

**Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development Initiative
Generation III Solicitation
Frequently Asked Questions Volume II**

Regionalism:

Question: Is the size of the region geographically as important as the impact in density of labor market involvement or participation?

Answer: Applications will be required to define and explain the region. It will be judged and scored on its merits.

Question: Is there a minimum population level for being considered a region?

Answer: No.

Question: Does the region need to be contiguous geographically?

Answer: ETA does not require counties within WIRED regions to be contiguous; however, regions intending to include an incongruous group of counties must display strong justification for why it would be acceptable.

High-Growth Industries/Sectors

Question: How many sectors are too few or too many?

Answer: ETA does not require a specific number.

It is up to the region to define itself and the regional strategies. In Generation 1, there are a number of approaches. Look carefully at the data in the region and describe the region's economy and industries that are growing or should be targeted for growth.

Question: Is it possible to have a statewide proposal for a high growth sector that has pockets of growth throughout the State?

Answer: It isn't prohibited. ETA's view is that the primary entity for economic activity is at the regional level. If a region chooses to submit a full state

application, we would strongly encourage you to do a very good job of defining why.

Question: If a proposal focuses on one broad sector -- i.e. life sciences -- do you want labor market data in the 2nd section of the proposal on other sectors in the region or just that sector and aggregate?

Answer: ETA's intention is to ensure the regional economies are made up of more than one sector. A region can identify one or two that will receive the bulk of that attention, but not the only sectors that a region would be focusing on.

Question: If a regional strategy focuses on one sector are they no longer viable?

Answer: There isn't a prohibition against focusing on a single industry. WIRED is focused on creating an economic transformation in regions, which typically doesn't happen around one industry. A region is welcome to make a compelling case for how a single industry will affect economic and systematic transformation.

Question: If the industry cluster selected is one that requires educational preparation at a minimum of a BA level some of the outcomes will be post award. How should we benchmark persons trained in that regard?

Answer: ETA will assess the outcomes around common measures. If part of the strategy goes beyond the award date, the region should explain what the support of this outcome will be. Any design measures outside of common measures will be captured in ETA's evaluation as much as possible.

Question: Is the region defined as the regional economy or the region defined by growth industries targeted by the grant?

Answer: Define your region, justify it and ETA will score it on its merits.

The strategies expected for a region and the definition should be connected. They need to support one another.

Question: Does the region define the High Growth industries or does ETA?

Answer: The region should define it. The region should provide data to support the identification of an industry as high growth and then discuss the strategies that will support the selected industries.

Multi-State Proposals:

Question: If a governor signs off on a neighboring state's application does that count as one of his or her two applications?

Answer: Yes. Governors can put their signatures on a maximum of two applications.

Question: If cross-state proposals count as a submission for BOTH participating states then cross-state proposals - a strong version of regionalization - will be very limited. One state will almost always benefit more greatly than another state in a cross-state initiative, therefore, the secondary state is not likely to support the initiative (versus supporting a sole state proposal projected to generate a greater return for the individual state). Can this cross-state proposal position be reconsidered?

Answer: No. ETA feels strongly that governors need to be activity engaged in the strategies in these regional economies. Merely gaining support from a governor isn't the same as him or her deciding that this is one of the top priorities for the state. Cross state applications will count against their total allotment.

Question: Can a Workforce Investment Board be a partner in two submissions? One within a state and one cross state?

Answer: Yes. ETA hasn't put parameters around that and expects the region to clearly define itself. If a WIB believes it is part of two different regions, ETA will judge the application on its merits.

Question: If a region includes part of another state in their application, but that state does not include the proposal as one of its two, can the applicant still include the other state partners in their design?

Answer: If they are including areas of a different state ETA expects the state's Governor to sign off on that application. If that does not happen then the region should define for the purposes of this SGA their region -- up to the

State border. If they want to make amendments later; that is something ETA will consider. For the SGA, if a region includes counties from another state, ETA will need that governor's signature.

Question: If the state addresses a worker in another state is that a cross-state application?

Answer: Not specifically, but if the identified strategies and industries are impacting workers in a neighboring state, that would call into question the definition of a regional economy if it did not include those regional areas.

Funding/Fiscal Agent

Question: When do we anticipate funding announcements?

Answer: Early June.

Question: What procurement strings come with these funds, if the project is in need of workforce products could these be sole sourced if identified within the proposal? Named partners and vendors as well?

Answer: The requirements depend on the entity. The state and region need to follow their own procurement requirements.

Naming a vendor in your application does not excuse you from following your own procurement requirements. Named partners and organizations that are truly partners to the application are outside the procurement process. Their participation or moving funds to a partner agency is not procurement.

Question: Would a grantee use local funds to pay for training then bill the grant recipient at the local level?

Answer: No. If a region is going to train people under this grant, they would use these grant funds directly to pay for the training.

Question: When would the funds be available?

Answer: ETA will make the first increment of funds available as soon as the grant agreements are signed.

Question: Can funds be used to develop a commercial development incubator?

Answer: In general, funds can be used on incubators provided that they are focused on training. Specific allowable costs decisions will be made on a case by case basis in consultation with ETA, the state and the region.

Question: Could funds be used for outreach activities?

Answer: Yes, for outreach activities in support of training and participants.

Question: If the State is the recipient, are they responsible for monitoring the funds.

Answer: Yes.

Question: If a community college is a state entity, could they be the fiscal agent?

Answer: ETA anticipated that a state governmental agency would be the recipient on behalf of the governor. The local level would be the workforce board.

Question: Are funds available for consultants on the project?

Answer: Regions are not prohibited from using consultants on these projects.

Question: What kind of restrictions do you envision on funding consultants? Are there restrictions on the work, strategic plan, Web site or system integration?

Answer: There will be certain conditions in the grants that discuss the parameters around hiring consultants if you are a successful applicant. It is hard to talk about what you can do or can't do without looking at the specific application.

Question: What is your expectation that a percentage of training dollars be spent on WIA participants?

Answer: There is no requirement with H1B funds that the individuals trained are eligible for WIA.

Question: If you are partnering cross state can you both function as a fiscal agent or do you have to select one?

Answer: Only one organization can be the fiscal agent. The region will have to select the lead state agent and a single fiscal agent ahead of time.

Question: Can grant funds be used for seed money for a business start up?

Answer: No.

Question: Clarification - the State Agency is the grant recipient and application submitter and then the local workforce board will serve as the fiscal agent?

Answer: The requirement in the SGA was the state or the local workforce agency/board would serve as the fiscal agent. The governor is just the applicant.

Question: Can a local community college working closely with the WIB be the fiscal agent?

Answer: A state agency or local WIB must be the fiscal agent.

Question: The governor submits the proposal and the money comes to the agencies the governor designate. The funds that pass-through that agency if it is not the applicant, can they reserve some of the funds to account for the serve or serve as the fiscal agent?

Answer: The state agency is the fiscal agent. The governor of the state is the grantee. In the Generation 1 and Generation 2 regions there have been different arrangements between the states and the local regions as to the extent of the involvement in the ongoing oversight and technical

assistance implementation of the project. ETA expects the state agency to play some role.

Question: In the SGA, there are limitations that four contractors cannot assist in proposal development. Can any of those be a partner in a WIRED proposal?

Answer: Those organizations would be part of a proposal as a subcontractor or as a sub recipient and be subject to the procurement rules.

Question: Would the funds come through the investment board or through the state agency?

Answer: It will come through the state agency. They will be the grant recipient.

Question: The FAQs state that equipment more than \$5,000 should not be a primary element of the budget. But purchasing equipment to train is okay. Is this consistent?

Answer: Yes. It is consistent. The purpose of these grants is not to buy a lot of equipment. But, if a region is going to train people and they need equipment to this end, then purchasing equipment is allowable. The equipment should not be the main focus of the plan. It should be in support of the main focus of the plan.

Question: Can this money be used for TAA payments if all other funds are exhausted?

Answer: No.

Question: Can a WIRED proposal leverage training funds?

Answer: Leverage doesn't strictly mean a hard match. ETA wants grantees to apply all resources possible towards a common strategy.

Question: Can WIRED dollars be used to provide seed capital to small companies trying to transfer technology from a federal lab until it is in a position to be funded through venture capital?

Answer: No, WIRED funds cannot be used for seed capital.

However, ETA is working with Federal labs and universities to promote technology transfer and will connect WIRED regions to those activities as well as other sources of funding that may provide such seed capital.

Technical and SGA Questions

Question: Could a WIRED region replace a local work force investment board or boards in a given area?

Answer: No. The WIB is required as part of WIA.

Question: To what extent does ETA anticipate considering geographic distribution in the Generation 3 grants?

Answer: It depends on how many applications ETA receives; where they come from and how they turn out in the rating process. ETA wants a broad representation in the WIRED Initiative, but ETA will not consider geography at the expense of not other stronger proposals.

Question: Is the \$5 million per application a hard cap? If ETA funds only eight applications does that mean that proposals in excess of \$5 million will be considered?

Answer: ETA intends to award \$5 million per application but reserves the right to make greater rewards.

Question: Will any virtual sites with planning grants be funded similar to the last round?

Answer: There is no intention to do so right now.

Question: Can building the partnership be part of the proposal? Is it okay if the partnership is not already in place at the time of submission?

Answer: Yes. A large number of Generation 1 and Generation 2 regions were faced with the same thing. If a region doesn't have a partnership formed yet, they should tell us who will be included.

Question: Who can be served and what kinds of activities are allowed with H1B funds?

Answer: Page six and seven of the SGA covers the allowable uses of funds.

Question: Is there an expected percentage of leveraged resources?

Answer: No, ETA doesn't have an expected percentage.

Question: Does ETA anticipate a 4th Generation of WIRED?

Answer: No.

Question: Is there a preference for distressed areas?

Answer: No. There is no preference.

Question: Can a state university be the applicant on the SF424?

Answer: The governor is the applicant.

Question: Can a state university or state community college be designated as the lead?

Answer: If the governor designates them, yes. They could be a co-lead and someone from the workforce investment system also needs to be a co-lead.

Question: Is there a percentage limit as to how much training and equipment can be purchased for training purposes over three years?

Answer: There are no percentage limits in this SGA. ETA is looking at the budget plan and the amount designated for equipment in relation to the projects that you propose.

Question: Should the budget and narrative be included within the 25 page limit of the proposal?

Answer: No. That is separate from the payable page limit.

Question: Can we get scoring comments on the Generation 1 application?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Is the application deadline eastern time?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Must all three governors sign one letter or would three separate letters suffice?

Answer: Three separate letters will suffice as long as they all come with the grant application.

Question: Are there any restrictions on font size, line spacing, including graphics?

Answer: Yes. The technical proposal is limited to 25 double-spaced, single-sided, 8.5-inch-by-11-inch pages with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Any pages over the 25-page limit will not be reviewed. Graphics may be used at the regions' discretion. The summary abstract may be three pages singled-spaced.

Question: Can there be more than one sub recipient?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Are the sub recipients the entities that provide the training or the services?

Answer: Not necessarily.

Other

Question: Will you provide technical assistance as you did in Generation 1?

Answer: ETA will provide technical assistance to Generation 2 and Generation 3, but the exact mechanism for how and when is still being determined at the national level.

That includes both TA f and the data tool. ETA is in the middle of multiple procurement actions.

Question: If you are identified as part of a region in a previous WIRED grant yet not engaged in the partnership, are you eligible to submit a grant as Generation 3 proposal?

Answer: If a geographic area was identified in Generation 1 or Generation 2 but is not actively part of the project going forward, they could uncouple themselves and join with another group of counties that they may be more aligned with.

If an area is part of a Generation 1 or Generation 2 region yet is more aligned with another region, they can submit the application. ETA will not fund another partnership within the same geography as an existing Generation 1 or Generation 2 recipient.

Question: How do you characterize minor overlap with an existing region? Would a WIA local area that comprises about 10 percent of a current region be eligible to be part of a Generation 3 application?

Answer: ETA does not want to fund the same region or give additional dollars for the same strategies that are an overlap of the region. ETA will leave it to the regions to define minor overlap. However, ETA doesn't expect more than one or two counties from a Generation 1 or Generation 2 region to be part of another region. If the region can make the case for more, ETA will consider it.

Question: Can you clarify the degree a region can overlap geographically with Generation 1 and generation 2 regions?

Answer: There are no points docked if you overlap with one of those individual regions. ETA wants the region to define why counties were selected as part of the region.

Question: Which would ETA see as being given a higher priority under these grant activities: people being fully prepared and trained within the three-year span of the grant or the institution of systems that might not come for a longer time?

Answer: Both. ETA would like to see a significant number of people trained during the life of this grant and a plan that is sustainable.

Question: Do the common performance measures apply if the plan doesn't call for anyone to be enrolled? Can the strategies be developmental partnership?

Answer: ETA is looking for individuals to be trained through the grants. ETA is not specifying what percentage of funds need to be used on training. ETA expects the common measures to apply to the grants that are awarded.

Question: What is talent development?

Answer: Talent development is about educating and training individuals with the skills they need to succeed in today's economy. That can be done through different ways such as K-12 education, community colleges, universities, apprenticeship programs, etc. This refers to ensuring the time the individual spends in training or education pays off in the development of skills to make them employable in growth industries.

Question: What does ETA mean by resource mapping or asset mapping?

Answer: ETA has learned from WIRED Generations 1 and 2 that there are a lot of assets that people don't realize are a part of their region. They are assets that are part of ongoing programs that are not identified as important to economic development or workforce development. What ETA has found is that when a region conducts a disciplined asset map, they identify a lot of opportunities to leverage resources and potentially identify new

resources and assets that can be used to support your regional economic plan.

Question: Can we give examples of innovative transformation strategies?

Answer: To view implementation plans for WIRED Generation 1 regions, visit <http://www.doleta.gov/wired/regions/>

Question: Are planning and coordination acceptable activities under this grant?

Answer: Yes. One of ETA's first requirements will be for the region to develop an implementation plan that lays out specific actions, strategies and goals to support the overall vision and how the dollars both from ETA and others will be used to support that.

Question: Is there a preferred method of tracking outcomes over the state or should regions use the current tracking system?

Answer: ETA doesn't have a preferred method. ETA expects that there would be coordination with the state on that issue.

Question: If a proposal is from a region that includes a BRAC action, can the military entity be counted as a "partner?"

Answer: Yes. That would be a major impact on the regional economy.

Question: What if the recipient is not qualified at the local level but is eligible for training?

Answer: Yes, there are a number of regions training individuals that are not eligible for WIA. That is why we are not using those dollars.

Question: Which MEPs are ETA currently working with?

Answer: For MEP information, visit http://www.doleta.gov/wired/files/MEP_Pilot_Summary.pdf

Question: When are electronic applications due?

Answer: Paper and electronic applications are due by 4:30pm on April 13, 2007. See Part IV, 3. Submission Dates and Times in the SGA.

Role of WIB/One-stop

Question: If you do not have a local WIB (only one state WIB), can the local one stop serve as the representative for the workforce development system?

Answer: No. It needs to be the WIB either state or local whichever is in your area.

Question: Should regions identify more than one local workforce investment boards or is that left to the governor to decide?

Answer: Regions are self defined. The SGA puts a point value around the identification and definition of a region. This definition needs to be supported with data. At that point, it becomes immaterial how many WIBS are included.