

Funding Opportunity: DOL Scaling Apprenticeships Grants for Institutions of Higher Education

Lewis-Burke Associates LLC – July 30, 2018

The Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) recently released a funding opportunity announcement to support sector-based approaches to developing and expanding apprenticeships on a national scale in key industry sectors. The grant aims to expand apprenticeships to sectors that often utilize H-1B visas, increase apprenticeship activity among small and medium-sized businesses, and promote a sector-based approach to the large-scale expansion of apprenticeships. The notice states, “Grant funds will be awarded to institutions of higher education in partnership with national industry associations, which together seek to develop, implement, and take to a national scale a new apprenticeship model; or expand an existing apprenticeship program to a new industry sector or occupation or a new population, on a national scale.” This program aligns with priorities set forth in the Trump Administration’s 2017 Executive Order on Expanding Apprenticeship in America.¹

Grant funds can be used to support training and training-related activities, including academic and work-based training, and may also be used for supportive services, such as childcare and transportation. Applicants must design their apprenticeship programs to target one of the following:

Option 1: Occupations in an H-1B industry: Applicants may choose to expand apprenticeships in an industry in which DOL has certified H-1B visas for occupations. Examples include, “information technology (IT) and IT-related industries, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, financial services, and educational services.”

Option 2: H-1B Occupations: Applicants may choose to target specific H-1B occupations that fall outside of the identified H-1B industries listed above. If the target occupation is not within a designated H-1B industry, applicants must provide data showing the occupation is one for which a significant number of H-1B visas have been certified.

Applicants may use grant funds to support the following training activities:

1) On-the-Job Training (OJT): The notice notes, “OJT also offers apprentices an earn-as-you-learn training option, allowing individuals to learn new skills while earning a regular paycheck.”

2) Related Technical Instruction (RTI): The notice notes, “Grant funds may be used to support the RTI (sometimes referred to as “classroom training”) of an apprenticeship. Allowable costs may include: (1) the development of courses at the post-secondary level that are integrated into the apprenticeship program, (2) apprentice tuition or other educational fees, (3) the delivery of instruction requirements, and (4) the translation of military training, skills, and experience into the apprenticeship program.”

3) Incumbent Worker Training: This includes programs that offer strategies for employers to upskill existing personnel. According to the solicitation, “Such training increases the skills and credentials for

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/3245/>

these workers to advance in their careers and assists employers in strengthening the skills of their existing workforce.”

4) Pre-Apprenticeship Training: According to the solicitation, “... applicants may propose pre-apprenticeship programs to serve as on-ramps to apprenticeship opportunities, as long as the training is on a career pathway that leads to middle to high-skilled occupations.”

5) Supportive Services: The notice states that “supportive services are those necessary to enable an individual to participate in education and training activities funded through this grant program. Examples of such services may include transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments.”

Applications must also ensure that apprentices receive college credit for classroom or related instruction.

Additional information on qualifying activities is provided in the full solicitation linked below.

Total Funding and Award Size: DOL intends to make approximately 15 to 30 grants. The estimated range of awards is \$1 million to \$12 million. Funding is also dependent on the number of apprentices an applicant intends to serve.

Figure 1. Minimum Goals for Apprentices Served During the Grant Period Based on Funding Request*

Funding Request	Minimum Apprentices Served
\$1,000,000 - \$2,000,000	800
\$2,000,001 - \$4,000,000	1,600
\$4,000,001 - \$8,000,000	3,200
\$8,000,001 - \$12,000,000	5,000+

Cost Sharing: Applicants must secure matching funds in an amount equal to at least 35 percent of the total requested funds. Funds may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions.

Eligible Entity: Grants will be awarded to an apprenticeship partnership of public and private sector entities. Eligible lead applicants include: a) an institution of higher education representing a consortium of institutions of higher education, or b) a state system of higher education, such as a community college system office or a single state higher educational board. Applicants must include in their apprenticeship partnership at least one high-level representative from private industry that represents the sector or industry in which the applicant is proposing to take apprenticeships to scale. This required private sector partner must consist of:

- One or more national industry/trade associations; or
- A consortium of at least five businesses representing an industry sector.

Period of Performance: The period of performance is 48 months with an anticipated start date of February 1, 2019. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and startup activities.

The notice states, "... grantees will begin enrolling apprentices no later than nine months after the date of grant award."

Application Deadline: Applications will be accepted until 4pm Eastern Time, October 16, 2018.

Sources and Additional Information:

- The notice of availability of funds and funding opportunity announcement is available at <https://www.doleta.gov/grants/docs/FOA-ETA-18-08.pdf>.