

*Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants (Third Round)*  
FOA-ETA-22-02  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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**1) Is there a new Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for the third round of SCC funding?**

No. The FOA for the second round of Strengthening Community College Training Grants (SCC2), FOA-ETA-22-02, closed on June 2, 2022. This same FOA will be used for the third round (SCC3). See Amendment Two of the SCC2 FOA under “Related Documents” at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=336701>, which revises language in the FOA to reflect changes applicable to the third round, and states that all references in FOA-ETA-22-02 to SCC2 will refer to the third round of grants, SCC3.

**2) What is the timeline for SCC3 applications?**

The closing date for receipt of SCC3 applications under this Announcement is October 14, 2022. You must submit your application electronically on <https://www.grants.gov> no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date or it will not be considered for funding.

**3) I applied for SCC2. Will I know about the outcome of my SCC2 application before the deadline for SCC3?**

All applications that were submitted by the June 2, 2022, SCC2 deadline, will be paneled as part of SCC2. DOL anticipates SCC2 awards will be announced by late August 2022. The SCC3 awards process is not a rolling process. Rather, non-awarded applicants for SCC2 may re-apply, along with new applicants, by the SCC3 closing date of October 14, 2022. All applications for SCC3 submitted by the deadline will be considered together in a new paneling process.

**4) Who can apply for SCC3 grants?**

The SCC3 FOA is open to the same eligible entities as the SCC2 FOA. Non-awarded applicants for SCC2 may re-apply, along with new applicants, by the SCC3 closing date of October 14, 2022.

To have a broader reach, colleges that were awarded grants in the first round of SCC (SCC1, FOA-ETA-20-07), or in the second round of SCC (SCC2), will be ineligible to

apply as leads in the third round (SCC3). However, these colleges are still eligible to be consortium members.

Colleges that were included as consortium members in the first and/or second rounds of SCC grants are eligible to apply as leads or consortium members in the third round.

The eligible lead applicant must be a community college that is a public institution of higher education as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act and whose most common degree awarded is an associate degree. Specific criteria for how the Department will determine this are in Section III.A.

The lead applicant must apply as a single institution lead or as a consortium lead representing a consortium of institutions of higher education (institution consortium).

Grants will be awarded to the lead applicant of an SCC Partnership, which will serve as the grantee and have overall fiscal and administrative responsibility for the grant.

Note that, to be eligible as a lead applicant, an applicant does not have to meet the criteria for “Qualified Institution,” as described in Section III.A.3. of the FOA and in Question #10, below.

**5) Will I be able to get feedback on an SCC2 application before the deadline for SCC3 applications?**

DOL offers non-awarded applicants the option to receive evaluative feedback on their grant applications. The non-award letter from the Grant Officer provides instructions on how to request evaluative feedback, as well as contact information. Note that non-awarded applicants should make the request for evaluative feedback no later than 45 days after receipts of the non-award letter from the Grant Officer, and sooner if seeking to use the feedback for the SCC3 application.

**6) What is the purpose of the third round of the *Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants* program?**

The third round of the Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants program (referred to as SCC3) will increase the capacity and responsiveness of community colleges to close equity gaps in addressing skill development needs of employers and workers, in support of the Biden-Harris Administration’s vision to build community college capacity for in-demand skills training through strategic partnerships between industry, education, and the workforce system. The purpose of this grant is (1) to increase the capacity and responsiveness of community colleges to address identified equity gaps (as described in Core Element 1: Advancing Equity), and (2) to meet the skill development needs of employers in in-demand industries and career pathways, as well as the skill development needs of marginalized and underrepresented workers.

## **7) How does the FOA define “equity” and “equity gaps”?**

Pursuant to Executive Order 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, “equity” means the “consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.”

In the context of this Announcement, an “equity gap” refers to significant and persistent inequity or disparity in the employment or educational opportunities offered to individuals who belong to one of the marginalized communities described in Executive Order 13985. These opportunities may include opportunities for students related to educational access or attainment, but they must ultimately relate to employment outcomes. They may also include inequities in opportunities for faculty and staff of the community colleges themselves, particularly where addressing those faculty and staff opportunities would improve the training and education, and supports for training and employment, of students.

## **8) How does the FOA seek to advance equity?**

This announcement includes several measures that support the Administration’s equity goals. All of these are discussed in greater detail in the FOA.

- The FOA requires that applicants conduct an equity gap analysis and develop two equity performance outcomes related to one or more key equity gaps that they propose to close or reduce within the SCC3 grant period of performance.
- The FOA seeks to ensure equitable opportunities for federal funding by encouraging and incentivizing applications from specific institutions. Specifically, the FOA will award bonus points to “lead applicants that are Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges or Universities, other Minority-Serving Institutions, or Strengthening Institutions Programs using Department of Education eligibility indicators.” The FOA refers to these institutions as Qualified Institutions and this is also discussed in Question 7.
- To promote flexibility and diversity in applicant types, the FOA will fund a mix of single institution grants and consortium grants. Further, consortium grantees must apply as one of three types of consortium applicants: state-level, labor market, or affinity-focused. An affinity-focused consortium is defined as having a lead applicant and majority membership of institutions that are eligible as

Qualified Institutions and that focus on building capacity to address equity gaps and achieve systems change within an affinity focus. Examples of affinity-focused consortia include, but are not limited to, a consortium of tribal colleges, a consortium of HBCUs, or a consortium of a majority of Qualified Institutions and minority of institutions that are not Qualified Institutions. In each example, the affinity-focused consortium would seek to address equity gaps that specifically impact the chosen area of affinity and which are common to its institution consortium members, through building or enhancing a common career pathway or pathways as described in Core Element 2 of the FOA.

- DOL will set aside up to \$5 million of the \$45 million in SCC3 Program Grant funds to ensure the award of at least one affinity-focused consortium grant.

**9) What qualifies as an institution consortium? What entities are eligible to participate in the institution consortium?**

The Department is requiring consortium applicants to apply for this funding as a consortium of colleges that will undertake systems change through one of three specific lenses: state-level, labor market, or affinity-focused.

- **State-focused consortium:** Institutions within a state may apply as a consortium to focus on creating sustainable systems change within their state community college and workforce systems.
- **Labor market-focused consortium:** Institutions within a state or across two or more contiguous states that share a common economic region may apply as a consortium to address equity gaps and respond to the workforce needs of a specific industry sector within the region's labor market.
- **Affinity-focused consortium:** A consortium that has a lead applicant and majority membership of institutions eligible as Qualified Institutions (see next question and FOA Section III.A.3. Qualified Institution) and focuses on building capacity to address equity gaps and achieve systems changes within an affinity focus. Colleges that are not designated as Qualified Institutions may be members of the consortium, as long as the lead applicant and a majority of the institution membership are Qualified Institutions.

Examples of affinity-focused consortia include, but are not limited to, a consortium of tribal colleges, a consortium of HBCUs, or a consortium of a majority of Qualified Institutions and minority of institutions that are not Qualified Institutions. In each example, the affinity-focused consortium would seek to address equity gaps that specifically impact the chosen area of affinity and which are common to its institution consortium members, through building or enhancing a common career pathway or pathways as described in Section I.A.2. Core Element 2.

Note that, in all three types of institution consortium, the lead applicant community college serves as one of the consortium members. Public and private non-profit two-year and four-year institutions of higher education, as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act, are eligible to participate as members of the consortium.

### **10) What is a “Qualified Institution”?**

The definition of Qualified Institution remains the same for SCC3 applicants as for SCC2 applicants.

In support of Executive Order 13985, FOA-ETA-22-02 will ensure equitable opportunities for federal funding by encouraging and incentivizing applications from specific institutions. These institutions include Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions, as well as institutions funded under the Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP). SIP institutions, funded through the Higher Education Act’s Titles III and V, are qualifying institutions that serve a higher than average percentage of low-income students and that have low education expenditures per student

Under this Announcement, priority consideration of two bonus points is available to lead institutions that the Department deems “Qualified Institutions,” as described below. In addition, colleges that wish to form an Affinity-Focused must have an institution consortium in which the lead applicant, as well as a majority of member institutions, are Qualified Institutions

The Department considers institutions of higher education to be Qualified Institutions for the purposes of this Announcement if they:

- Meet eligibility under Part F of the HEA of 1965, 20 U.S. Code § 1067q – Investment in Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Other Minority-Serving Institutions, and are designated by the U.S. Department of Education at its Eligibility Designations and Applications for Waiver of Eligibility Requirements website. Eligibility must be for FY 2021 or FY 2022. See “Eligibility Matrix” below for how this will be determined.

OR

- Meet both basic and specific eligibility requirements under Part A of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, 20 U.S. Code § 1057-1059b – Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP), and are designated by the U.S. Department of Education at its Eligibility Designations and Applications for Waiver of Eligibility Requirements website. Eligibility must be for FY 2021 or FY 2022. See “Eligibility Matrix” below for how this will be determined.

### **11) How will the Department determine whether an applicant is a Qualified Institution?**

For the purposes of identifying Qualified Institutions for this Announcement, applicants must provide, as a requested attachment, a letter from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), labeled “Letter Identifying Eligibility from the U.S. Department of Education.” This letter verifies an institution’s eligibility under Titles III and V and can be downloaded (for FY 2022) by institutions with existing accounts or requested from OPE directly. Eligibility must be for FY 2021 or FY 2022.

Applicants that are unable to obtain a copy of their FY 2021 or FY 2022 eligibility letter from OPE must submit, to verify eligibility, a letter from their institution stating which Eligibility Matrix at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/itudes/eligibility.html#el-inst> includes their institution. At their option, applicants may provide the line number indicating where their institution is located in the matrix (for FY 2021) or the tab and line number (for FY 2022). The letter must be provided as an attachment labeled “Qualified Institution Eligibility Letter.”

For FY 2021, DOL will consider those institutions that receive a ‘Yes’ designation in the column labeled “Eligible/Current Grantee” (column “AL”) on the Eligibility Matrix 2021 to be a Qualified Institution for this Announcement, and those same institutions should be able to provide the eligibility letter previously sent from OPE. The FY2022 eligibility matrix uses a different format than prior years and does not include institutions who were not deemed eligible or a current grantee. Thus, DOL will consider those institutions that appear anywhere in the Eligibility Matrix for FY 2022 to be a Qualified Institution for this Announcement, and those same institutions should be able to provide the eligibility letter from OPE.

### **12) What entities are required as part of the SCC Partnership?**

All applicants must include the following partners in their SCC partnership:

- One or more partners from the publicly funded workforce development system; and
- An employer partnership consisting of an industry/trade association or an employer sector consortium of at least three employers, for each proposed industry sector.

In addition, consortium applicants must include the following required partners:

- The institution consortium member(s), including the lead applicant.

### **13) How many colleges are required for an institution consortium?**

An institution consortium must include at least the community college that is a public institution as the consortium lead and one other institution, but the Department anticipates that more than two colleges will be required to accomplish the goals of a consortium, depending on the specific consortium focus.

#### **14) Can we include additional partners?**

Yes, we strongly encourage applicants to collaborate with other partners that can support and advance the work of the SCC Partnership. In light of the SCC program's equity goals, we encourage applicants to partner with organizations that have successfully engaged historically underrepresented and marginalized populations and communities. In support of quality jobs, we strongly encourage applicants to partner with unions or labor-management organizations within the industries that directly connect to the proposed career pathway(s) where feasible, whether as part of their employer partnership or as optional partners.

Other optional partners include community-based organizations; tribal entities; technical colleges; State Apprenticeship Agencies; federally funded programs, such as Adult Education and Perkins V Temporary Assistance to Needy Families programs, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training programs; economic development agencies; and foundations and philanthropic organizations. State-focused consortium applicants are encouraged to include at least one state-level or community college district-level entity, such as a state governing body for community colleges or for institutions of higher education more broadly, a statewide association of community colleges, or a community college district (or equivalent) entity.

#### **15) Can I apply for more than one grant?**

We will consider only one application from each organization. If we receive multiple applications from the same organization, 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. Eligible applicants may submit an application as the lead applicant, and also serve as an institution consortium member in an application or applications in which they do not serve as the lead applicant.

To have a broader reach, colleges that were awarded grants in the first round of SCC (SCC1, FOA-ETA-20-07), or in the second round of SCC (SCC2), will be ineligible to apply as leads in the third round (SCC3), but are eligible to be consortium members. Colleges that were included as consortium members in the first and/or second rounds of SCC grants are eligible to apply as leads or consortium members in the third round.

## 16) How is the grant program funded?

Section 169(c) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) authorizes this program. See also Title I of Division H of Pub. L. 117-103, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, March 15, 2022.

## 17) What are the two parts of this training initiative?

For the purposes of this FOA, this training initiative has two parts: the standard program grants will be referred to as SCC3 Program Grants and the additional evaluation funds will be referred to as Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding. As we explain further in Question #19 below, the purpose of Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding is to provide the opportunity for rigorous evaluation to approximately 2-4 of the applicants who are selected for SCC3 Program Grants.

## 18) What amount of funding is available? Is there a limit?

We expect availability of approximately \$50 million to fund the two parts of the SCC3 initiative:

- **SCC3 Program Grants:** About \$45 million of the \$50 million available will fund approximately 11-15 SCC3 Program Grants. Out of that amount, the Department anticipates awarding at least 75 percent of available funding through approximately 5-7 consortia grants and the remaining available funding through 6-8 single institution grants.

Single institution applicants may apply for a ceiling amount of \$1.6 million and consortium lead applicants may apply for a ceiling amount of \$5 million. The minimum for both types of applicants is \$1.5 million.

Up to \$5 million of SCC3 Program Grant funds will be set aside to ensure the award of at least one affinity-focused consortium grant.

- **Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding:** Up to \$5 million of the \$50 million total available will be set aside to award additional evaluation funding to 2-4 competitive applicants awarded SCC3 Program Grants, with a demonstrated justification for additional support to carry out an impact, outcomes, or behavioral interventions study.

Consortium applicants that include all consortium members may request up to \$1.65 million additional. Single institution applicants or consortium applicants with only the lead participating may request up to \$1.2 million additional.

If insufficient qualifying applications are received for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding, any funds not awarded for the additional evaluation component will be applied to SCC3 Program Grant awards.

**19) What is the purpose of the Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding option? How does it relate to the required third-party evaluation?**

To support rigorous evaluations, SCC3 offers the opportunity for successful applicants to receive additional funds, beyond the grant maximum, to conduct an impact, outcome, or behavioral interventions study that focuses on evaluating the achievement of their proposed equity gap goals. Suggested benchmarks for impact, outcome, and behavioral intervention evaluations are included in Appendix F.

The benefits of participating in Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding include the opportunity to gain valuable additional data and insights related to an institution's specific equity goals; the occasion to participate in and contribute to the larger national conversation about those goals; and additional funding to cover the full cost of the contracted evaluator and at least partial internal costs of conducting the additional evaluation activities.

The Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding option does not replace the required third-party evaluation requirement under the FOA. All grantees are required to retain (after award) a third-party evaluator to design and execute a developmental evaluation or an implementation evaluation of each funded project. See Section I.G. Evaluations.

**20) How long are the grants active?**

The period of performance for SCC3 is 48 months with an anticipated start date of February 1, 2023. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities.

We expect that start-up activities, such as hiring appropriate grant program staff and project design activities, will begin immediately after grant award. Grantees are required to procure their required third-party evaluator by the end of month six, if possible under their institution's procurement guidelines. Grantees are expected to start enrolling participants in grant-funded programs of study by at least month 12, with consideration of academic calendars, though sooner is preferred. We strongly encourage grantees to develop their project work plans and timelines accordingly. Required outputs, including key milestones and deliverables, must be included in an attachment to the Project Narrative; see Appendix H: Suggested Project Work Plan Format.

Grantees must plan to fully expend grant funds during the period of performance. DOL does not anticipate period of performance extensions under this FOA.

## **21) Who can be served by the grant?**

For the purposes of tracking participants under this FOA, “participants” are defined as the students enrolled in a program of study that is being developed or improved using SCC3 Program Grant funds. The definition of eligible participants is broad. Consistent with the funding source, eligible participants include a spectrum of workers – dislocated workers, incumbent workers, and new entrants to the workforce, including older youth. Section III.C.3 provides more information on eligible participants.

Additionally, through a focus on addressing equity gaps, these grants will target historically marginalized or underrepresented populations and communities – specifically people of color, women, individuals with disabilities, and those previously incarcerated – in their career pathway approach. The focus on building the capacity to offer accelerated career pathways to quality jobs will also benefit other populations, such as veterans and military spouses, and other individuals.

## **22) What is the geographic scope of these grant programs?**

The Department is requiring community colleges to apply for this funding as a single institution, or as a state-focused consortium, a labor market-focused consortium, or an affinity-focused consortium.

**Single Institution:** The Department expects that a single institution will align the SCC3 grant with the geographic area served by that college; it also may align the grant with additional geographic regions of other colleges in its state, as permitted by institutional guidelines.

**Consortium applicants:** The Department is requiring institutions to apply for this funding as a consortium of colleges that will undertake systems change through one of three specific lenses: state-level, labor market, or affinity-focused.

- **State-focused consortium:** Institutions within a state may apply as a consortium to focus on creating sustainable systems change within their state community college and workforce systems. State-focused consortia must coordinate with and between partners to support sustainable systems change at the state level. The Department expects state-focused consortia to align the SCC3 grant with the geographic area served by at least the colleges in the institution consortium, and encourages such consortia to align with the geographic areas of other non-funded colleges in the state, as permitted by institutional guidelines—particularly with respect to systems change at the state level.
- **Labor market-focused consortium:** Institutions within a state or across two or more contiguous states that share a common economic region. The Department expects labor market-focused consortia to align the SCC3 grant with the geographic area of the economic region, as defined in the application.

- Affinity-focused consortia: the affinity-focused consortium would seek to address equity gaps that specifically impact the chosen area of affinity and which are common to its institution consortium members, through building or enhancing a common career pathway or pathways as described in Section I.A.2. Core Element 2. While there are no geographic restrictions on affinity consortia, the Department expects affinity-focused consortia to align the SCC3 grant with the geographic areas served by its institution members, though institutions outside of the SCC3 consortium may also be able to benefit if the affinity focus aligns with existing efforts in those geographic areas.

See Section III.A. Eligible Applicants for more information about the geographic scope of each.

### **23) Are there targeted industries and/or occupations under this FOA?**

When selecting the career pathway(s) to be built or enhanced with grant funding, applicants must focus on those pathways that provide training to workers in in-demand industries, such as – but not limited to – advanced manufacturing, information technology, health care, clean energy, and others. Applicants also may consider how the development of and/or connection to entrepreneurial training to strengthen small business growth may support the chosen career pathways, in these and other industries, provided that the entrepreneurial training is aligned with grant goals and local economic needs.

Career pathways identified in application proposals must lead to good-quality jobs. For the purposes of this FOA, good-quality jobs are jobs that pay family-sustaining wages with wage progression, benefits, access to paid leave, opportunities for career advancement through training and education and, to the strongest extent possible, a platform for worker voice to support all workers and ensure fair pay and safe working conditions. Within these priorities, applicants must demonstrate that the industry sectors that they select align with the skills and needs of their economic region and the target population(s) that are key to their equity gap analysis.

### **24) Is there a match requirement?**

No. This program does not require cost sharing or matching funds. Including such funds is not one of the application screening criteria and applications that include any form of cost sharing or match will not receive additional consideration during the review process. Instead, the agency considers any resources contributed to the project beyond the funds provided by the agency as leveraged resources. Section IV.B.2 provides more information on leveraged resources.

## 25) What are the expected outcomes for the grant program?

All applicants must identify and define five customized performance outcomes to be used with their project, three that address key capacity-building goals and two that address key equity goals. To further quantify the benefits of SCC3 capacity-building initiatives, grantees will also be required to track participant outputs related to enrollment in and completion of a program of study, and credentials earned, for a cohort of students.

### Customized Outcomes

Applicants must provide customized, quantitative capacity-building and equity performance outcome targets, as described below, that flow from the equity gap analysis and logic model (described in Question #26) and that show end-of-grant target outcomes.

- The three **capacity-building outcomes** must measure key aspects of the grant-funded capacity that they propose to build to meet their equity and workforce goals under this FOA.
- The two **equity outcomes** must demonstrate key aspects of how the project will close one or more of the equity gaps identified in the gap analysis. These outcomes may relate to the same equity gap (if the applicant is targeting one primary equity gap) and reflect the project's efforts to tackle different aspects of the same underlying disparity. Alternatively, if the applicant is proposing to address several different equity gaps, the two outcomes may correspond to separate equity gaps.

These outcomes may occur at any phase along the career pathway but must be connected to a specific sectoral or occupational workforce shortage and aligned with a career pathway approach to address that worker demand. For detailed examples of capacity-building and equity outcomes with all requested components, see Section IV.B.3.b.2. *Note that the examples are for illustrative purposes only. Applicants must develop outcomes and outcome targets that are specific to their grant.*

***The applicant's five customized performance outcomes, and the related outputs, key milestones, and deliverables in the work plan form the basis of the Department's assessment of grantee performance.***

### Participant Tracking

To further quantify the benefits of SCC3 capacity-building initiatives, grantees will also be required to track participant outputs related to enrollment in and completion of a program of study, and credentials earned, for a cohort of students. However, applicants are not required to set participant targets, nor will grantees be required to track employment-related outcomes, as DOL will rely on the Common Reporting Information System (CRIS) for the latter.

Grantees will use DOL’s Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS) to track participant-level data. DOL will provide additional information after grant award; however, applicants must plan for participant cohort tracking and budget for data collection and reporting as part of their project work plans.

**26) What do the required equity gap analysis and logic model involve?**

An equity gap analysis must clearly articulate the equity gap(s) that the proposed project will address, and must demonstrate the extent of the identified barriers, based on data, evidence, and research, as appropriate. Applicants must demonstrate the connection between the identified gap(s) and employment outcomes. The identified gap(s) and their root causes should serve as the focusing elements in the development of the proposal.

Based in part on the needs identified in the equity gap analysis, applicants will develop a logic model in a concise and clear, two-page diagram. The logic model must provide a clear depiction of the proposed strategic approach(es) through a system components table and a theory of change rooted in available evidence. See Appendix D for more information on developing a logic model. Applicants must submit the logic model as an attachment, which does not count against the page limits for the Project Narrative.

**27) How will applications be evaluated for funding?**

The following applies to SCC3 Program Grants.

We have instituted procedures for assessing the technical merit of applications to provide for an objective review of 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 described below.

Criterion	Points (maximum)
1. Statement of Need (See Section IV.B.3.(a) Statement of Need)	10 total
2. Expected Outcomes and Outputs (See Section IV.B.3.(b) Expected Outcomes and Outputs)	28 total
3. Project Design (See Section IV.B.3.(c) Project Design)	44 total
4. Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity	8 total

(See Section IV.B.3.(d) Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity)	
5. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability (See Section IV.B.3.(e) Past Performance – Programmatic Capability)	6 total
6. Budget and Budget Narrative (See Section IV.B.3.(f)2. Project Budget and Budget Narrative)	4 total
7. Lead Institution is Qualified Institution – Bonus Points (See Section IV.B.3.(g) Priority Consideration: Lead Grantee is a “Qualified Institution” of Higher Education)	2 total
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>102</b>

Section IV.B.3 (Project Narrative) of this FOA has several “section headers” (e.g., IV.B.3.a), Statement of Need). 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 have specific point values assigned. These point values are the number of points possible for the application to earn for the rating factor.

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 102 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, representation among consortium types, the selection of one or more qualifying affinity-focused consortium, utilization of additional evaluation funding, and other relevant factors. The Grant Officer may consider any information that comes to their attention.

Applications for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding will be evaluated as described in Section IV.B.3.g Project Narrative for Additional SCC2 [now SCC3] Evaluation Funding (page 54).

**28) Must proposed projects lead to certain types of credentials under this FOA?**

All career pathways developed or enhanced with grant funding must lead to industry-recognized credentials. As stated in ETA's Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 25-19, an industry-recognized credential is either 1) developed and offered by, or endorsed by, a nationally or regionally recognized industry association or organization representing a sizeable portion of the industry sector; or 2) a credential that is sought or accepted by companies within the industry sector for purposes of hiring or recruitment, which may include credentials from vendors of certain products. See Attachment 1 of TEN No. 25-19, page I-3 for additional information.

**29) May applicants propose to develop or enhance non-credit programs or must their proposals focus solely on developing or enhancing credit programs?**

Grantees may use grant funds to adapt and/or develop both non-credit and credit programs, as long as the programs lead to industry-recognized credentials, meet FOA requirements, and support the proposed project design.

**30) What is a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), and do we need one to apply for this funding opportunity?**

Amendment Two to the SCC2 FOA (see <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=336701>) explains the new requirement for a UEI as follows: Starting April 4, 2022, the federal government will transition from using a DUNS Number to a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), and all applicants will be required to supply their UEI on the SF-424. If your entity is registered with SAM.gov, your UEI has already been assigned and is viewable under your entity record. Organizations that are not registered with SAM.gov can obtain more information about obtaining a UEI at [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov).

**31) Are we required to apply for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding?**

No, applying for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding is optional. Amendment Two to the SCC2 FOA (see <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=336701>) clarifies the language describing the Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding option as follows: As specified in Section I.G.2, all applicants for an SCC3 Program Grant may submit a separate application to receive additional funds for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding. Applying for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding is optional; applicants are not required to apply for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding in order to be considered for an SCC Program Grant, and they will not receive additional points for doing so. However, as stated in Section V.B.1, the grant officer may take into consideration utilization of additional evaluation funding when making final award selections.

**32) If we apply for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding, are there any restrictions around our choice of evaluator?**

Yes. The lead institution will be responsible for procuring an evaluator (after award) using a process consistent with federal, institutional, and other procurement rules. If an evaluator is involved in drafting the lead institution's proposal for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding, that evaluator is ineligible to serve as the evaluator for any subsequent Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding contract under this grant. An evaluator awarded this additional SCC3 evaluation funding may serve as the third-party evaluator for the implementation or developmental evaluation required with the SCC3 Program grant funds, so long as they were awarded that contract through the grantee organization's procurement process. If the same contractor firm will be conducting both a developmental evaluation and an impact, outcomes, or behavioral interventions study under the additional SCC3 evaluation funding component, the evaluator must establish an appropriate firewall between the different study teams.

Per the "tip" in the prospective applicant webinar posted at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/apply/find-opportunities>, applicants may wish to consider engaging the applicant's Institutional Research Center if applying for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding.

**33) What must applicants submit to apply for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding?**

Applicants wishing to apply for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding must submit a separate application and provide the following supplementary materials in three separate and distinct parts:

(I) Budget for additional evaluation funds, including the SF-424A and Budget Narrative providing a description of the costs associated with Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding; and

(II) Factors for consideration (a total of nine) that demonstrate the applicant's capability to implement the requirements for an impact, outcome, or behavioral intervention evaluation as described in Section IV.B.3. Project Narrative for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding (pages 54-56).

To address one of those factors, the applicant must submit, as supplementary material, letter(s) of commitment that include(s) institutional commitment to fully participate in the evaluation, and to support the evaluation, including data collection. The letter must be from the college president or appropriate official that defines the institution's role and provides evidence of its commitment to participate. For consortium applicants that are including all institution consortium members in the

Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding request, each institution must provide a letter of commitment. Letters of commitment do not count against the 8-page limit.

The factors for consideration are limited to 8 double-spaced, single-sided, 8.5 x 11 inch pages with 12-point text font and 1 inch margins. We will not read any materials beyond this specified page limit; and

(III) Attachments to the supplementary materials such as letter(s) of commitment described in (II) above.

Note: Applicants must include all the above supplementary materials as separate attachments. Applications that fail to adhere to the instructions in this section will not be eligible to exceed the award amount ceiling.

### **34) How will the Department assess applications for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding?**

The process for assessing applications for Additional SCC3 Evaluation Funding is separate from the process for selecting successful applicants for SCC3 Program Funds; it is described in Section V.B. Review and Selection Process (pages 66-67).

### **35) Section IV.B.3.(c)(7) Project Work Plan of the FOA refers to “milestones” and “deliverables,” while Appendix H: Suggested Project Work Plan Format refers to “activities” and “outputs.” Which terms should we use to ensure that we have met the requirements in Section IV.B.3. Project Narrative?**

In responding to the criteria outlined in Section IV.B.3.(c)(7) Project Narrative (pages 51-52), applicants should use the language specified in that section – namely, “milestones” and “deliverables.” To incorporate the required information into the suggested project work plan format provided in Appendix H, applicants may add an additional column (or columns) to the table using the terms “milestones” and “deliverables” in the column header(s). Alternatively, applicants may include information related to milestones and deliverables in the “outputs” column of the suggested work plan format. Note that, although the terms are not interchangeable, we consider “milestones” and “deliverables” to fall within the larger category of “outputs,” as that term is defined in Appendix H. If choosing the latter option, applicants should ensure that they meet the requirements of Section IV.B.3.(c)(7) by clearly labeling the “outputs” column header with the additional terms, “milestones” and “deliverables.”