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ADVISORY: TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER NO. 2-22

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
 STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS
 STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
 STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS AND CHAIRS
 STATE LABOR COMMISSIONERS
 INDIAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAM GRANTEEES

FROM: BRENT PARTON 
 Acting Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: QUEST: Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grants Funding Announcement

1. **Purpose.** To announce the availability of up to \$140 million for Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training (QUEST) Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs), with award amounts of up to \$15 million. These funds will enhance the public workforce system’s ongoing efforts to empower America’s unemployed and underemployed workers through worker and business engagement, elevate equity, and connect jobseekers with high-quality jobs.
2. **Actions Requested.** Interested and eligible entities must submit QUEST DWG funding applications no later than August 4, 2022, according to the instructions below. Share this guidance with all staff who administer DWGs, Unemployment Insurance, and Employment Services in order to plan responsive funding applications.
3. **Summary and Background.**
 - a. Summary – The QUEST DWG initiative will support employment equity and individual, community, and industry resilience as the nation prioritizes economic and employment recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Successful applicants will propose projects that include partnership development, community outreach, business engagement, and comprehensive career and training services, and that also may include disaster relief employment. QUEST DWGs focus on serving individuals whose employment has been negatively impacted by the pandemic, including individuals from historically marginalized and underserved populations who have been disproportionately impacted.
 - b. Background – The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in substantial effects on the health and prosperity of the nation, its people, and its businesses. While these impacts were

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widespread and varied, they were not evenly distributed across populations. Women, immigrants, lower-wage workers, people of color, people with disabilities, individuals who were formerly incarcerated, and other workers from historically marginalized communities were more likely to face unsafe working conditions, be laid off, or forced to leave the workforce to protect the health and safety of themselves or care for family members.

Even as the overall economy continues to rebound from the pandemic (the average national unemployment rate has dropped precipitously from 6.4% in January 2021 to 3.6% in April 2022 and payroll employment has expanded by more than 500,000 jobs each month in 2022¹), the emerging new economy is not benefitting all industries or populations equally. Many of the workers most negatively impacted by the pandemic continue to face persistent challenges with finding quality jobs amidst the ongoing economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis. Historically marginalized individuals, including African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, Latinos or Hispanics, and people with disabilities, as well as young adults aged 20 to 24 years, part-time workers, and people without high school diplomas, experienced the most significant employment hardships during the first year of the pandemic. Nearly all of these groups have not regained their pre-pandemic employment rates and continue to experience the most significant employment barriers.² The QUEST DWGs will support those individuals who have suffered the most as a result of the pandemic have equitable access to work at safe, well-paying employment, which further builds their own and the community's resilience to any continued economic impacts of the pandemic.

A comprehensive, equitable recovery requires strength and resilience in industries critical to our economy's stability and growth, such as sectors responsible for our nation's infrastructure, care economy, and climate resilience. In some instances, these were the same industries and workers that experienced disruption at the height of the pandemic and that now have an opportunity to reshape their workplaces and workforce to improve resilience, equity, and job quality. Aligned with the Biden-Harris Administration's Good Jobs Agenda to improve job quality nationwide, the Department of Labor's Good Jobs Initiative focuses efforts on ensuring that jobs created during this recovery are with "high-road" employers - those who offer high-quality job opportunities. High-quality jobs, for the purposes of the QUEST DWG, include family-sustaining wages and benefits, have predictable hours and schedules, are filled through transparent and nondiscriminatory hiring and promotion practices, offer clear paths for advancement, always prioritize worker health and safety, and include workers' voices in the workplace. The QUEST DWGs will advance these efforts to recover from the pandemic and allow grantees to create a resilient, skilled workforce in critical, in-demand industry sectors, such as:

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *News Release*, State Employment and Unemployment – May 2022 at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/laus.pdf>, (visited May 7, 2022).

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, May Economic News Release, Table A-2 Employment status of the civilian population by race, sex, and age, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t02.htm> and Table 3 Employment status of the Hispanic or Latino population by sex and age, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t03.htm>.

- Infrastructure-related sectors, including manufacturing, construction, communications, transportation, distribution and logistics.
- Care Economy sectors such as health, elder and child care, where worker shortages and resignations were felt acutely during the pandemic.
- Environmental remediation and climate change mitigation-related industries, including in support of environmental justice outcomes, which help mitigate the [climate conditions especially harmful to those dealing with the long-term health effects](#) resulting from COVID-19.
- Other critical industries identified by QUEST DWG applicants, particularly industries that are recovering from the pandemic such as leisure/hospitality and growth industries where employers offer high-quality jobs or are improving job quality, better insulating workers from future pandemic-related economic shocks.

The Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA) is committed to furthering high-quality jobs and supporting a skilled workforce with up to \$140 million in QUEST Disaster Recovery DWGs. These grants are Disaster Recovery DWGs authorized under Title I, Section 170 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), implementing regulations at 20 CFR 687.100–200, and guidance published in Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 16-21, *Updated National Dislocated Worker Grant Program Guidance*.

4. QUEST DWG Funding Opportunity.

- Goal of the QUEST DWG.** The goal of the QUEST DWG is to enable individuals who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the social and economic inequities that the pandemic exacerbated, to enter, return to, or advance in high-quality jobs in growth industries including infrastructure, environment and climate, the care economy, and other critical sectors as defined by the applicant with high-quality jobs. The activities of the QUEST DWG will yield improved individual and community resilience to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To achieve the goal of the QUEST DWG, grantees will design and implement a project aligned with this guidance and TEGL No. 16-21, *Updated National Dislocated Worker Grant Program Guidance*.

- Eligibility.**

- Qualifying Event.** ETA issues this guidance under 20 CFR 687.110(b), which describes the events that qualify for Disaster Recovery DWG funds. Unlike typical Disaster Recovery DWG applications, QUEST DWG applicants do not need to document a qualifying event in their application, as the qualifying event for the QUEST DWG is the HHS Public Health Emergency declaration for coronavirus that was first announced on January 27, 2020 and remains in effect as of this publication. This declaration covers the entire United States, including all Outlying Areas.

See section 4.d. below for information on required application elements.

ii. Applicant Eligibility. Under 20 CFR 687.120(b), the following entities are eligible to apply for QUEST DWGs:

- A. States;
- B. Outlying areas;
- C. Indian tribal governments as defined by the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122(6)).

iii. Participant Eligibility. Eligible participants for WIOA Disaster Recovery DWGs are defined as follows:

- A. Individuals temporarily or permanently laid off as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic disaster. This category may provide flexibility to grantees to enroll participants as ETA has determined that “laid off” in this context is different from “dislocated.” For purposes of the QUEST DWG, grantees have latitude to determine that individuals who were working prior to COVID but who became unemployed because of COVID are eligible to participate in grant activities; for example, an individual who was fired for failing to report to work in order to stay home and care for a family member might be, for the purposes of this grant, “laid off as a consequence of the declared disaster.” Grantees should develop a policy with which to define and interpret this eligibility criterion under the grant.
- B. Long-term unemployed individuals, as defined by the applicant. Applicants should note that the term “long-term unemployed individuals” for purposes of the QUEST DWG is not tied to the Bureau of Labor Statistics definition (unemployed for 26 weeks or more) and might be interpreted to include individuals who have no work history, have been incarcerated, or have otherwise not worked for an extended period. Grantees should develop a policy by which to define and interpret this eligibility criterion under the grant.
- C. Dislocated workers as defined by WIOA Section 3(15).
- D. Self-employed individuals who became unemployed or significantly underemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic disaster. Successful grantees should apply any existing policies that define and interpret the “significantly underemployed” eligibility criterion under the grant and must develop such a policy if one does not exist.

Note: Direct services such as career, training, supportive services, or disaster relief employment must be limited to the eligible participants above. Further, grantees should design and implement grant activities that prioritize services and outcomes for any underserved and

historically marginalized populations that otherwise meet the eligibility categories above.

However, some of these grants' activities may also benefit other non-DWG populations. For example, cohort training to introduce QUEST DWG participants to transportation and logistics industry standards may be offered to WIOA Adult program participants if class size and seat availability permit.

c. Grant Activities.

i. Required Grant Activities. Applicants for QUEST DWG funds must commit to executing the following types of activities:

A. *Develop or Expand Strategic Partnerships* – Applicants must create a data-informed project design that includes the development or expansion of strategic partnerships that will ensure that the grant will achieve the goals of the QUEST Initiative. While ETA does not require any specific entities to be partners in a QUEST DWG application, we encourage applicants to consider how partnerships might enable the project to most effectively and comprehensively develop or strengthen an economy built on equity, job quality, sustainability, and shared prosperity. Examples of strategic partnership activities include:

- developing partnerships with organizations that serve, train, and hire individuals from underserved and marginalized communities most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic,
- expanding partnerships with business or industry associations hiring workers into quality jobs,
- ensuring worker voice by soliciting input from and partnering with dislocated workers, individual workers, labor unions, labor-management partnerships, and other relevant organizations,
- building and expanding partnerships that bring together workers, employers, and labor to advance demand-driven workforce strategies, such as labor-management partnerships, and
- cultivating formal sector partnerships with demand industries and high quality employers.

Applications for QUEST DWGs must include letters of commitment from at least two partners (see Application Information below), but applicants may include as many partners as they deem appropriate and may add partners as necessary throughout the life of the project.

B. *Community and Participant Outreach* – Applicants must develop an operational plan for community and participant outreach that is culturally and linguistically appropriate to ensure that eligible participants know about and can participate and succeed in the grant's

services, particularly historically marginalized individuals and communities. Grant funds may be used to create and execute focused outreach campaigns to reach historically marginalized communities and other priority participant populations adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

C. *Business Engagement* – QUEST DWGs must include business engagement activities. In addition to assisting businesses with finding the workers they seek, strong business engagement enables grantees to work closely enough with businesses to share information on the value and business benefits of increasing job quality and equity, and support in creating or expanding high-quality jobs. For purposes of this grant, business engagement may include both strategic and operational activities. At the strategic level, applicants should consider activities that are intended to:

- develop long-term relationships with the employer community with an emphasis on expanding high quality jobs,
- provide solutions to the needs of individual employers, industry associations, or other groups to identify and address current or emerging skills needs,
- develop sector-based approaches,
- provide information on the services available through the workforce system,
- support the development of high-quality employment opportunities across an industry/sector, and
- develop and scale career pathway models incorporating worker voice, equity, and demand-driven workforce approaches, such as through labor-management partnerships.

At the operational level, QUEST grants may provide valuable solutions to hiring, retention, and other staffing challenges, particularly employers hiring workers into high-quality jobs and employers which aim to improve the quality of their jobs. Direct services to individual employers or business groups could include:

- collaborating to identify a position's skills needs to increase the use of skill-based hiring,
- developing work-based learning opportunities including registered apprenticeships,
- improving the transparency of career paths and promotional opportunities through opportunity mapping,
- technical assistance on improving equity and job quality, and demand-driven workforce models such as labor-management partnerships.

To maximize opportunities and build on existing relationships, applicants are encouraged to align the business engagement activities

for this grant with existing, ongoing business engagement activities operated by state or local Rapid Response teams, state or local workforce development boards, or others, wherever possible.

D. *Employment and Training Activities* – Grantees must design employment and training activities, which for DWGs encompasses career, training, and supportive services, that enable participants impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic including its social and economic inequities to gain the skills and experience necessary to qualify for, obtain, and advance in safe and sustainable jobs, particularly high-quality jobs in growth industry sectors. QUEST DWG grantees are encouraged to incorporate work-based learning or entrepreneurial training in their program design. Grantees must provide supportive services as appropriate to increase the likelihood of program participants’ successful completion of workforce services and the longer-term training associated with economic mobility. Grantees are strongly encouraged take a demand-driven approach that focuses employment and training activities on partnering with employers to prepare and place participants in high quality employment in priority sectors.

Grantees are also encouraged to review intake and eligibility policies and procedures to reduce delays in services and eliminate any eligibility requirements not required by law, to enable the broadest participation in grant-funded services. See TEGl No. 19-16 for definitions of allowable career, training, and supportive services.

ii. Disaster-Relief Employment. In addition to the required activities listed above, applicants may choose to carry out disaster-relief employment by creating jobs that respond to or address the ongoing health, employment or social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Applicants choosing to incorporate DRE activities must adhere to the wage, employment duration, and other requirements defined in TEGl 16-21, published on June 16, 2022, (and all other applicable ETA guidance) including that disaster-relief employment participants must receive wages at the same rates as employees who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills. When determining the appropriate wage to be paid, QUEST DWGs should account for the possibility that other entities could be a common-law joint employer of the participants, together with the worksite employer.³ This determination involves a number of factors. Grant recipients may request technical assistance after receipt of an award under the QUEST program if

³ Entities may qualify as employers under the common law if they have a right to control the manner and means by which the disaster relief work is accomplished. This is distinct from the definition of employment under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

they have questions or challenges in understanding how to determine whether an entity is a joint employer for purposes of the project. Further, in cases where the disaster-relief employer, does not have other employees doing the same or similar work and with similar training, experience, and skills, grant recipients must ensure, as required under TEGL 16-21, that the wages that they will pay to participants are in line with the industry standard for that type of work in the area and are at least \$15 per hour (unless otherwise negotiated).

Note: All activities must be permissible under 20 CFR 687.180(b). The Department may place award conditions on a grant to address allowable or potentially proposed unallowable activities with applicants; approval of a grant award does not automatically mean all proposed activities in the application are allowed.

- d. **Application Information.** ETA will only fund applications that are responsive to the requirements of WIOA and this TEGL. As described in Section 4a above, the goal of the QUEST DWG is to assist individuals who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the social and economic inequities that it exacerbated, to enter, return to, or advance in high-quality jobs that are safe, sustainable, stable, equitable, and support worker voice in the workplace. QUEST DWG projects should help dislocated workers and other eligible participants, including underserved and historically marginalized individuals, develop economic resilience to future economic shocks through employment, training, and entry into high-quality jobs, especially in growing and critical industries. The applicant must submit all the information required and can do so in the form of the suggested application (see Attachment B). The required information includes the following:
 - i. *Priority Industries.* Applicants must identify the industries for which they intend to focus participant training and other activities, and provide information on why placing participants in employment in these industries will help address the adverse effects of the pandemic on the participants. Grantees should describe the priority growth industries, such as those pertaining to our nation's physical infrastructure, social infrastructure such as the care economy, and climate-resilience sectors, and other industries where participants may be employed in high-quality jobs.
 - ii. *Project Summary.* The Project Summary provides a brief overview of the applicant's QUEST DWG project and must describe:
 - A. The strategic partners who have or will inform a successful project design.
 - B. The individuals, communities, industries, and companies the project will engage or serve.
 - C. The mix of required and allowable activities that will be used.
 - D. How the proposed project will achieve the QUEST DWG goal.

- iii. *Strategic Partners.* Applicants must describe existing or planned partnerships that will support and inform project design and grant activities and ensure successful outcomes. Applicants must provide the name of each partner (organization or individual) and their anticipated role in grant activities. Where applicable, applicants should also include a plan for how new partners are identified and included in the project.

A successful application will include partnerships with at least two organizations and include at least two partnership letters that demonstrate commitment to the QUEST DWG project must be included in the application. Applicants who plan to partner with more than two entities or individuals are only required to submit two letters of commitment though may submit as many as they wish.

- iv. *Community and Participant Outreach.* Applicants must describe how they plan to conduct outreach activities to underserved and historically marginalized communities and participants, including how such outreach will be culturally and linguistically competent and designed to reach those who were most adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- v. *Business Engagement.* Applicants must describe the business engagement activities, both at the strategic and operational levels, that they intend to carry out to support achieving the goal of the grant.
- vi. *Employment and Training Activities.* Grantees must describe the types of demand-driven employment and training activities that they will prioritize, including work-based learning where appropriate, that will enable participants impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic including its social and economic inequities to gain the skills and experience necessary to qualify for, obtain, and advance in safe and sustainable jobs, particularly high-quality jobs in growth industry sectors. Grant activities should emphasize preparing and placing participants in high quality employment in priority sectors and industries.
- vii. *Achieving the Goal of QUEST DWG.* The applicant must demonstrate that its project will achieve the goal of the QUEST DWG. Applicants must describe how the activities planned for the grant will address the health, employment or economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and support participants' transitions into high-quality jobs.

- e. **Availability of Funds and Application Review and Award.** The Department is making up to \$140 million available under this TEGL. Applicants may apply for grants of up to \$15 million each. To receive funding for a QUEST DWG, applicants must meet all eligibility requirements described in this TEGL and submit a responsive application that addresses the mandatory programmatic components outlined in this document.

ETA will award funds to responsive, high-quality applications on a first come, first served basis while funding remains available. Available funds for this grant could be depleted by other unforeseen DWG funding needs, such as natural disasters and national emergencies. ETA encourages applicants to submit quality final applications before the deadline. While applicants may submit subsequent versions of their application if they realize that edits are needed, doing so may cause an application not to be funded. ETA will consider the latest submitted application to be the official submission. The deadline for all application packages is August 4, 2022, at 11:59pm EDT. ETA may stop accepting applications earlier than this date if available funds are depleted before the official closing date.

Final award amounts will be determined subject to the availability of funds. If the total requests are less than the available funding or additional funds become available, grant awards may be increased proportionately. The Department will negotiate the final funding amount. ETA may require grant recipients to revise budget documents before award execution to account for discrepancies between funding requests and actual award amounts.

The period of performance for QUEST DWGs is two years, and grant funds will have an anticipated start date of September 30, 2022, and an end date of September 30, 2024. However, the Department reserves the right to provide a period of performance extensions beyond this date, as it deems appropriate and necessary, to achieve the purposes of these awards.

f. **Administrative Costs.**

- i. Administrative costs under this award follow the definition in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act at 20 CFR 683.215.
- ii. DWGs are subject to the Uniform Guidance: Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 CFR Part 200 and OMB's approved exceptions for the Department at 2 CFR Part 2900.

g. **Application Requirements.** To achieve greater efficiency and as part of ETA's ongoing effort to streamline the grant award process, grantees must submit the following items through Grants.gov at www.grants.gov:

- An electronically signed copy of an SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance (OMB Control No. 4040-0004);
- An SF-424A - Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (OMB Control No. 4040-0006);
- A Budget Narrative to explain the projected costs reflected in each line item of the SF-424A, demonstrating how grant funds will be used. See Attachment B for instructions on completing the budget narrative; and
- A completed QUEST DWG Project Synopsis form (Attachment B).

If an applicant fails to provide any of the documents or information described above their application will be deemed non-responsive and will not be funded.

An electronically submitted SF-424 through Grants.gov constitutes the official signed document and must reflect the total amount requested in item #18, *Estimated Funding*. Item #11 must include the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number*, 17.277. ETA encourages application submission as soon as possible; however, **applications must be received by 11:59 pm EDT on August 4, 2022**. ETA will award all QUEST Dislocated Worker Grants by September 30, 2022.

- h. **Grants.gov Submission Process.** Applicants must submit the application package through Grants.gov. Applicants who need to register with Grants.gov may do so at the following hyperlink: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>. Registration is a one-time process; applicants with a Grants.gov account do not need to register again.

To submit the required application package, applicants must:

- i. Select the *SEARCH GRANTS* tab on the Grants.gov homepage.
- ii. Under the section, *BASIC SEARCH CRITERIA*, enter the Funding Opportunity Number: **ETA-TEGL-02-22-DWG**.
- iii. Select the link to the applicable Opportunity Number provided in the search results.
- iv. Select the *PACKAGE* tab.
- v. Under the *ACTIONS* column, select *APPLY*.

Submitting the SF-424 through www.grants.gov constitutes an electronically signed SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. This submission process may, at times be complicated and time-consuming. As such, the Department strongly encourages applicants to initiate the process as soon as possible in order to allow time to resolve unanticipated technical problems.

Applicants are required to supply a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) on the SF-424. If your entity is registered with the System for Award Management (SAM) SAM.gov, your UEI has already been assigned and is viewable under your entity record. Organizations not registered with SAM.gov can obtain more information about a UEI at www.sam.gov. Before submitting, applicants must also ensure their registration with SAM.gov. Applicants may find instructions for registering with SAM at <https://www.sam.gov>. An awardee must maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration. To remain registered in the SAM database after the initial registration, entities must review and update the registration at least every 12 months from the date of initial registration. Failure to register with SAM and maintain an active account will result in Grants.gov rejecting the application submission.

For technical issues encountered during application submission, applicants may call 800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035 to speak to a Customer Support Representative or email support@grants.gov. The Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but closes on federal holidays.

- i. **Other Award Considerations.** At its discretion, ETA intends to fund applicants who adequately demonstrate eligibility according to the application requirements set out in Section 4g above. ETA may elect to award a grant with or without discussions with the applicant. Should a grant be awarded without discussions, the award will be based on the applicant's signature on the SF-424, including an electronic signature, which constitutes a binding offer by the applicant.

NOTE: The Department will determine if the applicant had any restriction on spending for any ETA grant due to adverse monitoring findings within the past three years. Depending on the severity of the findings, the Grant Officer may elect not to provide the applicant a grant award or to impose conditions on the award.

All applications deemed complete and responsive by the Grant Officer will undergo a risk review process. Before making an award, ETA will review information available through any OMB-designated repository of government-wide eligibility qualification or federal integrity information, such as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), Dun and Bradstreet, and "Do Not Pay." Additionally, ETA will comply with the requirements of 2 CFR Part 180 (Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)). This risk evaluation may incorporate results of the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility (application screening) or the quality of its application (technical review). If ETA determines that an entity is responsible and an award will be made, special conditions corresponding to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award. Risk-related criteria evaluated include:

- Financial stability;
- Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in the Uniform Grant Guidance;
- History of performance. The Applicant's record in managing awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, if it is a prior recipient of such Federal awards, including timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements, and if available, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended before future awards;
- Reports and findings from audits performed under Sub-part F – Audit Requirements of the Uniform Grant Guidance (2 CFR sections 200.500 – 200.520) or the reports and findings of any other available audits and monitoring reports containing finds, issues of non-compliance, or questioned costs; and
- The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on recipients.

The selection of an organization as a recipient does not constitute approval of the grant application as submitted. Before the actual grant is awarded, the Department may enter into negotiations about such items as program components, staffing and funding levels, and administrative systems in place to support grant implementation. If the negotiations do not result in a mutually acceptable submission, the Grant Officer reserves the right to

terminate the negotiations and decline to fund the application. The Department reserves the right not to fund any application related to this TEGL.

- j. **Reporting.** QUEST DWG recipients must submit the following reports no later than 45 days after the end of each quarter:
 - i. Performance Reporting.
 - A. WIOA Joint Quarterly Narrative Template (ETA-9179) – Submission of the quarterly project narrative reports using the WIOA Joint Narrative Template (OMB Control No. 1205-0448).
 - B. Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) Reports (ETA-9172) - Grantees must submit an individual record file quarterly on all participants and exiters. All relevant data elements on the individual record layout must be completed. Those data elements relevant to the DWG program are indicated in the DOL-only PIRL by an “R” in the DWG column. While many of these elements are also required for other programs, the PIRL contains data elements that are specifically for individuals participating in a DWG.

Performance accountability requirements for all DWGs, including QUEST DWGs, is in TEGL No. 14-18, *Performance Accountability Guidance Relating to Reporting Performance and Aligning Performance Definitions and Policies Across Workforce Employment and Training Programs Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor*. Information on DWG performance is available at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/dislocated-workers/performance>.

ETA expects an applicant to have the appropriate systems or partnerships in place to submit required performance data as described in this section. QUEST DWG applicants must commit to submitting the required performance data to receive a grant award under this funding announcement.

QUEST DWG grantee performance goals will mirror the relevant state’s current WIOA State Negotiated Levels of Performance for the title I Dislocated Worker Program. WIOA State Negotiated Levels of Performance are published at the following link: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/goals/negotiated-performance-levels>.

- ii. Financial Reporting.

DWG grantees must submit quarterly financial reports using the ETA-9130 (G) Financial Report. Guidance and instructions are available at the following link: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/management/reporting>.

- k. **Evaluation.** As a condition of grant award, grantees are required to participate in an evaluation, if undertaken by DOL. The evaluation may include an implementation assessment across grantees, an impact and/or outcomes analysis of all or selected sites within or across grantees, and a benefit/cost analysis or assessment of return on investment. Conducting an impact analysis could involve random assignment (which involves random assignment of eligible participants into a treatment group that would receive program services or enhanced program services, or into control group(s) that would receive no program services or program services that are not enhanced). We may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation. As a part of the evaluation, as a condition of award, grantees must agree to: (1) make records available to the evaluation contractor on participants, employers, and funding; (2) provide access to program operating personnel, participants, and operational and financial records, and any other relevant documents to calculate program costs and benefits; and (3) in the case of an impact analysis, facilitate the assignment by lottery of participants to program services, including the possible increased recruitment of potential participants; and (4) follow evaluation procedures as specified by the evaluation contractor under the direction of DOL.
- l. **Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) Statement.** The OMB Information Collection No 1225-0086, Expires July 31, 2022.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

This information is being collected for the purpose of awarding a grant. DOL will use the information collected through this solicitation to ensure that grants are awarded to the applicants best suited to perform the functions of the grant. This information is required to be considered for this grant.

5. **Inquiries.** Questions regarding this guidance should be directed to Grant Specialist at DOL-ETA-DWG@dol.gov with QUEST DWG in the subject line.

6. **References.**

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), sec. 170, Pub. L. No. 113-128, 128 STAT. 1425, 1573-1576 (July 22, 2014);
- 20 CFR pt. 687;
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 16-21, *Updated National Dislocated Worker Grant Program Guidance* (June 16, 2022);
- TEGL No. 14-18 – *Aligning Performance Accountability Reporting, Definitions, and Policies Across Workforce Employment and Training Programs Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)* (March 25, 2019); and

- *TEGL No. 19-16 – Guidance on Services Provided through the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES), as amended by title III of WIOA, and for the implementation of the WIOA Final Rules (March 1, 2017).*

7. Attachments.

- A. QUEST DWG Terminology
- B. Suggested Application Form
- C. Instruction Sheet for Budget Narrative

QUEST DWG Terminology

The QUEST DWG TEGL uses terminology that may not be commonly understood. Working definitions follow to ensure that QUEST DWG applicants have a shared understanding of the terms referenced in the TEGL.

Culturally appropriate outreach (also known as culturally sensitive and culturally competent outreach) acknowledges and incorporates the importance of racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic experiences of the communities and individuals involved with a particular program, policy, or procedure.¹

Equity refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality: Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances. The process is ongoing, requiring us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.²

High-quality jobs, also referred to as high-quality employment opportunities and good jobs, pay an average wage of at least \$15/hour or the local living wage, whichever is higher, provide an average of at least 30 hours/week of paid employment, have transparent and nondiscriminatory hiring practices and clear paths for professional development and advancement, provide access to employer-provided benefits, including health care, paid vacation, and sick leave, prioritize worker health and safety and are in companies and organizations that support workers' rights.

High-road employers are businesses and organizations that offer high-quality jobs.

Historically-marginalized populations are groups of people who have been excluded from full participation in mainstream educational, economic, cultural, social, and political activities. Examples of marginalized populations include, but are not limited to, groups excluded due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, language, and immigration status. Marginalization occurs due to unequal power relationships between social groups.³

1 Source: Race & Social Justice Initiative, [Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide](#).

2 Source: [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#)

3 Baah FO, Teitelman AM, Riegel B. Marginalization: conceptualizing patient vulnerabilities in the framework of social determinants of health—An integrative review. *Nursing Inquiry*. 2019;26(1):e12268.

**Suggested Application for Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training (QUEST)
Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs)**

The information in this suggested application **must** be submitted along with other required application materials as described in the QUEST DWG Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) no. 2-22. If more space is required than this suggested application provides, please attach up to five additional pages of information. Note that ETA will not review any information in excess of five additional pages.

QUEST DWG Applicant and Project Information	
Instructions: Please provide the information indicated in this table.	
Legal Name of Grant Applicant:	
Applicant Point of Contact	
Name:	Title:
Email:	Tel:
Type of Applicant Select the box for eligible entity type below <input type="checkbox"/> State Workforce Agency <input type="checkbox"/> Outlying Area Workforce Agency <input type="checkbox"/> Indian tribal governments as defined by the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122(6))	
Number of Participants Projected to be Served by the Proposed Project (insert figure in the space right.)	
Participant Eligibility Attestation <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm that your QUEST DWG project will only serve eligible individuals described below and in section 4.b.iii of the TEGL by checking the box at left. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals temporarily or permanently laid off as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic disaster. • Long-term unemployed individuals, as defined by the applicant. • Dislocated workers as defined by WIOA Section 3(15) Self-employed individuals who became unemployed or significantly underemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic disaster.	
Priority Industries. Indicate which industries the project will engage by checking the relevant boxes at right.	<input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Care Economy <input type="checkbox"/> Climate and Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Other Growth Industry (Please name):

<p>Project Service Area. Describe the geographic areas to be served by the proposed grant. See section 4.d.iii of the TEGL for additional information.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Outlying Areas</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A subset of the state’s Local Workforce Development Areas (list the LWDAs):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Counties/Parishes (list the counties/parishes):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other geographic areas such as Statewide and Native American Employment and Training areas (please define):</p>
<p>The rationale for Project Service Area: Provide a brief (<i>no more than 250 words</i>) description of why the service area for this proposed project was chosen, including how providing services in the areas will address the goal of the QUEST DWG.</p>	
<p>Performance Goals: Select the appropriate box at right to indicate an understanding that performance goals for the QUEST DWG mirror the negotiated goals established for the state’s WIOA Dislocated Worker Programs per section 4.j of the TEGL.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No - Please explain:</p>

Project Summary: Alignment with QUEST DWG Goal: Instructions: Per section 4.d.iii, applicants must briefly describe their proposed project and how it will achieve the goal of the QUEST DWG. Please address:

- The strategic partners who have or will inform a successful project design.
- The individuals, communities, industries, and companies the project will engage or serve.
- The required, and any allowable, activities that will be used.
- How the proposed project will achieve the QUEST DWG goal

Please limit the Project Summary length to no more than 500 words.

Required Grant Activity: Developing Strategic Partnerships

Instructions: Briefly describe existing and planned partnerships that will inform the project design and ensure successful outcomes. Please note each partner’s area of expertise (business, training and education, community service provider, other), and their expected contribution to the QUEST DWG project’s successful design, implementation, and outcomes.

Please limit the following narrative to no more than 300 words.

Instructions: Per section 4.d.iv of the TEGL, applicants must provide the name of each partner (organization or individual) and their anticipated role in grant activities. Where applicable, applicants should also include a plan for how new partners are identified and included in the project as needed.

Partner Name	Partner Type (Employer/industry, education, economic development, community	Partner Role(s) In Proposed Project
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	organization, etcetera.)	
<i>Ex. Community Health Association</i>	<i>Community organization</i>	<i>Outreach to potential participants</i>
Strategic Partner Commitment Letters: Select the relevant box at right to indicate whether commitment letters from at least two of the Strategic Partners are included in the grant application.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Required Grant Activity: Community and Potential Participant Outreach

Instructions: Per section 4.d.v, briefly describe the plan to reach priority communities and participants, including how such outreach will be culturally and linguistically competent and designed to reach those who were most adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please limit the following narrative to no more than 200 words.

Required Grant Activity: Business Engagement

Instructions: Per section 4.d.iv, please

- Describe the business engagement strategy including how the project will identify business needs and provide examples of the services and solutions the QUEST DWG will offer.
- Note how business engagement activities (both strategic and operational) support the goal of the QUEST DWG project.
- Highlight how the business engagement strategy aligns with any existing business engagement strategies and activities underway in the proposed project's geographic area.
- Identify any employers or industries that the QUEST DWG project anticipates engaging, and why they were selected.
- Note which, if any of the employers, currently offer jobs with family-sustaining wages, benefits, predictable hours and schedules, transparent and nondiscriminatory hiring and promotion practices, and support for workers' voices.

Please limit the following narrative to no more than 300 words.

Required Grant Activity: Employment & Training Activities

Applicants must describe the employment and training activities included in the proposed QUEST project design. These activities should enable participants impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic including its social and economic inequities to gain the skills and experience necessary to qualify for, obtain, and advance in safe and sustainable jobs, particularly high-quality jobs in growth industry sectors.

Please limit the following narrative to no more than 250 words.

Allowable Grant Activity: Disaster Relief Employment

Instructions: If the applicant's project design includes allowable disaster-relief employment, please

- Describe the jobs that will be created.
- Describe the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that created the need for these jobs.
- Describe how the work done in each job will directly address the health, employment, or economic impacts of the pandemic.
- Describe how the wage, employment duration, and other requirements defined in Training and Employment Guidance Letter 16-21 published on June 16, 2022, will be met.

Please limit the following narrative to no more than 300 words.

Achieving the QUEST Goal

Applicants must demonstrate that proposed projects will achieve the goal of the QUEST DWG and enable participants adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the social and economic inequities that the pandemic exacerbated, to enter, return to, or advance in high-quality jobs in growth industries including infrastructure, environment and climate, the care economy, and other critical sectors defined by the applicant. The activities of the proposed QUEST DWG project should result in improved individual and community resilience to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please limit the following narrative to no more than 300 words.

QUEST DWG Instruction Sheet for Completing the Budget Narrative

You must complete the SF-424A Budget Information Form (available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>). In preparing the Budget Information Form, you must provide a concise narrative explanation to support each line item on the SF-424A, which includes an itemization of the component costs adding up to the total projected cost for each line item. The calculations provided in the Budget Narrative must be accurate, and the line item cost projections in the narrative must match the associated cost identified on the SF-424A. Each category should include the total cost for the period of performance. Use the following guidance for preparing the Budget Narrative.

Personnel: List all staff positions by title (both current and proposed) including the roles and responsibilities. For each position give the annual salary, the percentage of time devoted to the project, and the amount of each position's salary funded by the grant.

Fringe Benefits: Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, FICA, retirement, etc.

Travel: For grantee staff only, specify the purpose, number of staff traveling, mileage, per diem, estimated number of in-state and out-of-state trips, and other costs for each type of travel.

Equipment: Identify each item of equipment you expect to purchase that has an estimated acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit (or if your capitalization level is less than \$5,000, use your capitalization level) and a useful lifetime of more than one year (see 2 CFR 200.1 for the definition of Equipment). List the item, quantity, and the unit cost per item.

Items with a unit cost of less than \$5,000 are supplies, not "equipment." In general, we do not permit the purchase of equipment during the last funded year of the grant.

Supplies: Identify categories of supplies (e.g., office supplies) in the detailed budget and list the item, quantity, and the unit cost per item. Supplies include all tangible personal property other than "equipment" (see 2 CFR 200.1 for the definition of Supplies).

Contractual: Under the Contractual line item, delineate contracts and subawards separately. Contracts are defined according to 2 CFR 200.1 as a legal instrument by which a non-federal entity purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a federal award. A subaward, defined by 2 CFR 200.1 means an award provided by a pass-through entity to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out part of a federal award received by the pass-through entity. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of a federal program.

For each proposed contract and subaward, specify the purpose and activities to be provided, and the estimated cost.

Construction: Construction costs are not allowed and this line must be left as zero. Minor alterations to adjust an existing space for grant activities (such as a classroom alteration) may be allowable. We do not consider this as construction and you must show the costs on other appropriate lines such as Contractual.

Other: Provide clear and specific detail, including costs, for each item so that we are able to determine whether the costs are necessary, reasonable, and allocable. List items, such as stipends or incentives, not covered elsewhere.

Indirect Costs: If you include an amount for indirect costs (through a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or De Minimis) on the SF-424A budget form, then include one of the following:

a) If you have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), provide an explanation of how the indirect costs are calculated. This explanation should include which portion of each line item, along with the associated costs, are included in your cost allocation base. Also, provide a current version of the NICRA.

or

b) If you intend to claim indirect costs using the 10 percent de minimis rate, please confirm that your organization meets the requirements as described in 2 CFR 200.414(f). Clearly state that your organization does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, and is not one described in 2 CFR 200, Appendix VII(D)(1)(b).

Applicants choosing to claim indirect costs using the de minimis rate must use Modified Total Direct Costs (see 2 CFR 200.1 below for definition) as their cost allocation base. Provide an explanation of which portion of each line item, along with the associated costs, are included in your cost allocation base. Note that there are various items not included in the calculation of Modified Total Direct Costs. See the definitions below to assist you in your calculation.

- **2 CFR 200.1 Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)** means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000. Other items may be excluded only when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs. The definition of MTDC in 2 CFR 200.1 no longer allows any sub-contracts to be included in the calculation. You will also note that participant support costs are not included in modified total direct cost. Participant support costs are defined below.
- 2 CFR 200.1 Participant Support Cost means direct costs for items such as stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences or training projects.

See Section IV.B.4. and Section IV.E.1 for more information. Additionally, the following link contains information regarding the negotiation of Indirect Cost Rates at DOL: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/centers-offices/office-of-the-senior-procurement-executive/cost-price-determination-division>.

Note that the SF-424, SF-424A, and Budget Narrative must include the entire federal grant amount requested (not just one year).