



Request for Ideas (RFI) for Responding to the Pending Recovery Act Competitive Grants Announcement

DEADLINE EXTENDED TO MAY 15, 2009

The US Department of Labor (DOL) is expected to release a solicitation for Recovery Act Competitive Grant proposals by 6/30/09. This RFI is issued by a partnership of workforce investment boards representing the Portland/Vancouver Metropolitan Area that includes the Workforce Investment Council of Clackamas County (WICCO), Worksystems, Inc., and the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC). Based on our experience, we expect DOL to specify a significant role for workforce boards in the development and implementation of the Recovery Act Competitive Grants. We want to draw on the expertise in our communities to develop proposals that are competitive and that have the potential to enhance the economic health of the region. The purpose of this RFI is to solicit ideas and concepts for one or more proposals that could be further developed, in partnership with training providers, community based organizations, and industry.

These pending DOL grants offer significant opportunities for creative metro leaders to engage in coordinated, regionalized problem solving that links and aligns key assets in the places where they are concentrated - metropolitan areas. We are committed to regional approaches to talent development and management, as evidenced by our collaboration in the WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) initiatives. The three workforce investment boards of the metro region invest almost \$40 million and, with WorkSource partners, serve approximately 200,000 job seekers and 5,000 businesses per year. The boards include 40 regional business leaders, 7 elected officials, 7 labor leaders, 5 college presidents, 5 economic development organizations, and 20 public sector and community based organizations. This membership allows the boards to serve as the primary conveners and coordinators of talent development resources and programs.

Our intent is to assure that the region's proposals for Recovery Act Resources are consistent with regional priorities, regionally aligned, and as competitive as possible. We are not requesting fully developed grant proposals. We are looking for concepts that could be competitive when fully developed. The workforce boards will review all of the ideas and concepts received. This review will inform our work in bringing the appropriate partners to the table to help us draft one or more proposals for DOL grant funds.

COMPETITIVE GRANTS

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides a total of \$750 million for competitive grants for training and placement in high growth and emerging industry sectors.

Of that amount, \$500 million is targeted for projects that prepare workers for careers in energy efficiency and renewable energy:

- energy efficient building, construction, and retrofitting
- renewable electric power
- energy efficient and advanced drive train vehicles
- biofuels
- deconstruction and materials use
- energy efficiency assessment for residential, commercial, or industrial sectors
- manufacturing of sustainable products using sustainable processes.

The remaining \$250 million will be for projects in other high growth and emerging industry sectors with a priority for:

- projects that prepare or advance workers for careers in the health care sector
- projects tied to industry sectors where jobs are being created as a result of Recovery Act investments (infrastructure, for example).

GUIDANCE

- We anticipate receiving further guidance from DOL in late Spring or early Summer with formal grant announcement published by 6/30/09.
- We do not know what the grant award amounts will be, but we are interested in exploring BIG ideas. We anticipate awards of at least \$1 million.
- We have a collective commitment to support pathways that lead to economic self-sufficiency and promote regional business competitiveness. As a result, we are committed to supporting strategies that provide pathways for underserved and disadvantaged populations and move workers (including incumbent workers) to family wage jobs.
- We anticipate that the proposal(s) we submit will generally train workers for middle skill jobs. These are jobs that require more than a high school diploma, but less than a four year degree.
- Because there is an emphasis on rapidly impacting the regional economy, proposals with extensive periods of planning or curriculum development are not likely to be competitive.
- We want to add to our region's capacity, not use grant funds to pay for existing capacity.

HOW TO PREPARE A COMPETITIVE GRANT IDEA OR CONCEPT

1. Title Page

- Provide contact information for your organization.
- State which target area you are addressing: energy efficiency, renewable energy, health care, or other high growth/emerging sector impacted by Recovery Act investments (specify the Recovery Act initiative/project/program you are leveraging)

2. Employer Demand (1 page)

- List the middle skill occupations targeted for training and the associated industry sectors.
- Describe how your project will positively impact regional workforce development and economic vitality.
- Describe the demand for the skills and training in terms of the current or projected gap between workforce supply and demand.

3. Concept Summary (2 pages)

- State whether your project will serve new workers or career advancers or both.
- Describe the target population for training.
- Provide a brief outline of the program as it would be experienced by participants, including outreach/recruiting, training, trainee support, and placement.
- Describe your collaborative approach. Note the roles that partners will play and their qualifications or expertise. Summarize the role that industry will play in developing and implementing the project.
- Estimate the number of enrollments, completions, and people placed in jobs. Describe the certificates or credentials that would be awarded to program completers.

4. Cost Factors (1 page)

Describe the program's cost structure and estimate total cost and cost per completion. A detailed or line item budget is not required at this point, but a cost range would be helpful. Tell us what you can about the factors that will determine actual cost.

HOW TO SUBMIT A COMPETITIVE GRANT IDEA OR CONCEPT

Send your ideas or concepts as an email attachment to Cary Harkaway, charkaway@worksystems.org by 4:00 PM on May 15, 2009.