



2026 Delta Workforce Grant Program: Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) Executive Summary

FOA Release Date: March 17, 2026

Application Due Date: May 15, 2026

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) is publishing this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) to solicit applications for grants under the 2026 Delta Workforce Grant Program (DWP).

The goal of the program is to target federal resources toward communities in the Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt regions particularly hard hit by industrial downsizing, business closures, and job losses. Additionally, DRA also prioritizes projects that impact distressed/isolated counties/parishes.

As provided in Goal 2, Nurture Local Workforce Ecosystems, of the [DRA Regional Development Plan IV](#), DRA will improve networks of agencies, organizations, businesses and educational institutions providing workforce development opportunities. It will promote access to services, funding and programs that enable career stability. DWP supports projects and initiatives that create a more vibrant economic future for the Delta region by expanding opportunities to recruit, train, and retain a skilled local workforce, aligning workforce and economic development strategies, creating sustainable talent pipelines, establishing or enhancing locally/regionally significant sector-based partnerships, and supporting enhanced workforce productivity through investments in innovative programming or services.

This FOA is organized to provide a general overview of the grant program as well as the specific requirements needed to complete an application. Additional background information on DWP is available at <https://www.dra.gov/workforce>.

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A. DRA OVERVIEW

The DRA was established in 2000 as a formal framework for joint federal-state collaboration to promote and encourage the economic development of the lower Mississippi River and Alabama Black Belt regions. To fulfill this purpose, DRA invests in projects supporting transportation infrastructure, basic public infrastructure, workforce training and business development. DRA works to create jobs, build communities, and improve the lives of those that reside in the region. DRA's region encompasses 255 counties and parishes in parts of Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee.

(An interactive map of the DRA region can be found [here](#).)

B. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Program Overview

The Delta Workforce Grant Program (DWP) is an initiative targeting federal resources toward communities in the lower Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt regions particularly hard hit by industrial downsizing, business closures and job losses.

Additionally, DRA also prioritizes projects that impact distressed/isolated counties/parishes. DWP supports projects and initiatives that create a more vibrant economic future for the Delta region by expanding job training and reemployment opportunities, aligning workforce and economic development strategies, creating sustainable talent pipelines, establishing or enhancing locally/regionally significant public- private partnerships, and supporting enhanced workforce productivity through investments in innovative programming or services.

To support career development, applicants are encouraged to pursue Sector Partnerships. A Sector Partnership is partnership of businesses from the same industry who join with other strategic partners to train and place workers into jobs that the businesses need filled and intend to fill through the partnership. The strategic partners should include education and training institutions, such as community and technical colleges, and can also be comprised of public, private, and nonprofit organizations. A sector partnership is focused on one specific industry and one or more specific roles within that industry. The lead entity of a sector partnership serves as an intermediary across all the partners in the sector partnership. Sector partnerships are effective because: they are carefully built to include necessary partners before workforce solutions are designed; they cut across traditional economic development, workforce, education, and social services system silos; they are targeted to in-demand sectors with jobs; and they consider the economic realities of a regional or state-wide industry in assessing workforce demand and training needs.

This program is designed to support evidence-based projects that:

- Develop or enhance cross-system partnerships by aligning economic development, workforce training, education, and other strategies to advance local or regional priorities and initiatives,

- Deliver specific workforce services meeting identified local or regional needs, including the development or expansion of Registered Apprenticeship programs, on-the-job training models, and other work-based learning approaches, among others,
- Create or expand workforce training programs that are skills based and valued in the labor market,
- Develop recruiting and hiring practices, such as skills-based hiring, and educational practices, such as issuance of credit for prior learning, that leverage the talents of existing workers, and
- Support the acquisition or development of curriculum and/or equipment, ensuring the delivery of quality, innovative training and workforce services.

2. 2026 DWP Grants

The 2026 DWP competitive grant competition is administered as follows:

Cycle Opens: **March 17, 2026**

Application Deadline: **May 15, 2026**

All applications received by the deadline will be screened for eligibility. Applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be reviewed and scored. Applications not selected for funding during this cycle can be revised and resubmitted in future funding cycles, pending availability of federal funds.

Applicants are encouraged to contact DRA program staff for additional information about the 2026 DWP application submission requirements as well as for technical assistance in developing their applications. Technical questions about the FOA should be directed to workforce@dra.gov with the subject line: Delta Workforce Program FOA. Include the contact's name, applicant organization, and phone number in the body of your email.

In addition to the requirements described in this FOA and online at <https://www.dra.gov/workforce>, all applications must also meet the general requirements for DRA funding (see Appendix I) and be consistent with [DRA's Regional Development Plan IV \(RDP4\)](#).

3. Background on DRA's Strategic Investment Goals

As described in the agency's strategic plan, [Navigating the Currents of Opportunity: DRA Regional Development Plan IV](#), DRA has identified four investment goals to advance its vision and mission and to guide its programs and investments. These goals reflect a consensus among local, state, and federal partners on the most critical investment opportunities in the DRA region. While each goal provides a tailored approach to advancing the Delta economy, these avenues are often complementary and cumulative, with progress in one goal area leading to advancement in another.

- **Goal 1 – Invest in Public Infrastructure:** Expand and invest in the resiliency of the region’s public infrastructure to improve residents’ quality of life and increase economic opportunity. This includes utilities (e.g., water, sewer), digital communications (e.g., broadband, cellular), and transportation (e.g., road improvements, public transit).
- **Goal 2 – Nurture Local Workforce Ecosystems:** Improve networks of agencies, organizations, businesses, and educational institutions providing workforce development opportunities. It will promote access to services, funding, and programs that enable career stability.
- **Goal 3 – Promote Business Growth and Entrepreneurship:** Strengthen the competitiveness of the region’s employers and attract new employers to the region. Support the long-term growth of micro and small businesses, especially those that promote local industries.
- **Goal 4 – Support Community Placemaking and Capacity-Building:** Expand efforts to enhance local placemaking, quality of life, and community capacity. This includes enabling community connectedness, increased efficacy, and leadership development.

4. 2026 DWP Priorities and Objectives

DWP Investment Priorities

The 2026 DWP Investment Priorities build upon DRA’s Strategic Investment Goal #2, Nurture Local Workforce Ecosystems and are summarized and described below.

Ultimately, the focus of DWP is on investments that are local or regional, industry-driven, and transformational to help revitalize Delta communities and spur economic development in DRA’s eight-state region. In general, DRA’s Investment Priorities are meant to advance worker-centered sector strategies. Within this broad focus, DRA is targeting investments focused on four key priorities:

- **Supporting Industry-Led Workforce Training**
- **Building Collaborative Talent Pipelines**
- **Supporting or Enhancing Industry Clusters**
- **Accelerating Local or Regional Economic Development**

Applications should consider the following guidance:

Support Industry-Led, Worker-Centered Workforce Training

Applicants should engage local or regional industry partners to understand their ongoing and evolving needs to develop or expand workforce training programs that build pathways to good-paying jobs that are tailored to the unique needs of these communities or that address the local workforce needs and places workers in jobs, thereby supporting regional economies with the skilled workforce necessary to compete in the 21st Century.

Preference will be given to applicants that, in accordance with E.O. 14278 and [America's Talent Strategy](#), demonstrate the ability to assist businesses in training, hiring, and retaining a skilled workforce, leveraging the full range of educational and community partners towards this goal.

Building Collaborative Talent Pipelines

Applicants should develop collaborative partnerships between K-12 education systems, institutions of higher education, workforce training partners, and local or regional industry partners to develop training programs that place Americans into high-quality infrastructure jobs and support equitable workforce development in electric vehicle production, skilled construction trades, telecommunications, and logistics in order to help rebuild infrastructure and achieve steady, stable growth in communities throughout the DRA region.

Supporting or Enhancing Industry Clusters

Applicants should assess industry clusters – groups of interrelated industries that drive wealth and job creation in a particular area – that exist in their region to create or expand workforce training programs that address the skill demand needs for high-growth industries and strengthen the economic competitiveness of the region.

Accelerating Local or Regional Economic Development

Applicants should assess existing data and studies informing local and regional economic development priorities to ensure the proposed project advances local or regional economies and that may support initiatives with a direct connection to economic development. To better ensure alignment with local and regional economic development priorities and supports initiatives applicants should review local Master Plans, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS), and regional workforce development plans.

2026 DWP Objectives

The overall objective of DWP is to invest in evidence-based workforce development projects that produce one, or any combination, of the following outcomes:

- **Job Placement & Higher Wages** – Provide workforce development services to dislocated workers, incumbent workers, or new entrants to the workforce, ultimately leading to gainful employment in high-growth industries or sectors.
- **Career Development** – Provide skills training and workforce development services in high-quality training efforts, like Registered Apprenticeships, that result in industry-recognized credentials or certifications for high-quality, in-demand careers.
- **Strategic Investment** – Strengthen industry clusters or sectors and advance local and regional economies, especially in economically distressed counties/parishes (defined by DRA) or persistent poverty counties/parishes (defined by the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service](#)).

C. AWARD INFORMATION

1. Availability of Funding

2026 DWP grant funds are available as follows:

DRA is making approximately \$4 million available for DWP project grants.

DRA expects to make individual grant awards ranging between \$50,000 - \$300,000 for each project it awards within the DRA region. Specific awards will vary by project type at the discretion of DRA. Applications with funding requests above the grant maximum of \$300,000 will not be considered.

DRA reserves the right to negotiate the budget costs with the applications that have been selected to receive awards, which may include requesting that the applicant remove or adjust certain proposed costs.

Projects must serve and benefit a portion of the Delta region as defined by the Delta Regional Authority Act of 2000, as amended. The Delta region includes certain counties and parishes in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi and Tennessee. If projects extend beyond the DRA region, only that portion within the region is eligible for DRA funding. A map of the Delta region is available online at <https://dra.gov/about-dra/map-room/>.

DRA will not be held responsible for proposal or application preparation costs. Publication of this FOA does not obligate DRA to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement nor to obligate all or any part of available funds.

2. Period of Performance

The period of performance for awards made under this program will be no more than 24 months, with an anticipated start date of August/September 2026 for all grantees.

D. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include:

- Local governments, including counties, parishes, cities, towns, villages, including special purpose districts or consortia engaged in economic and/or community development activities
- Public or private nonprofit organizations or associations
- Regional development organizations
- Economic development organizations

- Workforce investment boards
- Unions/labor organizations
- Community-based organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Institutions of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education
- Trade or Technical schools
- Federally Recognized Tribes

In addition, the DRA has additional geographic eligibility requirements. To be eligible for DRA funding, applicants must propose to serve and benefit a portion of the Delta region as defined by the Delta Regional Authority Act of 2000, as amended. A map and a description of the DRA region can be found online at: <https://dra.gov/about-dra/map-room/>.

2. Eligible Participants

Applicants must propose a project that serves individuals in one or more of the following targeted categories:

- New Entrants to the Workforce: This term refers to those who have never worked before or who have been out of the workforce long enough that it appears they are entering the workforce for the first time. For example, this may include, but is not limited to, long-term unemployed and formerly incarcerated individuals. Also eligible, consistent with federal and state wage and employment laws, are youth who are enrolled in high school and are currently or will be eligible to be employed before or within six months after the end of the grant lifecycle and youth who have dropped out of school and are seeking their first full-time job.
- Dislocated Workers: This term refers to individuals who were terminated or laid off; who have received a notice of termination or layoff from employment; or who were self-employed but are now unemployed.
- Incumbent Workers: This term refers to individuals who are employed but need employment and training services to secure full-time employment, advance in their careers, or retain their current occupations. This includes workers who are paid low and medium wages who would benefit from upgrading their skills to retain employment or advance in their careers, and workers who are currently working part-time.

Within these categories, applicants may serve a wide range of individuals, including high school or post-secondary students, individuals requiring adult basic and other education programs, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and individuals impacted by substance-use disorder.

3. Eligible Activities

Applicants may propose projects that include any of the following types of evidence-based activities. These activities should be supported by research and be proven to improve workforce development outcomes, helping applicants better align their projects with the DRA's strategic workforce goals:

i. Training and Work-Based Learning Models

Workforce training strategies must align with the target community's or region's strategic plan or economic development priorities. These strategies are based on evidence showing they effectively improve employability, job retention, and workforce competitiveness. Proven models include:

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) – According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Registered Apprenticeship is a proven model of job preparation that combines paid on-the-job training with related instruction to progressively increase workers' skill levels and wages. Graduates of these programs receive nationally recognized, portable credentials, and their training may be applied toward further post-secondary education. All Registered Apprenticeship programs consist of five core components – direct business involvement, on-the-job training, related instruction, rewards for skill gains, and a national occupational credential. Eligible activities include but are not limited to on-the-job training, job-related curriculum development, training providers, training facility retrofitting, and job training-related equipment and materials.

- **Work-based learning:** Evidence-based programs such as registered apprenticeships, customized training programs, incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, internships, externships, job shadowing, mentorship programs, and other work experiences have demonstrated success in providing participants with the hands-on skills necessary to succeed in high-demand sectors. Studies show that these programs improve employment outcomes by linking real-world experience with structured training.
- **Traditional classroom or virtual training:** Online learning modules, hybrid training programs, certification courses, skills development, sector-based training initiatives, and career readiness programs are proven to close skills gaps and enhance workforce readiness. Research indicates that these training approaches lead to higher reemployment rates and provide participants with the qualifications required to secure sustainable employment in growing industries.

Training costs must be fully covered under the project (including via leveraged resources where applicable) and may not result in debt (including student loan debt) to the participant. Studies have shown that reducing financial barriers to training improves program access and completion rates, especially for economically disadvantaged individuals.

ii. Other Employment-Related Activities

Employment-related activities are essential to helping participants achieve long-term workforce success. Evidence-based practices in this area include:

- **In-depth participant assessment and evaluation:** Research supports the use of individualized assessments to identify employment barriers and develop tailored employment plans that lead to higher rates of program completion and job placement.
- **Career planning:** The use of labor market information to guide participants toward training and careers that offer family-sustaining wages and benefits has been shown to result in better career outcomes. Job coaching and job matching services are also effective in ensuring participants are well-prepared for available opportunities.

iii. Innovative Service Delivery Strategies

Innovative service delivery strategies that address workforce challenges are encouraged. Based on evidence, strategies that involve collaboration between workers, employers and training providers have demonstrated success in addressing regional workforce needs. These strategies may include:

- **Online and hybrid learning:** Technology-enabled learning, such as modular content delivery and accelerated course offerings, increases access to education and training, especially in rural areas. Research highlights the effectiveness of these models in expanding educational opportunities and improving workforce outcomes.
- **Emerging technologies:** Interactive simulations, personalized instruction, AI, and digital learning tools offer significant potential to enhance the quality of training and improve job-readiness. Evidence indicates that these innovations increase learning engagement and success rates, especially in technology-driven fields.

iv. Participant Supportive Services

Customized supportive services are necessary to help participants complete training and secure employment. Evidence supports the effectiveness of the following services in removing barriers to workforce participation:

- **Transportation, childcare and housing assistance:** These services have been shown to significantly improve participation and retention in workforce development programs, particularly for low-income individuals.
- **Provision of stipends and incentives:** Offering financial incentives have been proven to increase engagement and reduce dropout rates, helping participants stay on track to complete their training and secure employment.

v. Employer Supportive Services

Evidence shows that partnerships with employers are critical to the success of workforce development programs. Applicants must demonstrate collaboration with at

least one employer, with a focus on supporting high-quality jobs that offer family-sustaining wages and opportunities for advancement. Proven employer support strategies include prioritizing industry needs by aligning workforce programs with private sector training investments and evolving skill demands and by matching education and training programs to career pathways by identifying credentials that are skills based and valued by employers in the labor market.

vi. Purchasing Equipment and Making Renovations

Capital improvements and the purchase of equipment to support workforce development initiatives are allowable when they address proven employment and training needs and are consistent with 2 CFR 200 requirements. Research supports the effectiveness of creating training facilities that provide hands-on experience, particularly in high-demand technical fields such as HVAC, health care, and manufacturing. Renovations that modernize training environments have also been shown to improve program outcomes. Prohibited activities with regard to capital expenditures include new construction or property acquisition.

Applicants should not duplicate existing state or federal programs. The DRA regularly communicates and collaborates with other agencies and state partners before extending an offer. This is done in order to ensure non-duplication and overlap of resources. Any identified objections may result in the rejection of the applicant if not resolved.

4. Documentation of Economic Impact

Eligible DWP projects must be located within the Delta region as defined by the Delta Regional Authority Act of 2000, as amended, and be targeted toward communities or regions that have been recently impacted or can reasonably demonstrate that they will be impacted in the near future by the loss of employment in a locally- or regionally-significant industry sector or that can identify opportunities for improving the competitiveness of a locally- or regionally-significant industry sector through expanded or enhanced workforce training and skills development.

Complete applications for a DWP grant must provide appropriate third-party economic and demographic statistics for the applicable community or region to document the extent to which contractions in a regionally significant industry sector have negatively impacted the community or region or identify evidence-based opportunities to support existing business(es) or industry clusters. The applicant will need to cite the data source used to demonstrate impact. Economic indicators, labor market analyses, official announcements made by local and regional industries and firms, demographic or industry data, and peer- reviewed scholarly articles and publications are strong sources of data to demonstrate these impacts. Applicants are encouraged to provide data (median household income, unemployment rate, etc.) from federal sources that may include, but are not limited to, the following sources:

- Department of Agriculture
 - Economic Research Service (ERS): <https://www.ers.usda.gov>

- U.S. Department of Commerce
 - Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA): <http://www.bea.gov/>
 - U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS): <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>
 - U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA): <https://www.eda.gov>
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS): <http://www.bls.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue Service (IRS): <https://www.irs.gov/>
- Federal Reserve Bank
 - St. Louis: <https://www.stlouisfed.org/>
 - Atlanta: <https://www.frbatlanta.org/>
 - Dallas: <https://www.dallasfed.org/>

5. Cost Sharing or Matching

Applicants must demonstrate at least a 10% cost share (cash and/or in-kind) matched by non-DRA sources¹. Matching sources may be non-federal, other federal or a combination of sources. Applicants located in and/or serving distressed counties/parishes do not need to demonstrate a match of any kind. In general, applications that demonstrate leveraged resources from private entities/employers are encouraged but will not receive additional points for their application.

6. Project Team Composition

In accordance with DWP Investment Priorities, applicants are expected to develop new or strengthen existing partnerships of community and economic development stakeholders to serve as members of a project team, which may include partners that are not eligible for DRA funding but are integral to a proposed project's success. While prior experience in managing federal grants is not required, applicants must demonstrate that they have the financial systems in place to manage these funds responsibly and effectively.

For program eligibility, at least one member of the project team must be located in the DRA region; however, it is not a requirement for each member of a project team to be located in the DRA region. Proposed projects must accrue benefits to communities located within the DRA region. Any eligible member of a project team may serve as the applicant and recipient of a DWP grant award.

Overall project team membership can be comprised of, but is not limited to, any type of organization listed as an Eligible Applicant in Section D.1 complemented by additional

¹ In general, DRA has the ability to accept other federal dollars as a matching contribution. However, some federal agencies and/or specific projects may have limitations on the use of other and/or total federal funding. Prospective applicants are encouraged to consult with DRA program staff prior to submission if planning to use other federal funds as a source to meet the matching funds requirement.

organizations such as:

- Industry and trade associations, local and regional businesses, and other representatives from the private sector,
- Economic development organizations,
- Local governments,
- Chambers of commerce,
- Planning organizations and development districts,
- Labor unions and labor-management,
- Registered Apprenticeship programs,
- State and local workforce organizations,
- Institutions of higher education, including (but not limited to) community colleges and other job training and adult education providers, and
- Nonprofit and community-based organizations that provide supportive services.

E. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. How to Apply

The electronic DWP application will be available on March 17, 2026. Applicants may access the application electronically at: <https://dra.communityforce.com/Login.aspx>.

2. Content and Form of the DWP Application

DWP is administered in accordance with DRA’s standard application policies and procedures. Please use the checklist below as a guide when preparing your application to ensure your submission has met all of the screening criteria and all of the required items to be included with your application. If your application does not meet all of the screening criteria, it will not move forward through the merit review process.

Application Requirement	Instructions	Complete?
The deadline submission requirement is met.	Page 12	
The applicant eligibility requirements are met.	Page 5-6	
The grant funds request is within the range of \$50,000 to \$300,000.	Page 5	
SAM.gov registration is current. <i>ALL applicant organizations must be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM) and provide DRA with the Unique Entity Id (UEI) number generated for free at SAM.gov.</i>		

At least one employer letter with the required information is included as an attachment.	Page 16	
Resumes of all project staff are included as attachments.	Page 17	
Your organization's IRS 501c3 certification letter, articles of incorporation, and/or parish/city-town charter is included as an attachment.		

Application narratives are limited to the applicant's responses to the questions within the electronic application. The type of information requested by DRA includes:

- Project name
- Project type (Always non-construction)
- Project summary/abstract
- Project length
- Project location, i.e., address
- Project description and rationale
- Local and regional collaboration tied to community workforce demand
- Anticipated project outcomes, work plan and project team
- Funding information

Supplemental resources and additional guidance about project application requirements are provided at <https://www.dra.gov/workforce>.

3. Submission Dates and Times

The submission dates and times for the 2026 DWP grant cycle are as follows:

Cycle Opens: **March 17, 2026**

Application Deadline: **May 15, 2026, 11:59 PM Central**

Potential applicants are encouraged to contact DRA program staff (workforce@dra.gov) or their [Local Development District](#) for additional information about the 2026 DWP application submission requirements as well as for technical assistance in completing applications.

In addition to the requirements described in this FOA and online at <https://www.dra.gov/workforce>, all applications must meet the general requirements for DRA funding and be consistent with DRA's strategic plan, [Navigating the Currents of Opportunity: DRA Regional Development Plan IV](#).

Technical Assistance

PRE-AWARD TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: At the pre-award workshop(s), applicants will have the opportunity to meet current grantees and learn more about the workforce development projects they are implementing in their communities and throughout the Delta region. The workshop focuses on best practices, practical challenges and solutions and witnesses first-hand the successful workforce training programs being implemented through DWP. Additionally, potential applicants will learn about information we may ask you to submit for possible funding, what DRA staff will be reviewing in your application prior to award (level of effort, indirect costs, etc.), and what will be required to ensure compliance with other federal and organizational requirements.

POST-AWARD TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: Successful applicants will receive technical assistance from DRA staff during the period of performance to ensure the development and long-term sustainability of their proposed projects. The purpose of the technical assistance is to provide grantees with tailored guidance focused on the implementation of their proposed workforce development programs and effective deployment of federal resources.

4. Application Submission Instructions

Project applications (with related attachments) must be submitted electronically via DRA's Grants Management System at <https://dra.communityforce.com/Login.aspx>.

Neither facsimile nor email transmissions of applications will be accepted.

After an application is submitted, it undergoes a validation process during which the application may be accepted or rejected due to errors, incomplete information, or eligibility disqualifications.

Be advised that it may take several days for the validation process to be completed and that the process may not begin until after the application deadline. Applications that do not include required information or contain critical errors will not be reviewed or evaluated for DWP funding.

F. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

DRA has instituted a technical review process to provide for an objective review of applications. The evaluation criteria are based on the program's priorities and objectives outlined in Section B: Program Description of this FOA.

Criteria	Points (maximum)
Project Description and Rationale	Section Total - 45
1. Description of Project Service Area and Community Needs	10
2. Project Design and Implementation	15
3. Description of Workforce Needs	10
4. Demonstration of Apprenticeship Training Model	5
5. Alignment with local, state, and federal economic development plans and/or workforce strategies	5
Local and Regional Collaboration Tied to Community Workforce Demand	Section Total - 20
1. Demonstration of Local and Regional Partnerships	10
2. Documentation of Employer Need	10
Anticipated Project Outcomes, Work Plan and Project Team	Section Total - 25
1. Anticipated Project Outcomes	10
2. Work Plan	10
3. Project Team and Relevant Experience	5
Funding Information	Section Total - 10
1. Funding Information	10

Project Description and Rationale – Subsection Total: 45 Points

The applicant must provide a comprehensive description of the project, including its necessity, design, and alignment with strategic goals and community needs. The proposal should demonstrate how the proposed activities support industry-driven workforce development in the DRA region, address specific workforce needs, and align with relevant strategic plans.

1. Description of Project Service Area and Community Needs (0-10 Points)

The applicant should describe the project service area, including the workforce challenges faced by the communities they seek to serve. Details should include population demographics, median household income, unemployment rate, and labor force participation rate, among other variables. Responses that describe their specific needs, while identifying target populations and the community benefits they hope to provide, will receive full points.

2. Project Design and Implementation (0-15 Points)

The applicant must outline a coherent and feasible approach for addressing identified community and workforce needs. This section should detail grant activities, including the specific actions to be taken, timelines for each phase of the grant, responsible personnel, and the resources required. For each proposed grant activity, the applicant will be scored upon their description of how the evidence-base supports that the service provided will lead to the desired outcomes. This description of the evidence-base should include both evidence cited in the Eligible Activities section above, as well as any relevant additional high-quality evidence that specifically supports the applicant's proposed activities. Further, areas such as recruitment strategies for any target populations must be clearly reflected. A comprehensive project design will often cover outreach methods, engagement tactics, and support tools for program participants. Often, describing the project design will also have elements reflected in the Work Plan, Project Timeline, Budget, and Budget Narrative.

3. Description of Workforce Needs (0-10 Points)

The applicant should describe the specific workforce needs of local and/or regional employers and the local workforce needs the project aims to address. This section should also explain how the project will benefit job seekers and workers in the service area. The applicant should outline strategies for ensuring access to training and employment opportunities, including supportive services such as childcare and transportation.

Finally, the applicant should describe how the project will engage employers and stakeholders to foster a more comprehensive workforce development environment. Finally, the applicant must demonstrate how their project activities will either take place in OR benefit at least one or more distressed or isolated parish/counties within the DRA footprint.

4. Demonstration of Apprenticeship Training Model (0-5 Points)

To receive full points, applicants must demonstrate how their project aligns with Pillar 1, Industry Driven Strategies, of the [America's Talent Strategy](#).

5. Alignment with local, state, and federal economic development plans and/or workforce strategies (0-5 Points)

Local, state, and federal economic development plans and/or workforce strategies are crucial for the successful implementation and long-term viability of workforce development projects. Alignment not only ensures the project's relevance but also enhances its potential for impact and long-term success. To gain full points, applicants must demonstrate how their project advances goals or addresses specific needs or actions outlined in [America's Talent Strategy](#) and across plans from entities such as Workforce Investment Boards, Regional Economic Development Organizations, and/or related organizations such as Chambers of Commerce.

Best Practices and Examples for Local Engagement Include:

- Provide specific examples of how the project aligns with Workforce Investment Board initiatives to close local workforce needs, enhance workforce readiness, and increase employment opportunities.
- Collaboration with Regional Economic Development Organizations to improve local workforce skills or enhance regional workforce strategies.
- Discuss how partnership with local education partners will address barriers to employment, such as lack of childcare and transportation.

Local and Regional Collaboration Tied to Community Workforce Demand – Subsection Total: 20 Points

The applicant must demonstrate local and/or regional collaboration with public and private partners and how they are working together collectively to build more skilled workers for local employers. To be considered for full points, the applicant must describe the role and responsibilities of each partner, identify any leveraged resources (i.e., cash, in-kind, other), and how they work with their collaborative partners to meet workforce demand and employer needs.

1. Demonstration of Local and Regional Partnerships (0-10 Points)

The applicant should demonstrate robust partnerships with local and regional entities representing the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. These partnerships should be collaborative efforts made to align the project with regional development plans, community needs, and the strategic goals of the involved partners. Emphasis should be placed on how these partnerships will enhance the project's capacity to address local challenges, leverage additional resources, and foster long-term community benefits.

To receive full points, the applicant must provide letters of support from engaged partners. Each letter should detail the extent of the partner's engagement, including their specific roles and responsibilities, contributions (financial or in-kind), and the anticipated impact of their involvement on the project's outcomes.

2. Documentation of Employer Need (0-10 Points)

The applicant must provide letters of engagement from at least one local or regional employer. These letters should detail the employer's workforce challenges, including the specific local workforce needs to be addressed by the project, and how the employer intends to participate in the proposed project (e.g., curriculum development, skills-based hiring, on-the-job training, Registered Apprenticeship). Letters should also highlight any collaborative efforts with the applicant and other local entities to ensure the project's success. **Applications that do not include at least one letter from an employer partner will not be considered.**

Anticipated Project Outcomes, Work Plan, and Project Team – Subsection Total: 25 Points

1. Anticipated Project Results (0-10 Points)

The applicant must provide specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable, and time-bound (SMART) project outcomes to be accomplished during the period of performance. These outcomes should be achievable within the project's timeframe and aligned with the broader goals and objectives of the project. The applicant should ensure that the proposed outcomes are both realistic and feasible given the project's scope, resources, and timeframe, providing specific metrics and clear evidence to support the feasibility of achieving these outcomes. The applicant must also provide evidence demonstrating how the proposed anticipated results were determined. For the purposes of this FOA, the term "results" is inclusive of both outcomes and outputs.

- For example, training 25 individuals in advanced manufacturing skills over a 24- month project period would demonstrate a realistic and attainable *output*.

Additionally, the applicant should detail how each proposed outcome directly addresses their identified needs and challenges, ensuring that the outcomes are specific and measurable, with a clear connection to the project's goals.

For instance, demonstrating an increase in employment or earnings among participants in the service area would illustrate a clear and relevant project outcome. A DRA-funded initiative might show success by helping residents secure higher-wage positions, improving overall employment rates, or raising average earnings within the target community.

2. Timeline and Work Plan (0-10 Points)

The applicant must provide a detailed work plan demonstrating the project tasks, deliverables, and the timeline for the tasks to be accomplished. To be considered for full points, the applicant must provide a detailed work plan and timeline for the entire period of performance, which may not exceed 24 months. The applicant should also address potential factors that could impact the project's success, including a contingency plan for issues that may arise.

3. Project Team and Relevant Experience (0-5 Points)

The applicant must identify key members of the project team and describe their roles and responsibilities as part of the project. To be considered for full points, the applicant must demonstrate that the project team has relevant experience and the organizational capacity to manage and implement the proposed project. This includes prior experience in or demonstrated capacity for managing complex federal grant requirements. Staff resumes and/or job descriptions (for positions the applicant is proposing to fill with grant funds) must be included as attachments to the application.

Funding Information – Subsection Total: 10 Points

1. Funding Information (0-10 Points)

The applicant must provide the total amount of funding being requested from DRA and whether or not they are required to meet the requirement of at least 10% of matching funds from non-DRA funding sources. Projects located in or serving distressed counties/parishes in DRA's region are NOT required to provide a match. DRA's Service Map [can be found here](#).

If applicable, the applicant must provide information about the source(s) of the matching funds, including a letter of commitment or other supporting documentation as evidence from each source. To be considered for full points, the applicant must provide a detailed categorical budget narrative for both DRA and non-DRA funds and describe how these costs align with the proposed project.

The Budget Narrative must provide a description of costs associated with each line item. The total of each cost category must add up to the entire grant amount. Provide clear and specific detail, including costs, for each item so that we are able to determine whether the costs are necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the project described in the project narrative. The Budget Narrative should also include a section describing any leveraged resources provided (as applicable) to support grant activities. Leveraged resources are all resources, both cash and in-kind, in excess of this award. Each category should include the total estimated cost for the period of performance. Use the following guidance for preparing the Budget Narrative:

Personnel: List all staff positions by title (including individuals hired by an employment contract) including the roles and responsibilities as they relate to this proposed project. For each position, give the annual salary, the percentage of time devoted to the project, and the amount of each position's salary funded by the grant.

Fringe Benefits: Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, FICA, retirement, etc.

Travel: For grantee staff only, specify the purpose, number of staff traveling, mileage, per diem, estimated number of in-state and out-of-state trips, and other estimated costs for each type of travel.

Equipment: Identify each item of equipment (including technology systems) you expect to purchase that has an estimated acquisition cost of \$10,000 or more per unit (or if your capitalization level is less than \$10,000, use your capitalization level) and a useful lifetime of more than one year (see 2 CFR Part 200.1 for the definition of Equipment). List the item, quantity, and the unit cost per item. Items with a unit cost of less than \$10,000 are supplies, not "equipment." In general, we do not permit the purchase of equipment during the last funded year of the grant.

Supplies: Identify the cost of supplies (e.g., general office supplies, desk/chairs, laptops/printers, other specialty items) in the detailed budget per category. Except for general office supplies, list the item, quantity, and the unit cost per item. Supplies include all tangible

personal property other than “equipment” (see 2 CFR Part 200.1 for the definition of Supplies).

Contractual: Under the Contractual line item, delineate contracts and subawards separately. Contracts are defined according to 2 CFR Part 200.1 as a legal instrument by which a non-federal entity purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a federal award. A subaward, defined by 2 CFR Part 200.1 means an award provided by a pass-through entity 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.

For each proposed contract and subaward, specify the purpose and activities to be provided, and the estimated cost.

Construction: Construction costs are not allowed, and this line must be left as zero. Renovations to an existing space for grant activities are allowable, but we do not consider this as construction, and you must show the costs on other appropriate lines such as Contractual.

Other: Provide clear and specific detail, including costs, for each item so that we are able to determine whether the costs are necessary, reasonable, and allocable. List items, such as stipends or incentives, not covered elsewhere.

Indirect Costs: Indirect costs are costs incurred by an organization that are not readily identifiable with a particular project or program but are nevertheless necessary to the operation of the organization and the performance of its programs. The costs of operating and maintaining facilities (rent, utilities, etc.), depreciation, and administrative salaries are examples of the types of costs that are usually treated as indirect costs.

If you include an amount for indirect costs (through a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or De Minimis), then include one of the following:

- If you have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), provide an explanation of how the indirect costs are calculated. This explanation should include which portion of each line item, along with the associated costs, are included in your cost allocation base. Also, provide a current version of the NICRA.

Or;

- If you intend to claim indirect costs using the 15% de minimis rate, please confirm that your organization meets the requirements as described in 2 CFR Part 200.414(f). Clearly state that your organization does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate and is not one described in 2 CFR Part 200, Appendix VII(D)(1)(b).

Applicants choosing to claim indirect costs using the de minimis rate must use Modified Total Direct Costs (defined below) as their cost allocation base. Provide an explanation of which portion of each line item, along with the associated costs, are included in your cost allocation base. Note that there are various items not included in the calculation of Modified Total Direct

Costs. See the definitions below to assist you in your calculation.

Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) Definition: To avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, we define MTDC as all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward or subcontract (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards and subcontracts under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward or subcontract in excess of \$25,000.

You will also note that participant support costs are not included in modified total direct costs. Participant support costs are defined below.

2 CFR Part 200.1 Participant Support Cost means direct costs for items such as stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences or training projects.

2. Review and Selection Process

Applications submitted to DRA within the 2026 DWP funding cycle will first be pre-screened to determine eligibility and completeness. Once project eligibility has been determined, DRA program staff will conduct a preliminary review to ensure the project scope is compatible with program guidelines, investment priorities, objectives, and funding principles established in this FOA. Once the preliminary review process is complete, DRA program staff will review and score each application based on the criteria set forth in Section F: Application Review Information.

DRA reserves the right to negotiate all budget costs with applicants that have been selected to receive awards, which may include requesting that the applicant remove or adjust certain proposed costs. Additionally, DRA may request that the applicant modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information pertaining to any aspect of the application. DRA also reserves the right to reject an application where information is uncovered that raises a reasonable doubt as to the applicant's ability to successfully fulfill the objectives and requirements of the grant award.

DRA, under its complete and sole discretion, may select for award some, all, or none of the applications received under this competitive solicitation. The award decision made by DRA is final.

G. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

Please see Appendix for Award Administration requirements.

Administration of DRA awards are subject to the same regulations, restrictions, and requirements as other federal awards. These include, but are not limited to, administrative requirements and cost principles, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), past performance and non-compliance, environment and historic preservation, and the Americans with Disabilities

ACT (ADA) requirements.

Grants involving construction will require the use of a basic agency to administer the funds, and grantees will be subject to the reporting requirement of the agency. Partnerships submitting applications involving construction, renovation, restoration, and other similar activities are strongly encouraged to contact DRA program staff for guidance.

H. DRA CONTACT INFORMATION

DRA strongly encourages interested applicants to contact DRA program staff and their respective [Local Development District\(s\)](#) with any questions they have about the DWP program in general, as well as with any specific questions they have about the use of agency funds to support projects in Delta communities and regions. Applicants with additional questions are encouraged to submit these to workforce@dra.gov.

I. GENERAL DISCLOSURES

The 2026 DWP program awards will be made only to the extent that funds are available. Publication of this FOA does not obligate DRA to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds. Applicants intending to contract with a specific individual, consulting group, or organization with DRA funding must have a competitive procurement policy in place.

This FOA does not commit DRA to award a contract, to procure, or to contract for services or supplies. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the FOA, DRA reserves the right to award grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts to communities or regions that best meet the requirements of the FOA, and not necessarily to the lowest cost proposers. DRA solely reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses received as a result of this request; to negotiate with all qualified sources; or to cancel in part or in its entirety this FOA if it is in the interests of DRA to do so.

Please note that DRA will not reimburse for any other costs associated with the preparation of a response to this FOA. Any DRA contracts awarded to work directly with consultants or consulting organizations will likely be a firm fixed-price contract or a cooperative agreement. Consultants and consultant teams that are legally barred from receiving federal contracts or contract payments will not be considered for work with communities or regions under this FOA.

Appendix I

DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY: AWARD ADMINISTRATION

1. Administrative Program Requirements

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

- i. Nonprofit Organizations, Educational Institutions, For-profit entities, and State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments–2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards)
- ii. All recipients must comply with the applicable provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Public Law No. 113-328, 128 Stat. 1425 (codified as amended at 29 U.S.C. 3101 et. seq.) and the applicable provisions of the regulations at 20 CFR Part 675 et. seq. Note that 20 CFR Part 683 (Administrative Provisions) allows unsuccessful applicants to file administrative appeals.
- iii. All entities must comply with 29 CFR Part 93 (New Restrictions on Lobbying), 29 CFR Part 94 (Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)), 2 CFR Part 180 (OMB Guidance to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement)), and, where applicable, 2 CFR Part 200 (Audit Requirements).
- iv. All entities must comply with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Build America, Buy America Act (the Act), Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52, as well as the Executive Memorandum M-22-11, dated April 18, 2022, Initial Implementation Guidance on Application of Buy America Preference in Federal Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure.

The Act requires the following Buy America preference:

All grantees must comply with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Build America, Buy America Act (the Act), Pub. L. No. 117-58, §§ 70901-52, including the implementing requirements at 2 CFR Part 184 and M-24-02, as summarized here. None of the funds provided under this award may be used for an infrastructure project unless:

- (1) All iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States. This means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States.
- (2) All manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States. This means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States, and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced,

or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55% of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation.

- (3) All construction materials are manufactured in the United States. This means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States. The construction material standards are listed in the definitions section below.

Incorporation into an infrastructure project – The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

When necessary, pursuant to Section 70914(c) of the Act, recipients may submit a written waiver request to DRA to waive the application of a Buy America preference. Waiver requests are subject to public comment periods of no less than 15 days and must be reviewed by DRA and the Office of Management and Budget Made in America Office. Recipients should consult the [DRA Buy America page here](#) to determine whether there are any applicable waivers in place. When DRA has determined that one of the following exceptions applies, a final determination of the waiver request will be made:

- (1) applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest (a “public interest waiver”);
- (2) types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality (a “nonavailability waiver”); or
- (3) the inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25% (an “unreasonable cost waiver”).
 - i. Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.
 - ii. Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance from the DRA pursuant to the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended. The act prohibits discrimination on the basis of age by recipients of federal financial assistance and in federally assisted programs or activities but permits the use of certain age distinctions and factors other

than age that meet the requirements of the Act.

- iii. Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (except sections 904 and 906 of those Amendments) ([20 U.S.C. 1681](#), [1682](#), [1683](#), [1685](#), [1686](#), [1687](#), [1688](#)), which is designed to eliminate (with certain exceptions) discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, whether or not such program or activity is offered or sponsored by an educational institution as defined in these Title IX regulations.
- iv. Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- v. Labor Standards for the Registration of Apprenticeship Programs and Equal Employment Opportunity in Apprenticeship and Training, as applicable.
- vi. DRA will follow the procedures outlined in the agency's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) policy. If DRA receives a FOIA request for your application, the procedures in DRA's FOIA policies for responding to requests for commercial/business information submitted to the government will be followed, as well as all FOIA exemptions and procedures. See generally 5 U.S.C. § 552

2. Other Legal Requirements

a. Religious Activities

DRA notes that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), 42 U.S.C. § 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 this grant solicitation and maintain that hiring practice. Religious organizations are eligible, on the same basis as any other organization, to seek DRA support or participate in DRA programs for which they are otherwise eligible.

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), nonprofit 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 the Government

Funding Transparency Act of 2008, Pub. Law 110-252, Title VI, Chap. 2, Sec. 6202), as follows.

- i. Except for those excepted from the Transparency Act under sub- paragraphs 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 you receive funding.
- ii. 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 <https://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.

- a. Federal awards to individuals who apply for or receive federal awards as natural persons (e.g., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization he or she may own or operate in his or her name).
- b. Federal awards to entities that had a gross income, from all sources, of less than \$300,000 in the entities' previous tax year; and
- c. 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 NOFA must recognize that confidentiality of PII and other sensitive data is of paramount importance to the Delta Regional Authority 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 TEGP 39-11 (issued June 28, 2012). All such activity conducted by 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 the handling of confidential information: You must ensure that PII and sensitive data developed, obtained, or otherwise associated with DRA funded grants is securely transmitted.

- i. 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 DRA or contractors.

- ii. 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 DRA standards for information security and any updates to such standards we provide to you. Awardees who wish to obtain more information on data security should contact their Federal Project Officer.
- iii. 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.
- iv. You further acknowledge that all PII data obtained through your DRA 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 DRA. Accessing, processing, and storing of DRA 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 DRA.
- v. 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.
- vi. 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 with their handling of such data, as well as the fact that they may be liable to civil and criminal sanctions for improper disclosure.
- vii. You must not extract information from data supplied by DRA for any purpose not stated in the grant agreement.
- viii. Access to any PII created by the DRA 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.
- ix. 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 be accessed only from secure locations.

- x. PII data obtained by the recipient through a request from DRA must not be disclosed to anyone but the individual requestor except as permitted by the Grant Officer or by court order.
- xi. You must permit DRA to make onsite inspections during regular business hours for the purpose of conducting audits and/or conducting other investigations to ensure 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.
- xii. You must retain data received from DRA 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 follow federal guidelines on record retention, which require that you 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 or 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 NOFA 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 who 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 who 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 government-wide suspension and debarment found at 2 CFR Part 180 and codified at 2 CFR Part 2998.

g. Closeout of Grant Award

- i. Any entity that receives an award under this Announcement must close its grant with DRA at the end of the final year of the grant.
- ii. The goal of the Grants Oversight and New Efficiency (GONE) Act is to close out expired grants. The GONE Act requires the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to instruct each agency, in coordination with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to submit to Congress and HHS by December 31 of the first calendar year beginning after this Act's enactment a report that:
 - a) Lists each federal grant award held by such agency,
 - b) Provides the total number of federal grant awards, including the number of grants by time period of expiration, the number with zero-dollar balances, and the number with undisbursed balances,
 - c) Describes the challenges leading to delays in grant closeout, and,
 - d) Explains, for the 30 oldest federal grant awards, why each has not been closed out.

The covered grants are those within an agency's cash payment management system that have been expired for two or more years and have not been closed out. No later than one year after the head of an agency submits its report, the agency head will notify HHS whether the agency has closed out the covered grants discussed in its report. HHS is required to compile this information and provide it to Congress.

3. Other Administrative Standards and Provisions

Except as specifically provided in this NOFA, 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. DRA Evaluation

As a condition of a grant award, awardees are required to participate in an evaluation if undertaken by DRA. The evaluation may include an implementation assessment across awardees, an impact and/or outcomes analysis of all or selected sites within or across awardees, and a benefit/cost analysis or assessment of return on investment. Conducting an impact analysis could involve random assignment (which involves random assignment of eligible participants into a treatment group that would receive program services or enhanced program services or into control group(s) that would receive no program services or program services that are not enhanced). We may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation. As a part of the evaluation, as a condition of award, awardees must agree to:

- (1) make records available to the evaluation contractor on participants, employers, and funding;
- (2) provide access to program operating personnel, participants, operational and financial records, and any other relevant documents to calculate program costs and benefits; and
- (3) in the case of an impact analysis, facilitate the assignment by lottery of participants to program services, including the possible increased recruitment of potential participants; and
- (4) follow evaluation procedures as specified by the evaluation contractor under the direction of DRA.

b. Performance Goals

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

5. Definitions

Construction materials

Construction materials mean articles, materials, or supplies that consist of only one of the items listed in paragraph (1) of this definition, except as provided in paragraph (2) of this definition. To the extent one of the items listed in paragraph (1) contains as inputs other items listed in paragraph (1), it is nonetheless a construction material. (1) The listed items are: (i) Non-ferrous metals; (ii) Plastic and polymer-based products (including polyvinylchloride, composite building materials, and polymers used in fiber optic cables); (iii) Glass (including optic glass); (iv) Fiber optic cable (including drop cable); (v) Optical fiber; (vi) Lumber; (vii) Engineered wood; and (viii) Drywall. (2) Minor additions of articles, materials, supplies, or binding agents to a construction material do not change the categorization of the construction material. “Buy America Preference” means the “domestic content procurement preference” set forth in section 70914 of the Build America, Buy America Act, which requires the head of each federal agency to ensure that none of the funds made available for a federal award for an infrastructure project may be obligated unless all of the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials incorporated into the project are produced in the United States.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure means public infrastructure projects in the United States, which includes, at a minimum, the structure, facilities, and equipment for, in the United States (1) roads, highways, and bridges; (2) public transportation; (3) dams, ports, harbors, and other maritime systems; (4) intercity passenger and freight railroads; (5) freight and intermodal facilities; (6) airports; (7) water systems; including drinking water and wastewater systems; (8) electrical transmission facilities and systems; (9) utilities; (10) broadband infrastructure; and (11) buildings and real property. Infrastructure includes facilities that generate, transport, and distribute energy.

Project

Project means the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of infrastructure in the United States.