

# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

## Employment and Training Administration

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### **NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

**ANNOUNCEMENT FOR:** Pay-for-Performance Incentive Payments Program

**ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE:** Initial

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER:** FOA-ETA-26-19

**ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER:** 17.285

*Submit all applications in response to this announcement through <https://www.grants.gov>.*

#### **FUNDING DETAIL:**

Expected Total Available Funding	\$145,000,000
Expected Number of Awards	5
Funding Range Per Award	\$10,000,000–\$40,000,000

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 these funds to select more grantees from the applications submitted in response to this Announcement.

#### **KEY DATES:**

Application Deadline	04/03/2026. We must receive applications no later than <b>11:59 pm Eastern Time.</b>
Expected Period of Performance Start Date	07/01/2026
Period of Performance Length	48

On approximately February 20, 2026, a pre-recorded Prospective Applicant Webcast will be available at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/apply/find-opportunities> and available for viewing any time after that date. While review of this Webcast is strongly encouraged to support successful grant applications, it is not mandatory.

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL, or the Department, or we), announces the availability of grant funds for the Pay-for-Performance (PfP) Incentive Payments Program. This Funding Opportunity (FOA) announces approximately \$145 million to fund up to five cooperative agreements authorized by the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025, Public Law 119-4 specifically to expand opportunities through apprenticeships only registered under the National Apprenticeship Act. Each cooperative agreement, which ranges from \$10 million to \$40 million, is a Pay-for-Performance (PfP) Incentive Payments Program designed to generate further, meaningful, and rapid expansion of the National Apprenticeship System. This initiative is being undertaken to meet the Administration’s bold commitment to achieve and exceed 1 million active apprentices.

The PfP Incentive Payments Program represents a significant and decisive action to prepare the workforce for the Golden Age of the American economy in alignment with [America’s Talent Strategy](#). Most importantly, it demonstrates the Administration’s commitment to strengthening the National Apprenticeship System and reinforcing Registered Apprenticeship as the premier, high-quality solution to strengthen America’s talent development pipeline. Investments such as this, which support skills and training for American workers, are crucial for economic strength, creating pathways to self-sufficiency, and ensuring the nation's leadership in a changing global economy.

The creation of the PfP Incentive Payments Program will also expand opportunities for innovation in the funding and rapid expansion of Registered Apprenticeship, helping to enhance this proven work-based learning model and develop new models for incentivizing employers and other stakeholders to develop and expand Registered Apprenticeship programs. Vitality, this initiative is also designed to both ensure that federal resources are directed at supporting the most well-crafted proposals, while also directly linking discretionary funding to a set of specific and robust outcomes that can be realized quickly. The program will further build out Registered Apprenticeships through the achievement of DOL’s desired objective of registering meaningful numbers of new apprentices and creating new Registered Apprenticeship programs or expanding existing programs to significantly grow the system. The cooperative agreements supported through this program will also facilitate funding for Registered Apprenticeships for small/mid-

sized employers, who might not otherwise pursue federal grant funding. They will focus on incentivizing the expansion and growth of the National Apprenticeship System both overall and in high-growth, high-demand industry sectors.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the funding opportunity announcement and the [2026 DOL Application Guide](#) in their entirety.

For further information or technical questions about this FOA, please contact Carmen Mew, Grants Management Specialist, Office of Grants Management, at [PfP\\_FOA-ETA-26-19@dol.gov](mailto:PfP_FOA-ETA-26-19@dol.gov) and specifically reference FOA-ETA-26-19. This Announcement is available on the ETA website at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants> and at <https://www.grants.gov>.

## II. ELIGIBILITY

### A. Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to serve as the lead applicant:

- **State Agencies and Territories**
- **National Industry Groups and Associations**
- **National Labor Management Organizations**
- **National Economic Development Entities:** Organizations that focus on economic development and/or economic recovery strategies to support the labor market.
- **Registered Apprenticeship or Workforce Intermediary Organizations:** Organizations functioning as business related entities/workforce intermediaries for the expressed purpose of serving the needs of businesses, individual businesses, or consortia of businesses.
- **Professional Consulting Organizations:** Organizations that are for-profit or not-for-profits that primarily house subject matter experts that can provide independent and objective advice and support to organizations to define and achieve their goals through improved utilization of resources.
- **Consortia:** A consortium of organizations that is led by an entity that is eligible to serve as lead applicant and whose principal function(s) is consistent with the capabilities associated with either one or more of the above-listed organizations. Additionally, a consortium may be comprised of multiple regional entities otherwise consistent with any one of the above-listed organizations to achieve a national reach. A consortium is a group made up of two or more organizations, higher education institutions, companies, or governments that work together to achieve a common objective.

The lead applicant will serve as the grantee and have overall fiscal and administrative responsibility for the grant.

Faith-based organizations are encouraged to apply, as are all organizations. Those that meet the eligibility requirements may receive awards under this funding opportunity. DOL will not, in the selection of recipients and administration of the grant, discriminate on the basis of an organization's religious character, affiliation, exercise, or lack thereof, or on the basis of conduct that would not be considered grounds to favor or disfavor a similarly situated secular organization.

### **Number of Applications Applicants May Submit**

An eligible lead applicant must specify a PfP Incentive Payments Program category for their application; see section III.A.1 for information on program categories.

The following guidelines apply:

- **Category 1:** One cooperative agreement will be awarded per industry (up to four awards).
  - Eligible lead applicants may submit one application per allowable industry for Category 1; in other words, eligible lead applicants may submit multiple applications for Category 1 so long as the applications are for different allowable industries.
  - If an eligible lead applicant submits multiple applications for the same industry, only the most recently received application that meets the deadline will be considered. If the most recent application is disqualified for any reason, we will not replace it with an earlier application.
  - Eligible lead applicants may not be awarded more than one cooperative agreement, and applications will be selected based on the strength of the program design.
- **Category 2:** One cooperative agreement will be awarded under Category 2; therefore, applicants may submit only one application for Category 2.

If one application is submitted for both categories, or if an application does not clearly specify the selected category in the Abstract, all application(s) will be deemed non-responsive and will not proceed to the review phase of this competition. An applicant will not be awarded a grant under both categories.

The Department reserves the right to change the amount of grant funds awarded depending on the quantity and quality of applications submitted. Awards made under this FOA are subject to the availability of federal funds. If additional funds become available, we reserve the right to select additional awardees from applications submitted in response to this FOA.

### **B. Cost Sharing**

This program does not require cost sharing (including matching) funds. Applicants that include such funds 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](#) provides more information on leveraged resources.

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section II.B Cost Sharing.

### **C. Period of Performance**

The performance period on the front page of this FOA includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities.

The Period of Performance (**POP**) is four years, starting on July 1, 2026.

Post-award, there will be an initial implementation period lasting up to 120 days during which the Department will collaborate with awardees to provide feedback on the incentive plan as needed and approve a final incentive plan for implementation.

### III. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

#### A. Purpose

The Administration is committed to protecting and strengthening Registered Apprenticeships and building on their successes to seize new opportunities and unlock the limitless potential of the American worker. The PfP Incentive Payments Program supports the implementation of several Presidential Executive Orders related to expanding Registered Apprenticeships including, [“Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future,”](#) [“Advancing Artificial Intelligence Education for American Youth,”](#) [“Restoring America’s Maritime Dominance,”](#) and [“Reinvigorating the Nuclear Industrial Base,”](#) which call for the growth of Registered Apprenticeships to better prepare our workforce for industry needs of today and tomorrow. This FOA provides guidance and outlines the requirements for the PfP Incentive Payments Program. The Department will award up to five cooperative agreements with a four-year POP focused on rapid expansion and scaling of Registered Apprenticeship programs across industries by offering incentive payments to program sponsors. The PfP Incentive Payments Program requires that at least 85 percent of the total grant funds awarded be used for incentive payments to Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors to scale and expand Registered Apprenticeship programs. The Department encourages applicants to propose incentive payments that exceed 85 percent of the total grant funds to maximize the impact of the PfP model proposed in response to this FOA. This grant program expands on the Department’s \$35.8 million investment in a PfP incentive model awarded to the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services, to expand Registered Apprenticeship programs in advanced manufacturing sectors nationwide through the [American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund](#).

This Funding Opportunity Announcement solicits applications for the PfP Incentive Payments Program.

#### 1. PfP Incentive Payments Program Categories

The PfP Incentive Payments Program will be distributed through a “pay for performance” model, where payments are linked to specific performance criteria or predefined outcomes. The program aims to stimulate innovation and reduce barriers that prevent sponsors from committing to developing or scaling Registered Apprenticeships.

Applicants must select one of two program categories for their application to maximize impact: **1) Rapid Expansion of Registered Apprenticeship** within an Industry specified by the Department through per apprentice incentive payments, and **2) Rapid Scaling of the Registered Apprenticeship System** across all other industries not funded by the Department in Category 1. Advanced manufacturing is also excluded from Category 2 because of the Department’s existing American Manufacturing Incentive Fund led by the Arkansas Department of Commerce targeting this sector. Applicants must select one category for their application.

##### **a. Category 1: Rapid Expansion of Registered Apprenticeship Within a Specific Industry**

Cooperative Agreements will focus on expanding Registered Apprenticeship programs in one target industry per application for their PfP Incentive Payments Program. Applicants must select from the following list of industries and may propose to target large subsectors within the below list of industries:

- Shipbuilding and Defense Industrial Base
- Artificial Intelligence (AI), Semiconductor, and Nuclear Energy Infrastructure
- Information Technology
- Healthcare
- Transportation
- Telecommunication

The Department is particularly interested in expanding Registered Apprenticeship in Shipbuilding and Defense Industrial Base and intends to make an award for this industry, contingent on receiving a quality application.

Artificial Intelligence (AI), Semiconductor, and Nuclear Energy Infrastructure, as a collective, refer to the building and maintenance of infrastructure within these industries. In other words, it is not our intent to isolate these industries; they should be considered *together*. This includes, but is not limited to, skill sets needed to build and maintain data centers, semiconductor fabrication facilities, and nuclear power facilities. Do *not* consider them as isolated industries, with disparate or unconnected talent supply needs. The Department is particularly interested in applications that focus on the infrastructure across all three industries (AI, Semiconductor, and Nuclear Energy Infrastructure). However, the Department will consider applications that propose targeting the infrastructure for one or two of these industries. Eligible Registered Apprenticeship sponsors requesting incentive payments within this industry category will be required to demonstrate that apprentices are placed into Registered Apprenticeship programs directly tied to the building and maintenance of infrastructure within these industries.

Category 1 will focus on scaling Registered Apprenticeship programs in targeted industries by offering incentive payments to Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors on a per-apprentice basis for “new” apprentices enrolled in relevant occupations during the POP. Applicants may identify broad, recognized sub-sectors and occupations within each targeted industry and are encouraged to provide a logical rationale to ensure sufficient coverage of the selected industry. During the implementation phase, grantees will work with the Department to identify eligible occupations for which Registered Apprenticeship sponsors can receive incentive fund payments.

#### **b. Category 2: Rapid Scaling of the Registered Apprenticeship System**

Cooperative agreements will focus on scaling Registered Apprenticeship programs by providing incentive funding in all industries or subsectors not funded under Category 1. Advanced manufacturing is also excluded from Category 2 because it is the focus of the Department’s existing American Manufacturing Incentive Fund led by the Arkansas Department of Commerce targeting this sector.

## 2. Pay for Performance Incentive Payment Program

In response to the Project Narrative in Section IV.C, applicants must submit a PfP Incentive Plan. The PfP Incentive Plan will serve as the Project Narrative. At a minimum, the Plan must include:

- **Statement of Need:** Describes labor demand and current labor market dynamics for relevant industry (or overall labor market if Category 2).
- **Incentive Model:** Identifies sponsor eligibility criteria, and the incentive payment structure, including payment amounts and any additional progression benchmarks for payment.
- **Payment Management System:** Identifies the entity responsible and the system for managing, processing, verifying apprentice enrollment and retention for at least 90 days and other progression benchmarks established by the applicant based on their plan, and issuing payments to sponsors. For the purposes of this FOA, verification requirements include procedures and safeguards ensuring entities receiving payments are Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors and are eligible to receive per apprentice incentive payments. The entity designated to operate this management system may be a partner organization instead of the lead entity.
- **Expected Outcomes and Outputs:** Identifies clearly defined goals and objectives of the project, including the number of program sponsors that will be supported by the grant awards.
- **Outreach and Communications Plan:** Applicants will support any Department-led Registered Apprenticeship national marketing campaign efforts and must provide a comprehensive outreach and communication plan to raise awareness of their PfP Incentive Payment Program.
- **Organizational Capacity:** Describes the lead applicant's capacity to effectively manage each component of the program at a national level, including a project management plan for efficient and effective management of the project with all partners and staff. The lead applicant must demonstrate its capacity to establish effective procurement processes, systems, and procedures and those of any partners who will be providing any services or conducting any activities under the grant (where applicable).

## 3. Geographic Scope

The PfP Incentive Payment Program's scope is nationwide, and applicants must allow eligible Registered Apprenticeship sponsors in any State and Territory, as defined in Section III.G, to apply for incentive funding. Applicants must demonstrate they have the capacity to provide incentive payments to eligible sponsors across all States and Territories.

### B. Program Goals and Objectives

The goal of the PfP Incentive Payments Program is to address the urgent need to grow and modernize the U.S. workforce and in direct response to the national call to expand access to Registered Apprenticeship programs, and motivate sponsors on a national scale to develop, expand, and/or join established Registered Apprenticeship Programs and hire apprentices. The focus of the grant program is to incentivize the expansion and growth of Registered Apprenticeship programs on a national scale. The program is built on a "pay for performance"



model, ensuring taxpayer dollars deliver measurable outcomes—real jobs, real skills, and real growth.

## **1. "New Apprentices" Eligible for Incentive Payments**

Under cooperative agreements in both categories, sponsors may receive incentive payments for any new apprentices enrolled in an eligible program and being trained for an eligible occupation after the grant's program start date of July 1, 2026, that are enrolled beyond a suggested substantial growth threshold of 125% of the program's three-year average enrollment in that eligible occupation.

The substantial growth threshold for sponsors operating programs developed after the grant program start date is zero, meaning any apprentices enrolled in such a program and being trained for an eligible occupation are considered new apprentices and sponsors will be eligible to receive payments for those apprentices. Requiring a program to exceed this substantial growth threshold ensures that funds support expansion by incentivizing increased apprentice numbers, rather than subsidizing programs with stable counts.

When calculating three-year average enrollment for programs that have not existed for at least three years, the average will be based on any years of operation. See Section III.G for an example.

The Department recognizes that there may be novel program designs that require flexibility on the substantial growth threshold based on current industry needs. Therefore, applicants may use the substantial growth threshold suggested by the Department or may propose a different substantial growth threshold percentage and/or methodology if they provide sufficient justification. Post-award, the Department will work closely with all grantees to ensure they have a substantial growth threshold in place that is appropriate for their project's scope and the grant's intended goals of incentivizing growth within the identified industry or broader Registered Apprenticeship system.

## **2. PfP Incentive Payment Requirements**

Applicants will propose a spending structure that will best meet the industry needs of Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors, and subject to approval by ETA post award.

The following requirements apply to each category:

- At least 85 percent of funds awarded must be issued to Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors as incentive payments.
- No payments are made until an apprentice is enrolled for at least 90 days (or an alternative initial payment benchmark of more than 90 days proposed by the applicant, and subject to approval by ETA post award). Partial payments for apprentices that do not meet the 90-day benchmark are not allowable.
- In addition to the initial payment after at least 90 days of enrollment, incentive payments may be paid to sponsors for their apprentice's achievement of different progression benchmarks within a program, such as the completion of the probationary period, retention for a certain period, or the achievement of other benchmarks related to an apprentice's progression through the program. Incentive payments for progression benchmarks must take place during the award POP. Including additional payments

within the spending structure is optional and progression benchmarks for any additional payments will be specified by the applicant.

- The total amount paid per apprentice, which is the sum of both the initial payment and any additional payments, cannot exceed the maximum amounts specified in this FOA in Section III.B.3 Table 1.
- Up to 15 percent of the funds awarded may be used for other direct and indirect costs associated with the grant, including outreach and communication to increase awareness of the incentive fund model; oversight, administration and staffing of the project; and other necessary and allowable costs.

### 3. Incentive Payment Structures by Category

As defined above, “new apprentices” means all apprentices enrolled in an eligible occupation beyond the substantial growth threshold (which is zero for new programs and 125% of three-year average enrollment within an eligible occupation for programs registered prior to the POP start date). The payment structure available to sponsors for enrolling eligible “new apprentices” differs across the two award categories.

- Payment Structure for Category 1: Individual Per New Apprentice Payments.**  
Sponsors will be eligible for initial payments for each “new apprentice” enrolled after at least 90 days. An applicant may also specify that a sponsor could receive additional incentive payments if their apprentices achieve applicant-specified progression benchmarks, such as program retention and completion. The maximum total amount for per apprentice payments (i.e. sum of initial and any additional payments) may not exceed \$6,000.
- Payment Structure for Category 2: Batch Based New Apprentice Payments.**  
Sponsors will be eligible to receive initial payments after meeting an applicant specified quantity of new apprentices (i.e., batch of new apprentices) enrolled in the program for at least 90 days. Applicants may also issue additional payments when batches of a sponsor’s apprentices meet progression benchmarks specified by the applicant. The amount of both initial and any additional payments should be informed by labor market data. The maximum total payment amount (i.e. sum of initial and any additional payments) for a batch of apprentices cannot exceed \$3,000 per apprentice.
  - The applicant may propose differentiated batch sizes based on the size of the employer. For example, applicants may establish higher industry-dependent batch size thresholds for medium sized and large employers based on market dynamics in the industry(ies) they are serving. The minimum required batch size is 3 apprentices. Applicants must propose a batch size structure and, upon award, will collaborate with the Department to determine the final batch size structure.

**Table 1: New Apprentice Payment Structure under each Category**

<b>PfP Incentive Payment Category</b>	<b>Category 1: Rapid Expansion of Registered Apprenticeship Within a Specific Industry</b>	<b>Category 2: Rapid Scaling of the Registered Apprenticeship System</b>
<b>Payment Structure</b>	Individual Per New Apprentice Payments	Batch Based New Apprentice Payments

<b>Maximum Payment Cap per Apprentice</b>	Up to \$6,000	Up to \$3,000
<b>Payment Structure</b>	<b>Required Initial Payment:</b> at least 90 days after program enrollment	<b>Required Initial Payment:</b> at least 90 days after program enrollment, after the applicant-specified batch size (i.e. number of apprentices that must be enrolled in the program for a sponsor to receive payment) is met.
	<b>Additional Payments (Optional):</b> Additional per apprentice payments are allowable after a sponsor's apprentices achieve applicant-specified progression benchmarks, not to exceed the \$6,000 per apprentice cap overall.	<b>Additional Payments (Optional):</b> Additional per batch payments are allowable after a batch of a sponsor's apprentices achieve applicant-specified progression benchmarks, not to exceed the \$3,000 per apprentice cap overall.
<b>Example Payment Structures</b>	A sponsor receives a first initial payment of \$3,000 after an eligible new apprentice is enrolled for at least 90 days. An additional payment of \$1,000 is given to the sponsor if the apprentice is retained in the program for a year. This would be a total payment of \$4,000 per apprentice.	A sponsor receives the first initial payment of \$10,000 once a batch of 20 eligible new apprentices have been enrolled for at least 90 days (an effective rate of \$500 per apprentice). An additional payment of \$8,000 is given to the sponsor once these 20 new eligible apprentices are retained in the program for a year (an effective rate of \$400 per apprentice). This would be a total payment amount of \$900 per apprentice.

### C. Expected Performance Outcomes

Applicants must propose performance target outcomes to track, report, and demonstrate proof of concept and support evidence that Registered Apprenticeship will benefit greatly through a PfP incentive payment model. These proposed targets must be based on evidence and labor market analysis. Therefore, applicants must provide target goals for the following performance measures for each year of the POP:

- The total number of apprentices enrolled for which Registered Apprenticeship sponsors received incentive payments.
  - To calculate the total number of apprentices, applicants may divide the amount of funding available for incentive payments by the average expected payment under the proposed incentive payment model.

- Applicants that are proposing progression benchmarks may also consider the estimated percentage of apprentices that will attain those progression benchmarks when developing the average expected payment.
- The total number of Registered Apprenticeship sponsors that received incentive payments.
  - To calculate the total number of Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, applicants may base their estimate on their understanding of the industry (or overall labor market) and the type of entities that may serve as Registered Apprenticeship sponsors.
- The total number of States and Territories with Registered Apprenticeship stakeholders engaged by the awardee.
  - Given the national scope of this project, applicants will engage stakeholders across all States and Territories. Accordingly, applicants should generally set a goal of all States and Territories to engage for each year of the POP.
  - The Department recognizes that certain industries are geographically concentrated. If a goal to serve all States and Territories is not appropriate for your industry, applicants may also consider whether relevant supply chains and related occupations should be incorporated to expand both industry and geographic coverage. Applicants should clearly describe and justify your proposed geographic goal and include industry data and Labor Market Information to support their justification. Regardless of the proposed geographic goal, all awardees must serve any Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor with an Eligible Occupation that applies to access the Incentive Fund. Awardees will be required to serve any sponsor that qualifies for funding under the incentive payment structure.
- The total number of States and Territories with Registered Apprenticeship sponsors receiving incentive fund payments.
  - Given the national scope of this project, applicants are encouraged to serve as many States and Territories as possible and should set an ambitious goal accordingly.
  - This target goal should be informed by the applicant's proposed goal for "total number of States and Territories with Registered Apprenticeship stakeholders engaged by the awardee".
- For planning purposes, applicants must propose annual anticipated spend down rates, including the level of funds expended through incentive payments.

While applicants must propose values, once awarded, this requirement does not prohibit grantees from using funds more quickly in response to increases in demand at any point of the POP. Target goals may be revised and finalized during the implementation period in consultation with the Department.

## **D. Funding Type**

Funding will be provided in the form of a Cooperative Agreement. Throughout this FOA, all references to grants are applicable to cooperative agreements.

## E. Eligible Participants

Awardees under this FOA will not directly serve participants/apprentices.

### Veterans' Priority for Participants

[38 U.S.C. 4215](#) requires DOL grantees to provide priority to veterans and spouses of certain veterans for employment, training, and placement services in any job training program directly funded, in whole or in part, by DOL.

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section III.E Veterans' Priority for Participants.

## F. Program Authority

The Full Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025, Public Law 119-4 authorizes this program.

## G. Definitions

- **Apprentice:** A worker at least 16 years of age, except where a higher minimum age standard is otherwise fixed by law, who is employed to learn an apprenticeable occupation as provided in 29 C.F.R. § 29.4 under standards of apprenticeship fulfilling the requirements of 29 C.F.R. § 29.5.
- **Apprenticeship Agreement:** A written agreement that contains the terms and conditions of the employment and training of the apprentice.
- **Eligible Occupation:** An occupation that sponsors may receive incentive payments for enrolling apprentices in beyond the substantial growth threshold. Under Category 1, eligible occupations are occupations identified by applicants within each targeted industry. The Department will finalize this list of eligible occupations with awardees during the implementation period. Under Category 2, eligible occupations are all occupations in industries or subsectors not funded under Category 1 or funded by the Department's existing American Manufacturing Incentive Fund led by the Arkansas Department of Commerce.
- **Initial Incentive Payment:** Incentive payment provided to a sponsor for having an apprentice (or a batch of apprentices if under Category 2) enrolled in their program for at least 90 days (or an alternative initial payment benchmark of more than 90 days proposed by the applicant, and subject to approval by ETA post award).
- **New Apprentices:** Under this FOA, new apprentices are apprentices that are all apprentices enrolled beyond the substantial growth threshold during the POP. For new programs developed after the grant's program start date, all apprentices enrolled are "new apprentices" eligible for payment.
- **New Registered Apprenticeship Program:** A program developed after the start of the POP.
- **Progression Benchmarks:** The benchmarks that an apprentice(s) must achieve for a sponsor to receive additional incentive payments. These progression benchmarks are specified by the applicant and can include, but are not limited to, benchmarks like

completing the probationary period, being retained in the program for a year, or completing the program.

- **Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Data System (RAPIDS):** Primary platform for sponsors to manage their apprentices, occupations, job openings, and other relevant program information.
- **Registered Apprenticeship Program:** Registered Apprenticeship programs are registered programs with OA or a DOL-recognized State Apprenticeship Agency as set out in 29 CFR Part 29.
- **Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor:** Any person, association, committee, business, or organization operating a Registered Apprenticeship program in whose name the program is (or is to be) registered or approved.
- **Registration Agency:** OA or a federally recognized State Apprenticeship Agency that has responsibility for registering apprenticeship programs and apprentices, providing TA, conducting reviews for compliance with 29 CFR Part 29, and quality assurance assessments.
- **States and Territories:** For the purposes of this FOA, States and Territories are defined as follows. The term “state” means “any of the 50 states of the United States and the District of Columbia.” The term “territory” means any territory or possession of the United States. For the purposes of this FOA, territories or possessions of the United States are defined as: Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.
- **Substantial Growth Threshold:** The enrollment threshold within an eligible occupation that sponsors must achieve before apprentices are considered “new” and count for per apprentice or meeting batch payments. The Department suggests a substantial growth threshold of *125% of the program’s three-year average enrollment in the eligible occupation*. For example, under the Department’s proposed substantial growth threshold, if a Registered Apprenticeship program had 10 active apprentices within the eligible occupation on average over the last three years, the sponsor would be eligible to count the 13th active apprentice they enroll in the eligible occupation and every additional active apprentice above this threshold thereafter towards incentive payments (i.e., eligible for per apprentice payments under Category 1 or eligible to count towards the batch size for payment under Category 2). The substantial growth threshold for a sponsor who develops a program after the grant’s start date is zero. Applicants may propose a different substantial growth threshold percentage and/or methodology if they provide sufficient justification that is appropriate for their project’s scope and the grant’s intended goals of incentivizing growth within the identified industry or broader Registered Apprenticeship system.

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section VIII.G Definitions.

## H. Funding Restrictions, Policies and Limitations

All proposed project costs must be necessary and reasonable and in accordance with federal guidelines.

The PfP Incentive Payments grant program has funding restrictions, policies, and limitations that are referenced in Section III.B. Applicants must review that section for a full understanding of the required funding restrictions, policies and limitations.

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section III.H Funding Restrictions, Policies and Limitations.

### **Evaluation and Data-Related Costs**

Labor and other costs related to data and evaluation are allowable, as defined in 2 CFR Part 200.455. Data and evaluation activities may include staff participating in interviews, focus groups, and surveys; staff working to execute data sharing agreements; staff preparing datasets required for an evaluation; staff participating in evaluation meetings; and other costs related to DOL's evaluations and data-related activities.

### **Salary and Bonus Limitations**

By law, no "Employment and Training Administration" appropriated funds 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. The Executive Level II salary may change yearly and is located on the [OPM.gov website](#). This limitation does not apply to contractors (vendors) providing goods and services as defined in 2 CFR 200.331. Where states are recipients of such funds, states may establish a lower limit for salaries and bonuses paid by subrecipients. To establish these limits, states may consider the relative cost of living in the state, the salary levels for comparable state or local government employees, and the size of the organizations that administer Federal programs involved, including ETA programs. See the [Program Authority](#) found in TEGL 10-24 for additional information.

## **I. Required Partnerships**

All applicants must include at **least one of the required partnership categories listed below** as a required partner:

- **A national industry association.** The association must represent industry practitioners or other relevant stakeholders. The association must have members or provide coverage to at least 30 States or Territories. Including an industry association not only demonstrates broad industry buy-in but also shows that the applicant will be able to leverage broader business partnerships once funded. Under Category 2 the association must represent broad business/economic development interests (e.g., Chamber of Commerce); or
- **Three or more regional industry associations.** The associations must represent industry practitioners or other relevant stakeholders. Each association must have members or provide coverage to at least three States or Territories not covered by the other associations to count towards this requirement. Under Category 2, the association(s) must represent broad business/economic development interests (e.g., multiple Regional Economic Development Agencies); or
- **Three national employers.** These employers must have employees in at least 30 States or Territories that anticipate becoming sponsors or participating employers in this grant program; or

- **Five regional employers.** These employers must have employees in at least three States or Territories that anticipate becoming sponsors or participating employers in this grant program.

Identifying industry and employer partners in the application will allow for more immediate implementation, shows an applicant's existing connections within the industry, and demonstrates the demand and scalability of their proposal.

#### **Optional Partner: Payment Management System Operator**

As described under Section IV.C.3.b., Project Narrative, all applicants must identify the entity responsible for running the process for issuing payments. This entity may be the applicant, or the applicant may identify a partner organization. If a partner organization is identified as the entity fulfilling this role, the applicant must submit a letter of commitment or MOU between the applicant and this partner organization clearly describing the responsibilities of both parties. The description of the partner organization's responsibilities must align with the payment system described in the applicant's project narrative.

**Other Partners:** Applicants are not restricted in engaging with additional partners. For entities focused within specific sub-sectors, applicants may also consider partnering with an entity with expertise in the larger sector. However, a partner may only receive grant funds in accordance with this FOA.

**Partnership Documentation:** Applicants must submit signed and dated Letters of Commitment or Memoranda of Understanding between the applicant and each partner organization identified in the application. These letters must be uploaded as an attachment to the application package and labeled "Letters of Commitment."

## **IV. APPLICATION CONTENT AND FORMAT**

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

- A. SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance";
- B. Project Budget, composed of the SF-424A and Budget Narrative;
- C. Project Narrative; and
- D. Attachments to the Project Narrative.

You must make sure that the funding amount requested is consistent across all parts and sub-parts of the application. You must submit your application in one package. Documents received separately will be tracked separately and will not be attached to your application for review.

### **A. SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance**

You must complete the SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance"

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section IV.A SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance.

### **B. Project Budget, Composed of the SF-424A and Budget Narrative**

You must complete the SF-424A Budget Information Form and a Budget Narrative. The Budget and Budget Narrative do not count against the page limit requirements for the Project Narrative.



For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section IV.B Project Budget, Composed of the SF-424A and Budget Narrative.

## **C. Project Narrative**

You must include a Project Narrative with your application. The Project Narrative shows that the applicant can implement the grant project explained in this Announcement. Applicants must describe how they will meet the requirements listed below. Applicants must show that their planned activities will meet the project goals. As appropriate, applicants should see Section [IX](#). Resources, E. DOL's Clearinghouse for Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) and DOL's Chief Evaluation Office as well as F. Data and Other Evidence Resources for starting places to find research that could provide evidence of a sound approach.

The Project Narrative is limited to 15 double-spaced single-sided 8.5 x 11-inch pages with Times New Roman 12-point text font and 1-inch margins. It must include the section headers listed below. The agency will evaluate the Project Narrative using the evaluation criteria identified in Section [VI.B](#). We will not read or consider any materials beyond the specified page limit (except for attachments listed in Section [IV.D](#) that impact the scoring of the application).

Applicants must submit their Project Narrative using the PfP Incentive Plan document provided in Appendix A. This document is clearly aligned with the Project Narrative headers in this section. Applicants must clearly review the scoring criteria outlined in this section (Project Narrative) and respond accordingly to the sections outlined in the PfP Incentive Plan document.

### **1. Statement of Need (Up to 8 Points)**

Scoring under this criterion is dependent on clear, logical, well-supported, and accurate interpretation of data. All data sources must include citations that provide information that enables the identification and verification of data. To receive full points for this section, an applicant must:

- i. Demonstrate that there is industry demand (or overall labor market demand if Category 2) for skilled workers, the current extent of Registered Apprenticeship within this industry (or overall labor market), and why Registered Apprenticeship is poised for scaling and expansion within this industry (or the overall labor market). Applicants must discuss this need using both quantitative and qualitative terms and cite sources for this labor market analysis, 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. If applying under Category 1, applicants are strongly encouraged to identify broad, recognized sub-sectors and occupations within each targeted industry. Applicants that target large, recognized sub-sectors and occupations within the selected industry must provide a logical rationale to ensure sufficient coverage of the selected industry. (Up to 4 points)
- ii. Clearly demonstrate that the applicant has the relevant expertise, including prior work, and partnerships necessary to assist this industry (or overall labor market) to address this labor demand and expand Registered Apprenticeship programs. (Up to 4 points)

### **2. Expected Outcomes and Outputs (Up to 8 Points)**

To receive full points for this section, applicants must include the following elements:

- i. Identify the following items for their proposed project (Up to 4 Points)
  - a. Provide the expected number of States and Territories engaged (via sponsor engagement in that State or Territory) and States and Territories served (via sponsors served in that State or Territory).
    - For targeted industries that are geographically dependent and as a result, a goal to serve all states and territories may not be appropriate, applicants should clearly describe and justify any proposed goal, including providing industry and/or Labor Market Information to support this justification. If an applicant proposes a goal of serving less than all States and Territories, this does not affect the program requirement that awardees will be required to serve any Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor with an Eligible Occupation that applies to access the Incentive Fund.
    - If applicable, applicants may also consider whether relevant supply chains and related occupations should be incorporated into the program to support both industry and geographic coverage.
  - b. Provide the expected number of Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors that will receive funding under the award during each year of the POP (see template in Appendix C).
  - c. Provide the expected number of apprentices enrolled for which Registered Apprenticeship sponsors will receive incentive payments during each year of the POP (see template in Appendix C).
- ii. Specify annual anticipated spend rates and tracking metrics described in Section III.C. For full points, applicants must explain how these spend rates align with the expected number of Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors that will receive funding under the award. (Up to 2 points)
- iii. Describe the system and process for tracking performance measures and target goals. Applicants must detail an effective process for how they will communicate expectations to partners, share progress against the spend plan, report required information to the Department, and adjust strategies as needed. (Up to 2 points)

### **3. Project Design (Up to 68 Points)**

#### **a. Incentive Model (Up to 20 Points)**

To receive full points, applicants must provide a detailed explanation of their proposed PfP Incentive Payments Program model. Applicants are encouraged to provide high quality research or evidence to support how the specification of their incentive model is likely to encourage sponsor interest and action necessary to expand Registered Apprenticeship and reach the estimated number of new apprentices outlined above. The incentive model must include the following components:

- i. A clear indication that the incentive payment amount is at least 85 percent or greater, as encouraged by the Department, and a breakdown of the payment structure, including the payment amount for the initial required payment to sponsors after their apprentice(s) are enrolled for at least 90 days and, if the applicant proposes providing additional payments,

the payment amounts and apprentice progression benchmark(s) that must be achieved by sponsors to receive these additional payments. (Up to 8 Points)

- a. If applying under category 2, applicants must also specify the batch size (i.e. the number of apprentices required to enroll or meet a progression benchmark before a Registered Apprenticeship sponsor receives payment).
- ii. Provide a logic-based explanation of the proposed payment structure, including industry specific (or general labor market if under category 2) research and evidence to justify that the payment amounts are appropriate to induce Registered Apprenticeship program development and growth. (Up to 6 Points)
- iii. A logic-based description of how the incentive model will effectively motivate Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to encourage program completion and support the retention of apprentices throughout the program. (Up to 6 Points)

#### **b. Payment Management System (Up to 30 Points)**

Applicants must describe in detail an effective plan to administer the project and manage per apprentice payments, including a comprehensive description of the payment management system used to provide payments. When applicable, applicants should include prior experience conducting similar activities. This component must include the following elements:

- i. **Application Process (Up to 4 Points):** Thoroughly describe an efficient and effective streamlined application process that minimizes paperwork and administrative burden for Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to receive payments and encourages a broad range of participating employers. This may include how the entity will receive initial applications for payments from Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, the information collected, and any supporting documentation that Registered Apprenticeship sponsors must submit to receive future payments. For full points, the applicant must demonstrate and provide an example of their (or the entity responsible for the payment management system if different) prior experience successfully implementing and operating a similar application process.
- ii. **Verification Process (Up to 4 Points):** Thoroughly describe effective verification procedures and safeguards that ensure that entities receiving payments are Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors and are eligible to receive per apprentice incentive payments. Applicants must also describe the verification process for confirming that Registered Apprenticeship sponsors enroll an apprentice for at least 90 days and that their apprentices achieve any additional progression benchmarks specified within the applicant's incentive model before making a payment. For full points, the applicant must demonstrate and provide an example of their (or the entity responsible for the payment management system if different) prior experience successfully implementing and operating a payment verification process.
- iii. **Timelines for Payments (Up to 2 Points):** Provide a reasonable timeline for payments to Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, which take into consideration the requirement that apprentices must be enrolled for at least 90 days. For full points, this timeline must identify when the applicant will determine the number of a sponsor's active apprentices eligible for payment, and include the anticipated amount of time between when the entity

operating the payment system receives the necessary information from sponsors and when payments are made to those sponsors.

- iv. **Related Communications Processes with Sponsors (Up to 4 Points):** Thoroughly describe effective procedures and means of communication with Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors, including how decisions regarding initial eligibility, the payment amount, and the status of forthcoming payments will be communicated to Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. For full points, the applicant must demonstrate and provide an example of their (or the entity responsible for the payment management system if different) prior experience successfully operating a similarly structured communication process.
- v. **Payment Mechanics and Logistics (Up to 8 Points):** Thoroughly describe an effective mechanism and operational system to be used to manage payments, including how payments are managed, the accounting system that will be utilized, the mechanism used to provide payments to Registered Apprenticeship sponsors (e.g. direct deposit), the system used to track payments, and any other information necessary to fully explain the proposed operational process for the payment system. For full points, the applicant must demonstrate and provide an example of their (or the entity responsible for the payment management system if different) prior experience successfully operating a similar payment mechanism and operational system.
- vi. **Appeals and Dispute Resolution Processes and Procedures (Up to 4 Points):** Thoroughly describe an effective process to address dispute resolutions for incentive payments, including a process for sponsors to appeal eligibility determinations or payment amounts, and identifying staff that will be dedicated to offering customer service regarding payment or application issues. For full points, the applicant must demonstrate and provide an example of their (or the entity responsible for the payment management system if different) prior experience successfully operating a similar appeals and dispute resolution process.
- vii. **Record Keeping and Reporting Processes (Up to 4 Points):** Thoroughly describe effective record-keeping practices to be used by the entity operating the payment management system to record payments. This should include a description of how the entity will record and track the number of payments made to each sponsor and the reason for each payment, the accounting system used by the entity, and the capacity for the entity to report this information to the Department. For full points, the applicant must demonstrate and provide an example of their (or the entity responsible for the payment management system if different) prior experience successfully operating a similar record keeping and reporting process.

**c. Communications and Outreach Plan (Up to 6 Points)**

- i. Describe the strategic communications and outreach plan to raise awareness of the PfP Incentive Fund Program, including effective strategies to provide incentive payment program support and guidance to Registered Apprenticeship sponsors and employers, supporting required partners in their outreach and engagement activities, and develop additional partnerships. Given the national scope of this project, applicants will engage stakeholders across all States and Territories. (Up to 2 points)

- ii. Accordingly, applicants must specify plans to engage stakeholders through direct outreach, targeted marketing and advertising, or other communication during each year of the POP. (Up to 2 points)
    - a. If applying under Category 2, applicants must identify if they will focus outreach on specific industries during the first year of the POP. Regardless, if an applicant focuses outreach within specific industries during the first year, sponsors from all industries will be eligible for payment under Category 2 during the entire POP.
  - iii. Applicants must commit to support and align their communication strategy with any Department-led Registered Apprenticeship national marketing campaign efforts. Applicants must also commit to collaborating with and leveraging other DOL-funded entities supporting Registered Apprenticeship expansion (states, industry intermediaries, and other grantees), as appropriate, particularly as it relates to referrals for eligible Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors interested in applying for incentive funds. (Up to 2 points)
- d. Organizational Capacity (Up to 12 points)**
- i. Include a detailed description demonstrating the lead applicant's capacity to effectively manage each component of the program, including a staffing plan, project management plan, and a communications plan for efficient and effective management of the project with all partners and staff and demonstrating its capacity to establish effective procurement processes, systems, and procedures and those of any partners who will be providing any services or conducting any activities under the grant (where applicable). (Up to 6 points)
  - ii. Describe the organization's overall financial stability to demonstrate sufficient capacity and capital to operate this incentive plan and continue other independent and ongoing organizational activity. Applicants are encouraged to provide supporting documentation to substantiate this description. (up to 6 points)

#### **4. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability (Up to 6 Points)**

To receive full points the applicant must:

- i. Convincingly demonstrate that the lead applicant completed a federal or non-federally funded grant or cooperative agreement or contract that is at least \$8,000,000 and awarded within the past five years of the closing date of this Announcement. (4 points). To be eligible to achieve full points, applicants must address the below factors. A funding threshold below \$8,000,000 will be eligible to receive partial points.
  - Describe the past performance project and include the following information:
    - The name of the grantor and the amount of grant award;
    - The name of the project;
    - Project Period of Performance Date; and
    - Demonstrate that the project, including goals and objectives, is similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project
- ii. Provide a detailed summary of the project's performance metrics and provide evidence that the project achieved intended results and delivered measurable value to the funder.

Applicants may include numerical or percentage values to describe their metrics, targets, and results. (2 points).

## **5. Budget and Budget Narrative (Up to 10 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. Applicants will receive points for the budget and budget narrative as follows:

- i. The extent to which the proposed expenditures will address all project requirements, including costs to develop and manage a payment management system, and whether key personnel have adequate time devoted to the project to achieve project results. (Up to 6 points)
- ii. The extent to which the budget narrative provides a description of costs associated with each line item on the SF-424A. Separate from the discussion of grant funds, the budget narrative should also include a complete description of leveraged resources provided (as applicable) to support grant activities. (Up to 2 points)
- iii. Whether or not the totals on the SF-424A and the Budget Narrative align. (2 points or no points)

## **D. Attachments to the Project Narrative**

In addition to the Project Narrative, the application also includes required and requested attachments as explained below (see Section [VI.A](#) on which required attachments must be submitted in order for the application to be reviewed). These attachments must be clearly labeled and do not count toward the Project Narrative page limit. Any other attachments included beyond those listed below will not be reviewed in the scoring of the application.

We encourage applicants to name the files using the document names listed below. Do not include special characters (e.g. &, -, \*, %, /, #). However, underscores (for example: My\_Attached\_File.pdf) to separate a file name are acceptable.

### **1. Required Attachments**

#### **a. Abstract**

You must submit an up to three-page abstract summarizing the proposed project. If you do not submit the abstract, your application will still be reviewed, but it may impact your score. See Section VI.A for a list of items that will result in the disqualification of your application. If you are selected for an award, the information provided in your abstract may be published to a public facing website as a summary of your project. The abstract must include the following:

- the applicant's name
- the applicant's entity type
- the applicant's city and State

- the project Category (i.e. Category 1 or Category 2)
- the project's target industry(ies) if applying under Category 1
- the project title
- the total federal funding request
- the project's geographic scope (i.e. national)
- a summary of program activities, including the proposed incentive plan funding structure
- the project's required partner(s) and roles, if applicable
- the project's optional partner(s) and roles, if applicable
- subrecipient activities, if applicable; and
- public contact information for the project

#### **b. PfP Incentive Plan document**

Applicants must submit their Project Narrative using the PfP Incentive Plan document provided in Appendix A. This document is clearly aligned with the Project Narrative headers in this section. Applicants must clearly review the scoring criteria outlined in the Project Narrative section and respond accordingly to the sections outlined in the PfP Incentive Plan document.

#### **c. Letters of Commitment or Memoranda of Understanding**

Submit signed and dated Letters of Commitment (LOC) or Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between the applicant and partner organizations and/or sub-grantees that propose to provide services to support or evaluate the program model and lead to the identified outcomes. See Section [III.I](#) Required Partnerships.

These letters must be uploaded as an attachment to the application package and labeled "Letters of Commitment."

The applicant must include Letters of Commitment or Memoranda of Understanding from additional multi-regional or national employers or industry associations that are committed to developing apprenticeship programs and receiving incentives payments under the proposal. These entities must represent the relevant industry. Failure to submit LOCs from or MOUs with required partners will result in the application being deemed non-responsive and not moving forward to the review phase of the competition.

## **2. Requested Attachments**

We request the following attachments. If you do not submit the attachments, your application will still be reviewed, but it will impact your score, unless otherwise noted.

#### **a. 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 [III.H](#). This attachment does not impact scoring of the application.

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

#### **b. Financial System Risk Assessment Information**

All applicants are requested to submit Funding Opportunity Announcement Financial System Risk Assessment Information. See Section [VI.D](#) for additional instructions. This attachment does not impact the scoring of the application.

## **V. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES**

### **A. How to Obtain an Application Package**

This FOA, found at [www.Grants.gov](http://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. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management**

All applicants for Federal grant funding must have a Unique Entity Identifier and be registered in the System for Award Management.

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section V.B Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management.

### **C. Submission Instructions**

Applicants must electronically submit their application through [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on 04/03/2026. We will not review applications received after 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date. We will not accept applications sent by hardcopy (mail or hand delivery), e-mail, telegram, or facsimile (FAX).

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section V.C Submission Instructions.

### **D. Intergovernmental Review**

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

### **E. Other Submission Requirements**

If you 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](mailto:support@grants.gov).

## **VI. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **A. Responsiveness Review**

#### **Application Screening Criteria**

Use the checklist below as a guide when preparing your application package to ensure your application meets all of the screening criteria and contains all required items. Applicants should not include the checklist in the application package. Applications that do not meet all the



requirements in the table below will not move forward through the merit review process or be considered for an award.

Application Requirement	Instructions	Complete?
Submission requirements are met	Section <a href="#">V.C</a>	
Eligibility criteria are met	Section <a href="#">II.A</a>	
Application is only for one category	Section <a href="#">II.A</a>	
Components of the application are saved in one 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 <a href="#">V.C</a>	
SAM Registration	Section <a href="#">V.B</a>	
SF-424 includes a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and line 18a. is not below \$10,000,000 and does not exceed the ceiling amount of \$40,000,000	Section <a href="#">V.B</a>	
SF-424A, Budget Information Form	Section <a href="#">IV.B</a>	
Budget Narrative	Section <a href="#">IV.B</a>	
A statement in the Budget Narrative committing to devote at least 85% of funds toward incentive payments	Section <a href="#">III.B</a>	
Project Narrative	Section <a href="#">IV.C</a>	
Specification on the Abstract that the proposed project's geographic scope has a national reach	Section <a href="#">III.A.2</a>	
Clear indication of application category on the Abstract	Section <a href="#">III.B.2</a>	
Letters of Commitment from required partners	Section <a href="#">III. I</a>	
For Category 1 applicants, clear indication of target industry on the Abstract	Section <a href="#">IV.D</a>	

## B. Review Criteria

Criterion	Points (Maximum)
1. Statement of Need (See Section <a href="#">IV.C.1</a> . Statement of Need)	8 total

2. Expected Outputs and Outcomes (See Section <a href="#">IV.C.2</a> Expected Outcomes and Outputs)	8 total
3. Project Design (See Section <a href="#">IV.C.3</a> Project Design)	68 total
4. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability (See Section <a href="#">IV.C.4</a> Past Performance – Programmatic Capability)	6 total
5. Budget and Budget Justification (See Section <a href="#">IV.B</a> Project Budget)	10 total
<b>TOTAL</b>	100

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section VI.B Review Criteria.

## **C. Review and Selection Process**

### **Merit Review and Selection Process**

A technical merit review panel will carefully evaluate applications based on the selection criteria. As outlined in section [VI.B](#) above, the selection criteria are based on the policy goals and priorities explained in this FOA.

Up to 100 points may be awarded to an applicant, depending on the quality of the responses provided. The final scores (which may include the mathematical normalization of review panels) will serve as the primary basis for selecting applications for funding. The panel results are advisory in nature and not binding on the Grant Officer. The Grant Officer can make selections based solely on the final scores or take into consideration other relevant factors when applicable. Such factors may include the geographic distribution of funds, the prioritization of industries and/or subsectors within industries, including but not limited to Shipbuilding and Defense Industrial Base, the type of eligible entity serving as the lead applicant, availability of funds 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. If a grant is 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.

Prior to issuance, and annually thereafter, awards will be subject to review in accordance to the process described in Executive Order 14332, Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking.

## **D. Risk Review**

### **Risk Review Process**

Before making an award, ETA will consider any information about the applicant that is in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). For ETA to

assess the applicant's Financial System, all applicants need to submit the Financial Risk Assessment explained in the application guide (Section VI.D) at the link below. For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section VI.D Risk Review.

## **VII. AWARD NOTICES**

### **A. Award Document**

A Federal Notice of Award document, signed by the Grant Officer, is the official document that obligates funds. If selected, this document will be provided electronically.

### **B. Award Timing and Notification to Applicants**

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 email and may request a written debriefing on the significant weaknesses of their application.

Selection of an organization as a recipient does not mean that their grant application is approved 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.

## **VIII. POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. 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.

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section VIII.A Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

#### **2. Religious Activities**

Guidance from DOL on the effect of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act on recipients of DOL financial assistance is found at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/grants/religious-freedom-restoration-act/guidance>.

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section VIII.A Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

#### **3. Other Legal Requirements**

For a complete understanding of the application requirements on Lobbying or Fundraising with Federal Funds; Transparency Act; Safeguarding Data Including Personally Identifiable Information (PII); Record Retention; Use of Contracts and Subawards; and Grant Closeout, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section VIII.A Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

#### **4. 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 program(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).

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section VIII.A Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

##### **DOL Disclaimer**

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

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section VIII.A Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

##### **Intellectual Property Rights and Open Licensing**

All work created using grant funds must be in a format that is readily accessible and available for open licensing to the public. This is required by 2 CFR Part 2900.13, and 2 CFR 200.315(d) to ensure DOL funds have as broad an impact as possible and to encourage innovation and the development of new learning materials.

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section VIII.A Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

##### **Credential Transparency**

DOL requires that grantees make publicly available information about industry-recognized credentials using linked open data formats that support full transparency and interoperability. This ensures individuals, employers, educators, and training providers have access to the most complete, current and beneficial information about providers, programs credentials, and competencies supported by federal funds.

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section VIII.A Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

#### **5. Special Program Requirements**

##### **a. DOL Evaluation**

As a condition of grant award, as per 2 CFR Part 200.301, grantees are required to participate in an evaluation, if undertaken by DOL.

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section VIII.A Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

##### **b. Performance Goals**

Applicants will be held to outcomes provided in their application. Failure to meet outcomes may result in technical assistance, intervention by ETA, or may have a significant impact on future grants with ETA.

### **DOL Evaluation and Assessments**

1. **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, random assignment, 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. We may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation.
2. **Annual Assessments:** As a condition of award, grantees must agree to coordinate with the program office on an ongoing basis and to specifically conduct annual assessments of their programs and to take appropriate steps to address OA and ETA feedback and to incorporate Administration priorities, including making agreed upon adjustments to the incentive model and program design, as needed.

## **B. Reporting**

You must meet DOL reporting requirements for quarterly financial and performance reports.

For a complete understanding of this application requirement, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section VIII.B Reporting.

### **1. Performance and Financial Reporting**

Grantees will be required to report their performance using ETA's 9179 Quarterly Narrative Report, and the ETA 9130 Fiscal Report. Awardees will not use WIPS to report apprentice data.

### **2. Verification of Apprentices for Reporting Purposes**

Applicants must verify the number of apprentices that a Registered Apprenticeship sponsor enrolls before providing incentive payments to the sponsor. In addition, applicants must be able to provide the Department data elements listed below for each sponsor that receives funds. This verification process may include the use of the Department's Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Database System (RAPIDS). The Department will coordinate with grantees post-award to determine a process to collect the information below from sponsors in States not utilizing RAPIDS.

- Sponsor name;
- RAPIDS Program ID;
- Whether a program is newly developed or established;
- The substantial growth threshold for the sponsor's program(s) that received funds;
- Date sponsor applied;
- Date(s) sponsor received payments, payment amount(s) for each payment, and benchmark(s) sponsor achieved to receive payment(s);
- Total number of new apprentices the sponsor received incentive payments for;
- RAPIDS Apprentice ID for any apprentice for which a sponsor received funding; and
- Total amount of incentive payments that the sponsor received for new apprentices.

## IX. RESOURCES

For additional information on A. Web-Based Resources; B. Industry Competency Models and Career Clusters; C. WorkforceGPS; D. SkillsCommons; E. DOL's Clearinghouse for Evaluation and Research (CLEAR); and F. Data and Other Evidence Research Resources, see the [2026 Application Guide](#), Section IX External Resources.

## X. OMB INFORMATION COLLECTION

OMB Information Collection No 1225-0086, Expires June 30, 2028.

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 50 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](mailto: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 02/13/2026 in Washington, D.C. by:

Aiyana Pucci  
Grant Officer, Employment and Training Administration

## APPENDIX A: Pay for Performance Incentive Plan Document

*The Department requires applicants to use this Pfp Incentive Plan document as their response to the Project Narrative section of the scoring criteria.*

*This document provides the framework for an Incentive Plan document that the Department and the awarded applicant will use to manage their grant project. Applicants must ensure information provided in this document is responsive to the scoring criteria. Applications will not receive points for sections that do not respond to the scoring criteria.*

*Applicants are encouraged to include relevant examples and supporting information in their Incentive Payment Plan to propose a Pfp model that stimulates innovation, reduces employer barriers to adopting Registered Apprenticeship, promotes scale and sustainability, and ensures effective use of taxpayer funds.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

*Applicants should include a brief overview of their PfP plan per the guidance in FOA-ETA-26-19 (FOA).*

## **II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*Applicants should summarize their proposal, including what category and industry they are serving (as applicable), how incentive funding will be distributed through a PfP model, and planned outcomes.*

## **III. STATEMENT OF NEED**

*Applicants should provide a labor market analysis that quantitatively and qualitatively describes the industry demand for skilled workers, the current extent of Registered Apprenticeship programs within the industry, and why it is poised for scaling and expansion within this industry (or describe these elements for the overall labor market if applying under category 2). Additionally, they must demonstrate their relevant expertise and partnerships that will support the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship programs in this industry (or overall labor market if applying under category 2). **Please reference section IV. Application Content and Format, C. Project Narrative, 1. Statement of Need of the FOA for relevant scoring criteria.***

## **IV. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS**

*Applicants should outline their expected number of States and Territories engaged and served, sponsors and new apprentices supported by the grant, using quantitative data to justify these projected amounts for each year of the performance period. They must propose anticipated spend rates for each year, explaining how these rates align with the expected number of sponsors funded. Applicants should also describe the system and process for tracking progress and adjusting strategies as needed. **Please reference section IV. Application Content and Format, C. Project Narrative, 2. Expected Outcomes and Outputs of the FOA for relevant scoring criteria.***

## **V. PROJECT DESIGN**

### **a. INCENTIVE MODEL**

*Applicants should provide a comprehensive explanation of their proposed PfP incentive model, supported by research or evidence that demonstrates how it will engage employers to expand apprenticeship programs and meet the expected number of new apprentices. Additionally, applicants should establish detailed incentive amounts and apprenticeship progression benchmarks if there are additional payments, and include a rationale for how the model will motivate sponsors to enhance program completion and apprentice retention. **Please reference section IV. Application Content and Format, C. Project Narrative, 3. Project Design, a. Incentive Model of the FOA for relevant scoring criteria.***

### **b. PAYMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

*Applicants should provide a detailed plan for administering the project and managing per apprentice payments, including their prior experience in similar activities. This plan must identify the entity responsible for the payment management system, whether the applicant or a partner organization, and should detail the application process, verification process, timelines for payments, related communication procedures with sponsors, payment mechanics and logistics, appeals and dispute resolution processes and procedures, and record-keeping and reporting processes. Additionally, if a partner organization is involved, applicants must include a letter of commitment outlining the scope of work. **Please reference section IV. Application Content and Format, C. Project Narrative, 3. Project Design, b. Payment Management System of the FOA for relevant scoring criteria.***

#### **c. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH PLAN**

*Applicants should outline their strategic communications and outreach plan to promote the PfP Incentive Fund Program, detailing strategies to raise awareness and plans to engage stakeholders. Additionally, they must commit to aligning their communication strategy with the Department's National Registered Apprenticeship campaign efforts and collaborating with and leveraging other DOL-funded entities supporting Registered Apprenticeship expansion. **Please reference section IV. Application Content and Format, C. Project Narrative, 3. Project Design, c. Communications and Outreach Plan of the FOA for relevant scoring criteria.***

#### **d. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

*Applicants should provide a detailed description of their capacity to manage all program components, including a staffing plan, project management plan and a communications strategy for effective collaboration with partners and staff, as well as establishing effective procurement processes, systems, and procedures. Additionally, they must outline their overall financial stability to demonstrate sufficient capacity and capital to operate this incentive plan and continue other independent and ongoing organization activity. **Please reference section IV. Application Content and Format, C. Project Narrative, 3. Project Design, d. Organizational Capacity of the FOA for relevant scoring criteria.***

### **VI. PAST PERFORMANCE**

*Applicants should demonstrate that the lead applicant completed a federal or non-federally funded grant or cooperative agreement or contract within the past five years. Applicants should ensure the project was similar in size and scope, having at least \$8,000,000 in funding to be eligible to receive full points and a funding amount below \$8,000,000 to be eligible to receive partial points. Additionally, applicants should provide a detailed summary of the project's performance metrics and provide evidence that the project achieved intended results and delivered measurable value to the funder. **Please reference section IV. Application Content and Format, C. Project Narrative, 4. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability of the FOA for relevant scoring criteria.***

### **VII. BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE**



Applicants should submit a complete Budget and Budget Narrative (which do not count against Project Narrative page limits), ensuring the SF-424A and narrative totals align. They should demonstrate that proposed expenditures address all project requirements and that key personnel have sufficient time to achieve project results. The budget narrative should describe costs for each SF-424A line item and fully detail leveraged resources, as applicable. **Please reference section IV. Application Content and Format, C. Project Narrative, 5. Budget and Budget Narrative of the FOA for relevant scoring criteria.** (Please note this section does not count toward the applicant's 15-page maximum.)

## APPENDIX B: Suggested Abstract Template

Lead Applicant / Organization Name:	
Lead applicant entity type:	
Lead Applicant City and State:	
Project Title:	
Funding Amount:	
PfP Incentive Payment Program Category:	
Target Industry:	
Geographic Scope: National	
Summary of Program Activities:	
Required Partner(s): <b>(Organization name and entity type)</b>	
<i>Insert name(s)</i>	<i>Insert role and type of organization</i>
<i>[add additional lines as needed]</i>	
Optional Partner(s): <b>(Organization names and entity type)</b>	
<i>Insert name(s)</i>	<i>Insert role and type of organization</i>
<i>[add additional lines as needed]</i>	
Subrecipient Activities:	
<b>Public Contact Information</b>	
Name:	
Title:	
Address:	

<b>Phone Number:</b>
<b>Email Address:</b>

### APPENDIX C: Expected Outcomes and Outputs Table

Applicants must propose target goals for the following performance measures. These proposed targets must be based on evidence and labor market analysis.

Year	Number of Sponsors Funded	Number of New Apprentices Funded	Number of States where Stakeholders are Engaged	Number of States where Sponsors Participate (States where new apprentices are located)	Spend Rate for Year	Cumulative Spend Rate
1					%	%
2					%	%
3					%	%
4					%	%