
	<b>NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE DIVISION OF WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS</b>
	<b>DWS Operational Guidance Number: OG 10-2023</b>
	<b>Date: November 13, 2023</b>
	<b>Subject: Business Services Funding for Industry Sector Partnerships Planning Grants for Program Year (PY) 2023</b>
	<b>From:</b>  <b>Chet Mottershead</b> <b>Assistant Secretary for Workforce</b>

**Purpose:**

To provide planning grant funding to Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) to convene local and regional partners and employers, plan and develop strategies and initiatives for evidence-based, in-demand industry sector partnerships as a regional strategy to meet the needs of businesses [WIOA Section 108(b)(4)(B)], specifically in subsectors of Advanced Manufacturing and primarily focused on clean energy, where applicable.

**Background:**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) emphasizes the important role of sector strategies in a dynamic regional workforce development plan. Within WIOA, regional coordination and planning requirements include the necessity of a regional plan that supports the “development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the regions.” Sector strategies are useful models of local and regional workforce development that are well-positioned to align the collective needs of employers in an in-demand industry with the skilled workforce needed, while ensuring a successful career pathway from training to employment and career progression. There is evidence of the effectiveness of a sector approach but the transition from paper to practice can be challenging. Real-world collaboration can be hard to sustain without dedicated support and focused commitment. Scaling effective strategies can also be challenging as the context, partnerships, and workforce challenges within specific sectors may involve factors and considerations that vary from those in a local or regional economic development area.

The United States Department of Labor (USDOL’s) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) developed a sector strategy framework which defines it as a partnership of multiple employers within a critical industry that brings together education, economic development, workforce systems, and community

organizations to identify and collaboratively meet the workforce needs of that industry within a regional labor market.

The ETA's Sector Strategy Implementation Framework advances five key elements that state and regional workforce partnerships should master in implementing a sector approach. They include:

- Data-Informed Decision Making - the organization/partnership uses rigorous data to make decisions about target industries and education and training investments.
- Industry Engagement - there is meaningful and continuous involvement of targeted industry sector employers in designing and delivering programs and services.
- Sector-Based Service Delivery - all partners are effectively facilitating the delivery of workforce solutions to be responsive to the needs of workers and the targeted industry sector(s).
- Sustainability and Continuous Improvement - the organization/ partnership is able to measure sector strategy outcomes and has an effective and realistic plan to financially sustain sector work over time.
- Organizational Capacity and Alignment - the organization/partnership has the personnel, policies, vision, and resources in place to continually support sector strategy outcomes.

As a sector industry, North Carolina emphasizes and prioritizes its commitment to clean energy. Governor Cooper initiated Executive Orders No. 80 "North Carolina's Commitment to Address Climate Change and Transition to a Clean Energy Economy"; Executive Order No. 246 "North Carolina's Transformation to a Clean, Equitable Economy", and Executive Order 271 "Growing North Carolina's Zero-Emission Vehicle Market" to support North Carolina's commitment to growing a clean energy economy.

**Action:** Local Area WDBs may apply individually or jointly within state economic regions for PY23 Business Services funds in amounts of up to \$35,000 (per local WDB) by completing and submitting the request form (Attachment 1) no later than 30 calendar days from this issued guidance.

The Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) will evaluate each application and award up to \$35,000 to support the planning of new and/or enhanced regional sector partnerships within Advanced Manufacturing subsectors, especially those that promote and support clean energy jobs. The five key elements of the final implementation plans will align with the USDOL framework.

Training and technical assistance for all applicants will be coordinated by the Business Services Unit throughout the planning year and monthly progress reporting will be required.

**Effective Date:** Immediately

**Expiration:** December 31, 2024

**Contact:** DWS Business Services Unit

**Attachments:**

1. Industry Sector Partnerships Planning Grants Funding Request Form
2. Allowable Uses of Industry Sector Partnerships Planning Grants Funding

Expired