**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities Initiative Round 2**

**Potential Applicant**

**Friday, May 29, 2020**

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LAURA CASERTANO: I want to welcome everyone to today's "Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities Initiative Round 2: Potential Applicant" webinar. And I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Robert Kight. He's the division chief with the Office of Workforce Investment, with the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Robert, take it away.

ROBERT KIGHT: OK. Thank you, Laura. Good afternoon, everyone. And we're so glad that you could join us this afternoon. We'd like to thank you for your interest in the Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities Initiative Round 2 funding opportunity announcement.

For today, we'll cover from a fairly high level the major elements of the funding opportunity announcement for the second round of the WORC grant initiative. Our intent is to provide this webinar in conjunction with our other technical assistance sessions to support potential applicants to develop by – in partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Delta Regional Authority, who are our partners throughout this process.

We will also answer questions that you may have during the webinar. But please be mindful that, because this is an open grant competition, there are many questions we are prohibited from answering. However, we will do our best to answer any questions – as many questions as possible throughout the presentation. Next slide, please.

Before we move forward – move on, I'd like to introduce the presenters from whom you'll be hearing throughout today's event. Our first presenter will be Emela Halilovic; she's a program analyst in workforce and education with the Appalachian Regional Commission. Aury Kangelos, who is the program manager of the Delta Regional Authority. And then we have Lynn Fraga who's the grant officer, the U.S. Department of Labor, here at ETA. Next slide, please.

We will start today with some background on the initiative, including why we created this grant opportunity and what we hope it will achieve. But first, let's learn a bit about the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Delta Regional Authority, our partners on this program. Emela?

EMELA HALILOVIC: Thanks, Robert. Welcome, everyone. The Appalachian Regional Commission – ARC – is a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of states – of federal, state, and local government.

ARC was established by an act of Congress back in 1965 and is composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chair who is appointed by the president. Local participation is provided through multi-county local development districts, and we as an agency invest in activities that address the five goals identified in our ARC strategic plan.

Those goals can be seen on the slide, one being economic opportunity; second, ready workforce; third, critical infrastructure; fourth, natural and cultural aspects; and five, a leadership and community capacity.

The ARC region, shown here, includes 420 counties in 13 states. It extends more than 1,000 miles, all the way from southern New York to northeastern Mississippi; and is home to more than 25 million people.

AURY KANGELOS: Thanks, Emela. And thank you, Robert, for allowing DRA to participate on today's webinar. I'd also like to thank all our friends over at ETA for all the time and effort that went into making this second round of this initiative a reality.

Similar to ARC, the Delta Regional Authority is a federal-state partnership created by Congress in 2000 to create jobs, build communities, and improve the lives of the 10 million residents that call the 252 counties and parishes of the 8-state Delta region home.

Led by the Delta Regional Authority board, which is comprised of the federal co-chairman who's appointed by the president and confirmed by the U.S. Senate, and the governors of the eight delta states, DRA fosters local and regional partnerships that address economic and social challenges to ultimately strengthen the Delta economy and the quality of life for our residents.

DRA invests in activities that improve regional economic opportunities and address the three goals identified in our strategic plan that you see here on the screen: improved workforce competitiveness, strengthened infrastructure, and increased community capacity.

As mentioned, the Delta Regional Authority serves residents in the 252 counties and parishes of the Delta, which is comprised of the Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt Region. To further this mission, DRA invests in four strategic areas: transportation infrastructure; basic public infrastructure; business development, with an emphasis on entrepreneurship; and workforce development.

More information on the Delta Regional Authority and our initiatives can be found on our website at dra.gov.

And with that I will turn it back over to Robert to provide an introduction to the WORC initiative.

MR. KIGHT: OK. Thank you, Aury and Emela. As we have mentioned, the WORC initiative is a partnership between the Employment and Training Administration and the ARC and DRA.

The WORC initiative provides grants to enable impacted communities to develop local and regional workforce development solutions aligned with existing economic development strategies and community partnerships to promote new, sustainable job opportunities and long-term economic vitality.

While there are many potentially eligible applicant organizations, all WORC grants must serve participants who reside in the Appalachian or Delta regions. Next slide.

This is round two, as we mentioned, of the WORC grants offered by ETA in partnership with ARC and DRA.

Because the Appalachian and Delta regions have been particularly hard hit by industrial downsizing and closures, and continue to face economic and employment challenges, Congress included language in the 2019 appropriations for the Department of Labor reserving funding to create a grant program that aims to bring economic and workforce success to these underserved areas. Next slide.

What is the goal of the WORC initiative? Well, the WORC initiative – WORC grants aim to achieve a specific and important goal, which we expect applications will aim to address. And that is to create economic prosperity and gainful employment opportunities for eligible residents impacted in the ARC and DRA regions, enabling them to remain and thrive in these communities.

WORC grants must demonstrate that, and how your proposed project aligns workforce and economic development strategies for short-term positive outcomes and long-term economic success for residents, businesses, and communities in the areas covered by your proposed project. Next slide.

As you can see, there's a number of grant objectives here. To achieve the goal of the WORC initiative, successful applications will propose projects that clearly address all of these objectives. I won't read them all to you here, but I do want to point out their importance in developing a successful grant proposal.

You can find these objectives in Section (1-8 ?) of the FOA, which is on page 4 and 5. To achieve the goals of the WORC initiative, successful applications will propose projects that clearly address all of the objectives listed in the FOA. These objectives should be incorporated into your project design.

And I'm quite sure when we get to our question-and-answer period we may have some additional questions related to the objectives. Next slide.

OK. So that's a brief overview of the WORC initiative. Now it's time to turn to a discussion of what the FOA lays out with regard to the grants themselves, including with regard to eligibility, grant activities, and more. For this we'll hear from Emela and Aury. Emela's first. Emela?

MR. KANGELOS: Thank you.

MS. HALILOVIC: Sure. Thanks, Robert. The FOA lists the entities eligible to apply for this funding opportunity. Because this is a competitive grant program, we cannot make determinations as to whether your organization is eligible prior to your submitting an application. If you believe your organization is eligible, you should submit an application and a determination will be made after the closing date.

Please note: your organization may be located anywhere in the U.S., but all services must be provided to eligible participants who live and work in the Appalachia and Delta regions. Your application must demonstrate that you commit to this requirement.

And I'm going to turn it over to Aury. He will tell you more about eligibility and participants.

MR. KANGELOS: Thanks, Emela. There are three types of eligible participants under this initiative. First, dislocated workers as defined in WIOA Section 315; incumbent workers; and new entrants to the workforce.

Applicants have discretion on defining the term "new entrants;" more specifically, to include a wide range of individuals, such as those receiving public assistance, possible dropouts, high school or postsecondary students, individuals enrolled in adult basic and other education programs, individuals with disabilities, veterans, Indian and Native American, and individuals with limited English proficiency.

MS. HALILOVIC: While grants may serve any part of the Appalachian and Delta regions, applicants are encouraged to develop plans to serve individuals who reside in economically-distressed counties and parishes. In addition, applicants are encouraged to serve individuals affected by substance use disorder and we will cover this in more detail shortly.

And now I'm going to turn it over back to Aury.

MR. KANGELOS: Thanks, Emela. Applicants must ensure that planned activities will achieve outcomes that are aligned with existing local or regional economic development and other strategic plan. Applicants must also demonstrate that their plan aligns with at least one element of the relevant 8 ARC or DRA state plans. And finally, applicants must demonstrate that their plan aligns with the relevant WIOA state plan. The FOA provides information on how you can find each of the relevant plans listed in this section.

Applicants must also demonstrate that their plan specifically addresses the current or future workforce needs of at least two local employers. You will be expected to demonstrate how your project will achieve positive outcomes in the short and medium terms. But most importantly, you will be expected to demonstrate long-term economic and workforce benefit to the communities served in the grant.

And with that I will turn it back over to Emela.

MS. HALILOVIC: Thanks. As Aury mentioned, there are four plans with which you must demonstrate alignment in your proposal. We are looking for long-term economic transformation that is sustainable over the long term. You will be expected to present a coherent strategy that truly aligns the strategies proposed with existing demonstrated needs of employers and with the broader economic development strategies in the communities.

We recommend that this alignment is integrated into your full application and is not only addressed in passing in one section. So think about how all aspects of your project will help achieve the goals of the broader economic development or strategic plan.

And now over back to Aury.

MR. KANGELOS: Thanks, Emela. These grants are designed to be flexible and promote innovative solutions to specific challenges, and therefore have a wide range of allowable activities.

The FOA discusses allowable activities in the following categories. We won't get into the details on these, but the FOA provides more context for you and we recommend you read these sections carefully as you design your proposed project.

And you can see the allowable activities are: delivering training or other workforce-related services, developing other innovative approaches to meet specific challenges, providing a wide range of support services to participants, serving and partnering with employers, and equipment purchases and facility renovations.

And with that I will turn it back over to Emela to talk a little bit more about the substance use disorder impacts.

MS. HALILOVIC: Thanks. So one of the priorities for the WORC initiative is to provide services to individuals struggling with substance use disorder. Applicants proposing to specifically address the workforce impacts of substance use disorder are encouraged to consider the following when framing the project.

So for instance, projects that address the substance misuse crisis should focus on creating a recovery ecosystem that will lead to workforce re-entry, including support for the post-treatment to employment continuum, which could support the training of recovery professionals, recovery-focused job training programs, as well as initiatives designed to coordinate, or link, recovery services and training that support the reintegration into the workforce of eligible substance use disorder affected individuals.

The recovery ecosystem. So in addition to considering this and we're encouraging you to consider the first bullet point that I just mentioned when framing your project. We are also encouraging you to consider the following. The recovery ecosystem is a complex link of multiple sectors, including but not limited to recovery communities, peer support, health, human services, faith communities, criminal justice, public safety, housing, transportation, education, and employers; designed to help individuals in recovery access the support services and training they need to maintain recovery and successfully obtain sustainable employment.

Also, you're encouraged to initiate or expand programs designed to eliminate or reduce the harm to the workforce and economic growth of the region that results from substance misuse; attract and retain relevant health care services, businesses, and workers.

And now I'm going to hand it over again to Aury.

MR. KANGELOS: Thanks, Emela. We want to provide a bit more information with regard to the roll of employers in the WORC grants.

Employers play two roles in this grant initiative. First, in demonstrating workforce needs. To ensure that your project is addressing specific workforce needs of local employers, you must include letters attesting to this from two employers. And then the second role is employers as partners in the grant. Applicants must also demonstrate collaboration with a strong and diverse community-wide coalition that must include engagement with at least two employers or industry partners.

Employer or industry partnerships increase the likelihood of establishing work-based learning programs and ensure that training and workforce development efforts are relevant to and evolve along with the needs of the employer community.

Employers provide valuable insight into the development of innovative training approaches, as well as leadership in aligning and enhancing existing strategic plans for the economic diversification and development of the region or community. Applicants should include information in their application about how they will access the leadership and support of the employer community.

And with that I will turn it over to Robert.

MR. KIGHT: Thanks, Aury and Emela. We now turn to a brief discussion of the performance requirements of the WORC initiative. Next slide.

Part of the review and scoring of your application will be focused on the outputs and outcomes of your grant. We recognize that these grants may take many shapes and approaches, and have different measures of success.

Applicants must indicate in their application the performance measures they will collect and share as part of their proposed project. Performance elements may consist of metrics or data that the organization already collects. The application must also demonstrate how these measures are reflective of the overall goals for the project and for the regional strategy.

The WORC grantees will submit a quarterly report consisting of a narrative description, according to a template that will be provided. In addition, there is a unique data collection requirement we will discuss on the next slide. Next slide.

ETA is also interested in learning the employment outcomes from WORC projects through the existing metrics for the workforce system. Applicants should be aware that, once awarded, WORC grants will partner with the workforce system in the local or state government to report these outcomes.

Grantees will be required to provide state or local workforce agencies with the necessary information to register those participants who receive employment-related services or classroom training as described in the FOA. These participants can then be registered in the Wagner-Peyser employment services, where they can access additional services as appropriate. The department will provide technical assistance to grantees post-award on this process. Next slide.

Let's turn now to a discussion of the application requirements, deadline, and process. To do that, I'll introduce Lynn Fraga again, who is the grant officer in ETA for the WORC program. Lynn, it's all yours.

LYNN FRAGA: Thank you, Robert. And hello to all of you. Happy to have the opportunity to talk with you today. And thanks for making the time to join us. I'm going to keep our current pace on track and I'm going to jump right in to what I think is probably my most important slide today.

If there's anything I wish for you to take away from my few minutes with you today, it's that the prospective applicants out there will make a promise to yourselves that you won't procrastinate in applying for this funding opportunity. I know we're all guilty at some point of putting things off, but please don't lose sight of how time-consuming the grant application process is. And I'm sure many of you are well aware of this already.

On top of that, there are plenty of other pitfalls that you have little control over, like technical glitches, also updating your registration with the System of Award Management. Please be sure to leave yourself ample time to react to those unanticipated surprises.

So as you know, the deadline is July 29, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. Eastern time and not a second after. You should be aware that this is a strictive (sic) deadline that we are obligated to adhere to. And it really does pain us from this end to have to declare an application not eligible for consideration due to late arrival, because we do understand the time and effort behind it.

And we're also very aware that for every application submitted there are plenty of folks attached to that effort who are hopeful for some funding assistance to do some good and meaningful work. So again, please do plan for the unexpected and avoid that last-minute submission drill.

Also critical to note, this year as a precautionary measure, during the COVID pandemic we will not be accepting hardcopy applications of any type, whether snail mail, hand deliveries, or overnight express. Grants.gov is the one and only option for application submission.

By now I'm sure that as a prospective applicant you've taken a good look at the funding opportunity announcement, or what we call the FOA. This slide provides several websites where you can find this important document. The document outlines every requirement for applying for the work funding opportunity. I encourage you to read it very well and refer back to it frequently as you prepare your applications.

At the top of this list of FOA locations is grants.gov, which is also the portal through which you will submit your application. I'd like to encourage you to subscribe to this particular announcement in grants.gov. In doing so, you will receive real-time updates regarding amendments and announcements relating to this FOA.

The second URL address on this slide is a grant finding page for the Employment and Training Administration at the U.S. Department of Labor. The third and fourth URL addresses correspond to the websites for our friend at ARC and DRA.

So again, please do read the FOA carefully. It's very easy to miss a critical detail which could result in a disqualification of an incomplete application, or losing significant points for the application not addressing critical information.

So I just mentioned that failing to read the FOA carefully could result in a disqualification of an incomplete application. And I'd like to talk a little bit more about that scenario.

Before an application is reviewed and scored by a panel, it goes through a prescreening process to ensure it meets the basic guidelines of a grant competition and it contains the required components. Should it not meet any one of the required criteria, the application is screened out and it will not go forward for review.

So please do use the checklist in Section 3.C.1 of the FOA to ensure that your application meets the requirements outlined in both this slide as well as the next slide.

So the first prescreen requirement, not surprisingly, is an on-time application, as we discussed. We also assess applicant eligibility, as well as whether we can open your application file and it is readable.

We also ensure the funding request falls within the required range and we check for current registration in the systems for award management, and verify the applicant's DUNS number is current.

The next slide contains additional prescreen requirements and it covers the components of the application itself. A missing application component will also disqualify your application.

These components are: number one, the SF-424, which is the Application for Federal Assistance; the project budget, which contains the SF-424A as well as the project narrative that provides the required details for each line item of the SF-424A. It also includes the applicant designation, which must be a separate attachment indicating whether an applicant is applying under the ARC or DRA service area. And it includes a map for illustration purposes.

And last but not least, the fourth component of the application comes in the form of two options this year. An applicant may submit a project narrative to provide all information required by the FOA, or an applicant may choose to use the optional proposal summary, which is Attachment A to the FOA. Each alternative must be submitted with the applicable attachments and we'll address this in later slides.

A quick note on the proposal summary Attachment A. It's a new option this year with this WORC funding opportunity. It accomplishes the same thing as a project narrative, but it is designed to assist grantees in providing a framework in which to capture all of the FOA's required information. It's intended to be a helpful alternative, but I also want to stress that it is an optional format. Grantees are welcome to submit the more standard project narrative.

So I'd like to talk a little bit more about these two options and let's start with the project narrative. So the project narrative is really the heart of your application. It provides a comprehensive description of the proposed project and it demonstrates and applicant's ability to implement the project in accordance with the provisions of the FOA.

Applicants choosing this format are limited to 10 double-spaced, single-sided, 8.5 by 11-inch pages, with Times New Roman 12-point font, and one-inch margins. Please do adhere to this requirement and be mindful not to ignore it, out of respect for your panel reviewers who have many, many applications to read and score.

The next slide covers additional narrative requirements and it covers how it should be organized. The FOA itself stipulates that the narrative be organized using the section subheadings provided in the FOA. Each of these sections are reviewed against the corresponding scoring criteria in Section 5A of the FOA. For reference, this slide outlines those major headings, from statement of need to the budget and budget narrative.

A quick point of clarification here. The standard language of our FOA references the budget and budget narrative as a section of the project narrative itself. However, it is most often submitted as an attachment to the application, which is absolutely fine. If an applicant does incorporate this into the project narrative document, it does not count towards the 10-page project narrative limit.

Please note too that the benefit of organizing the document according to the FOA subheadings is twofold. It helps applicants include all required information in the order it's referenced in the FOA, and it also assists reviewers as they check for the required information.

And now just a word on the attachments required with the project narrative, which if omitted could result in a loss of points during the scoring of your application. So please pay close attention to the FOA when assembling these attachments required.

These attachments are: the project abstract, the project timeline, two letters of engagement from an employer or industry partner, key staff résumés with job descriptions, as well as information demonstrating fiscal capacity.

And again, I'm going to remind you to include the all-important ARC/DRA designation attachment because, if overlooked, your application will be screened out and disqualified.

So let's talk about your second narrative option, again new this year, the proposal summary Attachment A. For applicants who would like to choose this alternative in lieu of the project narrative, here's what you need to know.

Again, first and foremost, remember the use of this format is optional. It's just meant to be helpful in providing a providing a framework within which you provide the information required by the FOA. While it does not carry with it a page limitation like the project narrative, certain sections do note a word count limit.

I also want to mention that this document is posted on grants.gov at the announcement for this particular FOA and it's available in a fillable format for the convenience of applicants.

Next I also want to mention the list of required attachments that must be submitted with the proposal summary, because this list is actually a little shorter than the list of attachments required with the project narrative. This is because the proposal summary already incorporates some attachment information within its format.

So to that end, bullet three on the slide outlines the attachments for the proposal summary. Again, not surprisingly, I'm going to take one final opportunity to stress that the ARC/DRA designation is required when you use the proposal summary as well. And should you not include it, your application will be screened out. Please don't forget this.

As well, use of the proposal summary requires that you include two other attachments: the two letters of engagement from employer/industry partners; along with an attachment demonstrating fiscal capacity, which can come in the form of a financial assessment form that's incorporated in the FOA, an IRS form 990, or a recent audit report.

The final topic I'd like to address today is just a quick overview of the review and award process. WORC applications will be reviewed by technical merit panels that evaluate the grant proposals against all criteria found in Section 5A of your FOA.

The available appropriated funding this year for this opportunity is approximately $29.2 million, and each award for this opportunity will range from $150,000 to $1.5 million. The actual number of grants, however, will depend upon the number of fundable applications we receive and the amounts (however ?) that they request.

Awards will likely be announced on or just before September 30, 2020. And successful applicants can expect a project start date of September 30, 2020, with a period of performance of no more than 36 months from start date.

Last but not least, should you have questions as you develop your application, please feel free to email Jennifer McEnry, per the information provided in your FOA. I know we've mentioned this before at the outset, but please know that out of fairness to all grant participants, the grant staff here at the Department of Labor is very limited to the assistance we can provide during the open period of the FOA. We generally answer your emailed inquiries by pointing to the section of the FOA that will best address the question asked.

Having said this, though, there are additional technical assistance resources which Emela and Aury will cover in the upcoming slides. In the interim, however, I will first wish you all good luck as you prepare your application packages, and pass the baton back to you, Robert.

MR. KIGHT: OK. Thank you, Lynn. Before we get to the Q&A portion of today's webinar, let's hear a bit about the technical assistance that ARC and DRA are providing to prospective applicants. Emela?

MS. HALILOVIC: Sure. So to assist potential applicants with the application process, ARC has designed a series of webinars, in total seven, to give communities the necessary resources and tools so that they can successfully compete for this funding opportunity. For more information on specific webinar topics and the date and times of those webinars, we have included here a link to our webpage. I encourage you to take a look at that webpage and register for one of those – or all – of the webinars.

In addition, we did conduct a webinar yesterday and we will continue holding the live webinars next week. All of the webinars will be recorded and posted on ARC's YouTube channel.

MR. KANGELOS: Thanks, Emela. In February, DRA hosted three technical assistance workshops in partnership with local and regional workforce experts. Unfortunately, the remaining in-person workshops scheduled for the spring and summer were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To adapt and continue providing pre-award technical support, DRA hosted two technical assistance webinars earlier this month.

All the workshop materials, PowerPoints, webinar recordings, and additional resources can be found on our website through the link provided on your screen, or at dra.gov/workforce.

In the upcoming weeks we'll also be developing a series of video recordings that will outline requirements of the FOA section by section. And again, those recordings will be available on our website in the coming weeks.

And with that I will turn it back over to Robert.

MR. KIGHT: OK. Thanks, Emela and Aury again. Thank you very much. Now is an opportunity for us to open and begin our Q&A portion of the event. I know many of you probably have many questions that you have. And so we'll see – do our best to answer those questions this afternoon. (Pause.)

Do we have any questions there? (Pause.)

MS. FRAGA: This is Lynn. I see – I believe question one – I'm having trouble with the participant questions section and seeing all of the questions. But I believe question one has to do with eligibility. I'm happy to take that one.

MR. KIGHT: OK. Go ahead.

MS. FRAGA: So the question is, "How do you know if your county is eligible to apply? And can more than one area apply together?"

Emela mentioned earlier in the presentation – and you may have heard – that it is really – the responsibility rests upon the applicants themselves to establish their eligibility within their application. The FOA provides quite a bit of detail on who is eligible. It casts a wide net. So hopefully you can squeeze in there. But again, the onus is on the applicant itself to prove their eligibility in their application.

The second part of the question is, "Can more than one area apply together?" Typically, we receive one entity – we receive an application, rather, from one entity and they in turn would partner with various organizations, either in the form of a contract arrangement or a subaward arrangement. And together they would work on that grant together.

MR. KIGHT: OK. Thank you, Lynn. I'm having some technical difficulties on my end and I'm not seeing the questions. So if you can continue to look – review the questions and address them as you see them, that would be helpful.

JEFF: Robert? Robert, this is Jeff. I'll take over for you here.

MR. KIGHT: OK. Thank you.

JEFF: So Lynn, I'm going to ask you a question related to COVID. "To what extent will be evaluating meeting the economic – (inaudible) – impacts of COVID-19 in our area? It's not mentioned specifically in the FOA."

MS. FRAGA: Yeah. Thanks, Jeff. This is actually a very good question. As you know, the FOA was written before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The FOA does not include within it scoring criteria to address COVID-19. So we will not be considering that in the scoring of your applications.

That doesn't mean, of course, that you would not be able to plan for that environment. I think a well thought out project would include some plans to address how that may impact on the delivery of services. And maybe my friends on the programmatic side of the house want to comment on that as well. But from the scoring perspective, you will not be evaluated on that.

JEFF: Great. Thank you. And of course, if it is something that you're dealing with and want the grant to address it, that's fine. But it's not – there's no requirement.

OK. There's a number of questions here about allowable expenses. I see some about course – credit or non-credit course tuition, stipends, industry-recognized credentials. All of those are allowable activities. There's a nice long list in the FOA of the things that the grant can cover. So we recommend that you read that pretty carefully. But we want these grants to address the needs that you're identifying. And so aligning that with the set of allowable activities is perfectly fine.

We see stipends, course tuition, credential – cost of credentials. All that can be part of what your grant is paying for.

All right. Lynn, I'm going to ask you this one while I'm looking at a couple of the others. "Are project narrative and proposal summaries scored in the same way?"

MS. FRAGA: That's another good question. Yes, they are absolutely scored the same way. We're really not scoring the narratives themselves; we're scoring the entire application package. And that package is scored against the criteria that's listed in Section 5A of the FOA.

The project – or rather, the proposal summary, which is new this year for WORC round two, is really meant to help applicants provide the framework for them to put all of the information in that the FOA requires. It is not scored differently or separately from the project narrative; it's just another option to present your information with.

JEFF: Great. Thank you. I think some folks are still typing. I see two more current questions; but if you have others, get them into the chat box.

The first one is, "Are there specific numbers of individuals who must be served or is that dependent on the proposal?" That's up to you in your application. You can serve the number of participants you think is necessary or possible.

What we do expect, however – and what we will be looking for in our review is that your numbers are consistent, that they align, that they make sense. So if you're – if you say you're going to serve 100 participants but then it looks like you're only really enrolling 10, that's an inconsistency that might be a problem.

But there's no limit and no – no bottom or top limit on how many participants you should be serving. And we don't review for a number; we review for consistency and outcomes and output.

There's a question about whether you can apply for both ARC and DRA service areas? Sure you can apply for – to cover both of those areas. But what you would have to do is choose which of the areas that you're designating for your application. Because we are – as Lynn mentioned, we do screen the applications based on what region you've determined you want to serve.

But if there are areas that you work in that have both of the regions either covered or nearby and you want those to be included, that's perfectly allowable. But, A, make sure that your application includes one or the other – ARC or DRA – as your designated region because it will be reviewed that way; and also that you are serving only participants who live in either of those regions, not participants who live in an area that does not fall within one of those two regions.

OK. The last question that I see here says that, "The FOA states that adult education participants are eligible. We have adult education participants that are currently incarcerated. Would they be eligible participants under WORC?" That probably depends on how you're defining your participant groups, particularly the new entrants to the workforce.

If you have folks who are going to be potentially released in the near term and you would consider them under how you would define new entrants, as we say, you have the flexibility to make that determination about whether those individuals would be new entrants.

The last question I see is about transportation being a big issue in an area. "Can transportation costs be an allowable cost for participants?" I would certainly look at the participant support services section of the allowable activities because – in the FOA – because that talks a lot about the things you can do to support your participants, including if they need to – if they need transportation to get from their home to the training site or to a worksite or something else, then that's an expense that you can include in your proposal.

MS. FRAGA: Jeff –

JEFF: OK. That's all –

MS. FRAGA: – did we cover –

JEFF: Go ahead, Lynn.

MS. FRAGA: Jeff, I'm sorry. Did we cover the stipend question?

JEFF: I just included it with the other stipends and –

MS. FRAGA: Oh, OK.

JEFF: – and tuition costs and all that kind of stuff are all allowable activities.

MS. FRAGA: Yes, stipends are allowable. I did just want to mention that there is a 20 percent limit. They should not exceed 20 percent of the total grant award, stipends and wages for participants. They could go above that, however it must receive prior approval.

JEFF: Right. Thank you, Lynn. So yeah, stipends – there are a few areas where you should read very carefully because there are some limitations on some of the percentage of the grant award that you can put towards certain activities like stipends.

MS. FRAGA: As well – sorry, Jeff. Just to add a note on stipends too. There are some specific requirements in the uniform guidance regarding that. There should be procedures in place that ensure that they're distributed fairly and equally and there should be good documentation in your grant files on that as well.

JEFF: OK. I see one or two folks still typing. I'll give you a second because that's all the questions I currently have. But if anybody has anymore that you want to submit, we'll give you another minute or two here.

And if we don't get to your question, if you think of something after this webinar is over, I recommend sending an email, per Lynn's slide, to Jennifer McEnry who's listed on the slide as the contact for questions. And we can try to answer anything you have that way as well.

So this isn't your only chance to get questions answered. But if you do have any more, we're happy to take them now. Otherwise we will – I'll give you another 30 seconds or so to type some questions in. And if not, we'll let you get back to your Fridays and we'll look forward to seeing the applications in a few months.

MR. KIGHT: OK. Thank you. Thank you, Jeff. Thank you for stepping in there. Thanks. Emela, Aury, do you have anything else you'd like to add or any comments or suggestions you'd like to give to the potential applicants?

MS. HALILOVIC: On ARC's side, nothing in particular. I just want to thank everyone on behalf of ARC for joining in today and asking these really important questions. And if you do have any questions, please reach out to DOL.

MR. KIGHT: OK.

MR. KANGELOS: Absolutely. Thanks, Robert, again. This is Aury. I really appreciate the opportunity to join everyone today. And thank Lynn as well for providing all this information to potential applicants.

If you have any questions, again, like Emela said, we encourage you to reach out to Jennifer and to check out our website, dra.gov/workforce, for some additional resources as you move through the application process.

MR. KIGHT: OK. Again, thanks everyone for your participation this afternoon. We hope you found this information to be extremely helpful. And we wish all of you the best of luck and have a great weekend and stay safe. Thank you.

(END)