

Question 1: Can you please clarify the following statement and what it is in reference to?

"It is expected that the grant application narrative will align closely with the narrative contained in the application for NCWorks Certification."

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: There are two separate and distinct applications, the NCWorks certification application and the Sector Partnership grant application. Both require narratives of no more than three pages. The narrative for the Sector Partnership grant application should demonstrate how grant funds will be used for the development of the certified pathway as presented in the narrative of the certification application. Certification application can be found here: <https://www.nccommerce.com/Portals/11/Documents/NCWorks%20Commission/NCWorks%20Certified%20Career%20Pathways/NCWorks%20CCP%20Application%20-%20fillable.pdf>

Question 2: The grant references funding to "Connect workers who lost a job through no fault of their own **and individuals struggling with long-term unemployment...**"

Please clarify if this means adults may also be served.

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: Grant funds must be used to serve eligible dislocated workers as defined in Section 103 of WIOA.

Question 3: Can grant funds be used for classroom training for dislocated workers and or adult participants?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: Grant funds may be used for classroom training for eligible dislocated workers as defined in Section 103 of WIOA.

Question 4: If awarded the planning grant, is there a time limit on those funds?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: Planning grant funds will expire on June 30, 2017. However, it is expected that local teams will move expeditiously from the planning phase to the implementation phase of the pathway certification process.

Question 5: Can a webinar be provided for those areas interested in applying?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: The NCWorks Pathways Conference on Sep. 14-15, 2015 will provide additional opportunity for local teams to receive assistance with the application process.

Question 6: Does NCWorks have a preferred definition for "career pathway"; a set of established career pathways (so that we are using the same terms); and a set of specific occupations that match specific pathways?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: NCWorks defines certified career pathways as integrated, seamless systems of education and workforce development programs, initiatives and resources. Certified pathways focus on matching worker preparation to employer need in high-demand occupations. While there are no specific occupations required by NCWorks, local teams must demonstrate that the sector is growing or in high-demand.

Question 7: To ask the first question below in a different way, if three boards are considering a regional approach to the development of three career pathways (with each board taking the lead on one) can the boards submit a joint single application and still have access to three \$30,000 planning grants; or should each board submit a separate application for each pathway?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: The planning grants follow the pathway, not the WDBs. Planning grants of up to \$30,000 may be awarded to any/all approved applications as grant funds allow. The NCWorks Commission encourages WDBs to work collaboratively to develop regional pathways. Regionalism will be considered favorably during the grant application review process.

Question 8: Assuming funding availability, can a single board submit more than one funding application at different times for two different pathways?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: Yes. The funding follows the pathway, not the WDBs.

Question 9: This was touched upon during the Q and A, but just to clarify...applications for funding for career pathway planning (I, II, and III, for \$30,000) can be submitted prior to the application for career pathway certification, but applications for implementation (IV and/or V, for \$150,000/\$300,000) have to be submitted along with or after the career pathway certification application, correct?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: Applications for career pathway planning funds can be submitted through June 30, 2016 and prior to achieving a certified career pathway. Sections IV and/or V can be submitted before the certified pathway application; however funds for sections IV and/or V will not be awarded until the corresponding pathway is recommended for certification.

Question 10: We were made aware of the training scheduled for September 14 and 15, but it was not mentioned during the Q and A call. Is this training still going to take place?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: Yes. If you have not received information about the conference as of 8.14.2015, please email dion.clark@nccommerce.com.

Question 11: If a region takes a regional approach for the development of career pathways, will two pathways in the region satisfy the performance requirement set by the NCWorks Commission that all boards are required to have two certified career pathways?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: The NCWorks Commission performance requirement is that each workforce development board will participate in the development and creation of two certified NCWorks Career Pathways for their area. If multiple WDBs work regionally to create a certified pathway, and that partnership is validated, then the commission would recognize each board as having one pathway.

Question 12: Is there a minimum percentage of the \$150,000 that is established toward DW participant training?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: Implementation grants will be awarded in amounts up to \$150,000/year for two years. In order to comply with the USDOL grant solicitation, local areas must expend at least 50% of the grant funds on work-based training.

Question 13: As it relates to the planning grant, can funds be used for the development of a regional career pathways website?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: No. The NC Department of Commerce will provide a career pathways website that can support career pathway needs by region.

Question 14: As it relates to the implementation grant, can funds be used to purchase the EMSI career coach site license that would be available on the regional career pathways website?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: No.

Question 15: As it relates to implementation funding, can funds be used toward the purchase of equipment?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: A minimal amount of implementation funds may be approved for purchase of equipment on a case by case basis. Applicants must provide detailed justification for equipment purchases.

Question 16: Can the local area receive a copy of the state's grant application that was submitted and approved by the U.S. Department of Labor for the Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: The State's application to the USDOL is subject to budget revisions and is not available to distribute currently. Once revisions have been approved by USDOL, the narrative will be available upon request.

Question 17: Are Dislocated Workers who have been unemployed for less than 26 weeks eligible to be served using grant funds?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: Dislocated Workers need not be long-term unemployed. Grant funds can be expended on workers who have been unemployed for any period of time as well as those who are still employed but have received notice of impending layoff.

Question 18: If an individual originally met the definition of a Dislocated Worker but is now underemployed, can s/he be considered a dislocated worker for this grant?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: Yes.

Question 19: As we develop our certified career pathway which will serve counties outside our local WDB service area, is it allowable to use sector partnership planning funds to include staff from the schools in other counties?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: Yes. The NCWorks Commission encourages WDBs to work collaboratively to develop regional pathways. Regionalism will be considered favorably during the grant application review process.

Question 20: Please help me to understand the distinction between an NCWorks Certified Career Pathways and other career pathways. I understand that grant funding for the Sector Partnership Career Pathways grant is to serve only qualified dislocated workers. How are adults and dislocated workers included in the pathways?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: While implementation grant funds can only be used to serve qualified dislocated workers, the creation of certified NCWorks Career Pathways benefit students and adults alike. Enrollment into an NCWorks Certified Career Pathway potentially starts in from the 8th grade and continues through the senior-most levels of a career. When regional partners align with the eight NCWorks Certified Career Pathway criteria they ensure a successful pathway that benefits both businesses and job seekers. Planning grant funds are available to create this pathways while implementation funds are available to supplement dislocated worker enrollment into training along the pathway.

Question 21: For purposes of the grant funding available, what qualifies as a region? Our team currently has several engaged employers onboard and we have all the required collaborators, however, we currently serve one county. Would this qualify as a region?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: It is the expectation of the NCWorks Commission that Certified Career Pathways meet the needs of a group of businesses; many of which recruit employees from outside of traditional geographic borders. The NCWorks Commission encourages WDBs to work collaboratively to develop regional pathways. Regionalism will be considered favorably during the grant application review process.

Question 22: What guidance can you provide on how we are to spend the half of the implementation grant not dedicated for training for dislocated workers?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: SP/CP grant dollars are National Dislocated Worker Grant dollars. All activities, including CRC costs, ITAs (training) and OJT dollars are for participants that are WIOA dislocated worker eligible.

Per the budget categories on the budget application, implementation dollars can be spent on staff development, staffing costs, outreach materials, travel and up to 5% Admin costs that are directly related to providing services to dislocated workers. (For example, funds for WIOA youth staff and activities would not be an allowable expense.)

Question 23: We realize that procurement rules that apply to all other USDOL grants apply in this case. Can DWS provide some templates for procurement for career pathways outreach efforts?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: Outreach efforts should be tailored to the specific sector and career pathway in each Local Area and should focus on reaching dislocated workers in the specific region. All outreach materials should also reflect the NCWorks brand.

Question 24: What guidance can be provided as to how much time WDBs have to spend the funds provided by the implementation grants?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: NO SP NEG funds may be spent after June 30, 2017. That means that the grant closeout period to get all invoices paid will begin on April 1, 2017. As time gets closer, we will explore applying for a no cost extension, but as of right now, grant activities should be winding down by April 1st.

Question 25: How do the WDB directors report how they spent the \$30k?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: Reporting process will be provided separately through the grant administrator.

Question 26: At the end of the grant are remaining funds encumbered or do they disappear?

NCWorks Career Pathways Response: On June 30, 2017, all unspent funds will be drawn back or reverted to USDOL/ETA. Only grant activity accruals can be paid after June 30, 2017.