SECTION 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Purpose

- This grant supports efforts led by State Workforce Development Boards—in partnership with groups of employers, industry organizations, and education/training—to identify workplace competencies, and develop curriculum and assessments that help workers gain and demonstrate those competencies.
  - This is unlike traditional degree and certificate programs that are designed by educators.
- The grant establishes a credentialing system that employers will use to make hiring and promotion decisions.
- The grant is designed to:
  - Create new education and training opportunities designed to help dislocated workers quickly return to employment.
  - Expand postsecondary options and opportunities.
  - Support entrepreneurship in stabilizing the local economy and IHEs, thus restoring pre-pandemic economic growth.

Approach

- Applicants are encouraged to review existing occupational frameworks and incorporate them as possible.
  - The program does not seek to fund the development of new occupational frameworks where existing frameworks endorsed by employers or industry sectors already exist.

Eligible applicants

- State Workforce Boards
  - Partnerships encouraged but not required with business and trade organizations, Standards Recognition Entities (SREs), Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), third-party intermediaries who help employers design and implement work-based learning programs, and other education and training providers.
- State Workforce Boards, at the governor’s discretion, will award sub-grants to business organizations, trade associations, CE providers, employer-based educational organizations, labor organizations, education and training organizations and IHEs. The purpose is to help sub-grantees (and/or):
Create and expand innovative education and training opportunities through short-term educational programs and career pathways that are responsive to rapidly changing economic conditions.

Provide new opportunities for education providers to help more individuals meet employer needs and workforce demands.

Help entrepreneurs succeed in rebuilding their businesses and finding new opportunities for growth.

**Funding, length of project**
- $5M to $20 M range, with an estimated average size of $15M.
- 8 TO 9 awards estimated
- Up to 36 months
- No cost sharing required.

**SECTION 2. ABSOLUTE AND COMPETITIVE PRIORITIES**

- **Absolute Priority 1:** Projects focus on: one of the following (1a, 1b):
  - **1a.** Creating, developing, implementing, replicating, or taking to scale short-term education programs and training courses and programs, and/or career pathways programs, including those focused on facilitating and strengthening entrepreneurship and small business ownership. The proposed project must focus on one or more of the following activities:
    - Helping displaced workers return to gainful employment.
    - Helping new workers enter jobs within in-demand industry sectors or occupations (as identified at the national, state, or local level).
    - Transitioning under-employed workers to new fields.
    - Assisting small business owners gain the skills needed to create new businesses or grow current businesses and become more resilient.
  - **1b.** Funding the creation, development, implementation, replication, or scaling of industry sector-based education and training models and programs that (all):
    - Are initiated and organized by employer stakeholders, which may include business leaders, trade associations, professional societies, or community business organizations.
    - May partner with IHEs or other postsecondary education and training providers.
    - May include the engagement of third-party intermediaries, which are organizations that help bridge the gap between employers and educational institutions to the benefits of students.
  - Projects under 1a and 1b may include apprenticeships and other work-based learning programs and must provide individuals the opportunity to earn badges, certifications, micro-credentials, licenses, or other credentials that employers agree will contribute to qualifying a candidate for employment or promotion in an in-demand industry sector/occupation.
    - Career pathways programs must also enable participants who have not already completed a high-school diploma or equivalent to earn such.
  - States will develop mechanisms—e.g., creating competency exams and evaluations; developing tracking systems to monitor participant outcomes; and administering employer satisfaction surveys—to assure the quality of short-term programs and engage business leaders in their development, implementation, and assessment.
Under Absolute Priority 1, there are two Competitive Preference Priorities:

- **Competitive Preference Priority** (up to 5 points) – **Distance Education**
  - Proposed program includes didactic education that will be principally delivered through distance education.

- **Competitive Preference Priority** (up to 3 points) – **Serving Lifelong Learners in Distressed Communities**
  - The extent to which the proposed project focuses on unique needs of individuals who reside in rural communities or Opportunity Zones, and that is designed to enable economic growth and development in these regions.
    - Examples are focusing primarily on in-demand jobs available to individuals in these communities; aligning education and job training with strategic planning goals for economic development in the community; or meeting the unique needs of individuals who may have challenges related to transportation, childcare, or limitations from technology.

Absolute Priority 2: Enable states to expand or create small business incubators that offer education and training, mentorship, as well as shared facilities and resources that will help small business recover and grow, and new entrepreneurs thrive.

- Incubators provide short-term educational and training programs or continuing education courses to:
  - Help entrepreneurs establish and grow their businesses.
  - Comply with or exceed industry standards.
  - Meet State and occupational health, safety, and licensure requirements.

- Small business incubators provide mentorship from faculty and other business professionals, and typically offer shared space, services, staffing, and equipment to help small businesses get started and grow.

- Small business incubators create new opportunities for HEs to expand their offerings and create new revenue streams so institutions can become entrepreneurial when declining enrollments and the pandemic result in longer-term underutilization of campus facilities.
  - In this regard, the funds assist in the stabilization of institutions and the local economy.

- State Workforce Boards will make sub-grants available to colleges and universities and/or college or university-affiliated entities to support development or expansion of campus-based or campus affiliated small business incubator programs and facilities.

- The goal of this priority is to improve the sustainability of IHEs, expand learning opportunities in the state, support the continued employment of faculty and staff, and create new opportunities for entrepreneurs and small business owners to grow, become more resilient, and thrive.

Under Absolute Priority 2, there is one Competitive Preference Priority (0 to 3 points) – **Serving Entrepreneurs and Businesses in Distressed Communities**.

- Locate the business incubator in off-campus business, with at least one minority-serving IHE or affiliate that is eligible to receive assistance under sections 316 through 320 of part A of Title III, under part B of Title III, or under Title V of the Higher Education Act of 1965.
- Locate the IHE-affiliated business incubator in a rural community or Opportunity Zone to support the business development goals of those communities.
**Acceptable use of grant funds**

- Under Absolute Priority 1, grant funds can be used to:
  - Develop and implement short-term education and training programs and/or career pathways programs.
  - Hire qualified instructors.
  - Procure necessary equipment and supplies.
  - Subsidize tuition and fees for individuals enrolled in these or existing programs so they can quickly gain entry to the workforce or become entrepreneurs without taking on debt.
  - Provide student uniforms, protective gear, student support services, and transportation vouchers.
  - Childcare support for student-parents enrolled in programs developed under this grant.

- Under Absolute Priority 2, grant funds can be used to:
  - Through sub-grants and contracts, grants may support state higher-education agencies, IHEs, and other postsecondary and continuing education and training providers.
  - Also eligible for support are non-traditional educational providers including those engaged in apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities, e.g.,
    - Training providers under WIOA title 1 programs, National Apprenticeship sponsors, and Standards Recognition Entities.

**SECTION 3. APPLICATION AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

**Application Requirements**

- Include a description of the State’s coronavirus burden.
  - Demonstrate significance of the impact of COVID-19 on students, employers, small businesses, and economic development in the State.
  - Include additional data including other public health measures such as COVID-19 deaths per capita, or other relevant education, labor, or demographic data.
- Include a description appropriate to Absolute Priority 1 or 2.
  - List organizations/entities that will be included as partners in developing and implementing planned activities.
  - Include implementation plan and timeline for key grant activities.
  - Include plan for data collection including estimated number of students, businesses, and IHEs if applicable that we will serve with grant funds.
  - List other sources of federal funds.
- Provide an analysis of State assets and collaborative efforts to respond to economic impacts of COVID-19 and need for short-term education programs as defined by the priorities
  - List supports already provided from federal and non-federal sources.
- Describe the steps the State is taking to identify and address the State’s immediate needs, referring to Absolute Priority 1a, Absolute Priority 1b, or Absolute Priority 2
  - For Absolute Priority 1a:
    - How the State is meeting the education, support, and mentorship needs of individuals who seek career preparation or advancement through short-term educational programs and career pathways programs.
    - Which short-term educational programs or career pathways programs will be the focus of the grant activities.
- Which occupations or occupational clusters will be the focus of the grant activities.
  - For Absolute Priority 1b:
    - How the State will identify the industry sectors and sector leaders developing and implementing sector-based education, training, and credentialing programs.
    - Prior experience the State has in leading sector-based education and training activities, including the development of sector-based apprenticeship programs.
    - How the State will recruit businesses and employers that will participate and that hire and promote employees based on credentials earned through industry sector-based education and training programs.
    - Which educational providers—e.g., IHEs or other postsecondary education and training providers—have experience working with industry leaders or employers to develop or provide competency-based education programs; and which providers have committed to the proposed project.
  - For Absolute Priority 2:
    - How the State is currently providing education, training, and support to entrepreneurs and small business owners.
    - How the State will build upon prior experiences with small business incubators or identify which kinds of small businesses it can best serve through incubators affiliated with one or more IHEs.
    - How the State will identify institutional partners, geographic locations, or industry sectors to be served by one or more incubators developed in this grant.
    - Describe specialized assistance, facilities, shared equipment, and other shared resources that will be provided by the proposed small business incubator.
    - Other sources of funding or continuing support that will enable the incubator to continue after the grant.
  - Describe how applicant will recruit unemployed or dislocated workers; workers seeking job transition or advancement; entrepreneurs; small business owners or other participants who would benefit.
    - How we will determine participation if demand exceeds supply.

**Program Requirements**

- Must make all information about credentials and competencies achieved as a result of funding publicly accessible through the use of linked open data formats that support full transparency and interoperability.
  - Information must include industry sector for/by which the credential was developed; who was involved in the development; the competencies/skills assessed in awarding the credential; the type of assessment used verify an individual’s eligibility to be awarded the credential; and the oversight body for awarding credentials.
**SECTION 4: APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

**Notice of Intent to Apply**
- Send email to [ESF-RWP@ed.gov](mailto:ESF-RWP@ed.gov) with “Intent to Apply” in subject line.

**Grant Guidelines**
- 25 pages
- Double spaced
- 12 point, Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Ariel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Highest Coronavirus Burden (Up to 40 points)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Check Appendix for determining burden, 0 to 20 points. NM places in the 61\textsuperscript{st} to 80\textsuperscript{th} percentile so <strong>NM RECEIVES 16 POINTS</strong>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Extent to which applicant has a high coronavirus burden based on indicators and information factors that demonstrate the significance of the impact on students, parents, and schools in the State. Description may include additional data including other public health measures such as deaths per capita or other relevant education, labor, or demographic data (20 points)</td>
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<th>B. Quality of Project Services and Quality of the Project Design (up to 35 points)</th>
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<td>• Quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of traditionally under-represented groups based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (5 points).</td>
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<td>• Exceptional approach to the absolute priority and a detailed project plan for addressing the priority (10 points).</td>
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<td>• Specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed, including nature and magnitude of the gaps or weaknesses (10 points).</td>
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<td>• Likelihood services will expand access to remote learning options and lead to improvements in student outcomes (AP 1); or services will increase the number and success of small businesses (AP2). (5 points)</td>
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<td>• Services proposed reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices (5 points).</td>
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<th>C. Quality of the Management Plan (up to 25 points)</th>
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<td>• Adequacy of plan to achieve objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (5 points).</td>
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<td>• Budget is adequate to support the project (5 points).</td>
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<td>• Costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the project (5 points).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons served and the anticipated results and benefits (10 points).</td>
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## Pricing

Complete and Deliver the ESF-RWP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development and Process around the ESF-RWP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delivery of Grant</td>
<td>$27,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>½ cost up front and ½ upon delivery</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 27,500</strong></td>
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