

single-sided, numbered pages]. (Note: The Financial Plan, the Executive Summary, and the Appendices are not included in the seventy-five (75) page limit). The requirements for the project narrative are described below under Part VII—Statement of Work.

All text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs must be double-spaced (no more than three lines per vertical inch); and, if using a proportional computer font, use no smaller than a 12-point font, and an average character density no greater than 18 characters per inch (if using a non-proportional font or a typewriter, do not use more than 12 characters per inch). Applications that fail to meet these requirements will be considered non-responsive.

Part VII. Government Requirements/ Statement of Work (Project Narrative)

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, including those with direct involvement in their area's One-Stop Career Centers, as described in Section V above.

For purposes of this solicitation, ODEP has specifically targeted the development and provision of customized employment to those people with disabilities identified in Part V.

ODEP expects that once capacity for using customized employment strategies is developed or enhanced, the One-Stop Centers and their partners will expand use of these strategies to other groups of people with (and without) disabilities.

For purposes of this solicitation, customized employment means individualizing the employment relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both. It is based on an individualized determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the person with a disability, and is also designed to meet the specific needs of the employer. It may include approaches such as supported employment; supported entrepreneurship; individualized job development; job carving and restructuring; use of personal agents (including individuals with disabilities and family members); development of micro-boards, micro-enterprises,

cooperatives and small businesses; and use of personal budgets and other forms of individualized funding that provide choice and control to the person and promote self-determination. These and other job development or restructuring strategies result in job responsibilities being customized and individually negotiated to fit the needs of individuals with a disability. Customized employment assumes the provision of reasonable accommodations and supports necessary for the individual to perform the functions of a job that is individually negotiated and developed.

Each applicant for these grants shall describe its plan for expanding capacity for, and provision of, customized employment opportunities to the target groups as defined in Part V above. Upon the commencement of a grant, grantees must begin a strategic planning and implementation process that will address multiple components of needed change. Planning, implementation and ongoing evaluation for continuous improvements are expected to be implemented from year one in recognition that dynamic planning will occur and evolve over time. By the end of year five, it is expected that a more long-term strategic plan will be in place for expanding the availability of customized employment, and for systemically revising policies and practices consistent with this goal.

The Project Narrative, or Section III of the grant application, should provide complete information on how the applicant will address the following DOL priorities for fiscal year 2003:

(1) Increase the availability of skill training, employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities; and

(2) Develop comprehensive One-Stop Centers, which are welcoming and are valued providers of choice by customers with disabilities seeking workforce assistance by assuring the availability of staff trained on disability issues, personalized employment counseling, knowledgeable support that addresses employment barriers and work incentives and the availability of accommodations and technologies for diverse disability needs.

Proposals will be rated based upon the quality of the applicant's response in addressing the four criteria described below in terms of a comprehensive strategic approach that addresses ODEP's priorities noted above. The four criteria (Statement of Need/National Significance, Comprehensive Service Strategy, Sustainability, and Management Plan and Outcomes) MUST be addressed and the applicant's

goals, accomplishments or status with regard to each item provided.

ODEP, however, does not expect the applicant to fully incorporate every item listed as part of their strategy and proposal design. ODEP recognizes that the needs and requirements of each state and community may be different, and therefore, some of the options identified may be more relevant than others in a particular state or community.

2. Statement of Need /Significance of the Project (15 points)

The purpose of the Statement of Need is to establish the overall status of disability issues relevant to the targeted population in the applicant's state; to identify strengths and deficiencies to be addressed by the applicant's proposal; to identify the overall scope of the proposal's objectives and design; to present the applicant's need for the grant resources; to demonstrate significance of the proposed project; and to demonstrate the development or demonstration of promising new strategies, practices, or innovations. This criteria will be rated upon the applicant's needs identified and proposed approaches to addressing the needs in the context of the Department's priorities.

The narrative in this section should include information that demonstrates:

(1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increase knowledge or understanding of problems, issues, or effective strategies for local workforce boards and other required and potential partners to use customized employment strategies to increase employment, choice and wages, and influence systems change in the local workforce system.

(2) The extent to which the applicant has an understanding of the issues the state and proposed geographic area are currently facing in their overall Customized Employment implementation efforts;

(3) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings that may be used by other appropriate agencies and organizations;

(4) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies;

(5) The extent to which the promising practices of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies;

(6) The potential replicability (national significance) of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for