

**DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program  
Funding Opportunity Announcement**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**  
**Updated May 15, 2023**

**GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

**1. What is the DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program?**

The DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program, funded through a user fee paid by employers to bring foreign workers into the United States (U.S.) under the H-1B nonimmigrant visa program, will invest in public-private partnerships to develop, implement, and scale worker-centered sector strategy training programs in H-1B industries and occupations critical to meeting the goals of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), formally known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Pub. L. No. 117-58. The U.S. will need a skilled workforce to fill the good-paying jobs created by the BIL’s historic investment—along with the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Act, Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and American Rescue Plan. To maximize the impact of the BIL investment, this grant program will train job seekers in advanced manufacturing; information technology; and professional, scientific, and technical services occupations that support renewable energy, transportation, and broadband infrastructure sectors. These include occupations in the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors; broadband expansion and smart city grids; and electrical, industrial, and civil engineers and technicians who facilitate the design, construction, modernization, and maintenance of the nation’s infrastructure.

**2. What is the grant program’s purpose?**

This grant program will expand the workforce partnerships necessary to build equitable pathways to good infrastructure jobs, particularly for workers from underserved and underrepresented populations in the local/regional communities where these infrastructure projects are located, as well as within these occupations (such as women). The BIL is a once-in-a-generation investment to rebuild our roads, bridges, ports, and airports; upgrade public transit and rail systems; replace lead pipes to provide clean water; provide affordable, high-speed internet to every family in America and deliver cheaper and cleaner energy.

To achieve the goals of the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), applicants are required to propose grant projects that address one of the following tracks for this grant program:

- 1) **Development Track:** Developing and Implementing Local/Regional Worker-Centered Sector Strategy Programs; or
- 2) **Scaling Track:** Scaling Effective Worker-Centered Sector Strategy Programs.

## **Development Track**

The goal of the Development Track is to establish local and regional partnerships that will develop and implement worker-centered sector strategy training programs in one or more infrastructure-related sectors. Applicants are expected to use evidence-based training strategies such as Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) and other recognized work and learn approaches. Additionally, applicants may propose to implement innovative, otherwise unproven strategies and approaches to recruitment, education and training, and partnership development that support or complement the evidence-based strategies to further inform promising sector strategy models. The Development Track will target populations in smaller and/or rural communities, as well as historically marginalized, underrepresented, and underserved populations.

## **Scaling Track**

The goal of the Scaling Track is to invest in established partnerships that have demonstrated evidence of effectiveness in implementing a sector strategy training program in one or more infrastructure-related sectors. This demonstrated effectiveness should include supporting data that shows employment outcomes, wage progression, and other evidence of sector training program achievement. Applicants will broaden the geographic scope of their existing effective sector strategy training program and incorporate worker-centered sector strategies. This track requires project designs which utilize evidence-based training models. Additionally, the Scaling Track will ensure that expansion efforts specifically target those populations that have historically been marginalized, underrepresented, and underserved within the identified sectors and communities.

### **3. What does it mean to have a worker-centered sector strategy?**

The DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program is designed to ensure workers are at the center of the grant program's training and employment strategies. A sector strategy is a systems approach to workforce development that involves a public-private partnership of multiple employers within an industry sector, that brings together educational institutions; economic development agencies; workforce development systems; and labor, worker, and community organizations to identify and collaboratively meet the workforce needs of that industry sector within a given economic region(s).

Worker-centered sector strategies build on the sector partnership to provide training programs that are industry-driven and responsive to local and regional infrastructure sector demands in the proposed service area, to meet industry needs while also engaging workers in training program designs that support the attainment of quality jobs. Quality jobs are those that ensure adequate staffing, offer family-sustaining wages and career pathway progression, require robust safety and health protocols, offer quality worker benefits (such as health insurance, paid leave, and retirement), and support recruitment and retention practices that promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. This also should include, whenever possible, collaboration with unions and worker organizations to develop and deliver training and/or providing supervised work-based learning. The worker-centered approach ensures that workforce development and employment opportunities are accessible to and shaped by communities of color and low-paid

workers by considering their needs and actively working to address the barriers to good jobs while ensuring that workers have agency and voice and are treated with dignity and respect.

#### **4. What are the core principles that must be incorporated into grant project designs?**

To effectively address a worker-centered sector strategy approach, applicants must embed three core principles into their project design to ensure meaningful impact on, and benefit to, the infrastructure workforce. The core principles are: 1) Strategies for Ensuring Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility and Prioritizing Recruitment, Training and Retention of a Local Workforce; 2) Career Pathways; and 3) Approaches for Increasing Job Quality.

The core principles are described in full on pages 12-19 of the FOA. Criteria for how an application should incorporate these core principles can be found on pages 47-50 of the FOA.

#### **5. How is this grant program funded?**

The DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program is authorized under Section 414I of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (ACWIA), as amended (codified at 29 U.S.C. 3224a). These grants are financed by a user fee paid by employers to bring foreign workers into the United States under the H-1B nonimmigrant visa program.

#### **6. Does the FOA support applications from smaller and/or rural communities?**

Yes. The Department strongly encourages applications that include smaller and/or rural communities.

In both tracks, applicants that demonstrate in their application that they are serving smaller and/or rural communities will receive two priority consideration points toward their overall application score.

For the purposes of this grant program smaller and rural communities include:

1. All non-metro counties;
2. All metro census tracts with Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) codes 4-10;
3. Large area metro census tracts of at least 400 square miles in area with population density of 35 or less per square mile with RUCA codes 2-3;
4. All outlying metro counties without an Urbanized Area (UA) to be rural; or
5. Any federally recognized Indian Tribe

If the applicant is proposing to serve smaller or rural communities for priority consideration, they must provide supporting data/documentation including the information source(s) utilized.

Applicants may use the data provided through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (<https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/about-us/what-is-rural/data-files>) to assist in documenting that the proposed service area includes smaller and/or rural communities.

## ELIGIBILITY AND PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW

### 7. Who is eligible to apply for this grant?

The following seven types of entities qualify as eligible lead applicants:

- **National or Community-based Nonprofit Organizations** targeting advanced manufacturing, information technology, and/or professional, scientific, and technical services occupations related to renewable energy, transportation, and/or broadband infrastructure sectors, including nonprofit trade, industry, or employer professional associations and advocacy groups representing the identified industries and sectors;
- **Labor Unions, Labor-Management Organizations, and Worker Organizations** that represent workers in advanced manufacturing, information technology, and/or professional, scientific, and technical services occupations related that provide training programs included on the State’s Eligible Training Provider List under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA);
- **Education/Training Provider(s)**: Public or private nonprofit education and training providers, including institutions of higher education as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001); Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) including Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Native American-serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NANTIs), Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions (ANNHIs), and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs); community and technical colleges and systems; nonprofit and community-based organizations that offer job training, including that provide training programs included on the State’s Eligible Training Provider List under WIOA;
- **Workforce Development Entities** involved in administering the public workforce system established under WIOA, including State and Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and Indian and Native American Program entities eligible for funding under WIOA Section 166 (29 U.S.C. 3221);
- **Economic Development Agencies**, including the District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD);
- **Native American Tribal Governments** (Federally recognized) which are defined as the recognized governing bodies of any Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, community, component band, or component reservation, individually identified (including parenthetically) in the list published most recently as of the date of enactment of this paragraph pursuant to section 104 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5131); and
- **State, County, and Local Governments**, including cities and townships, and State Workforce Agencies (State government agencies that receives funds pursuant to the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) to administer the State’s public labor exchange activities or the lead state agency responsible for the administration of WIOA title I activities).

NOTE: The Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 defines Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) separately from non-profit organizations. Per the Uniform Guidance in 2 CFR 200.1, a non-profit organization is defined as any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization, not including IHEs, that:

- (1) Is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest;
- (2) Is not organized primarily for profit; and
- (3) Uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization.

Separately from the definition of a non-profit organization, 2 CFR 200.1 uses the definition of Institution of Higher Education at [20 U.S.C. 1001](#), which includes as part of that definition that an IHE is “a public or other nonprofit institution.”

We allow all non-profits (as defined by 2 CFR 200.1), including IHEs (whether public or private), to apply, except for 501(c)(4)s, which are prohibited, per Section VI.B.2.b. of the FOA. For-profit organizations are not eligible to apply for these grants.

#### **8. Are for-profit institutions of higher education eligible to apply for this grant?**

For-profit education and training providers are not eligible as a lead applicant.

Page 28 of the FOA states that eligible lead applicants include “[p]ublic or nonprofit education and training providers, including institutions of higher education as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).”

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- (1) Is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest;
- (2) Is not organized primarily for profit; and
- (3) Uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization.

Separately from the definition of a non-profit organization, 2 CFR 200.1 uses the definition of Institution of Higher Education at [20 U.S.C. 1001](#), which includes as part of that definition that an IHE is “a public or other nonprofit institution.”

#### **9. Are private institutions of higher education eligible to apply for this grant?**

Yes, private institutions of higher education are eligible to apply, as long as they are **non-profits**. The eligibility requirements allow for both public and private non-profit institutions of higher education to apply for this grant opportunity.

## 10. Who are the required partners for the DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program?

This program will award grants to a DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program Partnership of public and private sector entities. Eligible lead applicants must establish a partnership that includes the following entities:

- **Employer Partners:**

- Development Track:

- A representative group of, and no less than two (2), employer partners who are committed to providing hiring opportunities for participants trained through the grant. An applicant may meet this employer partnership requirement by partnering with an industry/trade association that represents at least two (2) employers in the service area who are committed to providing hiring opportunities for participants trained through the grant.

- Scaling Track:

- A representative group of, and no less than four (4), employer partners who are committed to providing hiring opportunities for participants trained through the grant and who support the employment needs of the skilled workforce being created in those service areas. An applicant may meet this employer partnership requirement by partnering with one or more industry/trade associations that represent multiple employers who are committed to hiring opportunities for participants trained through the grant and operate in the identified service areas.
- **Education/Training Provider(s):** One or more public or private nonprofit education and training providers, including institutions of higher education as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001); HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs including PBIs, HSIs, NANTIs, ANNHIs, and AANAPISIs; community and technical colleges and systems; nonprofit and community-based organizations that offer job training, including those organizations that provide training programs included on the State's Eligible Training Provider List under WIOA.
- **Workforce Development Entities:** Entities involved in administering the public workforce system established under WIOA, including State and Local WDBs and Indian and Native American Program entities eligible for funding under WIOA Section 166 (29 U.S.C. 3221).
- **Worker Organizations, Labor-Management Organizations, or Labor Unions:** Entities such as worker organizations, labor unions, and labor-management organizations representing workers, or target populations of workers in advanced manufacturing, information technology, and/or professional, scientific, and technical services occupations supporting renewable energy, transportation, and/or broadband infrastructure sectors. Outside of a union, this could include worker associations, coalitions, alliances, guilds, or another similar worker advocacy group that is not considered a formal union.
  - Applicants proposing service areas where there may not be such organizations actively operating, such as in some smaller or rural communities, will be required to document this. In lieu of the letter of commitment or related documentation, such applicants must use the OLMS *Union Search* Tool to verify the lack of union

presence by providing the search records as an attachment. They should also describe any additional efforts or research conducted to identify any viable worker organizations in the area. Where none are demonstrated, the applicant must describe how they will ensure active worker voice and collaboration within the sector strategy partnership through identification of specific commitments and requirements for worker representation and engagement in all aspects of the training model.

- **State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAAs):** Applicants proposing Registered Apprenticeship Programs in states with federally recognized State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAAs) must include the SAA as a required grant partner. **(Required only if applicant is proposing to provide RAP training.)**

While an eligible lead applicant may represent one of the required partners, it is expected that applicants demonstrate quality representation from each type of required partner. Therefore, an entity cannot serve as more than one type of required partner in the DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program for the purpose of meeting FOA requirements. Additionally, applicants are strongly encouraged to collaborate with other optional partners that can support and advance the work of the DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program.

## **11. Can applicants include additional partners?**

Yes, applicants are strongly encouraged to collaborate with other optional partners that can support and advance the work of the DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program.

Optional partners may include:

- Nonprofit organizations specializing in advanced manufacturing, information technology, and/or professional, scientific, and technical services occupations that support renewable energy, transportation and/or broadband;
- State agencies with the responsibility for transportation, infrastructure, the environment, and energy;
- Foundations and philanthropic organizations;
- Agencies administering other relevant federal funding such as the Departments of Education, Commerce, Energy, and Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Science Foundation;
- Economic development agencies;
- community-based organizations that represent and serve marginalized and underrepresented populations, such as workers with disabilities, justice-impacted individuals, and people of color; and
- Organizations that aid newly arriving immigrant, refugee, asylee and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) populations.

## 12. **UPDATED!** Can a lead applicant subaward grant funds to sub-recipients?

Yes, applicants may subaward grant funds to subrecipients. Subrecipient agreements are often an important and necessary part of developing the public-private sector partnership programs described in the FOA. Entities such as state agencies or Local Workforce Development Boards, for example, often – either by necessity or program design – function as pass-through entities.

However, the Department expects that the lead applicant has the organizational capacity to implement the proposed program design. The Department strongly discourages applications that result in a “pass-through” of grant funds to a third-party entity (i.e., where the lead applicant sub-awards the **majority** of grant funds and operational activities to a single subrecipient).

The use of subrecipients is not a factor considered in the application screening criteria (page 26 of the FOA), nor in the criteria used to evaluate the technical merit of applications (pages 66 – 67 of the FOA). However, applicants that allocate a majority of the total grant award to one or more subrecipients will be assessed during the post-award Employment and Training Administration compliance review process to ensure effective grants management and accountability from the awarded lead.

Applicants that include subrecipients are strongly encouraged to ensure there is adequate staff and resources allocated to manage and oversee any subrecipients.

## 13. Who can be served through this grant program and who is the target population?

This grant program must serve participants who are at least 17 years old and not currently enrolled in secondary school within a local educational agency. Among the individuals eligible to receive training, those of particular interest include historically marginalized and underrepresented populations, including women (who are underrepresented in many key infrastructure occupations), people of color, justice-impacted individuals, individuals with disabilities, veterans, military spouses, transitioning service members, and other populations with employment barriers that hinder movement into career pathways that lead to middle- to high-skilled H-1B occupations.

This grant program will train individuals whose employment status when determined eligible for the program is **unemployed**, **underemployed**, or an **incumbent worker**. The definitions of unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent worker are found on page 37 of the FOA.

### **AWARDS OVERVIEW**

## 14. What is the total amount of grant funds that will be awarded?

The Department of Labor anticipates awarding up to \$80 million in DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program grants in round 1. Pending availability of funds, the Department intends to make approximately \$200 million available over the two competitive rounds of funding for this grant program. The Department intends to commit up to 50 percent of the total available funding to projects that develop local/regional worker-centered sector strategy



programs (Development Track). The Department intends to commit the remaining funds for projects focused on scaling effective worker-centered sector strategy programs (Scaling Track).

### **15. How many grants will be awarded?**

The DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program anticipates funding 15 to 25 grants.

### **16. What are the funding ranges for grants in Track 1 (Development Track) and Track 2 (Scaling Track)?**

**Track 1 (Development Track):** Individual grant amounts for this track will range from \$500,000 to \$2 million.

**Track 2 (Scaling Track):** Individual grant amounts for this track will range from \$2 million to \$5 million.

### **17. Is there a match or leveraged funds requirement for these grant projects?**

The DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program has different and distinct cost sharing and matching requirements for each track.

The **Development Track** grants are not required to provide matching funds. The intent of this track is to encourage the development of sector strategy models in less resourced communities that do not yet have established sector partnerships. The Department highly encourages public-private partnerships under the Development Track to contribute at least 15 percent of the total amount of requested funds as leveraged funds to support the grant project.

- Leveraged resources can come from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, businesses, industry associations, labor organizations, community-based organizations, education and training providers, and/or federal, state, and local government programs. Grantees should make participants aware of other federally funded workforce training resources from across the government, including training funded by the Departments of Education, Commerce, Energy, and Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Science Foundation.

The **Scaling Track** grants are intended to grow and expand existing effective models and partnerships. These grants are much larger in size and anticipated impact and therefore, it is required that applicants for the Scaling Track provide 15 percent matching funds to the federal share to support sustainability and strong investment of the partnerships.

- Match funding may come from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to the private sector (e.g., businesses or industry associations); the investor community (e.g., angel networks or economic development entities); the philanthropic community (e.g., foundations); and the non-profit sector (e.g., community organizations, faith-based organizations, or education and training institutions). Non-Federal, public-sector funds (e.g., from States or local governments) may be used for matching funds, if necessary.

- To be allowable as part of match, an expenditure must be an allowable charge for Federal grant funds and considered necessary and reasonable to accomplish the project or program objectives.
- Any resources contributed to the project in addition to the required 15 percent matching funds will be considered leveraged resources.

Given the intent and scope of the FOA, applicants under both tracks are encouraged to leverage other federal BIL funding, as well as other federal funds from sources such as the CARES Act and American Rescue Plan, as part of their strategic planning for these grants.

#### **18. How long is the grant period of performance?**

The period of performance is 60 months with an anticipated start date of 10/01/2023 for round 1. Round two is anticipated to start on 10/01/2024. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities.

#### **19. What is the timeline of the FOA?**

This FOA has two closing dates. The Department must receive applications by 7/7/2023 to be considered for round 1. Round 2 will open on 3/15/2024 and the Department must receive applications by 6/14/24 to be considered for round 2. For both rounds of funding, applications must be received no later than **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time** on the closing date to be considered.

#### **20. Can applicants apply for both tracks?**

No. Applicants may only apply for and propose grant projects under one of the proposed tracks identified in this FOA; either the Development Track or Scaling Track but not both.

**Applications that propose both training tracks will be considered nonresponsive and will not be scored.**

#### **21. Can a lead applicant apply for more than one grant?**

The Department will consider only one application from each organization applying as lead applicant. If the Department receives multiple applications from the same lead applicant organization for the same application funding round, only the most recently received application that met the deadline for that round will be considered.

#### **22. Can applicants apply for both round 1 and round 2 grants?**

Successful applicants who are awarded funding as a lead in the first round are not eligible to apply for the second round of funding as a lead applicant; however, they may be a required or optional partner in applications for the second round.

### **GRANT PROGRAM DESIGN**

**23. UPDATED! Which industry sectors and occupations will be targeted through these grant projects?**

The DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program will support **advanced manufacturing; information technology; and professional, scientific, and technical occupations** supporting renewable energy, transportation, and broadband infrastructure sectors.

Applicants that propose to train individuals in occupations that fall outside of these industries must provide data showing that they are in-demand occupations for which a significant number of H-1B visas have been certified and support renewable energy, transportation, and/or broadband infrastructure sectors in advanced manufacturing, information technology; and/or professional, scientific and technical services occupations. Applicants must use verifiable data to make this demonstration, such as labor market data and data provided by [DOL's Foreign Labor Certification Data Center](#).

**24. Are construction occupations allowable for these grant projects? Which industry sectors and occupations will be targeted through these grant projects?**

General construction occupations such as construction laborers are not allowable under this FOA. However, occupations that are in-demand in the proposed service area, and on a career pathway to middle- to high-skilled occupations in infrastructure-related occupations, such as engineers, construction managers, and other specialized occupations, may align with the training allowed with these grants.

The DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program will support advanced manufacturing, information technology, and/or professional, scientific, and technical services occupations that support renewable energy, transportation, and/or broadband infrastructure sectors to upskill the present workforce and innovate how to train and build a pipeline for the future workforce.

Appendix A: H-1B Industries and Occupations of the FOA (p. 81) provides examples of allowable occupations and industry sectors.

Applicants that propose to train individuals in occupations that fall outside of these industries must provide data showing that they are in-demand occupations for which a significant number of H-1B visas have been certified **and support advanced manufacturing, information technology, and/or professional, scientific and technical services occupations related to renewable energy, transportation, and/or broadband infrastructure sectors**. This may be shown by using the data provided on DOL's Foreign Labor Certification Data Center Web site (<http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/performancecdm>) and selecting the "Data Disclosure" tab for the latest database of occupations approved under H-1B petitions.

**25. Can applicants propose training outside of occupations in advanced manufacturing, information technology, and professional, scientific, and technical services?**

Appendix A: H-1B Industries and Occupations of the FOA (p. 81) provides examples of allowable occupations, but is not an exhaustive list.

Applicants that propose to train individuals in occupations outside of advanced manufacturing; information technology; and professional, scientific, and technical occupations must:

- 1) Provide data showing that the proposed occupations are in-demand occupations;
- 2) Provide data showing that a significant number of H-1B visas have been certified for that occupation;  
and
- 3) Explain how the proposed occupation(s) supports the renewable energy, transportation, and/or broadband infrastructure sectors.

Data demonstrating that a significant number of H-1B visas have been certified for that occupation may be shown by using the data provided on DOL's Foreign Labor Certification Data Center Web site. To view specific occupations for which H-1B visas have been certified, visit DOL's Foreign Labor Certification Data Center Web site ([http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/performance\\_data.cfm](http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/performance_data.cfm)) and select the "Data Disclosure" tab for the latest database of occupations approved under H-1B petitions.

## 26. What is the geographic scope for these grant projects?

The Funding Opportunity Announcement describes three geographic scopes:

1. **Local/regional** means serving part or all of an economic region within one state or a contiguous economic region that may cross more than one state. This also includes Economic Development Districts (EDD) as recognized by the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Agency (<https://eda.gov/edd/>).
2. **Statewide** means serving an entire state or multiple non-contiguous economic regions or EDDs within one state.
3. **National** means serving multiple economic regions or EDDs in multiple states. The service area does not need to be contiguous.

## 27. Can Track 1 (Development Track) propose projects for a Statewide or National geographic scope?

Applicants submitting proposals for the Development Track cannot implement projects at the Statewide or National level. Projects that include a Statewide or National geographic scope can only be proposed for the Scaling Track.

Applicants applying under the Development Track may only propose projects at the **local/regional** level, which may include **serving part or all of an economic region within one state** or a **contiguous economic region** that may cross more than one state. This also includes Economic Development Districts (EDD) as recognized by the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Agency (<https://eda.gov/edd/>).

## 28. What types of activities will this grant program fund?

The proposed training programs must support advanced manufacturing; information technology; and/or professional, scientific, and technical occupations in renewable energy, transportation, and/or broadband infrastructure sectors, and must include the following activities:

1. Developing or scaling sector partnerships of public and private sector entities and engaging employers, workers, labor, and education and training institutions in the adoption and deployment of employment and training services to address in-demand workforce needs in the proposed service area;
2. Incorporating worker voice into the development, implementation, and scaling of the training program as described in Section I.A.2;
3. Developing or scaling career pathways programs that emphasize the skills, competencies, and credentials needed for middle- to high-skilled H-1B occupations (such as incorporating battery manufacturing training into a current advanced manufacturing training program focused on solar panel manufacturing) that are aligned with industry and employer needs;
4. Offering high-quality training options (including work-based learning models) to prepare individuals to successfully move into high-quality jobs in middle- to high-skilled employment in H-1B occupations upon completion of such training;
5. Advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the infrastructure workforce by recruiting, training, and expanding the pool of workers with transferrable, certified skills aligned with employer needs for good jobs—particularly recruiting and hiring women, people of color, justice-impacted individuals, individuals with disabilities, and other populations with employment barriers that hinder movement into career pathways leading to middle- to high-skilled H-1B occupations;
6. Emphasizing RAPs as an earn and learn pathway and an equity strategy to break down barriers to infrastructure jobs for individuals without degrees;
7. Developing and implementing training program models (Development Track) or scaling established training program models (Scaling Track);
8. Prioritizing occupations and career pathways within the identified infrastructure sectors that are in high demand and offer above-average pay and benefits for the applicable industry and/or location, and opportunities for career advancement;
9. Providing intensive wrap-around supportive services to participants who need them, to ensure they can participate and complete the training program and enter good quality employment;
10. Offering proactive and comprehensive career navigation services to participants;
11. Developing a new, or leveraging an existing, system for reviewing and collecting participant data, and monitoring results to assess program performance;
12. Leveraging other private, federal, and state funding resources, including BIL resources; and
13. Institutionalizing the practice of worker-centered sector strategies by creating systemic changes, including through partnerships, policies, and procedures, to successfully sustain sector strategy models after the life of the grant.

Projects funded under this FOA will provide a range of training and education services that lead to middle- to high-skilled jobs in infrastructure-related occupations and sectors. An innovative mix of services will include assessment, coaching and counseling, supportive services, and

occupational skills training that leads to recognized postsecondary credentials and/or employment. All projects must incorporate a strong worker-centered assessment component that allows for a customization of services and training to meet the needs of the program participants to get a quality job, retain their employment, or advance to a new position in the targeted sector.

Applicants should include robust, comprehensive, and customized paid work-based learning strategies, such as RAPs and pre-apprenticeship programs that articulate to RAPs during the grant period of performance, On-the-Job Training (OJT), incumbent worker training, paid internships, and other forms of paid work experience. Other allowable training strategies include classroom, competency-based, accelerated learning, and technology-based training strategies.

### **29. Do applications need to include the provision of supportive services?**

Yes. A robust supportive services strategy is required as part of the proposed program design under the FOA. This means all grant projects must document in their project narrative, budget, and budget narrative that their application includes a supportive service needs assessment of all participants and procedures for the provision of supportive services for participants who need them. Up to 15 percent of grant funds may be used to provide supportive services for training participants and supportive services may also be provided as a leveraged cost.

### **30. Can an application focus on a career pathway model that trains and upskills current entry-level workers?**

This grant program does allow for recruitment of current entry-level workers. Under this FOA, training along a career pathway may start with entry-level occupations but must lead to employment and and/or advancement into in-demand middle- to high-skilled occupations in advanced manufacturing; information technology; and/or professional, scientific, and technical occupations supporting renewable energy, transportation, and/or broadband infrastructure sectors. Career pathways must be sector-focused and incorporate the needs and hiring opportunities of employers within a specific industry sector, and provide planned and sequenced coursework, training, and/or work experience that leads to attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.

This grant program seeks to advance strategies that support participants entering and progressing in career pathways programs leading to good-quality in-demand jobs in middle- to high-skilled infrastructure-related occupations.

**Note:** For purposes of this FOA, middle-skilled occupations are generally those that require some significant education and training beyond high school, but less than a bachelor's degree (such as a recognized postsecondary credential or Registered Apprenticeship Program). High-skilled occupations are generally those that require a bachelor's degree or higher.

### **31. Will there be an evaluation of the DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program?**

The Department believes that successful projects can develop evidence on effective workforce education and training strategies in renewable energy, transportation, and broadband industry sectors that can be replicated broadly. To facilitate this replication, the Department will conduct a national impact evaluation of the DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant projects to inform workforce development policy and advance DOL's mission to help the nation's employers and workers.

Grantees must agree to participate in the national evaluation as a condition of their award and further information on the evaluation plan will be provided after award.

## **PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES**

### **32. What are expected outcomes and outputs of the grant program?**

Applicants are expected to provide targets for the following outcome measures and tracking indicators:

#### **Tracking Indicators**

Applicants are required to provide targets for the following two tracking indicators; however, this data will not be treated as an outcome measure for performance purposes.

1. Total number of participants served;
2. Total number of participants who began receiving education/job training activities;

#### **Performance Outcome Measures**

1. Total number of participants who completed education/job training program activities;
2. Total number of participants who completed education/job training program activities and obtained a credential;
3. Total number of unemployed and underemployed participants who completed education/job training program activities and entered unsubsidized employment; and
4. Total number of incumbent worker participants who completed education/job training program activities and advanced into a new position.

### **33. How will past performance be evaluated?**

Section IV.B.3.e of the FOA provides full information on providing data on past performance.

Applicants will receive points based on past performance data. Applicants must use the information below and provide the applicable past performance information.

- Applicants must provide a full description of the lead applicant's prior experience with implementing an effective sector strategy model, the development of employment and training programs, or capacity to scale employment and training programs within a local/regional, statewide, or national area during the grant period. This could include evidence of existing sector partnerships, prior experience in taking employment and training programs to scale, and the number of participants served in prior programs.
- Demonstrate that partners have experience in deploying employment and training programs, including classroom training, work-based learning programs, internships, mentorships, or externships within the proposed industry, and in enrolling participants in employment and training programs, including providing supportive services, securing employment placements, and/or wage increases.
- Applicants must provide a past performance chart that shows the performance outcome measures achieved and spending rate analysis (during the original period of performance) for a grant initiative completed in the past five years from the closing date of this



announcement using the chart format described below. There are different chart format instructions depending on past grant experience. Applicants must use the information below to determine which instructions are applicable to their organization. Failure to provide a past performance chart as an attachment will result in zero points awarded for this rating factor.

All applicants must complete a Past Performance Chart that includes the overall objectives of the grant, population served, funding amount, and grantor contact information. There are different instructions in the FOA for:

- **Past H-1B Awardees:** Applicants that have received an H-1B-funded grant award from the Department whose period of performance ended within the past five years of the closing date of this announcement;
- **Past Employment Training Administration (ETA) Grant Awardees:** Applicants that have received an ETA grant award that was not an H-1B-funded grant award, whose period of performance ended within the last five years of the closing date of this announcement; and
- **Past Non-ETA Grantees:** Applicants that have received non-ETA assistance agreements (federal or non-federal grants and cooperative agreements but not federal contracts) whose period of performance ended within the past five years of the closing date of this announcement.

Applicants must submit, as part of the Past Performance Chart described above, the total grant amount and the percentage of grant funds spent **during the original period of performance** for the grant as identified through the Past Performance Chart Instructions specified in the FOA.

A sample Past Performance Chart is provided on page 54 of the FOA.

### **34. How will applications be evaluated for funding?**

The Department has instituted procedures for assessing the technical merit of applications to provide for an objective review of applications and to assist applicants to understand the standards against which applications 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.

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.

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Points (maximum)</b>
Statement of Need (See Section IV.B.3.a. Statement of Need)	10 total
Expected Outputs and Outcomes (See Section IV.B.3.b. Expected Outcomes and Outputs)	16 total
Project Design (See Section IV.B.3.c. Project Design)	54 total
Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity (See Section IV.B.3.d. Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity)	8 total
Past Performance – Programmatic Capability (See Section IV.B.3.e. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability)	10 total
Budget and Budget Narrative (See Section IV.B.2. Project Budget)	2 total
Priority Consideration: Service Area includes smaller and/or rural communities (See Section IV.B.3.a.iii.)	2 total
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>102</b>