

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**



**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF GRANT AVAILABILITY (AGA)**

**AGA GUIDELINES**

**PUBLISHED: MARCH 11, 2014**

**RESPONSES DUE: APRIL 15, 2014**

**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY  
OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION  
1521 N. SIXTH STREET  
HARRISBURG, PA 17102**

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**TOM CORBETT, GOVERNOR**

**[WWW.PA.GOV](http://www.pa.gov)**

**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY**

**JULIA HEARTHWAY, SECRETARY**

**[WWW.DLI.STATE.PA.US](http://www.dli.state.pa.us)**

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**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL REQUIRED FOR THIS AGA, INCLUDING ATTACHMENTS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE OVR WEBSITE:**

<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/publications/17374>

### **SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO:**

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY  
OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION  
1521 N. SIXTH STREET  
HARRISBURG, PA 17102

ATTN: DANA BACCANTI – ACES (ACCESS COLLEGE- EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS) PROJECT

**APPLICANTS MUST SUBMIT NO LATER THAN 3:00 PM ON: APRIL 15, 2014**

- **ONE (1) ORIGINAL DOCUMENT;**
- **FIVE (5) PAPER COPIES; AND**
- **ONE (1) ELECTRONIC COPY (VIA EMAIL) TO DANA BACCANTI AT [DBACCANTI@PA.GOV](mailto:DBACCANTI@PA.GOV).**

## SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

The Department of Labor & Industry’s Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is seeking applications for a grant, **ACES** (Access College-Employment Success) **Project**, to an organization to proliferate the existence of college-based, certificate programs in Pennsylvania that are intended to lead to permanent employment and to develop independent living skills for young adults with intellectual disabilities. Interested applicants will develop and implement the above specified programs at eligible colleges or universities with those institutions committed to developing programs similar to the comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual disabilities (TPSID) model and the *Think College Standards, Quality Indicators, and Benchmarks for Inclusive Higher Education*. An eligible college or university is defined as a public or private community college or traditional four-year college or university in Pennsylvania that is accredited by an institution of higher education accreditation organization recognized by the PA Department of Education or acceptable to OVR. The amount of the grant will not exceed \$1,350,000 for the initial term of the grant. This grant will be awarded for a term of three (3) years with the option to extend for a fourth and fifth year based upon the availability of funds. This Availability of Grant Application utilizes funds from the Department of Labor & Industry’s Reemployment Fund to increase independent living and financial self-sufficiency of individuals with intellectual disabilities through improved employment outcomes.

### Projects

The grant’s primary purpose is to increase the proliferation of college-based certificate programs for young adults with intellectual disabilities in Pennsylvania. Eligible colleges or universities that receive sub-grants must be committed to the goal of increasing competitive and/or customized, community-integrated employment outcomes for young adults with intellectual disabilities. These efforts include but are not limited to the following:

- Promotion of postsecondary, college-based programs for young adults with intellectual disabilities that provide a mix of credit and non-credit course offerings, and extracurricular activities that provide accessible, integrated and developmental opportunities for:
  - Community-Integrated, Customized and/or Competitive Employment
  - Academic Enrichment
  - Campus/Community Membership
  - Financial Literacy
  - Independent Living
    - Which may include community-integrated housing
  - Personal Mobility and Transportation Systems Training/Awareness
  - Socialization

- Collaboration with employers, workforce development programs, eligible colleges or universities, local education agencies, state agencies serving individuals with intellectual disabilities and private, for and not-for-profit community provider organizations to promote community-integrated, customized and/or competitive employment.

The grantee shall ensure that such certificate programs utilize a curriculum that is aligned with the TPSID model and that community-integrated, customized and/or competitive employment is the eventual outcome for any program participant.

The grantee shall expend funds only on those eligible colleges or universities that are committed to achieving eligibility as a Comprehensive Transition and Post-Secondary (CTP) Program to enable participating young adults with intellectual disabilities and future participants access to Federal Student Aid Programs (i.e. PELL) and State Student Aid (i.e. PHEAA).

The grantee shall also utilize funds to identify and advocate for new ways to enable other public and private funding streams to sustain such certificate programs after the grant funding is no longer available. These shall include but are not limited to local education agencies allowing students enrolled in special education to attend college-based certificate programs with special education funds while still enrolled in secondary education, OVR allowing such college-based certificate programs to be an eligible service which costs could be covered (partially or otherwise) and the Office of Developmental Programs allowing home and community-based waiver dollars be used to pay for such certificate programs and cover any associated costs including but not limited to housing or transportation.

## SECTION 2 – AWARD INFORMATION

- A. **FUNDING AVAILABILITY:** Up to \$1,350,000 for the initial term of the grant, ACES (Access College-Employment Success) Project. This award will be made for a term of three (3) years with an option to extend for a fourth and fifth year pending availability of funds. This grant will be awarded to one successful grantee. Funding will be available to the successful grantee for administration and staff activities as well as costs incurred by the eligible colleges or universities (sub-grantees) to develop and implement its certificate program. The grant anticipates sufficient funding to enlist, develop and implement certificate programs at no fewer than two new eligible colleges or universities (sub-grantees) each year of the grant period. The grantee is responsible for proposing how the available funding will be used to administer the grant and enlist and develop at least two college-based certificate programs per year. For the purpose of developing, implementing and sustaining a college-based certificate program, funding can be directed to sub-grantees for multiple years but not to exceed three years.
- B. **MATCH REQUIREMENT:** None required. However, match/leveraged funds and resources are encouraged.

- C. **ESTIMATED AWARDS:** The Commonwealth expects to award one grant.
- D. **REPORTING:** Applicants awarded funding will be required to submit Quarterly Performance Reports (QPRs) and Financial Status Reports (FSRs) that will report a narrative of their grant activity, including services provided, outcomes, challenges and/or barriers and strategies to address those challenges. Upon termination of the grant agreement, a closeout package must be submitted by the grantee within 60 days of the end of the grant.
- E. **PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:** OVR anticipates making an award with an initial performance period of three years. The grant period is from 7/1/2014-6/30/2017. If extended, Year 4 grant period will be 7/1/2017 to 6/30/2018 and Year 5 grant period will be 7/1/2018 to 6/30/2019.

### **SECTION 3 – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

- A. **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:** Existing organizations that possess experience with the development or administration of college-based certificate programs; experience with higher education, adults with intellectual disabilities, special education, and issues affecting the ability of people with disabilities to secure and maintain employment; experience advocating for system changes; and, the capacity, experience and expertise to proliferate the existence of college-based certificate programs intended to develop independent living skills and lead to employment outcomes for young adults with intellectual disabilities within eligible colleges or universities throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Eligible applicants will be capable of managing a grant; developing and following a budget; and facilitating partnerships with multiple stakeholders and funding sources to achieve the overall project goals, including but not limited to: enlisting interested and eligible colleges or universities as sub-grantees; ensuring that sub-grantees develop post-secondary programs similar to the TPSID model and adhering to *Think College Standards, Quality Indicators, and Benchmarks for Inclusive Higher Education*; developing and implementing an appropriate budget; providing technical assistance to ensure successful implementation by sub-grantees; collecting and reporting performance outcome measures; and coordinating and evaluating the activities of the project. The organization awarded the grant will facilitate development of sustainable braided funding sources for each sub-grantee such as Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Medical Assistance Waivers, Federal/State Financial Aid, Workforce Development, and OVR.

- B. ***ELIGIBLE PROJECTS:*** Eligible projects must address the targeted activity noted in Section 4 of this AGA.

#### **SECTION 4 – TARGETED ACTIVITY**

Pennsylvania has traditionally been a leader in “school-to-work” transition for young adults with disabilities since the authorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act. OVR recognizes that assisting young adults with disabilities to access post-secondary training and subsequently the workforce helps to increase this population’s financial independence and self-sufficiency, thereby, decreasing their long-term dependency on public services and funds. In its efforts to continually improve and increase services to young adults with disabilities, OVR has consistently collaborated with its partners in the Departments of Education, Public Welfare, and Health to develop interagency policies and procedures, to deliver coordinated services, and to implement effective and innovative transition models of service delivery. Despite these efforts, young adults with intellectual disabilities remain significantly under- or unemployed.

Given the Governor’s initiatives to increase employment of youth with and without disabilities as well as to increase services to young adults with disabilities respectively, the basis for issuing funds under this category is Section 605.1 of the Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation Law, Act of December 5, 1936, Sec. Ex. Sess. P.L. (1937) 2897, as amended, 43 P.S. § 841.5.

The project must adhere to all of the following activities and guidelines to establish models of transition and postsecondary programs for young adults with intellectual disabilities.

The grantee will provide the following deliverables:

- Solicit participation from interested and qualified eligible colleges or universities.
- Set criteria by which to select and make awards to sub-grantees.
- Prioritize selection of sub-grantees upon the following:
  - Sustained and meaningful partnerships with any relevant agency serving students with disabilities, such as vocational rehabilitation, county intellectual disability program, or local educational agency.
  - Provide or facilitate finding community-integrated and/or college/university owned or operated housing options for students with disabilities that are also available to their peers without disabilities.
  - Involvement of students attending the eligible college or university who are studying human services, social work, special education, general education, vocational rehabilitation, assistive technology or fields in the project program or who have an interest in participating.

- Involvement of businesses that have demonstrated a willingness to hire people with disabilities with which the qualified eligible college or university have established partnerships and working relationships.
- Provide specific program guidelines and technical assistance aligned with the TPSID model and *Think College Standards, Quality Indicators, and Benchmarks for Inclusive Higher Education* to selected sub-grantees (interested and qualified, eligible colleges or universities).
- Identify and facilitate the development of system-wide sustainable funding sources for college certificate programs (i.e. IDEA, MA Waivers, VR, PELL, PHEAA, etc.).
- Administer yearly grant budget and distribute funds accordingly to sub-grantees.
- Collect and report on all performance outcome measures.
- Coordinate and evaluate activities of the project.
- Ensure that sub-grantees are meeting project requirements.

The successful grantee will ensure that sub-grantees will:

- Meet the definition of eligible college or university, which is defined as:
  - a public or private community college or, traditional four-year college or university in Pennsylvania that is accredited by an institution of higher education accreditation organization recognized by the PA Department of Education or acceptable to OVR.
- Use grant funds to provide the following deliverables:
  - Identify, attract and serve young adults with intellectual disabilities
  - Provide individual supports and services for the academic and social inclusion of young adults with intellectual disabilities in academic courses, extracurricular activities, and other aspects of the eligible college or university's regular postsecondary program.
  - Provide a focus on integrated work experiences, career skills, academic enrichment, socialization, independent living skills, financial literacy, and self-advocacy skills that lead to community-integrated, customized and/or competitive employment.
  - Integrate person-centered planning in the development of the course of study for each youth or young adult with an intellectual disability participating in the project program.
  - Develop and supervise job internships for participating students during their final term of enrollment.
  - Participate with the Grantee in evaluation of project components including data collection, storage, analyses, and reporting.

- Engage in regular meetings or conference calls with Grantee and on an annual basis with OVR Project Leads to discuss project progress, successes, challenges and strategies.
  - Plan for the sustainability of the project program after the end of the grant period (i.e. private pay; financial aid for college training from OVR; “fee for service” under IDEA, MA Waivers, Workforce Development, etc.)
  - Create and offer a meaningful credential upon completion of the project program to participants.
- Seek approval as a Comprehensive Transition and Post-Secondary (CTP) Program to enable participating young adults with intellectual disabilities access to Federal Student Aid Programs (i.e. PELL) and State Student Aid (i.e. PHEAA) as well as develop other sources of financial support such as IDEA, MA Waivers, Workforce Development and OVR.

## **SECTION 5 – APPLICATION**

### **A. REVIEW CRITERIA**

#### **1 INITIAL REVIEW CRITERIA**

OVR 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 this AGA.

#### **2 MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA**

##### **CRITERION 1: PROJECT APPROACH AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

- Reasonableness of the proposed approach, as evidenced by clear goals, tasks, methods, deliverables and timelines.
- Degree to which the project ensures desirable project outcomes..
- Degree to which the application adequately describes successful implementation of the project.
- The ability to serve young adults with intellectual disabilities.
- The ability to provide relevant data for outcome measures.

##### **CRITERION 2: APPLICANT/TEAM CAPABILITIES**

- Degree to which the applicant successfully demonstrates experience working with young adults with intellectual disabilities, their families, and the public agencies that serve them.

- Previous experience developing, implementing and managing projects of similar size, scope and complexity.
- Degree to which applicant leverages existing relationships, collaborations or partnerships.
- Qualifications and/or experience of key personnel to implement the proposed project.
- Degree to which the roles and responsibilities of the project team have been identified and reasonableness of the applicant's ability to successfully coordinate and implement the proposed project including the vocational outcomes of project participants utilizing identified partners.

### CRITERION 3: POTENTIAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Degree to which applicant's proposal ensures sub-grantee efforts to:
  - Develop a college-based program upon guidelines similar to the TPSID model.
  - Develop a curriculum that includes independent living skills and that leads to employment outcomes.
  - Seek approval as a Comprehensive Transition and Post-Secondary (CTP) Program to enable participating young adults with intellectual disabilities access to Federal Student Aid Programs (i.e. PELL) and State Student Aid (i.e. PHEAA) as well as develop other sources of financial support.
- Degree to which applicant's proposal targets sub-grantees with successful job placement records and services.
- Degree to which applicant's proposal targets sub-grantees with comprehensive disability services offices.

### CRITERION 4: BUDGET FORM AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

- Line item justification of a complete budget and budget narrative that identifies where and how the awarded funds will be spent.
- Degree of cost reasonableness and relationship to proposed activities.

#### B. *OTHER SELECTION FACTORS:*

These factors, while not indicators of the applicant's merit, e.g. technical excellence, cost, applicant's ability, etc., may be essential to the process of selecting the application that will best achieve the project's objectives. Therefore, the following program policy factors may be used to assist in determining grant awards:

- Ability to serve statewide.

- Ability to establish sources of sustainable, braided funding.

### **Best and Final Proposals:**

A. While not required, OVR reserves the right to conduct discussions with applicants for the purpose of obtaining “best and final proposals.” To obtain best and final proposals from applicants, OVR may do one or more of the following, in any combination and order:

1. Schedule oral presentations;
2. Request revised proposals;

B. The following applicants will **not** be invited by OVR to submit a Best and Final Proposal:

1. Applicants who OVR has determined to be not responsible or whose proposals have been determined to be not responsive.
2. Applicants which OVR has determined do not possess the capability, experience or qualifications to assure good faith performance of the grant agreement.
3. Applicants whose score for their proposal is less than 70%.

OVR may further limit participation in the best and final proposal process to those remaining responsible applicants which OVR has, within its discretion, determined to be within the top competitive range of responsive proposals.

**Discussions for Clarification:** Applicants may be required to make an oral or written clarification of their proposals to OVR to ensure thorough mutual understanding and applicant responsiveness to the AGA requirements. OVR will initiate requests for clarification. Clarifications may occur at any stage of the evaluation and selection process prior to agreement execution.

### ***C. ANTICIPATED NOTICE OF SELECTION AND AWARD DATES***

Proposals must be received by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation no later than 3:00 PM, April 15, 2014 at the address listed on page 2. OVR anticipates notifying the applicant selected for award by May 15, 2014 and making awards by June 30, 2014. All material required for this AGA is available on the OVR website: <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/publications/17374>

## **SECTION 6 – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

- A. APPLICATION PACKAGE:** Application forms and instructions are available at the above referenced OVR web site.
- B. MANDATORY ATTACHMENTS:** You must complete all mandatory forms in accordance with the instructions on the forms and the additional instructions below. All forms must be submitted in the correct order and as one file. The file must be submitted in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) or Microsoft Word unless otherwise specified in this announcement. To facilitate application review, please provide the following forms and documents in the order in which they are listed. Failure to provide all of the documents and materials listed below could result in disqualification of the proposal.

**1. APPLICATION FORM**

Complete all fields (typed, not printed) and have the Authorized Individual sign and date the Application Form.

**2. OVR GRANT AGREEMENT FORM**

Please read, complete and sign this form. Please note that all attachments to this agreement become legally binding documents. This agreement provides assurance that the applicant has read, understood, and agrees to abide by the Department of Labor & Industry's, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's grant requirements. Upon a grant being awarded, this document will be fully executed by the Department of Labor & Industry and a copy provided to the grantee.

**3. PROJECT SUMMARY/ABSTRACT**

The project summary/abstract must contain a summary of the proposed activity suitable for dissemination to the public. It should be a self-contained document that identifies the name of the applicant, the project director, the project title, the project service area (counties to be served), the objectives of the project, a description of the project, including methods to be employed, the potential impact of the project (i.e., benefits, outcomes), and major participants (for collaborative projects). 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 one (1) page when printed using standard 8.5" by 11" paper with 1" margins (top, bottom, left, and right) [single or double spaced] with font no smaller than 11 point [Times New Roman or Arial].

**4. PROJECT NARRATIVE**

The project narrative must not exceed fifteen (15) pages, including cover page, table of contents, the statement of the project goal, deliverables, charts, graphs, maps, and letter(s) of support when printed using standard 8.5” by 11” paper with 1” margins (top, bottom, left, and right) [single spaced and printed on one side of the paper]. **EVALUATORS WILL REVIEW ONLY THE NUMBER OF PAGES SPECIFIED IN THE PRECEDING SENTENCE.** The font must not be smaller than 11 point [Times New Roman or Arial]. Page numbers must be provided in the footer. Do not include any Internet addresses (URLs) that provide information necessary to review the application.

The project narrative must include:

- **MERIT REVIEW CRITERION DISCUSSION:** The section should be formatted to address each of the merit review criterion listed in Section 5.2. 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.**

## **5. BUDGET SPREADSHEET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION**

Applicants must submit a detailed Budget Spreadsheet and Budget Narrative Justification for the initial term of the ACES Project. You must justify, in detail by line item, the costs proposed in each category (e.g., identify key persons in the personnel category and the estimated costs for each person and the percent of time allocated to the project, list Fringe Benefits by each staff person and the percent), list general categories of supplies, equipment, travel and amount for each category; and provide any other information you wish to support your budget. The budget will be evaluated in terms of cost reasonableness and the relationship to proposed activities. Budgets must be specific and complete. 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 modify application budgets, prior to, and/or after grant award.

## **6. TIMELINE**

Provide a timeline of the project broken down by each deliverable, task and/or subtask for the initial term of the ACES Project. The timeline should include for each Deliverable or task a start date and end date. The timeline should show interdependencies between Deliverables or tasks and include quantitative milestones. Projects should be operational as quickly as possible.

## 7. AFFIRMATION

An authorized representative, an individual who can legally bind the applicant organization into a grant, must complete and provide signature and/or initials acknowledging the contents of the documents listed below, as appropriate.

- **ATTACHMENT H - RIDER B - GRANT AGREEMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS**
- **ATTACHMENT I - NOTICE TO LANDLORD OR AUTHORIZED AGENT**
- **ATTACHMENT J - COMPLIANCE REVIEW FORM**

## C. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

### 1. ALLOWABLE COSTS

The commonwealth expects to award one (1) ACES (Access College-Employment Success) Project grant. Costs must be directly related to the development and operation of the proposed project. Applicants are strongly encouraged to build upon existing resources, including use of existing facilities to support the submitted application.

*Other Allowable Costs:*

- Administrative costs are limited to no more than 5%.
- Personnel costs and fringe benefits
- Equipment required for the operation of the new/expanded project
- Staff Travel
- Project supplies
- Consultation
- Other costs that are allowable, reasonable, approved by OVR, and required for the operation of the project

### 2. DISALLOWABLE COSTS

- Building construction
- Renovations or alterations
- Indirect costs – costs that have been incurred for common or joint objectives and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective
- Vehicles
- Customer wages or stipends
- Entertainment expenses
- Finance charges, fines or interest charges
- Projects supported during the fiscal year with other state or federal funds.

- Any costs associated with the development of this proposal

## **SECTION 7 – AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **A. *AWARD NOTICES***

Each applicant shall be notified in writing within 30 days after the decision is made of the approval or disapproval of the submitted application. The selected applicant will be notified that the effective date of the grant is the date all necessary commonwealth signatures have been obtained. The commonwealth will not reimburse the grantee for any costs incurred prior to the effective date of the grant agreement.

### **B. *REPORTING***

The recipient must comply with all commonwealth reporting requirements – including reporting information no later than 15 days after the end of each calendar quarter, or more frequently as directed by the commonwealth. Recipient agrees that in consideration of receipt of the grant funds, it will comply with all of the terms, conditions, requirements and limitations set forth in the Grant Agreement. Additional information on fiscal and programmatic information will be supplied to the applicant.

### **C. *QUALITY ASSURANCE AND MONITORING***

Recipients must comply with all commonwealth quality assurance and monitoring activities that ensure transparency, accountability, and the reduction of fraud, waste, error and abuse.

## **SECTION 8 – QUESTIONS/AGENCY CONTACTS**

### **A. *QUESTIONS***

A Pre-proposal Conference **will not** be scheduled. Therefore, questions regarding the content of this AGA must be submitted to Dana Baccanti at the following email address: [dbaccanti@pa.gov](mailto:dbaccanti@pa.gov).

The commonwealth will attempt to respond to a question within three (3) business days, and post the answer on the OVR web site listed below, unless a similar question and answer have already been posted.

Questions and comments concerning this AGA shall be submitted no later than five (5) calendar days prior to the application due date. Questions submitted after that date will not allow the commonwealth sufficient time to respond.

You can view all questions and answers on the following web site:

<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/publications/17374>