**WorkforceGPS**

**National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) Prospective Applicant Information**

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*Transcript by*

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GRACE MCCALL: And welcome to "National Farmworker Jobs Program – NFJP – Prospective Applicant Information" webinar. So without further ado I'd like to turn things over to Steven Rietzke, division chief, Division of National Programs, Tools, and Technical Assistance, United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Take it away, Steve.

STEVEN RIETZKE: Thank you, Grace. Hi, everyone. Good afternoon or good morning, if you're calling from a Pacific or Mountain time zone. We're glad to have you with us today. Happy Monday.

As Grace said, this is the prospective applicant webinar for the National Farmworker Jobs Program competition. We're all coming at you remotely, as I'm sure many of you are probably working. I'm going to hope that my dog doesn't howl too much while I'm kicking off this webinar. But you might hear a little bit; sounds like she might want to come inside.

So I just wanted to give you kind of a quick overview of the webinar today before I kick it off – or kick it over to our team here to go through the more detailed content. Just moving ahead in the slides, today my fellow speakers are going to be Laura Ibañez, who's the unit chief for the Specialty National Programs unit here in the Division of National Programs, Tools, and Technical Assistance; Francisca Rios, who is a workforce analyst on Laura's team, and glad she's joining us today; and Jimmie Curtis is the grant officer for NFJP and he'll be joining as well.

And before we get started, we are just curious kind of who's on the line with us today. So we've got a poll here for you to fill out. If you could, just let us know are you representing a current NFJP grantee? Are you with an organization that has been an NFJP grantee in the past but isn't currently? Or are you new to NFJP and looking forward to learning more about it?

All right. Looks like folks are filling it in. Fairly even between current grantees and new applicants. Almost exactly tied, actually, in terms of the number of folks on the line from those two categories. So welcome to those of you who are looking at applying to NFJP for the first time. And welcome to our current grantees as well.

I'll give you just another minute to keep clicking your answers in. A few more folks entering. Looks like that's probably about everybody. So we're pretty much even between current grantees and new applicants. Thanks, everybody.

So just to kind of give you a brief overview of what we're going to talk about, I'll go down this list here and there's a few key things that I wanted to point out before we kick off the detailed presentation. So we already gave you some brief introductions. We're going to give you an overview of the NFJP program, talk a little bit about the award types and amounts under this competition, as well as the eligibility information, and some of the details about application and submission.

One thing that I wanted to say right upfront – and Grace already kind of mentioned in it – which is that essentially we're really cautious about consistency in communication and information related to grant competitions. And because of this and because it can sometimes be hard to answer things on the fly, we're not actually answering questions live via this webinar today. We're just trying to give kind of a general overview and some highlights of what's in the funding opportunity announcement.

For the purpose of actually answering questions, as Grace mentioned, there's a point of contact that's listed in the FOA – the funding opportunity announcement – that's Charese Moore; she's on Jimmie's team in the grant shop.

And so as you have questions today, please write them down and submit them through that process. That makes sure that we've got sort of one funnel, one point of contact where all the answers come in – or where all the questions come in. And then we're able to coordinate the way that we answer those questions on the back end so that we can make sure that folks are getting consistent information and consistent answers.

So thank you for bearing with us on that. And again, please follow that process if you do have questions. And we appreciate it.

So a couple other things that I wanted to point out. First off, we recognize this is a crazy time right now. And that's kind of an understatement, right? Like, we're all in the midst of a global pandemic. And I know that you all, like we are, are really working hard to figure out what that means for your organizations, for your communities, for the constituencies and participants that you serve. And so I just want to acknowledge that.

We recognize that this is a fairly intense time where a lot of folks are working remotely and there's a lot of things going on. So we also recognize that it may be a little harder than – or maybe even a lot harder – than in a normal situation to respond to a funding opportunity announcement. So we recognize that.

Under our current statutory authority, we're really on a timeline to make July awards. And so that's why we're really sticking with this competition timeline, even though we recognize that it's sort of a more difficult than normal situation to respond to an FOA.

I think the good news is that you should be able to complete all the requirements under the FOA even if you're working in a remote scenario. It's fine to have things like electronic signatures and other kind of virtual stand–ins, where in the past you might have had to show up and actually get someone to sign with a wet ink signature, things like that. We're really not holding anybody to that kind of standard and it's fine to do this in a virtual environment.

So hopefully that doesn't – the fact that you're remote shouldn't restrict your ability to respond to this FOA.

One other thing I wanted to point out, that we've actually removed from this FOA – so there's not a page number I can give you for it, but in the previous competition there was a requirement to follow a process of actually submitting your application materials to the relevant governors' offices in the states where you would be providing services.

We actually re–looked at the underlying requirements in WIOA – the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – that that process was based on, and ultimately we decided that we could accomplish something pretty similar if ETA actually did the outreach on the back end once awards are made.

I think we want to make sure that governors' offices in every state are aware of who the NFJP grantee is and aware that those grantees should be at the table in terms of WIOA MOUs and infrastructure agreements and all that kind of stuff. But we didn't think it was necessary for grantees to actually do that in the application process. So we took it out.

So hopefully that is one of the requirements that we've simplified or eliminated to make it a little bit easier, especially in this time when you may not want to walk into a post office, frankly. So that's one thing.

The other thing that I wanted to point out is some – it's some new language in the FOA but it's based on appropriations language that's in the NFJP appropriation statute. And that one I can give you a page number. If you're in the PDF version of the FOA, it's back on page 38. And it's in the funding restrictions section and it's a section called "Minimum Spending of 70 Percent on Employment and Training Services." And this applies to career services and training grants.

And long story short, the appropriation gives a few different percentages. One relates to how to housing and – permanent housing versus temporary housing. But the other ratio that the appropriation gives is that career services and training grants should spend – or must spend – not than 70 percent on employment and training services.

And so we actually break down in the FOA some definitions that flow from that statutory appropriation language to explain what we would consider employment and training services versus not employment and training services. So if you go to that section, please take a look at that because it gives some specific definitions in that context that you should keep in mind as you're developing your grant applications.

And basically, what it ultimately says is that employment and training services does not include related assistance as it's defined under the NFJP regs, or administrative costs. But essentially, employment and training services includes everything other than those two categories. So take a look at that section just to keep those ratios in mind as you're developing program plans and budgets.

So those are the highlights that I wanted to give right off the bat. And I'm going to turn it over to Laura Ibañez to kick off the rest of the presentation.

LAURA IBAÑEZ: Thank you, Steve. So this announcement solicits applications for the National Farmworker Jobs Program, also referred to as NFJP.

Through NFJP the department will fund career services and training grants and housing grants for migrant and seasonal farmworkers, including MSFW youth and their dependents, to receive career services, training services, housing assistance services, youth services, and other related assistance services that help retain and stabilize their current agriculture jobs as well as acquire new skills they need to start careers that provide higher wages and stable, year–round employment.

There is approximately $91 million grant funds. And we're going to say a little bit more about the $91 million in grant funds later in this presentation.

So NFJP grantees awarded under this announcement must actively partner with state monitor advocates and nearby American Job Centers to deliver comprehensive work–based learning services and create pathways that lead to better economic outcomes for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents.

NFJP grantees are required One–Stop partners and must enter into an MOU with the local workforce development board. And there's a couple things that I want to note about this slide. So if not previously established, grantees are expected – so if not previously established, grantees are expected to enter into an MOU with the local workforce development board within the first six months of receiving an award, which establishes the respective responsibilities for providing access to NFJP services through the One–Stop delivery system.

And we also want to take a moment to remind you, given especially all that is going on, we felt like it was important to just flag for you that signed letters of commitment and MOUs are listed as a requested attachment in the FOA, not a required attachment in the FOA. So if an applicant fails to include the letters of commitment of MOUs, they won't be screened out. We just wanted to make sure that we say that out loud.

I am now going to hand it over to Francisca Rios at this time. Thank you.

JIMMIE CURTIS: Thank you, Laura. Good afternoon, everyone. Good morning. Hope you all are doing well. Again, this is Jimmie Curtis, the grant officer for this program. So like Laura said, of the $91 million, approximately $85 million is available through this funding opportunity announcement to fund an estimated 52 grants. And that's for the career services and training grants.

Eligible participants receive quality career services and training opportunities through a case management approach. As Laura already said, we expect the grantees to partner with employers to build their knowledge of the industries, help to inform the program design of the grant, generate resources, and broaden reach.

Also, we – in terms of goals for participants, obviously in the career services and training grants the main overarching goal is better earnings for participants and a better quality of life. When we get to the housing grants, there's approximately $6 million to fund an estimated 7 to 20 grants.

And I'll stop there just to make one quick note. So in the previous slide we talked about how the money that's available for career services and training grants is available for about 52 grants.

One of the things we mentioned in the FOA that's publicly available is that if you go to last year's TEGL – training employment guidance letter – and this would be the program year '19 TEGL, which is hyperlinked in the FOA. It lists all of the grantees for the career services and training grants, as well as the housing grants. And that gives you some idea of what the breakdown looks like for program year '19.

That's a good reference. We get a lot of questions asking how much should I apply for on the housing end? How much should I apply for on the career services end? So please refer to those allocations because that's sort of a good guidepost.

So back to the housing grants. Again, like Steve mentioned earlier, the housing grants are broken down into two different types of expenditures, one housing temporary and then obviously permanent housing. Grantees can also expend funds on related assistive services, including emergency assistance.

And the overarching goal for our housing grants is basically to increase living options available to MSFWs and their families.

I'll go ahead and turn it over to Francisca now.

FRANCISCA RIOS: Hello, everyone. My name is Francisca Rios, workforce analyst with the Specialty National Programs.

I will be going over the eligibility information, which includes the following: eligible applicants, career services and training grants, housing grants, participant eligibility, career services and training participant eligibility, and housing grant participant eligibility.

First I'm going to start with eligible applicants. Eligible applicants must have an understanding of the problems eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents face. They must also have a familiarity with the agriculture industry and the labor market needs of the proposed service area. They must have the ability to demonstrate the capacity to administer and deliver effectively a diversified program of workforce investment activities.

And priority of consideration and two bonus points will be awarded if the applicant, or at least one subgrantee, has at least one census tract in their target area designated by the secretary of the Treasury as a qualified opportunity zone. For more information on opportunity zones, you can visit the link on this slide for more opportunity zones frequently asked questions.

On the next slide we're going to talk about career services and training grants. The career services and training grant applications are being solicited for a single NFJP grant per state, including Puerto Rico, to serve the eligible migrant and seasonal farmworker population within that state, with the following exceptions.

No application will be accepted to operate NFJP in the District of Columbia, due to the small relative share of eligible participants and seasonal agricultural employment. Between four and six entities will be selected to provide NFJP services in California.

Connecticut and Rhode Island are a combined service delivery area. Delaware and Maryland are a combined service delivery area. And applications for the two combined state service delivery areas listed above must consider the two states as a single geographic area.

On the next slide we're going to talk about housing grants. And for the purposes of this announcement, housing grant applications are being solicited for service areas designated by the applicant and may be for a single state, multiple contiguous states, and portions of one or more contiguous states.

Next is participant eligibility. Program eligibility information can be found in TEGL 18–16. Additional program participant eligibility information is also available on May 2018 frequently asked questions document.

The NFJP Eligibility flowchart will help applicants better understand the eligibility requirements for NFJP participants. Pursuant to WIOA section 189(h) – Enforcement of Military Selective Service Act for Career Services and Training Grants and Housing Grants – NFJP male participants must meet the registration requirements of the Military Selective Service Act by registering for selective service as required. Additional information is also available in TEGL 18–16.

On career services and training participant eligibility, on the date of application for enrollment, in order to receive career services and training, an individual must be either an eligible seasonal farmworker adult, an eligible migrant farmworker adult, eligible migrant and seasonal farmworker youth, or the dependent of a migrant and seasonal farmworker; and a low–income individual who faces multiple barriers to economic self–sufficiency as defined in section 6 of TEGL 18–16.

For housing grant participant eligibility, on the date of application for enrollment, in order to receive permanent housing assistance services, an individual must be either an eligible migrant and seasonal farmworker, eligible migrant and seasonal farmworker family, other individual, or other families; and a low–income individual who faces multiple barriers to economic self–sufficiency as defined in section 6 of TEGL 18–16.

On the date of application for enrollment, in order to receive temporary housing assistance services, an individual must be either an eligible migrant and seasonal farmworker, or eligible migrant and seasonal farmworker family; and low–income individual who faces multiple barriers to economic self–sufficiency as defined in section 6 of TEGL 18–16.

And now I'm going to turn it over to Jimmie Curtis. Thank you.

MR. CURTIS: Thank you, Francisca. OK. So now I'm going to quickly go through the application submission requirements for this funding opportunity announcement. And again, all of this is publicly available in the funding opportunity announcement.

So first you have the Standard Form 424, which is the Application for Federal Assistance.

And let me just start by saying – and I'll reiterate this again later – all applications will be submitted via grants.gov electronically. We cannot accept any hard paper, hard copy applications through the mail. So everything will be done on grants.gov. And I think most of you all are very familiar with that application.

Besides the SF–424, we also have the SF–424A and the budget narrative, which we combined to call the project budget; the project narrative and then the attachments to the project narrative that are spelled out in the FOA.

So just to go over each one of these elements of the application. For the SF–424, you know, obviously you're going to make sure your DUNS number is on there. You want to make sure that you're registered sam.gov. There is SAM registration flexibility due to the pandemic right now, which allows applicants who are going to become inactive very soon, or who are inactive, to still be able to submit an application.

One of the things I do want to just caution everybody with regard to that is, if your sam.gov registration status goes to an inactive status, you definitely want to make sure that by the time we're ready to make awards over the coming months, that you work with sam.gov to get your registration status active. Our internal system does not allow us – our grant making system does not allow us to actually make an application to a sam.gov inactive applicant.

So again, just please work to try to get that active if you are inactive at any time under which your application is being considered by us.

In terms of the project budget, which is the 424A and the budget narrative, you want to make sure that you submit those documents as well. And that's clearly spelled out in the FOA.

The project narrative, I'm not going to go over each element here, but this is clearly described in the funding opportunity announcement. Each section of the project narrative, as well as there's the evaluation criteria as well, which talks about how much each section is worth in terms of the score. So you see those amounts there as well as the sections of the project narrative.

In addition to the project narrative, applicants should submit their attachments as well. You want to make sure your attachments are clearly labeled as such. There's requested and required attachments, as Laura mentioned earlier.

We will not consider any materials above and beyond the project narrative, as well as the rest of the documents that are talked about in the previous slide. So letters of support, any extraneous documents, we ask that you please leave those out of the submission. And then in section IV.B.4 of the FOA there's information on valid attachment file names.

Lastly, in terms of the application screening criteria, the chart that is early – pretty early in the FOA, you want to definitely refer to that to make sure that you have all of the information that's required, to make sure that your application is deemed responsive. So you see all the different elements there.

Obviously you want to make sure to submit it on time. You also want to make sure you have all the different components, the SF–424, the 424A, budget narrative, project narrative, and those other two forms and information that's listed there.

Applications must be received on the closing date, May the 14th, by 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time. And again, the only way to submit an application for this NFJP funding opportunity announcement is electronically through grants.gov.

So I just want to really make sure I encourage everyone to be prepared if you're having any issues troubleshooting with grants.gov or trying to get access to your particular package in grants.gov, please work with the grants.gov help desk on those technical issues. And definitely – I would definitely advise against waiting to the last minute to do so because the deadline is the deadline and we only accept applications that come in before May the 14th at 4:00 p.m.

All right. Now I'll turn it over to Steve.

MR. RIETZKE: Great. Thank you, Jimmie, Francisca and Laura. That's the content we had for you today. Hopefully that gave you a good sense of some of the key sections of the FOA and some key points about the application and submission process.

Jimmie, thank you for emphasizing the point that we're only accepting electronic applications now. And obviously, that's because essentially none of us are at the building to receive anything. So please do make sure you get familiar with the electronic submission process if you're not already, and be prepared to submit it that way.

I saw a note in our presenter chat on our end that someone had pointed out there's a – there may be a bad link in the PowerPoint presentation that leads to one of our FAQ documents on the NFJP eligibility. And we're going to check into that and make sure we fix the link before the final version of the PowerPoint is posted on the page associated with this webinar.

Again, if you have questions about the FOA and the competition, please send them to Charese Moore. Her information is up here on the screen. That email address is where we're funneling all the questions for NFJP's competition. And thank you, Charese, for being that coordinator.

And with that, I just want to wish you all good luck in the competition. I hope that you and your families and loved ones and coworkers and participants are staying safe and healthy during this pandemic. And with that I'll wish you good day.

And Grace, am I turning it back over to you for a couple more housekeeping items?

(END)