South Carolina State Workforce Development Board

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Access Point Expansion Grant

Background and Purpose

The SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) investigated the first two possible cases of novel Coronavirus on March 6, 2020. On March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States constitutes a public health emergency. Governor Henry McMaster issued an Executive Order (EO) on the same day declaring a state of emergency in South Carolina and taking action to prevent further spread of the virus (EO 2020-09). In the days and weeks that followed, many South Carolina businesses closed or dramatically reduced operations to protect the health and safety of employees and the public.

As a result, South Carolina experienced an unprecedented increase in the filing of Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims. In the week ending March 21, 2020, 31,054 intrastate unemployment insurance claims were filed, an increase of approximately 1600% from the previous week's count of 1,996 and 772 interstate claims were filed, an increase of approximately 800% from the previous week's count of 97. The most current data available indicates that for the week ending April 11, 2020, 87,686 initial claims were filed, an increase of 4,293.09% from the week ending March 14, 2020.[1]

While individuals can complete the claims filing process online and there are a number of well-developed, publically facing resources to help individuals navigate through the claims filing process, there are individuals who need more intensive in-person assistance. Therefore, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) has made funding available to increase the number of access points through community-based organizations to provide UI claims filing assistance to individuals laid off or otherwise separated from employment as a result of COVID-19 pandemic.

Allowable Use of Funds

Grant funds may _**only**_ be used to cover:

- salaries and fringe benefits of the staff working directly with individuals seeking claims filing assistance
- reasonable and necessary costs related to providing Internet access to individuals for self-service activities

Funds _**cannot**_ be used to cover indirect costs, administrative costs (costs of administering the grant), profit or program income, equipment, supplies, or other miscellaneous costs.

Please note: This grant is issued through Federal funding made available by the US Department of Labor. This funding must be used in accordance with all Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of this grant, including the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards ("Uniform Guidance", 2 CFR 200).

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[1] The SC Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) is communicating information to the public about unemployment insurance claim filings through weekly press releases. An archive of press releases can be found on DEW's website at www.dew.sc.gov under News & Announcements.

Period of Performance

Grants will be awarded for a maximum period of 6 months.

Required and Allowable Grant Activities

Entities are *required* to provide the following services:

- UI claims filing assistance using publically available tools and resources,
- assistance with registration in SC Works Online Services (SCWOS), and
- Internet access for UI claims filing processes and unassisted job search activities.

Eligible Applicants

Entities that are community-based organizations and have:

- current, active partnerships with local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs,
- a physical location that is accessible to the public, in which they are able to provide in-person services, following CDC requirements, and
- publically available Internet access or assure that Internet access will be made available through the grant

are eligible to apply for a grant.

Entities that are debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal programs or activities are not eligible to receive grant funding. Additionally, entities that have failed to perform successfully and/or sustain fiscal integrity on previously awarded grants are not eligible to apply. Successful performance includes timeliness or compliance with applicable reporting requirements, compliance with the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards, and meeting or exceeding the expected outcomes.

Eligible Participants

Individuals that receive UI claims filing assistance must be registered in SCWOS (SC Works Online Services), South Carolina's information and data management system, and be eligible and enrolled in the WIOA Adult program. Eligibility for the WIOA Adult program is determined through completion of a WIOA application. The WIOA application is available in SCWOS.

Training and technical assistance will be provided by DEW to ensure that staff working directly with participants are capable of assisting with SCWOS registration, completing a WIOA application for eligibility, enrolling a participant in the WIOA Adult program, and entering an activity code.

Partnership and Collaboration

Applicants must develop and describe a referral process with their local SC Works center to ensure that individuals who need additional services, beyond UI claims filing assistance, such as supportive services or training services, can be referred to an appropriate program that provides these services. A directory of SC Works Centers can be found here or by going to https://www.scworks.org/about-us/statewide-centers.

Performance and Expected Outcomes

Entities are required to track and report on the number of individuals who receive UI claims filing assistance on a weekly and monthly basis.

Additional instructions and technical assistance will be provided on tracking and reporting outcomes.

Application Narrative

To apply for this grant, please submit an application, including an application narrative, budget, budget narrative, and Grant Standard Assurances and Certifications, to Grants Management at workforcegrants@dew.sc.gov.

- Application narratives should be sent in either a Microsoft Word or PDF document,
- Application narratives must be in a legible font, double spaced, and contain page numbers, and
- Applications, including attachments, should not exceed 25 pages.

Applicants must clearly and completely respond to all application questions, highlighting throughout their ability and unique qualifications. Failure to thoroughly and honestly answer every question or include all requested documentation will result in a non-responsive application and disqualification. In addition to the questions asked below, please include any additional, relevant information as necessary.

1. Applicant Information

   a. Provide the full name, mailing address, physical address, phone number, and web address of the entity/organization applying for grant funding.

   b. Provide a point of contact for the application and grant implementation, including the individual's name, mailing address, physical address, and email address.

   c. Provide a complete and thorough overview of the entity/organization applying for funding, including organizational structure and demonstrated related experience.

   d. Describe the entity's grant management procedures, including applicable internal controls.

   e. Describe the entity's ability to comply with the Participant Eligibility (pg. 2) and Performance and Expected Outcomes (pg. 3) requirements.

   f. Provide the entity's Data Universal Numbering System ("DUNS") Number and a summary of each Federally-funded grant or program the entity has administered, including the entity's fiscal and programmatic performance on the grant.

2. Issue/Need Statement

   a. Describe the clientele served by the entity including a description of any unique barriers faced by the clientele and the services or benefits provided by the entity.

   b. Describe the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the area or community served by the entity, including information or data on business closings, unemployment claim filings, workers or industries more heavily impacted, and any additional information relevant to demonstrate the need for grant funding.

   c. Describe how funding through the grant will address the needs identified in 2(a) above.

3.   Outreach and Service Delivery

    a. Describe methods the entity will use to ensure that members of the community are aware of an encouraged to use the services available through the grant.

    b. Provide a list of the locations at which UI claims filing assistance will be made available through the grant.

    c. Identify the projected number of individuals that will receive claims filing assistance and the rationale used to arrive at the projected number.

    d. Describe the entity's ability to provide each of the required activities listed on page 2.

    e. Describe the referral process that will be used to ensure that individuals are referred to SC Works centers or other appropriate programs when more intensive services are needed, such as supportive services and training.

4.   Budget and Budget Narrative

    a. Use the Budget Worksheet (Attachment A) to provide salary and fringe benefit information on the staff who will provide services through the grant, as well as reasonable and necessary costs for providing Internet access.

    b. If costs for providing Internet access are included in the budget, the application must include a detailed narrative of the projected costs.

5.   Safety Measures

    a. Describe the measures that will be taken to practice social distancing and ensure compliance with guidelines published by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to slow the spread of COVID-19.

6.   Assurances

    a. Complete and submit the Grant Standard Assurances and Certifications (Attachment B).

    b. Provide a statement that the entity will provide Internet access to individuals that are receiving services through the grant.

    c. Provide a statement that the entity agrees to only use grant funds to cover the salary and fringe benefits of the staff working directly with the individuals receiving services and reasonable and necessary costs associated with providing Internet access.

Please email questions and/or requests for additional information to Grants Management at workforcegrants@dew.sc.gov.

Applications must be submitted by email to workforcegrants@dew.sc.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6th. Late applications or additions will not be accepted.