

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**Employment and Training
Administration****Solicitation for Grant Applications;
National Farm Worker Jobs Program;
Housing Assistance for Migrants and
Seasonal Farmworkers**

AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration, Labor.

ACTION: Notice of availability of funds and Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) for the National Farm Worker Jobs Program and for Housing Assistance to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Labor (the Department or DOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA), Office of National Programs (ONP), Division of Seasonal Farm Worker Programs (DSFP), announces a grant competition for operating the National Farm Worker Jobs Program (NFJP), AND for housing assistance for migrants and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs), under Section 167 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), 29 U.S.C. 9201. All applicants for grant funds should read this notice in its entirety.

Section 167, paragraph (a) of WIA requires that the Secretary award grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible entities for the purposes of carrying out the activities authorized under Section 167. Under this solicitation, DSFP anticipates that approximately \$72,213,541 will be available for grant awards for the NFJP, and approximately \$4,609,840 will be available for grant awards to provide housing assistance to migrants and seasonal farmworkers.

DATES: Applications, including those hand-delivered, must be received at the address below no later than 4:45 p.m., Eastern Time, on May 16, 2003.

Notice: All applicants are advised that U.S. mail delivery in the Washington, DC area has been erratic due to mail screening to detect anthrax contamination. All applicants should take this into consideration when preparing to meet the application deadline. Each applicant assumes the risk for ensuring a timely submission of an application. If, because of mail screening delays, the Department does not receive an application or receives it too late to give it proper consideration, even if the application was timely mailed, it will not be considered.

Note: Except as specifically provided, DOL/ETA acceptance of a proposal and an award of federal funds to sponsor any program(s) does not provide a waiver of any

grant requirement and/or procedures. For example, the OMB circulars require that an entity's procurement procedures must require that all procurement transactions must be conducted, as practical, to provide open and free competition. If a proposal identifies a specific entity to provide the services, the DOL/ETA's award does not provide the justification or basis to sole-source the procurement; *i.e.*, avoid competition.

ADDRESS: Applications must be directed to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Division of Federal Assistance, Attention: Serena Boyd, Room S-4203, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20210.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions should be addressed to Serena Boyd, Division of Federal Assistance, phone (202) 693-3301 or fax (202) 693-2879. (These are not toll-free numbers). All inquiries should reference SGA/DFA-03-108 and include a contact name, fax and phone numbers. This announcement will be posted on the Internet on ETA's homepage at <http://wdsc.doleta.gov>. Award notifications will also be published on this homepage.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Department of Labor (DOL) FY 2003 Appropriations Act provided funding for PY 2003 (July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004 only). No additional funds are being requested for PY 2004. Applicants should therefore note that awards made through this SGA process are for only one year. An applicant's description of the services to be provided should be limited to those service strategies that can be provided within the Program Year (PY) specified above.

Please note that two separate grants applications are being sought from this SGA. Applicants are invited to apply for funding to operate the local NFJP grants for the delivery of workforce investment services and related activities to migrant and seasonal farmworkers; or funding to provide farm worker housing assistance to eligible migrants and seasonal farmworkers; or both. Applications for funding the NFJP grants and the housing grants should be submitted separately, and will be reviewed and paneled by the Department separately.

Part I. National Farmworker Jobs Program*Purpose and Background*

The U.S. Department of Labor, Division of Seasonal Farm Worker Programs of the Employment and Training Administration is requesting grant applications for operating the National Farm Worker Jobs Program

(NFJP), and/or the farm worker Housing Assistance program, in accordance with Section 167 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), 29 U.S.C. 9201. WIA calls for a competition for the NFJP program to be conducted every two years, but authorizes the Secretary to waive this requirement for an additional two years if the grantees are performing satisfactorily and upon receipt of an acceptable two-year plan for the succeeding two years.

The current NFJP grants were originally awarded to begin program operation on July 1, 1999, and subsequently extended for an additional two-year cycle in 2001. Therefore, operational authority for the current NFJP grants expires on June 30, 2003, ending the cycle that began on July 1, 2001. Housing Assistance grants were also last competed in 2001, and their operational authority will also expire on June 30, 2003.

The National Farm Worker Jobs Program (NFJP) is authorized by WIA Section 167 to serve economically disadvantaged persons who primarily depend on employment in agricultural labor performed within the United States, including Puerto Rico, who experience chronic unemployment and underemployment. Qualifying participants are typically those persons employed on a seasonal or part-time basis in the unskilled and semi-skilled manual labor occupations in crop and animal production. Through training and other workforce development services, the program assists eligible seasonal farmworkers and their families to prepare for jobs likely to provide stable, year-round employment in agricultural and non-agricultural occupations.

For many years, the NFJP served as the primary vehicle through which migrant and seasonal farmworkers were assisted through job training to achieve employment in higher-skills, better paying jobs, and through supportive services that allowed them to continue their agricultural work while providing for their families. Over the years, this "categorical" targeting resulted in the development of expertise among a small number of organizations that devoted their efforts almost exclusively to serving farmworkers. As the workforce development system continued to evolve toward integrated service delivery rooted in collaboration among workforce development programs, these organizations continued to be considered the primary, and sometimes the only, program operators equipped to serve farmworkers.

The enactment of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) changed the way