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**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR****Office of Disability Employment Policy  
[SGA 03-16]****Innovative State Alignment Grants for Improving Transition Outcomes for Youth With Disabilities Through the Use of Intermediaries****AGENCY:** Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor.**ACTION:** Notice of availability of funds; solicitation for grant applications (SGA).

This notice contains all of the necessary information and forms needed to apply for grant funding. (SGA 03-16).

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) announces the availability of \$3 million to award up to 6 competitive grants in the amount of approximately \$500,000. Eligible applicants include State Workforce Investment Boards or the functional equivalent State entities. Indian and Native American tribal entities, or consortia of tribes, are also eligible to apply.

The purpose of this grant initiative is to:

1. Help States conduct resource mapping<sup>1</sup> to assess their youth service delivery infrastructure in light of evidence-based transition operating principles<sup>2</sup>;
2. Develop, implement, and evaluate a cross-agency multi-year State plan to improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities through blending and/or braiding<sup>3</sup> of Federal, State, and

<sup>1</sup> "Resource mapping" refers to a methodology that has been used by the Federal government, State agencies, local entities, and community-based organizations, among others, to link and align resource use with organizational goals, strategies, and expected outcomes. It is known by a multitude of names including asset mapping, asset analysis, and environment scans, and can involve a variety of different data collection strategies depending on what is being studied. For purposes of this SGA, the term "resource mapping" refers to the identification of available assets and resources within the States' youth service delivery infrastructure and an evaluation as to whether and/or to what extent that system is currently serving youth with disabilities consistent with the evidence-based operative principles discussed previously.

<sup>2</sup> "Evidence based transition operating principles" is a term defined, for purposes of this SGA, in part III.

<sup>3</sup> For purposes of this SGA, the term "blended funding" is used to describe mechanisms that pool dollars from multiple sources and make them in some ways indistinguishable. "Braided funding" utilizes similar mechanisms, but the funding streams remain visible and are used in common to

community resources and the use of local intermediary organizations;

3. Conduct local pilot demonstrations to determine how, through community partnerships, intermediary organizations can best be used to ensure that youth with disabilities obtain transition services consistent with evidence-based transition operating principles, and the impact of such intermediaries on improving transition outcomes for youth with disabilities; and

4. Demonstrate, through leveraging Federal, State and local public sector resources, concrete evidence of the likelihood of sustainability of grant objectives within the State.

These grants are for a one-year period and may be renewed for a period of up to four additional years depending upon the availability of funds and the efficacy of the project activities. *See also* parts IV and IX.

In meeting grant objectives, it is expected that the grantee will sub-award a substantial portion of its award to intermediary organizations. For purposes of this SGA, an intermediary organization is defined as an agent that:

- Convenes local leadership and broker relationships with multiple partners across multiple funding streams;
- Brings together workforce development systems, vocational rehabilitation providers, businesses, labor unions, educational institutions, social service organizations, transportation entities, health providers, and other Federal, State, and community resources which youth with disabilities need to transition to employment successfully.

Possible intermediaries include, but are not limited to, community-based non-profit organizations, faith-based and community organizations, employer organizations, community colleges, community rehabilitation programs, etc.

By connecting schools and other youth-serving institutions with workplaces and other available Federal, State, and community resources, the intermediaries will create a forum for building a system that better meets the needs of all interested stakeholders. In addition, intermediary organizations can assist the state in assessing and evaluating the performance and impact of its efforts related to these grant activities, and in providing necessary information and training in areas such as benefits planning, universal access, reasonable accommodation, mental health, housing, transportation, health

produce greater strength, efficiency, and/or effectiveness.

maintenance (including Medicare and Medicaid), and other self-sufficiency issues.

**DATES:** Applications will be accepted commencing on June 16, 2003. The closing date for receipt of applications under this announcement is July 28, 2003. Applications must be received by 4:45 p.m. (e.t.) at the address below. No exceptions to the mailing and hand-delivery conditions set forth in this notice will be granted. Applications that do not meet the conditions set forth in this notice will be considered non-responsive.

**ADDRESSES:** Applications shall be mailed to: U.S. Department of Labor, Procurement Services Center, Attention: Cassandra Willis, Reference SGA 03-16, Room N-5416, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20210. Telefacsimile (FAX) applications will not be accepted. Applicants are advised that mail delivery in the Washington area may be delayed due to mail decontamination procedures.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Cassandra Willis, U.S. Department of Labor, Procurement Services Center, telephone (202) 693-4570 (this is not a toll-free number), prior to the closing deadline. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may contact the Department via the Federal Relay Service, (800) 877-8339. This announcement will also be published on the Internet on ODEP's online home page at: <http://www2.dol.gov/odep>. Award notifications will also be published on the ODEP home page.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Part I. Delivery of Applications**

1. *Late Applications.* Any application received after the exact date and time specified for receipt at the office designated in this notice will be considered non-responsive, unless it is received before awards are made and it (a) is determined that its late receipt was caused by DOL error; (b) was sent by 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