I. REFERENCE(S):
- Notice of Availability of Funds and Funding Opportunity Announcement for Disability Employment Initiative Grants, FOA-ETA-17-05
- 29 CFR Part 38 WIOA Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Regulations
- 20 CFR Part 411 Ticket to Work and Self Sufficiency Program Regulations
- TEN No. 4-15: Expanding Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships to Create a Pathway to Good Middle Class Jobs for Youth and Adults with Disabilities
- TEN No. 2-14: Receiving Ticket to Work Payments as an Employment Network
- PGL ADM-2016-01: Administrative/Discretionary Grant Management and Accountability
- PGL VET-2014-02: Priority of Services for Veterans and Eligible Spouses

II. PURPOSE:
To provide guidance to Local Workforce Development Boards and Local Areas on implementation of the Disability Employment Initiative grant.

III. BACKGROUND:
Despite a historically low unemployment rate, Colorado’s growing economy has left many individuals with disabilities and their families behind. An estimated 26.9% of adults with a disability are employed, compared to 65.1% of adults without a disability. Individuals with disabilities and their families are more likely to have incomes at or below the poverty line: Coloradoans with disabilities have an average annual income of $23,158, compared to $33,626 for those without a disability. An estimated 17.1% of individuals with disabilities have incomes below the poverty line, compared to 10.6% of individuals without a disability.

An estimated 118,048 Coloradoans with a disability between ages 18 to 64 are employed, 22,420 are unemployed, and 146,238 are not in the labor force. People are more likely to acquire a disability as they age. National statistics published by the Centers for Disease Control estimate that 12.5% of Colorado residents ages 18-44, 23.4% of Coloradoans between 45-64, and 35.2% of Coloradoans 65 and older, have some form of disability. Many individuals with disabilities rely on Social Security disability programs as their source of income. The most recent data from the Social Security Administration (SSA)
indicates that 66,086 workers under age 65 received Social Security Disability (SSDI) benefits in 2003, while 34,029 adults ages 18-64 received Supplemental Security Income.

In October 2017, Colorado received a $2.25 million Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant to help address these issues. The purpose of the grant is to improve the education, training, and employment outcomes of adults with disabilities by refining and expanding already successful workforce strategies. DEI focuses on the career pathways framework and strategies to make the existing career pathway system more inclusive and accessible to individuals with disabilities, and helps address the needs for adults with significant disabilities for more individualized services through linkages with SSA’s Ticket to Work (TTW) program.

DEI is an initiative, not a discrete program, with a focus on systems change. The grant is foundational to WIOA, and enhances the workforce system’s ability to meet WIOA requirements to serve individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities; and helps provide access to additional resources through TTW. As such, it seeks to: improve the capacity of all WIOA service delivery components (Workforce, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation) to more effectively serve individuals with disabilities, and enable them to successfully access training and employment opportunities; further the integration of programs and services for job seekers with disabilities at both the state and local levels; and create a model of sustainability that will ensure that system changes and enhancements are permanent and continue after the grant ends.

The DEI is a 36-month project that will extend from October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2020. Because grant funding is limited, local areas are expected to leverage WIOA funding to accomplish the objectives of the grant, including enrollment into the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker programs for training and other services.

Key partners in the grant include the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) Workforce Development Programs (WDP), WDP DEI Project Coordinator, Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC), Colorado Department of Education/Adult Education Initiative (Adult Education), the Governor’s State Two Generation (2Gen) Program, and the participating local workforce areas. Representatives from each of the key partners comprise the DEI Project Leadership Team, which is directed and led by the CWDC.

IV: POLICY/ACTION:

A. Local Area Participation
The following local workforce areas have committed to participating in the DEI Project, including a commitment to either submit an application to become an Employment Network (EN) through the Social Security Administration’s TTW program or contract with an administrative EN:

- Arapahoe/Douglas Works
- Denver
- Pikes Peak

Each of these areas elected to utilize the services of a national administrative EN affiliated with the National Disability Initiative (NDI).
B. Participant Eligibility

Eligible participants are Adults (18 and older) with visible, non-visible, and significant
disabilities, including those who have acquired disabilities in adulthood, and who meet the
eligibility requirements of the WIOA Title I Adult or Dislocated Worker program. This includes
older in-school and out-of-school youth (18-24) with disabilities. For the purposes of the grant,
“disabilities” and “significant disabilities” are defined as:

- Adults with disabilities are job seekers with a disability as defined in section 3 of the
  Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12102), as follows:

  (1) **Disability**: The term “disability” means, with respect to an individual—
      (A) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major
          life activities of such individual;
      (B) a record of such an impairment; or
      (C) regarded as having such an impairment (as described in paragraph (3)).

  (2) **Major life activities**
      (A) **In general**: For purposes of paragraph (1), major life activities include, but
          are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing,
          eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning,
          reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.
      (B) **Major bodily functions**: For purposes of paragraph (1), a major life activity
          also includes the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited
          to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel,
          bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive
          functions.

  (3) **Regarded as having such an impairment**: For purposes of paragraph (1)(C):
      (A) An individual meets the requirement of “being regarded as having such an
          impairment” if the individual establishes that he or she has been subjected to an
          action prohibited under this chapter because of an actual or perceived physical or
          mental impairment whether or not the impairment limits or is perceived to limit a
          major life activity.
      (B) Paragraph (1)(C) shall not apply to impairments that are transitory & minor. A
          transitory impairment has an actual or expected duration of 6 months or less.

- Adults with significant disabilities are job seekers who have physical, sensory, mental,
cognitive, intellectual, or developmental disabilities, as defined by the ADA (above);
  AND receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance
  (SSDI) benefits; AND require significant accommodations, supports, and customization
  of job responsibilities in order to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment
  at or above minimum wage. (see: FOA-ETA-17-05 Section I.B.A, page 2, footnote 1)

**Veterans Priority of Service.** Veterans and spouses of certain veterans have priority of service
for the grant if they have a disability as defined by the ADA, and meet the grant and WIOA
eligibility requirements.
Ticket Holders. Ticket holders are individuals with disabilities who receive Social Security Disability Benefits (i.e. SSI or SSDI). Ticket Holders are eligible to participate in the TTW Program. To participate in the DEI project, interested Ticket Holders must assign their ticket to the participating local area’s administrative EN. Local areas should contact their administrative EN for assistance if the job seeker has assigned their Ticket to another EN.

C. Recruitment of Participants
One of the major objectives of the grant is to expand the capacity of the workforce system to effectively serve individuals with disabilities, measured by the number of participants with disabilities who receive services through the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker programs. Local workforce areas have a number of options available to help identify and recruit project participants, such as using Connecting Colorado to identify applicants who self-identified as an individual with a disability, and asking partner agencies for referrals.

The grant can be used as a vehicle for outreach to engage a wider range of potential community partners such as: DVR; high schools and school-based programs attended by students with disabilities; community colleges; Adult Education; TANF/SNAP programs; community mental health; the VA Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program; disability-related advocacy groups and coalitions; disability-related community-based agencies; Independent Living Centers, and community-based veterans programs.

Local areas are encouraged to work closely with their DVR partners to co-enroll mutual clients early in the assessment, training and employment process; utilize TTW Partnership Plus to seamlessly move clients from DVR to workforce services after they obtain employment; or facilitate the transition from school to employment for older youth enrolled in DVR’s Achieving Success by Promoting Readiness in Education and Employment (ASPIRE) program.

Local areas are encouraged to engage their Jobs for Veterans Services Grant (JVSG) staff in grant outreach activities to help identify and engage eligible veterans, and partner with the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) and CWT programs to provide referrals to the project.

Targeted outreach through websites, social media, flyers, and community events can be used to not only recruit individuals with disabilities for the grant, but also increase awareness of the wide range of services available through the workforce system for job seekers with disabilities.

D. Grant Activities
Although each local area will design and provide services that are consistent with their local plan, the participating areas are encouraged to collaborate and coordinate grant activities regionally to help maximize grant resources and optimize outcomes.

The grant requires that local areas focus on career pathways frameworks to provide services, including modifying existing career pathways to increase their accessibility and effectiveness for adult job seekers with disabilities. If grant funds are used to provide direct services, participants must be enrolled in either the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker program, and local areas are expected to leverage resources through their partner agencies to the fullest extent possible. Grant-funded direct services, therefore, should be used to enhance existing resources or to address gaps in service delivery.
Participant services include, but are not limited to:

- Training (including classroom and On-the-Job Training (OJT))
- Work-Based Learning
  - Paid and unpaid work experiences
  - Pre-apprenticeship training
  - Registered apprenticeships (RA)
  - OJT
  - Customized employment for participants with significant disabilities
- Career services
- Supportive services
- Benefits counseling and/or planning
- Case management
- Strength-based and alternate assessments
- Individualized learning/career development plans
- Two Generation (2Gen) service strategies
- Job search assistance, such as job referrals, job development, hiring events and job fairs

Career Pathways are a critical component in service delivery, and provide a series of connected education and training and support strategies to enable participants to obtain training, industry-relevant certifications, and employment within an occupational area. Local areas are encouraged to work with their local DVR and community colleges to identify, modify and/or develop career pathways for jobseekers with disabilities. Detailed career pathway tool kits are attached to this document, and are also available in the DEI Tool Kit in e-Colorado.

Comprehensive benefits planning is a critical service for all job seekers with disabilities who receive public assistance such as Social Security Disability payments, TANF/SNAP, public housing or rental assistance, etc. because of the impact that employment can have on their benefits. Benefits planning helps job seekers make informed decisions after weighing the overall benefits and costs of employment. The services can be provided in house by the local workforce area using qualified staff, including the Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC); or by contracting with an outside agency to provide these services. Staff who provide benefits planning must be trained and certified through Virginia Commonwealth University (the SSA contractor) or the Cornell University Hoch Tang Institute. Additional information regarding benefits planning and certification can be found in the e-Colorado DEI Tool Kit or through the administrative EN.

E. Coordination of Services with Other Project Partners

Local areas are encouraged to work with their partner agencies (WIOA and non-WIOA) to leverage resources, and coordinate services that meet the needs of participants and reduce the overall costs for each agency. This should include conducting outreach and co-enrolling participants that are from under-represented populations.

Resources including WIOA funds, federal and state discretionary grants, and referrals to partner programs such as Adult Education, Vocational Education, TANF, SNAP, and other local programs for services not available through the workforce center should be utilized.
Local areas may also provide Wagner-Peyser employment services for in-school youth who are 18 and older, and engaged in pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs through their local secondary schools, career and technical education programs, and community colleges.

2Gen service strategies can help increase the participant’s potential for successful completion of training by recognizing that an individual’s success is also dependent upon their family’s success. Collaborative partnerships should be used to provide additional services not available through WIOA to meet the needs of family members.

**F. Grant Enrollment and Activity**

DEI is an initiative and not a program, which means that system changes and enhancements are intended to become permanent and continue after the grant ends. One of its key objectives is to increase access to, and participation in, WIOA programs. To help reinforce this objective, all individuals with disabilities who receive services through the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker program, effective October 1, 2017, count towards grant performance outcomes, regardless of whether they receive services directly funded through the grant. Local areas are therefore not required to record, track, or report DEI enrollments unless they plan to use grant funds to provide direct services to an individual.

*If the local area uses grant funds to provide direct services, they must record and track the grant-funded services by entering the E/A code for DEI within the grant-funded activity, and entering the amount expended in the cost field.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Code:</th>
<th>Adult (AD) or Dislocated Worker (DW), as appropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity Codes:</td>
<td>Any applicable activity code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E/A Code:</td>
<td>Disability Employment (DE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> Use only if DEI funds are used to provide the service</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Field:</td>
<td>The cost field must be completed for each activity code funded through the grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant Characteristics Codes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Security Disability Benefits (SSI)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> Includes both SSI and SSDI recipients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training Completion Codes:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hired (H)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing (C)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsuccessful (U)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grant requires that the State report on the number of individuals with disabilities who enter and complete WIOA-funded training. It is therefore critical that a training completion code be entered for all participants who receive training services.

The grant requires additional information on grant participants who are Ticket holders that may not be tracked or reported through Connecting Colorado. Local areas should work with their administrative EN regarding ways to track and report this information.
G. Case File and Documentation Requirements

The case file and documentation must meet the requirements for the applicable WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker program. For the purposes of the grant, it is important to ensure that the participant’s disability status and SSDI/SSI benefits (when applicable) are appropriately documented.

Disability Status – Applicants must provide documentation regarding the existence and nature of their disability. Documentation requirements are the same as those used for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. In accordance with WIOA guidelines, self-attestation will only be allowed as a last resort, with the reason for allowing self-attestation clearly noted in the case file.

SSDI/SSI Benefits – Applicants who receive SSI or SSDI must provide documentation such as their benefit award letter or other correspondence from Social Security; or, written information from a state/local agency (e.g. DVR, county human services) or the Administrative EN that has already documented the receipt of SSI or SSDI benefits as part of their enrollment process.

H. Reporting Requirements

Quarterly Reporting

Local areas are required to submit a quarterly progress reports using the attached reporting template. This report must be sent via email to the DEI State Coordinator within 30 days after the end of the quarter.

In addition to reporting on funding expenditures, participant enrollment and activities, and performance measures, the local areas must track and document strategic planning activities, partner engagement, and additional career service and training outcomes. The submission of success stories is a required element of the quarterly report.

Closeout Report

A project closeout report shall be submitted to the state within 30 days of the end of the grant period of performance. A narrative statement outlining the highlights, challenges, successes, and customer and partner feedback must be included in the report. The report should be sent via email to the DEI State Coordinator.

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<th>Report #</th>
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## 1. Performance Requirements

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<th>Target</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Year</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Year</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td><strong>Individuals with Disabilities Served in WIOA Adult &amp; Dislocated Worker Programs</strong></td>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DE</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>72</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
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<td>DE</td>
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<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals with Disabilities Who Complete Training Under WIOA Adult/DW Programs</strong></td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ET</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>24</strong></td>
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<table>
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<th>Outcome Measure</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Year</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Year</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Year</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DE</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>$3,340</td>
<td>$3,340</td>
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<td>$3,340</td>
<td>$3,340</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,020</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,020</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,020</strong></td>
<td><strong>$30,060</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Social Security Disability Beneficiaries Participating in Career Pathways Programs</strong></td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>9</strong></td>
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### Expected Outcomes of Serving Ticket Holders (Continued from previous page)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Measure</th>
<th>1st Year</th>
<th>2nd Year</th>
<th>3rd Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Social Security Disability Beneficiaries Employed or Received a Placement in Post-Secondary Education</td>
<td>AR</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DE</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ET</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of TTW Milestones Achieved in Program Year</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>TBD¹</td>
<td>TBD¹</td>
<td>TBD¹</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

¹ - To be determined, based upon first year experience.

### J. Other Grant Requirements

The grant requires that participating local areas:

- Serve participants through either the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker program, in accordance with WIOA requirements and guidelines
- Leverage WIOA core programs and other program resources to the greatest extent possible to fund education, employment, and training activities, and supportive services for participants
- Either apply to become an Employment Network (EN) in the SSA TTW Program, and maintain EN status for the duration of the grant; OR contract with a qualified administrative EN
- Hire, or appoint, a full time DRC
- Participate in a national grant-related training conference in Washington DC, to be announced at a later date

A DRC must have disability-related and workforce knowledge skills, experience and abilities; and, be knowledgeable about career pathways systems and programs. If possible, the DRC should be an individual with a disability, but this is not required.

The DRC’s responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Assist in identifying and leveraging disability-related resources and partners to support collaboration on career pathways efforts
- Advise the workforce system on how to effectively promote the participation of individuals with disabilities in career pathways systems and programs
- Coordinate with career pathways programs’ direct service delivery staff, including career coaches
- Assist in LWDB, workforce staff, community college, business and other partner disability-related trainings (e.g. TTW as a potential source for training funds, accommodations, assistive technology, assessments, etc.)
- Assist the recruitment of individuals with disabilities to participate in career pathways programs and to utilize workforce services
- Help expand the workforce system’s participation as ENs under TTW
- Help Ticket Holders to participate in career pathways programs
• Help ensure that job seekers with disabilities access all the different programs and services they need, including career and training services, through workforce to participate in existing career pathways programs.
• Facilitate an effective approach to leverage resources needed for individuals with disabilities to fully participate in existing career pathways programs and achieve their employment goals.

DRCs may also provide benefits planning services on a part time basis for individuals interested in participating in grant activities.

K. Technical Assistance and Training
CDLE will work closely with National Disability Institute (NDI) to provide technical assistance and training on a wide variety of topics. NDI has worked with DEI since its inception in 2010, and many of its TA Coaches are former DRCs, Disability Program Navigators, or Benefits Planners. Training and technical assistance will be provided in a variety of ways including conference calls, webinars, site visits, in person meetings, monthly newsletters, and web-based resources.

A tool kit for the grant has been set up in e-Colorado to provide a wide range of resources on grant-related topics such as grant requirements, tools and templates, career pathways, Ticket to Work, workplace accommodations, newsletters, and websites.

Additional web-based resources are available through WorkforceGPS, including a Disability and Employment Community of Practice, and DEI-specific resources and archived training.

L. Outreach, Marketing and Promotional Guidelines, Limitations, Constraints
All outreach activity, marketing, and promotional expenses must be allowable pursuant to OMB Federal accounting principles and applicable circulars.

M. Monitoring Responsibilities
CDLE will review the grant’s progress at the state level on an ongoing basis to ensure that the overall grant activities, deliverables, expenditures (when applicable), and performance outcomes are in compliance with federal and state requirements.

N. Allowable Costs
Grant funds may be used to support activities under any of the six (6) career pathways program elements identified in the Career Pathways Toolkit: A Guide for System Development and the Career Pathways Toolkit: an Enhanced Guide and Workbook for System Development.

Allowable uses of grant funds may include:
• Universal design - Services and activities to strengthen workforce capacity to serve more individuals with disabilities using a customer-centered design approach
  o Includes minor modifications to ensure full program and physical accessibility
• Services and grant activities such as:
  o Participant training (e.g. classroom, pre-apprenticeship)
  o Work-Based Learning (e.g. OJT, internships, paid work experiences)
  o Customized employment for participants with significant disabilities
- Career services
- Supportive services
- Benefits counseling and planning (including training and certification)
- Case management
- Accessible curriculum design and modifications
- Strength-based and alternate assessments
- Individualized learning/career development plans
- Project staff – DRC to enhance knowledge; facilitate cross-agency collaboration, leverage available resources, and advise the workforce system on changes needed to make the existing career pathways system fully accessible and inclusive of individuals with disabilities. May also include case managers and other staff necessary to implement career pathways systems and programming.
- Professional development – Includes staff training and capacity building to achieve project goals, including staff training and certification for benefits planning
- Travel – Includes necessary travel to conduct activities in the workforce area and attendance at a national conference
- Administrative Costs – Direct costs only, not to exceed 10%

V. IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Effective immediately.

VI. INQUIRIES:
Please direct all inquiries to Steven Gold, DEI Project Coordinator, (303) 318-8836, steven.gold@state.co.us.

Elise Lowe-Vaughn, Director
Workforce Programs, Policy and Strategic Initiatives

ATTACHMENTS:
1. Quarterly Narrative Report Template

RESOURCE LINKS:
1. Career Pathways Checklist
   https://e-colorado.coworkforce.com/FolderNav.aspx?ID=32215

4. Technical Assistance and Training Overview