

U.S. Postal Service registered or certified mail not later than the fifth calendar day before the date specified for receipt of applications (e.g., an application submitted in response to a solicitation requiring receipt of applications by the 20th of the month must have been post marked by the 15th of that month); or (c) was sent by the U.S. Postal Service Express Mail Next Day Service to addressee not later than 5 p.m. at the place of mailing two working days prior to the date specified for receipt of applications. The term "working days" excludes weekends and Federal holidays. "Post marked" means a printed, stamped or otherwise placed impression (exclusive of a postage meter machine impression) that is readily identifiable, without further action, as having been supplied or affixed on the date of mailing by an employee of the U.S. Postal Service.

2. *Withdrawal of Applications.*

Applications may be withdrawn by written notice or telegram (including mail gram) received at any time before an award is made. Applications may be withdrawn in person by the applicant or by an authorized representative thereof, if the representative's identity is made known and the representative signs a receipt of the proposal.

3. *Hand-Delivered Proposals.* It is preferred that applications be mailed at least five days prior to the closing date. To be considered for funding, hand-delivered applications must be received by 4:45 p.m., ET, at the specified address. Failure to adhere to the above instructions will be basis for a determination of non-responsiveness. Overnight express mail from carriers other than the U.S. Postal Service will be considered hand-delivered applications and must be received by the above specified date and time.

Part II. Authority

Omnibus Appropriations Resolution, 2003, Pub. L. 108-7; Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001, Pub. L. 106-554, 29 U.S.C. 557b.

Part III. Background

HS/HT is a career development program for high school aged youth that started almost two decades ago in Los Angeles, California, to address concerns that not enough students, especially those with disabilities, were being prepared for careers in technology-focused industries. The Atlantic Richfield Company, with support from the Los Angeles Unified School District, designed America's first technology-focused transition program for young people with disabilities.

Shortly thereafter, in 1986, the President's Committee on Employment

of People with Disabilities (PCEPD), whose mission was to facilitate the communication, coordination, and promotion of public and private efforts that enhance the employment of people with disabilities, adopted the program. Building upon the strength of the public/private partnership that began in Los Angeles, program leaders developed relationships with large and small businesses, education and non-profit organizations, and government agencies. These relationships helped HS/HT grow and expand across the country.

The newly created Office of Disability Employment Policy at the United States Department of Labor assumed the role as the Federal agency responsible for continuing this program. In 2001, ODEP entered into a cooperative agreement with the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) to provide technical assistance and support to HS/HT sites nationwide. During 2002, ODEP and NCWD/Youth undertook a substantial refinement of the HS/HT program standards to promote the expansion of this career development program.

HS/HT is a network of state and locally operated programs designed to provide young people with all types of disabilities the opportunity to explore jobs or gain further education leading to technology-related careers. HS/HT is a community-based partnership with 70-plus programs currently operating across the country. The programs operate year-round in a variety of settings—schools, community organizations, businesses, and other locations. Current HS/HT operators include non-profits (Goodwill, Centers for Independent Living, United Cerebral Palsy Affiliates, etc.), community colleges, universities and school districts. Its stakeholders include employers, educators, consumers, family members, workforce system agencies, and rehabilitation professionals.

The HS/HT program offers proven techniques for developing improved employment outcomes for young people with disabilities. The HS/HT program is premised on four design features, supported by experience and research, as to what youth with disabilities need to succeed in adulthood. These four design areas include preparatory experiences, connecting activities, work-based experiences, and leadership development. See the HS/HT Program Manual at <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/resources&Publications/hshmanual.html> for further information. Graduates of HS/HT programs that employ these design features have demonstrated at least double the post-secondary educational

achievements of similarly situated students with disabilities who do not have this opportunity. At some HS/HT sites, as many as 70 percent of HS/HT graduates move on to post-secondary education. HS/HT clearly enhances expectations, educational achievements, and eventual employment outcomes for a population who, without this intervention, may be far more likely to move onto the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) rolls than to find competitive employment in technology related occupations.

Funding for HS/HT sites has traditionally been managed locally. In the past several years, however, ODEP has sought to move the leadership and funding towards a state-level model through its grant activities. In 2001, ODEP funded start-up HS/HT sites that began connecting HS/HT and WIA-assisted youth programs at the community level. In 2002, ODEP expanded upon that effort by funding grants to assist states in developing statewide HS/HT infrastructure and operations and further integrating HS/HT programs into the youth services provided under the One-Stop System.

The 2003 HS/HT grants are the next step in this process and focus on both state-level implementation and long-term sustainability. HS/HT sites have traditionally worked with community systems to coordinate the delivery of educational and transitional services to youth with disabilities. The HS/HT Implementation and Development Grants to be awarded as a result of the current SGA are intended to:

(1) Assist states in implementing a statewide HS/HT network working in partnership with the State Workforce Investment Board;

(2) Integrate the HS/HT program into WIA-assisted youth services; and

(3) Ensure sustainability of the HS/HT program through state-level management and coordination.

(4) Bringing HS/HT to the state-level will to help ensure that resources within a state are maximized and coordinated for the benefit of all HS/HT sites in that state. HS/HT state directors will work with key stakeholders (workforce investment systems, colleges, developmental disability councils, governors' committees on the employment of people with disabilities, employers, educators, rehabilitation professionals, consumers, and parents) to institutionalize the program within the state. By linking HS/HT, WIA and additional resources at the state-level, students with disabilities will have an