

# FUNDED®



A GRANTS OFFICE PUBLICATION

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**START  
YOUR  
ENGINES  
AFG IS  
BACK!**

**YOUTH CAREER  
CONNECT: WHEN  
ONE DOOR CLOSSES**

**PARTNERING  
WITH A PURPOSE**

**AVOIDING TMI**



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## **ON THE COVER**

Lake Worth fireman fighting burning building during training exercise. Training and personal protective equipment are just two of the priority areas within the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program's broad Operations and Safety Category. (Photo: Simon Dale/Getty Images)

## FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

This issue of *funded* provides a little something for everyone, from schools and community colleges to rural healthcare providers and fire departments.

Dan Casion takes us through the long-standing Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, with an eye toward preparing for this year's application process. The stability of the program provides a terrific opportunity to leverage what has worked in past years to improve your chances of success in the current round of funding.

In his *Between the Lines* column, Chris LaPage extols the virtue of "less is more" in proposal development, and provides some examples of how TMI (too much information) can obscure an otherwise compelling message.

Elizabeth Evans covers some background on various types of K-12 institutions and their eligibility for funding, as well as offering some alternatives to Youth CareerConnect for funding high school-focused college and career readiness programs.

As always, if you have comments, feedback, corrections, or topics for future issues, feel free to drop me a line at [mpaddock@grantsoffice.com](mailto:mpaddock@grantsoffice.com).

I hope you enjoy this issue of *FUNDED* as much as we've enjoyed bringing it to you!

Sincerely,

Michael Paddock  
Editor and Publisher, *FUNDED*



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# INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS (ITEST)

**SUMMARY:** The ITEST program through research and model-building activities seeks to build K-12 students' motivation and participation in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) core domains along with other STEM cognate domains, such as information and communications technology (ICT), computing, computer sciences, data analytics, among others, that inform education programs and workforce domains. ITEST supports projects that:

- Increase students' awareness of STEM and cognate careers
- Motivate students to pursue the appropriate education pathways for STEM and cognate careers
- Provide students with technology-rich experiences that develop disciplinary-based knowledge and practices, and non-cognitive skills (e.g., critical thinking and communication skills) needed for entering STEM workforce sectors

Proposals to the ITEST program may request support for projects that:

- Develop, implement, and study a curricular or instructional strategy or model to understand how to improve student interest in and/or preparation for STEM and/or STEM cognate careers based on a well-specified theory of action appropriate to a well-defined end-user
- Test existing measures or create valid and reliable new performance -based measures to evaluate the implementation and impact of an intervention strategy on how to prepare students for the existing or future STEM workforce. The focus may be on student assessments or assessing growth in teachers' knowledge of STEM and/or STEM cognate career opportunities
- Conduct design-based pilot studies of fully or partially developed interventions to examine the attainment of intended outcomes such as knowledge about approaches, models, and interventions involving children, mentors and teachers that are most likely to increase the nation's capacity and innovation in the STEM and/ STEM cognate workforce of the future

Successful ITEST projects will engage in foundational or model-based design applied research that seeks to understand conditions and contexts that improve K-12 students' STEM learning pathways and STEM-focused career preparations and mentorships. The ITEST program is particularly interested in projects that examine the effectiveness of engaging adult volunteers with relevant disciplinary expertise from academia or industry to mentor and engage students in school, after school or out-of-school. Typically, proposals with a primary focus on workforce development for youth and on school to work transitions should be submitted to ITEST. Also encouraged are proposals that engage students in the use of cutting-edge technological tools, in computer sciences, or in providing students with work/ problem based opportunities for innovative use of technology.

**DEADLINE:** The deadline for applications is November 6, 2014.

**ELIGIBILITY:** All U.S. organizations with an educational mission are eligible for ITEST. All ITEST projects must demonstrate evidence of partnerships and collaboration in the formulation, implementation, and/or interpretation and dissemination of the project.

**AWARD AMOUNTS:** Approximately \$25,000,000 will be available for the current competition.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:** [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=5467](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5467)

# START YOUR ENGINES - THE ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT PROGRAM IS BACK!

By Dan Casion

It's that time of year again where folks from fire departments and emergency medical services (EMS) communities need to start thinking about Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program. For those who aren't familiar with the program, AFG provides funding for fire departments, EMS, and to a lesser extent State Fire Training Academies to fund projects ranging from training, equipment acquisition, facilities improvements, vehicles, micro grants for small projects, and large-scale regional projects. It is a very well-administered and well-funded program with over \$300,000,000 available in this year's competition alone! However, it is a competitive program and not everyone who applies will win.

## ELIGIBILITY

There are a number of things to consider before you begin constructing your application; first and foremost: eligibility. FEMA defines eligible applicants as the following:

- A Fire Department (career, combination, volunteer), defined as an agency/organization having a formally recognized arrangement with a state, local, or tribal authority to provide fire suppression to a population within a fixed

geographical area on a first-due response basis

- A non-affiliated EMS Departments, defined as a public or private nonprofit emergency medical service organization providing direct emergency medical services including transport, but not affiliated with a hospital.
- A State Fire Training Academies, defined as the primary state fire training academy, a listing of which can be found at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fireservice/>

## AWARD LIMITS

Unlike many federal grant programs that restrict eligibility based on geography and population, AFG is open to applicants that reside in urban, suburban, and rural locations. However, award amounts are capped based on populations. These caps are as follows:

- Jurisdictions serving 100,000 or fewer people cannot be awarded more than \$1,000,000 in a fiscal year
- Jurisdictions serving 100,000 or more people cannot be awarded more than \$2,000,000 in a fiscal year

- Jurisdictions serving more than 500,000 but not more than 1,000,000 people cannot be awarded more than \$3,000,000 in a fiscal year
- Jurisdictions serving more than 1,000,000 people but not more than 2,500,000 people cannot be awarded more than \$6,000,000 for any fiscal year, but is subject a one percent aggregate cap of \$3,209,200
- Jurisdictions serving more than 2,500,000 people but not more than 2,500,000 people cannot be awarded more than \$6,000,000 for any fiscal year, but is subject a one percent aggregate cap of \$3,209,200

## MATCH REQUIREMENTS

Additionally, population plays a role in the required cash match. This cash match is broken down in the following fashion:

- Jurisdictions serving less than 20,000 people are required to put up a 5% match of the grant awarded
- Jurisdictions serving more than 20,000 people, but

## FEATURE

less than 1,000,000 people are required to put up a 10% match of the grant awarded

- Jurisdictions serving more than 1,000,000 people are required to put up a 15% match of the grant awarded

While an applicant is not required to have the cash match in hand at the time the application is submitted (nor even at the time of award), FEMA will contact potential grantees to determine whether they have the cash match on hand or that they have a feasible plan to fulfill the matching requirement. It's always a good idea to work your budget up well in advance of formally applying to the program so you can determine your matching requirement. Once you've calculated your matching requirement, now comes the hard part—confirming with your management that your organization will be able to meet the match. The sooner you can determine if you have support for the match, the better. Constructing your application without confirmation of the matching funds is a gamble, if not negligent. There is nothing worse than taking the time and energy to construct a quality application only to find that there are no matching funds available to satisfy the match.

## APPLICATION CONSTRUCTION

In terms of application construction for AFG, generally speaking, it's fairly straight forward. The application asks for basic demographic information and statistics about your organization, along with a narrative and a budget.

The narrative piece is where most applicants get hung up, but it's not too bad if you break it apart into smaller, manageable chunks. You'll need to think about the following questions:

- What is your organization's financial need for the project?
- Why can't your organization fund this project on its own?
- Besides applying to AFG, what other efforts have you made to obtain the funding?
- What organizational capabilities have been reduced or eliminated due to budgetary limitations?

When you're providing an explanation to these questions

you'll want to provide as strong evidence as possible to show that the financial shortcomings you describe are out of your organization's control and that Federal assistance is required.

## TIPS AND RESOURCES

Here are a couple of other pointers that should help you pull together the strongest application possible:

- Follow the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) to the letter. Failure to follow instructions will almost certainly disqualify your application.
- Maintain consistency throughout the application
- Avoid overly flowery text (including anecdotal or unsubstantiated claims), and use as much data as possible to present a clear need
- Have an outside party edit your narrative for style and grammar. The people closely involved in crafting of the narrative can overlook simple mistakes

The AFG program office maintains a site that has great materials to help applicants prepare their application: <http://www.fema.gov/assistance-firefighters-grant>. I strongly suggest that prospective applicants visit the site and review the materials they provide—they're invaluable!

## SUBMISSION

Finally, completed applications need to be submitted via FEMA's E-grant Application Portal. You'll need to make an account for the Portal if you don't already have one. Also you'll need to obtain your organization's Duns and Bradstreet (DUNS) number and a System for Award Management (SAM) account. These registrations can take some time to set up and activate, so it's a good idea to take care of these as soon as possible.

You can put your organization in a position of strength by preparing and doing your due diligence before the application period opens!



# THE PITFALLS OF TMI (TOO MUCH INFORMATION)

By Chris LaPage

“Too much of anything could destroy you... Too much darkness could kill, but too much light could blind.”

## CASSANDRA CLARE, CITY OF LOST SOULS

This excerpt from *City of Lost Souls* is an axiom about excess that rarely is applied in the context of information, the life blood of grant proposals. Although there may be one notable exception, any parent has probably heard the expression of disgust from an embarrassed child at some point: “MOM (with arms folded and face in full pout mode)... TMI!” While the general rule of the thumb is that you can never get enough information, our children may be able to teach us a lesson about the difference between acquisition and dissemination. In the latter case, there is indeed an ability to derail your efforts, particularly in the case of grant submissions. Some will argue that they would rather err on the side of providing too much information rather than the alternative, but in the context of a grant proposal, the key to success is to find the sweet spot, or the bottom of the pendulum swing. Since most people understand the perils of providing too little information, the focus of this month’s column is on avoiding the pitfalls of doing the opposite.

## PAGE, CHARACTER AND FILE SIZE LIMITS

In the context of proposal development, the one area of the submission where people tend to grasp excess is when it comes size limitations. Experienced grant professionals certainly understand that exceeding page, character, or file size limitations can have drastic consequences on the success of the proposal. At best, reviewers are required to stop reading at the limitation (and the missing information results in low scores and application denial). More often than not, any applications exceeding these limitations are dismissed without review.

One point I often hear from folks in the field is that if the funder (and by extension the reviewers) really like your

project, these limitations will not matter. While there are no hard figures to track the data, most federal funders estimate that up to a third of applications are generally denied as a result of size limitations or other technical issues with the submission (e.g. formatting, font size). The idea behind these physical limitations are two-fold: 1) Ensure that the proposals are manageable so that a timely review can be completed, and 2) Provide some type of guidance to applicants to level the playing field. There is no grey area on physical limitations, and applicants must abide by them in order to develop proposals that actually get reviewed (rather than rejected out of hand as non-compliant). In this case TMI is catastrophic, take the physical limitations seriously!

## QUALITY VERSUS QUANTITY

The issue of quantity versus quality is one that takes me back to college and term papers. The culture of higher education is one in which quality often times is sacrificed for the sake of quantity. Students tend to write to the size limitation provided by the professor (e.g. 20 page term paper). It makes no difference that in many cases these are maximum thresholds, as is the case with limitations provided by funders. If a student can meet the demands of the term paper and deliver a concise and quality paper in 16 pages (rather than the maximum 20), that should suffice. However, most students will attempt to reach that page limitation regardless, exerting tremendous effort to produce four additional pages of what can only be described as filler. On a subconscious level, everyone is guilty of incorporating filler into their writing (including yours truly), but in most instances it obscures the point of the proposal and tends to drastically reduce the quality of the submission. Reviewers do not value quantity and reaching artificial page limitations. In fact, you make their job easier if you can concisely make your case in fewer pages. The filler simply makes it harder for those reviewers to locate the various pieces they are trying assess and score in the review

## BETWEEN THE LINES

process. In this case, TMI stems directly from a fear of not providing enough information. It's okay to write less... there is no extra credit for writing to the maximum limitations.

### UNSOLICITED INFORMATION

Applicants tend to have an underlying urge to provide unsolicited information that is not being requested by the funder. In my experience, this is one of the most underrated and detrimental pitfalls for an applicant. Many times funders leave an opening in that they allow a certain number of attachments that do not necessarily count towards page limitations. As is human nature, applicants view that as a loophole where they can provide excess information in the form of strategic plans, white papers and other materials. Unfortunately, applicants usually tend to attach items to the proposal that were previously developed for other purposes than responding to the particulars of the grant solicitation. As a result, many times there are inconsistencies between these attached documents and the information contained within the proposal narrative.

One example that comes to mind is a healthcare provider that made a recent decision to extend their services via telemedicine to surrounding rural counties in their catchment area. They prepared a terrific proposal that recounted a long history of success with telehealth in their immediate urban environment. Their applica-

tion was denied because they decided to attach their one-year old strategic plan as part of the submission. That plan was included because the applicant thought it addressed their long-term vision for telehealth and provided proof that Telehealth was an organizational priority. Unfortunately, the plan had also been developed before the provider had decided to become a regional player and penetrate the surrounding rural areas. The reviewer noted this inconsistency as the main reason for their low score and denial. They most likely would have been better off not providing the unsolicited information. If you are determined to offer information that has not be requested, however, it should be thoroughly reviewed and updated to ensure that it is aligned with the proposal narrative. TMI opens the door to criticism by the reviewers.

### AIM FOR TRI (THE RIGHT INFORMATION)

Applicants must adhere to page limitations and emphasize presenting concise quality information during the proposal development process. Instead of looking for loopholes to bypass page limitations and incorporate unsolicited information, applicants should spend their time ensuring consistency across all application materials. In the end, while folks often err on the side of TMI, they would be better served by aiming to provide The Right Information (TRI). TRI helps you secure funding while TMI often compromises your chances.



A “less is more” approach to proposal development can often help you articulate your message without it getting lost in an unnecessarily wordy narrative. (Photo: Ingram Publishing)



# A GUIDE TO DETERMINING K-12 GRANT ELIGIBILITY

By Elizabeth Evans

**T**he landscape of American K-12 education is in flux. The options available to families for educating their children are now more diverse than ever. But what are the differences between these options and how does that relate to grants funding? In effort to provide some clarification, I have outlined a few basic definitions regarding the various K-12 education providers how these different types of providers can receive grant funding from state, federal, and foundation sources.

## THE BASICS

Public Schools are those that serve the children of a specific community and are maintained at the public's expense through revenue sources like taxes. For this reason, public schools are free for those residing in the boundaries of the community (or district) to attend. Occasionally states will award grants to specific Public Schools, but more often than not, the funding is granted to Local Education Agencies to then dole out funding to specific schools. Foundations are also known to fund projects at schools within the same locality or region.

A Local Education Agency (also known as an LEA) is a public board of education or other public authority

(as determined by the state) which has administrative control over public elementary or secondary schools within a given district. LEAs can be responsible for a single school, but are more commonly associated with several schools within a given area. The key here is that the schools for which the administrative agency oversees are public. This is a term that is common in most grant eligibility descriptions, and it is most frequently the LEA that must apply for funds on behalf of a specific school. To that end, LEAs are usually able to obtain grant funding from the widest range of sources: state, federal, and foundations.

So now that we've established what constitutes a Public School and a Local Education Agency, let's dive in to where things get a bit more tricky.

## VARIATIONS ON PUBLIC K-12 EDUCATION

Magnet Schools are schools which focus most learning into one specific content area (e.g. the arts, business, science), or operate based on certain models of learning (e.g. career academies). New students are often required to demonstrate skill or knowledge in the content area prior to acceptance, or they are admitted through a lottery system. These schools are ostensibly created to

attract students from diverse social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. This is largely because Magnet schools are not restricted by the same neighborhood- or city-based geographic boundaries set by standard Public School authorities. That said, because Magnet Schools are often established by a specific district or state education agency, these schools are still required to report to the area's LEA (just as the standard Public Schools must). As a subsidiary of the LEA, Magnet Schools are usually eligible for the same funding opportunities as basic Public Schools: state and federal funds that are first granted to an LEA, and local foundations.

Charter Schools are public schools which are independently run, meaning that they are free from many of the rules, regulations, and statutes that ordinary Public Schools must adhere to. Charter Schools are granted their existence through the State in which they operate and in exchange for the aforementioned leniency, these schools are required to meet higher levels of accountability measures in order to continue functioning. As a result, Charter Schools are often able and more willing to "take risks" through implementing innovative approaches aimed at increasing student achievement levels.

Most Charter Schools are part of a larger group known as a Charter Management Organization (a non-profit entity that operates multiple charter schools and launches new ones) or CMO. If the Charter School is a member of a CMO, often times the CMO will also hold LEA status over the Charter. In instances of a Charter School operating as a singular entity without a CMO, the specific school is usually granted its own LEA status by the state as part of its charter.

The education provided at a Charter School is still free to those enrolled, but unlike Public Schools, new student enrollment is usually determined by lottery once the school reaches capacity. Additionally, Charter Schools, while public, usually receive less or a fixed amount of funding per student when compared to standard public schools. As such, Charter schools usually make use of their non-profit status to secure grant funding from private sources (such as foundations) in order to bolster their programmatic efforts.

Charter Schools come in several different varieties and can focus on either general education or, like Magnet Schools, specific areas of academic focus (e.g. the arts, vocational training, military, and math and science). Currently, 42 states and the District of Columbia have legislation allowing for the creation of Charter Schools.

State grant funding for specific Charter Schools can sometimes be a challenge, as it largely dependent upon who holds the LEA status – the school or the CMO? Regardless, there are several federal grant opportunities for these schools provided by the Department of Education under the umbrella of the Charter School Program (CSP).

### PRIVATE K-12 EDUCATION

Private education is often sought out by families seeking an alternative to the public education options within their locality. The two branches of “private” (or more correctly, non-public) education are described below.

Private Schools are non-publicly supported schools that usually charge tuition to students’ families. These schools may have some form of selective enrollment process, and vary in priority. Those which are secular (i.e. non-religious) often emphasize a particular education philosophy/approach to learning (e.g. Waldorf Schools), focus on special needs (e.g. schools for the blind), or specialize in a particular subject (e.g. the arts, science and technology). Many of these schools also

have the expressed purpose of college preparation. Non-secular private schools, on the other hand, are usually affiliated with a specific faith, denomination, or local religious organization, and this relationship is forefront in the students’ learning. There are few state or federal grant opportunities for Private Schools, regardless of religious status, and the majority of grant opportunities available are through foundations and partnership with a local religious organization.

Home Schooling is exactly as it sounds: students are taught by one or both parents, or by tutors through either virtual means or coming to the child’s home. Materials for instruction can be purchased or created by the family/tutor and accountability for standards is coordinated through the state in which the family resides. Grant funding for this type of education is entirely restricted to foundations, and often provided as reimbursement to expenses incurred by specific families.

### SO WHAT NEXT?

Talk to your school’s top administrator! Even if you know your schools’ designation (e.g. charter), before seeking information on potential grant opportunities, it is always helpful to know who exactly possesses that often-required LEA status. As most federal and state opportunities are granted to LEAs, whoever holds that title will be the one your school needs to work with in order to apply for funding, so why not start building that relationship now?



Teacher Denise Severing congratulates a child during a math lesson at the federally-funded Head Start school in Woodbourne, New York. Head Start, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the longest-running early education program for children of low-income families in the United States.  
(Photo: John Moore/Getty Images)

# PARTNERING WITH A PURPOSE

By Dan Casion

**I**ncreasingly, state and federal grant programs are requiring partnerships as a prerequisite to applying. And even if a partnership isn't expressly required as part of the grant program, demonstrated partnerships are often treated preferentially. Within the context of this broad emphasis on collaboration, let's review how to avoid two common pitfalls in forging these partnerships.

## **Pitfall #1: Leaving the proposal development to someone else**

I recently spoke with a school district that was considered a high need district, and they were approached by a neighboring school district to participate in a highly competitive federal grant application. This district agreed to be part of the application and then proceeded to make one of the top errors that collaborating organizations make: not actually getting involved.

No one from the district was represented in the grants development team. If you're participating in a partnership, it is imperative that you be part of the team that's developing the grant application, so you can fully understand your organization's role within the project. It's also essential that you, as the partner, carefully read and review every element of grant application. If the lead applicant refuses to allow you to participate in this fashion, I would strongly suggest that you not participate in their application. Your organization

must have a voice and use it, otherwise you may be handed project responsibilities that you had no intention of taking on.

## **Pitfall #2: Not benefitting from your participation**

Additionally, you may not receive any real benefit, monetary or otherwise, from your involvement in the application. There's probably a very good reason a lead applicant has asked you to be part of the project. You may have compelling statistics, like a high percentage of low income population, or geographic features, like being in an extraordinarily rural location, whereby your participation in the project will bolster the application. It's a two way street though. Your partnership will add to the competitiveness of the application, but you need to realize a benefit from your involvement - whether it be monetary, access to the services described in the application, a share in equipment, etc.

One of the best ways to ensure "you'll get yours" is to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the lead applicant. It may or may not be a required part of the application, but it's still a good practice to have a MOU in place in any collaborative venture. A well-written MOU will spell out clearly who's participating, who's responsible for bringing what to the project, and what the timeframes are for the project deliverables. It is generally signed by high ranking executives from all the

organizations that are participating. The MOU will make certain that you know your role and what you can expect from the organization's your partnering with.

Partnering is a great way to bring new services, resources, personnel, and equipment to your organization, and coming together with other organizations can be positive and rewarding. Just make sure that you're not a silent partner in proposal development. Ask questions, speak up, and represent your organization from a position of knowledge, confidence, and strength; and document your relationship to avoid misunderstanding when the project is funded and it's time to implement.



Active participation is one of the key factors in making a collaborative project successful.  
(Photo: Thinkstock/Getty Images)



# REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE:

## UNDERSTANDING THE RURAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES OUTREACH GRANT PROGRAM

By Chris LaPage

“Margaret” is 35 years old and is in relatively good health when compared to her neighbors in the Appalachian region of West Virginia. She is raising three children, making do with the little income she receives for working a local flea market and the paltry sum sent along by social services. For someone who always prided herself on the concept of self-sufficiency, it was a huge step for her to even consider welfare, but she could not let her kids go hungry. In fact, she still makes all the clothing for the entire household, given her ability with a sewing needle. Margaret has lost a mother and one sister to breast cancer at very young ages. While she knows this puts her at a very high risk, she has not followed through with basic routine breast cancer screening. The issue is not one of coverage, as her entire household is on Medicaid. She finds it difficult to find spare time from raising the children to travel 45 minutes to the nearest healthcare facility. Even if she were able to find the time or bring the kids along, she does not have a reliable vehicle or any means of reliable transportation to make the trip.

Margaret is not an actual person, but her story is representative of healthcare in rural America. As the statistics demonstrate, Margaret likely will not find out about her cancer until it has advanced to the point where a cure is improbable. While this situation is both common and tragic in and of itself, it is also likely that her children will experience a similar plight. Even when measures, such as social services and Medicaid are put in place by governments, there are still gaping holes in rural healthcare service delivery. While some people equate insurance with access to the healthcare system, the truth is that there are

a wide variety of social and economic determinants of health status.

The goal of the Rural Health Care Services Outreach Grant Program (ROGP) is to improve healthcare delivery in these rural underserved areas, so that Margaret’s children encounter a much more robust system when they access healthcare services as adults. The idea is that when healthcare providers and ancillary organizations form effective partnerships, these complex multi-dimensional issues in rural areas can be addressed. Unlike other funding from the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), the ROGP does not limit eligibility to formal rural health networks. The program does require that at least three separate entities join together to arrange health services in rural areas through formal memorandums of understanding/agreement. However, it does not mandate a network board, bylaws and other requirements that are necessary to pursue Rural Health Network Development grants. In order to be competitive, the collaborating organizations should be able to demonstrate some historical evidence of cooperation and joint participation on other projects. Every participating project partner must have a real and meaningful role in the project. Simply providing letters of support will not allow a collaborative to be competitive. HRSA wants to see that every partner has an identified role and is actively involved; whether it be through the provision of money, personnel, space or other valuable resources. Approximately 80 successful coalitions will be able to access up to \$600,000 over a three year project period to fund their rural outreach project.

The good news about ROGP is that it is wide open in terms of the mod-

els that you can employ to address health care in rural areas. The program will fund foot soldiers on the ground in outreach efforts (personnel) to technology-based solutions, like telemedicine (note: 40% cap on equipment). The major point of emphasis in the 2015 competition is the focus on utilizing evidence-based or promising practice models. Thus, applicants must do their due diligence in reviewing the academic literature, provider case studies, and self-contained pilot data to ensure they are meeting these standards. The goal is to promote creativity, as HRSA encourages applicants to innovate while simultaneously ensuring there is some type of evidence base for the model or promising practice being proposed.

If you have the components to piece together a comprehensive project to address rural health care needs, the application deadline for ROGP is November 14, 2014. Successful applicants will be able to tell Margaret’s story, or a similar one, using local demographic data that documents the underserved status of the rural population in a defined region. HRSA will fund those projects that can make the largest impact on the lives of people like Margaret. Comprehensive projects will account for an actual health care delivery mechanism in addition to the socioeconomic factors that impact the ability of a rural resident to access providers. Finally, winners will be selected based on the strength of their consortia and the evidence-base of the models they are deploying. The goal is to be able to build a bridge that connects rural residents to important health services such as primary/preventative care and chronic disease management.

# YCC: WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSES, ANOTHER ONE OPENS

by Elizabeth Evans

You may want to sit down for this one, folks. I've got some bad news. But if you'll stick with me, you'll see that the old adage is, in this case, true.

It looks like the Youth CareerConnect program – a joint offering by the Department of Labor and the Department of Education – was a onetime deal. Yes, that's right, that means there won't be a 2015 competition come January.

Now, this isn't all that surprising given that the \$107 million used to fund the 24 Youth CareerConnect awards in 2014 came from the revenue amassed over several years of H-1B Visa fees. Once a bucket is depleted, it takes time to fill it back up again. But I, like many, was holding out hope that the federal government would find some other source to continue funding this excellent program in the meantime – particularly since President Obama has stated that college and career readiness of America's youth is one of this administration's top priorities!

Luckily, for those of you who were anticipating a 2015 competition of the Youth CareerConnect program, there is hope!

In the current version of the 2015 Federal Budget Proposal, both the Department of Labor and the Department of Education have proposed allocations to fund grants for youth college and career readiness partnership projects. Of particular interest are the Department of Labor's "American Apprenticeship Grant Program," and the Department of Education's "High School Redesign Grant Program" and "College Pathways and Accelerated Learning Grant Program." The following preliminary descriptions have been made available through each department's website regarding these opportunities:

## THE AMERICAN APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM

Department of Labor, \$100 million in funding projected

The Department of Labor is making existing H-1B funds available for American Apprenticeship Grants to reward partnerships that help more workers participate in appren-

ticeships. This competition will help more Americans access this proven path to employment and the middle class: 87 percent of apprentices are employed after completing their programs and the average starting wage for apprenticeship graduates is over \$50,000. The new American Apprenticeship Grants competition – which will be launched in the fall – will focus on partnerships between employers, labor organizations, training providers, community colleges, local and state governments, the workforce system, non-profits and faith-based organizations that -

- Launch apprenticeship models in new, high-growth fields: Many fast-growing occupations and industries with open positions, such as in information technology, high-tech services, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing, have an opportunity to adopt and adapt apprenticeship programs, to meet their skilled workforce needs.
- Align apprenticeships to pathways for further learning and career advancement: Apprenticeships that embed industry-recognized skills certifications or reward workplace learning with college credit provide an affordable educational pathway for those who need to earn while they learn, and apprenticeships linked to pre-apprenticeship programs can help more Americans access this training and get on an early pathway to a good career.
- Scale apprenticeship models that work: Across the country, there are pockets of excellence in apprenticeship, but all too often these successful models are unknown in other regions or to other employers. These grants will build from strength and invest in innovations and strategies to scale apprenticeships – including to market the value of apprenticeships, make them more attractive to women and other Americans who have been underrepresented, increase the return on investment

for workers and, or build national and regional partnerships to expand apprenticeships.

(Source: [http://www.doleta.gov/grants/pdf/ETA\\_Funding\\_Opportunities\\_updated\\_6314.pdf](http://www.doleta.gov/grants/pdf/ETA_Funding_Opportunities_updated_6314.pdf)).

### THE HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN GRANT PROGRAM

Department of Education, \$150 million in funding projected

The budget supports a new competition that will fund competitive grants to school districts and their partners to redesign high schools in innovative ways that better prepare students for college and career success so that all students graduate from high school with college credit and career-related experiences or competencies, obtained through project or problem-based learning, real-world challenges, and organized internships and mentorships. Grantees would work to -

- align academic content and instructional practices more closely with postsecondary education and careers;
- personalize learning opportunities to support the educational needs and interests of individual students;
- provide academic and wrap-around support services for those students who need them;
- make available high-quality career and college exploration and counseling on options for students after high school graduation;
- offer multiple opportunities to earn postsecondary credit while still in high school; and
- strategically use learning time in more meaningful ways, such as through technology, a redesigned school day or calendar, or competency-based progressions.

(Source: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget15/crosscuttingissues/skillsforneweconomy.pdf>)

### THE COLLEGE PATHWAYS AND ACCELERATED LEARNING GRANT PROGRAM

Department of Education, \$74. million in funding projected

This program will increase graduation rates and college enrollment and success by providing college-level and other accelerated courses and instruction in low-income middle schools and high schools, including Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses.

(Source: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget15/crosscuttingissues/skillsforneweconomy.pdf>)

Please note, that while the specific details of these programs have yet to be announced, we at Grants Office believe that these three opportunities will serve as a fitting replacement to the Youth CareerConnect program. After all, no matter what name the grant goes by, college and career readiness remains a federal funding priority. So look ahead and begin strategizing which of these new opportunities will best fit your current initiative; because as the old saying goes, “when one door closes...” well, you know.



Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis and Dr. Jill Biden start the Community College to Career Tour, stopping at locations in Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina to highlight the importance of community colleges in fostering careers. Given the administration's focus on community colleges as a gateway to career readiness, future workforce development programs are likely to encourage their requirement in grant-funded projects. (Photo: Department of Labor)



## PROGRAM SNAPSHOT



Grand opening at the USDA-supported Community Memorial Healthcare Hospital in Marysville, Kansas. (Photo: Community Memorial Healthcare)

# USDA COMMUNITY FACILITIES PROGRAM

**SUMMARY:** The Community Facilities Grant Program provides grants to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population, and grant funds may be used to assist in the development of essential community facilities.

Awards can be used to construct, enlarge, or improve community facilities for health care, public safety, and community and public services, and grants may be made in combination with other Community Facilities financial assistance such as a direct or guaranteed loan, applicant contributions, or loans and grants from other sources.

Projects are selected based on a priority point system. Priority projects are those that:

- Serve small communities - with the highest priority going to projects located in a community with a population of 5,000 or less.
- Serve low-income communities with the highest priority going to projects serving communities with median household incomes below the higher of the poverty line or 60% of the State non-metropolitan median household income.
- Provide healthcare, public safety, or public and community services.

**DEADLINE:** The application process and deadline vary by region, and applications are filed with the USDA Rural Development field offices. Contact information for Rural Development State Offices is available online at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd\\_map.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd_map.html).

**ELIGIBILITY:** Grants are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special-purpose districts, as well as non-profit corporations and tribal governments. Applicants located in small communities with low populations and low incomes will receive a higher percentage of grants.

**AWARD AMOUNTS:** The amount of grant assistance for project costs depends upon the median household income and the population in the community where the project is located, and on the availability of grant funds. In most instances, projects which receive grant assistance have a high priority and are highly leveraged with other loan and grant awards, however, grant assistance may be available for up to 75% of project costs.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:** [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/had-cf\\_grants.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/had-cf_grants.html)

# EVENTS



GRANTS OFFICE

## UPCOMING WEBCAST EVENTS

- Funding Technology to Empower University Research - Sponsored by NetApp  
October 16, 2014 at 2:00 pm ET  
Register at [www.grantsoffice.info/webcasts](http://www.grantsoffice.info/webcasts)
- Funding to Enhance Response, Investigation, and Prosecution of Domestic Violence - Sponsored by Panasonic  
November 4, 2014 at 2:00 pm ET  
Register at [www.justicegrants.info/webcasts](http://www.justicegrants.info/webcasts)
- Funding for Video-enhanced Policing - Sponsored by NetApp  
November 15, 2014 at 2:00 pm ET  
Register at [www.grantsoffice.info/webcasts](http://www.grantsoffice.info/webcasts)
- Funding School Safety Technology - Sponsored by NetApp  
December 18, 2014 at 2:00 pm ET  
Register at [www.grantsoffice.info/webcasts](http://www.grantsoffice.info/webcasts)
- Justice Assistance Grants: Re-thinking the Program You Know So Well - Sponsored by Panasonic  
January 13, 2015 at 2:00 pm ET  
Register at [www.justicegrants.info/webcasts](http://www.justicegrants.info/webcasts)

## RECENT WEBCAST RECORDINGS

- Making the Most of the 2014 Assistance to Firefighters Grants – Sponsored by Panasonic  
Recorded October 2, 2014 and is available for download at [www.grantsoffice.info/webcasts](http://www.grantsoffice.info/webcasts).
- Funding to Address High Crime Areas within Your Community - Sponsored by NetApp  
Recorded September 18, 2014 and is available for download at [www.grantsoffice.info/webcasts](http://www.grantsoffice.info/webcasts).
- Funding for Healthcare Technology to Connect Providers and Patients - Sponsored by Panasonic  
Recorded September 9, 2014 and is available for download at [www.grantsoffice.info/webcasts](http://www.grantsoffice.info/webcasts).

These and other recordings are available for playback or download at <http://grantsoffice.info/webcasts>.

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