

This SGA is designed to award strategic planning and implementation grants for customized employment to develop and/or expand the capacity of local workforce systems to provide meaningful and effective opportunity through One-Stops for all persons with disabilities. This SGA will lead to the development of comprehensive models of direct service delivery in the context of a One-Stop setting for individuals with disabilities with the greatest barriers to employment, many of whom have never been employed, have been limited to subsidized employment, are underemployed, or may be considered by some as unable to be employed. The Customized Employment grants will involve cutting edge approaches such as use of customized employment strategies and active involvement of essential programs of both mandated and non-mandated partners of the workforce system.

The result of these efforts will be an increase in employment, choice, and wages for people with disabilities through the use of customized employment, and the systemic evaluation and modification, as appropriate, of policies and practices to ensure that customized employment strategies for people with disabilities are systemically included in the services available through the One-Stop Centers.

The U.S. Department of Labor also offers Work Incentive Grants through its Employment and Training Administration. The Work Incentive Grants are designed to enhance service delivery throughout the National One-Stop delivery system for people with disabilities. The Work Incentive Grants are complementary yet distinct from the Customized Employment demonstration grants offered in this SGA. The Work Incentive Grants support systemic change through capacity building of the One-Stop infrastructure, whereas these Customized Employment Grants will serve as models of comprehensive service delivery that extend beyond WIA programs and provide services for individuals with disabilities who are the most disenfranchised under current service delivery systems.

Part IV. Funding Availability and Period of Performance

ODEP anticipates awarding approximately up to five competitive grants ranging from \$500,000 to \$750,000, to develop demonstration programs to support the development and coordination of customized community employment opportunities in non-stereotypical jobs for people with disabilities. This grant initiative is founded in the belief that in order to

fully participate in community life, individuals with disabilities 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 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, and the extent to which the application demonstrates such sustainability is an important rating criterion for this competition.

Funds shall not be used for modifying buildings or equipment for physical accessibility, although the strategic planning should address how resources will be leveraged for such purposes from other sources, as appropriate.

Part V. Eligible Applicants and Required Partnerships

Eligible applicants: Eligible applicants for these grants are restricted to Local Workforce Investment Boards (Local Boards) or, if appropriate, the WIA grant recipient or fiscal agent for the local area on behalf of the Local Board as established under WIA. The Local Board may coordinate numerous partnerships with other public and private entities, consistent with proposed activities of the grant and applicable administrative requirements. Local Boards are encouraged to form partnerships with other state and local entities and public and private non-profit organizations, including faith-based and community organizations.

Indian and Native American Tribal entities, or consortia of Tribes, with the written approval of their tribal council, are also eligible to receive these grants. Grants to Indian and Native American tribal grantees must recognize principles of sovereignty and self-governance established under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, allowing for the government-to-government relationship between the Federal and Tribal Governments. Such an application could involve coordination of services and enhancement to a One-Stop system approach for people with disabilities in a specific Indian community or covering multiple Tribal entities that may cut

across multiple States and/or workforce investment areas.

Required partnerships: The purpose of this initiative is to maximize the capacity of, and outcomes from, One-Stop Centers and their partners to effectively serve people with disabilities through customized employment strategies, and to integrate those strategies into the policy and practice of the One-Stop and its partners in order to increase employment, choice and wages for people with disabilities. These efforts must include the involvement of many key partners, especially those with direct involvement in their area's One-Stop Career Centers.

For purposes of this solicitation, the target groups are people with disabilities who are either unemployed or under-employed and are:

(1) Receiving Supplementary Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI); or

(2) Participating in day programs (such as day habilitation, day activity or day health programs) or participating in facility-based or community employment and earning less than minimum wage; or

(3) Participating in segregated employment and choosing to move to integrated, competitive employment; or

(4) 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 decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.* by Zimring, 527 U.S. 581(1999); or

(5) Transitioning from, or preparing to transition from, secondary school under a transition plan under part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*), and who, without access to customized employment strategies, would likely be referred to one of the environments identified in (2), (3) or (4) above, but who prefer integrated, competitive employment or self-employment.

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.

As Local Boards, through their local One-Stop Center are required to coordinate and to form partnerships with other state and local entities and public and private non-profit