

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Employment and Training Administration

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
ANNOUNCEMENT FOR:** Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Initial

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: FOA-ETA-22-02

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER: 17.261

KEY DATES: *The closing date for receipt of applications under this Announcement is 10/21/2022. We must receive applications no later than **11:59 pm Eastern Time.***

Submit all applications in response to this solicitation through <https://www.grants.gov>. For complete application and submission information, including online application instructions, please refer to Section IV.

On approximately March 15, 2022 a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page about the Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants FOA will be available at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/apply/find-opportunities>. Please check this link frequently for future updates, as additional FAQs may be added. A pre-recorded Prospective Applicant Webinar will also be available at the same link and available for viewing any time after that date. While a review of this Webinar is strongly encouraged to support successful grant applications, it is not mandatory.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL, or the Department, or we), announces the availability of approximately \$95,000,000 in grant funds authorized by the Section 169(c) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act for the second round of the Strengthening Community Colleges (SCC2) Training Grants program.

This second round of Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants will increase the capacity and responsiveness of community colleges to close equity gaps in addressing skill development needs of employers and workers, in support of the Biden-Harris Administration’s priorities to leverage and advance community colleges. Awarded grants will focus on accelerated learning strategies that support skill development, rapid reskilling, and employment through targeted industry sectors and career pathway approaches. These strategies will also address identified equity gaps to increase full access to educational and economic opportunity—particularly for individuals from historically underrepresented and marginalized populations and communities.

This Opportunity is built around four core elements: 1) Advancing Equity, 2) Accelerated Career Pathways, 3) Results-Driven Project Design, and 4) Sustainable Systems Change.

With respect to evidence, applicants are asked to justify why the proposed strategies are likely to

lead to the proposed outcomes, and illustrate that using a logic model. All those receiving an award are required to do a rigorous implementation or developmental evaluation through a qualified third-party, and this is an allowable cost of the award. In addition, applicants may opt to apply for additional evaluation funding beyond the standard grant award range to support a rigorous outcome, impact, or behavioral interventions study that assesses the effectiveness of the interventions, including whether the service delivery advances equity or other outcomes.

Applicants may apply as individual institutions of higher education (institutions) or as part of a consortium of institutions. For both single and consortium applicants, the lead entity must be a community college that is a public institution of higher education as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act, and at which the associate degree is primarily the highest degree awarded. The Department will award bonus points to lead applicants that are Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges or Universities, Minority-Serving Institutions, or Strengthening Institutions Programs using Department of Education eligibility indicators. Consortium applicants can be organized around a state focus, a regional labor market focus, or an affinity focus, which is further described in Section III.A.1. Employers and the public workforce development system are required partners in all projects, which also encourage additional strategic partnerships to support successful employment outcomes for participants and sustainable systems change for community colleges.

While matching funds are not required, leveraged funding and resources (including existing curricula) are strongly encouraged.

Two types of funding for this training initiative are available through this Announcement: SCC2 Program Grants and Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding.

- The Department anticipates that approximately \$40 million of the \$45 million total available will fund SCC2 Program Grants. Out of that amount, the Department anticipates awarding at least 75 percent of available funding through approximately 5-7 consortia grants (with funding levels between \$1.5 and \$5 million), and the remaining available funding through 6-8 single institution grants (with funding levels between \$1.5 and \$1.6 million). Up to \$5 million of SCC2 Program Grant funds will be set aside to ensure the award of at least one affinity-focused consortium grant.
- Up to \$5 million of the \$45 million total available will be set aside for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding, to award additional evaluation funding to 2-4 competitive applicants awarded SCC2 Program Grants, with a demonstrated justification for additional support to carry out an impact, outcomes, or behavioral interventions study. If insufficient qualifying applications are received for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding, any funds not awarded for the additional evaluation component will be applied to SCC2 Program Grant awards.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. PROGRAM PURPOSE

This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA, or Announcement) solicits applications for the second round of **Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants** (or SCC2). For the

purposes of this FOA, this training initiative has two parts: the standard program grants will be referred to as SCC2 Program Grants and the additional evaluation funds will be referred to as Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding, with the latter explained in Section II.A. Award Type and Amount. The purpose of this program is to address two inter-related needs: 1) to increase the capacity and responsiveness of community colleges to address identified equity gaps (as described in Core Element 1: Advancing Equity), and 2) to meet the skill development needs of employers in in-demand industries and career pathways, as well as the skill development needs of marginalized and underrepresented workers.

This grant program builds on the learnings from the four rounds of Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants, which focused on capacity building at community colleges and large-scale systems change within community college consortia. TAACCCT evaluations provided many relevant insights into the investments and partnerships necessary to drive systems change to address the skills development and retraining needs of adult workers and learners, and these provide a foundation for the Strengthening Community Colleges grant program. This second round of Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants builds on TAACCCT learnings and the first round of SCC investments, with a new focus on advancing equity by identifying and addressing equity gaps that directly or indirectly impact labor market outcomes for underrepresented and marginalized populations and communities. SCC2 aligns with the Biden-Harris Administration's vision to build community college capacity for in-demand skills training through strategic partnerships between industry, education, and the workforce system.

Ultimately, these grants should build the capacity of community colleges to equitably increase access to employment through educational and economic opportunity, by focusing on specific industry sectors and career pathways that will lead to skill development, rapid reskilling, and employment in quality jobs. These efforts will yield sustainable systems-level changes in education and training through collaboration between community colleges, employers and the public workforce development system that align education and training, work experiences, and industry-recognized credentials that lead to career growth.

SCC2 grants will focus on advancing equitable employment throughout the grant program, specifically equity gaps in opportunities for credentials, and equity in employment outcomes for the participants served by the community colleges, and may also include increasing the capacity of the colleges to make sustainable shifts in how they support equitable employment. In January 2021, the President issued Executive Order 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*. In support of this order, the SCC2 FOA will ensure equitable opportunities for federal funding by encouraging and incentivizing applications from specific institutions. These institutions include Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions, as well as institutions funded under the Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP). SIP institutions, funded through the Higher Education Act's Titles III and V, are qualifying institutions that serve a higher than average percentage of low-income students and that have low education expenditures per student. See Section III.A.3. Qualified Institutions for more information.

A broad range of workers will benefit from this grant program, including dislocated workers, incumbent workers, and new entrants to the workforce. The intended focus of SCC2 is to increase employment equity through educational and economic opportunity for historically marginalized or excluded populations such as people of color, women, individuals with disabilities, and those previously incarcerated. Veterans, military spouses, and many other populations will also benefit from the accelerated career pathways developed or enhanced through these grants.

Capacity-building grants provide an opportunity to invest in long-term systems change, and this FOA provides broad opportunities for such systems changes. When choosing which changes to focus on, and to support development of a project design, applicants should ask themselves:

1. What are the critical equity gaps that we want to target that impact both employment and the education that supports employment opportunities – and why? What practices, policies, and leadership changes are needed to increase our capacity to support equitable employment? What does the available evidence say about interventions that are likely to be successful for advancing equity?
2. Given our local context, which career pathway(s), and which enhancement strategies to accelerate movement along those career pathways, offer the best opportunities to address the identified equity gaps for improved employment outcomes? What does the available evidence say about the strategies that will more likely lead to successful outcomes?
3. How can we design and implement a work plan to support results-driven outcomes and report findings?
4. How can we ensure that the systems changes we make are institutionalized and sustained over the long term? What does the available evidence say about the strategies that will more likely lead to sustainable systems change?

Each of the four questions above is addressed further in the Core Elements below. For the purposes of this FOA, the four core elements serve as essential components of successful approaches to achieving the SCC2 Program Grants objectives. Although presented in a sequential format, the core elements are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. By design, the SCC2 core elements may take multiple forms depending on the situation and context.

To ensure that SCC2 projects accomplish the goals stated above in Section I.A., the Department will fund applications that address, in their proposals, the following SCC Core Elements.

1. Core Element 1: Advancing Equity

In determining a project design for this Announcement, applicants will need to ask themselves, “What are the critical equity gaps that we want to target that impact both employment and the education that supports employment opportunities – and why? What practices, policies, and leadership changes are needed to increase our capacity to support equitable employment? What does the available evidence say about interventions that are likely to be successful for advancing equity?”

Pursuant to Executive Order 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved*

Communities Through the Federal Government, the term “equity” means the “consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.”

In the context of this Announcement, an “equity gap” refers to significant and persistent inequity or disparity in the employment or educational opportunities offered to individuals who belong to one of the marginalized communities described in Executive Order 13985. These opportunities may include opportunities for students related to educational access or attainment, but they must ultimately relate to employment outcomes. They may also include inequities in opportunities for faculty and staff of the community colleges themselves, particularly where addressing those faculty and staff opportunities would improve the training and education, and supports for training and employment, of students.

An **equity** gap analysis must clearly articulate the equity gap(s) that the proposed project will address, and must demonstrate the extent of the identified barriers, based on data, evidence, and research, as appropriate. Applicants must demonstrate the connection between the identified gap(s) and employment outcomes. The identified gap(s) and their root causes should serve as the focusing elements in the development of the proposal.

The following are examples of focus areas for an equity gap analysis that may be present within an applicant’s institution or consortium, based on persistent national equity gaps. Applicants should not limit themselves to addressing these particular gaps; instead, we encourage applicants to identify the equity gap(s) that have the greatest impact on employment outcomes, based on their data analysis and the evidence available.

- Disparities in enrollment rates for students of color, women, students with disabilities, and/or other target populations, particularly with respect to programs of study that have high employment or educational outcomes.
- Disparities in completion rates for programs of study, or credential attainment, for students of color, women, students with disabilities, and/or other target populations.
- The gap in job placement rates and/or earnings for specific target populations in specific career pathways.
- Disparities in dropout/resignation rates at critical points along a career pathway.
- Disparities in the percentage of students participating in work-based learning programs.
- Inequitable rates of tenure for certain faculty groups compared to the overall rate, which inhibits students from getting the best qualified instructors.
- A lack of diverse and culturally responsive curricula and points of view in course content.

While evidence is still emerging, data show that low-paid workers and, in particular, people of color face persistent economic disparities, which the coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated.

[1] Historically marginalized students tend to face significant disparities in access to and participation in high-quality career and technical education programs at community colleges. For instance, some research shows that program completion rates and earnings six

years after program entry are lower for Black and Latino/a/x students than for White students, even among students in the same field of study (Anderson et al. 2021, Appendix A). [2] Other research suggests that students of color are overrepresented in shorter-term programs that yield lower economic returns, are less likely to stack credentials, and have lower credit for learning take-up rates (Kazis & Leasor in Brock & Slater 2021, Appendix A). Moreover, compared to students in credit programs, students in noncredit programs may be more likely to be of color, low-income, and older, and less likely to have access to the resources and support services that promote student success (ESG 2020, Appendix B).

A key contribution of the Department’s past investments in community colleges, especially the TAACCCT program, has been to position career pathways as a primary “mechanism for delivering high-quality credentials” (Bragg 2020, p. 8, Appendix B). All four rounds of TAACCCT emphasized that shorter-term, non-degree credentials should be stackable within longer-term educational programs that lead to associate and four-year college degrees, and provide opportunities for individuals to advance in the labor market as they progress along the career pathway. Some research suggests that certain non-degree credentials can have positive employment outcomes for adult learners, especially when the credentials are longer in length (i.e., credentials of six months to two years) (Blume et al. 2019, Valentine & Clay 2019, Appendix B). In addition, strategies designed to improve adult completion of non-degree credentials, including career pathways, comprehensive student supports, and credit for prior learning, can have positive impacts on non-degree credential completion (McKay et al. 2019, Miller et al. 2020, Appendix B). [3]

To realize the promise of career pathways as drivers of educational and economic mobility for students of all backgrounds, community colleges—in partnership with employers, the workforce development system, and other stakeholders—must rethink the design and delivery of their pathways approaches. This includes recognizing that “issues of inequity can occur at a number of points throughout the education pathway”—from recruitment and enrollment, to program retention and completion, to post graduation employment and career advancement (Dalporto & Tessler 2020, p. 7, Appendix A). Moreover, given the multilayered nature of such inequities, building an equity focus must occur simultaneously across multiple levels, including at the individual, interpersonal, program, institutional, and systems levels (Anderson et al. 2021; Petty & Leach 2020, Appendix E).

Research to date suggests several approaches to closing equity gaps in career pathway programs, including:

- **Aligning noncredit and credit programs.** Supporting the transferability and articulation of noncredit courses to degree programs—a key focus of accelerating time to completion and employment—can play a critical role in addressing the inequities that students in noncredit courses and programs often face (Kazis & Leasor in Brock & Slater 2021, Bragg et al. 2019). Strategies include designing noncredit certificates to function as on-ramps to degree programs; making noncredit programs credit-worthy using “bridge tools,” such as articulation agreements, competency-based education, and prior learning assessments; converting noncredit into credit-based programs through accreditation; and ensuring that credits in the same field are transferable and portable. [4] Importantly, strategies to reduce equity gaps related to credential attainment in

developmental education can include efforts to redesign contextualized or integrated basic skills instruction so that it is credit bearing and incorporated into credit-based pathways. [5]

- **Providing comprehensive student supports.** A growing body of research suggests that reducing equity gaps in retention and completion likely will require that colleges support students by offering wraparound and holistic services throughout the career pathway (Miller et al. 2020, Price & Valentine 2019, Bragg 2020). Several experimental studies have shown that strategies such as delivering comprehensive supports through individualized and proactive coaching, as well as through bundling and sequencing supports, significantly improve rates of persistence and degree completion (Price & Valentine 2019, Miller et al. 2020). [6] The literature also suggests that the “supports should be delivered both one-on-one and in small group settings, and that the supports should be more intentionally integrated into the student experience so they are unavoidable as students progress along their career pathway—from intake to completion” (Cotner et al. 2021, p. 37, Appendix B).
- **Improving data and tracking.** Efforts to close equity gaps necessitate a deep understanding of where disparities in access and outcomes exist, as well as of the extent to which the disparities are increasing or decreasing. Without such awareness, reform efforts may result in actions that reinforce existing inequities (Fink & Jenkins 2020, Appendix A). Thus, colleges should aim to build and improve data systems that allow them to track and analyze education, earnings, and employment outcomes that are disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, and other such characteristics. [7] They also should seek to collect data on noncredit certificates and industry certifications, and to integrate data on students in credit and noncredit courses and programs into institutional—and where available, statewide—data systems.

Accordingly, applicants are required to identify equity gaps and propose evidence-informed strategies that can address disparities, and build capacity to promote student access to and success in high-quality, accelerated career pathways with strong labor market prospects.

2. Core Element 2: Accelerated Career Pathways

In determining a project design for this Announcement, applicants will also need to ask themselves, “Given our local context, which career pathway(s), and which enhancement strategies to accelerate movement along those career pathways, offer the best opportunities to address the identified equity gaps for improved employment outcomes? What does the available evidence say about the strategies that will more likely lead to successful outcomes?”

Career pathway programs offer a clear sequence of education coursework and/or training credentials aligned with employer-validated work readiness standards and competencies, and integrate academic and occupational skills training. A career pathway system is the cohesive combination of partnerships, resources and funding, policies, data, and shared accountability measures that support the development, quality, scaling, and dynamic sustainability of career pathways and programs for youth and adults. To realize the potential of career pathways, stakeholders must work simultaneously and iteratively on both the programmatic and systems levels.

Emerging research to date suggests several approaches to accelerating career pathway programs, including:

- **Collaborating with a consortium of employers.** High-quality career pathways are generally sector-focused, incorporating the needs and hiring opportunities of employers within a specific industry sector. Hence, the Department strongly encourages applicants to build on successful, ongoing industry sector strategies. [8] To help ensure that pathways align closely with employer needs that also connect individuals to quality jobs, applicants are required to collaborate with a consortium of employers offering jobs that pay family-sustaining wages in identified, in-demand industries. [9] For industry partnerships to play a transformational role in meeting colleges' equity goals, colleges must deepen their engagement—at the strategic level—with employers at all levels of project design and implementation. [10]
- **Partnering with one or more public workforce development system partners.** The public workforce development system can also play a critical role in developing innovative and sustainable career pathway programs and systems. Research shows that partnerships with the public workforce development system have the potential to bolster community colleges' efforts to recruit prospective students, provide persistence and completion supports to students, develop data sharing agreements, and create statewide policies and practices to support adult learners, among other such benefits (Eyster et al. 2020, Appendix B). Hence, applicants are required to partner with one or more public workforce development system partners, as discussed in Section III.A.5. Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants (SCC) Partnership. The required partner entity is a state or local workforce development board, and applicants may also partner with American Job Centers, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Program authorized under Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and other service providers. In addition, to ensure a deeper connection with the workforce development system, the Department expects that applicants will propose career pathway strategies in industry sector(s) that closely align with the workforce priorities of their state and/or region. We urge applicants to describe their proposal's strategic alignment with such priorities in the required equity gap analysis, as described in Core Element 1.
- **Collaborating with unions or labor-management organizations.** The Department strongly encourages applicants to collaborate with unions or labor-management organizations to ensure that career pathways result in quality jobs that support worker voice, safety, and benefits. This collaboration may occur through the employer partners, as well as through separate outreach efforts. This collaboration also supports workforce needs through a dual-customer approach; these intermediary organizations provide a direct link to many training opportunities, while also providing worker input into local and regional training needs and solutions. Such organizations can help translate the capacity-building efforts of community colleges into direct training pathways and access to the targeted populations that the project seeks to benefit through the identified equity strategies.

Accordingly, in relationship with required and optional partners, successful applicants under this FOA will build or enhance career pathway programs that may include the following accelerated learning strategies:

- **Stacked and latticed credentials.** These credentials, which students may earn in sequence, build upon previously learned content as individuals progress along a career pathway or up a career ladder. They allow individuals to build a portfolio of credentials that are embedded into the curricula as they transition from learning to work or to different and potentially higher-paying jobs.
- **Competency-based education and assessment.** Competency-based education is an outcomes-oriented approach in which colleges assess and certify student mastery of learning outcomes through observational methods, such as task performance, exams, demonstrations, or other direct measures of proficiency. Students earn credentials based on the mastery of specific competencies as demonstrated through performance-based assessments.
- **Credit for prior learning and prior learning assessments.** Often used interchangeably, these terms refer to a process that involves an evaluation of skills and knowledge acquired from prior coursework or outside the classroom (i.e., the workplace) for the purpose of recognizing mastery against a given set of standards, competencies, or learning outcomes.
- **Modularized curricula.** A modularized curriculum is structured so that each course—divided into multiple, self-contained units of instruction—builds upon the next, with individuals building and attaining new skills as they move through competency sets. Instructors teach modules in manageable “chunks” so that individuals with varying levels of proficiency can progress. Modularized curricula can support self-paced learning, which allows individual to complete coursework at their own pace rather than during set classroom times.
- **Integrated education and career-focused training programs that offer accelerated and contextualized remediation.** Contextualized remediation is instruction that embeds traditional academic content (e.g., reading, writing, mathematics) within technical coursework, e.g., within courses in a selected program(s) of study. This model often occurs in tandem with a co-requisite or concurrent model of instruction, which involves simultaneous enrollment of students in remedial and college-level coursework.
- **Dual enrollment for secondary and postsecondary pathway programs.** Dual enrollment programs allow students to access college classes and achieve college credit before they graduate high school. Such programs can serve as a fast track for students toward a career pathway that aligns with college courses and curriculum.
- **Improved comprehensive and personalized student support services and career guidance.** Support services, often referred to as wraparound supports, are designed to enable an individual’s participation in education and training, and may include child care, transportation, housing, counseling, and provision of work tools or work clothes, among other services. Support staff, known variously as navigators, success coaches, or career coaches, typically deliver or provide access to these services, offering academic guidance and advising, academic support, career coaching, job placement, referrals to resources, and other supplemental services. The Department encourages applicants to use grant funds to build their capacity to offer these services in the long term, and to coordinate with WIOA and other program partners to leverage the resources needed to address SCC2 project participant needs.

- **Use of online and distance learning and advanced training technologies for rapid feedback and adaptive learning.** Online and technology-enabled (including hybrid, or a blend of online and classroom instruction) learning strategies provide individuals an opportunity to balance the competing demands of work and family with acquiring new knowledge and skills at a time, place, and/or pace that is convenient for them. The use of technology to enable rolling and open enrollment processes, modularize content delivery, and accelerate course delivery, among other strategies, can help colleges and universities increase access to postsecondary education and training. However, while still emerging, there is evidence suggesting that unequal access to technology and “digital skills gaps” may disproportionately affect people of color (Anderson et al. 2021). Particularly given the rapid shift to online programming that the pandemic accelerated, institutions should prioritize efforts to ensure that online and hybrid learning environments are high quality and designed to successfully serve marginalized groups. The literature contains many examples of strategies for promoting student success in online programming, including ensuring that students have access to technology, software, and broadband internet; providing students with academic and technological supports that encourage engagement with faculty, peers, and course content; and offering instructors ongoing professional development to “prepare them for teaching online with an equity focus” (ibid., p. 17).

Refer to Appendix B for more information and resources on the strategies listed above.

3. **Core Element 3: Results-Driven Project Design**

In determining a project design for this Announcement, applicants will need to ask themselves, “How can we design and implement a work plan to support results-driven outcomes and report findings?”

A results-driven project design connects the needs that a project intends to address, its theory of change based on available evidence, and its proposed evidence-informed activities to a framework that explicitly lays out the logical connections for how the project will deliver the intended outcomes, including the required performance outcomes and additional outcomes of interest. By requiring that applicants follow a results-driven process for designing and managing their grant-funded projects, this FOA seeks to ensure that applicants and their project partners identify the data they will need to validate the project’s design. This approach gives successful applicants a process to more systemically assess their progress and performance, and the opportunity to learn from and improve their projects over time based on data that their projects generate over the life of their grant periods.

Applicants must submit the following information, either in the Project Narrative or as separate attachments, as indicated in Section IV.B.3. Project Narrative. Note that the Department encourages applicants to incorporate into the design process the relevant findings from the studies that they cite. The applicant’s design process must include the following components:

a. Logic Model

A logic model is a graphic illustration of the relationship between a program’s resources, activities, and its intended effects. Logic models are effective tools to assist in program planning, implementation, management, evaluation, and reporting. They help define a program’s intended impact and goals; the sequence of intended effects; which activities are to produce

which effect; and where to focus outcome and process evaluations. Evidence supports positive connections between program success and the use of logic models (Kellogg Foundation, Appendix D).

Based on the evidence-informed strategies proposed in Core Elements 1, 2, and 4, including the needs identified in the equity gap analysis, applicants will develop a logic model in a concise and clear, two-page diagram. The logic model must provide a clear depiction of the proposed strategic approach(es) through a system components table and a theory of change rooted in available evidence. See Appendix D for more information on developing a logic model. Applicants must submit the logic model as an attachment, which does not count against the page limits for the Project Narrative.

Project implementers and their partners should use the logic model in tracking progress made toward the achievement of project outputs and outcomes. In addition, as part of their required third-party evaluation, grantees are expected to work with their third-party evaluators to finalize their research questions and further refine and develop their logic model after the grants have been awarded.

b. Performance Outcomes and Grantee Accountability

All applicants must identify and define five customized performance outcomes to be used with their project, three that address key capacity-building goals and two that address key equity goals. See Section IV.B.3.(b)(2). To further quantify the benefits of SCC2 capacity-building initiatives, grantees will also be required to track participant outputs related to enrollment in and completion of a program of study, and credentials earned, for a cohort of students. However, applicants are not required to set participant targets, nor will grantees be required to track employment-related outcomes, as DOL will rely on the Common Reporting Information System (CRIS) for the latter. See Section IV.B.3.(b)(3) Participant Tracking Plan and Section VI.C. Reporting.

Please note that the applicant's five customized performance outcomes, and the related outputs, key milestones, and deliverables in the work plan scored elsewhere, form the basis of the Department's assessment of grantee performance. The Department will review these outcomes, outputs, milestones, and deliverables on a quarterly basis for technical assistance purposes, and annually for monitoring and compliance purposes. Grantees will report customized outcomes using the Quarterly Narrative Report. See Section VI.C for information on this DOL reporting requirement. It is allowable for the grantee's required third-party evaluator to assist grantees in documenting outcomes. However, the grantee remains fully responsible for the reporting requirements.

c. Project Work Plan

Applicants must present a comprehensive project work plan. A sample format can be found in Appendix H. The project work plan must demonstrate a cohesive, well-designed approach to implementing the project.

4. Core Element 4: Sustainable Systems Change

In determining a project design for this Announcement, applicants will need to ask themselves, “How can we ensure that the systems changes we make are institutionalized and sustained over the long term? What does the available evidence say about the strategies that will more likely lead to sustainable systems change?”

“Sustainable systems change **alters a sufficient number of key drivers** (incentives, rules, etc.) such that the system that once perpetuated a ‘problem’ now instead perpetuates a ‘solution.’ This has implications on the way projects are designed and implemented.”

- Woltering, L. et al. 2019, Appendix E

Systems change with respect to workforce development refers to “efforts and initiatives that go beyond providing direct services to individual jobseekers and aim to transform how organizations effectively support employers and the workforce” (Bernstein & Martin-Caughey 2017, p. 1, Appendix E). A key lesson from TAACCCT is that “embedding collaboration as a core element of an initiative” can help community colleges implement their systems change and capacity-building efforts (Eyster et al. 2020, p. xiii, Appendix B). Primary stakeholders in this collaboration include industry and employers, the public workforce development system, other institutions of higher education, unions, labor-management organizations, community-based organizations, and the departments and offices internal to community colleges.

Sustainable systems change within the context of this FOA reflects targeted change to key drivers within career pathway programs and their connected systems/subsystems that ensures equitable access and outcomes to quality jobs. Given the critical role that employers and the workforce development system play in innovative and sustainable career pathway programs and systems, this FOA requires that both sets of stakeholders serve as required partners.

All applicants must address in their Project Narrative how they intend to sustain built capacity and systems change which advances equity through the proposed SCC2 grant. [11] Built capacity and systems change include strategic accomplishments or innovations such as program designs, policy changes, and partnerships, and may include new approaches to employer engagement, new ways of supporting students, and new methods of instructional design and delivery. The narrative must also demonstrate how the grantee will sustain the capacity built through the engagement and buy-in of state and local partners. Note that accomplishments or innovations that support a broader agenda—in particular, those that align with the strategic priorities of the institution, the state, and other community college reform efforts—have a greater likelihood of being sustained.

B. PROGRAM AUTHORITY

Section 169(c) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) authorizes this program. See also Title I of Division H of Pub. L. 116-260, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, December 27, 2020.

C. ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES

A wide range of activities may assist applicants in their efforts to close equity gaps in addressing the skill development needs of employers and workers. This section provides examples of activities that the Department considers allowable under the FOA, provided that they relate directly to grant objectives. That is, for costs associated with an activity to be allowable, the grantee must undertake the activity in relation to a grant-funded program of study, and the activity must have a clear connection to strategies to support success that are related to the grant's identified equity gaps and to student employment outcomes.

The Department anticipates that the majority of applicants will include the five specific types of allowable activities under Overarching Capacity-Building Activities.

Overarching Capacity-Building Activities

1. Hiring and/or training instructors or staff (including the costs of salaries and benefits) to assist in the development and/or delivery of new or adapted curricula, development of online and distance learning, and the establishment of internships, clinical/cooperative education programs, or Registered Apprenticeships at employer sites (note that Registered Apprenticeships are allowable with these grant funds, but unregistered apprenticeships are not).
2. Purchasing or upgrading classroom supplies and equipment (with prior approval of the grant officer) and/or educational technologies that will contribute to the instructional purpose in education and training courses supported by the grant.
3. Activities to support implementing changes in the time or scheduling of courses and any associated costs.
4. Activities to support implementing data integration tools and any associated costs.
5. Activities necessary to support the required third-party evaluation and any associated costs.

Other allowable activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

Reviewing and Adjusting Policies and Practices

- Analyzing institutional data to assess student inequities and identify gaps in student success, and to inform the development of interventions to improve equity (e.g., using the Office of Community College Research and Leadership's comprehensive local needs assessment tool). [12]
- Reviewing recruitment and admission practices with respect to equity.
- Redesigning advising policies to support marginalized students as they decide on a career field and program of study.
- Examining the extent to which faculty and staff demographics reflect those of their students, and using that data to promote diversity in hiring.
- Engaging project staff or faculty in facilitated professional development with internal or external subject matter experts (e.g., facilitated partnerships and learning opportunities between career pathways staff and faculty, using the college's center for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility).

Developing Comprehensive Student Supports

- Expanding and improving the capacity of student services that directly support the goals of the grant (for example, career guidance programs or navigators).
- Where leveraged funds are not available, implementing and sustaining longer-term solutions for providing students with navigators that can assist them with financial, career, and academic plans (which, evidence shows, are critical to supporting first-generation and economically disadvantaged students toward completion, employment, and retention).

Curriculum Development

- Using subject matter experts from industry, education, state workforce agency, labor market and economic research entities, and other areas to inform and assist in curriculum design, including online course design.
- Accessing timely labor market information, as it relates to identifying labor market demand, skills transferability, and current and projected job openings.
- Developing learning resources and other openly licensed educational resources, preparing resources for ADA compliance and affixing the CC BY 4.0 attribution license to them (see Section IV.E.4), and making them publicly available for use and adaptation via a public dissemination platform.
- Adapting existing industry-recognized curricula to support direct education and training provided through the grant.
- Obtaining accreditation for employer- and/or industry-recognized credentials.
- Preparing and posting grant-funded curriculum and materials as Open Educational Resources to meet FOA requirements.
- Making information about credentials and competencies developed or delivered with grant funds publicly accessible using linked open data formats that support full transparency and interoperability to meet FOA requirements.

Note that, wherever possible, grantees are required to leverage and adapt the curricula that TAACCCT program grantees developed as open educational resources so that the Department does not pay for duplicative development of programs of study. These resources are found at <https://www.skillscommons.org/>; grantees are specifically encouraged to review the open courseware resources at <https://support.skillscommons.org/showcases/open-courseware/>.

Program Design and Continuous Improvement

- Designing innovative programs that incorporate a deep understanding of the customer experience for employers and workers in order to improve customer experience and outcomes.
- Engaging in other program development activities, such as using subject matter experts from industry, education, and other areas to assist in program design and delivery;
- Leveraging and aligning existing federal resources to ensure that efforts can move from planning to implementation to sustainable systems change.
- Developing, implementing, and/or maintaining a tech-enabled mechanism to collect ongoing feedback from employers and job seekers about the quality of the training

program, how well the training program meets the needs of employers and participants, and any necessary updates to the education and program training throughout the project.

- Developing staff and infrastructure capacity to acquire, organize, and/or analyze program data for continuous improvement and program evaluation.
- Minor alterations to adjust an existing space for grant activities (such as a classroom alteration), in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards located at 2 CFR part 200 and DOL specific requirements at 2 CFR part 2900.

Partner Collaboration

- Conducting outreach to potential stakeholders.
- Establishing or strengthening collaborative partnerships, networks, and organizational structures, including expanding staff resources as necessary to successfully collaborate with partners and to manage the process and plan development, including partnerships for credit transfer and articulation agreements.
- Developing and implementing working agreements with key systems stakeholders.
- Developing and implementing effective and regular external and internal communications among planning partners.
- Developing and implementing articulation agreements with colleges, universities, and other education and training partners that allow for recognition of course credits in exchange for the education and/or training provided
- Sharing grant learnings with other colleges.

Technology-Enabled Learning

- Implementing and/or enhancing the information technology infrastructure used to provide education, training, and related activities, whether virtual or in-person.
- Deploying technology intensively to create competency-based, self-paced, skills-based learning, and making interactive resources, such as simulations and videos, widely accessible.
- Using educational software and online, diagnostic tools to support remediation, basic skills training, and contextualized learning, and to help students succeed in their coursework.
- Delivering personalized and adaptive instruction that builds on student interests and prior knowledge.
- Providing interactive tools that improve the ability of educators to predict whether students are at risk of dropping out or failing courses, and to help provide early intervention; and developing educational software that is effective as a personal tutor.
- Using software tools to implement virtual student services to support career and academic planning. For example, colleges working closely with the workforce development system may incorporate online career planning assessment tools into their advising process to create individualized career plans for participants.
- Providing open access to computer labs that maintain flexible hours of operation to accommodate student schedules.

- Expanding professional development opportunities for faculty and adjunct instructors to enable them to become proficient at technology-enabled learning and to create an active and engaging online learning experience for students.

Internal Data Reporting Capacity

- Developing and adopting standard definitions for a common set of reporting elements for those students enrolled in noncredit and adult education courses that align with those elements collected for students enrolled in credit-bearing courses.
- Integrating data on students in both credit and noncredit courses and programs into institutional and statewide data systems.
- Integrating data on attainment of industry-recognized credentials into the common set of institution-wide reporting elements.
- Adopting standard policies for complying with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) requirements, such as policies for accessing student education records when connected with audit or evaluation of federal or state programs and enforcement of or compliance with federal legal requirements of those programs, standard practices or agreements for disclosing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) through written agreements, and other PII and records management practices.

Participant-Related Costs

While the following costs are allowable with this funding source, the Department expects grantees to leverage existing college infrastructure, WIOA funding, Federal Perkins and Pell Grants, and other available sources to cover such participant-related costs, where feasible:

- Conducting outreach and recruitment of eligible participants.
- Implementing an initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, competencies, integrated participant services, supportive service, and employment needs.
- Providing direct education and training, including a portion of participant wages for work-based learning.
- Providing job development, job search and placement assistance and, where appropriate, academic and career counseling.
- Providing case management services.
- Providing supportive services that will allow individuals to participate in and successfully complete the training provided through the grant, such as access to child care, transportation, housing, counseling, work tools, and work clothes.

Equipment and Minor Alterations

Expenditures for equipment and minor alterations, renovations, or rearrangements, if specific to the project, are allowable with prior written approval from the Grant Officer. Minor alterations, renovations, or rearrangements may include activities and associated costs such as relocating, modifying, replacing, or adding items (such as switches and outlets) related to internal environments (temperature, humidity, ventilation, and acoustics), and installation of fixed equipment (including fume hoods and audio/visual equipment).

Award of a grant under this FOA does not constitute prior approval of equipment or minor

alteration. After grant awards are made, grantees will be required to obtain specific Grant Officer approval before acquiring equipment or proceeding with proposed alteration of facilities. The Grant Officer must determine that all proposed equipment, and/or alterations are (1) allocable, necessary, and reasonable; (2) tied to specific grant-related deliverables and outcomes outlined in the grantee's statement of work (SOW) (including capacity-building and/or training outcomes); and (3) consistent with the FOA. In their budget narrative, applicants proposing to spend grant funds on alterations as outlined in the SOW and budget narrative must demonstrate how these expenditures will support the expansion and improvement of the education and training programs that are the focus of their proposed project.

Total costs to the grant of all alterations cannot exceed 15 percent of the total grant award. All grant-funded activities related to alterations must be completed no later than 24 months from the start of the period of performance.

Applicants should refer to Section VI.B.1 of the FOA for a list of applicable federal laws and regulations related to cost principles, administrative, and other requirements that apply to this Announcement.

D. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Applicants must identify the geographic scope of the proposed project. The Department is requiring community colleges to apply for this funding as a single institution, or as a state-focused consortium, a labor market-focused consortium, or an affinity-focused consortium. See Section III.A. Eligible Applicants for more information about the geographic scope of each.

E. TARGET SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

When selecting the career pathway(s) to be built or enhanced with grant funding, applicants must focus on those pathways that provide training to workers in in-demand industries, such as—but not limited to—advanced manufacturing, information technology, health care, clean energy, and others. Applicants also may consider how the development of and/or connection to entrepreneurial training to strengthen small business growth may support the chosen career pathways, in these and other industries, provided that the entrepreneurial training is aligned with grant goals and local economic needs.

Career pathways identified in application proposals must lead to good-quality jobs. For the purposes of this FOA, good-quality jobs are jobs that pay family-sustaining wages with wage progression, benefits, access to paid leave, opportunities for career advancement through training and education and, to the strongest extent possible, a platform for worker voice to support all workers and ensure fair pay and safe working conditions.

Within these priorities, applicants must demonstrate that the industry sectors that they select align with the skills and needs of their economic region and the target population(s) that are key to their equity gap analysis.

F. INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS

All career pathways developed or enhanced with grant funding must lead to industry-recognized credentials. As stated in ETA’s Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 25-19, an industry-recognized credential is either 1) developed and offered by, or endorsed by, a nationally or regionally recognized industry association or organization representing a sizeable portion of the industry sector; or 2) a credential that is sought or accepted by companies within the industry sector for purposes of hiring or recruitment, which may include credentials from vendors of certain products. [13] See Attachment 1 of TEN No. 25-19, page I-3 for additional information.

Please note that any credentials delivered or developed through this program must be publicly accessible through the use of linked open data formats that support full transparency and interoperability, such as through the use of the credential transparency description language specifications. See Section IV.E.4.

G. EVALUATIONS

An important aspect of this grant program will be to document the capacity built and the systems change achieved by grantees, and to share information about grantee successes and lessons learned with all grantees, as well as other interested colleges. There are three aspects to third-party evaluations related to this Announcement: a developmental evaluation or implementation evaluation required of all grantees; “Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding,” which is an option to apply for additional funding to undertake more rigorous evaluation; and the requirement to participate in a DOL evaluation, if one is led by the Department. We also offer all applicants (not just those awarded grants) the opportunity to engage with evaluation learnings and peer sharing from SCC2 grants. Each of these aspects is explained further below.

1. Required Third-Party Evaluation (All Applicants)

The Department believes that successful projects will develop evidence on effective workforce education and training strategies to address the needs of employers and to address equity gaps in a community college setting. Thus, all grantees are required to retain (after award) a third-party evaluator to design and execute a developmental evaluation or an implementation evaluation of each funded project. Figure 2 describes some differences between a developmental evaluation and an implementation evaluation. [14]

Figure 2: Developmental Evaluation vs. Implementation Evaluation

Developmental Evaluation	Implementation Evaluation
Purpose: Collects and uses data to provide real-time feedback to inform the development of the intervention and potential adaptations to the intervention to address dynamic environments.	Purpose: Collects and uses data to examine if the intervention was implemented as intended. It assesses how the program or service is delivered relative to its intended theory of change, and often includes information on content, quantity, quality, and structure of services provided.

<p>Roles & relationships: Positioned as a collaborator and gathers data to provide feedback and support course correction as part of an ongoing process of continuous improvement, adaptation, and intentional change. (Note: If the same contractor firm will be conducting both a developmental evaluation and implementation evaluation, an appropriate firewall between the different study teams should be established.)</p>	<p>Roles & relationships: Positioned as an external partner to assure independence and objectivity.</p>
<p>Examples of evaluation questions: In what ways is the initiative evolving/developing with the changing levels/quality of stakeholders' involvement? What are the stakeholders learning from the ongoing iterations to the initiative? In what ways is design thinking or other frameworks influencing the initiative?</p>	<p>Examples of evaluation questions: How are the program and strategies being designed, planned, and implemented? What are the challenges to program implementation? To what extent are participants being reached and served as intended? How satisfied are program stakeholders? What has been done in an innovative way?</p>
<p>Measurement: Develops evaluation measures and tracking mechanisms quickly as outcomes emerge; measures can change during the evaluation as the process unfolds.</p>	<p>Measurement: Develops pre-determined evaluation measures that do not change.</p>

Post-award, DOL will provide grantees with a description of key components the third-party evaluations will be expected to include, which may assist grantees in creating a statement of work to recruit and select an evaluator with the needed competencies and expertise to carry out the evaluation. Key components of the evaluation will include, but are not limited to: a description of the program's logic model, clearly defined research objectives and research questions, and an appropriate and rigorous research design, data measures, data sources, data collection plans, and analytic methods.

The cost of the study should not exceed five percent of the applicant's overall budget, and must be included in the overall grant budget and budget narrative. All applicants must submit a Third-Party Evaluation Procurement Plan as an attachment to their Project Narrative, which covers the specific steps that will be undertaken to procure an evaluator for the required third-party evaluation, demonstrating how those steps meet the following procurement requirements:

- Consistency with Federal procurement law at 2 CFR 200.320, as well as any applicable college, state, or other procurement regulations. Note that, because the budget limit for the evaluator is no more than five percent of the total grant, the total may be under the Simplified Acquisition Threshold of \$250,000. Such purchases are referred to as "Small Purchases," with specific rules found at 2 CFR 200.320(a)(2).
- Consistency with institution, state, or other relevant entities' procurement requirements. Note that, if the institution, state, or other relevant entity has more

restrictive rules for the type of procurement planned, the procurement must meet both those requirements and federal requirements.

Grantees must procure their required third-party evaluator by the end of month six, if possible under required federal, institutional, and any other relevant procurement guidelines. After procuring a third-party evaluator, grantees must submit a Draft Detailed Evaluation Design from their evaluator, which must be revised and submitted as a Final Detailed Evaluation Design, based on feedback provided by the Department. DOL will review the submissions to ensure that the designs are feasible. In the evaluation design, grantees must include plans to submit Interim and Final Reports from their third-party evaluator by the milestones specified below.

Required milestones and deliverables for the third-party evaluation are as follows, and they must be included in the required Project Work Plan. Deviations from this timeline are possible but require prior ETA approval. See Section IV.B.3.(c)(8).

- No later than Month 6 (or the earliest timing that is feasible under the grantee's institutional procurement guidelines): Procure third-party evaluator for developmental or implementation evaluation.
- No later than Month 9: Submit a Draft Detailed Evaluation Design from the evaluator, using guidance provided by the Department.
- No later than Month 12: Submit a Final Detailed Evaluation Design in collaboration with the third-party evaluator.
- Throughout: Ensure that the third-party evaluator carries out the evaluation and completes all tasks and deliverables, and provides ongoing input and consultation.
- No later than Month 27: Submit the evaluator's Interim Implementation or Developmental Evaluation Report to the grantee's Federal Project Officer (FPO) and Program Office using the suggested format or similar layout, provided after grant award.
- No later than Month 48: Submit the evaluator's Final Implementation or Developmental Evaluation Report using the suggested format or similar layout.

2. Option to Exceed the Funding Cap: Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding (Optional but encouraged for all applicants)

In addition to the required third-party evaluation described above, and to support rigorous evaluations, SCC2 offers the opportunity for successful applicants to receive additional funds, beyond the grant maximum, to conduct an impact, outcome, or behavioral interventions study that focuses on evaluating the achievement of their proposed equity gap goals. [15] This FOA refers to this opportunity as "Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding." The Department anticipates that this funding will be awarded in the form of additional funds to one or more successful applicants for an SCC2 Program Grant.

All applicants have the option to submit, as an attachment to their SCC2 Program Grant proposal, a separate Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding proposal in response to the criteria below. Both consortia and single institution applicants may submit such proposals, which will be evaluated competitively. Among institutions awarded SCC2 Program Grants, the Department estimates that approximately 2-4 grantees will receive Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding, based on separate review of the respective Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding proposals. If

the Department does not receive competitive proposals for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding, any remaining funds will be awarded in the form of SCC2 Program Grants.

The benefits of participating in Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding include the opportunity to gain valuable additional data and insights related to an institution's specific equity goals; the occasion to participate in and contribute to the larger national conversation about those goals; and additional funding to cover the full cost of the contracted evaluator and at least partial internal costs of conducting the additional evaluation activities.

Suggested benchmarks for impact, outcome, and behavioral intervention evaluations are included in Appendix F. Should an awarded applicant for the SCC Program Grant also be awarded Additional SCC2 Evaluation, the Department will provide these successful applicants with additional technical assistance to support procurement and ongoing implementation of a rigorous quality evaluation. The lead institution will be responsible for procuring an evaluator (after award) using a process consistent with federal, institutional and other procurement rules. If an evaluator is involved in drafting the lead institution's proposal for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding, that evaluator is ineligible to serve as the evaluator for any subsequent "Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding" contract under this grant. An evaluator awarded additional SCC2 evaluation funding may serve as the third-party evaluator for the implementation or developmental evaluation required with the SCC Program grant funds, so long as they were awarded that contract through the grantee organization's procurement process. If the same contractor firm will be conducting both a developmental evaluation and an impact, outcomes, or behavioral interventions study under the additional SCC2 evaluation funding component, the evaluator must establish an appropriate firewall between the different study teams.

A portion of the Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding will be available to the institution to provide staffing support, such as leadership from the institution's research division, and staff to support additional data collection. See Section II.A. Award Type and Amount for more information.

Applicants seeking Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding must demonstrate that they meet the factors for consideration listed in Section IV.B.3. Project Narrative for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding. See also Section V.B.3. Merit Review and Selection Process for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding for information on how the evaluation of supplementary materials for applications requesting funds above the amount of the award ceiling will be considered in the selection process.

3. Required Participation in DOL Evaluation

All successful applicants must participate in a national evaluation, if one is led by the Department. See Section VI.B.4. Special Program Requirements for more information.

4. Opportunity to Engage with SCC2 Program Evaluations and Learnings

The Department realizes that writing a proposal in response to an Announcement requires considerable effort, and that doing so is in itself a capacity-building undertaking. To build on that effort, and to share the knowledge gained from this grant with applicants who do not win awards, learnings will be available to all interested parties

on <https://collegeconnection.workforcegps.org/>. In addition, we will create a “Community College Capacity-Building Learning Cohort” that receives invitations to selected SCC-related technical assistance activities. All applicants will receive information from DOL about how to access this opportunity after we make awards under this Announcement.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AWARD TYPE AND AMOUNT

Funding will be provided in the form of a Grant.

We expect availability of approximately \$45,000,000 to fund SCC2 Program Grants, including up to \$5 million that may be used for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding. Applicants may apply for a ceiling amount of up to \$5,000,000 for SCC2 program grants. Awards made under this Announcement are subject to the availability of federal funds. In the event that additional funds become available, we reserve the right to use such funds to select additional grantees from applications submitted in response to this Announcement.

SCC2 Program Grants: Single institution applicants may apply for a ceiling amount of \$1.6 million and consortium lead applicants may apply for a ceiling amount of \$5 million. The minimum for both types of applicants is \$1.5 million. Subject to receiving sufficient applications of fundable quality, DOL intends to award at least 75 percent of grant funds to consortium applicants and the remaining grant funds to single institution applicants. DOL anticipates that the funding as described in this FOA will yield approximately 5-7 consortia grants and 6-8 single institution grants.

Affinity-focused consortia may be awarded grants alongside State-focused or labor market-focused consortia. In addition, up to \$5 million of SCC2 Program Grant funds will be set aside for one or more qualifying affinity-focused consortium applicants.

Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding: Subject to receiving applications of fundable quality, DOL may award up to \$5 million out of the total amount available for Strengthening Community College Training Grants in the form of Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding, to provide additional funding for rigorous evaluation to approximately 2-4 applicants who are selected for SCC2 Program Grants.

Consortium and single institution applicants may apply to exceed their respective maximum funding level of \$5 million and \$1.6 million by proposing an impact, outcome, or behavioral intervention evaluation as described in Section I.H.2. Option to Exceed the Funding Cap: Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding.

- Consortium applicants that include all institution consortium members in their application for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding may seek up to an additional \$1.65 million for a grant total not to exceed \$6.65 million. Successful awardees may use up to 30 percent of the \$1.65 million to staff the additional tasks required for the evaluation.
- Single institution applicants, or consortium applicants that include only the lead college for the purposes of Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding, may seek up to an additional \$1.2 million for a total grant award not to exceed \$2.8 million or \$6.2 million

respectively. Successful awardees may use up to 20 percent of the \$1.2 million to staff the additional tasks required for the evaluation.

B. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The period of performance is 48 months with an anticipated start date of 09/01/2022. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities.

We expect that start-up activities, such as hiring appropriate grant program staff and project design activities, will begin immediately after grant award. Grantees are required to procure their required third-party evaluator by the end of month six, if possible under their institution's procurement guidelines. Written requests for prior approval to acquire grant-funded special purpose equipment and/or to alter space must be submitted no later than 12 months after the award date of the grant; DOL strongly encourages grantees to submit such requests within the first 90 days. Grant Officer-approved special purpose equipment and/or altered space must be acquired, completed, and available for use in support of the project's statement of work no later than 24 months after the award date of the grant; DOL strongly encourages grantees to begin to use such investments sooner. Grantees are expected to start enrolling participants in grant-funded programs of study by at least month 12, with consideration of academic calendars, though sooner is preferred. We strongly encourage grantees to develop their project work plans and timelines accordingly. Required outputs, including key milestones and deliverables, must be included in an attachment to the Project Narrative; see Appendix H: Suggested Project Work Plan Format.

Grantees must plan to fully expend grant funds during the period of performance. DOL does not anticipate period of performance extensions under this FOA.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

1. Applicant Types and Requirements

In keeping with the direction provided by Congress under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, the Department will award grants under this program to lead applicants that meet one of the following definitions:

- **Single Institution:** A community college that is a public institution as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act, and at which the associate degree is primarily the highest degree awarded, as shown by the college's designation at <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>. A single institution lead applicant must partner with one or more workforce development system partners, and required employer partner(s), as described below. Together, the required and optional partners are referred to as a Strengthening Community Colleges (SCC) Training Grants Partnership (or SCC Partnership). The requirements for required and optional partners are described below in Section III.A.5. SCC Partnership. Applicants must list all partners in the abstract. The Department expects that a single institution will align the SCC2 grant with the geographic area served by that college; it also may align the grant with additional geographic regions of other colleges in its state, as permitted by institutional guidelines.

- **Institution Consortium:** A lead applicant representing a consortium of institutions, as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act. The consortium lead must be a community college that is a public institution of higher education as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act, and at which the associate degree is primarily the highest degree awarded, as shown by the college’s designation at <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>. Consortium members may include community colleges and public and private, non-profit four-year institutions, as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act. Grants will be awarded to the lead applicant of the institution consortium, which will serve as the grantee and have overall fiscal and administrative responsibility for the grant.

An institution consortium must include at least the consortium lead and one other institution, but the Department anticipates that more than two colleges will be required to accomplish the goals of the consortium, depending on the specific consortium focus. The institution consortium must partner with one or more workforce development system partners, and employer partner(s), as described below. Together the required and optional partners are referred to as a Strengthening Community Colleges (SCC) Training Grants Partnership (or SCC Partnership). The requirements for required and optional partners are described below in Section III.A.3. SCC Partnership. Applicants must list all partners in the abstract.

For consortium applicants, the Department is requiring institutions to apply for this funding as a consortium of colleges that will undertake systems change through one of three specific lenses: state-level, labor market, or affinity-focused.

- ***State-focused consortium:*** Institutions within a state may apply as a consortium to focus on creating sustainable systems change within their state community college and workforce systems. State-focused consortia must coordinate with and between partners to support sustainable systems change at the state level and leverage state resources in the achievement of program outcomes and outputs. The Department strongly encourages state-focused consortia to include a state institution coordinating entity in their SCC Partnership. See Section III.A.5.(d) Optional Partners for examples of institution coordinating entities. We encourage (but do not require) state-focused consortium applicants to include all, or a majority, of institutions in a state, if feasible based on the project design. The Department expects state-focused consortia to align the SCC2 grant with the geographic area served by at least the colleges in the institution consortium, and encourages such consortia to align with the geographic areas of other non-funded colleges in the state, as permitted by institutional guidelines—particularly with respect to systems change at the state level.
- ***Labor market-focused consortium:*** Institutions within a state or across two or more contiguous states that share a common economic region may apply as a consortium to address equity gaps and respond to the workforce needs of a specific industry sector within the region’s labor market. Labor market-focused consortia must describe their economic region, and define how they will coordinate with and between partners to support sustainable systems change at the regional level and how the project will leverage state, interstate, or regional

resources in the achievement of program outcomes and outputs. The Department expects labor market-focused consortia to align the SCC2 grant with the geographic area of the economic region, as defined in the application.

- ***Affinity-focused consortium:*** A consortium that has a lead applicant and majority membership of institutions eligible as Qualified Institutions (see Section III.A.3. Qualified Institution) and focuses on building capacity to address equity gaps and achieve systems changes within an affinity focus. Colleges that are not designated as Qualified Institutions may be members of the consortium, as long as the lead applicant and a majority of the institution membership are Qualified Institutions. Affinity-focused consortia must describe the affinity focus of their consortium, and describe how they will coordinate with and between partners to support sustainable systems change to address equity gaps specific to their chosen area of affinity and to build career pathways that address worker demand and employer skill needs through an equity lens. Affinity-focused consortia must also describe how the program will leverage connected systems resources, such as state, interstate, or labor market systems, in the achievement of program outcomes and outputs. Examples of affinity-focused consortia include, but are not limited to, a consortium of tribal colleges, a consortium of HBCUs, or a consortium of a majority of Qualified Institutions and minority of institutions that are not Qualified Institutions. In each example, the affinity-focused consortium would seek to address equity gaps that specifically impact the chosen area of affinity and which are common to its institution consortium members, through building or enhancing a common career pathway or pathways as described in Section I.A.2. Core Element 2. While there are no geographic restrictions on affinity consortia, the Department expects affinity-focused consortia to align the SCC2 grant with the geographic areas served by its institution members, though institutions outside of the SCC2 consortium may also be able to benefit if the affinity focus aligns with existing efforts in those geographic areas.

Note that, to be considered an affinity-focused consortium, the lead applicant and a majority of institution consortium members must qualify as Qualified Institutions, as specified in Section III.A.3 Qualified Institution, below. If an applicant applying as an affinity-focused consortium fails to meet the criteria outlined in that section, their application will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed.

See Funding Opportunity Announcement for specific eligibility requirements.

2. Eligible Lead Applicant

For both single and consortium applicants, grants will be awarded to the lead applicant of an SCC Partnership, which will serve as the grantee and have overall fiscal and administrative responsibility for the grant. To have a broader reach, colleges that won grants in the first round of SCC will be ineligible to apply as leads in the second round, but eligible to be consortium members.

As stated previously, the consortium lead must be a community college that is a public institution of higher education as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act, and at which the

associate degree is primarily the highest degree awarded, as shown by the college's designation at <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>. [16] Lead applicants must identify their institution type (as indicated on the NCES website) in Section 9 of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance.

To be eligible as either a lead applicant or as a member of an SCC Partnership, all institutions must, by the closing date of this FOA and throughout the entity's performance in this grant program, be accredited 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/>.

Please note that all elements of 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards) and 2 CFR Part 2900 (DOL's Supplement to 2 CFR Part 200), including the monitoring and examination of records, apply to any entity that carries out a federal award as a recipient or subrecipient, including for-profit organizations. In addition, the entity may not earn or keep any profit resulting from federal financial assistance.

3. Qualified Institutions

Under this Announcement, priority consideration of two bonus points is available to lead institutions that the Department deems "Qualified Institutions," as described below. In addition, colleges that wish to form an Affinity-Focused Consortium (see Section III.A.1. Applicant Types and Requirements) must have an institution consortium in which the lead applicant, as well as a majority of member institutions, are Qualified Institutions.

Qualified Institutions: The Department considers institutions of higher education to be Qualified Institutions for the purposes of this Announcement if they:

- Meet eligibility under Part F of the HEA of 1965, 20 U.S. Code § 1067q – Investment in Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Other Minority-Serving Institutions, and are designated by the U.S. Department of Education at its Eligibility Designations and Applications for Waiver of Eligibility Requirements website. Eligibility must be for FY 2021 or FY 2022. See "Eligibility Matrix" below for how this will be determined.

Note that the Eligibility Matrix includes the Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities program under Title III and the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institution program under Title V of the Higher Education Act. It also includes Tribal Colleges and Universities, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions Programs, the Predominantly Black Institutions Program, the Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions Program, and the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Program.

OR

- Meet both basic and specific eligibility requirements under Part A of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, 20 U.S. Code § 1057-1059b – Strengthening Institutions

Program (SIP), and are designated by the U.S. Department of Education at its Eligibility Designations and Applications for Waiver of Eligibility Requirements website. Eligibility must be for FY 2021 or FY 2022. See “Eligibility Matrix” below for how this will be determined.

The purpose of the U.S. Department of Education’s Strengthening Institutions Program is to support institutions of higher education to help them become self-sufficient and expand their capacity to serve low-income students by providing funds to improve and strengthen the institution's academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability. To be eligible for SIP funding, the institution must have at least half of its students receiving financial aid or a higher than average percentage receiving Pell grants, and also have low expenditures per student. More information is available at <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/iduestitle3a/index.html>.

Required Letter and Eligibility Matrix: For the purposes of identifying Qualified Institutions for this Announcement, applicants must provide, as a requested attachment, a letter from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), labeled “Letter Identifying Eligibility from the U.S. Department of Education.” This letter verifies an institution’s eligibility under Titles III and V, and can be downloaded by institutions with existing accounts or requested from OPE directly. Eligibility must be for FY 2021 or FY 2022. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Labor may also utilize the Eligibility Matrix 2021 or 2022, found on the Eligibility Designations and Applications for Waiver of Eligibility Requirements at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/idades/eligibility.html#el-inst> to further verify eligibility. DOL will consider those institutions that receive a ‘Yes’ designation in the column labeled “Eligible/Current Grantee” (column “AL”) on the Eligibility Matrix 2021 or 2022 to be a Qualified Institution for this Announcement, and those same institutions should be able to provide the eligibility letter from OPE.

4. **Role of Lead Applicant**

In the required abstract, applicants must clearly identify the lead applicant and each required member of the SCC Partnership.

The lead applicant will serve as the grantee, must be the organization specified in Section 8 of the SF-424 Application Form, and will be:

- the point of contact with the Department to receive and respond to all inquiries or communications under this FOA and any subsequent grant award;
- the entity with authority to withdraw or draw down funds through the Department of Health and Human Services - Payment Management System (HHS-PMS);
- the entity responsible for submitting to the Department all deliverables under the grant, including all technical and financial reports related to the project, regardless of which partnership member performed the work;
- the entity that may request or agree to a revision or amendment of the grant agreement or statement of work;
- the entity that ensures that the programmatic functions are carried out, as well as provides stewardship of all expenditures under the grant;

- the entity responsible for coordinating with both the grant’s required third-party evaluator and with DOL’s national evaluator, including participating in a national evaluation and other studies, if required by DOL; and
- the entity responsible for working with DOL to close out the grant.

5. **Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants (SCC) Partnership**

A **single institution** applicant’s SCC Partnership will comprise the lead applicant, the required workforce development system partner(s), the required employer partners, and any optional partners, each of which is described below. In forming the partnership, applicants should consider which entities have the best ability to support the requirements described in Core Elements 1-4 in Section I.A. The Department strongly encourages single institution applicants to partner with unions or labor-management organizations within industries that directly connect to their proposed career pathway(s). Applicants must demonstrate strong engagement of the partnership leaders necessary to achieve the commitments made in the application, as described in Section IV.B.3. Project Narrative.

A **consortium** applicant’s SCC Partnership will comprise the institution consortium members, including the lead applicant, the required workforce development system partner(s), the required employer partners, and any optional partners, each of which is described below. In forming the partnership, applicants should consider which entities have the best ability to support the systems changes described in Core Elements 1-4 in Section I.A. The Department strongly encourages consortium applicants to partner with unions or labor-management organizations within industries that directly connect to their proposed career pathway(s). Applicants must demonstrate strong engagement of the partnership leaders necessary to achieve the commitments made in the application, as described in the Section IV.B.3. Project Narrative.

For **both single institution and consortium applicants**, to demonstrate the active involvement of the required partners, applicants must provide signed documentation of commitments from the required partners—such as signed memoranda of understanding, a partnership agreement, or another type of signed agreement—which demonstrate the engagement of high-level leadership for each entity being proposed as a required partner. Additionally, active involvement and the depth of partnerships may be indicated through budgeted grant funding allocations and leveraged resources and funding from partners. The Department encourages applicants to include leveraged resources and/or funding commitments in commitment documentation. Applicants will be scored based on the quality of partner involvement in the project, as described in Section IV.B.3. Project Narrative.

a. **Institution Consortium (Required for Consortia)**

The Department is requiring consortium applicants to apply for this funding as a consortium of colleges that will undertake systems change with a state-level focus, labor market focus, or an affinity focus. An institution consortium must include at least the consortium lead and one other institution, but the Department anticipates that more than two colleges will be required to accomplish the goals of the consortium, depending on the specific consortium focus. The lead applicant community college serves as one of the consortium members. Public and private,

non-profit two-year and four-year institutions of higher education, as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act, are eligible to participate as members of the consortium. In forming the consortium of institutions, applicants must consider which institutions will be best able to support the systems changes described in Section I.A. Applications will be scored based on the alignment of the institution consortium members with the type of consortium and the systems changes proposed.

b. Required Workforce Development System Partner(s) (All Applicants)

All applicants must include in their SCC Partnership one or more partners from the publicly funded workforce development system. For the purpose of this FOA, the workforce development system entities are state workforce agencies, or state and local workforce development boards under Section 121 of WIOA and Native American entities eligible for funding under Section 166 of WIOA (29 U.S.C. 3221). These organizations have state or local expertise in workforce development and may provide leadership in implementing the following types of activities, or oversee the organizations, such as American Job Centers, that implement them:

1. Understanding and analyzing the need for education and training in the local area, including identifying targeted industries, occupations, sector strategies, hiring needs, and populations to be served, and providing relevant sources of data, including labor market information and other tools or reports.
2. Assessing potential participants for the grant program.
3. Identifying and referring candidates for education and training in the grant program.
4. Providing additional supportive services.
5. Connecting and placing participants with employers that have job openings.
6. Collecting, tracking, and reporting participant data to ETA.

In selecting the required workforce development system partner(s), applicants should consider which entity(ies) will be best able to support the Core Elements in Section I.A., which may include either or both workforce boards and American Job Centers.

c. Required Employer Partner(s) (All Applicants)

All applicants must include in their SCC Partnership an employer partnership consisting of an industry/trade association or an employer sector consortium of at least three employers, for each proposed industry sector. An industry/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. Applicants proposing an employer sector consortium must describe how they will use a sector strategy to work with the employers as a cohesive group representative of a locally or regionally in-demand sector, not as individual employers.

The employer partnership will play an important role in supporting grant success with respect to the development of career pathways, and its roles and responsibilities in doing so must be outlined in Section IV.B.3. Project Narrative.

d. Optional Partners (All Applicants)

While the required partners reflect collaboration between higher education, employers, and the workforce development system, we strongly encourage applicants to collaborate with other partners that can support and advance the work of the SCC Partnership. Given that the SCC program aims to increase the capacity and responsiveness of community colleges to close equity gaps and to meet the skill development needs of employers in in-demand industries, we encourage applicants to partner with organizations that have successfully engaged historically underrepresented and marginalized populations and communities. Such collaboration may take multiple forms and support a variety of goals, including, but not limited to, the following:

- In support of quality jobs, the Department strongly encourages applicants to partner with unions or labor-management organizations within the industries that directly connect to the proposed career pathway(s) where feasible, whether as part of their employer partnership or as optional partners.
- Applicants may also benefit from partnering with community-based organizations that provide social supports and/or wrap-around services.
- To support sustainability and scaling of the efforts funded by this FOA, state-focused consortium applicants are strongly encouraged to include in their SCC Partnerships at least one state-level or community college district-level entity. Examples include, but are not limited to, a state governing body for community colleges or for institutions of higher education more broadly; a statewide association of community colleges; or a community college district (or equivalent) entity.
- Other optional partners may include tribal entities, technical colleges, State Apprenticeship Agencies, federally funded programs such as Adult Education and Perkins V, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training programs, economic development agencies, and foundations and philanthropic organizations.

B. COST SHARING OR MATCHING

This program does not require cost sharing or matching funds. Including such funds is not one of the application screening criteria and applications that include any form of cost sharing or match will not receive additional consideration during the review process. Instead, the agency considers any resources contributed to the project beyond the funds provided by the agency as leveraged resources. Section IV.B.2 provides more information on leveraged resources.

C. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Application Screening Criteria

You should use the checklist below as a guide when preparing your application package to ensure that the application has met all of the screening criteria. Note that this checklist is only an aid for applicants and should not be included in the application package. We urge you to use this checklist to ensure that your application contains all required items. 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 requirements are met	Section IV.C	
Eligibility	Section III.A	
The components of the application are saved in any of the specified formats and are not corrupt. <i>(We will attempt to open the document, but will not take any additional measures in the event of problems with opening.)</i>	Section IV.C.2	
Application federal funds request does not exceed the ceiling amount of \$1.6 million for single institutions or \$5 million for consortium leads, nor is it less than \$1.5 million for either type of applicant.	Section II.A	
If applying as an Affinity-Focused Consortium, eligibility of the lead and a majority of consortium members as “Qualified Institutions”	Section III.A.3	
SAM Registration	Section IV.B.1	
SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance	Section IV.B.1	
SF-424 includes a DUNS Number	Section IV.B.1	
SF-424A, Budget Information Form	Section IV.B.2	
Budget Narrative	Section IV.B.2	
Project Narrative	Section IV.B.3	

2. Number of Applications Applicants May Submit

We will consider only one application from each organization. If we receive multiple applications from the same organization, we will consider only the most recently received

application that met the deadline. If the most recent application is disqualified for any reason, we will not replace it with an earlier application.

Eligible applicants may submit an application as the lead applicant, and also serve as an institution consortium member in an application or applications in which they do not serve as the lead applicant.

3. Eligible Participants

a. Participants Eligible to Receive Training

For the purposes of tracking participants under this FOA, “participants” are defined as the students enrolled in a program of study that is being developed or improved using SCC2 Program Grant funds. The definition of eligible participants is broad. Consistent with the funding source, eligible participants include a spectrum of workers—dislocated workers, incumbent workers, and new entrants to the workforce, including older youth.

Additionally, through a focus on addressing equity gaps, these grants will target historically marginalized or underrepresented populations and communities—specifically people of color, women, individuals with disabilities, and those previously incarcerated—in their career pathway approach. The focus on building the capacity to offer accelerated career pathways to quality jobs will also benefit other populations, such as veterans and military spouses, and other individuals.

Applicants must identify a specific cohort of students that, if awarded, they will use to track participant-level outcomes. See Section IV.B.3.(b)(3) Participant Tracking Plan and Section VI.C. Reporting.

Applicants may propose a project that focuses on providing services to participants who fall within any one of the following three categories: dislocated workers, new entrants to the workforce, or incumbent workers. The three categories of workers are defined as follows:

- i. **New entrants to the workforce:** For the purposes of this FOA, we consider “new entrants to the workforce” to refer to those who have never worked before or who have been out of the workforce for a long enough time as though they are entering the workforce for the first time. For example, this may include, but is not limited to, long-term unemployed individuals and formerly incarcerated individuals. Also eligible, consistent with federal and state wage and employment laws, are youth who are enrolled in their junior or senior year of high school/secondary school and who could 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.
- ii. **Dislocated workers:** For the purposes of this FOA, this term refers to individuals who were terminated or laid-off or have received a notice of termination or lay-off from employment; or were self-employed but are now unemployed, as well as other individuals defined in WIOA Sec. 3(15).
- iii. **Incumbent workers:** For the purposes of this FOA, this term refers to individuals who are employed (with any employer) but need training to secure full-time employment, advance in their careers, or retain their current occupations. This includes low-wage and medium-wage workers who need to upgrade their skills to

retain employment or advance in their careers, and workers who are currently working part-time.

- i. Unemployed workers: For the purposes of this FOA, we define “unemployed worker” as an individual who is without a job and who wants and is available to work. This can include the long-term unemployed, such as individuals who have been unemployed for six months or more, and youth who have dropped out of school and are seeking their first full-time job.
- ii. Dislocated workers: For the purposes of this FOA, this term refers to individuals who were terminated or laid-off or have received a notice of termination or lay-off from employment; or were self-employed but are now unemployed.
- iii. Incumbent workers: For the purposes of this FOA, this term refers to individuals who are employed but need training to secure full-time employment, advance in their careers, or retain their current occupations. This includes low-wage and medium-wage workers who need to upgrade their skills to retain employment or advance in their careers, and workers who are currently working part-time.

b. Veterans’ Priority for Participants

38 U.S.C. 4215 requires grantees to provide priority of service to veterans and spouses of certain veterans for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services in any job training program directly funded, in whole or in part, by DOL. The regulations implementing this priority of service are at 20 CFR Part 1010. In circumstances where a grant recipient must choose between two qualified candidates for a service, one of whom is a veteran or eligible spouse, the veterans’ priority of service provisions require that the grant recipient give the veteran or eligible spouse priority of service by first providing him or her that service. To obtain priority of service, a veteran or spouse must meet the program’s eligibility requirements. Grantees must comply with DOL guidance on veterans’ priority. ETA’s Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 10-09 (issued November 10, 2009) provides guidance on implementing priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses in all qualified job training programs funded in whole or in part by DOL. TEGL No. 10-09 is available at https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2816.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. HOW TO OBTAIN AN APPLICATION PACKAGE

This FOA, found at www.Grants.gov and <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/apply/find-opportunities> contains all of the information and links to forms needed to apply for grant funding.

B. CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applications submitted in response to this FOA must consist of four separate and distinct parts:

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

3. Project Narrative; and

4. Attachments to the Project Narrative.

You must ensure that the funding amount requested is consistent across all parts and sub-parts of the application.

1. SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance”

You must complete the SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance” (available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>).

- In the address field, fill out the nine-digit (plus hyphen) zip code. Nine-digit zip codes can be looked up on the USPS website at <https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction!input.action>.
- The SF-424 must clearly identify the applicant and must be signed by an individual with authority to enter into a grant agreement. Upon confirmation of an award, the individual signing the SF-424 on behalf of the applicant is considered the Authorized Representative of the applicant. As stated in block 21 of the SF-424 form, the signature of the Authorized Representative on the SF-424 certifies that the organization is in compliance with the Assurances and Certifications form SF-424B (available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>). You do not need to submit the SF-424B with the application.

If applying for the additional SCC2 evaluation funding, do not include the additional amount on the SF-424. No SF-424 application form is needed for the additional funding. Follow the submission requirements in IV.B.3.

In addition, the applicant’s Authorized Representative’s signature in block 21 of the SF-424 form constitutes assurance by the applicant of compliance with the WIOA 188 rules issued by the Department at 29 CFR 38.25, which includes the following language:

As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under Title I WIOA, the grant applicant assures that it has the ability to comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: Section 188 of the WIOA and its implementing regulations at 29 CFR Part 38, which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship or status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States, or participation in any WIOA Title I—financially assisted program or activity; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color, and national origin; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities; The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs.

The grant applicant also assures, that as a recipient of WIOA Title I financial assistance [as defined at 29 CFR 38.4(zz)], it will comply with 29 CFR part 38 and all other regulations

implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the grant applicant's operation of the WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements the grant applicant makes to carry out the WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. The grant applicant understands that the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

In addition, the applicant's Authorized Representative's signature in block 21 of the SF-424 form constitutes assurance by the applicant of compliance with the WIOA 188 rules issued by the Department at 29 CFR 38.25, which includes the following language:

As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under Title I WIOA, the grant applicant assures that it has the ability to comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: Section 188 of the WIOA and its implementing regulations at 29 CFR Part 38, which prohibit discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship or status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States, or participation in any WIOA Title I—financially assisted program or activity; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color, and national origin; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities; The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs.

The grant applicant also assures, that as a recipient of WIOA Title I financial assistance [as defined at 29 CFR 38.4(zz)], it will comply with 29 CFR part 38 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the grant applicant's operation of the WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements the grant applicant makes to carry out the WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. The grant applicant understands that the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

a. Requirement for DUNS Number

All applicants for federal grant and funding opportunities must have a DUNS number, and must supply their DUNS Number on the SF-424. The DUNS Number is a nine-digit identification number that uniquely identifies business entities. If you do not have a DUNS Number, you can get one for free through the D&B website: <https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do>.

Grant recipients authorized to make subawards must meet these requirements related to DUNS Numbers:

- Grant recipients must notify potential subawardees that no entity may receive a subaward unless the entity has provided its DUNS number.

- Grant recipients may not make a subaward to an entity unless the entity has provided its DUNS number.

(See Appendix A to 2 CFR Part 25.)

b. Requirement for Registration with SAM

Applicants must register with the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting an application. Find instructions for registering with SAM at <https://www.sam.gov>.

A recipient must maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application under consideration. To remain registered in the SAM database after the initial registration, the applicant is required to review and update the registration at least every 12 months from the date of initial registration or subsequently update its information in the SAM database to ensure it is current, accurate, and complete. For purposes of this paragraph, the applicant is the entity that meets the eligibility criteria and has the legal authority to apply and to receive the award. If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time the Grant Officer is ready to make a federal award, the Grant Officer may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

2. Project Budget

You must complete the SF-424A Budget Information Form (available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>). In preparing the Budget Information Form, you must provide a concise narrative explanation to support the budget request, explained in detail below.

a. Budget Narrative

The Budget Narrative must provide a description of costs associated with each line item on the SF-424A. 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. Valuation of leveraged resources follows the same requirements as match. Applicants are encouraged to leverage resources to increase stakeholder investment in the project and broaden the impact of the project itself.

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 (both current and proposed) including the roles and responsibilities. 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 you expect to purchase that has an estimated acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit (or if your capitalization level is less than \$5,000,

use your capitalization level) and a useful lifetime of more than one year (see 2 CFR 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 \$5,000 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 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 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 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. Minor alterations to adjust an existing space for grant activities (such as a classroom alteration) may be allowable. 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: If you include an amount for indirect costs (through a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or De Minimis) on the SF-424A budget form, then include one of the following:

a) 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

b) If you intend to claim indirect costs using the 10 percent de minimis rate, please confirm that your organization meets the requirements as described in 2 CFR 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 200, Appendix VII(D)(1)(b).

Applicants choosing to claim indirect costs using the de minimis rate must use Modified Total Direct Costs (see 2 CFR 200.1 below for definition) 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.

- **2 CFR 200.1 Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)** means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards 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 in excess of \$25,000. Other items may be excluded only when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs. The definition of MTDC in 2 CFR 200.1 no longer allows any sub-contracts to be included in the calculation. You will also note that participant support costs are not included in modified total direct cost. Participant support costs are defined below.
- **2 CFR 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.

See Section IV.B.4. and Section IV.E.1 for more information. Additionally, the following link contains information regarding the negotiation of Indirect Cost Rates at DOL: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/centers-offices/office-of-the-senior-procurement-executive/cost-price-determination-division>.

Note that the SF-424, SF-424A, and Budget Narrative must include the entire federal grant amount requested (not just one year).

Do not show leveraged resources on the SF-424 and SF-424A. You should describe leveraged resources in the Budget Narrative.

Applicants should list the same requested federal grant amount on the SF-424, SF-424A, and Budget Narrative. If minor inconsistencies are found between the budget amounts specified on the SF-424, SF-424A, and the Budget Narrative, ETA will consider the SF-424 the official funding amount requested. However, if the amount specified on the SF-424 would render the application nonresponsive, the Grant Officer will use his or her discretion to determine whether the intended funding request (and match if applicable) is within the responsive range.

3. Project Narrative

Project Narrative for SCC2 Program Grant Application

Note that, in addition to completing the primary Project Narrative, applicants interested in applying for additional evaluation funding should refer to the separate section below for the Project Narrative for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding applications.

The Project Narrative must demonstrate your capability to implement the grant project in accordance with the provisions of this Announcement. It provides a comprehensive framework and description of all aspects of the proposed project. It must be succinct, self-explanatory, and

well-organized so that reviewers can understand the proposed project.

The Project Narrative is limited to 25 double-spaced single-sided 8.5 x 11 inch pages with Times New Roman 12-point text font and 1-inch margins. You must number the Project Narrative beginning with page number 1.

We will not read or consider any materials beyond the specified page limit in the application review process.

The following instructions provide all of the information needed to complete the Project Narrative. Carefully read and consider each section, and include all required information in your Project Narrative. The agency will evaluate the Project Narrative using the evaluation criteria identified in Section V.A. You must use the same section headers identified below for each section of the Project Narrative.

NOTE: Full points will not be given for simply repeating the requirements stated below or elsewhere in the Announcement. For example, if the applicant is asked, “Describe in detail how the lead applicant will use a data-driven decision-making process to communicate expectations,” they will not receive full points (and may receive zero points) for simply saying, “We will use a data-driven decision-making process to communicate expectations.” To receive full points, the applicant must describe, in their own words, *how* they will meet the stated requirement, and convincingly demonstrate that they are using a sound approach.

Responsive proposals will fully integrate the four core elements described in Section I: Program Purpose, which are: 1) Advancing Equity, 2) Accelerated Career Pathways, 3) Results-Driven Project Design, and 4) Sustainable Systems Change.

a. Statement of Need (Up to 10 Points)

1. Equity Gap Analysis (6 points)

To receive a full 6 points for this section, applicants must, in response to Core Element #1: Advancing Equity in Section I.A. Program Purpose:

- Clearly identify the student population(s) at the center of the equity gaps that the proposal intends to close, and explain why the population(s) was chosen.
- Clearly demonstrate the connection between the identified gap(s) and the anticipated impact on education and employment outcomes from addressing those gaps.
- Convincingly demonstrate the existing and desired state for the education and career training programs, systems, and infrastructure proposed for development or expansion, and how the current lack of capacity impacts the applicant’s ability to serve the equity-targeted students, and employers, in the selected industry sector(s) or occupation(s).

2. Target Industries, Occupations, and Employer Demand (4 points)

Scoring under this criterion will be based on the extent to which the discussion of the following factors is clear, logical, well supported, and an accurate interpretation of labor market data. All data sources must include citations that provide information that enables the identification and verification of data.

In addition, to receive a full 4 points for this section, applicants must:

- Provide a clear identification of one or more specific industry sectors on which the proposed project will focus, such as—but not limited to—advanced manufacturing, information technology, health care, or clean energy. Within industries, describe the targeted occupations, which must be on a career pathway to good-quality jobs for the intended participant populations, as defined in Section I.E.
- Clearly and convincingly identify how the selected industry sector(s) align(s) with demonstrated employer demand for training, skills, competencies, and degrees/credentials necessary for entry into and retention in quality jobs, given the project’s proposed equity goals.
- Provide a detailed and convincingly supported description of the current and future projected regional demand for employment in the selected industry sector(s) and occupation(s). Applicants must cite the source for the projected demand, such as Bureau of Labor Statistics or other DOL sources, state workforce agency sources, employers, or other written labor market information provided by employers or other knowledgeable parties. Applicants must provide strong evidence, with citations, that the jobs targeted are quality jobs with family-sustaining wages, and must identify the average prevailing wages offered for the selected industry and occupation, based on national, state, or local data. To the extent possible, data should reflect the geographic scope proposed.

b. Expected Outcomes and Outputs (Up to 28 Points)

1. Logic Model (6 points)

In response to Core Element #3: Results-Driven Project Design in Section I.A. Program Purpose, applicants must describe their project’s design, outputs, and outcomes/impacts in the form of a logic model that explicitly lays out the logical connections of the project’s design, detailing how the project will deliver results using grant-funded and (if applicable) leveraged resources. The logic model must consist of a systems component table and a theory of change (scored here), and must be aligned with the Performance Outcomes table, along with other outcomes that applicants may identify. Applicants must submit the logic model as an attachment, which does not count against the page limits for the Project Narrative. For additional information about the logic model components, see Section I.A.3.(b) Logic Model and Appendix D: Logic Model.

In addition, to achieve the full 6 points for this section, applicants must include:

- A **system components table** that plainly depicts Inputs (e.g., partners, partner roles, grant funding, and leveraged funding/services/materials), Activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and Desired Impacts. The outcomes must align with the Performance Outcomes table.
- A **theory of change** that identifies the problem(s) to be solved (from the equity gap analysis and labor market information), community needs and assets, desired results, influential factors, strategies, and assumptions.

2. Capacity-Building and Equity Performance Outcomes (12 points)

Applicants must provide customized, quantitative capacity-building and equity performance outcome targets, as described below, that flow from the equity gap analysis and logic model scored above and that show end-of-grant target outcomes. See the sample worksheet in Appendix G: Suggested Table for Performance Outcomes. Applicants must submit the Performance Outcomes table as an attachment, which does not count against the page limits for the Project Narrative.

Applicants must develop five grant-specific outcomes, three of which measure *key aspects* of the grant-funded capacity that they propose to build to meet their equity and workforce goals under this FOA, and two of which demonstrate *key aspects* of how the project will close one or more of the equity gaps identified in the gap analysis. These outcomes must be in the logic model, though additional outcomes may also be included in the logic model, as applicable.

While this FOA requires applicants to develop at least the five outcomes specified above, DOL encourages applicants to consider developing—for internal use—additional outcomes and outputs (besides the required ones) that may be appropriate for the success of their projects; however, DOL will only track and monitor the five required outcomes.

Capacity-Building Outcomes 1, 2, and 3 (6 points)

The three capacity-building outcomes may occur at any phase along the career pathway (e.g., recruitment/enrollment, educational persistence/completion, post-graduation employment/training), and must be tied to a career pathway program that the applicant proposes to build or enhance using SCC grant funds, as well as to the Core Elements in Section I.A. The strategies or interventions that the applicant proposes to deploy to achieve the capacity-building outcomes may occur at the individual, interpersonal, institutional, and/or systemic levels, but ultimately must be connected to positive workforce outcomes.

Examples of capacity-building outcome statements follow. *Note that these examples are for illustrative purposes only. Applicants must develop outcome statements that are specific to their grant.*

EXAMPLE #1 Capacity-Building Outcome Statement: For the Health Sciences pathway, obtain credit articulation for 12 noncredit courses using the curriculum committee approval process.

EXAMPLE #2 Capacity-Building Outcome Statement: Develop targeted family-based approaches to workforce development for Information Technology programs of study that involve clients' family members to help ensure healthy career planning and career sustainability.

EXAMPLE #3 Capacity-Building Outcome Statement: Pilot for Advanced Manufacturing programs of study a centralized data system wherein industry and workforce development system partners are engaged to provide ready access to labor market data used to drive new career pathway programs.

In addition to the criteria above, to receive the full 6 points, applicants must provide the following for each of the three capacity-building outcome measures:

- Include the following components: the outcome statement, type or direction of change, unit of measurement, outcome target, current state/other baseline, grant-funded program(s) of study, target population(s), definition(s) that demonstrate(s) or explain(s) when the project achieves the outcome target, timeframe, and a description of how the increased capacity will be sustained.
- Fully describe the rationale, explain how it is a key aspect of the capacity building and ties to the proposed logic model, reference evidence or data used, and explain how it relates to the project’s equity goals.

An **example** of a capacity-building outcome with all requested components follows. Note that this example is for illustrative purposes only. Applicants must develop outcomes and outcome targets that are specific to their grant.

EXAMPLE Capacity-Building Outcome Statement: Pilot new statewide prior learning assessment policy (PLA) in three advanced manufacturing career pathways at five consortium colleges.
Type or Direction of Change: Increase
Unit of Measurement: Consortium college (piloting PLA policy)
Outcome Target: Five colleges pilot PLA policy in three advanced manufacturing pathways
Current State/Other Baseline: Three individual colleges have existing PLA policies; however, there is no standardization or agreements between colleges for PLA policies, nor are they widely used.
Grant-funded Program(s) of Study: Robotics 1, Mechatronics 1, and Mechatronics 2
Target Population(s): Latino/a/x and African American students, who are currently under-represented among students in this discipline
Definition(s): “Pilot” (for each college) means at least one individual in the Department of Advanced Manufacturing is assigned a coordinator role in their job description; the potential to use PLA is published prominently on the college’s Advanced Manufacturing website and on related college-wide recruitment and registration websites; professors are trained to do assessments and a compensation system is established for this purpose; and an outreach plan for the targeted populations is implemented.
Timeframe: College 1 in Y2; colleges 2 and 3 in Y3; colleges 4 and 5 in Y4.
How sustained: Will be continued at 5 consortium institutions and rolled out to the other 8 community colleges in the state during and after the period of performance, using learnings from this pilot.
Rationale: Evidence shows that PLA students are more likely to complete college credentials than non-PLA students: e.g., a 49% student credential completion rate with PLA and 27% without PLA; the impact of PLA on credential completion for Latino/a/x and African American students is also significant (24% improvement for the former and 14% for the latter due to PLA) (CAEL 2020). The equity gap analysis conducted for the purposes of this

proposal identified that Latino/a/x and African American students were under-enrolled in Robotics and Mechatronics compared to their presence in the student population and community. Given the evidence associated with PLA resulting in significant improved success for these populations, and as demonstrated in the logic model, the project believes the proposed pilot PLA implementation will increase the colleges' capacity and decrease the disparate impact on the target populations.

Equity Outcomes 1 and 2 (6 points)

Based on their equity gap analysis, applicants must develop two equity outcomes related to one or more key equity gaps that they propose to close or reduce within the SCC2 grant period of performance. These outcomes may relate to the same equity gap (if the applicant is targeting one primary equity gap) and reflect the project's efforts to tackle different aspects of the same underlying disparity. Alternatively, if the applicant is proposing to address several different equity gaps, the two outcomes may correspond to separate equity gaps.

The equity gap(s) and related outcome(s) may occur at any phase along the career pathway (e.g., recruitment/enrollment, persistence/completion, and/or post-graduation employment/training), but must be connected to a specific sectoral or occupational workforce shortage and aligned with a career pathway approach to address that worker demand, which the applicant proposes to build or enhance using SCC grant funds. The strategies or interventions that the applicant proposes to deploy to achieve the outcomes may occur at the individual, interpersonal, institutional, and/or systemic levels, but must ultimately be connected to positive workforce outcomes.

Examples of equity outcome statements follow. *Note that these examples are for illustrative purposes only. Applicants must develop outcome statements targets that are specific to their grant.*

EXAMPLE #1 Equity Outcome Statement: Increase the completion rate of female students of color in the identified programs of study to 32 percent.

EXAMPLE #2 Equity Outcome Statement: Implement a data system accessible to staff and faculty that disaggregates student enrollment, benchmark achievement, completion, and employment by race and gender at the program of study, course, and faculty levels.

EXAMPLE #3 Equity Outcome Statement: Implement a systemic structure of authentic partnerships with entities that serve underrepresented populations for the purpose of providing wrap-around student supports.

In addition to the criteria above, to receive the full 6 points, applicants must provide the following for each of the two equity outcomes measures:

- Include the following components: the outcome statement, type or direction of change, unit of measurement, outcome target, current state/other baseline, grant-funded program(s) of study, target population(s), definition(s) that demonstrate(s) or explain(s) when the project achieves the outcome target, timeframe, and a description of how the increased equity will be sustained.

- Fully describe the rationale for the outcome, explain how it is key to the equity gap analysis and ties to the proposed logic model, how it will contribute to improved employment outcomes within the identified sector(s) for the target population, and how it relates to the project’s capacity-building goals. Reference evidence or data used.

An **example** of an equity outcome with all requested components follows. Note that this example is for illustrative purposes only. Applicants must develop outcome statements and outcome targets that are specific to their grant.

EXAMPLE Equity Outcome Statement: Document Career Pathway practices that create positive career field belongingness perceptions and promote persistence in the selected pathway program as reported by students of color.
Type of Direction of Change: Increase
Unit of Measurement: Reported sense of belongingness, and rate of persistence in the program, for and by students of color.
Outcome Target(s): 80% of students of color reporting positive perceptions of career fielding belongingness; 70% persist from enrollment to completion.
Current State/Other Baseline: Low enrollment of students of color in comparison to other programs of study and anecdotal responses point to low perceptions of belongingness of students of color. A baseline for belongingness will be established at the beginning of the period of performance. Persistence is currently 50%.
Grant-funded Program(s) of Study: Animation, Audio & Video production, Digital Media
Target populations: Students of color
Definitions: Belongingness means the sense that students are important and respected members of their universities as demonstrated through the SOBI-P Instrument. Persistence means retention from enrollment to completion.
How Sustained: Activities and outputs associated with this outcome will target structural elements within the program of study and career pathway. These include activities such as culturally relevant teaching and inclusive curriculum, intrusive advising, partnerships using demographically aligned work-based learning and mentor opportunities, and rubrics for assessing program materials for inclusivity.
Rationale: Equity gap analysis showed high motivation of incoming students of color at the college for the targeted pathways but low enrollment, and inequitable persistence, in these same pathways. Root cause analysis focused attention on climate characteristics and practices within the programs of study. Higher education scholars have consistently shown that students of color are more likely to be successful if they perceive the campus environment and

career fields to be comfortable and inclusive (e.g., Carter & Hurtado, 1997; Museus, Nichols & Lambert, 2008; Yosso, Smith, Ceja & Solórzano, 2009; Ajayi, Alex, 2021; Verdin, Dina, 2021). As demonstrated in the logic model, success within the context of this project includes increased enrollment, and benchmark persistence and program completion, which tie directly to employment outcomes in the target industries.

3. Participant Tracking Plan (2 points)

Since closing equity gaps is a strong focus of the SCC2 grants, it is important to show the participant outcomes that begin to emerge from capacity-building efforts. Participant performance outcomes can also demonstrate proof of concept and contribute to the body of evidence for SCC2 grants. Thus, while applicants are not required to submit participant targets for the purposes of this Announcement, grantees will be required to track and report participant outputs for a selected cohort of students on a quarterly basis throughout the grant period of performance. Grantees will utilize DOL's Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS) to track participant-level data. DOL will provide additional information after grant award; however, applicants must plan for participant cohort tracking and budget for data collection and reporting as part of their project work plans. Program-specific performance output measures are defined in Section VI.C.3. Quarterly Progress Reports.

To receive a full 2 points for this section, applicants must:

- Fully describe the grant-enhanced program(s) of study they propose to use for participant tracking and why those programs of study are central to the proposed project design.
- Describe how they will define and document “enrollment into a program of study” for the proposed participant cohort.
- Describe the system for collecting and tracking data for the identified participant cohort during the grant period of performance.

4. Sustainable Systems Change Plan (8 points)

In response to Core Element #4: Sustainable Systems Change in Section I.A. Program Purpose, scoring under this criterion is based on a clear, complete, and convincing description of how the applicant intends to sustain the capacity built through the grant and build on key grant innovations and systems change after the grant period of performance ends.

To receive a full 6 points for this section, applicants must:

- Provide a detailed narrative description that clearly identifies key aspects the grantee plans to sustain, and describes for each the current state, the grant-end state that will be achieved during the period of performance, and the planned sustained state beyond the grant end date.
- Describe how the institutions will institutionalize activities, innovations, or systems changes into their overall, non-grant-funded education and training activities, enabling them to continue program enhancements with non-grant resources when the grant ends.

- Define how the planned sustainable systems change aligns with the priorities of required partners, and the contributions those partners will play in sustaining the systems change.

Applicants must also (for 2 points):

- Convincingly demonstrate that proposed strategies with respect to sustaining systems change are informed by relevant evidence (such as formal evaluations that provide a systematic analysis of a program or intervention to assess effectiveness and efficiency; exploratory or descriptive studies; or other rigorous or independent research). Provide citations and, where available, references to quality or rigor of studies cited. Examples of studies can be found in Appendix C: Evidence-Informed Design and Appendix E: Resources on Capacity Building and Sustainable Systems Change.

c. Project Design (Up to 44 points)

The applicant must thoroughly describe the proposed education and training capacity-building strategies, including the research and evidence on which those strategies are based, and how the proposed strategies incorporate the Core Elements described in Section I.A. Throughout this section, the applicant must demonstrate a cohesive, well-designed approach to implementing the project.

1. Institutions of Higher Education Selection (4 points)

To receive a full 4 points:

Single institution applicants must convincingly describe the strengths that they bring to the project design, and how their community college is positioned to support success in achieving project outcomes, particularly in addressing equity concerns using a systems change approach.

Consortium applicants must identify their proposed consortium type—state-level focused, labor market focused, or affinity focused—and describe the reason(s) for choosing this consortium type. This description must also convincingly demonstrate that their proposed institution consortium members (described in Section III.A.5) are the best choices to support success in achieving project outcomes using a systems change approach. Applications will be scored based on the alignment of the institution consortium members with the type of consortium and the systems changes proposed.

- State-level focused consortia must describe how they will coordinate with and between partners to support sustainable systems change at the state level and how the program will leverage state resources in the achievement of program outcomes and outputs.
- Labor market-focused consortia must describe how they will coordinate with and between partners to support sustainable systems change at the regional labor market level and how the program will leverage state, interstate, or regional resources in the achievement of program outcomes and outputs.
- Affinity-focused consortia must describe how they will coordinate with and between partners to support sustainable systems change at the institutional and consortium level and how the program will leverage connected systems resources in the achievement of program outcomes and outputs.

Consortium applicants must also provide documentation of commitment, as described in Section III.A.5, from each member of the institution consortium that convincingly demonstrates their engagement with the aspect of the project for which they are responsible. These must be provided in the documentation of commitment attachment. Consortium applicants that fail to provide documentation of commitment from each institution consortium member included in the application will receive zero points for this rating factor.

As a reminder, to be considered an affinity-focused consortium, the lead applicant and a majority of institution consortium members must qualify as a Qualified Institution, as specified in Sections III.A.1 and III.A.3, above; otherwise, the application will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed.

2. Advancing Equity (10 points)

In response to Core Element #1: Advancing Equity, using the equity gap(s) described in Section I.A. and identified by the applicant's equity analysis, applicants must identify evidence-informed strategies designed to address those gaps in the context of the applicants' selected career pathways programs. The evidence-informed strategies may target multiple levels influencing equity-related education and employment opportunities and outcomes, including the interpersonal, program, institutional, and systems levels. To receive full points for this section, applicants must:

- Identify the strategies that will be used to address the specified equity gaps, and indicate for each strategy if the anticipated outcome will affect the individual, interpersonal, program, institutional and/or systems level. Describe the interconnected nature of the equity issues and the strategies needed to address them. (4 points)
- Provide a thorough and detailed explanation/justification for how and why these strategies are adequate to significantly narrow or close the identified gaps, and how they will align with the selected career pathways programs to address the workforce needs of the identified sector(s). Identify how required and optional partners will be involved in strategy implementation. (4 points)

Applicants must also (for 2 points):

- Convincingly demonstrate that proposed strategies with respect to advancing equity are informed by relevant evidence (such as formal evaluations that provide a systematic analysis of a program or intervention to assess effectiveness and efficiency; exploratory or descriptive studies; or other rigorous or independent research). Provide citations and, where available, references to quality or rigor of studies cited. Examples of studies can be found in Appendix A: Resources on Gap Analysis and Equity and Appendix C: Evidence-Informed Design.

3. Accelerated Career Pathways (10 points)

In response to Core Element #2: Accelerated Career Pathways in Section I.A. Program Purpose, applicants must identify the career pathway program(s) to be developed or enhanced with a clear sequence of education coursework and/or training credentials aligned with employer-validated work readiness standards and competencies, and integrated academic and occupational skills training. Within the context of the applicants' identified equity goals, to receive full points the applicant must:

- Include a plausible plan for how the proposed education and career-focused training programs will enable participants to accelerate completion of coursework. It must also clearly identify the specific services and career guidance the grant-funded program will provide; and identify the specific barriers to program retention, completion, and employment that the program will address through comprehensive and personalized student services and career guidance and the connection to the equity gap(s) being addressed. (4 points)
- Provide a thorough description of and plausible plan for how the project will support the transferability and articulation of noncredit courses and academic credit across programs and institutions that will create career pathways for workers to further their education. This includes, but is not limited to, linking with programs such as high school dual enrollment programs, postsecondary career and technical education, pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs, and other programs that lead to credit-bearing coursework and employment. The plan must describe the steps and approvals necessary for articulation of all SCC2-funded courses offered by all institutions in the consortium (if applicable) to become effective, including the anticipated time these steps will take. (2 points)
- Describe how the career pathway approach will address the workforce needs for the identified sector(s) through credentialing and other skills gains demonstrations, direct entry in employment for participants, and earnings gains, if applicable. (2 points)

Applicants must also (for 2 points):

- Convincingly demonstrate that proposed strategies with respect to accelerating career pathways are informed by relevant evidence (such as formal evaluations that provide a systematic analysis of a program or intervention to assess effectiveness and efficiency; exploratory or descriptive studies; or other rigorous or independent research). Provide citations and, where available, references to quality or rigor of studies cited. Examples of studies can be found in Appendix B: Resources on Career Pathways and Sector Strategies and Appendix C: Evidence-Informed Design.

4. **Demonstration of Employer and Industry Engagement (6 points)**

As stated in Section III.A.5.(c) Required Employer Partner(s), the employer partner(s) consist of an industry/trade association or an employer sector consortium of at least three employers, *for each industry sector proposed*. Applicants may propose one or more industry sector(s) aligned with their selected career pathway(s). Successful applicants will ensure that the required employer partner(s) actively engage in designing and implementing the accelerated career pathways. To receive the full 6 points, applicants must also provide the following:

- If using an employer consortium, applicants must describe how they will develop a sector strategy to work with the employers as a cohesive group representative of a locally or regionally in-demand sector, not as individual employers. If using an industry/trade association, applicants must describe how that organization will support a sector strategy
- Comprehensive description of the roles of each employer partner(s) and the specific and quantifiable contributions each will provide to support the goals of the project, including its equity goals. Applicants must demonstrate that they are actively engaging the

required employer partner(s) in implementing the accelerated career pathway strategy within the following key areas:

1. Providing leadership to the project in setting strategic direction and in meeting the college's equity goals.
 2. Demonstrating support for worker voice with respect to job quality, worker health and safety, and diversity, equity and inclusion; this may be demonstrated by employer partnership with a union, a labor management organization, or through other means.
 3. Informing the identification and mapping the necessary skills and competencies for the program(s).
 4. Providing work-based learning opportunities, including on-the-job training and Registered Apprenticeship.
 5. Assisting with curriculum development and program design.
 6. Where appropriate, informing the design of an assessment or validating credentials that will address industry skill needs.
 7. Providing resources, such as mentors, the donation of equipment, or other contributions to support the proposed project.
 8. Offering direct hiring of successful participants of the enhanced program of study, where feasible.
- Clear documentation of the employer partner roles and contributions to the project as described in Section III.A.5 that convincingly demonstrates their engagement with the aspect of the project for which they are responsible. These must be provided in the documentation of commitment attachment.

Applicants that fail to provide documentation of commitment from an industry/trade association or at least three employer partners (for each proposed industry sector) will receive zero points for this rating factor.

5. Demonstration of Workforce Development System Engagement (6 points)

To receive a full 6 points for this section, the applicant must provide, consistent with Section III.A.5.(b):

- A clear description of the level of proposed collaboration between the applicant and the public workforce development system partner(s) to create and implement a comprehensive strategy of responding to the labor market in determining the skill needs of employers and the suitability of individuals for training and the attainment of associated credentials.
- Documentation of the extent to which the applicant engages required and optional workforce development system partners in the proposed capacity-building project, and leverages the workforce development system's demonstrated experience in improving employment-related skills and involvement in initiatives to help address workers' barriers to employment. This includes evidence that the required state and/or local workforce development boards (or tribal entities eligible under WIOA Section 166) are involved in the development and implementation of the grant project. Applicants are strongly encouraged to demonstrate active involvement and the depth of partnerships through budgeted grant funding allocations and leveraged resources.

- Applicants must demonstrate workforce development board or tribal entity engagement in the form of documentation described in Section III.A.5 that convincingly demonstrates engagement with the aspect of the project for which they are responsible. Applicants must provide these in the documentation of commitment attachment.

Applicants that fail to provide documentation of commitment identifying at least one eligible workforce development system partner will receive zero points for this rating factor.

6. Required Third-Party Evaluation Procurement Plan (2 Points)

To receive a full 2 points for this section, applicants must:

- Submit a third-party evaluation procurement plan as an attachment that describes whether the applicant intends to procure a developmental or implementation evaluation, and that provides specific examples of how staff, faculty, and students will participate in evaluation activities. (Note that the detailed third-party evaluation plan should not be included with the application; winning applicants will be informed of such requirements after grants are announced. This section refers only to the plan to procure the third-party evaluator.)
- Describe in the plan the specific steps that the applicant will take to procure an evaluator for the developmental or implementation evaluation, demonstrating how those steps meet procurement requirements in this Announcement (see Section I.H.1. Required Third-Party Evaluation).
- Include the evaluation procurement in the required budget narrative and budget.
- Include the required third-party evaluation milestones described in Section I.H.1. in the project work plan.

7. Project Work Plan (6 points)

Scoring under this criterion is based on a clear and complete identification of a comprehensive work plan for the whole period of performance with feasible and realistic milestones. Applicants must submit the work plan as an attachment; a sample work plan table can be found in Appendix H: Suggested Project Work Plan Format. Applicants must base the work plan on the Capacity-Building and Equity Performance Outcomes described in Section IV.B.3.(b)(2), and thoroughly describe the key milestones and deliverables necessary to accomplish each outcome. Milestones are key markers of grant progress; these are typically expressed in the form of an action or event marking a significant change or stage in development. Deliverables are typically expressed in the form of a product.

Applicants must also include in the work plan the milestones and deliverables related to the required third-party evaluation, which are listed in Section I.H.1.

In addition, the applicant must demonstrate the capacity to manage the project by detailing the consortium members responsible for supporting each milestone/deliverable. The Department will use the Capacity-Building and Equity Performance Outcomes identified above, as well as the outputs, key milestones, and deliverables in the work plan, to monitor grants.

To receive a full 6 points in this section, applicants must provide the following:

- **Key Milestones and Deliverables:** Thoroughly describe the activities and deliverables necessary to accomplish the five required performance outcomes and the required third-party evaluator milestones and deliverables. Milestones and deliverables must be reasonable, based on the project design.
- **Responsible Parties and Deadlines:** For each milestone and deliverable, clearly describe the specific responsible entity(ies) by name (e.g., ABC CC, Employer X), and provide deadlines.

d. Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity (up to 8 Points)

To receive full points for this section, applicants must:

- Describe the required qualifications and time commitment of the lead applicant’s day-to-day project manager. For full points, the qualifications must include at least three years of project management experience (or equivalent education) and the time commitment must be at least 80 percent, and these must also be reflected in the project budget. (2 points)
- Provide an organizational chart that identifies the lead applicant, required partners, and any other proposed partners. The chart must describe the structure of the relationships of all partners involved in the project. The chart must also identify the proposed project’s staffing plan to illustrate that partners have the capacity to support the lead applicant to carry out the proposed project. Applicants must submit the chart as an attachment. If no organizational chart is attached, this subsection will receive zero points. (2 points)
- Describe in detail how the lead applicant will use a data-driven decision-making process to communicate expectations to partners and institutional leaders, share progress against key milestones, and adjust strategies. For full points, the applicant must include the “who, when, what and how” of the process and demonstrate a sound approach. (2 points)
- Describe the applicant’s fiscal and administrative controls in place to manage federal funds, and demonstrate that the controls are adequate to ensure accountability and timely fiscal reporting, and to protect against incurring unallowed costs with grant funds. (2 points)

e. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability (Up to 6 Points)

Points for this section will be assigned based on the extent to which the applicant:

- Provides a full description of the lead applicant’s prior experience in **leading or addressing systems change** that convincingly demonstrates the ability to accomplish multi-pronged complex projects and an explanation of the results of the project(s). If the lead applicant in a consortium does not have this experience, the applicant must describe the experience of an institution consortium partner that does, and how the applicant will leverage that experience to support project success.
- Describes the relevant prior experience (within the last five years) of the lead applicant or a partner in **managing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements**.

- Demonstrates that the lead applicant and partners have sustained career pathway development, sector partnerships, and/or capacity-building activities following completion of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements.

f. Budget and Budget Narrative (Up to 4 points)

The Budget and Budget Narrative will be used to evaluate this section. Please see Section IV.B.2 for information on the requirements. The Budget and Budget Narrative do not count against the page limit requirements for the Project Narrative. For a full 4 points, the applicant must:

- Demonstrate that the proposed expenditures will address all project requirements, including the required third-party evaluation, and that key personnel have adequate time devoted to the project to achieve expected project results.
- Provide a detailed description of costs associated with each line item on the SF-424A. The budget narrative should also include a complete description of leveraged resources provided (as applicable) to support grant activities.
- Align the totals on the SF-424A and the Budget Narrative.

g. Priority Consideration: Lead Grantee is a “Qualified Institution” of Higher Education (2 bonus points)

For both consortium and single institution applicants, to receive priority consideration of two bonus points, a lead applicant must be identified as a Qualified Institution, as described in Section III.A.3. Qualified Institutions.

As stated in Section III.A.3., for the purposes of identifying Qualified Institutions for this Announcement, applicants must provide, as a requested attachment, a letter from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), labeled “Letter Identifying Eligibility from the U.S. Department of Education.” This letter verifies an institution’s eligibility under Titles III and V; institutions with existing accounts may download this letter or request it from OPE directly. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Labor may utilize the Eligibility Matrix 2021 or 2022, found on the Eligibility Designations and Applications for Waiver of Eligibility Requirements at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/ides/eligibility.html#el-inst>, to further verify eligibility. Those institutions that receive a ‘Yes’ designation in the column labeled “Eligible/Current Grantee” (see column “AL”) on the Eligibility Matrix 2021 or 2022 will be considered a Qualified Institution for this Announcement and these same institutions should be able to provide the eligibility letter from OPE.

Note that while the U.S. Department of Education updates its Eligibility Matrix annually, the lead applicant under this FOA needs only to be eligible using the version of the Eligibility Matrix that is in effect as of the date of closing of this FOA; if a lead institution’s eligibility changes subsequently, the institution may continue serving as the lead applicant throughout the grant period of performance.

Applicants must state whether the lead institution is a Qualified Institution on the required abstract.

If the applicant institution's name is different on the SF-424 from the institution name in the Eligibility Matrix, the applicant must explain the reason in the Project Narrative.

Project Narrative for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding

As specified in Section I.H.2. Option to Exceed the Funding Cap, all applicants for an SCC2 Program Grant may submit a separate application to receive additional funds for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding. Applying for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding is optional; the Department will not consider this separate application when determining selections for SCC2 Program Grants.

The Department encourages applicants to utilize principles of equitable evaluations, such as those articulated at <https://www.equitableeval.org>.

To be considered for additional funds, applicants must provide the following supplementary materials in three separate and distinct parts: (I) budget for additional evaluation funds, including the SF-424A and budget narrative; (II) factors for consideration; and (III) attachments to the supplementary materials. Applicants must include all supplementary materials as separate attachments. Applications that fail to adhere to the instructions in this section will not be eligible to exceed the award amount ceiling.

In their grants.gov application, applicants must attach these documents under the Required Other Attachment section and label them as follows: "I. Supplementary Materials - Additional SCC2 Evaluation Budget," "II. Supplementary Materials - Factors for Consideration," and "III. Supplementary Materials - Attachments." Please note that the Department will hold applicants to the outcomes provided; failure to meet those outcomes may have a significant impact on any future grants with ETA.

a) **Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding Budget**

The budget consists of the SF424A with the additional amount requested and corresponding budget narrative providing a description of the costs associated with Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding. All costs included in the supplementary budget narrative must be reasonable and appropriate to the project timeline and deliverables. For consortium applicants, all associated evaluation costs for the Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding should be reflected in the budget for the Lead Institution. Costs of grant-funded staff may not exceed more than 30 percent of the Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding budget for consortium applicants, including all their consortium members; or 20 percent of the Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding budget for single institutions or consortium applicants where only the lead college is included. Applicants should include travel costs for the procured evaluator of the Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding contract to attend at least one in-person conference in Washington, DC during the period of evaluation. The budget narrative should not exceed 2 double-spaced, single-sided, 8.5 x 11 inch pages with 12-point text font and 1 inch margins.

b) **Factors for Consideration**

The factors for consideration must demonstrate the applicant's capability to implement

the requirements for an impact, outcome, or behavioral intervention evaluation as described in Section I.H.2. The factors for consideration are limited to 8 double-spaced, single-sided, 8.5 x 11 inch pages with 12-point text font and 1 inch margins. We will not read any materials beyond this specified page limit.

All applicants applying for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding must address factors 1-9 below.

1. **Letters of Commitment:** The applicant provides a letter of institutional commitment to fully participate in the evaluation, and to support the evaluation, including data collection. The letter is from the college president or appropriate official that defines the institution's role and provides evidence of its commitment to participate. For consortium applicants including all institution consortium members, each institution must provide a letter of commitment. These letters must be attached as supplementary materials and do not count against the 8-page limit.
2. **Description:** The applicant provides a description of the type of evaluation that it proposes to conduct (impact, outcomes, or behavioral interventions), a rationale for that choice, and the draft research questions that the applicant intends to pursue.

For impact evaluations, the Department encourages applicants to propose randomized control trials; however, applicants may propose non-experimental designs if they meet certain evidence standards. Applicants proposing alternative methodologies must show that the proposed alternative design (e.g., quasi-experimental designs such as regression discontinuity) also allows the evaluation to draw causal inferences about the effect of the program. Additional information on methodological designs is available in Appendix F.

For outcomes evaluations, applicants must specify the outcomes or types of outcomes that they will assess, as well as the intended study design and the time period over which they will analyze outcomes (e.g., longitudinal versus cross-sectional designs).

For behavioral interventions evaluations, applicants must design and test an intervention aimed at solving a problem with a behavioral dimension (obstacles that come up because of the way people process information, make decisions, and act on those decisions). Applicants must identify the hypothesized behavioral barrier that the intervention aims to address and describe the design of the behavioral intervention (including a description of how the applicant will refine their original diagnosis of behavioral barriers and of their willingness to adjust program processes for the intervention). Applicants must also specify the outcomes or types of outcomes that they will assess, as well as the intended study design and the time period over which they will analyze outcomes. The Department encourages the use of impact designs (see above) for all behavioral interventions evaluations.

3. **Relationship to Required Evaluation:** The applicant provides a description of how the proposed additional evaluation will complement the third-party implementation or developmental evaluation that this FOA requires of all grantees.
4. **Staffing Plan:** The applicant provides a detailed staffing plan that will support the evaluation, including a description of the qualifications of the individual who will serve as the institution's lead for the SCC2 Evaluation Grant and the staff that will be assigned

to support the evaluation. The staffing plan must include an organization chart that shows how the staff and evaluator for the Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding relate to the staff and required third-party evaluator for the SCC2 Program Grant, and that shows the role of consortium members (if applicable) in the evaluation.

5. **Evaluation Management Plan:** The applicant provides an evaluation management plan that includes a proposed timeline for securing an evaluator and submitting interim and final reports; and information about data collection and the data sources that the evaluation will use.
6. **Evidence:** The applicant includes a description of the research evidence on which their current effort is based.
7. **Participant Cohort:** The applicant identifies how it will define a participant cohort for the purposes of this evaluation, and provides a detailed plan of how the evaluation will track the cohort and document the outcomes, as needed, for the purposes of the evaluation.
8. **Application to Current and Future Practices:** The applicant provides a description of how the college(s) will use the results of the evaluation to examine current practice and inform future practice.
9. **Procurement Process:** The applicant fully describes the procurement process that it will use to obtain the evaluator after award, and convincingly demonstrates that the process it uses conforms to federal, institutional, and other requirements.

In describing the procurement process, the applicant includes:

- A plan for selecting and procuring the services of a third-party evaluator prior to enrolling participants into programs of study that the SCC2 Program Grant develops or enhances, if possible.
- The levels of capacity and expertise required of the selected organization(s) to conduct the type of evaluation proposed.
- The target date for selection of the evaluation team.
- An affirmation that the evaluation team selected will have the demonstrated ability to conduct the type of evaluation studies proposed; had no affiliation with the development of the grant application; will not be involved in the development, implementation, or management of the grant; and will have no financial interest in the outcome of the evaluation.

c) Supplementary Materials

1. Applicants must attach letter(s) of commitment as supplementary materials.

4. Attachments to the Project Narrative

In addition to the Project Narrative, you must submit attachments. All attachments must be clearly labeled. We will exclude only those attachments listed below from the page limit. The Budget and Budget Justification do not count against the page limit requirements for the Project Narrative.

You must not include additional materials such as resumés or general letters of support. You must submit your application in one package because documents received separately will be tracked separately and will not be attached to the application for review.

Save all files with descriptive file names of 50 characters or fewer and use only standard characters in file names: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, and underscore (_). File names may not include special characters (e.g. &, -, *, %, /, #), periods (.), blank spaces, or accent marks, and must be unique (e.g., no other attachment may have the same file name). You may use an underscore (example: My_Attached_File.pdf) to separate a file name.

a. Required Attachments

(1) Abstract

You must submit an up to two-page abstract summarizing the proposed project including, but not limited to, the scope of the project and proposed outcomes. Omission of the abstract will not result in your application being disqualified; the lack of the required information in the abstract, however, may impact scoring. See III.C.1 for a list of items that will result in the disqualification of your application. The abstract must include the following:

- Lead applicant's organization name
- Project title/name and purpose
- Total funding requested for SCC2 Program Grant
- Total funding requested for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding (if applicable)
- Type of applicant (per Section III.A.2. Eligible Lead Applicant), and type of consortium (if applicable)
- Industry sector(s)
- Geographic area served
- Intended beneficiaries
- Eligibility of lead applicant as a Qualified Institution, if applicable
- All required partners, including Institution Consortium Partners (for consortia only), employer partners, and workforce development system partners, as well as the optional partners that are part of the Partnership
- Indication of whether Institution Consortium Partners (for consortia only) are Qualified Institutions
- A brief summarization of the proposed project including but not limited to key equity gaps to be addressed, program(s) of study to be developed or enhanced, industry recognized credential(s) to be awarded, and a summary of project activities that describes what will be different at the end of the grant compared to current state
- Subrecipient activities
- The five required capacity-building and equity performance outcomes
- Description of the student cohort to be used for participant tracking
- Public contact information

b. Requested Attachments

We request the following attachments, but their omission will not cause us to disqualify the application. The omission of the attachment will, however, impact scoring unless otherwise noted.

(1) Past Performance Documentation

This attachment must include both the Chart of Past Performance and the Grantor Verification Letter (if the chart is not signed by the Grantor).

These documents must be uploaded as an attachment to the application package and labeled “Past Performance.”

(1) Documentation of Commitments

Submit signed and dated documentation of commitment, which can include Letters of Commitment, Memoranda of Understanding, Partnership Agreements, or other types of signed agreements between the applicant and required partner organizations, as well as optional partners that propose to provide services to support the program model and lead to the identified outcomes. Documentation of commitments from the following required partners will be used in scoring: each of the institution consortium partners, the workforce development system partner(s), and the employer partner(s). See Section IV.B.3. We may use documentation of commitments from optional partners in scoring.

Applicants must upload this documentation of commitments as one or more attachments to the application package and specifically label it “Documentation of Commitments.”

(3) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

If you are requesting indirect costs based on a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by your federal Cognizant Agency, then attach the most recently approved Agreement. (For more information, see Section IV.B.2. and Section IV.E.1.) This attachment does not impact scoring of the application.

This document must be uploaded as an attachment to the application package and labeled “NICRA.”

(4) Financial System Risk Assessment Information

All applicants are requested to submit Funding Opportunity Announcement Financial System Risk Assessment Information. See Section V.B.2 for a sample template and additional instructions. This attachment does not impact the scoring of the application.

(4) Logic Model

Submit the system components table and the theory of change required and scored as part of the logic model in the Project Narrative, Section IV.B.3.(b)(1). See the example in Appendix D: Logic Model. DOL will share publicly the abstracts and logic models of successful applicants.

Applicants must upload this document as an attachment to the application package and specifically label it “Logic Model.”

(5) Capacity-Building and Equity Performance Outcomes Table

Submit the projected capacity-building and equity performance outcomes information in a

performance outcomes table as required in the Project Narrative, Section IV.B.3.(b)(2). For an example, see Appendix G: Suggested Table for Performance Outcomes.

Applicants must upload this document as an attachment to the application package and specifically label it “Performance Outcomes.”

(6) Third-Party Evaluation Procurement Plan

Submit the Procurement Plan as required in the Project Narrative, Section IV.B.3.(c)(7), including the type of evaluation that the applicant intends to procure, how key stakeholders will participate, and procurement steps.

Applicants must upload this document as an attachment to the application package and specifically label it “Third-Party Evaluation Procurement Plan.”

(7) Project Work Plan

Submit the Project Work Plan as required in the Project Narrative, Section IV.B.3.(c)(8), including key milestones and deliverables, due dates, responsible parties, and deadlines. See the suggested template in Appendix H: Suggested Project Work Plan Format.

Applicants must upload this document as an attachment to the application package and specifically label it “Project Work Plan.”

(8) Organizational Chart

Submit the Organizational Chart as described in the Project Narrative, Section IV.B.3.(d).

Applicants must upload this document as an attachment to the application package and specifically label it “Organizational Chart.”

(9) Supplementary Materials for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding (if applying for additional funds)

If applying for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding, submit the supplementary materials, as described in the Project Narrative for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding.

Applicants must upload these documents as attachments to the application package and specifically label them “I. Supplementary Materials - Additional SCC2 Evaluation Budget,” “II. Supplementary Materials - Factors for Consideration,” and “III. Supplementary Materials - Attachments.”

(10) Letter Identifying Eligibility from the U.S. Department of Education

Applicants that wish to receive priority consideration of two bonus points and/or to be deemed eligible to apply as an affinity consortium must attach a verification letter from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), labeled “Letter Identifying Eligibility from the U.S. Department of Education.” As indicated in Section III.A.3., this letter verifies an institution’s eligibility under Titles III and V of the Higher

Education Act; institutions with existing accounts may download this letter or request it from OPE directly.

C. SUBMISSION DATE, TIME, PROCESS AND ADDRESS

We must receive your application by 10/21/2022. You must submit your application electronically on <https://www.grants.gov> **no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date.**

Applicants are encouraged to submit their application before the closing date to minimize the risk of late receipt. We will not review applications received after 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date. We will not accept applications sent by hard-copy, e-mail, telegram, or facsimile (FAX).

1. Hardcopy Submission

No applications submitted in hardcopy by mail or hand delivery (including overnight delivery) will be accepted for this funding opportunity.

2. Electronic Submission through Grants.gov

Applicants submitting applications must ensure successful submission **no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date.** Grants.gov will subsequently validate the application.

The process can be complicated and time-consuming. You are strongly advised to initiate the process as soon as possible and to plan for time to resolve technical problems. Note that validation does not mean that your application has been accepted as complete or has been accepted for review by the agency. Rather, grants.gov verifies only the submission of certain parts of an application.

a. How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Read through the registration process carefully before registering. These steps may take as long as four weeks to complete, and this time should be factored into plans for timely electronic submission in order to avoid unexpected delays that could result in the rejection of an application.

Applicants must follow the online instructions for registration at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>. We recommend that you prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information and save time.

An application submitted through Grants.gov constitutes a submission as an electronically signed application. The registration and account creation with Grants.gov, with E-Biz Point of Contact (POC) approval, establishes an Agency Organizational Representative

(AOR). When an application is submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the AOR who submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The E-Biz POC must authorize the individual who is able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of your organization as the AOR; this step is often missed and it is crucial for valid submissions.

b. How to Submit an Application to DOL via Grants.gov

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For a complete workspace overview, refer to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>.

When a registered applicant submits an application with Grants.gov, an electronic time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by

Grants.gov. Grants.gov will send the applicant AOR an email acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) with the successful transmission of the application, serving as proof of timely submission. The applicant will receive two email messages to provide the status of the application's progress through the system.

- The first email will contain a tracking number and will confirm receipt of the application by Grants.gov.
- The second email will indicate the application has either been successfully validated or has been rejected due to errors.

Grants.gov will **reject applications if the applicant's registration in SAM is expired. Only applications that have been successfully submitted by the deadline and later successfully validated will be considered.** It is your responsibility to ensure a timely submission. While it is not required that an application be successfully validated before the deadline for submission, it is prudent to reserve time before the deadline in case it is necessary to resubmit an application that has not been successfully validated. Therefore, enough time should be allotted for submission (24-48 hours) and, if applicable, additional time to address errors and receive validation upon resubmission (an additional two business days for each ensuing submission). It is important to note that if enough time is not allotted and a rejection notice is received after the due date and time, DOL will not consider the application.

To ensure consideration, the components of the application must be saved as .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, .rtf or .pdf files. If submitted in any other format, the applicant bears the risk that compatibility or other issues will prevent DOL from considering the application. We will attempt to open the document, but will not take any additional measures in the event of problems with opening.

We strongly advise applicants to use the various tools and documents, including FAQs, which are available on the "Applicant Resources" page at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>.

We encourage new prospective applicants to view the online tutorial, "Grant Applications 101: A Plain English Guide to ETA Competitive Grants," available through WorkforceGPS at <https://strategies.workforcegps.org/resources/2014/08/11/16/32/applying-for-eta-competitive-grants-a-web-based-toolkit-for-prospective-applicants-438?p=1>.

To receive updated information about critical issues, new tips for users, and other time-sensitive updates as information is available, you may subscribe to "Grants.gov Updates" at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/manage-subscriptions.html>.

If you encounter a problem with Grants.gov and do not find an answer in any of the other resources, contact one of the following:

- call 1-800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035 to speak to a Customer Support Representative or
- email support@grants.gov.

The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week but closed on federal holidays. If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to call the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number.

Late Applications

We will consider only applications successfully submitted through Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date and then successfully validated. **You take a significant risk by waiting to the last day to submit through Grants.gov.**

D. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

E. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

All proposed project costs must be necessary and reasonable and in accordance with federal guidelines. Determinations of allowable costs will be made in accordance with the Cost Principles, now found in the Office of Management and Budget’s Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), codified at 2 CFR Part 200 and at 2 CFR Part 2900 (Uniform Guidance-DOL specific). Disallowed costs are those charges to a grant that the grantor agency or its representative determines not to be allowed in accordance with the Cost Principles or other conditions contained in the grant. Applicants, whether successful or not, will not be entitled to reimbursement of pre-award costs.

Indirect Costs

As specified in the Uniform Guidance Cost Principles, indirect costs are those that are incurred for common or joint objectives and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective. An indirect cost rate is required when an organization operates under more than one grant or other activity, whether federally-assisted or not. You have two options to claim reimbursement of indirect costs.

Option 1: You may use a NICRA or Cost Allocation Plan (CAP) supplied by the federal Cognizant Agency. If you do not have a NICRA/CAP or have a pending NICRA/CAP, and in either case choose to include estimated indirect costs in your budget, at the time of award the Grant Officer will release funds in the amount of 10 percent of Modified Total Direct Costs to support indirect costs. Within 90 days of award, you are required to submit an acceptable indirect cost proposal or CAP to your federal Cognizant Agency to obtain a provisional indirect cost rate. (See Section IV.B.4. for more information on NICRA submission requirements.)

Option 2: Any organization that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, with the exceptions noted at 2 CFR 200.414(f) in the Cost Principles, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (see 2 CFR 200.1 for definition), which may be used indefinitely. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as the non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. (See 2 CFR 200.414(f) for more information on use of the de minimis rate.)

Salary and Bonus Limitations

None of the funds appropriated under the heading “Employment and Training” in the appropriation statute(s) may be used by a recipient or subrecipient of such funds to pay the salary and bonuses of an individual, either as direct costs or indirect costs, at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. This limitation does not apply to contractors providing goods and services as defined in the Audit Requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance (see 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart F). Where states are recipients of such funds, states may establish a lower limit for salaries and bonuses of those receiving salaries and bonuses from subrecipients of such funds, taking into account factors including the relative cost of living in the state, the compensation levels for comparable state or local government employees, and the size of the organizations that administer federal programs involved including ETA programs. See Public Law 113-235, Division G, Title I, section 105, and TEGL number 05-06 for further clarification: https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2262.

Intellectual Property Rights

Pursuant to 2 CFR 2900.13, to ensure that the federal investment of DOL funds has as broad an impact as possible and to encourage innovation in the development of new learning materials, the grantee will be required to license to the public all work created with the support of the grant under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY) license. Work that must be licensed under the CC BY includes both new content created with the grant funds and modifications made to pre-existing, grantee-owned content using grant funds.

This license allows subsequent users to copy, distribute, transmit, and adapt the copyrighted work and requires such users to attribute the work in the manner specified by the grantee. Notice of the license shall be affixed to the work. For general information on CC BY, please visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>.

Instructions for marking your work with CC BY can be found at https://wiki.creativecommons.org/Marking_your_work_with_a_CC_license.

Questions about CC BY as it applies to this specific funding opportunity should be submitted to the ETA Grants Management Specialist specified in Section VII.

Only work that is developed by the recipient in whole or in part with grant funds is required to be licensed under the CC BY license. Pre-existing copyrighted materials licensed to or purchased by the grantee from third parties, including modifications of such materials, remain subject to the intellectual property rights the grantee receives under the terms of the particular license or purchase. In addition, works created by the grantee without grant funds do not fall under the CC BY licensing requirement.

The purpose of the CC BY licensing requirement is to ensure that materials developed with funds provided by these grants result in work that can be freely reused and improved by others. When purchasing or licensing consumable or reusable materials, the grantee is expected to respect all applicable federal laws and regulations, including those pertaining to the copyright and accessibility provisions of the Federal Rehabilitation Act.

Separate from the CC BY license to the public, the Federal Government reserves a paid-up, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use for federal purposes (i) the copyright in all products developed under the grant, including a subaward or contract under the grant or subaward; and (ii) any rights of copyright to which the recipient, subrecipient, or a contractor purchases ownership under an award (including, but not limited to, curricula, training models, technical assistance products, and any related materials). Such uses include, but are not limited to, the right to modify and distribute such products worldwide by any means, electronically or otherwise. The grantee may not use federal funds to pay any royalty or license fee for use of a copyrighted work, or the cost of acquiring by purchase a copyright in a work, where the Department has a license or rights of free use in such work. If revenues are generated through selling products developed with grant funds, including intellectual property, DOL treats such revenues as program income. Such program income is added to the grant and must be expended for allowable grant activities.

If applicable, the following standard ETA disclaimer needs to be on all products developed in whole or in part with grant funds.

“This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the grantee and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The U.S. Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it.”

Credential Transparency

The Department wishes to ensure that individuals, employers, educators and training providers have access to the most complete, current and beneficial information about providers, programs credentials, and competencies supported with these public, federal funds. To this end, the Department requires that information about all credentials (including but not limited to diplomas, badges, certificates, certifications, apprenticeships, licenses, and degrees of all levels and types) and competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) developed or delivered through the use of these public federal funds be made publicly accessible through the use of linked open data formats that support full transparency and interoperability, such as through the use of credential transparency description language specifications. ETA will provide specific guidance and technical assistance on data elements to include in the published open data, such as information about the credential provider, the credential and its associated competencies, delivery mode, geographic coverage, the industry sector(s) and occupation(s) for which the credential was developed, related assessments, related accreditations or other quality assurances where appropriate, costs, and available outcomes.

WIOA Infrastructure

All one-stop partner programs including all programs funded under title I of WIOA are required to contribute to the infrastructure costs and certain additional costs of the one-stop delivery system in proportion to their use and relative benefits received as required in 20 CFR 678.700 and 678.760. The sharing and allocation of infrastructure costs between one-stop partners is governed by WIOA sec. 121(h), WIOA's implementing regulations, and the federal Cost Principles contained in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 CFR part 200 (Uniform Guidance). The federal Cost Principles state that a partner's contribution is an allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable cost to the program and is consistent with other legal requirements. A list of the required one-stop partner programs is available at 20 CFR 678.400.

F. OTHER SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Withdrawal of Applications: You may withdraw an application by written notice to the Grant Officer at any time before an award is made.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. CRITERIA

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.

Section IV.B.3 (Project Narrative) of this FOA has several "section headers" (e.g. IV.B.3.a), Statement of Need). Each of these "section headers" of the Project Narrative may 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 have specific point values assigned. These point values are the number of points possible for the application to earn for the rating factor.

Criterion	Points (maximum)
1. Statement of Need (See Section IV.B.3.(a) Statement of Need)	10 total
2. Expected Outputs and Outcomes (See Section IV.B.3.(b) Expected Outcomes and Outputs)	28 total
3. Project Design (See Section IV.B.3.(c) Project Design)	44 total
4. Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity (See Section IV.B.3.(d) Organizational, Administrative,	8 total

Criterion	Points (maximum)
and Fiscal Capacity)	
5. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability (See Section IV.B.3.(e) Past Performance – Programmatic Capability)	6 total
6. Budget and Budget Narrative (See Section IV.B.3.(f)2. Project Budget and Budget Narrative)	4 total
7. Lead Institution is Qualified Institution – Bonus Points (See Section IV.B.3.(g) Priority Consideration: Lead Grantee is a “Qualified Institution” of Higher Education)	2 total
TOTAL	102

Standards for Evaluating the Applicant’s Response to Each Requirement for SCC2 Program Grants

Section IV.B.3, Project Narrative, provides a detailed explanation of the information an application must include (e.g., a comprehensive work plan for the whole period of performance with feasible and realistic dates). Reviewers will rate each “rating factor” based on how fully and convincingly the applicant responds. For each “rating factor” under each “criterion,” panelists will determine whether the applicant thoroughly meets, partially meets, or fails to meet the “rating factor,” unless otherwise noted in Section IV.B.3, based on the definitions below:

Standard Rating	Definition	Standard for Calculating Points
Thoroughly Meets	The application thoroughly responds to the rating factor and fully and convincingly satisfies all of the stated specifications.	Full Points
Partially Meets	The application responds incompletely to the rating factor or the application convincingly satisfies some, but not all, of the stated specifications.	Half Points
Fails to Meet	The application does not respond to the rating factor or the application does respond to the rating factor but does not convincingly satisfy any of the stated specifications.	Zero Points

In order to receive the maximum points for each rating factor, applicants must provide a response to the requirement that fully describes the proposed program design and demonstrates the quality of approach, rather than simply re-stating a commitment to perform prescribed activities. In other words, applicants must describe why their proposal is the best strategy and how they will

implement it, rather than that the strategy contains elements that conform to the requirements of this FOA.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

1. Merit Review and Selection Process

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 102 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, representation among consortium types, the selection of one or more qualifying affinity-focused consortium, utilization of additional evaluation funding, and other relevant factors. The Grant Officer may consider any information that comes to their attention.

The government may elect to award the grant(s) with or without discussion with the applicant. Should a grant be awarded without discussion, the award will be based on the applicant's signature on the SF-424, including electronic signature via E-Authentication on <https://www.grants.gov>, which constitutes a binding offer by the applicant.

2. Merit Review and Selection Process for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding

Applications for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding must be submitted as attachments to applications for SCC2 Program Grants. Applications for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding will only be reviewed for those applications that scored competitively for SCC2 Program Grants. An expert review panel will evaluate applications for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding against the factors for consideration in Section IV.B.3. Project Narrative for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding, which are based on the policy goals, priorities, and emphases set forth in this Announcement. In determining whether to approve or deny the request for funding for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding, the Grant Officer will consider the expert review panel's evaluation of supplementary materials for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding and total funding available (up to \$5 million for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding), and may also consider other factors such as diversity or similarity of equity goals, applicant types, or evaluation types proposed, and recommendations of DOL's Chief Evaluation Officer. The panel results are advisory in nature and not binding on the Grant Officer. The Grant Officer may consider any information that comes to their attention.

2. Risk Review Process

Prior to making an award, ETA will review information available through various sources, including its own records and any OMB-designated repository of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), Dun and Bradstreet, and "Do Not Pay." Additionally, ETA will comply with the requirements of 2 CFR Part 180 codified at 2 CFR Part 2998 (Non-procurement Debarment and Suspension). This risk evaluation may incorporate results of the

evaluation of the applicant’s eligibility (application screening) or the quality of its application (merit review). If ETA determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award. Criteria to be evaluated include the following:

- i. Financial stability;
- ii. Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in the Uniform Grant Guidance;
- iii. History of performance. The applicant’s record in managing awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, if it is a prior recipient of such federal awards, including timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements and, if applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards;
- iv. Reports and findings from audits performed under Subpart F–Audit Requirements of the Uniform Grant Guidance or the reports and findings of any other available audits and monitoring reports containing findings, issues of non-compliance, or questioned costs;
- v. The applicant’s ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, and other requirements imposed on recipients.

NOTE: As part of ETA’s Risk Review process, the Grant Officer will determine the following:

- If the applicant had any restriction on spending for any ETA grant due to adverse monitoring findings; or
- If the applicant received a High Risk determination in accordance with [TEGL 23-15](#).

Depending on the severity of the findings and whether the findings were resolved, the Grant Officer may, at their discretion, elect not to fund the applicant for a grant award regardless of the applicant’s score in the competition.

All applicants are requested to submit the following information as an attachment to their application (suggested template below) for ETA to assess the applicant’s Financial System. This information will be taken into account as one component of ETA’s Risk Review Process. Applicants may use the suggested template or answer the questions in a separate attachment. It is unlikely that an organization will be able to manage a federal grant without the following system/processes in place. Applicants are expected to have these in place before applying for a grant with ETA.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR -EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION (ETA) FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT: FINANCIAL SYSTEM RISK ASSESSMENT		
	SECTION A: PURPOSE	

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR -EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
ADMINISTRATION (ETA)
**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT: FINANCIAL SYSTEM RISK
ASSESSMENT**

The financial responsibility of grantees must be such that the grantee can properly discharge the public trust which accompanies the authority to expend public funds. Adequate administrative and financial systems including the accounting systems should meet the following criteria as contained in 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900.

- (1) Accounting records should provide information needed to adequately identify the receipt of funds under each grant awarded and the expenditure of funds for each grant.
- (2) Entries in accounting records should refer to subsidiary records and/or documentation which support the entry and which can be readily located.
- (3) The accounting system should provide accurate and current financial reporting information.
- (4) The accounting system should be integrated with an adequate system of internal controls to safeguard the funds and assets covered, check the accuracy and reliability of accounting data, promote operational efficiency, and encourage adherence to prescribed management policies.

SECTION B: GENERAL

1. Complete the following items:

a. When was the organization founded/incorporated (*month, day, year*)

b. Principal officers Titles

c. Employer Identification Number:

d. Number of Employees
Full Time: Part Time:

2. Is the organization or institution affiliated with any other organization: Yes No
If yes, please provide details as to the nature of the company (for profit, nonprofit, LLC, etc) and if it provides services or products to the organization in relation to this grant.

3. Total Sales/Revenues in most recent accounting period. (*12 months*)
\$

SECTION C: ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

1. Has any Government Agency rendered an official written opinion concerning the adequacy of the accounting system for the collection, identification and allocation of costs under Federal contracts/grants? Yes No

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR -EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
ADMINISTRATION (ETA)
**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT: FINANCIAL SYSTEM RISK
ASSESSMENT**

<p>a. If yes, provide name, and address of Agency performing review:</p>	<p>b. Attach a copy of the latest review and any subsequent correspondence, clearance documents, etc.</p> <p>Note: If review occurred within the past three years, omit questions 2-8 of this Section and Section D.</p>
<p>2. Which of the following best describes the accounting system:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">State Internally Web-based administered Developed</p>
<p>3. Does the accounting system identify the receipt and expenditure of program funds separately for each contract/grant?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Yes N Not o Sure</p>
<p>4. Does the accounting system provide for the recording of expenditures for each grant/contract by the component project and budget cost categories shown in the approved budget?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Yes N Not o Sure</p>
<p>5. Are time distribution records maintained for an employee when his/her effort can be specifically identified to a particular cost objective?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Yes N Not o Sure</p>
<p>6. If the organization proposes an overhead rate, does the accounting system provide for the segregation of direct and indirect expenses?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Yes N Not o Sure</p>
<p>7. Does the organization have an approved indirect cost rate or cost allocation plan? If so, who approved it (Federal Cognizant Agency or a Pass-through Entity)? What are the effective dates?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Yes N Not o Sure</p>
<p>8. Does the accounting/financial system include budgetary controls to preclude incurring obligations in excess of:</p> <p>a. Total funds available for a grant?</p> <p>b. Total funds available for a budget cost category (e.g. Personnel, Travel, etc)?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Yes N Not o Sure</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes o Sure</p> <p style="text-align: right;">N Not o Sure</p>
<p>9. Does the organization or institution have an internal control structure that would provide reasonable assurance that the grant funds, assets, and systems are safeguarded?</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Yes N Not o Sure</p>
SECTION D: FINANCIAL STABILITY	
<p>1. Is there any legal matter or an ongoing financial concern that may impact the organization's ability to manage and administer the grant? If yes, please explain briefly.</p>	

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR -EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION (ETA) FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT: FINANCIAL SYSTEM RISK ASSESSMENT		
SECTION E: FINANCIAL STATEMENTS		
1. Did an independent certified public accountant (CPA) ever examine the financial statements? Yes No		
2. If an independent CPA review was performed please attach a copy of their latest report and any management letters issued. Enclosed N / A		
3. If an independent CPA was engaged to perform a review and no report was issued, please provide details and an explanation below:		
SECTION F: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION		
1. Use this space for any additional information (<i>indicate section and item numbers if a continuation</i>)		

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

All award notifications will be posted on the ETA Homepage at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/>. Applicants selected for award will be contacted directly before the grant’s execution. Non-selected applicants will be notified by mail or email and may request a written debriefing on the significant weaknesses of their application.

Selection of an organization as a recipient does not constitute approval of the grant application as submitted. Before the actual grant is awarded, we may enter into negotiations about such items as program components, staffing and funding levels, and administrative systems in place to support grant implementation. If the negotiations do not result in a mutually acceptable submission, the Grant Officer reserves the right to terminate the negotiations and decline to fund the application. We reserve the right not to fund any application related to this FOA.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

1. Administrative Program Requirements

All grantees 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 FOA will be subject to the following administrative standards and provisions.

- i. Non-Profit 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) and 2 CFR Part 2900 (DOL's Supplement to 2 CFR Part 200).
- 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 (Governmentwide 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. 29 CFR Part 2, subpart D—Equal Treatment in Department of Labor Programs for Religious Organizations; Protection of Religious Liberty of Department of Labor Social Service Providers and Beneficiaries.
- v. 29 CFR Part 31—Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Labor—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- vi. 29 CFR Part 32—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.
- vii. 29 CFR Part 35—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance from the Department of Labor.
- viii. 29 CFR Part 36—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.
- ix. 29 CFR Part 38 – Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- x. 29 CFR Parts 29 and 30—Labor Standards for the Registration of Apprenticeship Programs, and Equal Employment Opportunity in Apprenticeship and Training, as applicable.
- xi. The Department of Labor will follow the procedures outlined in the Department's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) regulations (29 CFR Part 70). If DOL receives a FOIA request for your application, the procedures in DOL's FOIA regulations 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; 29 CFR Part 70.
- xii. Standard Grant Terms and Conditions of Award—see the following link: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/resources>.

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- ii. Appeal – This program is authorized under section 414(c) of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (ACWIA), as amended (codified at 29 USC 2916a). Therefore, appeal under sections 186 of the Workforce Investment Act or the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is not available.
- iii. All entities must comply with 29 CFR Part 93 (New Restrictions on Lobbying), 29 CFR Part 94 (Governmentwide 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).
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- vii. 29 CFR Part 35—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance from the Department of Labor.
- viii. 29 CFR Part 36—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.
- ix. 29 CFR Part 38 – Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
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2. Other Legal Requirements

a. Religious Activities

The Department 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. As stated in 29 CFR 2.32(a), religious organizations are eligible on the same basis as any other organization, to seek DOL support or participate in DOL programs for which they are otherwise eligible. Guidance from DOL is found at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/grants/religious-freedom-restoration-act/guidance>.

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), non-profit 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.

- 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.
- 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.

- Federal awards to individuals who apply for or receive federal awards as natural persons (e.g., unrelated to any business or non-profit organization he or she may own or operate in his or her name);
- Federal awards to entities that had a gross income, from all sources, of less than \$300,000 in the entities' previous tax year; and
- 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 FOA must recognize that confidentiality of PII and other sensitive data is of paramount importance to the Department of Labor 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 [TEGL 39-11](#) (issued June 28, 2012). All such activity conducted by ETA and/or 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 DOL/ETA 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 ETA 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 ETA standards for information security described in TEGl NO. 39-11 and any updates to such standards we provide to you. Grantees 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 ETA 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 ETA. Accessing, processing, and storing of ETA 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 ETA.
- 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 in 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 ETA for any purpose not stated in the grant agreement.
- viii. Access to any PII created by the ETA 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 ETA must not be disclosed to anyone but the individual requestor, except as permitted by the Grant Officer or by court order.

- xii. You must retain data received from ETA 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), non-profit 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 FOA 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 that 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 that 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

Any entity that receives an award under this Announcement must close its grant with ETA at the end of the final year of the grant. Information about this process may be found in ETA's Grant Closeout FAQ located at <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/grants/pdfs/GCFAQ.pdf>.

3. Other Administrative Standards and Provisions

Except as specifically provided in this FOA, 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. ETA Evaluation

As a condition of grant award, grantees are required to participate in an evaluation, if undertaken by DOL. The evaluation may include an implementation assessment across grantees, an impact and/or outcomes analysis of all or selected sites within or across grantees, 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, grantees must agree to: (1) make records available to the evaluation contractor on participants, employers, and funding; (2) provide access to program operating personnel, participants, and 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 DOL.

b. Performance Goals

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

C. REPORTING

You must meet DOL reporting requirements. Specifically, you must submit the reports and documents listed below to DOL electronically.

1. Quarterly Financial Reports

A Quarterly Financial Status Report (ETA 9130) is required until such time as all funds have been expended or the grant period has expired. Quarterly reports are due 45 days after the end of each calendar-year quarter. On the final Financial Status Report, you must include any subaward amounts so we can calculate final indirect costs, if applicable. You must use DOL's Online Electronic Reporting System and information and instructions will be provided to grantees. For other guidance on ETA's financial reporting, reference TEGL 20-19 and our webpage at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/management/reporting>.

2. Quarterly Performance Reports

The grantee must submit a quarterly performance report within 45 days after the end of each calendar-year quarter. The report must include quarterly information on interim indicators and performance goals. The last quarterly progress report will serve as the grant's Final Performance Report. This report must provide both quarterly and cumulative information on the grant performance. Submission requirements will be provided to grantees upon award. We will also provide you with guidance about the data and other information that is required to be collected and reported on either a regular basis or special request basis.

2. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Primary Indicators of Performance

Section 116 of WIOA establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of states and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system. [17] ETA discretionary grant programs are also collecting these performance measures in an effort to align performance outcomes system-wide. Training and Employment Guidance Letter 14-18, *Aligning Performance Accountability Reporting, Definitions, and Policies Across Workforce Employment and Training Programs Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)*, aligns and streamlines performance indicators and requirements across 15 DOL Employment and Training Administration (ETA) programs to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) performance indicators, while also rescinding and eliminating outdated performance guidance for these programs, in addition to clarifying existing ETA performance accountability policies that changed due to WIOA. [18]

The following WIOA primary indicators of performance are applicable to SCC2 grants:

1. Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit;
2. Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit;
3. Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit;
4. Effectiveness in Serving Employers (Retention with the Same Employer 2nd and 4th Quarters After Exit);
5. Credential Attainment; and
6. Measurable Skill Gains.

The Department acknowledges that successful SCC2 grant applicants may not have access to unemployment insurance wage records in order to track and report exit-based outcomes on employment rates, median earnings, and the effectiveness in serving employer measures. ETA and the Kansas Department of Commerce (KDOC) have a Memorandum of Understanding that enables ETA's national program grantees access to aggregate wage information through the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) to calculate performance measure outcomes. This arrangement is facilitated through the Common Reporting Information System (CRIS), managed by the State of Kansas. [19] Therefore, the Department matches wage records on behalf of grantees in order to capture these specific exit-based outcomes for participants of the SCC2 program for the following indicators only:

1. Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit;
2. Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit;
3. Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit; and
4. Effectiveness in Serving Employers – Retention with Same Employer 2nd and 4th Quarters after Exit.

The WIOA Credential Attainment and Measurable Skill Gains measures are calculated using participant-level performance data collected and reported during the grant period of performance by successful grant applicants.

Social Security Numbers: For the purposes of performance reporting, grantees are required to collect participant-level data to ETA, including Social Security Numbers (SSNs), on all individuals that receive grant-funded services. SSNs allow ETA to match employment data from CRIS. Thus, the collection of participant SSNs lessens the burden on grantees in tracking exit-based employment measures, while permitting consistent and reliable outcome information on the program's longer-term impacts. The DOL-Only Performance Accountability, Information, and Reporting System / WIOA Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) (OMB Control No. 1205-0521) is the current OMB-approved reporting requirements that will apply to these grants. Please note: while grantees are required to ask participants for their SSN, a participant cannot be denied services if they choose to not disclose this information.

3. Quarterly Narrative Performance Reports

In addition to the Quarterly Performance Report, the grantee must submit the Joint Quarterly Narrative Performance Report Template (ETA 9179) progress report within 45 days after the end of each calendar year quarter during which the grant is within the period of performance for the award. The report includes quarterly information regarding accomplishments, including project success stories, upcoming grant activities, and promising approaches and processes, as well as progress toward performance outcomes, including updates on product, curricula, and training development.

3. Quarterly Progress Reports

SCC2 grants are required to submit a Quarterly Progress Report, consisting of the Quarterly Narrative Report (QNR) and the Quarterly Performance Report (QPR), containing updates on the implementation and progress specified in the grant's Statement of Work and the status of grant program outputs for all participants that receive grant-funded services. The progress report is due within 45 days after the end of each reporting quarter. For example, for the quarter ending

March 30, the reporting deadline is May 15.

DOL will provide grantees with access to the online reporting system, Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS), along with formal guidance and technical assistance for data collection and reporting.

Quarterly Narrative Report (QNR): Grantees must submit the OMB-approved WIOA Joint Quarterly Narrative Report Template, ETA-9179, (OMB Control No. 1205-0448) to report quarterly progress of the grant and identify promising practices and challenges of the grantee in implementing the grant.

Grantees must include quarterly updates on their customized capacity-building and equity outcomes in Section IV of their QNR. We will provide additional information about this requirement after grant award. Note that, after grant award, successful applicants may be asked to provide annual targets for each customized outcomes, if not already included.

Quarterly Performance Report (QPR): The quarterly performance report (QPR) is a quantitative report of all participants served through the grant program. Successful applicants will use the Quarterly Performance Report Form (ETA-9173) of the DOL-only Performance Accountability, Information, and Reporting System (OMB Control No. 1205-0521) to report participant-level data. The QPR is a quarterly aggregate of individual participant records that the grantee has collected and uploaded as a data file into the WIPS. The data file will include data elements related to participant outputs and demographic information for each participant.

The following program-specific performance measures (PM) will be reported in the QPR, along with demographic information; however, grantees do not need to set targets for these outputs:

- **PM1: Participant Cohort Students Who Begin Education/Training.** Those students who are enrolled in grant-funded program(s) of study and have begun education/training activities. Participants are reported as unique, unduplicated individuals.
- **PM2: Students Who Complete the Cohort Program of Study.**
- **PM3: Students Who Complete the Cohort Program of Study and Receive a Credential.**
- **PM4: Credentials Received by Students Enrolled in the Cohort Program(s) of Study.** SCC4 measures credentials, not students. Credentials may be earned before or after completion. Students may earn multiple credentials.

Definitions for the purposes of this Announcement are as follows:

- **Grant-Funded Program of Study:** A curriculum of multiple courses that leads to one or more industry-recognized credentials, which the grantee has developed or enhanced using grant funds. The applicant must describe the grant-funded program of study in the Project Narrative (or in a subsequent approved modification).
- **Participant Cohort:** The subset of students that SCC2 grantees will track for the purposes of documenting participant (student) outputs and outcomes. DOL will not require grantees to track participants in all grant-enhanced programs of study, but applicants must select and describe at least one program of study that is central to their

proposed project design for which they will track participant outputs and customized capacity-building and equity outcomes.

- **Enrolled in a Program of Study:** Applicants must describe in their project narrative and, if selected, consistently apply a definition for “enrollment into a program of study” that aligns with their college’s definition. Applicants are encouraged to carefully consider what documentation or records they will use to determine that a student has enrolled in a program of study that leads to an industry-recognized credential.
- **Industry-Recognized Credential:** An industry-recognized credential refers to credentials described in Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 25-19, “Understanding Postsecondary Credentials in the Public Workforce System.” [20]
- **Final Report:** The last Quarterly Progress Report will serve as the grant’s Final Performance Report. This report must provide both quarterly and cumulative information on the grant activities. It must summarize project activities, employment outcomes and other deliverables, and related results of the project, and must thoroughly document the training or labor market information approaches that the grantee used.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

For further information about this FOA, please contact Matthew Carls, Grants Management Specialist, Office of Grants Management, at carls.matthew.l@dol.gov. Applicants should e-mail all technical questions to carls.matthew.l@dol.gov and must specifically reference FOA-ETA-22-02, and along with question(s), include a contact name, and phone number. This Announcement is available on the ETA website at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants> and at <https://www.grants.gov>.

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. WEB-BASED RESOURCES

DOL maintains a number of web-based resources that may be of assistance to applicants. These include the CareerOneStop portal (<https://www.careeronestop.org>), which provides national and state career information on occupations; the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) Online (<https://online.onetcenter.org>), which provides occupational competency profiles; and America's Service Locator (<https://www.servicelocator.org>), which provides a directory of our nation's American Job Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Career Centers).

B. INDUSTRY COMPETENCY MODELS AND CAREER CLUSTERS

ETA supports an Industry Competency Model Initiative to promote an understanding of the skill sets and competencies that are essential to an educated and skilled workforce. A competency model is a collection of competencies that, taken together, define successful performance in a particular work setting. Competency models serve as a starting point for the design and implementation of workforce and talent development programs. To learn about the industry-validated models, visit the Competency Model Clearinghouse (CMC) at <https://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel>. The CMC site also provides tools to build or customize industry models, as well as tools to build career ladders and career lattices for specific regional economies.

C. WORKFORCEGPS RESOURCES

We encourage you to view the information on workforce resources gathered through consultations with federal agency partners, industry stakeholders, educators, and local practitioners, and made available on WorkforceGPS at <https://workforcegps.org>.

We encourage you to view the online tutorial, “Grant Applications 101: A Plain English Guide to ETA Competitive Grants,” available through WorkforceGPS at <https://strategies.workforcegps.org/resources/2014/08/11/16/32/applying-for-eta-competitive-grants-a-web-based-toolkit-for-prospective-applicants-438?p=1>.

We created Workforce System Strategies to make it easier for the public workforce system and its partners to identify effective strategies and support improved customer outcomes. The collection highlights strategies informed by a wide range of evidence, such as experimental studies and implementation evaluations, as well as supporting resources, such as toolkits. We encourage you to review these resources by visiting <https://strategies.workforcegps.org>.

We created a technical assistance portal at <https://grantsapplicationandmanagement.workforcegps.org/> that contains online training and resources for fiscal and administrative issues. Online trainings available include, but are not limited to, Introduction to Grant Applications and Forms, Indirect Costs, Cost Principles, and Accrual Accounting.

D. SKILLSCOMMONS RESOURCES

SkillsCommons (<https://www.skillscommons.org>) offers an online library of curriculum and related training resources to obtain industry-recognized credentials in manufacturing, IT, healthcare, energy, and other industries. The website contains thousands of Open Educational Resources (OER) for job-driven workforce development, which were produced by grantees funded through DOL’s Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) program. Community colleges and other training providers across the nation can reuse, revise, redistribute, and reorganize the OER on SkillsCommons for institutional, industry, and individual use.

IX. OMB INFORMATION COLLECTION

OMB Information Collection No 1225-0086, Expires July 31, 2022.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

Send comments about the burden estimated or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, to the attention of the Departmental Clearance Officer, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room N1301, Washington, D.C. 20210. Comments may also be emailed to: DOL_PRA_PUBLIC@dol.gov.

PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR GRANT APPLICATION TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND ONLY COMMENTS ABOUT THE BURDEN CAUSED BY THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND YOUR GRANT APPLICATION TO THE SPONSORING AGENCY AS SPECIFIED EARLIER IN THIS ANNOUNCEMENT.

This information is being collected for the purpose of awarding a grant. DOL will use the information collected through this “Funding Opportunity Announcement” to ensure that grants are awarded to the applicants best suited to perform the functions of the grant. This information is required to be considered for this grant.

Signed _____ in Washington, D.C. by:

Grant Officer, Employment and Training Administration

APPENDIX A: RESOURCES ON GAP ANALYSIS AND ADDRESSING ISSUES OF EQUITY

The Department encourages applicants to review the following resources, as relevant, when developing their proposals.

Equity Gap Analysis

Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment

The Perkins V comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) aims to facilitate a data-informed, continuous improvement process for community colleges using an equity lens.

Office of Community College Research and Leadership, 2019

<https://occrll.illinois.edu/comprehensive-local-needs-assessment>.

Unpacking Program Enrollments and Completions with Equity in Mind

This guide presents examples and instructions for data analyses that colleges can conduct to better understand student enrollments and completions in particular programs. Included with the guide is a Data Tool, which may facilitate analysis of college data with an equity lens.

Fink, J. & Jenkins, J., Community College Research Center, 2020

<https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/unpacking-program-enrollments-completion-equity.html>.

Pathways to Results

Pathways to Results (PTR) empowers organizations to continuously enhance pathways and programs of study by addressing inequities in student outcomes.

Office of Community College Research and Leadership,

2014 <https://occrll.illinois.edu/ptr/publications>.

Equity in the Workforce

JFF's Vision for an Equitable Economic Recovery

Afranie, A., et al., JFF, 2021

<https://strategies.workforcegps.org/resources/2021/05/13/15/59/JFFs-Vision-For-An-Equitable-Economic-Recovery>.

The Unequal Race for Good Jobs

Carnevale, A., et al., Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2021

<https://strategies.workforcegps.org/resources/2021/05/07/18/52/The-Unequal-Race-for-Good-Jobs>.

Framing the Opportunity: Eight State Policy Recommendations that Support Postsecondary Credential Completion for Underserved Populations

McDonnell, R., & Collins, M., Jobs for the Future, 2017

<https://strategies.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/10/11/18/47/Framing-the-Opportunity-Eight-State-Policy-Recommendations-that-Support-Postsecondary-Credential>.

Racial and Ethnic Equity Gaps in Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Considerations for Online Learning

Anderson, T., et al., Urban Institute, 2021

<https://www.urban.org/research/publication/racial-and-ethnic-equity-gaps-postsecondary-career-and-technical-education>.

Strategies for Improving Postsecondary Credential Attainment Among Black, Hispanic, and Native American Adults

Brock, T., & Slater, D. (Eds.), Community College Research Center, 2021

<https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/credential-attainment-black-hispanic-native-american-adults.html>.

Voices from the Field: How Community Colleges Are Advancing Equity in Career and Technical Education

Dalporto, H., & Tessler, B., MDRC, 2020

https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/Equity_in_CTE_brief.pdf.

Unpacking Program Enrollments and Completions With Equity in Mind

Fink, J., & Jenkins, D., Community College Research Center, 2020

<https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/unpacking-program-enrollments-completion-equity.pdf>.

APPENDIX B: RESOURCES ON CAREER PATHWAYS AND SECTOR STRATEGIES

The Department encourages applicants to review the following resources, as relevant, when developing their proposals.

Designing and Delivering Career Pathways at Community Colleges: A Practice Guide for Educators

Cotner, H., et al., Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 2021

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/27>.

Large Scale Change: Lessons Learned from TAACCCT

Van Noy, M., et al. (Eds.), 2021, Volume 2021, Issue 193: New Directions for Community Colleges

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15360733/2021/2021/193>.

Systems Change in Community Colleges: Lessons from a Synthesis of the Round 3 TAACCCT Third-Party Evaluation Findings

Eyster, L., et al., Urban Institute for the U.S. Department of Labor, 2020

https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/ETA_Round3TAACCCTImplementationSynthesis_Report_Sep2020.pdf.

Moving Up: Lessons from TAACCCT on Career Pathway Progression

Bragg, D., New America, 2020

<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/moving-lessons-taacct-career-pathway-progression/>.

Evidence on Career Pathways Strategies: Highlights from a Scan of the Research

Sarna, M., & Adam, T., Abt Associates for the U.S. Department of Labor, May 2020

https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/ETA_CareerPathways_Brief_November2020.pdf.

Increasing Community College Graduation Rates with a Proven Model: Three-Year Results from the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) Ohio Demonstration

Miller, C., et al., MDRC, 2020

https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/ASAP_OH_3yr_Impact_Report_1.pdf.

Impacts of Key Community College Strategies on Non-Degree Credential Completion by Adult Learners

McKay, Heather A., et al., DVP Praxis and Lumina Foundation, 2019

<https://www.luminafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/impacts-of-key-community-college-strategies-on-non-degree-credential-completion-by-adult-learners.pdf>.

Non-Degree Credentials Provide Value for Adults in the Labor Market

Valentine, J.L., & Clay, J., DVP Praxis and Lumina Foundation, 2019

<https://www.dvp-praxis.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/DVP-PRAXIS-Non-Degree-Credentials-and-Labor-Market-Outcomes.pdf>.

Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG 1.0) Impact Study: Three-Year Impacts Report

Peck, L.R., et al, Abt Associates for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/health-profession-opportunity-grants-hpog-10-impact-study-three-year-impacts-report>.

Estimating the Impact of Nation's Largest Single Investment in Community Colleges: Lessons and Limitations of a Meta-Analysis of TAACCCT Evaluations

Blume, G., et al., New America, 2019

<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/estimating-impact-taacct/>.

What Works for Adult Learners: Lessons from Career Pathway Evaluations

Bragg, D., et al., Jobs for the Future, 2019

<https://www.jff.org/resources/what-works-adult-learners-lessons-career-pathway-evaluations/>.

The Employer Perspectives Study: Insights on How to Build and Maintain Strong Employer-College Partnerships. Round 4 TAACCCT Evaluation

Scott, M., et al., Abt Associates and Urban Institute for the U.S. Department of Labor, 2018

<https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/legacy/files/Employer-Perspectives-Study-Report-Round-Final.pdf>.

TAACCCT Sustainability Toolkit

Jobs for the Future for the U.S. Department of Labor, 2016

https://collegeconnection.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/07/25/13/22/Resource_TAACCCTSustainabilityToolkit.

Career Pathways Toolkit: An Enhanced Guide and Workbook for System Development

Manhattan Strategy Group for the U.S. Department of Labor, 2016

https://careerpathways.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/10/20/10/11/Enhanced_Career_Pathways_Toolkit.

Sector Strategy Implementation Framework

ETA Sector Strategies Technical Assistance Initiative, 2016

<https://businessengagement.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/04/12/13/53/Sector-Strategies-Implementation-Framework>.

Stackable Credentials

Introduction to Stackable Credentials

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, 2021

<https://cte.ed.gov/initiatives/credentials>.

A More Unified Community College: Strategies and Resources to Align Non-Credit and Credit Programs

Education Strategy Group (ESG), 2020

https://edstrategy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/A-More-Unified-Community-College_FINAL.pdf.

Integrated and Contextualized Remediation

Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) Program in Three Colleges: Implementation and Early Impact Report.

Glosser, A., et al., U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/i_best_implementation_and_early_impact_report_508.pdf.

Reflections on Accelerating CTE: Final Evaluation Report.

Smith, T., et al., Jobs for the Future, 2019

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED598367.pdf>.

Competency-Based Education

Next-Generation CBE: Designing Competency-Based Education for Underprepared College Learners (Series)

Jobs for the Future, 2018

<https://www.jff.org/resources/next-generation-cbe-designing-competency-based-education-underprepared-college-learners/>.

Quality Framework for Competency-Based Education Programs

Competency-Based Education Network, 2017

[st_button_CBE17016_Quality_Framework_Update.pdf \(cbenetwork.org\)](https://www.cbenetwork.org/st_button_CBE17016_Quality_Framework_Update.pdf).

Improved Student Services and Counseling

Comprehensive Student Supports Help Adult Learners Earn Non-Degree Credentials.

Price, D., et al., DVP Praxis and Lumina Foundation, 2019

https://www.dvp-praxis.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Student_Supports_and_Non_Degree_Credentials_web.pdf.

Navigating the Journey: Encouraging Student Progress through Enhanced Support Services in TAACCCT

Love, I., New America, 2019,

<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-papers/navigating-the-journey/>.

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)/Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

The PLA Boost: Results from a 72-Institution Targeted Study of Prior Learning Assessment and Adult Student Outcomes

Klein-Collins, R., et al., CAEL and Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2020

[PLA Boost Report CAEL WICHE - October 2020.pdf](https://www.cael.org/publications/PLA-Boost-Report-CAEL-WICHE-October-2020.pdf).

Connecting Adults to College with Credit for Prior Learning

Palmer, I., & Nguyen, S., New America, 2019.

https://d1y8sb8igg2f8e.cloudfront.net/documents/Connecting_Adults_to_College_with_Credit_for_Prior_Learning_2019-10-03_144605.pdf.

APPENDIX C: RESOURCES ON EVIDENCE-INFORMED DESIGN

The following clearinghouses contain reviews of research studies and provide ratings of the quality of the evidence within a subset of those studies. Note that quality ratings reflect confidence that the interventions examined caused the study's results; the rating is not a measure of whether the findings are positive.

Applicants may use one or more of these clearinghouses to identify what the available evidence says about the strategies that will more likely lead to successful outcomes and to cite research supporting their program model.

- **DOL’s Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR)**

<https://clear.dol.gov/>

CLEAR identifies and summarizes many types of research, including descriptive, implementation, and impact studies. In addition, CLEAR assesses the quality of research that looks at the effectiveness of particular policies and programs.

- **Community college topic area:** <https://clear.dol.gov/topic-area/community-college>

CLEAR reviews studies that examine the effectiveness of community college policies and programs that aim to improve academic persistence, degree/certificate completion, and labor market outcomes of community college students. Each individual study profile includes a summary of the study, findings, and implications.

- **U.S. Department of Education’s What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)**

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>

WWC reviews the existing research on different *programs, products, practices,* and *policies* in education. It uses a systematic review process to identify all of the research on an intervention, assesses the quality of each study, and summarizes the findings from the high-quality studies.

- **U.S. Department of Health & Human Services’ Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse (Pathways Clearinghouse)**

<https://pathwaystowork.acf.hhs.gov/>

The Pathways Clearinghouse identifies interventions that aim to improve employment outcomes, reduce employment challenges, and support self-sufficiency for low-income populations, especially Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and other public program recipients. The Pathways Clearinghouse systematically evaluates and summarizes the evidence of their effectiveness, and includes 221 interventions and 295 studies to date.

- **USDOL Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) - Completed Reports**

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasp/evaluation/completedstudies>

CEO provides this source for completed studies that have advanced understanding of the U.S. labor market and its role in the global economy.

- Note that CEO released new studies related to the Trade Adjustment Act Community Colleges and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant programs in December 2020.

- **USDOL Office of Policy Development and Research, Division of Research and Evaluation (DRE) Research Publication Database:** A searchable database containing over 400 labor-related publications. See <https://www.doleta.gov/research/>

- **USDOL Evaluation and Research Hub (Eval Hub):** A community point of access to support workforce development professionals in their efforts to use evaluations to improve workforce system services and strategies and to choose evaluations and research to help inform program policies and evidence-based practices. See <https://evalhub.workforcegps.org/>.

APPENDIX D: RESOURCES ON LOGIC MODEL

A logic model explicitly lays out the logical connections of a project's design, detailing how the project will deliver results using grant-funded and leveraged resources, as available. For the purposes of this FOA, the two-page logic model (see below for suggested templates) must consist of a system component table and a theory of change, and must be aligned with the required Performance Outcomes table.

The sections below provide information about the required two-page logic model for this FOA, described in Section I.A.3.(b). The Department does not intend for this information to represent an exhaustive list of what the applicant could include. The logic model must include the following:

- System Components Table including Resources/Partners (i.e., partners, partner roles, grant funding, and leveraged funding/services/materials), Activities, Outputs, the Performance Outcomes required under this FOA and any other Outcomes (Short-term, Intermediate, and Long-term Outcomes), and Desired Impacts.
- Theory of Change that identifies the problem or issue (from the equity gap analysis and labor market information), community needs and assets, desired results, influential factors, strategies, and assumptions.

Applicants must include the system components table and theory of change as an attachment to the Project Narrative, and label it "Logic Model." *Note that DOL intends to share publicly the abstracts of successful applicants, along with their logic models.*

For a detailed explanation and examples of developing and using logic models, see:

Element Six: Measure System Change and Performance of the Career Pathways Toolkit: An Enhanced Guide and Workbook for System Development

https://careerpathways.workforcegps.org/-/media/Communities/careerpathways/Files/7_Element_6_100516.ashx. In particular, the following templates, containing examples, may be helpful: Template 1: System Components (sample), see pages 9-10; and Template 2: Systems Theory of Change (sample), see pages 14-15. https://careerpathways.workforcegps.org/-/media/Communities/careerpathways/Files/7_Element_6_100516.ashx.

Learning to Love Your Logic Model (Webinar Recording)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services

https://youtu.be/2HrG5ButP_g

Additional Resources

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide

W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 1

<https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resources/2004/01/logic-model-development-guide>

Logic Models

CDC Evaluation Documents, Workbooks and Tools

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Program Performance and Evaluation Office

https://www.cdc.gov/eval/tools/logic_models/

Logic Model Tip Sheet

Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services,
Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation

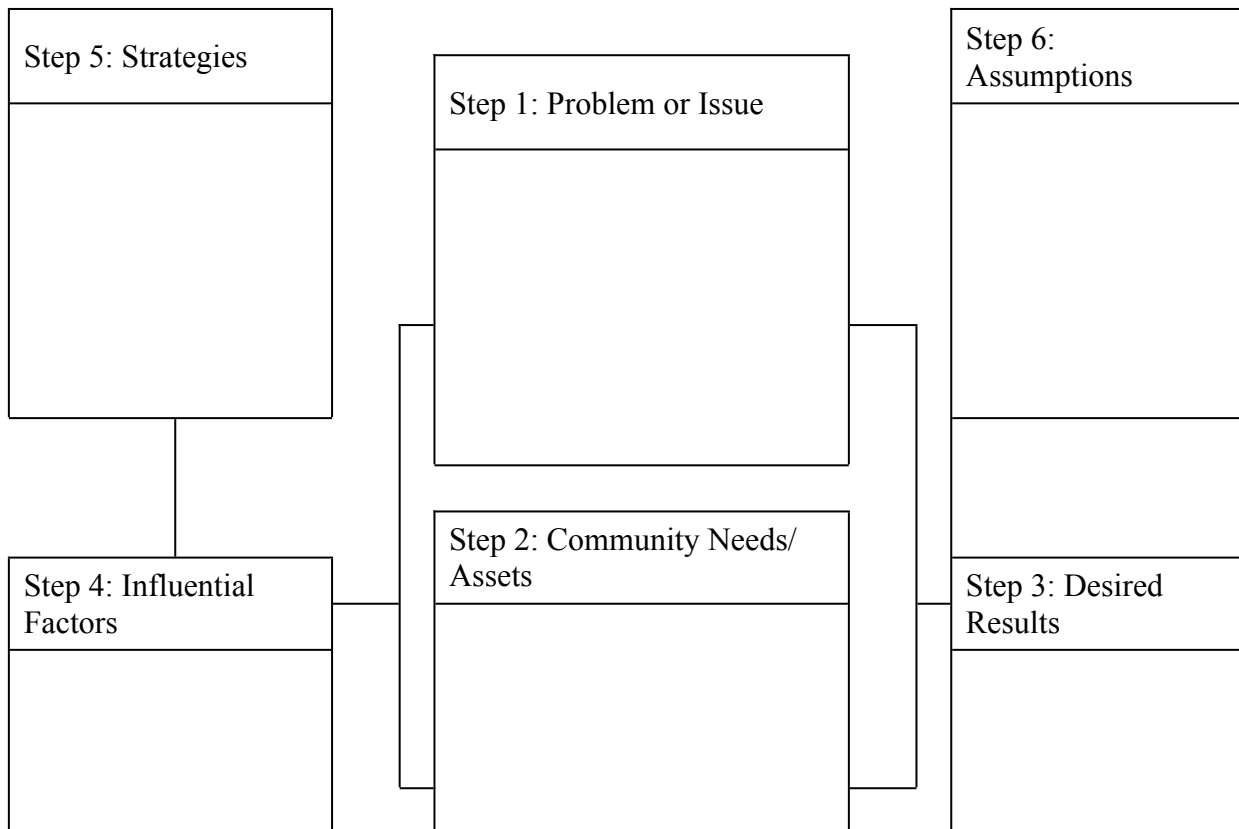
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/prep-logic-model-ts_0.pdf

Suggested Format for System Components Table

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Required Performance Outcomes and other outcomes (short-term, intermediate, and long-term)	Desired Impacts

Suggested Format for Theory of Change

See the template on pages 14-15 in the Career Pathways Toolkit, cited above.





APPENDIX E: RESOURCES ON CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS CHANGE

“Programmatic interventions help people beat the odds. Systemic interventions can help change their odds.”

Karen Pittman
CEO of the Forum on
Youth Investment

Applying systems change principles will help to ensure that the capacity built under the SCC2 project will sustain beyond the period of performance and that the project will continue to achieve advancements in equity. Systems change efforts fall into two categories of change. First-order change refers to enhancements or improvements to an existing mode of practice, and second-order change involves a paradigm shift in how a problem is perceived.

Capacity Building

For the purposes of this FOA, capacity building is defined as the process through which individuals, groups of people, and organizations obtain, strengthen, and scale the capabilities they need in order to set and advance goals toward chosen outcomes. Capacity is the means to plan and achieve organizational goals, and capacity building describes the ways to those means so that stakeholders can lead sustained and scaled improvements over time. Capacity building may focus on infrastructure, operational functions, and/or individual capabilities within organizations and systems, so that organizations can generate positive change in opportunities and outcomes on behalf of wage earners.

Systems Change

Per research cited below (Bernstein & Matin-Caughey 2017), the following may be seen as “key principles” of systems change:

- Systems change focuses on changing policy, practice, perceptions, funding, and institutions
- Collaboration and relationships are central components of systems change
- Systems change initiatives are complex and multilevel
- The desired effects are sustained and institutionalized

The Department encourages applicants to review the following resources, as relevant, when developing their proposals.

Systems Change & Deep Equity: Pathways Toward Sustainable Impact, Beyond “Eureka!,” Unawareness & Unwitting Harm

Petty, S., & Leach, M., Change Elemental, 2020

<https://changeelemental.org/resources/systems-change-and-deep-equity-monograph/>.

From Programs to System Change Series under the TAACCCT program

Jobs for the Future for the U.S. Department of Labor, 2019

https://collegeconnection.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/03/02/19/41/Resource_From_Programs_to_System_Change_Series.

Scaling – From “Reaching Many” to Sustainable Systems Change at Scale: A Critical Shift in Mindset

Woltering, L. et al., *Agricultural Systems*, Vol. 176, 2019

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308521X18314392>.

Changing Workforce Systems—A Framework for Describing and Measuring Systems Change

Bernstein, H., & Martin-Caughey, A, Urban Institute, 2017

https://www.urban.org/research/publication/changing-workforce-systems/view/full_report.

Systems Change under the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Program

Bernstein, H., et al., Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016

https://www.abtassociates.com/sites/default/files/migrated_files/aa1d7ffd-4c9b-44a6-bbe0-65ab15f7631a.pdf.

Systems Change in the National Fund for Workforce Solutions

Soricone, L., National Fund for Workforce Solutions, 2015

<https://nationalfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Systems-Change-in-the-National-Fund-120415.pdf>.

Putting the System Back into Systems Change: A Framework for Understanding and Changing Organizational and Community Systems

Foster-Fishman, P. et al. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 39(3-4), 197-215: 2007

http://www.pointk.org/resources/files/Foster-Fishman_-_system_change_AJCP.pdf.

Systems Change Reborn: Rethinking our Theories, Methods, and Efforts in Human Services Reform and Community-Based Change

Foster-Fishman, P. G. & Behrens, T. R., 2007. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 39(3), 191-196.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-007-9104-5>.

APPENDIX F: RESOURCES ON EVALUATION

The Department encourages applicants to review the following resources, as relevant, when developing their proposals.

Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants: Third-Party Evaluations Webinar

<https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2021/03/22/16/15/Strengthening-Community-Colleges-Training-Grants-Third-Party-Evaluations>.

Evaluation and Research Hub (EvalHub)

A community point of access to support workforce development professionals in their efforts to choose and use evaluations to improve workforce system services and strategies.

<https://evalhub.workforcegps.org>.

Evaluation Toolkit: Key Elements for State Workforce Agencies

<https://evalhub.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/09/07/19/58/WIOA-Evaluation-Toolkit>.

Three Principles Ground the Equitable Evaluation Framework

Equitable Evaluation Initiative, 2019

<https://www.equitableeval.org/ee-framework>.

Guidance for TAACCCT Grant's Third-Party Evaluations

https://collegeconnection.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/08/22/14/12/Guidance_for_TAACCCT_Grant-s_Third_-_Party_Evaluations.

Guidelines for Reviewing Implementation Studies

Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR), 2014

https://clear.dol.gov/sites/default/files/CLEAR_Operational%20Implementation%20Study%20Guidelines.pdf.

A Developmental Evaluation Primer

Gamble, J., J.W., McConnell Family Foundation, 2008

<https://mcconnellfoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/A-Developmental-Evaluation-Primer-EN.pdf>.

DE 201: A Practitioner’s Guide to Developmental Evaluation

Dozois, E., et al., J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, 2010

<https://mcconnellfoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/DE-201-EN.pdf>.

Framework of Evaluation Methodologies for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funding

Please use the chart below to help determine the type of evaluation the applicant should plan, and justify the selection on the basis of the characteristics below. It is not possible to compile a complete table of evaluation options and recommendations for each possible combination of circumstances that can arise; however, the chart below may suffice as an outline of what DOL considers an appropriate level of evaluation given various proposed project characteristics.

Types and Uses of Evaluation

Evaluation Type Options	
Impact Evaluation	This type of evaluation assesses the causal impact of a program, policy, or organization, or aspect of them on outcomes, relative to a counterfactual. In other words, this type of evaluation estimates and compares outcomes with and without the program, policy, or organization, or aspect thereof. Impact evaluations include both experimental (i.e., randomized controlled trials) and quasi-experimental

	designs. An impact evaluation can help answer the question, “does it work,” or “did the intervention lead to the observed outcomes?”
Outcome Evaluation	This type of evaluation measures the extent to which a program, policy, or organization has achieved its intended outcome(s), and focuses on outputs and outcomes to assess effectiveness. Unlike impact evaluation above, it cannot discern causal attribution but is complementary to performance measurement, as noted above. An outcome evaluation can help answer the question, “were the intended outcomes of the program, policy, or organization achieved?”
Behavioral Interventions Evaluation	This type of evaluation generates causal evidence on the effectiveness of behavioral interventions in addressing the targeted problem. Similar to impact evaluation above, a behavioral interventions evaluation determines the degree to which small changes in the environment, program operations, or default rules can shape actions and reduce barriers to employment and/or skills outcomes.

Information for this chart is derived from the following sources:

Overview of the Federal Performance Framework, Definitions, Evaluation

OMB Circular A11 200.22 at pages16-18 (2021)

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/a11.pdf>

The Practitioner’s Playbook for Applying Behavioral Insights to Labor Programs.

Practitioner’s Playbook for Applying Behavioral Insights to Labor Programs

Darling et al., Mathematica for the U.S. Department of Labor, 2017

<https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/legacy/files/7-Practitioner-Playbook-Final-20170517.pdf>

APPENDIX G: SUGGESTED TABLE FOR PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

This FOA requires applicants to develop a systems component table and theory of change as part of their logic model (see Section I.A.3.(b) and Appendix D). A key aspect of this process is developing project outcomes. As described in Sections I.G. and IV.B.3(b)(2), applicants must develop five grant-specific outcomes, three of which measure the grant-funded capacity that applicants propose to build to meet their equity goals under this FOA, and two of which demonstrate how the project will close one or more of the equity gaps identified in the equity gap analysis. Applicants must include these outcomes in their logic model, and they may include additional outcomes as well.

In addition to including brief versions of outcomes in the logic model, applicants must submit a table (as an attachment) with more details on the five required project outcomes. The table below is a sample format that applicants may use to present their outcomes. The Department expects that these five outcomes will flow from the assessment approach that applicants undertake, as outlined in their logic model. See Section IV.B.3.(b)(2) for several examples of

such outcomes (which the FOA provides for illustrative purposes only).

We define or explain the terms in the table below, as follows:

- **“Type or direction of change”** indicates the manner in which the capacity or equity gap targeted by the intervention will change (e.g., increase, decrease, create, eliminate).
- **“Unit of measurement”** defines what exactly the applicant will measure to determine status toward completion.
- **“Outcome Target(s)”** describes, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, the desired results of the project’s intervention at the end of the grant period of performance.
- **“Current State/Other Baseline”** refers to the existing education and career training programs, infrastructure, state of student achievement and/or system status related to the area that the applicant proposes to develop or enhance, which the required gap analysis should reveal. The baseline may also include information about the comparison group (where applicable). The baseline can be quantitative (including “zero”) or a qualitative description of the current state.
- **“Grant-funded Program(s) of Study”** refers to one or more career pathway programs that the project proposes to build or enhance using grant funds.
- **“Target Population”** is the group of individuals who are the subject of the equity gap that the project proposes to close or reduce and/or the group to be served in the specific sector career pathway.
- **“Definition(s)”** for the accomplishment describes what exactly must occur to call an accomplishment “done.”
- **“Timeframe”** indicates one or more target dates for accomplishing the outcome.
- **“How sustained”** describes the manner in which and the extent to which the project intends to sustain the grant-funded capacity that it builds after the grant period of performance ends.
- **“Rationale”** provides a summary of the theory of change in the logic model, i.e., logical reasoning that the proposed strategies will fill a need and lead to the intended outcomes. Include evidence-informed citations to evidence where appropriate.

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES TABLE FOR [INSERT PROJECT TITLE/NAME]
CAPACITY BUILDING OUTCOME #1
Capacity-Building Outcome Statement 1: <i>Insert applicant outcome from logic model</i>
Type or Direction of Change:
Unit of Measurement:
Outcome Target:
Current State/Other Baseline:
Grant-funded Program(s) of Study:

Target Population(s):
Definition(s):
Timeframe:
How Sustained:
Rationale: <i>Align with logic model</i>
CAPACITY BUILDING OUTCOME #2
Capacity-Building Outcome Statement 2: <i>Insert applicant outcome from logic model</i>
Type or Direction of Change:
Unit of Measurement:
Outcome Target:
Current State/Other Baseline:
Grant-funded Program(s) of Study:
Target Population(s):
Definition(s):
Timeframe:
How Sustained:
Rationale: <i>Align with logic model</i>
CAPACITY BUILDING OUTCOME #3
Capacity-Building Outcome Statement 3: <i>Insert applicant outcome from logic model</i>
Type or Direction of Change:
Unit of Measurement:
Outcome Target:
Current State/Other Baseline:
Grant-funded Program(s) of Study:
Target Population(s):
Definition(s):
Timeframe:
How Sustained:

Rationale: <i>Align with logic model</i>
EQUITY OUTCOME #1
Equity Outcome Statement 1: <i>Insert applicant outcome from logic model</i>
Type or Direction of Change:
Unit of Measurement:
Outcome Target:
Current State/Other Baseline:
Grant-funded Program(s) of Study:
Target Population(s):
Definition(s):
Timeframe:
How Sustained:
Rationale: <i>Align with logic model</i>
EQUITY OUTCOME #2
Equity Outcome Statement 2: <i>Insert applicant outcome from logic model</i>
Type or Direction of Change:
Unit of Measurement:
Outcome Target:
Current State/Other Baseline:
Grant-funded Program(s) of Study:
Target Population(s):
Definition(s):
Timeframe:
How Sustained:
Rationale: <i>Align with logic model</i>

APPENDIX H: SUGGESTED PROJECT WORK PLAN FORMAT

Applicants must use the five project outcomes (the three capacity-building outcomes and two equity outcomes) listed in their Performance Outcomes Table (see Appendix G) as the basis of their project work plan, which is provided as an attachment. In addition, applicants must include the required Third-Party Evaluation activities described in Section I.H. Evaluations. They also must include activities related to developing and implementing a tracking system for their Participant Cohort. The project work plan below is a suggested format; the Department encourages applicants to include additional activities and outputs specific to their project design.

Working from these requirements, applicants must designate key activities and develop project outputs associated with each outcome, and include these items in the work plan. The activities and outputs should be the same as those included in the required logic model; see Section I.A.3.(b) and Appendix D for an explanation of the model and definitions of key terms. In particular, note the following definitions:

- **Activities:** The processes, services, and actions to direct the course of change. The activities are the interventions that, when implemented, create a result (outputs).
- **Outputs:** The direct results of program activities. This is a *quantitative measure* that reveals that an action occurred. An illustrative example of an activity is to build a collaborative. An output is the number of partners signing the Memorandum of Understanding.

As noted, we encourage applicants to include additional activities and outputs in their work plan; such added detail would permit grantees to better demonstrate progress against their proposed outcomes.

In addition, applicants should indicate the name of each SCC2 partner engaged in the activity, designating which organization has the lead responsibility for producing the output. They also should identify the timeframe for achieving the outputs.

Finally, the acronym SMART is a common acronym used to test whether an output is sound. Applicants should ensure that the outputs used in their work plans follow the SMART framework described here. Specifically, SMART outputs are as follows:

- **Specific:** Specifically and qualitatively describe the output (e.g., partnerships with local manufacturing sector, small businesses).
- **Measurable:** Where possible, quantitatively describe the output in the “measure” column below (e.g., 10 new partnerships with manufacturing sector small businesses).
- **Achievable:** Check that, based on the award amount requested, the resources available to be leveraged, and the capacity of the project’s organization and partners, the applicant can realistically expect to achieve the output within the scope written in the work plan.
- **Relevant:** Check that achieving the output logically leads to and supports achieving the outcome with which it is associated.
- **Time-bound:** Include a timeframe for completing the output (e.g., “month 6,” “year 1”).

PROJECT WORK PLAN FOR [INSERT PROJECT TITLE/NAME]
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CAPACITY-BUILDING OUTCOMES #1-3			
Capacity-Building Outcome Statement #1: <i>Insert applicant's grant-specific capacity-building outcome statement from the performance outcomes table (Appendix G).</i>			
ACTIVITIES	ENTITY(IES) RESPONSIBLE	OUTPUTS	TIMELINE/DUE DATES
<i>Insert activities, taken from logic model, for Capacity-Building Outcome 1</i>	<i>Insert responsible lead and any supporting entity(ies) responsible for achieving the activities</i>	<i>Insert outputs, taken directly from logic model.</i>	<i>Insert due dates for achieving outputs</i>
<i>[add additional lines as needed]</i>			
Capacity-Building Outcome Statement #2: <i>Insert applicant's grant-specific capacity-building outcome statement from the performance outcomes table (Appendix G).</i>			
ACTIVITIES	ENTITY(IES) RESPONSIBLE	OUTPUTS	TIMELINE/DUE DATES
<i>Insert activities, taken from logic model, for Capacity-Building Outcome 2</i>	<i>Insert responsible lead and any supporting entity(ies) responsible for achieving the activities</i>	<i>Insert outputs, taken directly from logic model.</i>	<i>Insert due dates for achieving outputs</i>
<i>[add additional lines as needed]</i>			
Capacity-Building Outcome Statement #3: <i>Insert applicant's grant-specific capacity-building outcome statement from the performance outcomes table (Appendix G).</i>			
ACTIVITIES	ENTITY(IES) RESPONSIBLE	OUTPUTS	TIMELINE/DUE DATES
<i>Insert activities, taken from logic model, for Capacity-Building Outcome 3</i>	<i>Insert responsible lead and any supporting entity(ies) responsible for achieving the activities</i>	<i>Insert outputs, taken directly from logic model.</i>	<i>Insert due dates for achieving outputs</i>
<i>[add additional lines as needed]</i>			

EQUITY OUTCOMES #1 and #2
Equity Outcome Statement #1: <i>Insert applicant's project outcome statement from the performance outcomes table (Appendix G).</i>

ACTIVITIES	ENTITY(IES) RESPONSIBLE	OUTPUTS	TIMELINE/DUE DATES
<i>Insert activities, taken from logic model, for Equity Outcome 1</i>	<i>Insert responsible lead and any supporting entity(ies) responsible for achieving the activities</i>	<i>Insert outputs, taken directly from logic model.</i>	<i>Insert due dates for achieving outputs</i>
<i>[add additional lines as needed]</i>			

Equity Outcome Statement #2: *Insert applicant's outcome statement from the performance outcomes table (Appendix G).*

ACTIVITIES	ENTITY(IES) RESPONSIBLE	OUTPUTS	TIMELINE/DUE DATES
<i>Insert activities, taken from logic model, for Equity Outcome 2</i>	<i>Insert responsible lead and any supporting entity(ies) responsible for achieving the activities</i>	<i>Insert outputs, taken directly from logic model.</i>	<i>Insert due dates for achieving outputs</i>
<i>[add additional lines as needed]</i>			

THIRD-PARTY EVALUATION			
See Section I.H.1. Third-Party Evaluation.			
OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	DUE DATES	ENTITY(IES) RESPONSIBLE
Submit a detailed procurement work plan to procure a third-party evaluator for an implementation evaluation.	<i>Insert the activities applicant will use to demonstrate achievement of the output(s)</i>	<i>Insert due date no later than Month 1</i>	<i>Insert responsible lead and any supporting entity(ies) responsible for achieving the activities</i>
Procure third-party evaluator for implementation evaluation.	<i>Insert the activities applicant will use to demonstrate achievement of the output(s)</i>	<i>Insert due date no later than Month 6, or the earliest timing feasible under institutional procurement guidelines</i>	<i>Insert responsible lead and any supporting entity(ies) responsible for achieving the activities</i>

Submit a Draft Detailed Evaluation Design from the evaluator, using guidance provided by the Department.	<i>Insert the activities applicant will use to demonstrate achievement of the output(s)</i>	<i>Insert due date no later than Month 9</i>	<i>Insert responsible lead and any supporting entity(ies) responsible for achieving the activities</i>
Submit a Final Detailed Evaluation Design in collaboration with third-party evaluator.	<i>Insert the activities applicant will use to demonstrate achievement of the output(s)</i>	<i>Insert due date no later than Month 12</i>	<i>Insert responsible lead and any supporting entity(ies) responsible for achieving the activities</i>
Ensure that third-party evaluator carries out the evaluation and completes all tasks and deliverables, and provides ongoing input and consultation if the evaluation uses an adaptive model.	<i>Insert the activities applicant will use to demonstrate achievement of the output(s)</i>	<i>Insert due dates that reflect interim milestones</i>	<i>Insert responsible lead and any supporting entity(ies) responsible for achieving the activities</i>
Submit evaluator's Interim Implementation Report to FPO and Program Office using suggested format.	<i>Insert the activities applicant will use to demonstrate achievement of the output(s)</i>	<i>Submit due date no later than Month 27</i>	<i>Insert responsible lead and any supporting entity(ies) responsible for achieving the activities</i>
Submit evaluator's Final Implementation Report using suggested format.	<i>Insert the activities applicant will use to demonstrate achievement of the output(s)</i>	<i>Insert due date no later than Month 48</i>	<i>Insert responsible lead and any supporting entity(ies) responsible for achieving the activities</i>

PARTICIPANT COHORT TRACKING

See Section IV.B.3.(b)(3) Participant Tracking

ACTIVITIES	ENTITY(IES) RESPONSIBLE	OUTPUTS	TIMELINE/DUE DATES
<i>Insert activities for participant tracking</i>	<i>Insert responsible lead and any supporting entity(ies) responsible for achieving the activities</i>	<i>Insert outputs, taken directly from logic model.</i>	<i>Insert due dates for achieving outputs</i>
<i>[add additional lines as needed]</i>			

APPENDIX I: SUGGESTED ABSTRACT FORMAT

The template below is a suggested format. Applicants may tailor this template as needed to fit their proposed application. The abstract may be up to three pages and is provided as an attachment. DOL will share publicly the abstracts and logic models of successful applicants.

Overview

Lead Applicant Organization Name:
Project Title/Name and Purpose:
Total Funding Requested for SCC Program Grant:
Total Funding Requested for Additional SCC2 Evaluation Funds:
Type of Applicant: <i>Indicate single, or type of consortium</i>
Industry Sector(s):
Geographic Area Served:
Intended Beneficiaries:
Eligibility of Lead Applicant as Qualified Institution: <i>See Section III.A.3.; Indicate whether applying as a Qualified Institution or Not Applicable</i>

SCC Partnership

INSTITUTION CONSORTIUM PARTNERS <i>(Required for consortium applicants only)</i>	
<i>Insert names of Institution Consortium Partners</i>	<i>Insert Qualified Institution or N/A</i>
<i>[add additional lines as needed]</i>	
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM PARTNER(S) <i>(Required for all applicants)</i>	
<i>Insert name(s) of Workforce Development System Partner(s):</i>	<i>Insert type of organization</i>
<i>[add additional lines as needed]</i>	
EMPLOYER PARTNER(S) <i>(Required for all applicants)</i>	

<i>Insert name(s) of Employer Partner(s):</i> <i>[add additional lines as needed]</i>	<i>Insert industry sector</i>
OPTIONAL PARTNER(s)	
<i>Insert name(s) of Optional Partner(s):</i> <i>[add additional lines as needed]</i>	<i>Insert type of organization</i>

Project Information

Key Equity Gap(s) to be addressed:	
Program(s) of Study to be developed or enhanced:	
Industry-Recognized Credential(s) to be Awarded:	
Summary of Program Activities: <i>Describe what will be different at the end of the grant compared to current state</i>	
Subrecipient Activities: <i>Describe activities to be done by subrecipient(s)</i>	
Capacity-Building Performance Outcomes <i>(Insert from the Performance Outcomes Table – See Appendix G)</i>	
<i>Capacity Building Outcome 1</i>	
<i>Capacity Building Outcome 2</i>	
<i>Capacity Building Outcome 3</i>	
Equity Performance Outcomes <i>(Insert from Performance Outcomes Table – See Appendix G)</i>	
<i>Equity Outcome 1</i>	
<i>Equity Outcome 2</i>	
Description of student cohort to be used for participant tracking <i>(see Section IV.B.3(b)(3))</i>	

Public Contact Information

Point of Contact Name and Title: Institution: Address: Phone Number: Email Address:
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ENDNOTES

[1] For instance, a recent Brookings study shows that Latino/a/x, low-income, and young individuals (ages 18-24) suffered the highest rates of job and income loss compared to other groups. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/07/13/covid-19-job-and-income-loss->

[leading-to-more-hunger-and-financial-hardship/](#).

[2] In this FOA, we use the term Latino/a/x to be inclusive of gender-neutral or non-binary self-identification.

[3] A meta-analysis of TAACCCT third-party evaluations found that the TAACCCT program had a positive impact on both education and employment outcomes (see Blume et al. 2019, Appendix B). “The analysis also showed that TAACCCT-funded programs that demonstrated these positive effects implemented career pathways, stackable credentials, comprehensive student supports, employer engagement, and rigorous evaluation” (Eyster & Bragg, in Van Noy et al. 2021, p. 154, Appendix B).

[4] The ultimate aim is for institutions to “put the onus on themselves to align content, learning objectives, and outcomes to make programs credit-worthy, rather than on students to prove through additional assessments that their learning is credit-worthy” (ESG 2020, p. 10, Appendix B).

[5] Interventions that include contextualized or integrated basic skills instruction have been studied extensively and the findings have been mixed (Martinson et al., 2021, p. vi). An expert panel review of nine studies resulted in a recommendation to “deliver contextualized or integrated basic skills instruction to accelerate students’ entry into and successful completion of career pathways” with a moderate evidence base (Cotner et al. 2021, p. 23).

[6] “Bundling is the integrated delivery of academic and nonacademic supports” and “sequencing is the aligning of supports with students’ needs through each stage of their college journey” (Kalamkarian, Salazar, & Lizarraga in Brock & Slater 2021, p. 17, Appendix A).

[7] For instance, colleges should seek to understand student enrollment patterns across programs, the extent to which such programs lead to improved opportunities with respect to further education or employment, and whether student representation in such programs is equitable (Kazis & Leasor in Brock & Slater 2021).

[8] A sector strategy is a partnership of multiple employers within an industry that brings together educational institutions, economic development agencies, workforce development systems, and community organizations to identify and collaboratively meet the workforce needs of that industry within a given labor market. Sector partnerships create customized responses to the needs of target industries within their regional economy, and create and incorporate career pathway strategies by aligning education and training programs with industry needs.

[9] Key areas in which employers may contribute to building and sustaining career pathway programs include: 1) providing leadership to the project in setting strategic direction; 2) assisting with curriculum development and program design; 3) identifying and mapping the necessary skills and competencies for the program(s); 4) informing the design of an assessment or validating credentials that will address industry skill needs; 5) offering work-based learning opportunities, such as on-the-job training and Registered Apprenticeships; and 5) providing resources, such as mentors and the donation of facilities, faculty, equipment, or other contributions to support the proposed project.

[10] See

https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/TAACCCT/pdfs/TAACCCT_Fact_Sheet_Employer_Engagement_10.21.2016.pdf. See also Appendix B: Resources on Career Pathways and Sector Strategies.

[11] There is a vast literature on systems theory and what constitutes a system. In general, systems are a collection of interacting, interdependent parts that function as a whole and include subsystems, networks, and overlapping or nested components (Ackoff & Rovin 2003; Foster-

Fishman & Behrens 2007, Appendix E). In this FOA, we use "systems change" to refer to "an intentional process designed to alter the status quo by shifting and realigning the form and function of a targeted system" (Foster-Fishman, Nowell, & Yang 2007, p. 197, Appendix E).

[12] The Perkins V comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) aims to facilitate a data-informed, continuous improvement process for community colleges using an equity lens (Office of Community College Research and Leadership, 2019, <https://occrll.illinois.edu/comprehensive-local-needs-assessment>).

[13] Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 25-19 *Understanding Postsecondary Credentials in the Public Workforce System*, June 8, 2020 complements Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 10-16, Change 1, *Performance Accountability Guidance for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I, Title II, Title III and Title IV Core Programs* and TEGL 14-18 *Aligning Performance Accountability Reporting, Definitions, and Policies Across Workforce Employment and Training Programs Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)*, which provide policy guidance on credentials and reporting credential attainment.

[14] For more information, see the webinar on Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants: Third-Party

Evaluations, <https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2021/03/22/16/15/Strengthening-Community-Colleges-Training-Grants-Third-Party-Evaluations>.

[15] Additional resources for planning and conducting behavioral trials can be found at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasp/evaluation/topic-areas/behavioral-interventions>.

[16] To determine eligibility of the lead applicant under the FOA, DOL will consider how the NCES college navigator website at <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/> designates the institution's "type"—e.g., through terms such as "2-year" or "4-year, primarily associates." DOL may also review information under the site's Programs/Majors tab, which shows the number of associate and bachelor's degrees that the institution awards, to confirm that associate degrees are primarily the highest degree awarded. DOL may use other information sources as well. If applicants are concerned that their designation on the NCES navigator website does not confirm that their institution primarily awards associate degrees, they may also include documentation in their applications that verifies their status with regard to this issue, if they desire.

Note that the eligibility requirement applies only to the lead applicant. If the lead applicant is applying as a consortium lead, the consortium members may include community colleges and public and private, non-profit four-year institutions of higher education, as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act.

[17] <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/performance-indicators>

[18] TEGL No.14-18, *Aligning Performance Accountability Reporting, Definitions, and Policies Across Workforce Employment and Training Programs Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)*, March 25, 2019, https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=7611.

[19] See <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/cris>.

[20] See https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=5953.