

(WIA) and the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA). The WorkFORCE grants will utilize the resources and incentives of these and other initiatives to create competitive employment opportunities for individuals eligible under the *Olmstead* decision and the Executive Order. The resulting employment opportunities for people with disabilities eligible for these programs are essential to accomplish the goal of full integration within the community.

In addition, these grants will support implementation of coordinated workforce development envisioned under the WIA. The WIA established comprehensive reform of existing Federal job training programs, consolidating multiple programs into a unified system and bringing multiple Federal programs together as required partners in the One-Stop delivery system established under the WIA. The One-Stop Centers, which comprise the heart of this system, are in a position to expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities by helping to ensure that the workforce system is accessible both physically and programmatically. To accomplish this, however, additional state and local organizations must be involved, including community based providers of customized employment services. Additional partners necessary to the success of this endeavor for people with disabilities include, but are not limited to, the following: State programs for individuals with cognitive and developmental disabilities; Medicaid; mental health and substance abuse agencies and organizations; transportation and assistive technology providers; Small Business Development Centers; secondary education programs; community colleges; University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities; foundations; and faith-based and community organizations.

In particular, it is essential that One-Stop Centers have available a variety of eligible training providers in their respective communities to meet the needs of individuals seeking employment. This includes faith-based and community organizations with expertise in customized employment strategies for assisting people with disabilities to achieve choice-based employment. Such innovative partnerships with the One-Stop system hold the promise of dramatically increasing both employment and wages for people with disabilities, in part by increasing their choices for integrated, competitive employment, business ownership, entrepreneurship, and other customized employment options.

In response to these considerations and in view of the potential resources described above, the ODEP will continue its Working for Freedom, Opportunity and Real Choice through Community Employment (WorkFORCE) Grant Initiative by awarding WorkFORCE Action Grants that develop and/or expand the capacity of communities to provide individually determined, customized employment, in partnership with the workforce development system.

Part IV. Funding Availability and Period of Performance

The ODEP anticipates awarding up to 6 grants, ranging from approximately \$400,000 to \$625,000 per year, totaling \$2.5 million, to develop demonstration programs to support the development and coordination of customized community employment opportunities in non-stereotypical jobs for people with disabilities who want to: (1) Move from nursing homes, residential facilities, or other segregated environments into the community; (2) continue living in the community; (3) achieve economic self-sufficiency; and (4) attain full access to, and participation in, their communities. This grant initiative is founded in the belief that to fully participate in community life, such individuals must have the opportunity for employment.

These demonstration grants will be awarded for one year, with four additional option years possible, depending upon the availability of funds and the efficacy of grant activities, established by independent reviews conducted by the ODEP or its designees. It is envisioned that if funding continues for the full five years, the funding for years four and five will be at successively lower rates with funding during year four at 80 percent of the third year funds, and funding during year five at 60 percent of the third year funds. Grantees are expected to use this grant to leverage and develop other public and private resources to ensure sustainability.

Part V. Eligible Applicants and Required Partnerships

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for these demonstration grants are non-profit organizations including faith-based and community organizations (although not 501(c)(4) entities subject to the Lobbying Disclosure Act). To be determined eligible, applicants must:

1. Successful applicants must indicate their intent to register as eligible training providers in their states and

coordinate with their local One-Stop Career Center(s);

2. In addition, successful applicants will not utilize certificates authorized under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act in their implementation of project activities and will utilize only individually determined customized employment strategies in securing employment for the target population.

Required Partnerships

The purpose of the WorkFORCE Action Grants is to demonstrate the employment potential of people with disabilities through techniques for accomplishing community employment in non-stereotypical integrated settings, utilizing customized employment strategies. These efforts must include the involvement of many key partners, especially those with direct involvement in their area's One-Stop Career Centers.

The target populations to be served are people with disabilities who are either unemployed or under-employed and who are:

- In non-work (*i.e.*, day activity, social clubs), segregated work, or transitioning to work settings; or,
- Expected to be or are determined to be covered under the *Olmstead* decision and Executive Order and therefore part of the state overall *Olmstead* planning and implementation process; or,
- Awaiting employment services and supports following a move from a residential facility, or as part of a plan to move into a community under the Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead* and the *Olmstead* Executive Order.

In addition, this program is subject to the provisions of the "Jobs for Veterans Act," Public Law 107-288, which provides priority of service to veterans and certain of their spouses in all Department of Labor-funded job training programs. Please note that, to obtain priority of service, a veteran must meet that program's eligibility requirements. Comprehensive policy guidance is being developed and will be issued in the near future.

The target groups to be served by these grants are intended to be those persons with disabilities who are both defined above and who have been among the hardest to serve due to low expectations for employment, lack of employment skills, limited independent living experiences or other individualized needs and supports.

Applicants must:

1. Submit a letter signed by their state's governor, or his or her designee for overall *Olmstead* implementation, that the proposed grant activities will be regarded as an official demonstration