

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### TEGL 15-19: Availability of Program Year 2019 Funding for State Apprenticeship Expansion Grants, “Building State Capacity to Expand Apprenticeship through Innovation”

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#### **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

#### **1. What organizations can apply for these grants?**

- As indicated in the TEGL Section 1: Purpose, organizations eligible to receive funding under this announcement are States. The term “State” means “any of the 50 States of the United States, District of Columbia, or any Territory or possession of the United States.” For the purposes of this TEGL, territories or possessions of the United States are defined as: Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa. The Governor has the authority to designate a state agency as the lead for receiving the funds. As such, the state agency administering the grant does not have to be a State Workforce Agency or a recognized State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA). However, as noted in the TEGL, if the lead applicant is operating in a SAA state, the lead applicant should provide documentation of partnership to ensure successful implementation of the grant.

#### **2. Can a State with an apprenticeship system that has not received previous State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) or Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) funding apply?**

- Yes. This new funding vehicle is open to all States, as defined in the TEGL.

#### **3. Does the application require a letter from a State’s Governor or Chief Elected Official?**

- Yes. The Governor or another chief elected official must provide a leadership commitment letter – to be uploaded to Grants.gov separately from the project narrative and work plan – demonstrating the State’s commitment to this effort. The letter must do the following:

Designate the State Agency to be the recipient of the award.

- Must be one of the eligible entities (see Appendix II: Award Information, Eligible Applicants).
- Must commit to work in partnership with the State Apprenticeship Agency or federal Office of Apprenticeship working within the State.

Describe specifically how the Governor or chief elected official plans to support the expansion of quality and innovative apprenticeship training programs that are aligned with the WIOA State Plan.

The letter must be addressed to Brinda Ruggles, Grant Officer, at the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration Office of Grants Management, 200 Constitution Ave, NW Room N-4716, Washington, DC 20210.

For State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) States, applicants must identify and detail their engagement and collaboration with the SAA.

**4. Does this State apprenticeship funding replace the previous State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) and Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grant initiatives?**

- No. This is not a replacement but a new funding stream. This new program may have overlapping performance from the other past grants. However, this grant must have distinct activities, the activities can be related to the previous ones but not the same.

**5. Can Native American/American-Indian Tribes apply?**

- Not at this time. However, we encourage Tribes to contact their State representatives to initiate conversations regarding how they can partner with currently eligible entities.

**6. Can Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) apply?**

- Only in some States. Generally, WDBs are not Statewide Agencies, but if yours is, contact your Governor's Office to determine who the designated Agency is and reach out to them to discuss getting involved in the application development.

**7. Can my 510(c)(3) apply?**

- No. However, ETA encourages you to keep an eye on Apprenticeship.gov for the list of awardees, and contact your State Agency to explore partnership opportunities.

**AWARD INFORMATION**

**8. What is the size of the grant awards?**

- \$73 million in Program Year (PY) 2019 funds is available to States through tiered funding.
  - **Tier I: Baseline Goals and Activities:** Every State can receive a base amount of \$450,000; U.S. territories receive \$300,000; and all entities must use these funds to address the following three *required* baseline goals and activities. See Appendix III of the TEGL for details.
  - **Tier II (Optional): Innovation Goals and Activities:** ETA will award States as much as \$9 million to carry out activities above-and-beyond supporting the basic RAP structures in the State. There are three funding levels for this tier, and ETA will determine the award amount based on the goals selected by applicants from a list in Appendix III. All applications for Tier II funds must be supported by

strong evidence of an applicant’s past performance in establishing and expanding RAPs, in alignment with the criteria in Attachment II-1 of the TEGL.

- Up to \$3 million
- \$3,000,001 to \$6 million
- \$6,000,001 to \$9 million

**9. Do states have to apply to receive Tier I funding?**

- Yes.

**10. Can applicants apply for Tier I funding only?**

- Yes.

**11. Can applicants apply for Tier II funding only?**

- No. Applicants must apply for Tier I, if also applying for Tier II funding.

**12. When are applications due?**

- The deadline for submissions is May 21, 2020 at 11:59:59pm. Applicants should begin the process early enough to allow adequate time for complete application submission to grants.gov prior to the deadline. See TEGL Appendix II: Award Information, Appendix VI: Application Review and Award. Any application submitted that includes the requisite SF-424, SF-424A, and a project narrative will be considered for funding, subject to conditions upon award at the Grant Officer’s discretion.

**13. Are extensions available?**

- No. Extensions will not be granted beyond May 21, 2020. See Appendix VI “Application Review and Reward.” Proposals will first be screened to determine if the applicant meets the eligibility requirements enumerated in Appendix II, Award Information. All required elements outlined in Appendix III, Application Submission, of this announcement must be submitted. Applications that do not include an SF-424, SF-424A, Budget Narrative, and Project Narrative for Tier I Baseline Goals will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed. Submissions will only be accepted via www.grants.gov. Submissions via other electronic mediums will not be accepted, nor will hard copy submissions.

**14. What are the requirements for the required work plan?**

- See Attachment I-2 for a sample work plan to be submitted for base funding and goal activities. The work plan must clearly describe short-term, mid-term, and long-term milestones, and must include all of the following:
  - Project Goals: The overarching achievements that will be pursued;

- Milestones: The key markers of grant progress. These are typically expressed in the form of an action or event marking a significant change or stage in development;
- Key Activities: The major activities of the State’s apprenticeship expansion strategies, including timeframes for expanding existing RAPs, deployment of new apprenticeship programs, and/or enrollment of new participants in apprenticeship training;
- Outcomes and Deliverables: The number of participants served, the required annual report, and other outcomes and deliverables of the project; and
- Key partners: The partners identified for key activities.

**15. Are there minimum requirements for the number of apprentices to be enrolled?**

- No. However, applicants should identify targets goals for the number of apprentices to be enrolled, as appropriate for the project, in their proposed performance outcomes measures.

**16. What are the requirements for the performance outputs and outcomes?**

- See Attachment I-3 for a sample format table to outline intended performance outputs and outcomes. The performance outcomes measures must be included as an Attachment to the application.

**17. Where do we apply?**

- See Appendix V. Applicants must submit the application package through Grants.gov. Submission via other electronic mediums will not be accepted, nor will hard copy submissions. This submission process may at times be complicated and time-consuming. As such, DOL strongly encourages applicants to initiate the process as soon as possible in order to allow time to resolve unanticipated technical problems. Applicants needing to register with Grants.gov may do so at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>. Registration is a one-time process, and applicants that already have a Grants.gov account do not need to register again. Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different web forms within an application. For complete workspace overview, refer to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>.

**18. Is there a checklist to ensure Applicants cover all requirements of the TEG?**

- Yes. See Attachment III-1 titled “Application Submission Checklist”.

**19. How long is the grant period of performance?**

- See Appendix V “Application Submission.” ETA plans to award these grants by July 1, 2020 with a 36-month period of performance ending June 30, 2023.

**20. What additional information can you provide regarding the evaluation?**

- As a condition of the 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.

**PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

**21. Are there standard/ preliminary baseline Tier I activities that should be addressed in each application?**

- Yes. The Tier I activities that are required are listed below.
  - A. *National Apprenticeship System Building.* States must spend base funding on developing structures that ensure all RAPs in the State have the features of high-quality apprenticeship described in 29 C.F.R. parts 29 and 30.
  - B. *System Alignment for Apprenticeship Expansion.* States must spend base funding to build statewide capacity to increase the number and quality of apprenticeships through stronger alignment with the education and workforce systems.
  - C. *Improving Data Sharing and Data Integrity.* States must spend base funding to improve data collection and sharing and data integrity.

For more details see Appendix III-A

**22. Are there Tier II activities that should be addressed in the application?**

- Yes, if Applicants choose to apply for this level of funding. ETA will award States as much as \$9 million if their application demonstrates improvements and innovations to RAPs in their State that spread the RAP model, develop infrastructure, and impact other significant policy issues. Applications must also credibly demonstrate that stated goals can be accomplished during the life of the grant. See Appendix III for details.

**23. Are there minimum requirements for the number of grant staff? If so, how much of grant staff's time must be dedicated to grant projects?**

- No. However, Applicants must provide a detailed description demonstrating their capacity to effectively manage each component of the program including a narrative portion and functional organizational chart as outlined in Attachment I-1(iii).

**24. Are there specific reporting requirements?**

- Yes. See Appendix IX "Reporting Requirements." A Quarterly Financial Status Report (ETA 9130) is required until such time as all funds have been expended or the grant period has expired. Grant recipients must also submit a Quarterly Progress Report quarter. This report includes a quarterly narrative report that details all grant activities that occurred during the quarter, as well as a quarterly performance report. In order to

submit these quarterly reports, the grant recipient will be required to track and report participant-level data to ETA, including Social Security Numbers (SSNs), on all individuals who are provided grant-funded services. The SSN information allows ETA to efficiently match employment data from State unemployment insurance and other wage records. Thus, the collection of participant SSNs lessens the burden on grant recipients when tracking exit-based employment measures, while reporting consistent and reliable outcome information. Performance reporting for these grants will align with the DOL-Only Performance Accountability Information and Reporting System (OMB Control No. 1205-0521) information collection request (ICR). As part of quarterly performance reporting, DOL requires grant recipients to conduct data validation to ensure the validity of data submitted to DOL. Grant recipients are encouraged to fully implement the data validation framework published in forthcoming DOL data validation guidance.

## **ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES**

### **25. Can grant funds be used to support Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAPs)?**

- No. Funds awarded come from the authority provided in the Department’s Fiscal Year 2019 appropriation, which provided funds to “expand opportunities relating to apprenticeship programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act... through grants, cooperative agreements, contracts and other arrangements, with States and other appropriate entities...” See Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019 (Public Law 115-245, Division B, Title I).

Therefore, funds can only be used to support RAPs and quality pre-apprenticeship programs that lead to a RAP.

### **26. Are there funding restrictions under this TEG?**

- Yes. See Appendix IV, Funding Restrictions.

### **27. What are allowable pre-apprenticeship activities under this TEG?**

- Funds can only be used to support RAPs and quality pre-apprenticeships leading to RAPs as described in Appendix I.