

# **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

## **Employment and Training Administration**

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### **Notice of Availability of Funds and Funding Opportunity Announcement for** *Workforce Data Quality Initiative – Round V*

**Announcement Type:** Initial

**Funding Opportunity Number:** FOA-ETA-15-06

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 17.261

**Key Dates:** The closing date for receipt of applications under this Announcement is **May 6, 2015**. Applications must be received no later than **4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time**.

**Addresses:** Mailed applications must be addressed to:

U.S. Department of Labor  
Employment and Training Administration, Office of Grants Management  
Attention: Steven Rietzke, Grant Officer  
Reference FOA-ETA-15-06  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N4716  
Washington, DC 20210

For complete application and submission information, including online application instructions, please refer to Section IV.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

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The Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL, or the Department, or we), announces the availability of approximately \$10 million in grant funds authorized by Section 171(c)(2) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and section 169 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) for grants to State Workforce Agencies (SWA) for the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI). With the passage of the WIOA, WDQI grants become even more vital as states move towards developing and building a more integrated data structure and develop consumer-friendly displays (i.e., scorecards) of program outcome information. WIOA expands on WIA by weaving data collection from both DOL and the Department of Education (ED) in a manner that is unique for the workforce system. Furthermore, we will encourage grantees to align and integrate data systems to support program management, performance reporting, and common case management systems. Additionally, grantees should focus on designing information technology systems which reduce burden and present integrated information to support service provision and inform customer choice. We further encourage grantees to use grant funds to expand access to comprehensive information sharing tools that enable both participants and employers to access programmatic outcomes. The Department has reserved up to 3 percent of this round's total grant funding (a maximum

amount of approximately \$300,000) to provide technical assistance to grantees in developing and implementing their State workforce longitudinal administrative databases. For the remainder of this document, we will interchangeably refer to the databases created as “workforce longitudinal administrative databases” or “workforce longitudinal databases.”

Grants awarded will provide SWAs the opportunity to develop or expand State workforce longitudinal administrative databases. The State workforce longitudinal databases will, at a minimum: 1) include information on programs that provide training, employment services, and unemployment insurance; 2) connect with education data contained in Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) databases; 3) be linked at the individual level to allow for the evaluation of federally and State-supported education and workforce programs; 4) be capable of generating workforce training provider performance information and outcomes in a standardized, easy to understand format (e.g., scorecards), consistent with all applicable Federal and State privacy laws; and 5) lead to better information for customers and stakeholders of the workforce system. Where such longitudinal systems do not exist or are in early development, WDQI grant assistance may be used to design and develop these databases. WDQI grant assistance can also be used to improve upon existing State workforce longitudinal databases. This FOA provides a description of the application submission requirements, outlines the process that eligible entities must use to apply for funds covered by this FOA, and details how grantees will be selected. Additional background information on the WDQI is available at <http://www.doleta.gov/performance/workforcedatagrants09.cfm>.

## **I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

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### **A. PROGRAM PURPOSE**

The purpose of WDQI is to support the development and expansion of State workforce longitudinal administrative databases over a three-year grant period. Collecting longitudinal workforce and education data will provide a comprehensive picture of workers' earnings throughout their careers. This data will be important as States implement the new performance reporting requirements to inform consumer choice and support evaluation activities under WIOA. Through analysis, these data will demonstrate the relationship between education and training programs, as well as the benefits of the programs to employment outcomes. These grants will help support the emphasis on accountability and transparency that is a key feature of the recently enacted WIOA and will be funded through section 171(c)(2) of WIA and section 169 of WIOA<sup>1</sup>. These grants will

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<sup>1</sup> The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (“WIOA”, Pub. L. 113-128) was signed into law on July 22, 2014 and takes effect July 1, 2015. The Department will make two awards under this FOA to each selected recipient of WDQI funding. The first award will be made under the authority of WIA and will be subject to WIA’s requirements, including its implementing regulations. The second award will be made after July 1, 2015 and will be subject to WIOA’s requirements, including its implementing regulations. At the time of the second award, the Department will issue a grant modification which will subject the first award to WIOA’s requirements. After the grant

also help support the implementation of WIOA by connecting the data infrastructure across programs, enabling states to meet the performance accountability requirements under WIOA.

Applicants are expected to clearly demonstrate their plans to build or expand the workforce longitudinal databases; store and use the data in adherence to all applicable confidentiality laws; develop and produce workforce training provider performance information and outcomes in a standardized, easy to understand format (e.g. scorecards), consistent with all applicable Federal and State privacy laws; and identify what types of analysis they will conduct with their data, while protecting Personally Identifiable Information (PII) for all data collected. The WDQI will provide funding to accomplish a combination of the following objectives:

- **Develop or improve State workforce longitudinal databases.** Workforce performance information and outcomes are already reported by localities, States, and nationally, so grantees will not be creating entirely new data collection systems. What will be new, however, is coordinating or expanding/strengthening the coordination of these workforce data sources so individual-level records can be matched to one another across programs and over time.
- **Connect with education data contained in SLDS.** Enable workforce data to be matched with education data, consistent with all relevant Federal and State privacy and confidentiality laws, to ultimately create longitudinal data systems with individual-level information from pre-kindergarten through post-secondary and into the workforce system. The connection of workforce and education data enables the analysis of individuals' receipt of both education and training services to help determine ways to maximize the outcomes of these services and the effectiveness of the programs.
- **Improve the quality and breadth of the data in workforce longitudinal databases.** It is important that data in the workforce longitudinal databases are complete and accurate and include an array of performance information in order to enhance knowledge about the workforce system and the impact of State workforce development programs. Data collection systems might also be improved to strengthen data validity and minimize the reporting burden on State agencies and training providers. These improvements will be especially important under WIOA to help the data collection for Eligible Training Providers, to minimize burden and maximize quality.
- **Use longitudinal data to evaluate the performance of federally and State-supported education and job training programs.** Policymakers and practitioners can use this data analysis to make programmatic adjustments that improve these programs. Linking education data with workforce data at the individual level will

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modification, all award funds will be subject to WIOA and its implementing regulations. We expect regulations implementing section 188 of WIOA to be promulgated in summer, 2015.

allow for the evaluation of outcomes of federally or State- supported education and workforce programs.

- **Provide user-friendly information to help customers select the education and training programs that best suit their needs.** This includes the production and dissemination of workforce training provider performance information and outcomes, in a standardized, easy to understand format (e.g., scorecards), consistent with all applicable Federal and State privacy laws. These scorecards contain data to help job seekers make informed decisions about training programs that offer skills training the job seekers need to pursue in-demand jobs and for employers to access workers with the right skills for jobs they want to fill. These scorecards would be publicly searchable by training program of study and would allow anyone, including policy makers, students and researchers, to search labor market information and available training and subsequent outcomes, such as program completion, employment and wage information of participants in these training programs. Please note that additional guidance will be available later in 2015 to the grantees on the standardized scorecard template required under WIOA. Grantees will be required to follow any DOL guidance on data standardization.

## **B. OTHER PROGRAM INFORMATION**

### ***Launch Point***

The Department recognizes that States vary in their current capacity with regard to workforce longitudinal databases (referred to throughout this FOA as the “launch point”) and anticipates receiving applications in all three categories described below. In designing their projects, States will determine the relative importance of each of the objectives above based on the State’s launch point for developing a workforce longitudinal database. The Department’s expectations for grantees will differ depending on their launch point, which will fall into one of three categories:

- States without a workforce longitudinal database that are proposing a new or planned workforce longitudinal database;
- States with a partially-developed workforce longitudinal database; or
- States with a comprehensive workforce longitudinal database.

### ***Partnerships with Research Universities or Other Research Entities***

SWAs without the internal capacity to operate the longitudinal database may need to partner with an external entity (such as a research university, private, for-profit, or non-profit organization) to develop, maintain, and use the workforce longitudinal database, both operationally and for research purposes. A proven model that has been employed by many successful states is to have the State research university build and maintain the workforce longitudinal database. Many State research universities have the capacity to carry out the building of workforce longitudinal administrative databases and are situated advantageously throughout the country.

Alternative models that maintain PII privacy and confidentiality consistent with Federal and State laws and result in high-quality data systems will also be considered under the WDQI grant program. It is critical that the following considerations are incorporated into any partnership model:

- The research partner chosen by the SWA must have demonstrable capacity to assist in the collection and storage of the longitudinal workforce data.
- The research partner entity must be able to ensure that the data collected will be stored in accordance with local, State, and Federal confidentiality and PII protective provisions.
- The research partner will be responsible for processing data requests, conducting in-depth data analysis, preparing standard reports, responding to requests for additional papers, and reporting on State and local workforce and education issues and trends as requested by external entities, consistent with all applicable Federal and State privacy laws.

SWAs proposing to have their workforce longitudinal databases operated by a State university must assure that university staff will work closely with the State education agency. It is important to note that many of the statewide educational data systems or SLDS are also in the design and development stages. If the State's SLDS only contains K-12 data, applicants will need to connect workforce data to the K-12 SLDS as well as any relevant postsecondary databases. In States where that data is not stored longitudinally, applicants will need to link to available non-longitudinal education data (for example, individual-level post-secondary education data, consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA]). If a State's education agency has a partially- or fully-developed SLDS with both K-12 and post-secondary data, the applicant must work with that agency to link the education and workforce data, consistent with FERPA.

When working with a State research university or research organization, applicants should investigate additional security measures that may be required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of that university or research organization. The IRB must give approval for the State research institution's involvement in this partnership. Approval must be based on the applicant's plan for confidential transfer, storage and usage of data, and protection of PII.

### **C. PROGRAM AUTHORITY**

This program is authorized by section 171(c)(2) of WIA and section 169 of WIOA<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Please see footnote 1.

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION**

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### **A. AWARD TYPE AND AMOUNT**

Funding will be provided in the form of a grant. ETA has approximately \$10 million available to fund approximately 8 grants. You may apply for a ceiling amount of up to \$1.2 million. Any grant application with a proposed value greater than \$1.2 million will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered. Awards made under this Announcement are subject to the availability of Federal funds. In the event that additional funds become available, we reserve the right to use such funds to select additional grantees from applications submitted in response to this Announcement.

### **B. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE**

The period of performance is 36 months with an anticipated start date of July 1, 2015. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities. Applicants must plan to fully expend grant funds during the period of performance while ensuring full transparency and accountability for all expenditures.

## **III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

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### **A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Eligible applicants for this grant competition are SWAs in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands which:

- Did not receive a Round IV award under solicitation SGA-DFA-PY-13-05; and
- Have received no more than one award through SGA-DFA-PY-09-10 (Round 1), SGA-DFA-PY-11-01 (Round 2), and SGA-DFA-PY-12-07 (Round 3).

SWAs that have received two WDQI grant awards, as well as SWAs that received a WDQI grant award through SGA-DFA-PY-13-05 are not eligible to apply. These following States' SWAs are ineligible: Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, and Virginia. Of those that have received no more than one award through SGA-DFA-PY-09-10 (Round 1), SGA-DFA-PY-11-01 (Round 2), and SGA-DFA-PY-12-07 (Round 3), we do not anticipate funding more than two such applicants through this competition.

Additionally, applicants must be members of the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) 2 at the time grant funds are released and must abide by the WRIS2 Data Sharing Agreement (DSA).

**B. COST SHARING OR MATCHING**

Cost sharing or matching funds are not required for this program. Please note that any resources contributed to the project are considered leveraged resources and do not constitute cost sharing or matching funds. More information on leveraged resources may be found in Section IV.B.2. Applications that include any form of cost sharing or match will not receive additional consideration during the review process. Cost sharing or match is not one of the application screening criteria.

**C. OTHER INFORMATION**

**1. Application Screening Criteria**

You should use the checklist below as a guide when preparing your application package to ensure that the application has met all of the screening criteria. Note that this checklist is only an aid for applicants and should not be included in the application package. We urge you to use this checklist to ensure that your application contains all required items. If your application does not meet all of the screening criteria, it will not move forward through the merit review process and will not be considered for funding.

<b>Application Requirement</b>	<b>Instructions</b>	<b>Complete?</b>
The deadline submission requirements are met	Section IV.C	
If submitted through Grants.gov, the components of the application are saved in any of the specified formats and are not corrupt. (We will attempt to open the document, but will not take any additional measures in the event of problems with opening.)	Section IV.C.	
Application does not exceed the ceiling amount of \$1.2 million	Section II.A	
Applicant has registered with SAM and maintains an active account	Section IV.B.1	
Signed SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance	Section IV.B.1	
Signed SF-424 includes a DUNS Number	Section IV.B.1	
SF-424A, Budget Information Form	Section IV.B.2	
Budget Narrative	Section IV.B.2	
Project Narrative	Section IV.B.3	
Abstract	Section IV.B.4.a	

Application Requirement	Instructions	Complete?
Signed Letter certifying that the State has or will have a current WRIS2 DSA prior to the release of funds	Section IV.B.4.b	
Signed Letter of Agreement between the State workforce and education agencies	Section IV.B.4.c	

**2. Number of Applications To Be Submitted**

Multiple applications from an organization are not allowed. If multiple applications are received, the most recent application submitted will be accepted. If the most recent application is disqualified for any reason, we will not replace it with an earlier application.

**IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

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**A. HOW TO OBTAIN AN APPLICATION PACKAGE**

This FOA, found at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) and [http://www.doleta.gov/grants/find\\_grants.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/grants/find_grants.cfm), contains all of the information and links to forms needed to apply for grant funding. Applicants should note that hyperlinks to portions of the FOA are included in various parts of the Announcement. Applicants are required to comply with all parts of the FOA, including those parts found at the hyperlinks.

**B. CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

Applications submitted in response to this FOA must consist of four separate and distinct parts: (1) the SF-424 “Application for Federal Assistance;” (2) Project Budget; (3) Project Narrative; and (4) attachments to the Project Narrative. It is your responsibility to ensure that the funding amount requested is consistent across all parts and sub-parts of the application.

**1. SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance”**

You must complete the SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance” (available at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>). The SF-424 must clearly identify the applicant and must be signed by an individual with authority to enter into a grant agreement. Upon confirmation of an award, the individual signing the SF-424 on behalf of the applicant is considered the Authorized Representative of the applicant. As stated in block 21 of the SF-424 form, signature of the Authorized Representative on the SF-424 certifies that the organization is in compliance with the Assurances and Certifications form SF-424B (available at

<http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>). The SF-424B is not required to be submitted with the application.

In addition, the applicant's Authorized Representative's signature in block 21 of the SF-424 form constitutes assurance by the applicant of compliance with the following requirements in accordance with 29 CFR 37.20.

As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act<sup>3</sup>, the grant applicant assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: Section 188 of the WIOA, which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIOA Title I—financially assisted program or activity; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color and national origin; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities; The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs. The grant applicant also assures that it will comply with WIOA's implementing regulations when they are promulgated and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the grant applicant's operation of the WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements the grant applicant makes to carry out the WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. The grant applicant understands that the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

#### **Requirement for DUNS Number**

All applicants for Federal grant and funding opportunities are required to have a DUNS number, and must supply their DUNS Number on the SF-424. The DUNS Number is a nine-digit identification number that uniquely identifies business entities. If you do not have a DUNS Number, you can get one for free through the D&B website: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do>. As authorized under 2 CFR 25, grant recipients authorized to make subawards must be aware of the following requirements related to DUNS Numbers:

- Grant recipients must notify potential subawardees that no entity may receive a subaward from you unless the entity has provided its DUNS number to you.

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<sup>3</sup> Please see footnote 1.

- Grant recipients may not make a subaward to an entity unless the entity has provided its DUNS number to you.

### **Requirement for Registration with SAM**

Applicants must register with the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting an application. Instructions for registering with SAM can be found at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/#1>. A recipient 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, the applicant is required to review and update the registration at least every 12 months from the date of initial registration or subsequently update its information in the SAM database to ensure it is current, accurate, and complete. For purposes of this paragraph, the applicant is the entity that meets the eligibility criteria and has the legal authority to apply and to receive the award.

## **2. Project Budget**

You must complete the SF-424A Budget Information Form (available at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>). In preparing the Budget Information Form, you must provide a concise narrative explanation to support the budget request, explained in detail below.

**Budget Narrative:** The budget narrative must provide a description of costs associated with each line item on the SF-424A. It should also include a description of leveraged resources provided (as applicable) to support grant activities.

Use the following guidance for preparing the budget narrative:

- a. Personnel – List all staff positions by title (both current and proposed). Give the annual salary of each position, the percentage of each position’s time devoted to the project, the amount of each position’s salary funded by the grant, and the total personnel cost for the period of performance.
- b. Fringe Benefits – Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, FICA, retirement, etc.
- c. Travel – Specify the purpose, mileage, per diem, estimated number of in-state and out-of-state trips, and other costs for each type of travel.
- d. Equipment – Identify each item of equipment to be purchased which 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 200.33 for the definition of Equipment). List the quantity and unit cost per item. Items with a unit cost of less than \$5,000 are supplies. In general, we do not permit the purchase of equipment during the last funded year of the grant.

- e. Supplies – Supplies include all tangible personal property other than “equipment” (see 2 CFR 200.94 for the definition of Supplies). The detailed budget should identify categories of supplies (e.g. office supplies). List the quantity and unit cost per item.
- f. Contractual – Identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose and estimated cost. If applicable, identify any subrecipient agreements, including purpose and estimated costs. See Section VI.B.2.f. for more information on the distinction between contractor and subrecipient.
- g. 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 the costs must be shown on other appropriate lines such as Contractual.
- h. Other – List each item in sufficient detail for us to determine whether the costs are reasonable or allowable. List any item, such as stipends or incentives, not covered elsewhere here.
- i. Indirect Costs – If indirect costs are included in the budget, then include either, a) the approved indirect cost rate with a copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), a description of the base used to calculate indirect costs along with the amount of the base, and the total indirect costs requested, or b) if you meet the requirements to use the 10% de minimis rate as described in 2 CFR 200.414(f), then include a description of the modified total direct costs base (see 2 CFR 200.68 for definition) used in the calculation along with the amount of the base, and the total indirect costs requested based on the 10% de minimis rate. See Section IV.B.4. and Section IV.E.1. for more information. Additionally, the following link contains DOL-specific information:  
<http://www.dol.gov/oasam/boc/dcd/index.htm>.

Note that the entire Federal grant amount requested (not just one year) must be included on the SF-424, SF-424A, and budget narrative.

No leveraged resources should be shown on the SF-424 and SF-424A. Leveraged resources should be described in the budget narrative. The requested Federal grant amount listed on the SF-424, SF-424A, and budget narrative must be the same. The funding amount included on the SF-424 will be considered the official funding amount requested if any inconsistencies are found.

### 3. Project Narrative

#### a) *Preparing the Project Narrative*

- The Project Narrative must demonstrate your capability to implement the grant project in accordance with the provisions of this Announcement. It provides a comprehensive framework and description of all aspects of the proposed project. It must be succinct, self-explanatory, and well organized so that reviewers can understand the proposed project.
- The Project Narrative is limited to 25 double-spaced single-sided 8.5 x 11 inch pages with Times New Roman 12 point text font and 1 inch margins. Any materials beyond the specified page limit will not be read or considered in the application review process. You must number the Project Narrative beginning with page number 1.

The following instructions provide all of the information needed to complete the Project Narrative. You should carefully read and consider each section, and include all required information in your Project Narrative. The Project Narrative will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria identified in Section V.A. You must use the same section headers identified below for each section of the Project Narrative:

#### (1) Statement of Need

Applicants must submit a Statement of Need that clearly describes the applicant's launch point (which is the current status of the State's workforce longitudinal database as described in Section I.A.1.) and capacity; partnerships with state research universities or other research entities; the extent to which the SWA (or the lead research/data-sharing entity) has developed data-sharing partnerships; established longitudinal linkages among the different data sources; and produced useful analysis based on linked data. Applicants must identify their launch point. Expectations for grantees will differ depending on their launch point which, as described in Section I.A.1., will fall into one of three categories:

- States without a workforce longitudinal database that are proposing a new or planned workforce longitudinal database.
- States with partially-developed workforce longitudinal database.
- States with comprehensive workforce longitudinal databases.

#### **Capacity and Objectives**

Proposals from applicants with new or planned workforce longitudinal database must include comprehensive descriptions of the potential capacity existing in their States to create a longitudinal workforce data system. Applicants with partially-developed workforce longitudinal databases must include a comprehensive discussion of the opportunities that exist in their

State to expand and fully implement the workforce longitudinal database. Applicants with comprehensive workforce longitudinal data systems must include a comprehensive discussion of the need to expand the breadth of workforce data collected. Applicants must integrate information about the current status of any existing workforce longitudinal database with the plan to proceed forward under this grant opportunity.

The applicant must clearly describe the State's need and objectives for each of the following major activities that DOL expects applicants to undertake in creating, upgrading, and using its workforce longitudinal database (each item below notes in parentheses which applicant type(s) it applies to):

- Creating or expanding workforce longitudinal data system (all applicants);
- Improving the quality of workforce data (all applicants);
- Developing or expanding the capacity to match workforce and education data and ensuring adherence to the requirements of FERPA, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, which only permits the non-consensual disclosure of PII from these systems in limited circumstances (all applicants);
- Using data for analysis that will help policymakers and practitioners understand the performance of workforce and education programs. Applicants should describe the policy questions that the State seeks to answer, and how the system will support answering those questions (all applicants);
- Producing and disseminating workforce training provider performance information and outcomes to the public in a standardized, easy to understand format (e.g., scorecards or integrated data platforms), consistent with all applicable Federal and State privacy laws, with their completed systems within the three-year grant period (all applicants); and
- Creating user-friendly portals to publicize the data in ways that help consumers choose between different education and training programs (applicants with a partially or fully developed workforce longitudinal data system).

**State Longitudinal Education Data System (SLDS) Status**

Applicants must describe the status of the SLDS in their State. Applicants will have to work with the State education agency to determine whether that State has begun to plan for their SLDS, has a partially-developed SLDS, or has a fully-implemented SLDS. The application must include a detailed description of the SLDS plan and clearly identify which sets of education data

are part of the SLDS. If neither of these exists, the applicant must indicate which education data sets they will incorporate into their workforce longitudinal database until the State education agency is able to generate an SLDS.

### **Sustainability**

Applicants must explain plans for sustaining these workforce longitudinal databases beyond the 3-year grant period, including how their planned or existing MOUs and DSAs will be renewed with their partners to ensure continued maintenance and analysis of the workforce longitudinal database. Continued Federal funding cannot be guaranteed, so applicants must describe alternative funding sources in this section.

#### (2) Project Deliverables

Applicants must clearly identify and list the proposed deliverables (products, features, benchmarks) that will result from the project for each of the requirements that the State will be addressing in work funded under this grant. These deliverables should help address the needs and goals the applicant identified in the Statement of Need. Deliverables must be expressed as products or features that can be measured at the end of the grant period.

#### (3) Project Design

Applicants must propose methods that will be used to achieve the stated outcomes and outputs and outline a plan of action that describes the scope of the data system and provides details on how the proposed work will be accomplished including timelines for completion of work. Cite factors that might speed up or slow down the work and state the reason for taking the proposed approach rather than other approaches. Identify any potential barriers and describe how the project will be able to overcome those barriers.

For the development or enhancement of a State workforce longitudinal database, applicants must address the following elements:

##### 1. Database Design, Data Quality Assurance, and Proposed Uses

Applicants with no workforce longitudinal database must provide a complete project plan that outlines system specifications, confidentiality measures, and data analysis functionality, and a detailed description of the intended design of data content and usage.

Applicants with a fully-developed or partially-developed workforce longitudinal database must clearly describe the existing database design, including its confidentiality measures and data analysis functionality, and

provide a detailed description of the intended design for expansions to data content and usage.

All applicants must specify the planned or actual record layout for the data files that will be contained in their workforce longitudinal databases. This layout must include the format for the data records, and the format and definition of each included data field. With WIOA implementation taking effect on July 1, 2015, the Department encourages applicants to begin incorporating data fields for the workforce and education programs required under WIOA.

Applicants must also demonstrate the actual or intended use of the following database design element:

- Personal Identifier

Applicants must explain how the database will be developed or has been developed using the social security number (SSN) as a unique personal identifier for individuals entering into the workforce system, in addition to jobseekers and employees already in the workforce system. The SSN is already in use throughout the workforce system and will allow States to gather this data longitudinally in order to accurately track movement into and out of workforce and education systems. Collection of the client's SSN is not required throughout the workforce system and may not be required as a condition of receiving workforce development services. Although it is nearly uniformly collected on a voluntary basis, DOL recognizes that the workforce longitudinal databases will be restricted to those individuals having supplied their SSN and therefore may not represent a complete database of all persons who are receiving workforce development services. Applicants must also describe the capacity of the workforce longitudinal databases to link, consistent with FERPA, to unique identifiers in the SLDS.

Applicants must provide a clear description of how they will develop or improve data validation measures and other quality assurance measures used to promote the quality, completeness, validity, and reliability of the data collected.

Applicants must clearly lay out the plans they will develop or improve to protect the confidentiality of these individual data records, including but not limited to robust protection of PII. The method for storing, transferring, analyzing, and sharing data must be detailed in accordance with State and Federal confidentiality provisions, including but not limited to FERPA.

2. Scope of Longitudinal Workforce Data

Applicants must clearly identify which programs are or will be included in the data system and the plan to match data with each

program throughout the longitudinal data system. Applicants should also discuss, in detail, any potential barriers to sharing data with partner agencies, and discuss feasible proposed solutions to overcome these barriers. At a minimum, the data systems must include disaggregated individual record data (including wage record information) for the following:

- WIOA Title I;
- Adult Education and Literacy;
- Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended;
- Wagner-Peyser Act;
- Trade Adjustment Assistance and Trade Readjustment Allowances program data;
- UI wage record information from quarter to quarter measuring employment and income earning gains;
- UI benefit data including demographic information associated with UI benefit payments;
- Federal employment data (available through DOL's Federal Employment Data Exchange System); and
- Existing State education agency data (including early childhood, K-12, and post-secondary education student demographic data, test scores, teachers, graduation rates, and transcripts).

Applicants are also encouraged to include data from other education and human services programs such as: TANF; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps); Registered Apprenticeship<sup>4</sup> and data from other similar programs which may yield workforce-related outcomes.

3. **Integration of Efforts with State Education Authorities**  
Applicants must describe how they will establish or maintain a relationship with the State education agency leading the SLDS initiative to link data between education and workforce databases, consistent with FERPA, to support longitudinal data analyses and provide performance information from secondary and post-secondary training providers to the workforce system and consumers. Specifically:
  - SWAs where the workforce longitudinal database is emerging or undeveloped, applicants must describe their plans to match the data between the education and workforce databases.
  - SWAs with a partially-developed or comprehensive workforce longitudinal databases must describe new approaches to link these

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<sup>4</sup> Reed, Debbie, et. al, (2012). "An Effectiveness Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis of Registered Apprenticeship in 10 States" – Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. Employment and Training Administration. .

databases with education entities collecting comparable education data. As specified in Section IV.B.4.c, the applicant must provide (as an attachment) a signed letter of agreement between the State workforce and education agencies.

4. **Inter- and Intra-State Agency Partnerships**  
Workforce data may be supplied by organizations within the SWA as well as outside agencies within and across State lines. Applicants must describe, in detail, their strategy to create, sustain, strengthen, or expand partnerships and maintain working relationships within and outside the State workforce system. Applicants must indicate which organizations will participate in the WDQI, along with their authority and willingness to provide regular access to their data. These partnerships include (but are not restricted to) agencies such as the State revenue department or other agency outside of the SWA, where UI, WIOA, or other programs are administered in full or in part in that agency. Moreover, partnerships with State economic, human services, or other agencies provide an opportunity to match individual level data to the workforce longitudinal database. Applicants must clearly describe the existing or proposed partnerships and briefly describe the data that the partner will be providing for the initiative. Applicants must clearly describe their plan for peer-to-peer technical assistance with other states on their promising practices in developing these databases and data matching systems. Documentation of proposed and/or existing partner relationships may include brief descriptions of existing or proposed MOUs, letters of support, and/or detailed plans for working relationships and shared responsibilities. In all cases, partnerships must be forged to gather relevant workforce and education data. Note that States with a developed or partially-developed workforce longitudinal database should focus on describing maintenance and expansion of partnerships. Applicants should also clearly describe potential barriers (including legislative barriers) to data-sharing among partner agencies, along with strategies to overcome such barriers, as appropriate. With implementation of WIOA on the horizon, applicants are encouraged to create or expand partnerships and push for the adoption of common data elements among the state and local agencies that manage the programs required under WIOA.
5. **Integration of State-based Wage Data Matching Systems**  
Applicants must describe how they will use funds to advance their ability to expand their wage data matching infrastructure to improve performance reporting for the workforce system, including reporting of outcomes for eligible training providers. The description should include how this integration will support the successful

implementation of the performance accountability requirement under WIOA.

6. Confidentiality

Applicants must describe the methods and procedures (e.g., through demonstrating existence of or plans to develop MOUs, letters of intent, and DSAs) for assuring the security and confidentiality of the collection, storage, and use of all data contained in the workforce longitudinal database, including protection of PII. Applicants must describe how confidentiality in research, evaluation, and performance management will be maintained. The applicant must also explain the security responsibilities of the SWA and its partners.

Applicants must describe the confidentiality procedures that will be used to protect PII, including requirements for the actual collection of data, data transmission, maintenance of computerized data files, reporting and publication of data, and compliance with State and Federal PII privacy and confidentiality statutes and regulations. Applicants must also describe under what circumstances PII data will be made available, to whom, and to what level of specificity, in accordance with confidentiality laws. Applicants should consult recommendations released from the National Institute of Standards and Technology on the protection of PII<sup>5</sup>

Applicants must identify staff-level positions that will be granted access to confidential data and the corresponding level of access for each position. For example, generally, employees of State research universities are State employees, are therefore considered agents of the State workforce or education agencies, and are granted access to or restricted from sensitive data and PII based upon State laws. Staff that will be granted access to confidential data are expected to observe rules set by the State university's IRB. Additionally, it can be assumed, for the purpose of this application, that all proposed employees will be subject to Federal laws governing data-sharing, transfer of data, and PII confidentiality, including but not limited to the requirements of FERPA, 20 U.S.C. 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99.

7. Data-Sharing Agreements (DSAs)

For each program included in the workforce longitudinal database, applicants must submit copies of DSAs with the agencies that house the programmatic data. DSAs included as attachments to the Project Narrative will not count against the page limit. The DSA must outline

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<sup>5</sup> McCallister, Erika, Grance, Tim, & Scarfone, Karen. "Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information (PII). National Institute of Standards and Technology, U.S. Department of Commerce. Special Publication 800-122. Retrieved from <http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/nistpubs/800-122/sp800-122.pdf>.

the storage, use, and ongoing maintenance of the data and address the following requirements:

- How data will be exchanged between partners;
- The purposes for which the data will be used;
- How and when the data will be disseminated;
- Which entity maintains control of the data;
- Which entity actually owns the data;
- The intended methods of ensuring confidential collection, use and storage of the data; and
- Which entities inside and outside of the data-sharing agreements will have access to the data.

DSAs that involve the disclosure of PII from education records must:

- Designate the entity collecting the data as the authorized representative of the State educational authority to evaluate a federally or State supported education program;
- Specify: (a) the PII to be disclosed; (b) the purpose for which the PII is disclosed to the authorized representative as stated in 34 CFR 99.35; and (c) a description of the activity with sufficient specificity to make clear that the work falls within the exception of 34 CFR 99.31(a)(3), including a description of how the PII will be used;
- Require the authorized representative to destroy the PII when it is no longer needed for the purpose specified;
- Specify the time period in which the PII must be destroyed; and
- Establish policies and procedures, consistent with FERPA and other Federal and State confidentiality and privacy provisions, to protect PII from further disclosure (except back to the disclosing entity) and unauthorized use, including limiting use of PII to only authorized representatives with legitimate interests in the evaluation of a Federal or State-supported program. DSAs also should contain specific plans for secure data transfer and storage.

Grantees should consider developing DSAs with the DOL to obtain individual-level data for various programs for which DOL is the data administrator. The Department encourages the production of full- or limited-scope public use data files that will be hosted by the SWA or an agreed upon designated host.

8. Planned Reports/Deliverables

Applicants creating a workforce longitudinal database must include their plans to produce reports that provide information about statewide performance of the workforce system. Applicants with partially- or fully-developed workforce longitudinal databases must describe the policy questions that they will use the longitudinal data systems to answer. All applicants must also include a description of the types of analysis and research projects that will be conducted with the workforce longitudinal database to improve program performance and enhance customer choice. All applicants must address how data from each partner will be incorporated into these reports, and how stakeholders can use the reports to improve the workforce system. Not every partner must be included in each report, but each partner should be represented in at least one report. Applicant must also describe the extensive research and analysis products that will be generated beyond the regular reporting and analysis requirements.

All applicants must describe their plan to produce and disseminate reports and workforce provider performance information and outcomes to the public in a standardized, easy to understand format (e.g. scorecards or integrated digital platforms), consistent with all applicable Federal and State privacy laws. These deliverables are for statewide use and, though DOL reserves the right to request access to these planned reports, submission of these deliverables to DOL is not required. Please note that additional guidance will be available later in 2015 to the grantees on the standardized scorecard template required under WIOA.

(4) Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity

Provide detailed information on the applicant organization's current mission, structure, staffing, and relevant experience. Describe how these factors contribute to the ability of the organization to conduct the program requirements and meet program expectations. Include information about any organization(s) under contract (such as a state research university or other research entity) with the applicant that will have a significant role in implementing the project. Applicants must provide a description of the following in their proposed or existing staffing structure:

- The workforce longitudinal database must be overseen by a Database or Project Manager who is qualified to work with large and complex administrative longitudinal databases. The applicant must clearly list the duties and responsibilities of this position. The applicant must also describe the kinds of prior experience that the Database or Project Manager possesses to fulfill these duties and responsibilities.
- The duties and responsibilities of a data analyst(s).
- The position descriptions of proposed staff positions including knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as examples of the kinds of previous experience that make a candidate for the position highly qualified to assist with planning, implementing, and conducting analysis with these workforce longitudinal databases.
- Describe how each staff member will be expected to facilitate or contribute to the various data-sharing partnerships. Include a brief discussion of how the applicant will ensure that any staff of this project will comply with State and Federal confidentiality laws. Verify that State employees (with the workforce agency, other agencies, or a State research institution for example) are already subject to State and institutional laws, regulations, or procedures governing confidential data-sharing and/or transfer and be sure to include this in your description of such staff under this section.
- Identify what entity is to be the actual employer of each proposed staff member. For those who are not direct employees of the SWA, discuss how these individuals will contribute to the project and describe what their compensation levels will be.

Describe the fiscal and administrative controls in place to properly manage Federal funds. Include the organization's capability to sustain some or all project activities after Federal financial assistance has ended.

(5) Budget and Budget Justification

Please see Section IV.B.2. for information on requirements related to the budget and budget justification.

**4. Attachments to the Project Narrative**

In addition to the Project Narrative, you must submit attachments. All attachments must be clearly labeled as Attachments. Only those attachments listed below will be excluded from the page limit for the Project Narrative. Additional materials such as

resumés or general letters of support must not be included. You must submit your application in one package because documents received separately will be tracked separately and will not be attached to the application for review. Save all files with descriptive file names of 50 characters or less and be sure to only use standard characters in file names: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, and underscore (\_). File names may not include special characters (e.g. &,-,\*,%/,#), periods (.), blank spaces or accent marks, and must be unique (i.e., no other attachment may have the same file name). An underscore (example: my\_Attached\_File.pdf) may be used to separate a file name.

### **Required Attachments**

The following attachments must be included with the application package and the failure to do so will cause the application package to be screened out.

- a. **Abstract:** You must submit an up to two-page abstract summarizing the proposed project, including, but not limited to, the scope of the project and proposed outcomes and deliverables. The proposed project must include the applicant's name, project title, a description of the area to be served, number of participants to be served, the total cost per participant, and the funding level requested. The Abstract is limited to two-page double-spaced single sided 8.5x11 inch pages with 12 point text font and 1 inch margins. When submitting in grants.gov, this document must be uploaded as an attachment to the application package and specifically labeled "Abstract." Please note that applicants will be held to the outcomes and deliverables proposed and failure to meet these outcomes and deliverables may have a significant impact on future grants with ETA.
- b. **WRIS2 Data-sharing agreement:** All applicants must be members of WRIS 2 at the time grant funds are released and abide by the WRIS 2 DSA. All applicants must submit a letter from the SWA official certifying that the state has a current WRIS2 DSA. If the DSA is not fully executed at the time of application, the state may submit a letter attesting that the WRIS 2 DSA will be executed by the time grant funds are issued. The WRIS2 DSA must be in place before funds will be released.
- c. **Letter of agreement:** Grantees must submit a signed letter of agreement between the State workforce and education authorities, with a commitment to share information and outcomes for performance accountability purposes. The letter of agreement should describe the agencies' plans for linking data between education and workforce databases. If there are state-legislative or other barriers to sharing data between these agencies, the letter of agreement should describe how the agencies will address these barriers.
- d. **Data-Sharing Agreements:** For each program included in the workforce longitudinal database, applicants must submit copies of DSAs with the agencies that house the programmatic data. DSAs included as attachments to the Project Narrative will not count against the page limit. The data sharing agreements must meet the requirements in IV.3.a(3)6.

### **Requested Attachments**

The following attachments are requested, but their omission will not cause the application to be screened out. If the omission of the attachment will impact scoring, such an impact will be noted in the description of the attachment.

- a. Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form: We request applicants submit a Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form (available at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>). This form is in the grants.gov application package. Please note that this is a standard form used for many programs and has a check box for applying as an individual. Disregard this box on the form as individuals are not eligible to apply for this Announcement. This attachment does not impact scoring of the application.
- b. **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement:** If you are requesting indirect costs based on a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by your Federal Cognizant Agency, then attach the most recently approved Agreement. (For more information, see Section IV.B.2. and Section IV.E.1.) This attachment does not impact scoring of the application.

In addition to the information provided in the Project Narrative and the data-sharing agreements requested above, applicants may provide, as attachments, draft or finalized MOUs, Letters of Intent, or other statements attesting to the formation of data-sharing partnerships with other organizations. While these additional attachments are not required, they may help the applicant to further substantiate evidence of their intended partnerships as evaluated under section V.A.4. Detailed descriptions/qualifications for proposed staff positions to be included in the development of these workforce longitudinal databases may also be included.

Applicants must submit their application in one package because documents received separately will be tracked separately and will not be attached to the application for review. The Department will not accept additional materials such as resumes or general letters of support submitted by organizations or individuals that are not partners in the proposed project and that do not directly identify the specific commitment or roles of the project partners.

**C. SUBMISSION DATE, TIMES, PROCESS AND ADDRESSES**

The closing date for receipt of applications under this Announcement is **May 6, 2015**. Applications must be submitted either electronically on <http://www.grants.gov> or in hard copy by mail or in hard copy by hand delivery (including overnight delivery). Hard copy applications must be received at the address below no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date. Applications submitted on grants.gov must also be successfully submitted (as described below) no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date. You are cautioned that applications should be submitted before the deadline to ensure that the risk of late receipt of the application is minimized. Applications sent by e-mail, telegram, or facsimile (FAX) will not be accepted.

Applicants submitting applications in hard copy by mail or overnight delivery must submit an original signed application (including the SF-424) and one (1) “copy-ready” version free of bindings, staples or protruding tabs to ease in the reproduction of the application by DOL. Applicants submitting applications in hard copy are also required to include in the hard copy submission an identical electronic copy of the application on compact disc (CD). If discrepancies between the hard copy submission and CD copy are identified, the application on the CD will be considered the official applicant submission for evaluation purposes. Failure to provide identical applications in hardcopy and CD format may have an impact on the overall evaluation.

If an application is physically submitted by both hard copy and through <http://www.grants.gov>, a letter must accompany the hard-copy application stating which application to review. If no letter accompanies the hard copy, we will review the copy submitted through <http://www.grants.gov>.

No exceptions to the mailing and delivery requirements set forth in this notice will be granted. Further, documents submitted separately from the application, before or after the deadline, will not be accepted as part of the application.

Mailed applications must be addressed to:

The U.S. Department of Labor  
Employment and Training Administration, Office of Grants Management  
Attention: Steven Rietzke, Grant Officer  
Reference FOA-ETA-15-06  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N4716  
Washington, DC 20210.

Mail delivery in the Washington DC area may be delayed due to mail decontamination procedures. Hand-delivered applications will be received at the above address. All overnight delivery submissions will be considered to be hand-delivered and must be received at the designated place by the specified closing date and time.

Applications that are submitted through Grants.gov must be successfully submitted at <http://www.grants.gov> no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date and then subsequently validated by Grants.gov. The submission and validation process is described in more detail below. The process can be complicated and time-consuming. You are strongly advised to initiate the process as soon as possible and to plan for time to resolve technical problems if necessary. Note that validation does not mean that your application has been accepted as complete or has been accepted for review. Rather, grants.gov only verifies that certain parts of an application have been submitted.

We strongly recommend that before you begin to write the application, you should immediately initiate and complete the “Get Registered” registration steps at [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get\\_registered.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp). You should read through the

registration process carefully before registering. These steps may take as much as four weeks to complete, and this time should be factored into plans for timely electronic submission in order to avoid unexpected delays that could result in the rejection of an application. The site also contains registration checklists to help applicants walk through the process. We strongly recommend that you download the “Organization Registration Checklist” at

<http://www.grants.gov/documents/19/18243/OrganizationRegChecklist.pdf/fc7e7c18-2497-4b08-8d9b-bfac399947a3>

and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last minute searches for required information and save time.

As described earlier in Section IV.B.1., you must have a DUNS Number and you must register with SAM before submitting an application.

The next step in the registration process is creating a username and password with Grants.gov to become an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR). AORs will need to know the DUNS Number of the organization for which they will be submitting applications to complete this process. To read more detailed instructions for creating a profile on Grants.gov visit: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-3-username-password.html>.

After creating a profile on Grants.gov, the E-Biz point of Contact (E-Biz POC) - a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM - will receive an email to grant the AOR permission to submit applications on behalf of their organization. The E-Biz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and approve an individual as the AOR, thereby giving him or her permission to submit applications. To learn more about AOR Authorization visit: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-4-aor-authorization.html>, or to track AOR status visit: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-5-track-aor-status.html>.

An application submitted through Grants.gov constitutes a submission as an electronically signed application. The registration and account creation with Grants.gov, with E-Biz POC approval, establishes an AOR. When an application is submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the AOR on file will be inserted into the signature line of the application. You must register the individual who is able to make legally binding commitments for your organization as the AOR; this step is often missed and it is crucial for valid submissions.

When a registered applicant submits an application with Grants.gov, an electronic time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. Within two business days of application submission, Grants.gov will send the applicant two email messages to provide the status of the application’s progress through the system. The first email, sent almost immediately, will contain a tracking number and will confirm receipt of the application by Grants.gov. The second email will indicate the application has either been successfully validated or has been rejected due to errors.

Grants.gov will reject applications if the applicant's registration in SAM is expired. Only applications that have been successfully submitted by the deadline and later successfully validated will be considered. It is your sole responsibility to ensure a timely submission. While it is not required that an application be successfully validated before the deadline for submission, it is prudent to reserve time before the deadline in case it is necessary to resubmit an application that has not been successfully validated. Therefore, enough time should be allotted for submission (two business days) and, if applicable, additional time to address errors and receive validation upon resubmission (an additional two business days for each ensuing submission). It is important to note that if enough time is not allotted and a rejection notice is received after the due date and time, the application will not be considered.

To ensure consideration, the components of the application must be saved as .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, .rtf or .pdf files. If submitted in any other format, the applicant bears the risk that compatibility or other issues will prevent DOL from considering the application. We will attempt to open the document, but will not take any additional measures in the event of problems with opening.

We strongly advise applicants to use the various tools and documents, including FAQs, which are available on the "Applicant Resources" page at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>.

We encourage new prospective applicants to view the online tutorial, "Grant Applications 101: A Plain English Guide to ETA Competitive Grants," available through Workforce3One at: [http://www.workforce3one.org/page/grants\\_toolkit](http://www.workforce3one.org/page/grants_toolkit).

To receive updated information about critical issues, new tips for users and other time sensitive updates as information is available, you may subscribe to "Grants.gov Updates" at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/manage-subscriptions.html>

If you encounter a problem with Grants.gov and do not find an answer in any of the other resources, call 1-800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035 to speak to a Customer Support Representative or email [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). The Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is closed on Federal holidays.

**Late Applications:** For applications submitted on Grants.gov, only applications that have been successfully submitted no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date and then successfully validated will be considered. You take a significant risk by waiting to the last day to submit through Grants.gov.

Any hard copy application received after the exact date and time specified for receipt at the office designated in this notice will not be considered, unless it is received before awards are made, it was properly addressed, and it was: (a) sent by U.S. Postal Service mail, postmarked not later than the fifth calendar day before the date specified for receipt of applications (e.g., an application required to be received by the 20th of the month must be postmarked by the 15th of that month); or (b) sent by professional overnight delivery

service to the addressee not later than one working day before the date specified for receipt of applications. "Postmarked" means a printed, stamped or otherwise placed impression (exclusive of a postage meter machine impression) that is readily identifiable, without further action, as having been supplied or affixed on the date of mailing by an employee of the U.S. Postal Service. Therefore, you should request the postal clerk to place a legible hand cancellation "bull's eye" postmark on both the receipt and the package. Failure to adhere to these instructions will be a basis for a determination that the application was not filed in a timely manner and will not be considered. Evidence of timely submission by a professional overnight delivery service must be demonstrated by equally reliable evidence created by the delivery service provider indicating the time and place of receipt.

**D. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW**

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

**E. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS**

All proposed project costs must be necessary and reasonable and in accordance with Federal guidelines. Determinations of allowable costs will be made in accordance with the Cost Principles, now found in the Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), codified at 2 CFR Part 200. Disallowed costs are those charges to a grant that the grantor agency or its representative determines not to be allowed in accordance with the Cost Principles or other conditions contained in the grant. Applicants, whether successful or not, will not be entitled to reimbursement of pre-award costs.

**1. Indirect Costs**

As specified in the Uniform Guidance Cost Principles, indirect costs are those that have been incurred for common or joint objectives and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective. An indirect cost rate is required when an organization operates under more than one grant or other activity, whether Federally-assisted or not. You have two options to claim reimbursement of indirect costs.

- **Option 1:** You may use a NICRA or Cost Allocation Plan (CAP) supplied by the Federal Cognizant Agency. If you do not have a NICRA/CAP or have a pending NICRA/CAP, and in either case choose to include estimated indirect costs in your budget, at the time of award the Grant Officer will release funds in the amount of 10% of salaries and wages to support indirect costs. Within 90 days of award, you are required to submit an acceptable indirect cost proposal or CAP to your Federal Cognizant Agency to obtain a provisional indirect cost rate. (See Section IV.B.4. for more information on NICRA submission requirements.)

- **Option 2:** Any organization that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, with the exceptions noted at 2 CFR 200.414(f) in the Cost Principles, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (see 2 CFR 200.68 for definition) which may be used indefinitely. If you choose this option, this methodology must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as you choose to negotiate for an indirect cost rate, which you may apply to do at any time. (See 2 CFR 200.414(f) for more information on use of the de minimis rate.)

## **2. Administrative Costs**

Under this FOA, an entity that receives a grant to carry out a project or program may not use more than 10 percent of the amount of the grant to pay administrative costs associated with the program or project. Administrative costs are for the performance of administrative functions in carrying out activities under Title I of WIOA that are not related to the direct provision of workforce investment services (including services to participants and employers). Such costs include both personnel and nonpersonnel costs and both direct and indirect costs. Administrative costs do not need to be identified separately from program costs on the SF-424A Budget Information Form. However, they must be tracked through the recipient's accounting system. To claim any administrative costs that are also indirect costs, the applicant must obtain an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement from its Federal Cognizant Agency or be eligible to use the 10 percent de minimis rate, as specified above.

## **3. Salary and Bonus Limitations**

None of the funds appropriated under the heading "Employment and Training" in the appropriation statute(s) may be used by a recipient or subrecipient of such funds to pay the salary and bonuses of an individual, either as direct costs or indirect costs, at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. This limitation does not apply to contractors providing goods and services as defined in the Audit Requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance (see 2 CFR 200 Subpart F). Where States are recipients of such funds, States may establish a lower limit for salaries and bonuses of those receiving salaries and bonuses from subrecipients of such funds, taking into account factors including the relative cost-of-living in the State, the compensation levels for comparable State or local government employees, and the size of the organizations that administer Federal programs involved including Employment and Training Administration programs. See Public Law 113-76, Division H, Title I, section 105, and Training and Employment Guidance Letter number 05-06 for further clarification: [http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr\\_doc.cfm?DOCN=2262](http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2262).

## **4. Intellectual Property Rights**

The Federal Government reserves a paid-up, nonexclusive and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use for Federal purposes: i) the copyright in all products developed under the grant, including a subaward or contract under the grant or subaward; and ii) any rights of copyright to

which the recipient, subrecipient or a contractor purchases ownership under an award (including, but not limited to, curricula, training models, technical assistance products, and any related materials). Such uses include, but are not limited to, the right to modify and distribute such products worldwide by any means, electronically or otherwise. The recipient may not use Federal funds to pay any royalty or license fee for use of a copyrighted work, or the cost of acquiring by purchase a copyright in a work, where the Department has a license or rights of free use in such work. If revenues are generated through selling products developed with grant funds, including intellectual property, these revenues are program income. Program income is added to the grant and must be expended for allowable grant activities.

Additionally, the Federal government has the right to require intellectual property developed under a competitive Federal award process to be licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution license. This license allows subsequent users to copy, distribute, transmit and adapt the copyrighted Work and requires such users to attribute the Work in the manner specified by the recipient.

If applicable, and a Creative Commons Attribution license is not required, the following needs to be on all products developed in whole or in part with grant funds:

***“This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the recipient and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The U.S. Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for non-commercial purposes is permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner.”***

**F. OTHER SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Withdrawal of Applications: Applications may be withdrawn by written notice to the Grant Officer at any time before an award is made.

## V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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### A. CRITERIA

We have instituted procedures for assessing the technical merit of applications to provide for an objective review of applications and to assist you in understanding the standards against which your application will be judged. The evaluation criteria are based on the information required in the application as described in Sections IV.B.2. (Project Budget). and IV.B.3. (Project Narrative). Reviewers will award points based on the evaluation criteria described below:

<b>Criterion</b>		<b>Points (maximum)</b>
1.	<b>Statement of Need</b> (See Section IV.B.3.a.(1) Statement of Need)	15
2.	<b>Expected Outcomes, and Outputs- Project Deliverables</b> (See Section IV.B.3.a.(2) Expected Outcomes and Outputs)	15
3.	<b>Project Design</b> (See Section IV.B.3.a.(3) Project Design)	60
4.	<b>Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity</b> (See Section IV.B.3.a.(5) Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity)	6
5.	<b>Budget and Budget Justification</b>	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>

#### 1. Statement of Need (up to 15 points)

Proposals from applicants will be evaluated based on how:

- Clearly the applicant identifies its launch point, as described in Section IV.B.3.a(1), including a detailed description of how the SWA (or the lead research/data-sharing entity) has developed data-sharing partnerships, established longitudinal linkages among the different data sources, and produced useful analysis based on linked data. (Up to 5 points).
- Clearly the applicant explains a compelling need and identifies appropriate and feasible objectives that it intends to achieve in undertaking each of the following activities (Up to 5 points):
  - Create, expand, or fully implement their proposed workforce longitudinal databases (all applicants);
  - Improve the quality of workforce data (all applicants);

- Develop or expand the capacity to match workforce and education data while adhering to the applicable privacy laws (all applicants);
  - Use data for analysis that will help policymakers and practitioners understand the performance of workforce and education programs (all applicants);
  - Produce and disseminate workforce training provider performance information consistent with the requirements in Section IV.B (all applicants);
  - Create user-friendly portals to publicize the data in ways that help consumers choose between different education and training programs (only applicants with a partially or fully developed workforce longitudinal data system).
- Clearly the applicant describes the status and plan for SLDS, including a clear identification of which sets of the education data are part of the SLDS. If applicable, the applicant will be evaluated on the feasibility of incorporating the proposed education data sets into the applicant's workforce longitudinal data system. (Up to 3 points)
  - Viable the State's sustainability plan is for maintaining the database beyond the three year grant period. (Up to 2 points)

## **2. Project Deliverables (up to 15 points)**

The applicant will be evaluated based on the extent to which the expected outcomes and outputs are realistic, clearly described, and consistent with the expressed needs and goals. The proposed outcomes and/or outputs must clearly address and relate directly and logically to the stated needs with respect to both data system requirements and implementation. The application clearly describes measurable or observable deliverables that will be accomplished by the end of the grant period of performance.

## **3. Project Design (up to 60 points)**

Scoring under this section will be based on the following project elements, relative to the State's launch point:

### **1. Database Design, Data Quality Assurance and Proposed Uses (Up to 10 points)**

Proposals from applicants will be evaluated based on the clarity of the applicant's description of a database design that includes an appropriate data record layout (including clear descriptions of the format for the data records, and the format and definition of each included data field), robust confidentiality measures, data

analysis functionality, and a detailed description of the intended design of data content and usage.

Proposals from applicants will be evaluated based on the clarity of the applicant's description of how the database design will implement the requirements specified in Section IV.B.3.a(3)2 for:

- Using SSNs as unique personal identifiers in the database;
- Developing or improving data quality measures that promote the quality, completeness, validity, and reliability of the data collected; and
- Developing or improving security measures to protect the confidentiality of database records, including but not limited to robust protection of PII.

## 2. Scope of Longitudinal Workforce Data (Up to 10 points)

Proposals from applicants will be evaluated based on the feasibility of the applicant's plan for matching disaggregated data (at the individual level, including wage record information) through the longitudinal data system for each of the following required programs:

- WIOA Title I;
- Adult Education and Literacy;
- Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended;
- Wagner-Peyser Act;
- Trade Adjustment Assistance and Trade Readjustment Allowances program data;
- UI wage record information from quarter to quarter measuring employment and income earning gains;
- UI benefit data including demographic information associated with UI benefit payments;
- Federal employment data (available through DOL's Federal Employment Data Exchange System); and
- Existing State education agency data (including early childhood, K-12, and post-secondary education student demographic data, test scores, teachers, graduation rates, and transcripts).

Applicants will also be evaluated on the feasibility of proposed solutions to overcome potential barriers to sharing data with partner agencies, if applicable.

3. Integration with State Education Agencies (Up to 5 points)

Proposals from applicants will be evaluated based on:

- The clarity of the applicant's description of a feasible plan to match education and workforce data, appropriate to the applicant's launch point.
- The strength and feasibility of the applicant's demonstration of how it will maintain a relationship with the State education agency of the leading the SLDS initiative to link data between education and workforce databases, consistent with FERPA, to support longitudinal data analysis and provide performance information from secondary and post-secondary training providers to the workforce system and consumers. The applicant must provide a signed letter of agreement between the State workforce and education agencies that meets the requirements in Section IV.B.4.c.

4. Inter- and Intrastate Agency Partnerships (Up to 5 points)

Proposals from applicants will be evaluated on:

- The clarity of the applicant's detailed description of a comprehensive and feasible strategy to create, sustain, strengthen, or expand partnerships and maintain working relationships within and outside the State workforce system.
- The appropriateness of the applicant's specifications of organizations that will participate in the WDQI. For each specified organization, the applicant must provide evidence of its authority and willingness to provide regular access to its data.
- The feasibility of the applicant's proposed plan for peer-to-peer technical assistance with other states on their promising practices in developing these databases and data matching systems.
- The clarity of the applicant's description of the existing or proposed partnerships including the applicant's brief description of the data the partner will provide for the initiative. Documentation of proposed and/or existing partner relationships may include brief descriptions of existing or proposed MOUs, letters of support, and/or detailed plans for working relationships and shared responsibilities. States with a developed or partially-developed workforce longitudinal database should clearly describe how they will maintain and expand partnerships.

5. Integration of State-based Wage Data Matching Systems (Up to 5 points)  
Proposals will be evaluated on the feasibility of the applicant's plan to expand state-based wage data matching infrastructure.

6. Confidentiality (Up to 5 points)  
Proposals from applicants will be evaluated on:

- The thoroughness of the applicant's description of the methods and procedures for assuring security and confidentiality of the collection, storage, and use of all data contained in the workforce data system, including protection of PII.
- The clarity of the applicant's description on how confidentiality in research, evaluation, and performance management will be maintained.
- The clarity of the applicant's explanation of the responsibilities of the SWA and its partners.
- The clarity and effectiveness of the applicant's description of the confidentiality procedures to protect PII, including requirements for the actual collection of data, data transmission, maintenance of computerized data files, reporting and publication of data, and compliance with State and Federal PII privacy and confidentiality statutes and regulations.
- The completeness of the applicant's description of the circumstances PII data will be made available, to whom, and to what level of specificity.

7. Data-Sharing Agreements (Up to 15 points)  
The applicant must submit copies of DSAs with each agency that houses the programmatic data for each program included in the longitudinal data system. These agencies are those that the applicant identified in the Project Narrative sections titled "Scope of Longitudinal Workforce Data" and "Inter- and Intrastate Agency Partnerships." The application will be evaluated on the extent to which DSAs meet the requirements in Section IV.3.a(3)6, including the requirements for the disclosure of PII from education records, if applicable.

8. Planned Reports and Deliverables (Up to 5 points)  
Applicants will be evaluated on:

- The clarity of the applicant's description of the types of reports the state plans to prepare about the statewide performance of the workforce system and how these reports can be used to improve the workforce system.

- The quality of the applicant’s detailed description of the types of analysis and research projects that will be conducted with the workforce longitudinal database to improve program performance and enhance customer choice and how data from each partner will be incorporated into these reports.

Applicants with partially- or fully-developed workforce longitudinal databases will be evaluated on the quality of policy questions that they will use the longitudinal data system to answer and the clear plan for the development, production, and dissemination of workforce training provider performance information and outcomes, in a standardized, easy to understand format (e.g. scorecards).

#### **4. Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity (up to 6 points)**

- Applicants will be evaluated on the extent to which the proposal demonstrates how the applicant’s current mission, structure (including staffing), and relevant experience will contribute to the applicant’s ability to conduct the program requirements and meet program expectations. (Up to 1 point)
- Applicants will be evaluated on whether the proposed or existing staffing structure for this project, including the database or project manager, data analyst(s) and other staffing needs, are fully explained and appropriate for the scope of the project. The extent to which key personnel have adequate time devoted to the project to achieve project results. If personnel will be hired or contracted for the project, the qualifications and duties of these new hires or contractors are clearly described. (Up to 2 points)
- Applicants will be evaluated on the extent to which applicants demonstrate the organization has the fiscal and administrative controls to properly manage Federal funds. The management plan for the project demonstrates that there will be sufficient administrative oversight and controls to enable the work to proceed on time, as planned, and within budget. (Up to 1 point)
- Applicants will be evaluated on the extent to which their application demonstrates the organization’s capability to sustain project activities after Federal financial assistance ends (Up to 2 point).

#### **5. Budget and Budget Justification (up to 4 points)**

The extent to which the budget is reasonable based on the activities outlined in the project narrative. (4 points)

**B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

**1. Merit Review and Selection Process**

A technical merit review panel will carefully evaluate applications against the selection criteria to determine the merit of applications. These criteria are based on the policy goals, priorities, and emphases set forth in this FOA. Up to 100 points may be awarded to an applicant, depending on the quality of the responses provided. The final scores (which may include the mathematical normalization of review panels) will serve as the primary basis for selection of applications for funding. The panel results are advisory in nature and not binding on the Grant Officer. The Grant Officer reserves the right to make selections based solely on the final scores or to take into consideration other relevant factors when applicable. Such factors may include the geographic distribution of funds, diversity of awards across the three launch point categories, and/or other relevant factors. The Grant Officer may consider any information that comes to his/her attention.

The government may elect to award the grant(s) 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 electronic signature via E-Authentication on <http://www.grants.gov>, which constitutes a binding offer by the applicant.

**2. Risk Review Process**

Every application will be evaluated to determine the risks posed by applicants. Prior to making an award, ETA will review information available through any OMB-designated repository of governmentwide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as 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 codified by DOL at 29 CFR Part 98 (Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement)). This risk evaluation may incorporate results of the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility (application screening) or the quality of its application (merit review). If ETA determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award. Criteria to be evaluated include:

- (1) Financial stability;
- (2) Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in the Uniform Grant Guidance;
- (3) 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 applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards;
- (4) Reports and findings from audits performed under Subpart F – Audit Requirements of the Uniform Grant Guidance or the reports and findings of any

other available audits and monitoring reports containing findings, issues of non-compliance or questioned costs;

- (5) The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on recipients.

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

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### **A. AWARD NOTICES**

All award notifications will be posted on the ETA Homepage (<http://www.doleta.gov>). Applicants selected for award will be contacted directly before the grant's execution. Non-selected applicants will be notified by mail or email and may request a written debriefing on the significant weaknesses of their application.

Selection of an organization as a recipient does not constitute approval of the grant application as submitted. Before the actual grant is awarded, we 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. We reserve the right to not fund any application related to this FOA.

### **B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

#### **1. Administrative Program Requirements**

All grantees will be subject to all applicable Federal laws, regulations—including the OMB Uniform Guidance, and the terms and conditions of the award. The grant(s) awarded under this FOA will be subject to the following administrative standards and provisions:

- a. Non-Profit Organizations, Educational Institutions, and State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments – 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards)
- b. Profit Making Commercial Firms – Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) – 48 CFR part 31 (Cost Principles), and 2 CFR Part 200 (Administrative Requirements).
- c. All recipients must comply with the applicable provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Public Law No. 113-328, 128 Stat. 1425 (codified as amended at 29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.).<sup>6</sup> Note that section 186(a) of WIOA allows unsuccessful applicants to file administrative appeals.

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<sup>6</sup> Please see footnote 1.

- d. All entities must comply with 29 CFR Part 93 (New Restrictions on Lobbying), 29 CFR Part 94 (Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)), 29 CFR Part 98 (Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension, and drug-free workplace requirements), and, where applicable, 2 CFR Part 200 (Audit Requirements).
- e. 29 CFR Part 2, subpart D—Equal Treatment in Department of Labor Programs for Religious Organizations, Protection of Religious Liberty of Department of Labor Social Service Providers and Beneficiaries.
- f. 29 CFR Part 31—Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Labor—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- g. 29 CFR Part 32—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.
- h. 29 CFR Part 35— Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance from the Department of Labor.
- i. 29 CFR Part 36—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.
- j. Regulations implementing section 188 of WIOA, due to be promulgated in summer of 2015.
- k. 29 CFR Parts 29 and 30—Labor Standards for the Registration of Apprenticeship Programs, and Equal Employment Opportunity in Apprenticeship and Training, as applicable.
- l. General Terms and Conditions of Award—See the following link:  
<http://www.doleta.gov/grants/pdf/2014template.pdf>

## **2. Other Legal Requirements:**

### ***a) Religious Activities***

The Department notes that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), 42 U.S.C. Section 2000bb, applies to all Federal law and its implementation. If an applicant organization is a faith-based organization that makes hiring decisions on the basis of religious belief, it may be entitled to receive Federal financial assistance under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and maintain that hiring practice even though Section 188 of the WIOA<sup>7</sup> contains a general ban on religious discrimination in employment. If a faith-based organization is awarded a grant, the organization will be provided with information on how to request such an exemption.

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<sup>7</sup> Please see footnote 1.

**b) *Lobbying or Fundraising the U.S. Government with Federal Funds***

In accordance with Section 18 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-65) (2 U.S.C. 1611), non-profit entities incorporated under Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501(c) (4) that engage in lobbying activities are not eligible to receive Federal funds and grants. No activity, including awareness-raising and advocacy activities, may include fundraising for, or lobbying of, U.S. Federal, State or Local Governments (see 2 CFR 200.450 for more information).

**c) *Transparency Act Requirements***

You must ensure that you have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the reporting requirements of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Pub. Law 109-282, as amended by section 6202 of Pub. Law 110-252) (Transparency Act), as follows:

- Except for those excepted from the Transparency Act under subparagraphs 1, 2, and 3 below, you must ensure that you have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the subaward and executive total compensation reporting requirements of the Transparency Act, should they receive funding.
- Upon award, you will receive detailed information on the reporting requirements of the Transparency Act, as described in 2 CFR Part 170, Appendix A, which can be found at the following website:  
<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-22705.pdf>
- The following types of awards are not subject to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act:
  - (1) Federal awards to individuals who apply for or receive Federal awards as natural persons (i.e., unrelated to any business or non-profit organization he or she may own or operate in his or her name);
  - (2) Federal awards to entities that had a gross income, from all sources, of less than \$300,000 in the entities' previous tax year; and
  - (3) Federal awards, if the required reporting would disclose classified information.

**d) *Safeguarding Data Including Personally Identifiable Information (PII)***

Applicants submitting applications in response to this FOA must recognize that confidentiality of PII and other sensitive data is of paramount importance to the Department of Labor and must be observed except where disclosure is allowed by the prior written approval of the Grant Officer or by court order. By submitting an application, you are assuring that all data exchanges conducted through or during the course of performance of this grant will be conducted in a manner consistent with applicable Federal law

and TEGl NO. 39-11 (issued June 28, 2012). All such activity conducted by ETA and/or recipient/s will be performed in a manner consistent with applicable state and Federal laws.

By submitting a grant application, you agree to take all necessary steps to protect such confidentiality by complying with the following provisions that are applicable in governing their handling of confidential information:

1. You must ensure that PII and sensitive data developed, obtained, or otherwise associated with DOL/ETA funded grants is securely transmitted.
2. To ensure that such PII is not transmitted to unauthorized users, all PII and other sensitive data transmitted via e-mail or stored on CDs, DVDs, thumb drives, etc., must be encrypted using a Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 140-2 compliant and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) validated cryptographic module. You must not e-mail unencrypted sensitive PII to any entity, including ETA or contractors.
3. You must take the steps necessary to ensure the privacy of all PII obtained from participants and/or other individuals and to protect such information from unauthorized disclosure. You must maintain such PII in accordance with the ETA standards for information security described in TEGl NO. 39-11 and any updates to such standards we provide to you. If you wish to obtain more information on data security should contact their Federal Project Officer.
4. You must ensure that any PII used during the performance of your grant has been obtained in conformity with applicable Federal and state laws governing the confidentiality of information.
5. You further acknowledge that all PII data obtained through your ETA grant must be stored in an area that is physically safe from access by unauthorized persons at all times and the data will be processed using recipient issued equipment, managed information technology (IT) services, and designated locations approved by ETA. Accessing, processing, and storing of ETA grant PII data on personally owned equipment, at off-site locations e.g., employee's home, and non-recipient managed IT services, e.g., Yahoo mail, is strictly prohibited unless approved by ETA.
6. Your employees and other personnel who will have access to sensitive/confidential/proprietary/private data must be advised of the confidential nature of the information, the safeguards required to protect the information, and that there are civil and criminal sanctions for noncompliance with such safeguards that are contained in Federal and state laws.
7. You must have policies and procedures in place under which your employees and other personnel, before being granted access to PII,

acknowledge their understanding of the confidential nature of the data and the safeguards with which they must comply in their handling of such data as well as the fact that they may be liable to civil and criminal sanctions for improper disclosure.

8. You must not extract information from data supplied by ETA for any purpose not stated in the grant agreement.

9. Access to any PII created by the ETA grant must be restricted to only those employees of the grant recipient who need it in their official capacity to perform duties in connection with the scope of work in the grant agreement.

10. All PII data must be processed in a manner that will protect the confidentiality of the records/documents and is designed to prevent unauthorized persons from retrieving such records by computer, remote terminal or any other means. Data may be downloaded to, or maintained on, mobile or portable devices only if the data are encrypted using NIST validated software products based on FIPS 140-2 encryption. In addition, wage data may only be accessed from secure locations.

11. PII data obtained by the recipient through a request from ETA must not be disclosed to anyone but the individual requestor except as permitted by the Grant Officer or by court order.

12. You must permit ETA to make onsite inspections during regular business hours for the purpose of conducting audits and/or conducting other investigations to assure that you are complying with the confidentiality requirements described above. In accordance with this responsibility, you must make records applicable to this Agreement available to authorized persons for the purpose of inspection, review, and/or audit.

13. You must retain data received from ETA only for the period of time required to use it for assessment and other purposes, or to satisfy applicable Federal records retention requirements, if any. Thereafter, you agree that all data will be destroyed, including the degaussing of magnetic tape files and deletion of electronic data.

**e) *Record Retention***

You must be prepared to follow Federal guidelines on record retention, which require you to maintain all records pertaining to grant activities for a period of at least three years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report. See 2 CFR 200.333-.337 for more specific information, including information about the start of the record retention period for awards that are renewed quarterly or annually, and when the records must be retained for more than three years.

**f) Use of Contracts and Subawards**

You must abide by the following definitions of contract, contractor, subaward, and subrecipient:

**Contract:** Contract means a legal instrument by which a non-Federal entity (defined as a state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education (IHE), nonprofit organization, for-profit entity, foreign public entity, or a foreign organization that carries out a Federal award as a recipient or subrecipient) purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a Federal award. The term as used in this FOA does not include a legal instrument, even if the non-Federal entity considers it a contract, when the substance of the transaction meets the definition of a Federal award or subaward (see definition of Subaward below).

**Contractor :** Contractor means an entity that receives a contract as defined above in Contract.

**Subaward:** Subaward means an award provided by a pass-through entity (defined as a non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a Federal program) 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. A subaward may be provided through any form of legal agreement, including an agreement that the pass-through entity considers a contract.

**Subrecipient:** Subrecipient means a non-Federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a Federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. A subrecipient may also be a recipient of other Federal awards directly from a Federal awarding agency.

You must follow the provisions at 2 CFR 200.330-.332 regarding subrecipient monitoring and management. Also see 2 CFR 200.308(c)(6) regarding prior approval requirements for subawards. When awarding subawards, you are required to comply with provisions on governmentwide suspension and debarment found at 2 CFR Part 180 and codified by DOL at 29 CFR Part 98.

**g) Closeout of Grant Award**

Any entity that receives an award under this Announcement must close its grant with ETA at the end of the final year of the grant. Information about this process may be found in ETA's Grant Closeout FAQ located at <http://www.doleta.gov/grants/docs/GCFAQ.pdf>.

**3. Other Administrative Standards and Provisions**

Except as specifically provided in this FOA, our acceptance of an application and an

award of Federal funds to sponsor any programs(s) does not provide a waiver of any grant requirements and/or procedures. For example, the OMB Uniform Guidance requires that an entity's procurement procedures ensure that all procurement transactions are conducted, as much as practical, to provide full and open competition. If an application identifies a specific entity to provide goods or services, the award does not provide the justification or basis to sole source the procurement, i.e., avoid competition.

#### **4. Special Program Requirements**

**a) *ETA Evaluation***

We may require that the program or project participate in an evaluation of overall performance of ETA grants and require the cooperation of the recipient as a condition of award. The Department has also reserved up to 3 percent (approximately \$300,000) of this round's total grant funding to provide a technical assistance contractor to assist grantees in developing and implementing their workforce longitudinal databases to ensure smooth implementation and execution. Grantees must agree to work with DOL's designated contractor and to provide access to program operating and technical personnel, as specified by the contractor(s) under the direction of DOL, including after the expiration date of the grant.

**b) *Performance Goals***

Please note that applicants will be held to outcomes and deliverables proposed and failure to meet those outcomes and deliverables may result in technical assistance or other intervention by ETA, and may also have a significant impact on decisions about future grants with ETA.

**c) *Reporting***

You must agree to meet DOL reporting requirements. Quarterly financial reports, quarterly progress reports, and MIS data must be submitted by the recipient electronically. You must agree to provide the reports and documents listed below:

**(1) Quarterly Financial Reports**

A Quarterly Financial Status Report (ETA 9130) is required until such time as all funds have been expended or the grant period has expired. Quarterly reports are due 45 days after the end of each calendar year quarter. On the final Financial Status Report, you must include any subaward amounts so we can calculate final indirect costs, if applicable. You must use DOL's Online Electronic Reporting System and information and instructions will be provided to grantees.

**(2) Quarterly Performance Reports**

You must submit a quarterly progress report within 45 days after the end of each calendar year quarter. The report must include quarterly information on grant activities, performance goals, and milestones. The last quarterly progress report will serve as the grant's Final

Performance Report. This report must provide both quarterly and cumulative information on the grant activities. It must summarize project activities, employment outcomes and other deliverables, and related results of the project, and must thoroughly document the training or labor market information approaches that you used. We will provide you with formal guidance about the data and other information that is required to be collected and reported on either a regular basis or special request basis.

1. Design Plan: Sixty days after execution of final grant award grantees must submit a detailed design plan which will expand upon and operationalize the activities proposed in this grant application. This report must include a timeline which incorporates all project stages, milestones, targets and proposed schedule of deliverables stemming from the analysis of State workforce data for statewide dissemination. The grantee must submit a Cost proposal allotting the expenditure of this grant over the three year period including, but not limited to, considerations for equipment, personnel, fees and fixed costs.
2. Final Report: A draft final report must be submitted no later than 60 days before the expiration date of the grant. This report must summarize project activities, outcomes, and related results of the project, and should thoroughly document approaches. After responding to DOL questions and comments on the draft report, an original and two copies of the final report must be submitted no later than the grant expiration date. Grantees must agree to use a designated format specified by DOL for preparing the final report.

## **VII. AGENCY CONTACTS**

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For further information about this FOA, please contact Linda K. Forman, Grants Management Specialist, Office of Grants Management, at (202) 693-3416. Applicants should e-mail all technical questions to [forman.linda@dol.gov](mailto:forman.linda@dol.gov) and must specifically reference FOA-ETA-15-06, and along with question(s), include a contact name, fax and phone number. This Announcement is being made available on the ETA Web site at <http://www.doleta.gov/grants> and at <http://www.grants.gov>.

## VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

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### A. TRANSPARENCY

DOL is committed to conducting a transparent grant award process and publicizing information about program outcomes. Posting grant applications on public websites is a means of promoting and sharing innovative ideas. For all applications in this grant competition, we will publish the Abstracts required by Section IV.B.4., and selected information from the SF-424 for all applications on the Department's public website or similar publicly accessible location. Additionally, we will publish a version of the Project Narrative required by Section IV.B.3. for all those applications that are awarded grants, on the Department's website or a similar location. No other attachments to the application will be published. The Project Narratives and Abstracts will not be published until after the grants are announced. In addition, information about grant progress and results may also be made publicly available.

DOL recognizes that grant applications sometimes contain information that an applicant may consider proprietary or business confidential information, or may contain personally identifiable information (PII). Proprietary or business confidential information is information that is not usually disclosed outside your organization and disclosing this information is likely to cause you substantial competitive harm.

PII is any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as name, social security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, or biometric records, and any other information that is linked or linkable to an individual, such as medical, educational, financial, and employment information.<sup>8</sup>

Abstracts will be published in the form originally submitted, without any redactions. Applicants should not include any proprietary or confidential business information or PII in this summary. In the event that an applicant submits proprietary or confidential business information or PII, DOL is not liable for the posting of this information contained in the Abstract. The submission of the grant application constitutes a waiver of the applicant's objection to the posting of any proprietary or confidential business information contained in the Abstract. Additionally, the applicant is responsible for obtaining all authorizations from relevant parties for publishing all PII contained within the Abstract. In the event the Abstract contains proprietary or confidential business information or PII, the applicant is presumed to have obtained all necessary authorizations to provide this information and may be liable for any improper release of this information.

By submission of this grant application, the applicant agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the United States, the U.S. Department of Labor, its officers, employees, and

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<sup>8</sup> OMB Memorandum 07-16 and 06-19. GAO Report 08-536, *Privacy: Alternatives Exist for Enhancing Protection of Personally Identifiable Information*, May 2008, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08536.pdf>.

agents against any liability or for any loss or damages arising from this application. By such submission of this grant application, the applicant further acknowledges having the authority to execute this release of liability.

In order to ensure that proprietary or confidential business information or PII is properly protected from disclosure when DOL posts the winning Project Narratives, applicants whose Project Narratives will be posted will be asked to submit a second redacted version of their Project Narrative, with any proprietary, confidential commercial/business information, and PII redacted. All non-public information about the applicant's and consortium members' staff (if applicable) should be removed as well.

The Department will contact the applicants whose Project Narratives will be published by letter or email, and provide further directions about how and when to submit the redacted version of the Project Narrative.

Submission of a redacted version of the Project Narrative will constitute permission by the applicant for DOL to make the redacted version publicly available. We will also assume that by submitting the redacted version of the Project Narrative, the applicant has obtained the agreement to the applicant's decision about what material to redact of all persons and entities whose proprietary, confidential business information, or PII is contained in the Project Narrative. If an applicant fails to provide a redacted version of the Project Narrative within 45 days of DOL's request, DOL will publish the original Project Narrative in full, after redacting only PII. (Note that the original, unredacted version of the Project Narrative will remain part of the complete application package, including an applicant's proprietary and confidential business information and any PII.)

Applicants are encouraged to maximize the grant application information that will be publicly disclosed, and to exercise restraint and redact only information that clearly is proprietary, confidential commercial/business information, or PII. The redaction of entire pages or sections of the Project Narrative is not appropriate, and will not be allowed, unless the entire portion merits such protection. Should a dispute arise about whether redactions are appropriate, DOL will follow the procedures outlined in the Department's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) regulations (29 CFR Part 70).

Redacted information in grant applications will be protected by DOL from public disclosure in accordance with Federal law, including the Trade Secrets Act (18 U.S.C. § 1905), FOIA, and the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. § 552a). If DOL receives a FOIA request for your application, the procedures in DOL's FOIA regulations for responding to requests for commercial/business information submitted to the government will be followed, as well as all FOIA exemptions and procedures. See 29 CFR § 70.26. Consequently, it is possible that application of FOIA rules may result in release of information in response to a FOIA request that an applicant redacted in its "redacted copy."

## **B. WEB-BASED RESOURCES**

DOL maintains a number of web-based resources that may be of assistance to applicants. For example, the CareerOneStop portal (<http://www.careeronestop.org>), which provides national and state career information on occupations; the Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) Online (<http://online.onetcenter.org>) which provides occupational competency profiles; and America's Service Locator (<http://www.servicelocator.org>), which provides a directory of our nation's One-Stop Career Centers.

FERPA: The Privacy and Technical Assistance Center is a “one-stop” resource for education stakeholders to learn about data privacy, confidentiality, and security practices related to student-level longitudinal data systems. The following are a selection of PTAC resources available online:

PTAC Checklist: Data Governance: <http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/data-governance-checklist.pdf>

PTAC FERPA Written Agreement Checklist: <http://ptac.ed.gov/content/checklist-data-sharing-agreement-apr-2012>

Guidance for Reasonable Methods and Written Agreements:  
<http://ptac.ed.gov/Guidance-Reasonable-Methods-Written-Agreements>

Case Study #5: Minimizing Access to PII: Best Practices for Access Controls and Disclosure Avoidance Techniques: <http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/case-study5-minimizing-PII-access.pdf>

PTAC - New Guidance: Disclosure Avoidance & Limiting Access to PII:  
[http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Webinar\\_DD\\_Nov2012Final.pdf](http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Webinar_DD_Nov2012Final.pdf)

Technical Brief # 2: Data Stewardship: Managing Personally Identifiable Information in Student Education Records: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011602.pdf>

Tech Brief #3: Statistical Methods for Protecting Personally Identifiable Information in Aggregate Reporting: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011603.pdf>

Joint Letter with ED OESE HHS ACF:  
[http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Joint\\_FERPA\\_Letter\\_with\\_ED\\_OESE\\_HHS\\_ACF\\_4\\_24\\_2013.pdf](http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Joint_FERPA_Letter_with_ED_OESE_HHS_ACF_4_24_2013.pdf)

Webinar Data Sharing Under FERPA Presentation:  
[http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/webinar-data-sharing-011112\\_final\\_0.pdf](http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/webinar-data-sharing-011112_final_0.pdf)

### State Longitudinal Data Systems

The National Center for Education Statistics oversees grants for state longitudinal data systems, and provides resources and technical assistance on developing, sustaining,

and effectively using these systems. Resources are at:

<http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/>

Centralized vs. Federated Data Systems: SLDS Brief:

[http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/federated\\_centralized\\_print.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/federated_centralized_print.pdf)

P-20W Data Governance "Challenge": College and Career Readiness:

[http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/dgscenario\\_ccr.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/dgscenario_ccr.pdf)

P-20W Data Governance: SLDS Best Practices Brief:

[http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/brief4\\_P\\_20W\\_DG.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/brief4_P_20W_DG.pdf)

### **C. INDUSTRY COMPETENCY MODELS AND CAREER CLUSTERS**

ETA supports an Industry Competency Model Initiative to promote an understanding of the skill sets and competencies that are essential to an educated and skilled workforce. A competency model is a collection of competencies that, taken together, define successful performance in a particular work setting. Competency models serve as a starting point for the design and implementation of workforce and talent development programs. To learn about the industry-validated models visit the Competency Model Clearinghouse (CMC) at <http://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel>. The CMC site also provides tools to build or customize industry models, as well as tools to build career ladders and career lattices for specific regional economies.

Career Clusters and Industry Competency Models both identify foundational and technical competencies, but their efforts are not duplicative. The Career Clusters link to specific career pathways in 16 career cluster areas and place greater emphasis on elements needed for curriculum performance objectives; measurement criteria; scope and sequence of courses in a program of study; and development of assessments. Information about the sixteen career cluster areas can be found by accessing: [www.careerclusters.org](http://www.careerclusters.org).

### **D. WORKFORCE3ONE RESOURCES**

1. We encourage you to view the information gathered through the conference calls with Federal agency partners, industry stakeholders, educators, and local practitioners. The information on resources identified can be found on Workforce3One.org at: <https://www.workforce3one.org/find/?sr=1&ps=20&sort=5>.
2. We encourage you to view the online tutorial, "Grant Applications 101: A Plain English Guide to ETA Competitive Grants," available through Workforce3One at: [http://www.workforce3one.org/page/grants\\_toolkit](http://www.workforce3one.org/page/grants_toolkit).
3. We created *Workforce System Strategies* to make it easier for the public workforce system and its partners to identify effective strategies and support improved

customer outcomes. The collection highlights strategies informed by a wide range of evidence such as experimental studies and implementation evaluations, as well as supporting resources such as toolkits. We encourage you to review these resources by visiting <http://strategies.workforce3one.org/>.

4. We created a technical assistance portal at <https://etareporting.workforce3one.org/page/financial> that contains online training and resources for fiscal and administrative issues. Online trainings available include, but are not limited to, Introduction to Grant Applications and Forms, Indirect Costs, Cost Principles, and Accrual Accounting.

## **IX. OMB INFORMATION COLLECTION**

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OMB Information Collection No 1225-0086, Expires January 31, 2016.

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. Send comments about the burden estimated or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, to the attention of the Departmental Clearance Officer, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room N1301, Washington, DC 20210. Comments may also be emailed to [DOL\\_PRA\\_PUBLIC@dol.gov](mailto:DOL_PRA_PUBLIC@dol.gov). PLEASE DO NOT RETURN THE COMPLETED APPLICATION TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND IT TO THE SPONSORING AGENCY AS SPECIFIED IN THIS ANNOUNCEMENT.

This information is being collected for the purpose of awarding a grant. The information collected through this "Funding Opportunity Announcement" will be used by the Department of Labor to ensure that grants are awarded to the applicants best suited to perform the functions of the grant. Submission of this information is required in order for the applicant to be considered for award of a grant.

Signed April 7, 2015, in Washington, D.C. by:

Steven Rietzke  
Grant Officer, Employment and Training Administration