# Department of Property & Procurement

Government of the United States Virgin Islands

3274 ESTATE RICHMOND, CHRISTIANSTED, U. S. VIRGIN ISLANDS 00820

8201 SUB BASE, SUITE 4, ST. THOMAS, U. S. VIRGIN ISLANDS 00802

ST. CROIX MAIN OFFICE: 340.773.1561 | ST. THOMAS MAIN OFFICE: 340.774.0828

ST. CROIX FAX: 340.773.0986 | ST. THOMAS FAX: 340.777.9587

HTTP://DPP.VI.GOV


August 23, 2016

AMENDMENT #1 RFP-026-2016(P)

To develop, implement, manage and coordinate a State Apprenticeship Strategy & Partner Engagement Activity

INSERT: Questions and Answer(s)

ALL OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS REMAIN UNCHANGED

BIDDERS MUST ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THIS AMENDMENT WITH THEIR BID PROPOSAL

Questions & Answers

1) Will the Virgin Islands Department of Labor be sharing in any format (hard copy or via email/electronically) the specific deliverables expected from the Virgin Islands Apprenticeship USA State Accelerator Grant with the bidders? Although I am aware of the general requirements of the federal U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Grant. it would be helpful be privy to any other stated specific deliverables the Virgin Islands must produce so the plan/project approach for their implementation is as thorough as possible. The VIDOL will be sharing the specific details on the deliverables once the project coordinator is selected.

If this information is available on the federal U.S. Department of Labor or local website of VIDOL, I would appreciate if a link is shared. Attached is some general information regarding the grant.

2) Is the Period of Performance for the V.I. one or two years? This is important to be able to submit a realistic time table for completion of the deliverables and to develop a responsible budget in the Proposal. The period is for two years.

3) Will the Contractual Project Coordinator be working with specific staff in both districts within the V.I. Department of Labor to complete the deliverables of the ApprenticeshipState USA Accelerator Grants? It is important to know what VIDOL staff may be assigned to this project and what their roles will be -e.g. Administrative or Direct Project Involvement. The Department has a Special Projects Coordinator territorially assigned to the Registered Apprenticeship program. The selected project coordinator will be working with this individual.

4) Is the Contractual Project Coordinator responsible for renting separate space for program operations, apart from the VIDOL Offices in both districts or will the Project Coordinator expected to work within VIDOL Office Space? Space will be provided at the VIDOL on both islands.

| EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY SYSTEM<br>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR<br>Washington, D.C. 20210 | CLASSIFICATION<br>ApprenticeshipUSA/Registered Apprenticeship |
|---|---|
| | CORRESPONDENCE SYMBOL<br>OA |
| | DATE<br>April 21, 2016 |

**ADVISORY:** **TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER NO. 19-15 APPRENTICESHIPUSA STATE ACCELERATOR GRANTS FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT**

**TO:** STATE GOVERNORS
STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARD CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS
STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES
STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

**FROM:** PORTIA WU /s/
Assistant Secretary

**SUBJECT:** ApprenticeshipUSA Funding Announcement: State Accelerator Grants

1. **Purpose.** Building on historic bipartisan support from Congress and leadership across a broad range of States, the United States Department of Labor (DOL) is announcing $90 million available this year through the ApprenticeshipUSA initiative. ApprenticeshipUSA is a national campaign bringing together a broad range of stakeholders, including employers, labor, States, education and workforce partners, to expand and diversify Registered Apprenticeship in the United States. Through this TEGL and a forthcoming Funding Opportunity Announcement DOL will invest a total of $61.5 million in State-led strategies to grow and diversify apprenticeship. The remaining funds will be used to invest in national intermediaries and activities to engage employers, expand and diversify Registered Apprenticeship to new sectors and under-served populations, and promote innovation and excellence in this critical earn and learn strategy. For more information on ApprenticeshipUSA investments, please see www.dol.gov/apprenticeship.

   This Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) announces the availability of up to $9.5 million for ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator Grants (Accelerator Grants) of up to $250,000 per State (for purposes of this TEGL, State has the same definition as it does in 29 C.F.R. § 29.2.). The Accelerator Grants will support Governors and their States to catalyze or build upon existing strategies to expand and diversify Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. These strategies include convening key industry representatives, State agency leaders and other stakeholders to form strategic partnerships, and elevate apprenticeship as a workforce solution in both traditional and non-traditional industries including IT, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, cyber-security, business services, transportation, and others.

| RESCISSIONS<br>None | EXPIRATION DATE<br>Continuing |
|---|---|

Accelerator Grants are structured to support a range of State activities aimed at integrating Registered Apprenticeship within State talent development systems through partnerships and policy alignment across the workforce, secondary and post-secondary education, economic development systems, and beyond. Accelerator Grants will also offer States the opportunity to build their capacity to conduct outreach and work with industry leaders to launch new or expand existing apprenticeships, as well as to identify and capitalize on strategic opportunities for expansion and technical assistance to promote excellence and innovation. For example, sector partnerships and the development of career pathways may connect a range of students, jobseekers, and underrepresented populations to careers in high-demand fields utilizing quality Registered Apprenticeships.

Governors and States are uniquely positioned to develop and implement innovative strategies that use Registered Apprenticeship—a proven earn and learn model—to connect industries seeking talent with the skilled workforce they need. For example, over the past two years, 14 States have grown apprenticeships by more than 20% (see https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/09/10/expanding-apprenticeships-invest-american-workers). Accelerator Grants require States to commit to develop or advance sustainable plans for apprenticeship expansion and leverage existing education and training resources to support apprenticeship. As an Accelerator Grantee, States will have the opportunity to engage with peers in a series of high-profile national ApprenticeshipUSA activities and learning events.

By supporting new and strengthening existing State strategies to grow apprenticeship opportunities, the Accelerator Grants will help lay the foundation for rapid and sustained expansion and diversification of quality apprenticeship nationwide. Over the course of the next few months, DOL will release additional funding opportunities for States, as well as national partners. These funding opportunities will build upon this initial investment and the envisioned success of the State Accelerator grantees over the next few years.

2. **Background.** Registered Apprenticeships are work-based learning and post-secondary earn-and learn models that meet national standards for registration with DOL, or with a DOL-recognized State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA). As our economy continues to grow, Registered Apprenticeships are playing an increasingly important role with international and American businesses across all industries by providing a pipeline of skilled workers to help them remain competitive. Many employers are increasing their use of Registered Apprenticeships as a "grow your own" strategy to increase and diversify their pipeline of skilled workers.

This proven workforce strategy offers apprentices opportunities to earn a salary while they learn the skills employers demand in a variety of occupations. Apprenticeships are available in a range of industries and occupations including Computer Numerical Control Operator (CNCO) in Advanced Manufacturing, nursing assistant in the Healthcare industry, electrician in the building trades, or coder in Information Technology. The average starting salary for an apprenticeship graduate is over $50,000 a year. Apprenticeship graduates also earn over the

course of their careers $300,000 more on average in wages and benefits than their peers who do not participate in a Registered Apprenticeship..[1]

The President issued a bold challenge in 2014 to double the number of and further diversify Registered Apprentices within 5 years. Currently, there are approximately 450,000 Registered Apprentices in the United States, which represents a relatively small portion of the labor force compared to other industrialized nations. To put this number in a global context, the United States would need more than six times as many new apprentices as Great Britain, to have a similar per capita ratio. In another comparison, there are over 19 million students in 2- and 4-year American colleges and universities. Underutilization of the apprenticeship model has resulted from a lack of funding, capacity, promotion, and technical assistance, particularly at the State level, and represents a significant lost opportunity to efficiently train American workers with 21st century skills and create stronger State economies.

Additionally, there continue to growing the overall number of apprenticeship opportunities, there is increased attention on further diversifying Registered Apprenticeships. DOL, in coordination with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors and other key stakeholders, continues to advance this key policy goal but more work must be done and greater progress must be made. To illustrate this point, "in 2012, only 6% of active apprentices in the United States were women, up slightly from 5 % in 2008"..[2] Statistics also show that additional efforts are needed to increase opportunities for communities of color, youth, persons with disabilities, veterans, and Native Americans, among others. As employers recruit and hire from a diverse set of potential employees, they increase opportunities to become more innovative and adaptable to ever changing market conditions.

Registered Apprenticeship programs are authorized through the National Apprenticeship Act of 1937 (29 U.S.C. 50, et seq.). All Registered Apprenticeship programs consist of five core components – direct business involvement, on-the-job training, related instruction, rewards for skill gains, and a national occupational credential.

- **Business Involvement (Employer Driven).** Employers are the foundation of every Registered Apprenticeship program, and the skills needed for workforce success form the core of the model. Businesses must play an active role in building Registered Apprenticeship programs and are involved in every step of their design and execution. Intermediaries, primarily unions, industry associations, colleges, and workforce partners often play a key leadership role in bringing businesses together in support of Registered Apprenticeship programs.

- **On-the-Job Training.** Every Registered Apprenticeship program includes structured On-the-Job Training (OJT, also commonly referred to as On-the-Job Learning). Apprentices receive hands-on training from an experienced mentor for at least one year. This training is developed by mapping the skills and knowledge the apprentice must learn over the course of the program to be fully proficient at the job.

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1 An Effectiveness Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis of Registered Apprenticeship in 10 States. 2012. http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/~/media/publications/PDFs/labor/registered_apprenticeship_10states.pdf
2 Center for American Progress. Training for Success: A Policy to Expand Apprenticeships in the United States. https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/labor/report/2013/12/02/79991/training-for-success-a-policy-to-expand-apprenticeships-in-the-united-states/

- **Related Instruction.** Apprentices receive related instruction or classroom style training that complements their OJT. This instruction delivers the technical and academic components that apply to their profession. Related instruction may be provided by a community college, technical school or college, a joint apprenticeship training program, or by the business itself. This instruction can be provided at the school, online, or at the job site.

- **Rewards for Skill Gains.** Apprentices receive increases in pay as their skills and knowledge increase. Progressive wage gains reward and motivate apprentices as they advance through training and become more productive and skilled at their jobs.

- **National Occupational Credential.** Every graduate of a Registered Apprenticeship program receives a nationally-recognized credential, referred to as a Certificate of Completion, which is issued by DOL or a federally-recognized SAA. This portable credential signifies that the apprentice is fully qualified for the occupation he or she has trained in. Many Registered Apprenticeship programs – particularly in high demand industries such as health care, advanced manufacturing, and transportation – also offer interim credentials and/or integrate other industry credentials into the curriculum.

  For more information, please visit our homepage: http://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship.

3. **Allowable Costs.** Grant costs are governed by the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance and DOL exceptions at 2 CFR parts 200 and 2900, respectively. Grants can cover expenses necessary to carry out the programmatic requirements described in section 4 of this TEGL, and other State planning and implementation actions that include or are related to any of the following apprenticeship development activities:

   ***Staff, Contractor, and Subject Matter Expert Support*** - Grant funds may be used to offset the cost of staffing, contractor, or subject matter experts that support the development and implementation of a state apprenticeship strategy and partner engagement activities:

   a. **Staffing** – States may use grant funds for full or part time staff or contractors to coordinate planning and implementation across multiple systems and agencies. Strong consideration should be given to expanding the capacity of the SAA, where applicable.
   b. **Subject Matter Expert Support** – Grant funds may be used to contract with subject matter experts such as apprenticeship and industry specialists, process re-engineers to streamline program development and registration processes, diversity and inclusion practitioners, information technology experts to update apprenticeship information systems, etc. Funds may be used to develop plans in each of these areas that can be executed upon successful securing of implementation or other funds.
   c. **Facilitation** – States may use funds for assistance with facilitation and guidance for convening with industry, a cross-agency leadership team, and other key partners at the statewide level.

   ***Outreach and Technical Assistance*** – States may use grant funds for services to develop a professional outreach plan to build employer demand for Registered Apprenticeship, and

technical assistance strategies to assist individual employers to develop new programs and improve program quality. Funds may also be used to support strategies for increasing Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for women, communities of color, youth, persons with disabilities, veterans, and Native Americans, among others. Lastly, funds may be used for engaging parents, educators, other critical stakeholders, and State residents in the vision and generating further support for apprenticeships across the State.

***Analysis & Asset Mapping*** – Grant funds may be used to fund labor market analysis and asset mapping to help States understand sectoral and talent pipeline opportunities for apprenticeship expansion and diversification. Funds may also be used to develop strategies to integrate other resources (Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA), Pell, State programs, foundation funds, etc.) that can be leveraged in support of the State's vision and plan. This analysis, along with partnership engagement, will help States to develop plans for the sustained expansion and diversification of apprenticeship in their State that build on existing resources for education and training and opportunities to better serve under-represented populations.

***Publications*** – States may produce new reports, data tools, or resources that can be published or otherwise distributed publicly to encourage and facilitate the adoption of apprenticeship and opportunities to better serve under-represented populations.

***Strategic Partnership Meetings and Associated Travel*** - Grant funds may be used to offset the cost of in-State travel to planning meetings or industry and partner convenings, or out-of-State travel to learn from States, regions, and other experts and practitioners engaged in apprenticeship reform or innovation efforts. Allowable costs include, but are not limited to:

i. **State and Regional Industry Round Table Events** – Convening employers, key industry and workforce intermediaries, and other stakeholders within and across multiple sectors throughout the State to identify strategic opportunities for apprenticeship expansion.
ii. **Peer-to-Peer Exchanges** – Dispatching State delegation(s) to engage in cross-learning with leading States or other experts on apprenticeship expansion and diversification.
iii. **State Apprenticeship Institutes** – Hosting State leadership forums with the purpose of driving greater alignment of apprenticeship with workforce agencies, employers, community colleges, labor, and other components of the talent development system.
iv. **Partner Engagement** – Convening a range of potential partners, including secondary and post-secondary partners, workforce, community based organizations, and others, to build awareness of and develop apprenticeship models and strategies.
v. **ApprenticeshipUSA Training** – Attending a DOL-hosted national convening to include peer-learning and technical assistance sessions to support States in their pursuit of apprenticeship expansion and diversification.
vi. **Training and Consultation** – Participating in other related training or learning opportunities related to apprenticeship provided by other key stakeholders including those held by other States (e.g., Eastern Seaboard

Apprenticeship Conference, Pacific Northwest Apprenticeship Conference), policy organizations (e.g., Urban Institute); or education or workforce organizations (e.g., AACC, NAWB, NGA, NASTAD, and others).

***Data Collection*** – States may use a portion of these funds to enhance data collection capabilities and reporting of individual records (i.e., Registered Apprentices and Program Sponsors) to the Office of Apprenticeship (OA) in a format that is compatible with current and future data collection and reporting platforms. Note: As DOL continues to build a modern IT platform to better manage and report on apprenticeship data, States are strongly encouraged to work with DOL to provide input to customize this platform to meet State needs versus using State Accelerator funds to develop new or substantially modernize state systems. DOL has formed a federal-state workgroup to ensure States' needs and input can be gathered. This option is significantly more cost-effective than investing in new stand-alone systems.

4. **Programmatic Requirements.** Programmatic requirements for all States receiving an ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator grant are outlined below. State applicants agree to carry out these requirements throughout the 2-year life of the grant. States receiving a grant will be required to engage in the following programmatic activities and submit the appropriate information to DOL as explained below:

   i. **Provide a Response to the ApprenticeshipUSA Action Planning Tool as described in Attachment I).** State Accelerator grantees are required to submit a response to the criteria contained in Attachment I no later than August 15, 2016. This response will assist each State to consider gaps and opportunities that can be used to develop plans that will expand and diversify apprenticeships in the State.

   DOL recognizes that States will be in varying conditions of readiness to expand and diversify apprenticeship. By completing responses to the Action Planning Tool, States will help to shape DOL's technical assistance plans, which will be implemented over the life of the grant. States should also view the Action Planning Tool as a way to guide the development of statewide strategies and plans, including plans which may be proposed in a forthcoming FOA. For those States with more established apprenticeship operations, the tool offers an opportunity to showcase how the State will aggressively pursue broader transformation (e.g., acquiring expertise to scale-up in a new industry or facilitating next steps for State system integration; or recruiting underresented populations in Registered Apprenticeship noted earlier in TEGL).

   ii. **Apprenticeship Data Collection and Reporting.** States must continue to collect Registered Apprenticeship data elements related to Registered Apprenticeship programs and Registered Apprentices and submit to DOL. Currently many States provide data to DOL on demographics, program sponsors, new programs, and progress of apprentices in aggregate form. To build a more comprehensive picture of Registered Apprenticeship activity across the country, States will be expected to share this data at the individual

record level at quarterly intervals in line with other workforce development programs.

iii. **State Level Co-Investment and Leveraged Resources in Apprenticeship Innovation.** States must identify existing State, private, and other federal resources that will be leveraged to support expansion and diversification activities articulated in the State Action Planning Tool. States must not supplant existing State funding streams that currently support Registered Apprenticeship.

iv. **Participate in ApprenticeshipUSA Training.** States should budget for two individuals to participate in at least one ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator grantee technical assistance event hosted by DOL. DOL will convene State teams for a grantee in-person training. This training will focus on supporting State grantees with technical assistance and subject matter expertise while showcasing best practices from peer states for innovating, diversifying, and expanding Registered Apprenticeship.

v. **Participate in scheduled conference calls**. Following grant awards, States will participate on an orientation call to discuss program requirements and expected outcomes. Subsequent conference calls will be scheduled to discuss progress.

vi. **Submit interim narrative progress and financial reports**. States shall submit interim narrative progress and financial reports that capture grant accomplishments, apprenticeship outreach and communication, engagement activities with employers, industry intermediaries and other key partners, challenges encountered, and solutions. The due date for such reports will be 45 days after the end of each calendar year quarter. Further information will be provided to grantees.

vii. **Share state's final plan for apprenticeship innovation, and final narrative and financial reports.** At the conclusion of the grant, participating States will be required to submit a State plan for apprenticeship expansion and diversification as well as a written narrative program report that summarizes accomplishments, apprenticeship outreach and communication, engagement activities with employers, industry intermediaries, inclusion and diversity practitioners, and other key partners, challenges encountered, and lessons learned. The State plan and narrative report may demonstrate progress as measured by short and long-term indicators and outline future plans to sustain the work. DOL will provide additional guidance on the required elements of the final report. Participating States will also be required to submit a final financial report (Form 9130).

5. **Eligible Applicants.** State Governors should identify an appropriate state agency that will be the eligible applicant and submit an application in accordance with the process described in Section 8. Accelerator Grants will be awarded to both federally administered States and federally recognized SAAs in compliance with 29 CFR part 29. For purposes of this TEGL, State has the same definition as it does in 29 C.F.R. § 29.2. Applications

must clearly identify the State entity that will be the grant recipient (e.g., SAA, economic development agency, state workforce agency or state workforce board, or a state community or technical college system). This entity will have the sole responsibility for administering the project. For States with federally recognized SAAs, the SAA should be included as a lead or are required to be a key partner in the implementation of grant activities.

6. **Funds Availability.** The period of performance is 2 years and grant funds will be available for expenditure through May 30, 2018. DOL is making up to $9.5 million available under this TEGL. States may apply for Accelerator Grants of up to $250,000. The final amount of each grant is dependent on the number of applicants and cumulative amount of funding requested; however, no grant will exceed $250,000. If the cumulative funding requested by all applicants exceeds the amount of funds available, all grant awards will be reduced proportionately. If the cumulative funding requested is less than the amount of funds available, each applicant will receive the full amount requested and the balance of funds will be added to the amount available for the forthcoming FOA. See http://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship for more information on additional ApprenticeshipUSA investments.

7. **Submission Procedures and Timeline.** In an effort to achieve greater efficiency and as part of ETA's on-going effort to streamline the grant award process, grantees are required to submit the following documents through Grants.gov: 1) an electronically signed copy of a SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance (OMB Control No. 4040-0004); 2) SF-424A - Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (OMB Control No. 4040-0006); and 3) a budget narrative to reflect the expenditures included in the SF-424A that demonstrates how Accelerator Grant funds will be used.

   An electronically submitted SF-424 through Grants.gov constitutes the official signed document and must reflect the total amount allotted of no more than $250,000 in item #18, Estimated Funding Item #11 must include the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number, 17.201. ETA encourages States to apply by April 30, 2016; however, the official closing date for this grant opportunity is May 15, 2016. ETA plans to award the Accelerator Grant funds in late May.

   To submit the required documents, States must follow the "Apply for Grants" link on Grants.gov, and download the links for the grant application package. States should **not** follow the "Find Grants" link, as this not a competitive funding opportunity.

   If States encounter a problem with Grants.gov and do not find an answer in any of the other resources, call 1-800-518-4726 or 606-545-5035 to speak to a Customer Support Representative or email support@grants.gov. The Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is closed on federal holidays.

8. **Reporting.** 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, grantees must include any subaward amounts so we can calculate final indirect costs, if applicable. Grant recipients must submit the ETA 9130 using DOL's Online Electronic Reporting System. Specific instructions on how to use that system will be provided after award.

9. **Inquiries.** Questions concerning this TEGL should be submitted to the Office of Apprenticeship, (Torrey Cunningham at cunningham.torrey@dol.gov). Questions, concerning the submission process should be directed to Andrea Hill, Grants Management Specialist at hill.andrea@dol.gov.

10. **Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) Statement.** According to the PRA, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The Department notes that a Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information, nor is the public required to respond to a collection of information unless it is approved by OMB under the PRA, and displays a currently valid OMB control number (44 U.S.C. 3507). Also, notwithstanding any other provisions of law, no person shall be subject to penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if the collection of information does not display a currently valid OMB control number (44 U.S.C. 3512). The currently valid OMB Control Number for this collection is OMB No 1225-0086.

11. **Resources.**
    - ApprenticeshipUSA home page: http://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship
    - ApprenticeshipUSA Toolkit: http://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/toolkit.htm
        - Version for Download: http://www.doleta.gov/oa/employers/apprenticeship_toolkit.pdf
    - Pre-Apprenticeship: Pathways for Women into High-Wage Careers: A Guide for Community-Based Organizations and Workforce Providers http://www.doleta.gov/oa/preapp/
    - Federal Resources Playbook: http://www.doleta.gov/oa/federalresources/playbook.pdf
    - State Apprenticeship Agency Contacts: https://www.doleta.gov/oa/stateagencies.cfm

12. **Attachment.**
    Attachment I: ApprenticeshipUSA Action Planning Tool