



## **Colorado SECTORS Implementation Grants** *Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA)*

### **Background**

The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) and the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) recognize that a skilled workforce is the single most important driver in determining the state's future competitiveness. Regions that understand how to leverage their human capital investments to strengthen their unique regional industry base and provide more opportunities for individual economic advancement will thrive. Toward that goal, CDLE and CWDC believe that statewide adoption of sector initiatives is the framework to transform the workforce development system to better meet the needs of Colorado's industries and workers. Sector initiatives are a statewide economic development strategy to help workforce regions, employers, educators, economic developers, and other potential partners to transition workers and connect the unemployed and underemployed to careers in growing industry sectors.

Sector initiatives are industry-specific, regional partnerships that address employers' needs for skilled workers, and workers' needs for good jobs. Sector initiatives focus intensively on the workforce needs of a specific industry over a sustained period, often concentrating on specific occupations, and always engaging multiple employers to analyze industry needs and design customized solutions.

In May 2009, CDLE and CWDC issued the first round of SECTORS Initiative grants. These grantees participated in a six-month planning phase to lay the groundwork for their sector partnerships. The planning phase included research to define the industry sector, region of focus, and workforce challenges, including garnering input directly from employers within the industry of focus; organizing and convening public and private stakeholders to lead the initiative; and hiring staff to coordinate the initiative. Following the planning phase, some of these grantees received additional funding to advance to the next phase and implement their sector initiatives.

### **Key Elements of Implementation Grants**

The CWDC and the CDLE announce the availability of a second round of funding for Colorado SECTORS Implementation Grants, which will be awarded through a competitive process to partnerships of two or more Workforce Regions or sub-regions of the Rural Consortium. This cross-regional partnership of two or more Workforce Regions or sub-regions will be referred to in this solicitation as a "super-region." Funds will be made available to implement regional sector initiatives that have already undertaken some initial research and planning to define their targeted industry sector

and key workforce challenges. Up to \$225,000 is available to each super-region of two or more Workforce Regions or sub-regions of the Rural Consortium, and up to \$425,000 is available to each super-region of three or more Workforce Regions or sub-regions of the Rural Consortium. The total number of grants to be awarded has not been determined.

Implementation grants will be announced on July 1, 2010 and the period of performance for implementation grants will last until December 31, 2012. Grantees will receive support and customized technical assistance throughout this period to successfully implement their sector initiative.

### **Eligible Applicants**

The eligible applicant is a Workforce Development Region or sub-region of the Rural Consortium. A single Region or sub-region shall submit the application on behalf of a super-region – a partnership composed of at least two Workforce Development Regions or sub-regions. Each application should designate one Region or sub-region as the primary convener. A Region or sub-region may designate another organization with the responsibilities of SECTORS Initiative convener, but shall remain the fiscal agent and shall be responsible for reporting activities and progress of the SECTORS Initiative to the CDLE and CWDC. In this case, the application must be jointly submitted by the Workforce Region or sub-region and designated convener.

The convener is an intermediary organization that will build in-depth knowledge of the industry, establish relationships with multiple employers across the super-region, conduct research to monitor the industry's changing needs, coordinate community resources to address industry staffing and competitiveness needs, and invest in potential and current workers in the industry to create enhanced opportunities. A variety of organizations can act as a convener, including but not limited to employer organizations (such as chambers of commerce or trade associations), labor-management partnerships, local workforce investment boards or one-stop centers, and faith- or community-based organizations.

### **Technical Assistance and Resources**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to refer to the Sector Strategies Toolkit in the development of their implementation plan. This online Toolkit was developed as part of the National Governor's Association State Sector Strategy Learning Network, in conjunction with its two project partners - The Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) and the National Network of Sector Partners (NNSP). Colorado and six other states contributed to the development of this resource. The toolkit is publicly accessible at <http://www.sectorstrategies.org/toolkit>.

Questions about the application process and requirements may be sent in writing to Marie Valenzuela at [Marie.Valenzuela@state.co.us](mailto:Marie.Valenzuela@state.co.us).

## **Required Proposal Components**

### **I. Cover/Signature Sheet**

See **Attachment A**.

### **II. Proposal Narrative**

#### **A. Problem Statement**

Applicants must clearly and concisely identify and explain the workforce issues/challenges that the partnership will address. This might include skills gaps in incumbent workers, new workers, or both populations. It might address challenges in recruitment and retention, industry and company-wide organization and process. It might articulate specific demographic challenges, such as replacing an aging workforce or dealing with immigrant and refugee populations with English as a Second Language needs.

The problem statement should be justified by qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Applicants should cite the data sources used in their workforce data and intelligence and describe their data collection methods, whether it was primary research involving surveys and interviews, or secondary data sources such as LMI (Labor Market Information) Gateway or Economic Modeling Specialists Inc. (EMSI).

#### **B. Industry and Super-Region of Focus**

Applicants must identify the industry or sector of focus, document that a labor market analysis has been conducted, that the industry of focus accounts for a significant share of economic activity and employment in the region in which the initiative is planned, and that it provides opportunities for workers to advance. If the selected industry does not account for significant regional economic activity, the applicant must otherwise justify the industry selection with relevant data. The initiative should focus on critical occupations within the sector, i.e. occupations which are important to the economic competitiveness of the sector.

Applicants must identify the region(s) of focus in the proposal and demonstrate why it is a region or super-region, justified by data collection and analysis that clearly illustrates why that region is a natural labor market for the targeted sector.

#### **C. Measures and Outcomes**

Applicants are required to set benchmarks for four key metrics in the proposal (see **Attachment B** for evaluation framework). Applicants awarded grants will be required to track and report on the performance outcomes in the evaluation framework for the duration of the grant. The evaluation framework was

developed in collaboration with current SECTORS Initiative grantees to measure systems change and value to workers, employers and other partners. Applicants should describe their plan for regularly self-evaluating the partnership's strategic planning process and benchmarking progress against goals.

Each grantee will be expected to participate in statewide benchmarking activities, and to share their lessons, reflections, and best practices with other grantees.

### **III. Strategic Work Plan**

The work plan should contain a set of articulated goals that builds from the problem statement. All proposals should outline the key strategies that will achieve the goals, including tasks and anticipated timelines in a work plan structure. A template is included in **Attachment C** to track the 30-month timeline and projected outcomes or deliverables for each goal. Sustainability should also be addressed in your work plan and should not be left until the end of the period of performance. Please include in your work plan how you will seek funding to sustain your initiative and when you will seek these resources, beginning no later than December 2011.

### **IV. Partner Roles and Responsibilities and MOU**

The proposal should include a listing of the leadership team that will drive the initiative and a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that details each partner's responsibilities. The team must include representatives from industry, workforce, education, and economic development, at a minimum. Each team member's role in the initiative, including the convener, must be clearly defined and any leveraged resources noted (see **Attachment D** for template). *There is a 10% non-governmental match requirement to apply for the SECTORS Initiative Implementation Grant.* The match may be met through in-kind contributions, such as staff time, meeting space, and other non-financial contributions. The matching contributions must come from industry or other non-governmental sources, and should be included in the MOU where each partner's role is described.

Note: If an MOU requires a formal contracting process within your county, letters of commitment may be submitted in lieu of an MOU to demonstrate partner commitment.

### **VI. Detailed Budget, Budget Narrative and Quarterly Projected Expenditures**

You will need to submit a detailed budget (see **Attachment E** for spreadsheets), budget narrative, and cumulative quarterly projected expenditures tables with your proposal (see **Attachment F** for a template). Please note there are four separate worksheets to complete in the budget template.

Please include travel funds for three people to attend one grantee Academy per year in the metro area.

The budget narrative should include at a minimum:

- Explanation of planned contracted services
- Explanation of “other expenses”
- Explanation of leveraged resources that are being brought to the project in addition to the proposal costs, including identification of the entities providing the leveraged resources. This narrative must clearly identify that a cash match of at least 10% of the total grant funding applied for is being provided from non-governmental sources.
- Resources and purpose of the resources
- Identification of project sustainability beyond the life cycle of the grant. Examples might include fundraising activities, in-kind and financial gifts, and fee-for-service models. Leveraged resources may be used to support the project’s sustainability beyond the period of this award.

### **Format and Submission Requirements**

Complete applications must be received by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment by **5:00 p.m., June 1, 2010.**

Proposals must be:

- Formatted in 12-point type with one-inch margins.
- 25 pages or less, including any attachments. PDF format preferred.
- Sent electronically to [kate.anderson@state.co.us](mailto:kate.anderson@state.co.us). If you do not receive email confirmation of receipt, please follow-up to confirm receipt of proposal by phone to Kate Anderson at (303) 318-8984.