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**DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES
 ISSUANCE NUMBER PY 18-01**

Daryl E. Bassett, Director

July 5, 2018

TO: Local Workforce Development Board Directors/Area Administrators/
 Service Providers

SUBJECT: Apprenticeship State Expansion Grant Request for Proposal Issuance for 2nd Round of Arkansas
 Expands Apprenticeship (AREA) Continuation Funding

- I. **Purpose:** To request proposals from Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) to increase the number of registered apprentices (RA's) and registered apprenticeship programs in both traditional RA industry sectors (e.g., construction trades) and non-traditional industry sectors (e.g., advanced manufacturing, health care, information technology, transportation logistics, etc.) across the State.
- II. **General Information:** As Arkansas employers continue to face challenges to find skilled employees to meet their needs RA offers an employer-driven workforce development solution that consists of both related technical instruction (i.e., classroom training) and mentored on-the-job training. RA provides benefits to both job seekers and employers. Successful RA programs require strong partnerships between employers, training providers, and trainees.

III. Part 1: Background

In November of 2016, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (ADWS) was awarded a “base” funding amount of \$900,000 from the U.S. Department of Labor under the State Expansion Grant Funding Opportunity Announcement 16-13. The “base” award has a period of performance of November 1, 2016 through April 30, 2019. The goal of the existing “base” AREA grant is to increase the number of RA's by five percent over the base number by increasing total RA's in current programs, branching out to create new non-traditional programs based on employer need, and including a diverse underserved population that has not previously participated in RA programs. In a letter dated March 23, 2018, USDOL announced a second round of funding availability to current SAE grantees. Under the continuation funding announcement, each previously awarded SAE State was allocated a fixed maximum amount for USDOL application purposes. Arkansas is eligible for an additional \$1,089,989.00 in 2nd round continuation funding. The second round continuation funding comes with USDOL performance expectation of an additional 10% in RA growth over the period of performance ending October 31, 2020.

Part 2: Grant Details

Types of grants awarded: Local Workforce Development Areas will receive funding through a competitive RFP process. It is anticipated that there will be maximum funding amounts of \$100,000 for each awarded proposal. Proposals will need to reflect partnership development activities and performance that leads to a minimum of ten percent growth in the number of RA's within a given LWDA region. LWDA's will be responsible for organizing employer, training provider, and stakeholder partnerships leading to RA growth. LWDA's are encouraged to co-enroll participants into WIOA services to leverage resources. ADWS will be responsible for reviewing and evaluating proposals submitted by LWDA's for awards. Proposals will be evaluated based on their merits of establishing partnerships to deliver services and grant performance. There are no guarantees that all submitted proposals will be awarded.

- 1. Funding amount:** It is anticipated that funding amounts will be a maximum \$100,000 for each awarded proposal. This is a competitive RFP process with awarded recipients demonstrating the capacity to organize and deliver required RA growth in both traditional and non-traditional industry sectors.
- 2. Grant period:** LWDA AREA grants must be expended incrementally and consistently from date of award, and must be fully expended by October 31, 2020.

Local Workforce Development Boards are the lead applicants and fiscal/administrative agents for the 2nd Round AREA Continuation grants. Required partners in grant applications include employers from target industry sectors, economic development entities, and educational institutions (preferably both secondary and post-secondary). Grant applications must discuss the roles of these partners in the proposed project and also include as attachments letters of commitment from involved partners. Local Workforce Development Boards should consider their region's sector strategies plans and business services strategies for RA growth opportunities across industry sectors.

A conference call will be scheduled for July 18 at 10:00 to discuss the RFP process and answer any questions related to the RFP process or the Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Under the SAE grant continuation funding, consultative apprenticeship subject matter experts are available to provide technical assistance and assist with RFP planning efforts. ADWS has ongoing working relationships with these individuals under the grant.

Part 3: Required, Allowable, and Unallowable Grant-Funded Activities

- 1. Required grant activities:** All applicants are required to identify participating employer partners that will be involved in the grant.
- 2. Allowable grant activities:** Allowable grant-funded activities include:
 - a. Provision of a range of training services that support individuals enrolled in a Registered Apprenticeship Program, including: classroom occupational training; development of curricula and standards of apprenticeship; online and technology-based learning; accelerated and competency-based training that integrates academic and occupational skills training; and apprenticeship training costs and other supportive services.
 - b. Pre-apprenticeship training to include high school programs.
 - c. Other activities with prior approval of ADWS.

3. **Unallowable grant activities:** Grant funding may not be used for the following activities and costs
 - a. Equipment purchase or rental
 - b. Administrative costs in excess of 3 percent [3%]
 - c. Food and beverage purchase
 - d. Indirect costs
 - e. Payments of participant wages.

Part 4: Matching Requirements

Cash matching is not required under this grant funding opportunity. Leveraged resources and in-kind matching contributions are encouraged but not required. Cash and in-kind matching contributions and leveraged resources should be clearly delineated on the grant application budget form and discussed in the accompanying budget narrative.

Part 5: Recordkeeping, Reporting, and Monitoring

LWDA AREA Continuing grant awardees will be required to submit monthly Narrative reports to ADWS describing grant activities. The reports will be due by the 15th of each month. ADWS will provide a Narrative Report template to be used for monthly reporting purposes. LWDA awardees will be required to track enrolled participant activity through USDOL reporting templates (and/or systems) and AJL. Also, awardees will be required to submit monthly expenditure information associated with the AREA Continuation Grant activities via the AWIS system by the 15th of each month.

Part 6: Subaward Contents and Format Checklist

1. General guidelines for grant:

- a. **Notice of Intent (NOI)** Applicants must submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) NLT July 25 at 12:00 p.m. (Email to Mark.McManus@arkansas.gov will be sufficient).
- b. **Submission format:** Grant applications (which include a Project Narrative, Budget and Budget Narrative) and attachments must be submitted via email to AREA Grants Coordinator, Mark McManus, Mark.McManus@arkansas.gov, by no later than September 4, 2018 at 12:00 p.m. Note: proposals will be reviewed and evaluated as received. Proposals will be awarded based on the merits of the application materials submitted and funding availability. There are no guarantees that all submitted proposals will be awarded.
- c. **Page format and limits:** Project Narratives will be submitted using the ADWS Notice of Subaward template provided. The Budget format is limited to 2 pages, one for the budget and one for the budget narrative; and will need to include descriptions of standard 424a form budget categories that include: personnel, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, contractual, other, and indirect charges.
- d. **Subaward organization:** Applications must be organized according to the format provided below.

2. Subaward format:

- a. **Project Narrative:** The project narrative should describe the primary areas of focus for the LWDA's AREA Continuation Grant activities. The project narrative will need to summarize strategies planning efforts conducted to date as well as points of emphasis moving forward. The project narrative will need to identify the primary point of contact (provide name, email address,

and phone number) for the AREA Continuation Funding grant. Subsections of the project narrative will need to consist of the following components:

- ✓ **Executive summary:** The executive summary should provide a brief summary of the proposed grant project focus and scope, participating required and other partners, desired outcomes, deliverables, and timelines.
- ✓ **Analysis of need:** This section should include a discussion of the regional economy, its critical industries, industry workforce needs and challenges as identified through data and employer input, key regional trends (e.g. aging workforce, out-migration, etc.) impacting workforce issues, and any other factors that demonstrate the need for implementation grant funding assistance.
- ✓ **Project design:** This section should include a detailed discussion of the project mission and goals, scope of project activities, roles and contributions of required and other partners, anticipated outcomes, project deliverables, timeline, and plans for sustaining project activities and outcomes post-funding.
- ✓ **Evidence of alignment:** This section should demonstrate the proposed project's alignment with existing regional workforce development, economic development, and education priorities, including those outlined in the local and regional WIOA plans, as well as identified regional workforce needs/challenges.
- ✓ **Grant oversight and management capacity:** This section should discuss the local workforce area's financial and administrative grant management capacity and project management capacity.
- ✓ **Timeline:** Include a quarterly timeline detailing key project activities and associated timeframes.
- ✓ **Attachments:** Required attachments include: identification of employer partners, education/training provider partners, and economic development partners.

- b. Budget and Budget Narrative:** The Budget and Budget Narrative is limited to 2 pages (one for budget and one for budget narrative) and will need to include descriptions of standard 424a form budget categories that include: personnel, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, contractual, other, and indirect charges. The budget narrative description will need to include a breakdown of personnel that will be involved in the effort.

- IV. Action Required:** Questions about the funding opportunity may be submitted to AREA Grants Coordinator, Mark McManus at mark.mcmanus@arkansas.gov by **August 1, 2018, at 12:00 p.m.**

Subgrant Deadlines

- Conference call to discuss RFP scheduled for July 18 at 10:00.
- Notice of Intent to submit a proposal due by July 25 at 12:00 p. m.
- Subgrant proposals are due NLT **September 4; by 12:00 p.m.**
- Subgrant funds must be fully expended by October 31, 2020.

- V. Inquiries:** Grant-related questions and subawards should be submitted via email to Mark McManus, AREA Grants Coordinator, mark.mcmanus@arkansas.gov.

- VI. Resources:**

- ADWS Notice of Subgrant Award Template
- Subgrant Award Terms and Conditions

VII. USDOL SAE Grantee 2nd round of funding letter (March 23, 2018).

Expiration Date: October 31, 2020