

Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities

Performance Accountability

Introduction

The Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) is an initiative of the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA) in partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and Delta Regional Authority (DRA). WORC enables impacted communities to develop local and regional workforce development solutions aligned with existing economic development strategies and community partnerships to promote new, sustainable job opportunities and long-term economic vitality.

This grant program design supports alignment of workforce development with existing strategies and plans for economic development and diversification in rural communities in the following areas hard hit by economic transition and recovering slowly:

- The Appalachian region, as defined in 40 U.S.C. 14102(a)(1), and
- The Lower Mississippi Delta (Delta) region, as defined in 7 U.S.C. 2009aa(2).

These grants enable eligible applicants within the Appalachian and Delta regions to expand the impact of existing workforce development initiatives. These demonstration grant projects provide valuable career, training, and support services to eligible individuals in counties and parishes and/or areas currently underserved by other resources. These grants support workforce development activities that prepare dislocated workers, new entrants to the workforce, and incumbent workers for good jobs in high-demand occupations aligned with a regional or community economic development strategy.

Grant Activities

The primary focus of WORC is development of workforce training aligned with a strategic plan or economic development priorities for the community or region served by the grant. Some of the allowable training and work-based learning approaches include, but are not limited to traditional classroom training or work-based learning such as apprenticeships, customized training programs, incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, internships, or other work experiences. These may occur before or after layoff, in order to help facilitate reemployment.

This program is also designed to:

- ◆ implement innovative approaches to address the economic and workforce-related impacts within each of the regions;
- ◆ provide enhanced training and support activities to dislocated workers (including displaced homemakers), new entrants in the workforce, incumbent workers, and, particularly in the Appalachian region, individuals affected by substance use disorder who reside in the eligible areas;
- ◆ support workforce development activities that prepare eligible participants for good jobs in high-demand occupations aligned with a state, regional, or community economic development strategy; and,



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- ◆ foster expanded capacity and leveraging resources to address participants' needs through the workforce system in the Appalachian and Delta regions.

Grant Participants

- ◆ *New Entrants to the Workforce*: individuals who have never worked before or who have been out of the workforce for a long enough time to make it as if they are entering the workforce for the first time. For example, this may include, but is not limited to, the long-term unemployed and formerly incarcerated individuals. Also eligible, consistent with Federal and state wage and employment laws, are youth who are enrolled in their junior or senior year of high school and who could be employed before or within six months after the end of the grant lifecycle, and youth who have dropped out of school and are seeking their first full-time job.
- ◆ *Dislocated Workers*: individuals who were terminated or laid-off or have received a notice of termination or lay-off from employment; or were self-employed but are now unemployed, as well as other individuals described at WIOA sec. 3(15).
- ◆ *Incumbent Workers*: currently employed individuals who need training to secure full-time employment, advance in their careers, or retain their current positions.

Performance Reporting

PERFORMANCE GOALS

Grantees identified the performance measures they will collect and share as part of their proposed project in each application. Examples of possible outcomes and outputs from the project might include:

- anticipated number of participants receiving training and other services;
- anticipated number of employers receiving services;
- development of new certification programs;
- curricula to be developed;
- increased training capacity in community(ies); and
- enhanced the capacity to address the identified needs of employers.

Performance elements may consist of metrics or data that the organization already collects with respect to participants and/or grant projects. All projects must include the number of participants obtaining new or improved employment opportunities as one of the outcomes.

REPORTING

As part of these requirements, grantees must submit a Quarterly Narrative Report (QNR) in a specific report template (ETA-9179) provided to grantees. The template provides grantees a set of questions including progress of the grant timeline, strategic partnership activities, grant activities and accomplishments. The QNR must address the performance goals described in the approved grant proposal.



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Grantees must submit the QNR via email with the subject line, "WORC Quarterly Narrative Report"

To three recipients:

- The assigned ETA Federal Project Officer (FPO). Contact information for this individual is contained in the grant agreement documents;
- Delta Regional Authority (DRA) at: workforce@dra.gov; and
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) at: WORC@arc.gov.

Specific reporting requirements for each WORC grantee are established in their grant agreements, which include financial (ETA-9130) and performance reporting.

LEVERAGE EXISTING STATE REPORTING SYSTEMS

WORC grantees that serve individuals are required to coordinate with State Workforce Agencies that administer the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service and ensure the registration of participants in the Employment Service. This allows the Department to collect employment outcomes data in alignment with other workforce initiatives (e.g. WIOA) and minimizes duplicative reporting. WORC grantees are responsible for initiating these conversations with their respective State Workforce Agency. ETA can assist in facilitating connections between WORC grantees and State Workforce Agencies upon request to the Regional office or Federal Project Officers (FPO) assigned to the grant.

The participants that will register with Employment Service are those who receive:

- Staff-assisted career services, specifically comprehensive skill assessments, development of an individual employment plan, individual career counseling or career planning, internships or work experiences, or out-of-area job search assistance; or
- Training services, specifically occupational skills training, entrepreneurial training, or training programs operated by the private sector.

Note: State Workforce Agencies registering WORC participants in the state's Employment Service should report code value "WORC001" in one of the Special Project ID fields (Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) data element(s) 105, 106, or 107). Please see the PIRL layout (ETA-9172) for more details (<https://doleta.gov/performance/reporting/>).

Additional Resources

- ◆ FOA-ETA-19-08: Funding Opportunity Announcement for Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC): A Grant Initiative for the Appalachian and Delta Regions: <https://www.doleta.gov/grants/pdf/FOA-ETA-19-08.pdf>
- ◆ The ETA "Quarterly Narrative Report Template" is report form ETA 9179. To view the required template, go to: <https://performancereporting.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/08/13/20/59/Quarterly-Narrative-Report-ETA-9179>
- ◆ ETA's performance website: <https://www.doleta.gov/performance/reporting/>.
- ◆ ETA's WorkforceGPS website includes performance reporting information, technical assistance, and e-learning modules: <https://performancereporting.workforcegps.org/>.
- ◆ TEGL 10-16, Change 1: https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=3255

