

**H-1B Scaling Apprenticeship Through Sector-Based Strategy
Frequently Asked Questions
on the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)
U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration
August 31, 2018**

1) What is the timeline of the FOA?

Applicants will have 90 days to respond to this FOA from publication. The closing date for receipt of applications under this Announcement is October 16, 2018. We must receive applications no later than 4:00:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date.

2) What are the goals of this grant program?

The overarching goals of this grant program are threefold: (1) to accelerate the expansion of apprenticeships to new industry sectors reliant on H-1B visas, (2) to promote the large-scale expansion of apprenticeships across the nation, and (3) to increase apprenticeship opportunities for all Americans.

3) Who can apply?

Grants will be awarded to the lead applicant of an apprenticeship partnership of private and public sector entities. For the purposes of this FOA, eligible lead applicants include: a) an institution of higher education representing a consortium of institutions of higher education, (IHEs), as defined in Section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002); or b) a state system of higher education, such as a community college system office or a single state higher educational board.

To be eligible for inclusion in the apprenticeship partnership, a lead applicant that is an IHE must be accredited, by the closing date of this FOA and remain so throughout the entity's performance in this grant program, by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association that has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. A database of institutions that are accredited by bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education can be found at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>. Generally, institutions of higher education are two-year and four-year colleges and universities, including institutions that serve minorities (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, or others designated by the U.S. Department of Education at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html>).

The apprenticeship partnership, including the lead applicant, must include public and private sector entities; otherwise the application will be considered

non-responsive and will not be considered or reviewed. An entity cannot serve as more than one type of required partner for the purpose of meeting FOA requirements.

4) What is meant by “consortium of institutions of higher education”?

An institution of higher education submitting an application as a lead applicant must represent a consortium of IHEs. A consortium of IHEs means one or more IHEs that have entered into agreement with the lead applicant for the purpose of carrying out this grant. All consortium members must meet the definition of IHEs, as defined in Section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002). All members of the consortium must be listed in the abstract of an IHE’s application. The lead applicant that is an IHE must provide the names of its IHE consortium members in the abstract.

5) Who are required partners in the apprenticeship partnership?

Applicants must include in their apprenticeship partnership at least one high-level representative from private industry that represents the sector or industry in which the applicant is proposing to take apprenticeships to scale. This required private sector partner must consist of:

- One or more national industry/trade associations; or
- A consortium of at least five businesses representing an industry sector.

The national industry/trade association(s) must be able to demonstrate national membership and represent a significant number of the companies within the targeted industry sector. A national/trade association, also known as an industry trade group, business association, sector association, or industry body, is an organization founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry. Employer consortiums of five businesses must demonstrate a national reach through their organizational structure or through their apprenticeship partnership. To demonstrate the active involvement of the required private sector partners, applicants must provide signed documentation of commitments – such as signed memoranda of understanding, an organizational charter, a partnership agreement, or other types of signed agreements – which demonstrate the engagement of high-level leadership for each entity being proposed as a required partner.

6) Can we include additional partners?

Yes. While the required private sector partner(s) reflect the national scope and reach of the project, we strongly encourage applicants to collaborate with other partners that can support and advance the work of the apprenticeship partnership. These include: organizations functioning as workforce intermediaries, such as workforce development boards, labor-management organizations, community-based organizations, and private non-profit service providers; other organizations to support outreach and training activities, such

as: industry-led training organizations, industry intermediaries, unions, or non-profit educational organizations; Small Business Development Centers; American Job Centers; YouthBuild Programs; community organizations that provide social support and/or wrap-around services; State Apprenticeship Agencies; foundations and philanthropic organizations; and Federally-funded programs.

In addition, applicants that are proposing to develop new apprenticeship programs may want to partner with certifiers or certification entities that will ensure that the training received meets national industry standards and provide quality assurance of the apprenticeship through third-party validation.

7) Can I apply for more than one grant?

We will consider only one application from each organization. However, you may submit one application as lead applicant, and in addition may be included as a partner in one or more applications submitted where you are not the lead applicant.

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

8) What amount of funding is available? Is there a limit?

Through this FOA, we will award up to \$150 million in H-1B funds. Additional grants may be awarded depending on availability of funds. We expect to fund approximately 15 to 30 apprenticeship grants with individual grant amounts ranging from \$1 million to \$12 million. The grant size will depend on the size of the targeted industry sector and the proposed scale of the apprenticeship project. Any grant application with a proposed value greater than \$12 million or less than \$1 million will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered.

9) How long are the grants active?

The period of performance is 48 months. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities. These activities include: promoting apprenticeship programs within the targeted H-1B industry and/or occupation on a national scale; developing or expanding training activities for apprentices; providing training to apprentices; and follow-up for tracking and reporting performance outcomes. We expect hiring appropriate grant project personnel and undertaking start-up activities will begin immediately and expect that grantees will begin enrolling apprentices no later than nine months after the date of grant award. We also expect that applicants will have begun expanding their apprenticeship program nationally by at least the beginning of the fourth year of the grant. We strongly encourage applicants to develop their project work

plans and timelines accordingly. Grantees must plan to fully expend grant funds during the period of performance.

10) Who can be served by the grant?

The intent of this FOA is to fund projects that provide apprenticeship training and services to individuals that will gain the skills and competencies required to enter middle- and high-skilled jobs along a career pathway in a variety of H-1B industries and occupations. This program will train individuals who are unemployed and seeking entry or reentry into the workforce, underemployed workers, and incumbent workers who need to increase their skills to remain competitive.

Individuals must be older than 16 years and not currently enrolled in school within a local educational agency. Training must result in advancement of an individual’s skills along a career pathway into middle- and high-skilled occupations.

Among the individuals eligible to receive apprenticeship training, those of particular interest include veterans, military spouses, transitioning service members, and ex-offenders. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to include individuals who are not traditionally represented in apprenticeship programs and H-1B industries, including women, people of color, and ex-offenders.

11) Are there minimum goals for apprentice service levels based on the amount of funding requested?

Yes. This FOA sets goals for the minimum number of apprentices to be served during the grant period, based on the funding amount requested by applicants. These numbers are minimum outcome goals applicants must propose for the numbers of apprentices to be served through the grant, and applicants are strongly encouraged to serve more than the minimum thresholds.

Minimum Goals for Apprentices Served during the Grant Period Based on Funding Request*

Funding Request	Minimum Apprentices Served
\$1,000,000 - \$2,000,000	800
\$2,000,001 - \$4,000,000	1,600
\$4,000,001 - \$8,000,000	3,200
\$8,000,001 - \$12,000,000	5,000+

Applicants must propose apprentice targets that are based on the FOA requirements and that are appropriate for the scope of their project. Applicants

should refer to Section IV.B.3.a.(2) Expected Outcomes and Outputs for more information on how they will be scored on proposed targets.

12) Are smaller states with small population required to serve a minimum of 800 apprentices?

Yes. This grant is focused on expanding apprenticeships on a national scale so we anticipate that to meet the apprentice goals, several regions or states will collaborate to serve apprentices within an industry sector. Therefore, smaller states may form consortia to reach service levels that may exceed the numbers of apprentices currently trained within an individual state.

13) Is there a match requirement?

Yes. This program requires cost sharing or matching funds. Such funds may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions and must be equal to 35 percent of the total Federal share of costs. Any resources contributed to the project in addition to cost sharing or matching funds will be considered leveraged resources. Section IV.B.2. Project Budget provides more information on leveraged resources.

To be allowable as part of match, an expenditure must be an allowable charge for Federal grant funds and considered necessary and reasonable to accomplish the project or program objectives. DOL will make determinations of allowable costs in accordance with the applicable Federal Cost Principles as indicated in Section IV.E. Funding Restrictions.

DOL encourages applicants to leverage additional resources beyond the required match to supplement grant activities. Applicants must count and document as leveraged resources any cash or in-kind commitments beyond 35 percent of the grant award amount required as matching funds.

Both matching and leveraged resources can come from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to: the private sector (e.g., businesses or industry associations); the investor community (e.g., angel networks or economic development entities); the philanthropic community (e.g., foundations); and the non-profit sector (e.g., community organizations, faith-based organizations, or education and training institutions). Non-Federal, public sector funds (e.g., from States or local governments) may be used for matching funds, if necessary.

14) What is the geographic scope of these grant programs?

Applicants must develop comprehensive approaches to establishing new apprenticeship models or expanding existing apprenticeship programs on a national scale. They must also identify proposed service areas, such as economic region(s), cities, counties, and states, where new or existing apprenticeship

programs will be deployed initially, and explain how those programs will ultimately reach a national scale.

15) What are examples of apprenticeship activities that are allowable with this funding opportunity?

This grant program will expand apprenticeship opportunities within H-1B industry sectors, particularly those sectors that have not deployed apprenticeships on a large scale previously, and increase the number and types of workers participating as apprentices. Therefore, grant project activities will include establishing new apprenticeship programs or expanding existing apprenticeship programs, creating the training infrastructure/network to deploy the new programs, promoting apprenticeship programs on a national scale, and developing training activities for an expanded pool of individual apprentices in the newly certified or expanded programs.

Apprenticeship activities that are allowable under this FOA fall within one of the following categories:

1. deploying apprenticeship training;
2. taking apprenticeships to scale, which includes activities for establishing new apprenticeships and expanding existing apprenticeship programs; and
3. other allowable activities that support the expansion of apprenticeship opportunity.

For detailed examples of the kinds of activities that are included within each of these categories, refer to Section I.E. Program, Activities/ Allowable Activities.

16) Within the apprenticeship activities that are allowable with this funding opportunity, what types of apprenticeship training can be provided under these grants?

This grant program aims to provide workers with the apprenticeship training and industry-recognized credentials they need to reach middle- to high-skilled occupations. DOL therefore requires grantees to provide training along a career pathway to middle- and high-skilled jobs. Although apprentices do not need to have advanced educational credentials or middle- to high-skills levels to enter the program, any training that starts at a lower skill level must build sequentially toward transitioning the apprentice into a job requiring more advanced skills.

Under this FOA, applicants may use grant funds to support the following training and training-related activities:

- 1) On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- 2) Related Technical Instruction (RTI)
- 3) Incumbent Worker Training
- 4) Pre-Apprenticeship Training

5) Supportive Services

In addition, all apprenticeship programs funded through this grant must support recognized standards of high-quality apprenticeship programs. The FOA specifies the following five hallmarks of program quality to which all apprenticeship programs funded through this grant must adhere:

- 1) Paid, Work-Based Component
- 2) OJT Training and Mentorship
- 3) Educational and Instructional Component
- 4) Industry-Recognized Credentials Earned
- 5) Safety, Supervision, and Equal Employment Opportunity

For additional information on training standards and allowable training and supporting activities under this FOA, refer to Section I.E.

17) Are there any restrictions on using grant funds for OJT?

Grant funds may be used to subsidize the training and education costs for apprentices enrolled in programs that utilize a third-party education provider to implement sector-based programs. This would include reimbursing employers for some of the extraordinary costs of OJT. The following restrictions apply to projects funded under this FOA:

- For the purposes of this FOA, grantees may use grant funds to reimburse a portion (up to 50 percent) of the apprentice's wages for small employers (those with 50 or fewer employees, as these employers often need the greatest assistance to participate in apprenticeship programs).
- For those businesses that have more than 50 employees, grant funds may not be used to reimburse OJT costs; however, grantees may count these OJT costs as matching funds.

Refer to the FOA Section IV.E.4. *Use of Grant Funds for On-The-Job Training* for additional restrictions on using OJT.

18) Are there targeted industries and/or occupations under this FOA?

This grant program will fund projects that expand apprenticeships to industries in which apprenticeships may traditionally be unavailable or underrepresented by providing apprenticeship training that leads to well-paying, middle- and high-skilled jobs across a diversity of H-1B industries and occupations. While program participants do not need to have those skill levels to enter the apprenticeship programs, the grant projects should help move apprentices along a career pathway to earn the education and on-the-job experience that will result in employment in middle- and high-skilled jobs.

To help American industry reduce the need for skilled foreign workers under the H-1B visa program, applicants must design their apprenticeship programs to target one of the following:

- **Option 1:** Occupations in an H-1B industry - Applicants may choose to expand apprenticeships in an H-1B industry. An H-1B industry is an industry in which the Department has certified H-1B visas for occupations in that industry. The list of H-1B industries that are acceptable for applications is found in Appendix A. These industries are the information technology (IT) and IT-related industries, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, financial services, and educational services. Applicants may choose to target multiple occupations within an industry, or to narrow their focus to a specific occupation within that H-1B industry. However, applicants may only target one H-1B industry. For example, an applicant may choose to focus on the IT sector, specifically targeting developing cybersecurity apprenticeships within IT only and not targeting other IT occupations.
- **Option 2:** H-1B Occupations - Applicants may choose to target a specific H-1B occupation(s) that fall outside of the identified H-1B industries. If this occupation is not within the H-1B industries identified in Appendix A, the application must provide data showing that the H-1B occupation is one for which a significant number of H-1B visas have been certified. This may be shown by using the data provided by DOL's Foreign Labor Certification Data Center. Applicants may propose to serve more than one H-1B occupation; however, the H-1B occupations must be within a single industry and must be scalable in that industry.

Applicants that do not clearly identify they are serving one of the H-1B industries identified in Appendix A or provide justification for a specific H-1B occupation(s) will be found non-responsive and will not be considered.

19) Can our grant project serve more than one industry sector?

No, this grant program is designed to address the needs of one industry sector so that the apprenticeship training program can be deployed to a national scale. Applicants may propose to serve more than one H-1B occupation; however, the H-1B occupations must be within a single industry and must be scalable in that industry.

20) How will applications be evaluated?

We have instituted procedures for assessing the technical merit of applications to provide for an objective review of applications and to assist you in understanding the standards against which your application will be judged. The evaluation criteria are based on the information required in the application as

described in Sections IV.B.2. Project Budget and IV.B.3. Project Narrative. Reviewers will award points based on the evaluation criteria described below.

Criterion	Points (maximum)
1. Statement of Need (See Section IV.B.3.a.(1) Statement of Need)	8
2. Expected Outcomes, and Outputs (See Section IV.B.3.a.(2) Expected Outcomes and Outputs)	34
3. Project Design (See Section IV.B.3.a.(3) Project Design)	44
4. Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity (See Section IV.B.3.a.(4) Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity)	6
5. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability (See Section IV.B.3.a.(5) Past Performance – Programmatic Capability)	4
6. Budget and Budget Justification (See Section IV.B.2. Project Budget)	4
TOTAL	100

Section IV.B.3. Project Narrative of this FOA has several “section headers” (i.e., IV.B.3.a.(1) Statement of Need). Each of these “section headers” of the Project Narrative include one or more “criterion,” and each “criterion” includes one or more “rating factors,” which provide detailed specifications for the content and quality of the response to that criterion. Each of the rating factors has specific point values assigned. These point values are the number of points possible for the application to earn for the rating factor.

A technical merit review panel will carefully evaluate applications against the selection criteria to determine the merit of applications. These criteria are based on the policy goals, priorities, and emphases set forth in this FOA. Up to 100 points may be awarded to an applicant, depending on the quality of the responses provided.

The final scores (which may include the mathematical normalization of review panels) will serve as the primary basis for selection of applications for funding. The panel results are advisory in nature and not binding on the Grant Officer. The Grant Officer reserves the right to make selections based solely on the final scores or to take into consideration other relevant factors when applicable. Such factors may include the geographic distribution of funds, distribution among industries/occupations, representation among new and expanded

apprenticeship programs, and/or other relevant factors. The Grant Officer may consider any information that comes to his/her attention.