



# Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) Grant Technical Assistance Workshop

May 19, 2023

**Sea Talantis**  
*Director of Human Infrastructure,  
Delta Regional Authority*

# AGENDA

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1. 2023 WORC Grant Program Overview
2. Developing a Competitive Proposal
3. Break
4. Lightning Talks with WORC Grantees

# Acronym Definitions

**DOL:**

*U.S. Department of Labor*

**ETA:**

*Employment and Training Administration*

**FOA:**

*Funding Opportunity Announcement*

**WORC:**

*Workforce Opportunity for Rural  
Communities Grant Program*

# OVERVIEW

## Partners

- U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Northern Border Regional Commission

## Funding Opportunities

- Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) Grant Program - **\$44.2 million**
  - Award Ceiling: \$1.5M
  - Award Floor: \$150k

## Technical Assistance

- One (1) Regional Workshop | Alexandria, LA
- One (1) Webinar
- Post-award technical assistance for successful applicants



# Getting Started

- Visit [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) to download materials
- Review FOA and mandatory attachments
- Check [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) registration

# Application Submission

## DATE, TIME, AND PROCESS

Applications must be submitted via grants.gov by **June 13, 2023**, no later than **10:59pm Central Time**.

DOL will **not** accept hardcopy submissions.

# Funding Opportunity Description

## PROGRAM PURPOSE

*“...to create economic mobility, **address historic inequities for marginalized communities** of color and other underserved and underrepresented communities, and **produce high-quality employment for workers** who reside in the Appalachia, Delta & Northern Border regions, **enabling them to remain and thrive** in these communities.”*

# Funding Opportunity Description

## PROGRAM PURPOSE (cont'd)

*“The WORC Initiative is designed to address persistent economic distress by **aligning community-led economic and workforce development strategies and activities** to ensure long-term economic resilience and **enable dislocated and other workers in the regions to succeed in current and future job opportunities.**”*



## Award Information

- Total Program Funding: Approx. **\$44.2 million**
- Award Ceiling: **\$1.5 million**
- Award Floor: **\$150,000**
- Funding will be provided in the form of a grant

# Award Information

## PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

- No more than 36 months
- Anticipated start date: October 1, 2023
- This period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities

# Eligibility Information

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- State/County/City/Township Government
- State or Local Workforce Development Boards
- Regional Development Organizations (ex. LDD)
- Special District Governments
- Institution of Higher Education (Public/Private)
- Non-profits (with/without 501c3 status)
- Independent School District
- State or local education agencies

# Eligibility Information

## **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS, *continued***

- Public/Indian Housing Authorities
- Labor organizations or labor-management partnerships
- Hispanic-serving institutions
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities
- Indian/Native American Tribal Government or Designated Organization

# Eligibility Information

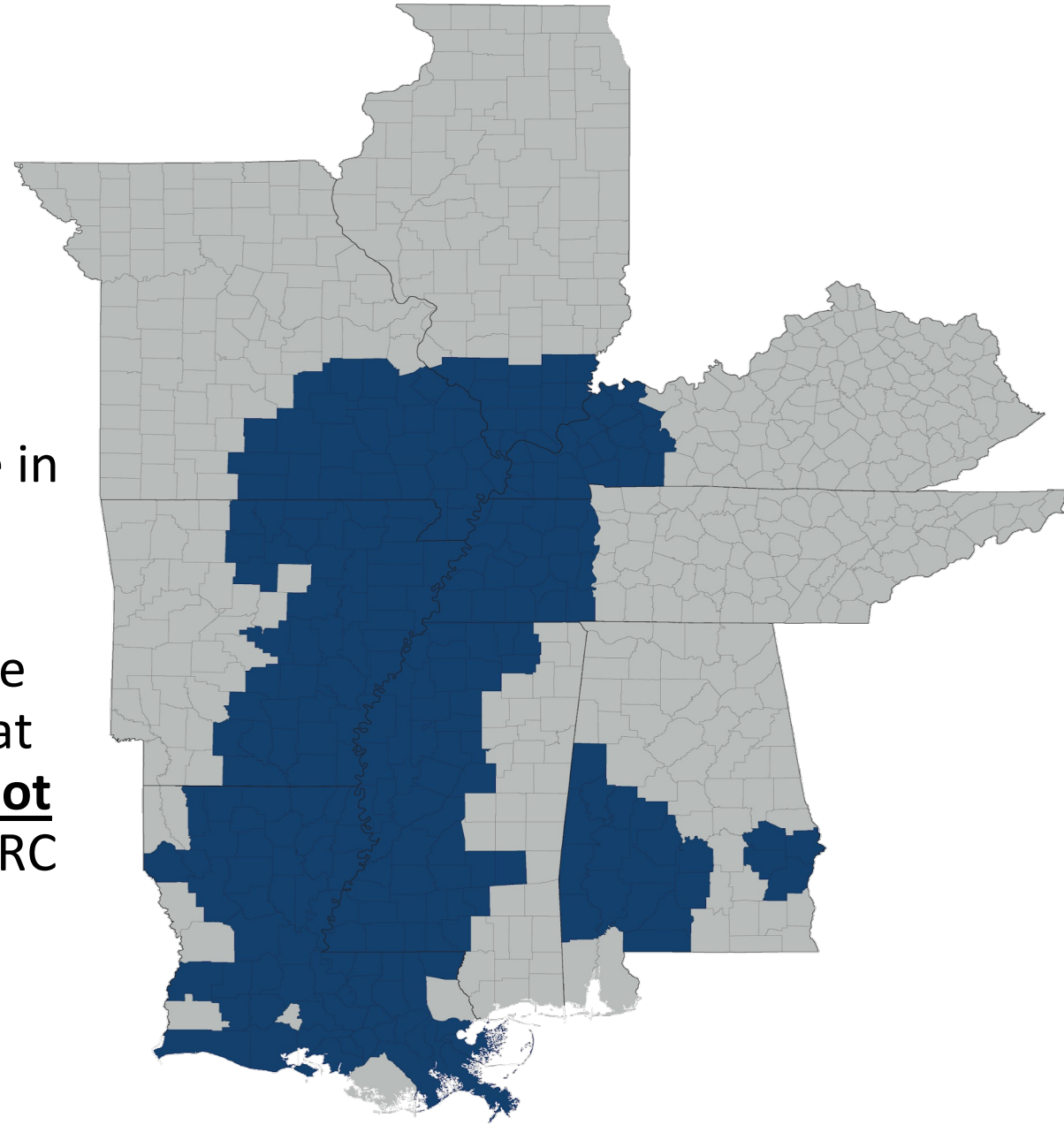
## REQUIRED COLLABORATION OR ENGAGEMENT

- At least two (2) employer/industry partners
- One (1) public workforce system partner
  - State or Local Workforce Development Board
  - American Job Center operator or partner program
  - Other training provider
- One (1) community-based organization

*Documentation must be provided as evidence if applicant entity represents the latter two partners described above.*

# Eligibility Information

- Applicants **must** demonstrate that they are serving eligible participants who live in the **DRA/ARC/NBRC regions**.
- Applicants may train for jobs outside DRA/ARC/NBRC region (including remote work), but **must** clearly demonstrate that employment in these occupations **will not** require relocation outside of the DRA/ARC region.



# Eligibility Information

## APPLICATION SCREENING CRITERIA

- Submission deadline
- Applicant eligibility
- Application documents are saved in specified formats
- SAM Registration is current and is reflected in the SF-424
- SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance
- SF-424 includes federal funds request between \$150k and \$1.5M
- SF-424 includes DRA, ARC or NBRC regional designation
- SF-424 includes Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) for the applicant
- SF-424A Budget Information Form
- Budget Narrative
- Project Narrative

# Eligibility Information

## COST SHARING AND LEVERAGED RESOURCES

- WORC does not require cost sharing or matching funds.
- It is *encouraged* for projects to leverage resources (i.e. cash or in-kind) with partners and other stakeholders.
- Resources contributed to the project beyond funds provided by DOL are considered leveraged resources.



# Eligibility Information

## NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS

- Only one application from each organization will be considered for funding.
- Applicant organizations can be included as a partner on other applications.

# Eligibility Information

## ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

- **New Entrants**: Individuals who have never worked before or have been out of the workforce long enough time to make it as if they are entering the workforce for the first time.
- **Dislocated Workers**: Individuals who were terminated or laid-off or have received a notice of termination or lay-off from employment; or those who were self-employed but now unemployed (WIOA sec. 3(15)).
- **Incumbent Workers**: Individuals who are currently employed and need training to secure full-time employment, advance in their careers, or retain their current positions.

# Eligibility Information

## ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Training and Other Employment-Related Activities
- Supportive Services for Grant Participants
- Employer Services
- Strategic Planning for Economic Transformation
- Purchasing Equipment and Making Renovations (**Requires Prior Approval**)

# Eligibility Activities

## *Training and Other Employment-Related Activities*

- Work-based learning such as Registered Apprenticeships, customized training programs, incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, internships, or other work experiences.
- In-depth participant assessment and evaluation to identify employment barriers and development of individual employment plans.
- Career planning, job coaching, and job matching services.
- Employability skills training.

# Eligibility Activities

## *Supportive Services for Grant Participants*

- Activities or resources enabling individuals to participate in career and training services or to gain or retain employment.
- Grant recipients may offer support services to participants directly or through partner organizations.

# Eligibility Activities

## *Employer Services*

- Emphasis on small and medium-sized employers.
- May focus on individual employer or cluster/sector-based approach.
- Applicants should consider what other role(s) industry partners can play in the project.

# Eligibility Activities

## *Strategic Planning for Economic Transformation*

- Convening community partners and leaders
- Developing a vision
- Conducting data analysis
- Aligning education, economic, and workforce development strategies with evidence and opportunities
- Identifying resources and sustainability

**No more than \$100,000 for planning activities!**

# Eligibility Information

## *Purchasing Equipment and Making Renovations*

- Capital expenditures, such as the purchase of equipment or capital improvements
  - Improvements to buildings or equipment
  - Minor alterations, renovations, or rearrangements of buildings/facilities/equipment
- Leasing space for training, education, and related activities

### **Important:**

- ***New construction or property acquisition is not an allowable activity!***
- ***After award, requires prior approval from Grant Officer!***
- ***Must not exceed 50% of the project budget!***



# Content and Form of Application Submission

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1. SF-424 “Application for Federal Assistance;”
2. Project Budget, composed of the SF-424A and Budget Narrative;
3. Project Narrative; and
4. Attachments to the Project Narrative.

*You must ensure the funding amount requested is consistent throughout all components of the application submission.*

# Project Narrative – Scoring Criteria

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- a. Abstract – *2 points*
- b. Statement of Need – *20 Points*
- c. Project Results and Achieving Purpose of WORC – *30 Points*
- d. Project Design – *40 Points*
- e. Organizational Capacity and Experience for Project Success – *6 Points*
- f. Budget and Budget Narrative – *2 Points*

*TOTAL POINTS = 100*

# Project Narrative

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- Must demonstrate your capability to implement the grant project in accordance with the provisions of the FOA.
- Provides a comprehensive framework and description of all aspects of the proposed project.
- Must be succinct, self-explanatory, and well-organized so reviewers can understand the proposed project.
- LIMITED TO 20 DOUBLE-SPACED, SINGLE-SIDED 8.5 X 11 INCH PAGES WITH TIMES NEW ROMAN SIZE 12-POINT TEXT FONT AND 1-INCH MARGINS.

# Abstract

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- 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.
- Must include the following:

Applicant's name	Funding level requested
Project title	List of counties in the project area, incl. a map
Brief summary of the proposed project	Intended beneficiaries/eligible participants to be trained
WORC region (select one only: Appalachian, Delta region, or Northern Border)	Brief summary of subrecipients and their activities (if applicable)
Total number of participants project to be enrolled into training AND anticipated to obtain new or enhanced employment	

# Statement of Need

20 Points



Project Service Area, Challenges and Opportunities – 8 Points



Target Population – 6 Points



Description of Workforce Needs – 6 Points

# Project Service Area, Challenges and Opportunities

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- Must describe the communities covered by the project service area, including the barriers faced by the residents, businesses, and communities in addressing workforce challenges and achieving sustained economic success.
- Applicants must additionally describe the service area's current challenges with regard to employment including low wages, educational attainment, workforce demographics, and other factors that the proposed project will address to help develop or sustain good jobs.
- Describe the components, strategies, priorities or other elements of the applicable federal and state strategic plans for the WORC region (Appalachian, Delta, or Northern Border) for which the applicant is applying, with which the proposed project will align, and a description of how those existing plans and other local strategies will support or contribute to the success of the WORC grant.
- Describe the applicant's definition of good jobs that the proposed project will use as an employment goal for participants, and will communicate to participants and partner employers.

# Target Population

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To receive full points, applicants must:

- Identify and define the population(s) of eligible participants intended to be served through the grant, including why this population was selected;
- Identify and define historically-marginalized individuals or communities, in alignment with the equity Core Principle of the WORC Initiative, to be prioritized for participation in grant activities and outcomes, describe why these individuals or communities were chosen as a focus of the project, and demonstrate how serving this population will address inequalities or other barriers resulting from historic marginalization or exclusion;
- Describe the planned approaches to successfully recruiting individuals from these populations to enroll in grant activities; and
- Identify the specific inequalities and barriers these populations face and how serving this population through a WORC-supported project will enable them to achieve positive outcomes.

## Description of Workforce Needs

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- Applicants must include relevant information on the current or expected workforce needs of employers or industries that the proposed project activities will be designed to address.
- Describe the anticipated consequences of not addressing the identified workforce needs.



## Project Results and Achieving the Purpose of WORC - 30 Points



Expected Results – 10 Points



Achieving WORC Initiative Purpose – 20 Points

# Expected Results

Activities	Expected Results
Total participants obtaining new or enhanced employment (required result)	175 (job placements or incumbent workers entering a career pathway in jobs paying above average for the area)
1 apprenticeship program developed	100 workers/trainees awarded an industry-recognized credential or obtained increased wages after training
5 employer trainings on substance use disorder conducted	20 employers hired individuals recovering from substance abuse
Outreach to companies to support career pathways to promote opportunities for increased job quality.	5 employer partners implement career pathways programs that include wage increases.

# Achieving the Purpose of WORC

Applicants must demonstrate that their proposed project will produce results and benefits that will support or achieve the purpose of the WORC Initiative. Applicants may include specific results along with other information to make this demonstration.

To receive full points for this portion of the application, applicants must demonstrate how the successful completion of the proposed grant project will support each of the three Core Principles of the WORC FOA, and clearly connect the expected results to the issues raised in the Statement of Need.

Reviewers will score these elements on clarity, alignment, consistency, and that the proposed results are logical based on the rest of the application.

# Project Design

40 Points



Project Description - 30 Points



Project Partnerships - 10 Points

# Project Description

## 30 Points

- Describe project activities and implementation
  - Including milestones and timeline.
- Describe how the planned activities address:
  - Needs and challenges described in the Statement of Need,
  - The proposed service area's workforce demand/needs and overcome challenges to serve the target population.
- Project activities → Budget narrative
- Explain strategies to keep plan on track to achieve expected results.
- Explain how the project will achieve each of the Core Principles.



# Project Partners

## 10 Points

### Partnerships Required:

- At least two (2) employers/industry reps;
- At least one (1) State or Local Workforce Dvlpmnt Board, American Job Center; and
- At least one community organization.

For each partner entity, the following info must be included in the project narrative:

- Name of each partner (incl. location)
- Partner's role
- Committed resources and alignment and long-term sustainability of the project
- Supporting documentation (*required!*)
  - Letter of need/engagement



# Organizational Capacity and Experience for Project Success

6 Points

Must describe how the applicant (incl. program team, partners, and others) has the capacity and expertise to achieve successful outcomes for their proposed project.

## **Attachments:**

- Past Performance Documentation *(if applicable)*
- Financial System Risk Assessment Information *(requested)*
- Work experience (i.e. resume) or job descriptions *(required)*

# Budget and Budget Narrative

2 Points

## Budget

- SF-424  
Application for Federal Assistance
- SF-424A  
Budget Information Form

## Budget Narrative

- Personnel
- Fringe Benefits
- Travel
- Equipment (*\$5,000 +*)
- Supplies (*less than \$5,000*)
- Contractual
- Construction\*\*\*
- Other
- Indirect Costs



# Required Attachments to Project Narrative

## Abstract (*two pages*)

To receive full points the abstract must contain:

- Applicant's name;
- WORC region (only one);
- Project title;
- Summary, including scope of project and proposed outcomes;
- Participant information (enrollment, etc.);
- Funding level requested;
- List of counties/parishes served and map;
- Intended participants to be trained;
- Subrecipients.

# Requested Attachments to Project Narrative

- Evidence of Required Partnerships
- Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- Financial System Assessment Information
- Project Timeline
- Key Staff Experience or Job Descriptions

# Application Review

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- You MUST include all information identified in the table in Section III.C.1—failure to include any item in the table will result in your application not being reviewed.
- Applications are reviewed by a panel and scored individually against the elements in the FOA in section V.A.
- The total number of grants awarded will depend upon the number of competitive applications and the amounts requested (approx. 30 grants total).

# Common Mistakes

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- Not following the FOA requirements and scoring criteria.
- An unclear and unconcise project narrative and description.
- Using form letters from project and employment partners.
- Not aligning the project narrative/description to the budget.
- Failure to include key personnel resumes and job descriptions.
- Not naming attachments with clear and direct file names.

# Agency Contacts

## *Questions about the FOA?*

Sabrina Guerrier, Grants Management  
Specialist

[DOL-ETA-DWG@dol.gov](mailto:DOL-ETA-DWG@dol.gov)

*(reference: FOA-ETA-23-07)*

## *Questions about projects?*

[workforce@dra.gov](mailto:workforce@dra.gov)

[stalantis@dra.gov](mailto:stalantis@dra.gov)