



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

Updated March 19, 2021

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic significantly [affected U.S. employment](#) patterns. The federal government has responded with new initiatives and flexibilities to improve the capacity of workforce development and job training assistance programs to address [changing labor market conditions](#). This Insight describes selected federal assistance programs available to state, local, and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions. It does not include information on programs for individuals (e.g., scholarships, fellowships, unemployment benefits, or other individual assistance programs).

Types of Federal Assistance

Many types of federal grant funding are awarded to states as [formula grants](#) or [block grants](#); states, territories and tribes make awards to sub-recipients to implement program objectives. [Other federal grants](#), known as [discretionary or project grants](#), may be awarded on a competitive basis directly to beneficiaries. Finally, federal assistance can include [cooperative agreements](#) or [technical assistance](#). 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 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA; P.L. 113-128, [as amended](#)) is the primary federal law supporting workforce development and training. The Department of Labor (DOL) allots WIOA funding to states, which sub-allocate funding to local areas. According to DOL guidance, WIOA funding may be used for COVID-19 response activities, such as internet technology for [distance learning or](#)

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IN11423

[training](#) or “[On-The-Job](#)” [training](#) to place eligible participants in COVID-19-related manufacturing industries (e.g., producing respiratory masks). Under WIOA’s demonstration authority, DOL awarded [Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants](#) to expand online and technology-enhanced learning in industries such as [healthcare, logistics, and cybersecurity](#). State and local [workforce development boards](#) may provide additional guidance on COVID-19-related workforce activities.

Dislocated Worker Grants Program

DOL competitively awards [Dislocated Worker Grants](#) (DWGs) to states and territories to provide temporary employment for workers affected by national emergencies (including health), disasters, or major economic dislocations. States may sub-grant DWG funding to [local workforce development boards](#) or entities engaged in approved projects.

In response to COVID-19, DOL provided [additional flexibilities](#) for DWGs, including the use of funds for [COVID-19-related activities](#), like contact tracing.

See CRS In Focus IF11530, *Dislocated Worker Activities in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*.

H-1B Skills Training Grants

DOL competitively awards two forms of [H-1B Skills Training Grants](#) to assist areas and sectors affected by COVID-19. [H-1B Rural Healthcare Grants](#) support healthcare training in rural areas. [H-1B One Workforce Grants](#) support training in information technology, cybersecurity, manufacturing, and transportation sectors. Because of pandemic-related disruptions, DOL encouraged H-1B Skills Training grantees to provide online or technology-enhanced training.

Department of Education

Reimagine Workforce Preparation Grant

The Department of Education (ED) competitively awards [Reimagine Workforce Preparation grants](#) to states with high coronavirus burdens. The grant is intended to help individuals return to work through short-term education, training or [career pathway programs](#).

Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

[Perkins Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) Act grants](#), administered by [states and territories](#), fund local secondary and postsecondary CTE providers. In response to the pandemic, ED has provided [general guidance](#) on using supplies to support distance learning and information specific to [CTE programs](#).

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Community Development Block Grant

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, [Community Development Block Grant \(CDBG\)](#) may be used for workforce development activities. [CDBG guidance](#) discusses COVID-19-related eligible activities, including [job training](#) to expand healthcare jobs. Additionally, [CDBG-CV COVID-19 FAQs](#) discuss spending flexibilities. [State and local CDBG administrators](#) have discretion in determining [eligible funding uses](#). See CRS Insight IN11315, *Community Development Block Grants and the CARES Act*.

Department of Health and Human Services

Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant

The Department of Health and Human Services, [Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant](#) supports health, clinical, and laboratory services; public education; and workforce training. The block grant program is typically administered by [state health departments](#).

Health Resources & Services Administration

The Health Resources & Services Administration, [Bureau of Health Workforce](#) provides [funding opportunities](#) to schools and individuals through [grants](#), [scholarships](#), and [loans](#). See COVID-19 [Grantee FAQs](#) and COVID-19 [Loan FAQs](#).

Indian Health Service Grants

[Indian Health Service](#) (IHS) programs provide grants to tribes, tribal organizations, and educational institutions for expenses related to recruiting and training health professionals. For example, IHS administers [grant programs for colleges and universities](#) to facilitate education in health professions.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA) funds public health efforts to develop the [behavioral health workforce](#). [State agencies](#) administer two noncompetitive [block grants](#), and SAMHSA administers [competitive grants](#) supporting workforce development. See the [FY2020](#) and [FY2021](#) grants announcements.

Community Services Block Grant

The [Community Services Block Grant](#) (CSBG) supports [community-based activities](#) designed to lessen poverty and address employment, education, housing, and other needs. CSBG is administered [by states](#). See [COVID-19 funding guidance](#).

Department of Agriculture

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), [National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#) supports [agricultural workforce development through grants](#) and other assistance to educational institutions. See the [COVID-19 resource guidance](#).

Rural Development

[USDA Rural Development](#) administers programs benefitting [rural businesses](#) and communities, including workforce development activities. For example, [Rural Business Development Grants](#) support training and technical assistance for rural businesses. See the [COVID-19 page](#).

Department of Commerce

Economic Development Administration

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) [Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs](#) provide economically distressed communities with resources to address economic needs, including workforce development. See the [COVID-19 page](#).

[Economic Development Districts \(EDDs\)](#) are multi-jurisdictional entities leading regional economic development projects and planning processes. See the [EDA's directory](#) to locate EDDs and other resources by state, and CRS Insight IN11402, *The Economic Development Administration's Economic Recovery Assistance for COVID-19 Impacted Communities*.

Federal Regional Commissions

Four active [federal regional commissions and authorities](#) support economic development, workforce development, and other activities. For information on services areas and grants for the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#), [Delta Regional Authority](#), [Denali Commission](#), and [Northern Border Regional Commission](#), see CRS Report R45997, *Federal Regional Commissions and Authorities: Structural Features and Function*.

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