



Selected Grant Resources for Workforce Development and Jobs Training in Response to COVID-19

June 15, 2020

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has had a significant [impact on the U.S. workforce](#). This Insight identifies federal departments and agencies that administer programs to support workforce development, training, and job readiness initiatives. It focuses on selected programs that state, local, and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions may use to address pandemic-related labor market impacts. It does not include workforce or training assistance programs for individuals (such as scholarships, fellowships, unemployment benefits, or other individual assistance).

Types of Federal Assistance

Many types of federal grant funding are awarded to states as [formula grants](#) or [block grants](#). In turn, the states (including territories and tribes) make awards to subrecipients to implement the programs' core objectives. [Other types of federal grants](#) (commonly called [discretionary or project grants](#)) may be awarded directly to beneficiaries on a competitive basis.

Federal assistance may also be available in the form of [cooperative agreements](#), [technical assistance](#), or other types of aid.

For general information on grant resources, see CRS Report RL34012, *Resources for Grantseekers*.

Selected Federal Assistance Resources

Department of Labor

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

The Department of Labor's (DOL's) [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA) is the primary law for training and employment programs for adult, dislocated, and youth workers. Formula funding is

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awarded to states, which disburse some funding to local areas. [State and local workforce development boards](#) may provide specific resources to respond to the pandemic. In addition, according to [WIOA guidance](#), certain COVID-19-related activities (such as cleaning or sanitizing) are considered eligible uses of funding.

DOL awarded discretionary funding for [Dislocated Worker Grants](#) (DWGs) to states and territories to temporarily respond to effects of the coronavirus public health emergency. Economic Recovery DWGs are also available to applicants affected by major economic dislocations, such as [mass layoffs](#). DOL [provided flexibility](#) for DWGs, allowing recipients to use funding for contact tracing activities. States may sub-grant funding to [local workforce development boards](#) or may expend funds through public and private agencies and organizations engaged in approved projects. See CRS In Focus IF11530, *Dislocated Worker Activities in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*.

National Farmworker Jobs Program

The competitive [National Farmworker Jobs Program](#) provides funding to support public agencies and community-based organizations that provide [career services and training to farmworkers and dependents](#).

Department of Education

Reimagining Workforce Preparation Grant

The Department of Education launched a new discretionary grant in response to COVID-19, the [Reimagining Workforce Preparation Grant](#). Coronavirus-affected states may use the [grant](#) to establish short-term educational opportunities and career pathway programs to help individuals return to work.

Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

[Perkins Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) Act state grants](#) support a wide variety of CTE activities. [States and territories](#) distribute funding to local secondary and postsecondary CTE providers.

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Community Development Block Grant

Funding made available through the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) [Community Development Block Grant](#) (CDBG) program may be used for workforce development activities. [CDBG guidance for eligible activities supporting the COVID-19 response](#) includes [provisions for job training](#) to expand the pool of health care workers and technicians. The program's state and local administrators have discretion in determining [eligible uses of CDBG funding](#). Stakeholders may contact [HUD's field offices](#) or their respective [state, county, or city CDBG administrators](#). See CRS Insight IN11277, *Responding to the COVID-19 Outbreak with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Authorities*.

Department of Health and Human Services

Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant

The [Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant](#) supports health, clinical, and laboratory services; public education efforts; and workforce training. The Block Grant Program is administered [at the state level](#) (typically by state health departments).

Health Workforce Grants

The [Health Resources & Services Administration](#) awards several [Health Workforce Grants](#) to support health care workforce training and education activities. See [COVID-19 FAQs](#).

Indian Health Service Grants

[Indian Health Service](#) (IHS) programs provide grants to tribes, tribal organizations, and academic institutions for expenses related to recruiting, training, and retaining health professionals. For example, the IHS administers [grant programs for colleges and universities](#) that encourage health care services to tribal communities.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA) leads public health efforts to advance behavioral health and funds efforts to develop the [behavioral health workforce](#). State agencies administer two noncompetitive [block grants](#)—SAMHSA also administers [competitive grants](#), including programs that may support [workforce development and training](#). See [COVID-19 guidance](#) for current grantees.

Community Services Block Grant

The [Community Services Block Grant](#) (CSBG) supports [a range of community-based activities](#) to lessen poverty and provide services to address employment, education, housing, and other needs. CSBG is administered [at the state level](#). See [COVID-19 guidance](#) for current grantees and stakeholders.

Department of Agriculture

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

The [National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#) supports [agricultural workforce development through grants and other assistance](#) to educational institutions. See the [updated COVID-19 guidance](#) for current grantees, partners, and applicants.

Rural Development

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) [Rural Development](#) office administers [numerous programs benefitting rural businesses](#) and communities. Some of these programs may be used to support workforce development activities, such as training and technical assistance to rural businesses (e.g., see [Rural Business Development Grants](#)). Stakeholders should contact [USDA Rural Development state offices](#). See the [COVID-19 page](#).

Department of Commerce

Economic Development Administration

The Economic Development Administration's (EDA's) [Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs](#) provide economically distressed communities with resources to address a wide variety of economic needs, including workforce development. See CRS Insight IN11402, *The Economic Development Administration's Economic Recovery Assistance for COVID-19 Impacted Communities*.

Federal Regional Commissions

The four active [federal regional commissions and authorities](#) support economic development, workforce development, and other activities. See CRS Report R45997, *Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities: Structural Features and Function* for information about the grant programs and service areas of the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#), [Delta Regional Authority](#), [Denali Commission](#), and [Northern Border Regional Commission](#).

Selected Resources for Technical Assistance and Coordination

[Economic Development Districts \(EDDs\)](#) are multijurisdictional entities that help lead regional economic development projects and planning processes. See the [EDA's directory](#) to locate EDDs and other resources by state.

As noted, [state and local workforce development boards](#) may provide guidance and technical assistance on workforce and training initiatives.

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