners
 - New and emerging occupations and skill and credential requirements
 - Sector strategies for workforce development
 - Educational and career pathways, ladders, and lattices
 - Performance measurement in the public workforce system and its incentive effects
- Unemployment and its effects on individuals, families, and communities
- Factors that affect employment transitions and attachment to the labor force
- Working conditions and worker safety
- Effects of enforcement on employers' compliance with laws and regulations
- Child labor and workers' rights around the world
- The changing roles of women in the workforce
- Strategies to facilitate veterans' entry into the civilian workforce
- Strategies to remove employment barriers for people with disabilities
- Retirement decisions

Through this grant competition, the Department will support creative and innovative research that demonstrates the potential to

- Use sound research methods to yield policy-relevant and adequately supported findings
- Contribute to the evidence base underlying the Department's policy development or execution
- Shed light on particularly noteworthy aspects of labor, employment, and training policies or programs
- Point to novel directions for inquiry, which could inform the Department's priorities in research, evaluation, and pilot and demonstration projects

The Department expects that successful applications will exhibit methodological rigor, potential salience for policymaking, and thematic creativity or novelty.

II. Background

For additional information on the Department's policy goals and activities in the coming years, please see its strategic plan for fiscal years 2011–2016 at http://www.dol.gov/_sec/stratplan/.

The program is funded by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), which oversees the public workforce system and the Federal-State partnership of unemployment insurance systems. ETA maintains an online database of research reports and papers that it has funded at <http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/>. Applicants who propose to address employment or training topics are advised to gain some familiarity with the subjects and methodological approaches of past research projects.

III. Eligibility

Although no strict eligibility restrictions will apply, the Department and Mathematica expect to award grants to postdoctoral associates and junior faculty members.

IV. Disciplinary and Methodological Focus

The Department encourages proposals from researchers in a variety of social science and cognate disciplines, including economics, sociology, public policy and administration, psychology, and education. Similarly, the selection committee will consider proposals representing a variety of methodologies, quantitative and qualitative alike.

V. Amount of Award

The individual award amount will depend on the applicant's proposed budget. We expect that the typical award is in the range of one month's summer support plus relevant research-related expenses.

VI. Expected Deliverables

Applicants should propose to deliver the following:

- A research paper at least 25 pages in length (not including graphics or references), written at an appropriate standard for submission to a nationally or internationally recognized journal in the field (such as the *Journal of Labor Economics* or *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*). We expect successful applicants to submit their final papers to

at least one such journal (with due acknowledgment of this grant program) and keep the Department and Mathematica apprised of the outcome of the submission.

- A presentation of research findings at a briefing at the Department. Date and time of such a briefing will be negotiated between the award recipient and the Department and will follow the submission of the draft final paper.
- Monthly progress reports on the study to be submitted to Mr. Bryce Onaran at bonaran@mathematica-mpr.com.

VII. Instructions on How to Apply

The complete application package should be submitted to Mr. Bryce Onaran (bonaran@mathematica-mpr.com) by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on February 28, 2011. It should include the following documents, submitted as separate email attachments in either portable document (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) file format:

1. **Research project description.** This document must include the following sections: Introduction, Background, Statement of Relevance, Statement of Problem and Research Questions, Methodology, Deliverables, Limitations, and Expected Impact. The document's overall length may not exceed 10 pages. The Background section introduces the literature on the subject as well as the concepts and terms that are most salient to understanding the proposal. The Statement of Relevance section places the project in the context of the Department's programmatic, enforcement, and/or research efforts and motivates the choice of topic. The Statement of Problem and Research Questions section articulates the specific research topic that the applicant proposes to address and succinctly formulates the questions the applicant aims to answer. The Methodology section discusses the methods the researcher proposes to use in sufficient technical detail to enable social science researchers to assess the suitability of those methods to the proposed project and research questions. The Deliverables section describes the deliverables the applicant commits to producing in the event of award, including their length, topical focus, and format. The Limitations section forthrightly addresses any limitations of the proposed study design and methodology as well as any concerns about the availability of data and the internal and external validity of the research project. The Expected Impact section outlines the proposed project's impacts on policy formulation and execution as well as implications for the research literature in the field.
2. **Application form.** Applicants must complete the application form that accompanies this announcement.
3. **Project management plan.** This plan should include a specific time line of main tasks and deliverables (for example, literature review, data analyses, and paper drafts). Projects must be completed by September 30, 2011, and earlier completion dates are preferred. Award recipients will track their work relative to the project management plan in their monthly progress reports.
4. **Curriculum vitae.** Applicants must include a curriculum vitae no longer than five pages.
5. **Budget.** Given the nature of this program and the size of the grants, there are no strict requirements on the form and detail of the budget. At a minimum, it should include the amount of funding requested, a point or range estimate of hours of labor required to complete the project, a comprehensive list of any purchases and travel expected for

performing the work with expected costs of each, and a narrative budget justification explaining the amount sought and any budget line items.

6. **Letter of commitment.** Applicants must include a signed letter of commitment indicating that they have the time and ability to perform the proposed projects if they receive the awards.

Letter of recommendation. Applicants must include a letter of recommendation from a senior researcher who is knowledgeable about the applicant's research record and potential. The letter should address the applicant's research accomplishments and capabilities and include a commitment to discuss the proposed research activities with the applicant over the course of the project. The recommender may elect to email the letter directly to Mr. Bryce Onaran at bonaran@mathematica-mpr.com, in which case the letter should clearly state the applicant's name at the top.

All documents should use 1.5 line spacing and have 1.0-inch margins throughout with each page of every document numbered and marked with the applicant's last name. Submissions that are incomplete or not compliant with these specifications might not be reviewed.

VIII. Evaluation Criteria

Completed applications will be evaluated by selected staff at the Department based on the following: the strength, rigor, and appropriateness of the proposed methodology; the extent of innovation and creativity in the choice of topic and/or method; potential contribution to the policy evidence base and to the scholarly literature; and the completeness and quality of the submitted application materials. The applicant's demonstrated research record will also factor into the selection process. The number and value of awards are limited by the total amount of available funds.

IX. Additional Information

Award decisions will be made at the discretion of the Department and will not be subject to appeal; no language in this announcement shall limit the parties' discretion in making the awards. Decisions are expected no later than March 18, 2011.

By applying for a grant under this announcement, an individual agrees, if successful, to attend a kickoff telephone conference call with other grantees, the Department, and Mathematica soon after award; to respond in a timely and complete fashion to comments and suggestions from the Department and Mathematica's representatives; and to submit the draft final report at least one month in advance of the final due date. Any exceptions to these requirements must come in writing from Mr. Onaran.

Two payments under the grants will be disbursed, conditional on satisfactory progress. Payments may be terminated for material deficiencies in performance.

Upon the Department's approval, grantees are expected to make their research results available to the research community and the general public. The Department retains the right to use and disseminate the scholar's research findings. Please be advised that the Department intends to publish scholars' research papers on the ETA research publication database Web site. Scholars must include the following disclaimer on the bottom of the cover page of the research paper or report:

“This report (paper) has been funded, either wholly or in part, with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Labor under Contract Number DOLQ091A20941. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government.”

X. Contact Information

Any questions should be directed to Mr. Bryce Onaran at bonaran@mathematica-mpr.com.