

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY

STRATEGIC INNOVATION GRANTS

Notice of Grant Availability (NGA)

PUBLISHED: AUGUST 15, 2016

RESPONSES WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL 5 P.M., SEPTEMBER 30, 2016

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

TOM WOLF, GOVERNOR

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY

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SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO:

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY
STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
651 BOAS STREET, ROOM 514
HARRISBURG, PA 17121
ATTN: STRATEGIC INNOVATION GRANT APPLICATION
RA-LI-PAWDB@PA.GOV

APPLICANTS *MUST* SUBMIT ONE ELECTRONIC COPY TO THE EMAIL ADDRESS INDICATED ABOVE BEFORE THE GRANT DEADLINE.

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), providing a framework for Governors and states to make changes to their workforce systems. The federal law sets the parameters for the workforce system which is an integral part of the commonwealth's ability to serve jobseekers and employers. WIOA enables the commonwealth to align workforce priorities across multiple partners, training providers, employers and others to ensure we are creating a skilled workforce for today and the future.

Pennsylvania's approved WIOA Combined State Plan notes: An effective workforce development system will be built on a foundation of alignment, innovation, employer engagement, accountability structures and improved data. Pennsylvania will look beyond WIOA to set broad goals for a comprehensive workforce development system that increases the number of "jobs that pay," expands the number of "schools that teach" the skills necessary to succeed in college and careers, and is a model of "government that works."

Pennsylvania's WIOA Combined State Plan includes five broad goals. The commonwealth is seeking innovative proposals that address one or both of the following goals through this grant availability:

- Establish career pathways as the primary model for skill, credential and degree attainment and provide all Pennsylvanians, with an emphasis on Pennsylvanians with barriers to employment, an opportunity to obtain a job that pays.
- Engage employers through multi-employer workforce partnerships to improve the connection and responsiveness of workforce programs to the demand side of the labor market, increase public-private investment in critical skills, and support the spread of employer practices that create jobs that pay.

SECTION 2 – AWARD INFORMATION

- A. **PROJECT SPONSORS:** This NGA is offered by the commonwealth utilizing state Reemployment Fund dollars.
- B. **APPLICATION DEADLINE:** September 30, 2016 by 5 p.m. Eastern Time.
- C. **ESTIMATED FUNDING:** Up to \$2,000,000 is available.
- D. **ANTICIPATED AWARD SIZE:** Grant awards will range from \$25,000 to \$400,000.
- E. **REPORTING:** Applicants awarded funding must submit quarterly reports summarizing grant activities and expenditure of funds. Reports will include impact measures that clearly demonstrate a direct connection to this funding.
- F. **PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:** The commonwealth anticipates a period of performance starting January 1, 2017 and ending June 30, 2018.

SECTION 3 – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

- A. **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:** Eligible applicants include Local Workforce Development Boards, employment and training service providers, community based organizations and apprenticeship programs registered in Pennsylvania.
- B. **LEAD APPLICANT:** Each proposal must identify a single entity as the lead applicant. The lead applicant will serve as the Fiscal Agent with responsibility for receiving, managing and dispersing grant funds. The lead applicant will be responsible for completing grant activities, achieving grant outcomes and providing required reports.

SECTION 4 – BACKGROUND

This NGA supports Governor Wolf’s vision of “jobs that pay, schools that teach, and government that works” by encouraging creativity and innovation in achieving two of the broad goals for workforce development depicted in the WIOA State Plan. Each proposal must clearly demonstrate how it addresses one or both of the goals. Preference will be given to applicants that include educational institutions as proposal partners.

Additional detail regarding each of the goals follows:

Goal: Establish Career Pathways

It is imperative that the workforce development system provide training for skills that lead to employment in [High Priority Occupations \(HPOs\)](#) or entry-level occupations that lead to HPOs. Career pathways must be diverse with multiple entry and exit points allowing individuals of varying abilities, including low-skilled adults and youth with multiple barriers to employment, to have realistic access to pathways. The commonwealth will look to support career pathways that help adults and youth advance among multiple occupations, advance within an occupation or move to a new occupation that has similar skills to a previous occupation. The commonwealth has adopted the WIOA definition of career pathway as follows:

The term "career pathway" means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training and other services that:

- A. aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;
- B. prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the "National Apprenticeship Act"; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.) (referred to individually in this Act as an "apprenticeship", except in section 171);
- C. includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals;
- D. includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- E. organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
- F. enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and
- G. helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

WIOA identifies the following groups of individuals as having barriers to employment:

- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Indians, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiians
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals
- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system
- Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under TANF
- Single parents (including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed individuals

Goal: Engage Employers to Strengthen the Connection of Education and Training and the Economy, Increase Investment in Critical Skills and Increase Jobs that Pay

Employers must be partners in the education and workforce system, not just end-users. It is critical for employers to be at the table to offer insights into current and future skill and occupational needs and provide feedback on proposed and implemented career pathways, sector strategies and training programs. It is also imperative that the workforce development system engage the right employers – those offering jobs with reasonable wages, benefits, full-time stable employment, ongoing training and advancement opportunities, paid sick days, family leave and medical leave, and predictable schedules to balance family needs. Low-quality jobs have high turnover rates and limited opportunity for advancement, bringing into question the return on investment of limited WIOA resources. In addition, by engaging employers that provide good jobs by the standards of their sector, the commonwealth can support formal training, and formal and informal peer learning, that grow these companies and increase the number of other employers that adopt good human resource practices.

It is also critical that the commonwealth support employers who want to come together to address their training and human resource challenges in a more efficient, multi-employer way. The fragmentation of employers when it comes to workforce issues – recruitment, training, curricula, credentialing, career pathways – makes it more difficult for workforce services to align their programs with the common needs of employers. Pennsylvania is already ahead of other states in strengthening the voice of groups of employers in workforce development through its national leadership in building Industry Partnerships as well as its extensive investment in multi-employer apprenticeships. The commonwealth will build on its past experiences in order to improve employer engagement with the workforce system.

SECTION 5 – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. APPLICATION PACKAGE: Application forms and instructions are available at: <http://www.dli.pa.gov/Businesses/Workforce-Development/grants/Pages/default.aspx>

B. MANDATORY ATTACHMENTS: Applicants must complete all mandatory forms and any applicable optional forms in accordance with the instructions on the forms and the additional instructions below. Files that are attached to the forms must be submitted in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) or Microsoft Word unless otherwise specified in this notice.

1. APPLICATION FORM

Complete all fields (typed, not printed) in accordance with the instructions found at the bottom of the form. Save this information in a file named “**Application Form**”. An authorized representative (an individual who can legally bind the applicant organization into a contract) must provide a signature.

2. PROJECT SUMMARY

The Project Summary must contain a synopsis of the proposal suitable for dissemination to the public. It should be a self-contained document that identifies:

- The name of the applicant;
- Project title;
- Project service area (e.g., counties to be served);
- Objectives of the project;
- Description of the project;
- Potential impact of the project (i.e., benefits, outcomes);
- Project partners; and,
- Project point of contact with contact information.

This document must not include any proprietary or sensitive business information as the commonwealth may make it available to the public. The Project Summary must not exceed two (2) pages. Save this information in a file named “**Project Summary**”.

3. PROJECT NARRATIVE

The Project Narrative must not exceed fifteen (15) single-spaced one-sided pages when printed using standard 8.5” by 11” paper with 1” margins (top, bottom, left, and right).. Cover pages, table of contents, charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations count toward the fifteen (15) page limit. **EVALUATORS WILL REVIEW ONLY THE NUMBER OF PAGES SPECIFIED IN THE PRECEDING SENTENCE.** Page numbers must be provided in the footer. Do not include any Internet addresses (URLs) that provide information necessary to review the application. Save this information in a file named “**Project Narrative**”.

The Project Narrative must be formatted to clearly address each of the Merit Review Criteria in Section 6. Provide sufficient information so that reviewers will be able to evaluate the application in accordance with these merit criteria. **EVALUATORS WILL REVIEW AND CONSIDER ONLY THOSE APPLICATIONS THAT ADDRESS SEPARATELY EACH OF THE MERIT REVIEW CRITERION.**

4. BUDGET FORM

Applicants must submit a detailed budget request utilizing the budget form provided with the application package. The budget will be evaluated in terms of cost reasonableness and the relationship to proposed activities. Budgets must be for the time period beginning January 1, 2017 and ending June 30, 2018. The budget will also become the financial basis for any grant award, including making cost reimbursement payments over the course of the project. The commonwealth reserves the right to unilaterally modify application budgets, prior to, and/or after grant award. Save the information in a single file named "**Budget Form**". The Budget Form does not count toward the fifteen (15) page limit of the Project Narrative.

5. BUDGET NARRATIVE

Applicants must justify, in detail and by line item: the costs proposed in each object class category/cost classification category; the general categories of supplies and amount for each category; and any other information to support the budget. Save the budget justification information in a single file named "**Budget Narrative**". The Budget Narrative does not count toward the fifteen (15) page limit of the Project Narrative.

SECTION 6 – APPLICATION REVIEW AND CRITERIA

A. CRITERIA

○ INITIAL REVIEW CRITERIA

Prior to comprehensive merit evaluation, the commonwealth will perform an initial review to determine that (1) the applicant is eligible for an award; (2) the information required by the announcement has been submitted; (3) all mandatory requirements are satisfied; and (4) the proposed project is responsive to the purpose of the NGA.

○ MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

The comprehensive merit evaluation will be conducted by a review team who will score proposals based on the degree to which the proposal addresses the following required elements:

CRITERION 1: PROJECT APPROACH AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (50 POINTS)

- Describe the proposed project activities. (5 points)
- Describe the targeted population or targeted employers: (5)
 - For career pathways projects, describe the targeted population(s) to include why the population(s) was chosen and how the population(s) will be recruited for project participation.
 - For business engagement projects, describe the sectors, industries, and/or employers targeted to include why they were chosen, how they will be recruited for project participation and how they will be engaged throughout the project.
- Identify project team members and describe their roles and responsibilities. (5)
- Describe the objectives and goals of the project. (10)
- Describe how and why the project is innovative. (10)
- Describe prior efforts and experiences that will inform the proposed project. (5)
- Provide a project timeline to include implementation steps and deliverables. (10)

CRITERION 2: OUTCOMES AND METRICS (20 POINTS)

- Describe how the project will be evaluated to include proposed outcome measures and outputs and explain how identified outcomes and outputs will signify project success. (15)
- Describe the process to be used to collect and report on proposed outcome measures. (5)

CRITERION 3: POTENTIAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY (20 POINTS)

- Describe how the project addresses one of the broad goals identified in Section 1. (5)
- Describe the short- and long-term impacts expected as a result of the project. (5)
- Describe how the project is scalable and replicable. (4)
- Describe how the project's best practices and lessons learned will be shared throughout the workforce system in the commonwealth. (3)
- Describe how the project can be sustained beyond the grant period. (3)

CRITERION 4: BUDGET FORM AND BUDGET NARRATIVE (10 POINTS)

(These documents are considered attachments and do not count against the 15 page limit)

- Provide a complete budget and a detailed budget narrative, reflective of the scope of the project that identifies where and how funds will be spent. (10)
 - If staff is to be funded by the grant, provide a description of the duties and responsibilities of each staff person to be funded in the Budget Narrative.
 - If the staff person has already been identified, provide a description of their qualifications to meet the duties and responsibilities of the position.

DISCUSSIONS AND AWARD

The commonwealth may enter into discussions with a selected applicant for any reason deemed necessary, including but not limited to: (1) the budget is not appropriate or reasonable for the requirement; (2) only a portion of the application is selected for award; (3) the commonwealth needs additional information to determine that the recipient is capable of complying with reporting requirements; and/or (4) special terms

and conditions are required. Failure to satisfactorily resolve the issues identified by the commonwealth within a specific period of time determined by the commonwealth may preclude award to the applicant.

B. *ANTICIPATED NOTICE OF SELECTION AND AWARD DATES*

The commonwealth anticipates notifying applicants selected for award by December 1, 2016.

C. *SUBMISSIONS FROM SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS*

The commonwealth reserves the right to request additional or clarifying information from successful applicants for any reason deemed necessary.

D. *SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES*

APPLICATION PACKAGES MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5:00 P.M., SEPTEMBER 30, 2016.

E. *USE OF FUNDS*

1. *ALLOWABLE COSTS*

Funds available through this NGA must be used for project activities that support one of the goals identified in Section 1. Administrative costs are permitted so long as they do not exceed ten (10) percent of the total grant award.

2. *DISALLOWABLE COSTS*

- Building construction;
- Supporting lease or rental cost of a building;
- Procuring lobbying services.

Pre-award costs are incurred at the applicant's risk. The commonwealth is under no obligation to reimburse such costs if for any reason the applicant does not receive an award or if the award is made for a lesser amount than the applicant expected.

SECTION 7 – AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. *AWARD NOTICES*

Each applicant shall be notified in writing of the approval or disapproval of the submitted application. The initial award letter shall contain language to the effect that “the commonwealth cannot be held accountable for any costs incurred prior to the effective date of the grant agreement.”

B. *REPORTING*

Applicants awarded funding will be required to submit quarterly reports summarizing grant activities and expenditure of funds. Reports will include impact measures that clearly demonstrate a direct connection to this funding. Report due dates will be provided by the Department of Labor & Industry upon award.

Upon expiration or termination of this grant agreement, a close out package must be submitted by the grantee within 60 days of the end date of the grant. Additional information will be supplied to each approved applicant.

SECTION 8 – QUESTIONS/AGENCY CONTACTS

A. QUESTIONS

Questions regarding the content of this NGA must be submitted, in writing, via RA-LI-PAWDB@PA.GOV.

SECTION 9 – OTHER INFORMATION

A. RIGHT TO REJECT OR NEGOTIATE

The commonwealth reserves the right, without qualification, to reject any or all applications received in response to this announcement and to select any application, in whole or in part, as a basis for negotiation and/or award.

B. COMMITMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS

The contracting officer is the only individual who can make awards or commit the commonwealth to the expenditure of public funds. A commitment by other than the contracting officer, either explicit or implied, is invalid.