Career Connect Washington: Washington Jobs Initiative

Sectoral Partnership Competitive Grant Solicitation

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration

Good Jobs Challenge

Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN)   ED22HDQ3070093
Award Recipient, System Lead Entity   Washington Student Achievement Council
Subaward Recipient, Solicitation and Grant Administrator   Washington State Employment Security Department
Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)   11.307 Economic Adjustment Assistance

Contents

Summary of Opportunity

THIS IS A COMPETITIVE SOLICITATION FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS. The Employment Security Department (ESD), on behalf of the Career Connect Washington coalition, is seeking applications from highly qualified and eligible entities who will lead and manage Sectoral Partnerships to achieve the objectives of the Washington Jobs Initiative.

The Washington Jobs Initiative: Career Connect Washington & the Good Jobs Challenge

Career Connect Washington (CCW) is a coalition of employers, organized labor, State agencies, educational institutions, students, and community leaders working together to create work-based learning programs that connect people with paid work experience, a postsecondary credential, and good

jobs in high-demand industries. CCW changes the lives of Washingtonians, with an intentional focus on those furthest from opportunity.

Everyone in Washington deserves a future of purpose and prosperity and CCW is working to make sure every Washingtonian has multiple pathways toward economic self-sufficiency and fulfilment, strengthened by a comprehensive state-wide system for career connected learning.

The US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Good Jobs Challenge (GJC) is making once-in-a-generation investments in high-quality, locally led workforce systems to dramatically transform America's communities. These systems and partnerships will create and implement industry-driven training programs, designed to train workers with the skills to secure quality jobs – jobs that provide good pay, benefits, and growth opportunities. With a focus on equity, the GJC is expanding career opportunities for more Americans to reach their full potential and secure good paying jobs while producing a skilled workforce to ensure the United States is prepared to innovate, compete, and succeed in a 21st Century global economy.

Washington State submitted a plan—Washington Jobs Initiative (WJI)—and won a federal grant award to leverage the Career Connect Washington system and partners to train 5,000 Washingtonians and ensure that at least 3,000 are placed in good jobs by 2025. Through this competitive grant solicitation, ESD will issue subawards that invest in industry sector partnerships that provide training, embed paid work-based learning, and help Washingtonians get onto career pathways that lead to good jobs with family-sustaining wages.

The WJI is led by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), as federal grant recipient and System Lead Entity of the WJI Regional Workforce Training System. WSAC leads the WJI in partnership with Career Connect Washington and its coalition including, but not limited to, Washington STEM, the Washington State Labor Council, and the Washington State Office of Equity. The Employment Security Department (ESD) is a named subrecipient of WSAC on the GJC federal award. ESD serves as the grant administrator responsible for managing strategic grantmaking to Sectoral Partnerships.

WJI Impact & Goals

EDUCATION   *5,000 participants receive education and training for high-skill and high-wage careers*

JOBS   *3,000 participants placed into quality jobs in high-demand industries*

EQUITY   *Priority and focus will be given to individuals and communities kept furthest from opportunity, including but not limited to: women, black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC); LGBTQIA2S+ individuals; individuals with disabilities; low-income individuals; and other Washingtonians disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic*

CCW Sector Leaders & WJI Industry Sectors

CCW Sector Leaders, in direct partnership with Washington's employers, publish and periodically update industry sector strategies. These sector strategies provide detail on employer hiring needs and the programs which must be developed and implemented to meet those needs. The WJI targets the ten

high-demand and high-growth industry sectors represented by CCW Sector Leaders. ESD strongly advises all prospective applicants review these strategies, contact the appropriate CCW Sector Leader, and work closely with the appropriate CCW Sector Leader in the development of their Sectoral Partnership and grant application.

CAREER CONNECT WASHINGTON INDUSTRY SECTORS

1. *Advanced Manufacturing & Aerospace*
2. *Agriculture & Natural Resources*
3. *Clean Technology & Energy*
4. *Construction*
5. *Education*
6. *Finance*
7. *Healthcare*
8. *Information Technology & Cybersecurity*
9. *Life Science*
10. *Maritime*

Pro-Equity Anti-Racism Action Plan

Pursuant to [federal](#) and [state](#) executive order, all Sectoral Partnerships will develop and implement strategies to identify and address equity gaps, a Pro-equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) Action Plan.

Sectoral Partnership PEAR Action Plans must identify target populations to be served and the actions to be taken by the Sectoral Partnership to ensure those populations have equitable access to, and outcomes from, programs and services. The PEAR Action Plan must also implement a continuous five-step process consisting of the following elements:

1. SCOPE – Scope the reach, intensity, and duration of program(s) and services;
2. ANALYZE & PARTNER – Analyze equity conditions and partner with community;
3. CO-CREATE – Co-create and partner in decision-making (about design and implementation) with communities impacted by the proposed program(s) and services;
4. IMPLEMENT – Implement program(s) and services while engaging in real-time coordination with community decision makers; and
5. (RE)COMMIT – Assess performance and impact of program(s) and services with community decision makers to and reengage in this five-step process to continuously improve equitable access and outcomes.

The Washington State Office of Equity's [Pro-equity Anti-Racism Plan & Playbook,](#) provides information and technical assistance resources regarding PEAR work and a five-step Equity Impact Assessment Process. Applicants may review Office of Equity materials, as well as the supplementary resources listed below, when developing their own PEAR Action Plan.

- [Equity v. Equality: What's the Difference?](#)
- [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government](#)
- [(divorcing) White Supremacy Culture](#)
- [Racial Equity Impact Assessment](#)
- [Native Land Map](#)

- [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in Apprenticeships](#)

Sectoral Partnerships will be required to demonstrate their approach to addressing equity gaps for target populations, which may include implementation of these, and other, effective equity strategies.

Sectoral Partnership Competitive Grant Solicitation

Intent to Issue Multiple Subaward Agreements

ESD will issue approximately $15,500,000 of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in subawards to Backbone Organizations who will lead and manage Sectoral Partnerships.

ESD intends to issue multiple subawards. For planning purposes only, ESD estimates that initial subawards may range from $500,000 to $2,000,000. Subaward amounts may vary based on the merit of proposals, industry need and employer commitments, equitable access and outcomes for priority populations, and the capabilities of Sectoral Partnerships to expediently place participants into high-quality jobs.

ESD intends to reissue this solicitation, and recapture and reallocate funds, until all WJI objectives are met. Should ESD identify additional State or federal funds available for these purposes, ESD reserves the right to issue or amend agreements pursuant to this solicitation.

Periods of Performance & Expeditious Proposals

The GJC is designed to get Americans back to work and increase wage growth, as well as develop demand-driven systems that will continue to support Americans in securing and retaining quality jobs. In view of the purpose of the GJC and the goals established for Washington's workers and industries by the WJI, ESD may prioritize funding proposals which demonstrate the highest level of diligence in achieving training, job placement, and equity outcomes **expeditiously**.

The periods of performance of individual subawards may vary. For planning purposes only, ESD estimates periods of performance will begin in September or October of 2023 and will end when proposal outcomes are achieved but likely no later than September or October of 2025.

Sectoral Partnership

A Sectoral Partnership is a partnership of employers from the same industry who join with other strategic partners to train and place workers into high-quality jobs that employers need filled and intend to fill through the partnership. The strategic partners may include government, education (including community and technical colleges), training organizations, economic development organizations, workforce development organizations, unions, labor management partnerships, industry associations, employer-serving organizations, and community-based organizations. A Sectoral Partnership is focused on one specific industry sector, and one or more specific career connected learning pathways within that industry sector. Sectoral Partnerships are effective because: they are carefully built to include all necessary partners before workforce training solutions are designed; they cut across traditional economic development, workforce, education, and social services system silos; they are targeted to in-demand sectors with high-quality jobs; and they consider the economic realities of a regional industry in assessing employer demand and training needs.

As an example, Career Connect Washington Career Launch programs require a sector partnership between program builders, educators, and employers which are guided by regional networks and sector leads associated with the program's focus area.

Backbone Organization

A Backbone Organization is the lead entity of a Sectoral Partnership. The Backbone Organization is the lead applicant for this grant solicitation, submitting a single proposal on behalf of the Sectoral Partnership. If awarded, the Backbone Organization will be an ESD subrecipient of the US Commerce EDA federal award. They will serve as fiscal agent for all subaward funds, provide oversight and compliance with all EDA and Uniform Guidance requirements, ensure all performance objectives are met, and will conduct all required federal participant, narrative, and fiscal reporting.
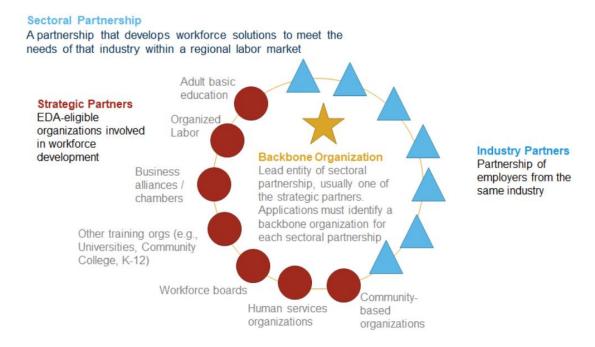
A Backbone Organization must be an EDA-eligible entity. ESD cannot, and will not, issue a subaward of federal EDA funds through this solicitation to a non-EDA-eligible entity. Thus, ESD will not entertain applications from entities that are not EDA-eligible entities; such proposals will be disqualified from consideration.

Characteristics of a Backbone Organization

Backbone Organization leads and convenes a single-sector sectoral partnership. An effective Backbone Organization will have some or all of the following characteristics:

- Convening power in the region;
- Committed support of the executive leadership from the region and buy-in from appropriate stakeholders depending on the affected region (e.g. a mayor or chief executive of a jurisdiction, chief executives of a major employers, heads of labor unions, presidents of two- and four-year institutions of higher education, etc.);
- Relationships and credibility with key players in the CCW ecosystem, including employers, governmental entities, program builders, regional networks, local workforce development boards, educational institutions, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and worker-serving organizations;
- A proven track record of coordinating and driving stakeholders to successful action;
- Connections to systems with strong fundraising capabilities;
- Dedicated full-time employee(s) with experience in federal grant reporting as well as federal financial oversight, monitoring, and administration activities; and
- Dedicated full-time employee(s) focused on regional workforce issues to support regional economic development.

The characteristics described above map to existing and emerging roles and relationships through the lens of the CCW system, such as those embodied in program builders, sector leaders, and regional network partners. Applicants may refer to this technical assistance document for more information on how WJI Sectoral Partnerships can map to current Career Connect Washington roles.

Allowable Activities: Two Models

There are two allowable models which Sectoral Partnerships may execute to meet employers' skilled workforce needs. A Sectoral Partnership may deploy one or both models.

Model 1: Program Implementation

The Program Implementation model is appropriate when **operating an existing career connected learning program** (e.g. Career Launch, Registered Apprenticeship) will effectively respond to training and hiring needs identified by employers.

Allowable Program Implementation activities include:

1. Securing employer commitment(s) to hire, based on identified skill needs for target occupations (included in CCW sector strategies);
2. Developing and implementing the PEAR Action Plan with community;
3. Conducting outreach to underserved and priority populations;
4. Recruiting priority populations to participate in the training program;
5. Providing skills training to participants;
6. Providing wrap-around supports to participants; and
7. Placing participants into good jobs.

Model 2: Program Design & Implementation

The Program Design & Implementation model is appropriate when **a new career connected learning program must first be built or scaled** before it can be implemented to meet employers' training and hiring needs. Program Design activities will be familiar to CCW system actors who are, or have worked with, CCW Program Builders.

Allowable Program Design & Implementation activities include:

1. Securing employer commitment(s) to hire, based on identified skill needs for target occupations (included in CCW sector strategies);
2. Designing training models and curricula, per employer needs and commitments;
3. Obtaining necessary program certifications from appropriate entities (e.g. Career Launch endorsement, apprenticeship registration);
4. Developing and implementing the PEAR Action Plan with community;
5. Conducting outreach to underserved and priority populations;
6. Recruiting priority populations to participate in the training program;
7. Providing skills training to participants;
8. Providing wrap-around supports to participants; and
9. Placing participants into good jobs.

Eligible Applicants, Subawardees, & Subcontractors

Eligible applicants are EDA-eligible entities for investment assistance which includes:

1. District Organization;
2. Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes;
3. State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions;
4. Institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or
5. Public or private non-profit organization or association, including labor unions acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State.

Backbone Organizations may include stakeholder organizations in their proposals, as appropriate. Co-applicants and subawardees (determined per 2 CFR 200.331) must also be EDA-eligible entities. Proposals may also include subcontractors selected in accordance with the Uniform Guidance Procurement Standards at 2 CFR 200.317 – 200.327.

Technical Assistance for Prospective Applicants

CCW statewide partners, including WSAC, ESD, and Washington STEM, are available to provide technical assistance to prospective applicants.

To receive the most current information and updates regarding the Washington Jobs Initiative, this solicitation, and technical assistance opportunities, ESD strongly encourages all prospective applicants to sign up to receive email updates from CCW and to regularly revisit both WSAC's Washington Jobs Initiative webpage and CCW's Apply for Funding page.

WSAC, ESD, and Washington STEM have also provided direct points of contact for applicant inquires and technical assistance requests in the Points of Contact for Inquiries section of this solicitation.

Solicitation Timeline & Activities

Applicants must follow the schedule of activities set forth below. This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of ESD. Any change(s) will be included as an amendment and published by ESD, WSAC, and CCW. Applicants are responsible for remaining up-to-date regarding any possible amendments and revisions to the timeline.

Table of Solicitation Timeline and Activities

Applicant Events and Due Dates	
Grant Solicitation Published	**June 2, 2023**
Technical Assistance Webinar (1 of 2) *Pathways to Good Jobs: Industry Sector Partnerships*	June 21, 2023, 1:00 – 2:30 Zoom Link Meeting ID: 944 9091 5324
WJI Grant Solicitation Conference (1 of 2) *Focus: Letters of Intent to Bid*	June 22, 2023, 1:30 – 3:00 Zoom Link Meeting ID: 856 8114 7354
Due Date: Letters of Intent to Bid	**June 30, 2023 – 11:59 PM Pacific**
Technical Assistance Webinar (2 of 2) *Pathways to Good Jobs: Wrap-around Support*	July 11, 2023, 1:00 – 2:30 Zoom Link Meeting ID: 939 9835 0465
WJI Grant Solicitation Conference (2 of 2) *Focus: Sectoral Partnership Proposals*	July 18, 2023, 3:00 – 4:30 Zoom Link Meeting ID: 832 8034 1443
Due Date: Sectoral Partnership Proposals	**July 31, 2023 – 11:59 PM Pacific**
Estimated Evaluation, Scoring, and Award Dates	
Evaluations of Written Proposals	August 1 – 18, 2023
Applicant Interviews (optional)	August 14 – 25, 2023
Applicant Development & Revisions (optional)	August 21 – 38, 2023
Final Evaluations	August 28 – 31, 2023
Award Announcements	September 1, 2023
Subaward Agreement Development & Execution	September 1 – 29, 2023
Sectoral Partnership Agreements Begin	September 18 – October 2, 2023

Letters of Intent to Bid

Letters of Intent to Bid will be due June 30, 2023, at 11:59 PM Pacific Time. ESD intends to use these letters to gather general information about the proposals in development statewide, so that targeted and useful support and technical assistance can be provided.

The Backbone Organization must submit a Letter of Intent to Bid on behalf of the Sector Partnership. The letter shall not exceed 1,000 words and must include the following:

1. Current name of the Sectoral Partnership and the proposed initiative;

2. Employer members of the Sectoral Partnership, their industry sector, target occupations, skilled workforce needs and hiring commitments (present and future);
3. Career connected learning programs to be designed and/or implemented;
4. Estimated federal funds to be requested;
5. Total participants to be served and total job placements;
6. Names and responsibilities of the government, education (including community and technical colleges), training organizations, economic development organizations, workforce development organizations, unions, labor management partnerships, industry associations, employer-serving organizations, and/or community-based organizations who are members of the Sectoral Partnership (present and future);
7. Summary of PEAR Action Plan and responsibilities across the Sectoral Partnership in serving priority populations;
8. Engagement with the CCW Sector Leader, industry sector strategy, and partnerships with other CCW system actors (including Regional Networks and Program Builders); and
9. Requests for guidance and technical assistance from the CCW coalition and awarding agencies.

Submitting a Letter of Intent to Bid does not obligate the applicant to submit a Sectoral Partnership Proposal, nor does it obligate ESD to award a grant to the applicant. If an entity submits a Letter of Intent to Bid and later decides not to submit an application, ESD asks that the entity notify ESD of its decision to not continue forward.

Provision of Technical Assistance by CCW and Awarding Agencies

ESD will review each Letter of Intent to Bid with WSAC and CCW coalition members. ESD and our partners will provide guidance and technical assistance requested. In addition, ESD and our partners may provide additional guidance to assist applicants in meeting the goals of the GJC and the WJI. Such guidance may include advisory feedback on programming and strategies, support in developing PEAR Action Plans, and direct connections to employers and CCW system actors.

ESD will host two WJI Grant Solicitation Conferences to provide general technical assistance to all system actors and prospective applicants regarding the GJC, the WJI, and terms of this grant solicitation. These conferences will be open to the public. Recordings and materials will be published online at the CCW website (careerconnectwa.org).

Sectoral Partnership Proposals

Sectoral Partnership Proposals will be due July 31, 2023, at 11:59 PM Pacific Time.

Proposals must comply with the terms set forth in the Proposal Requirements section of this solicitation. ESD reserves the right to determine any proposal which does not comply with these terms and conditions as non-responsive and therefore ineligible for further consideration.

Only proposals received from EDA-eligible Backbone Organizations, on or before the date and time specified, and determined responsive by ESD will be eligible for further consideration.

ESD may reissue this solicitation, and recapture and reallocate funds, until all WJI objectives are met. However, there is no timeline at present by which ESD will reissue this solicitation.

Evaluation, Scoring, and Awards

ESD has provided an estimated timeline for the evaluation, scoring, and awarding of responsive proposals, for planning purposes only. ESD may revise or otherwise deviate from this estimated timeline as it deems necessary to allow sufficient time for applicants, reviewers, partners, and awarding agencies to complete the activities outlined in this section.

Scoring criteria and procedures are described in the Proposal Requirements and Evaluation, Scoring, and Awards sections of this solicitation.

Proposal Requirements

Overview

This solicitation will result in subaward agreements by which Backbone Organizations will become jointly responsible, with WSAC and ESD, for the performance of the GJC federal award. Therefore, while this solicitation is competitive, it is also cooperative. Letters of Intent and Sectoral Partnership Proposals are stages of dialogue between Sectoral Partnerships and awarding agencies as we work to implement the goals of the WJI.

In the interest of achieving the goals of the GJI and the WJI and to ensure parity and equity across industry sectors, regions, and priority populations, ESD and WSAC reserve the right to work with applicants to revise submitted proposals and further develop strategies before any subawards are made. With this in mind, Sectoral Partnership Proposals should not be exhaustive; rather, they should provide ESD, WSAC, and CCW partners with simple and actionable information to drive further development and decision making.

Sectoral Partnership Proposals are comprised of four required sections: 1) the Backbone Organization Questionnaire; 2) the Project Narrative; 3) Participant Performance and Project Budget; and 4) Letters of Support. Only the Project Narrative, Performance and Budget, and Letters of Support are scored. The Backbone Organization Questionnaire is required but not scored, as it is simply intended to obtain directory information about the Backbone Organization as lead applicant.

Required Content

Sectoral Partnership Proposals are comprised of four required sections: 1) the Backbone Organization Profile; 2) the Project Narrative; 3) Participant Performance and Project Budget; and 4) Letters of Support. Only the Project Narrative, Performance and Budget, and Letters of Support are scored. The Backbone Organization Profile is required but not scored, as it is simply intended to obtain directory information about the Backbone Organization as lead applicant.

Section 1: Backbone Organization Profile

Applicants must complete the Backbone Organization Profile form and submit Section 1 as a single Word of PDF file using the naming convention "[Sectoral Partnership Name], Section 1, [Backbone Organization Name]".

[Click Here to Access and Download the Backbone Organization Profile Form](#)

Section 2: Project Narrative

Section 2: Project Narrative is required and scored. It consists of two subsections, each of which includes three prompts. Proposals must respond to both subsections and all prompts to be considered responsive. The subsections are set out below; named as Section 2A, Strategy Narrative and 2B Operational Narrative.

Applicants must submit Section 2 as a single Word or PDF file using the naming convention "[Sectoral Partnership Name], Section 2, [Backbone Organization Name]". Hyperlinks may be included in the single Project Narrative file. However, applicants should note that evaluators are only required to review the direct contents of the three prompts in both proposal sections.

The maximum length for the Section 2: Project Narrative proposal is five pages. The intent of this limitation is to restrict narrative proposals to only the information necessary for evaluators to understand, evaluate, and discuss proposals with applicants. This is a firm requirement and is based on a standard one-inch page margins with a font size consistent to Times New Roman 12. Section 2 proposals which exceed the stated five-page limit, or the page formatting requirements, will be determined non-responsive and disqualified from further consideration.

Applicants are required to isolate each subsection and prompt in their Section 2: Project Narrative proposal. The formatting should make it clear to ESD staff and evaluators where each subsection and each prompts begins and ends.

Section 2.A: Strategy Narrative

The Section 2.A: Strategy Narrative subsection includes three prompts. Applicants are required to isolate this subsection and their response to each prompt in their Section 2: Project Narrative proposal document.

1. Describe the Sectoral Partnership and how it will respond to industry demand. Include specific employer hiring commitments and skill needs for occupations in the sector.
2. Describe the Sectoral Partnership's PEAR Action Plan. How will the Sectoral Partnership achieve equitable access and outcomes for underserved populations in the region(s)?
3. List and describe each training program separately and identify which allowable activity models apply to each (i.e. Implementation vs Design & Implementation). How will federal funds be directed toward job creation and job placement for each program?

Section 2.B: Operations Narrative

The Section 2.B: Operations Narrative includes three prompts. Applicants are required to isolate this subsection and their response to each prompt in their Section 2: Project Narrative proposal document.

1. Describe the capabilities of the EDA-eligible Backbone Organization to serve as the federal fiscal agent, grant subrecipient, and entity responsible for oversight and reporting. How will the Backbone Organization work with Training Providers, community-based organizations, and other Sectoral Partnership members to ensure federal requirements are met?
2. Describe the governance and leadership structure of the Sectoral Partnership. How will the Backbone Organization leverage its convening power in the region to convene an employer-led partnership that delivers job creation and job placement outcomes?

3. Describe the roles and responsibilities of Training Providers, community-based organizations, employers, and other Sectoral Partnership members in implementing the PEAR Action Plan. How will employers and partners work together to achieve equitable outcomes for priority populations?

NOTE: Applicants may choose to include a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or similar agreement as an attachment to the Sectoral Partnership Proposal. Provision of this supporting documentation is optional. Evaluators may review such an agreement to form a more complete understanding of the operational roles and capabilities of the Sectoral Partnership.

Section 3: Participant Performance and Project Budget

The Section 3: Participant Performance and Project Budget is required and scored. It must include a line-item budget, budget narrative, projected quarterly expenditures, and proposed participant outcomes by training program and quarter. Quarterly participant performance targets must include recruitments by target population, training program enrollments, training program completions, participants receiving wrap-around supports, and job placements for each proposed program.

In addition to the Participant Performance and Project Budget, Backbone Organizations must submit to ESD indirect cost rate information as part of their Sectoral Partnership proposal. Such documentation may include the current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement with the designated federal cognizant agency for indirect costs, a cost allocation plan negotiated with ESD, or an attestation to use a de minimis indirect cost rate (not to exceed 10%).

ESD has prepared a Participant Performance and Project Budget template which applicants may use when submitting proposals. Applicants may revise this template as needed, but must include the required contents previously described (i.e. a line-item budget, budget narrative, projected quarterly expenditures, and proposed participant outcomes by training program and quarter).

[Click Here to Access and Download the Budget & Performance Template](#)

Applicants must submit Section 3 as a single Excel or PDF file using the naming convention "[Sectoral Partnership Name], Section 3, [Backbone Organization Name]".

Section 4: Letters of Support

Section 4: Letters of Support is required and scored. Letters will not be scored individually; they will be reviewed and scored as a collective demonstration of regional support necessary to deliver required outcomes.

Applicants are required to submit **no more than five letters of support**.

Letters may be written and submitted jointly to demonstrate the collective support of an aligned group of entities, such as businesses or community-based organizations. Named subrecipients and parties to a Sectoral Partnership MOU (if such an MOU exists) do not need to submit letters of support.

Applicants may wish to prioritize letters which demonstrate employer hiring commitments, vital community leadership, and commitments necessary to achieving the goals of the PEAR Action Plan.

Valid letters of support must include: 1) name of the business or entity; 2) address of the business or entity; 3) date of letter; 4) name of the signatory; 5) title of the signatory; and 6) contact information of the signatory. Information contained on the entity's letterhead does not need to be repeated.

Applicants must submit Section 4 as a single PDF file using the naming convention "[Sectoral Partnership Name], Section 4, [Backbone Organization Name]".

Requirements for Electronic Submission of Proposals

Proposals must be submitted electronically by email to ESDGPWashingtonJobsInitiative@esd.wa.gov using the subject line "Proposal: [Sectoral Partnership Name], [Backbone Organization Name]".

Checklist of Proposal Submission Requirements

In summary, a complete and responsive application must be emailed to ESDGPWashingtonJobsInitiative@esd.wa.gov on or before 11:59 PM Pacific time on Monday, July 31st, 2023 with each of the following five documents attached:

1. The Section 1: Backbone Organization Profile, attached as a single Word of PDF file using the naming convention "[Sectoral Partnership Name], Section 1, [Backbone Organization Name]";
2. The Section 2: Project Narrative (with separate and isolated responses to each subsection and prompt) attached as a single Word of PDF file using the naming convention "[Sectoral Partnership Name], Section 2, [Backbone Organization Name]";
3. The Section 3: Participant Performance and Project Budget (which includes a line-item budget, budget narrative, projected quarterly expenditures, and proposed participant outcomes by training program and quarter) attached as a single Excel of PDF file using the naming convention "[Sectoral Partnership Name], Section 3, [Backbone Organization Name]";
4. The Section 4: Letters of Support (which includes no more than five letters prioritized to demonstrate the commitments of employers, community leadership, and PEAR Action Plan partners) attached as a single PDF file using the naming convention "[Sectoral Partnership Name], Section 4, [Backbone Organization Name]"; and
5. The indirect cost rate information of the Backbone Organization (which may include the current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement with the designated federal cognizant agency for indirect costs, a cost allocation plan negotiated with ESD, or an attestation to use a de minimis indirect cost rate).

Also, as noted in the Section 2.B description above, Backbone Organizations may attach an MOU jointly developed and executed by the members of the Sectoral Partnership, if such an agreement exists. This is attachment is optional and may be reviewed by evaluators.

Evaluation, Scoring, and Awards

Procedures for Identifying Responsive Applications for Evaluation

ESD personnel will perform an initial screening of all applications to determine if each application is complete and responsive, per the terms and conditions of this solicitation. Only those determined responsive will be considered. ESD staff may also consider an application to be non-responsive if it is determined that the applicant or proposal does not substantively reflect the stated purposes, goals, and intents of the APRA, GJC, WJI, or CCW coalition. Any such determinations may be made to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state law and coherence of statewide economic and workforce

development policy. Applicants will be notified by ESD in writing if their application is determined to be non-responsive.

All responsive applications will be forwarded to a Review Committee for evaluation. Prior to forwarding applications for evaluation, ESD reserves the right to request additional clarifying information from applicants. Such information requests will be made by email and will include specific response timelines.

Evaluation Committee

ESD will convene and staff an evaluation committee to be chaired by the WSAC. The committee will include representatives of Washington employers, organized labor, and other members of the statewide CCW coalition.

Evaluation committee members will individually score each proposal on merit. The committee may then caucus to discuss the merits of all responsive proposals. The evaluation committee may invite applicants, ESD staff, CCW Sector Leaders, and other subject matter experts to provide additional information deemed necessary to inform decision making. This information may be provided by written questions and answers, oral presentations, or as remarks during the committee's caucus.

To ensure the objectives of the GJC and WJI are met, the evaluation committee may consider parity of investments across industry sectors, equity for underserved populations and regions, and the quality of training and job opportunities (e.g. wages, benefits, credentials), in addition to the individual merits of proposals. Likewise, as federal grant recipient and grant administrator, respectively, WSAC and ESD reserve the right to revise, negotiate, and reassign any subawards recommended for funding by the evaluation committee.

Priority for Career Launch, Registered Apprenticeship, and Placement-ready Programs Responsive to Industry Demand

As previously stated, the GJC is designed to get Americans back to work and increase wage growth, as well as develop demand-driven systems that will continue to support Americans in securing and retaining quality jobs. In view of the purpose of the GJC and the goals established for Washington's workers and industries by the WJI, ESD may prioritize funding proposals which demonstrate the highest level of diligence in achieving training, job placement, and equity outcomes **expeditiously**.

The evaluation committee, WSAC, and ESD reserve the right to prioritize federal funds for the implementation of existing Career Launch, Registered Apprenticeship, and other placement-ready programs which are responsive to employer skill demands and hiring commitments.

Rights to Cooperative Revision and Development of Proposals

To ensure the objectives of the GJC and WJI are met, ESD, WSAC, and the CCW coalition partners may work directly with applicants to revise and further develop Sectoral Partnership strategies and proposals. As previously stated, such engagement may include advisory feedback on programming and strategies, support in developing PEAR Action Plans, and direct connections to employers and CCW system actors.

Backbone Organizations should plan to respond to regular communications from ESD, WSAC, and CCW staff throughout the solicitation review period. Such communications may seek clarification on proposal element, include invitations to present or discuss proposals, or provide technical assistance and guidance to improve the impact and viability of proposals. Backbone Organizations which are slow to respond to

communications or reluctant to collaboratively improve their strategies are unlikely to receive subawards.

Considerations in the Evaluation of Proposals

In addition to the considerations previously described, the evaluation committee may consider the following when evaluating Sectoral Partnership proposals.

Backbone Organization

- Is there a clear and cogent rationale for the selection of Backbone Organization and does this entity have the capability to fulfill its role?
- Is the Backbone Organization a trusted, credible, objective, and knowledgeable convener with the capability to lead with industry players?
- Do the letters of support demonstrate real knowledge and commitments from employers and other partners?

Strategic Goals

- Are the strategies and goals of the Sectoral Partnership demonstrably aligned with the needs of industry?
- Does the proposal clearly identify how the PEAR Action Plan will address racial and other equity gaps?
- Does the proposal provide a clear definition the industry and region(s) to be served, and describe how and why it has been identified?
- Does the Sectoral Partnership include BIPOC-led community organizations or other partners that have trusted relationships with the priority populations and communities?
- Is sufficient data or employer input provided to demonstrate that federal investments in the target industry sector and region will yield high-quality job placements for individuals kept furthest from opportunity?
- Are employer leaders in the Sectoral Partnership closely linked by a common product or service, workforce skills, similar technologies, or other economic ties?

Assessment of Critical Workforce and Skill Needs

- Are the strategies and goals of the Sectoral Partnership consistent with the gaps and opportunities identified by the CCW Sector Leader in the industry sector strategy?
- Are training programs targeting pathways to middle- and high-skill occupations that pay living wages?
- Are employers leading the Sectoral Partnership and making firm hiring commitments?

Designing and Implementing Programs

- Do program solutions directly meet the stated needs of industry employers and hiring commitments made?
- If new programs are to be built, are the design and implementation timelines consistent with employers' hiring needs?
- Does the proposal describe effective program co-creation with impacted communities?
- Do programs have clear and cohesive strategy for outreach, recruitment, enrollment, wrap-around supports, and job placements for priority populations?

- Does the proposal describe the barriers priority populations face? How are wrap-around supports provided to mitigate these barriers and promote equitable access and outcomes?

Organizational, Administrative and Fiscal Capacity
- Does the Backbone Organization demonstrate the capability to oversee federal funds, effectively manage the project, and comply with all federal reporting requirements?
- Does the proposal include a well-thought out and intentional governance structure and action steps outlining how the Sectoral Partnership is going to work collaboratively?

Budget and Budget Narrative
- Are the expenses listed in the budget reasonable, allowable, and reflective of the proposal?
- (For consideration, not required) Does the proposal include leveraged resources and/or in-kind contributions from employer partners or other members of the Sectoral Partnership?

Notification of Awards
ESD, WSAC, and CCW partners will announce all subawards issued per this solicitation. Notification will be posted on CCW and WSAC websites. ESD and our WJI partners may also issue press releases describing Sectoral Partnerships and the WJI.

Debrief Conferences, Records Disclosures, & Protests
Debrief for Unsuccessful Applicants
Applicants who submitted a proposal and were not selected will be given the opportunity for a debrief conference with ESD staff. ESD must receive the request for a debrief conference within five (5) business days after the notification of awards is published. ESD will make every effort to schedule the debrief conference promptly.

Discussion will be limited to the merits of the applicant's proposal, including the factors considered in the evaluation of that proposal. Comparisons between proposals or evaluations of the other proposals will not be allowed. Debrief conferences may be conducted by video conference or on over telephone and may be scheduled for a maximum of thirty minutes.

Records Disclosures
Applicants may request copies of solicitation and evaluation documents or may inspect solicitation and evaluation documents in order to decide the efficacy of making a protest. Such a request must be made as a public records request sent to the Public Records Office for ESD, with an additional copy of the request should also be sent to ESDGPWashingtonJobsInitiative@esd.wa.gov. ESD will respond to provide the applicant with notice on when they should expect to receive the documents.

Protests
Applicants protesting this solicitation shall follow the procedures described herein. Protests that do not follow these procedures shall not be considered. This protest procedure constitutes the sole administrative remedy available to an applicant under this solicitation. ESD will not accept any protest before the announcement of the award subrecipients.

A protest may be made based only on the following grounds:

1. A matter of bias, discrimination, or conflict of interest on the part of an evaluator;

2. Errors in computing scores; or
3. Non-compliance with the procedures established in this solicitation document.

NOTE: By their nature, WJI subawards are intended to provide equitable impact and benefit across Washington. Accordingly, final awards and selections are best developed under the discretion of ESD in consultation with WSAC and the CCW coalition. Consequently, there may be instances where the higher, or highest, scoring proposals are not selected for funding. Because such equitable impact and benefit is based on subjective determinations for the best interests of Washington, it is not grounds for a protest.

Protests not based on these grounds will not be considered. Protests will be rejected as without merit if they address issues such as: 1) An evaluator's professional judgment on the quality of a proposal, or 2) ESD's assessment of its own needs or requirements.

This protest procedure is only available to applicants who submitted a proposal to this solicitation and who have participated in a debrief conference. ESD must receive a protest within five (5) business days of the debrief conference.

Protests must be in writing, must be signed by the applicant, and must be received by ESD at the address below within five (5) business days after the debriefing conference. Protests may be submitted by email.

All protests shall be emailed to ESD as follows:

Email address: ESDGPWashingtonJobsInitiative@esd.wa.gov

Subject line: Sectoral Partnership Grant Solicitation - Protest by [Applicant Name].

Upon ESD's receipt of a protest, a review and investigation will be conducted by ESD Director of Contracts or their assignee, who had no involvement in the evaluation and award process. The reviewer will conduct an objective review of the protest, based on the contents of the written protest and the solicitation and any amendments, the proposals, all documents showing evaluation and scoring of the proposals record and any other pertinent information and issue a decision within ten (10) business days of receipt of the protest, unless additional time is needed. If additional time is needed, the protesting applicant will be notified of the delay.

In the event a protest may affect the interest of another applicant that submitted a proposal, such applicants will be given an opportunity to submit its views and any relevant information on the protest to the Contract's Director.

ESD will make a final determination on the protest; per its findings, ESD will:

- Find the Protest lacking in merit and uphold ESD's action;
- Find only technical or harmless errors in ESD's process and determine ESD to be in substantial compliance and reject the protest; or
- Find merit in the protest and provide ESD options which may include:
  - That ESD correct the errors and re-evaluate all proposals;
  - That ESD reissue the solicitation and begin a new process; or
  - Other courses of action as deemed appropriate by ESD.

Resulting Subaward Agreements

Resulting subaward agreements will establish the terms and conditions by which the Backbone Organization will serve as an ESD subrecipient of the US Commerce EDA GJC federal award. The agreement will outline the Backbone Organization's roles and responsibilities as the subrecipient and lead entity, pursuant to federal requirements. This will include, but is not limited to, federal fiscal agent functions, regional oversight and management, and federal project reporting (participant, narrative, and fiscal). If ESD and the awarded subrecipient cannot fully agree on contract terms, ESD has the right to rescind the award and re-award to another applicant.

In addition to roles and responsibilities as a federal subrecipient, the resulting subaward will articulate the role of the Backbone Organization as the leader and convener of the Sectoral Partnership. Agreements will describe the strategies and deliverables (as outlined in funded proposals), set expectations to PEAR Actions Plans, set common standards for communications and engagement as a CCW partner and system actor, include detailed budgets and performance targets, and identify the supports and technical assistance resources made available by federal and state partners to ensure the Backbone Organization and Sectoral Partnership are successful.

Statements of Work

Statements of Work will include both standard and unique elements. Standard elements will include common expectations of all Backbone Organizations and Sectoral Partnerships which align with federal guidance and expectations promulgated by US Commerce. In addition, standard elements will include communication and branding standards, participation in communities of practice, and expectations for engagement with other CCW grant recipients. Unique Statement of Work elements will be developed in partnership with an assigned ESD grant manager and based on the distinct strategies described in each applicant's proposal.

EDA Workforce Data Collection Instrument

US Commerce has published GJC data collection and reporting requirements. The EDA Workforce Data Collection Instrument includes the data elements which must be collected and reported by each Backbone Organization to WSAC on a quarterly basis. These data include Sectoral Partnership reporting, Training Provider reporting on each operational program, participant-level data including Personally Identifiable Information (PII), and data regarding the provision of wrap-around supports to participants.

The EDA Workforce Data Collection Instrument and current federal guidance is incorporated by reference into this solicitation and is available online at the links provided below.

> Click Here to Access the EDA Workforce Data Collection Instrument
>
> Click Here to Access the GJC – EDA Workforce Data Collection Instrument – Terms and Definitions

Backbone Organizations must have systems and processes to receive, maintain, transmit, and dispose of PII collected for the purposes of this federal grant which comply with applicable federal guidelines and established best practices.

WSAC will procure for, and implement, a secure digital portal for Backbone Organizations to upload quarterly report data. More information on this portal will be promulgated by WSAC.

Invoicing and Financial Reporting

WJI federal funds will be disbursed on an advance basis every month. Using forms provided by ESD, subrecipients will submit to ESD Specialized Accounting: 1) invoices for actual expenditures incurred in the prior month which include accounting documentation from the subrecipient's accounting system of record; 2) advance estimates for the future month; and 3) cost narratives. These invoicing and financial reporting documents will be delivered by subrecipients to ESD by the 15th of every month during the period of performance.

ESD Monitoring and Oversight

ESD's Workforce Monitoring Unit will conduct required administrative, fiscal, and programmatic monitoring of all ESD subrecipients. Such monitoring may include compliance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; US Commerce EDA program and fiscal requirements; case-file reviews of participant records; and reviews of project expenditures. Subrecipients will grant ESD Workforce Monitoring full and expedient access to all relevant records to facilitate monitoring reviews. Monitoring activities may be conducted virtually, on-site where participant services are provided, and utilizing hybrid or asynchronous approaches.

ESD Workforce Monitoring Unit will promulgate all monitoring tools and standards in advance of scheduling monitoring activities.

Equity Audits

ESD, WSAC, and the CCW partners may conduct an equity audit of each WJI subrecipient. This equity audit may include but not be limited to: priority and provision of services to focus populations; the provision of wrap-around supports to participants; engagement and partnership with community-based organizations; equitable hiring commitments of employer champions; and co-creation and decision making with community. In all WJI subawards, ESD will reserve full authority to pursue corrective actions with subrecipients who have not fully implemented their PEAR Action Plan. Such corrective actions may include the recapture of federal funds (in full or in part) and the termination of the subaward for cause.

Audit Requirements

Single or program-specific audits shall be performed in accordance with the requirements contained in the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200, Subpart F, Audit Requirements). Any non-federal entity (i.e. non-profit organizations, including non-profit institutions of higher education and hospitals, States, local governments, and Indian Tribes) that expends federal awards of $750,000 or more in the (sub)recipient's fiscal year to conduct a single or program-specific audit in accordance with the requirements set out in the Uniform Guidance.

Third-party Evaluation

As a condition of a subaward, subrecipients may be required to participate in an EDA-funded third-party evaluation or a third-party evaluation undertaken by WSAC, ESD, and the CCW coalition. The evaluation may include an implementation assessment across EDA grantees and Sectoral Partnerships, an impact and/or outcome analysis of all or selected sites/components within or across partners, and/or a benefit/cost analysis or assessment of return on investment. Conducting an impact analysis could involve random assignment (which involves random assignment of eligible participants into a treatment group that would receive/have received program services or into control group(s) that would not/has not

received program services or program services). EDA or ESD may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation. Per the terms of resulting subawards, subrecipients must: (1) make records available to an evaluation contractor or contractors on participants, employers, and funding; (2) provide access to program operating personnel, participants, and operational and financial records, and any other relevant documents to calculate program costs and benefits; and (3) in the case of an impact analysis, facilitate the assignment of participants to program services, including the possible increased recruitment of potential participants; and (4) follow evaluation procedures as specified by the evaluation contractor(s).

Inquiries and Technical Assistance Requests

Prospective applicants may contact ESD with general questions and requests for technical assistance via email (ESDGPWashingtonJobsInitiative@esd.wa.gov). ESD staff will review email requests and may route to a WJI partner best positioned to respond, such as WSAC and Washington STEM.