

Mass Workforce Issuance

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☐ Policy

☒ Information

To: Chief Elected Officials
Workforce Development Board Chairs
Workforce Development Board Directors
Title I Administrators
Career Center Directors
Title I Fiscal Officers
DCS Operations Managers

cc: WIOA State Partners

From: Alice Sweeney, Director
Department of Career Services

Date: June 18, 2018

Subject: **New Funding Opportunity – Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) Demonstration Projects - Call for Ideas**

Purpose: The Department of Career Services is seeking at least one local workforce board that is interested in entering into a cooperative agreement specific to the US Department of Labor (DOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) *Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) Demonstration Projects*.

Background: The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), in collaboration with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL, the Department), and the Social Security Administration (SSA) have announced the availability of approximately \$20,000,000 in funds authorized by Section 169, subsection (b)(5), of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Section 1110 of the Social Security Act, and Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 to plan and conduct pilot demonstration projects in Phase 1 of RETAIN – the Retaining Employment and Talent after Injury/Illness Network. A subset of Phase 1 RETAIN awardees will competitively receive Phase 2 RETAIN cooperative agreements and funds to implement projects at full scale. DOL will award all funds and administer all cooperative agreements in both phases of RETAIN.

The RETAIN Demonstration Projects will be funded in two (2) phases. **This FOA covers Phase 1.** The initial period of performance (Phase 1) is eighteen (18) months and includes planning and start-up activities, including the launch of a small pilot demonstration. The small pilot demonstration must begin within nine (9) months of the award or immediately after the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provides Paperwork Reduction Act approval for the project's information collection, whichever occurs later. DOL expects to provide approximately \$2,500,000 each to up to eight (8) state workforce agencies in the form of cooperative agreements for Phase 1. The state workforce agencies must partner with the State Health Departments, or equivalent entities generally responsible for managing, regulating, or influencing the provision of health services; health care systems practicing coordinated care and population health management; and the State Workforce Development Board. Expenditures for planning activities are limited to \$1,000,000, leaving a minimum of \$1,500,000 for pilot implementation.

At the conclusion of the initial period of performance, up to four (4) Phase 1 awardees will be awarded supplemental funding of up to \$19,750,000 each to implement the demonstration projects during Phase 2 through a separate competition. Awardees will continue receiving support from the RETAIN Program TA Provider. If funds are available in future years, DOL may award additional Phase 2 cooperative agreements to Phase 1 awardees not initially selected for Phase 2. More information on the two-phased funding process is in Section II.A and II.B.

DOL will host a prospective applicant webinar for this competition. The date, time, and other logistical information will be posted on ODEP's website at <https://www.dol.gov/odep>.

Funding Opportunity:	<u>FOA-ODEP-18-01</u>
Application Deadline:	July 23, 2018
Total Funds Available:	\$20,000,000
Award Ceiling:	\$2,500,000
Expected Number of Awards:	Up to 8
Period of Performance:	18 months
Eligible Applicants:	State Departments of Labor, State Workforce Development Agencies, or an equivalent entity with responsibility for labor, employment, and/or workforce development; and Entities described in section 166(c) of WIOA relating to Indian and Native American programs

Eligible Participants:

- Must be employed, or at a minimum in the labor force, at the onset of the injury, illness, or condition (work- or non-work-related) for which they are participating in RETAIN; and

- May not include individuals who have applications for federal disability benefits pending or who are already receiving such benefits as the onset of the injury or illness.

The primary goals of the RETAIN Demonstration Projects are:

1. To increase employment retention and labor force participation of individuals who acquire, and/or are at risk of developing, work disabilities; and
2. To reduce long-term work disability among project participants, including the need for federal disability benefits (i.e., Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

On **Monday, June 25**, a second **prospective applicant teleconference** to answer questions about the FOA is being held. Details are as follows:

- *Date:* Monday, June 25, 2018
- *Time:* 1:00 p.m. ET
- *Dial In Number:* 888-989-6419
- *Participant Passcode:* 1023755

The audio recording and written transcript from the first prospective applicant teleconference are [posted on ODEP's website](#). The second prospective applicant teleconference will also be recorded and posted to the website for those who are

Action

Requested: Please share with management, staff and partners as appropriate.

Please review solicitation FOA-ODEP-18-01 in its entirety. The Department of Career Services is exploring the viability of an application; DCS would be the Lead Applicant, as described in the FOA. State Partners have begun to shape an idea for this grant opportunity. The application must include **at least one cooperative agreement with a Local Workforce Development Board**.

If you feel you have a program or existing relationship that will lend itself to this project, please contact Leslie Seifried at Leslie.Seifried@MassMail.State.MA.US by close of business **June 20, 2018**.