



**MID-CAROLINA
WORKFORCE & TALENT
DEVELOPMENT**

Policy Letter #24

TO: All Staff
FROM: Matthew Fowler, Director
SUBJECT: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant

PURPOSE

To transmit the guidelines for and implementation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funds awarded to the Mid-Carolina Local Area.

BACKGROUND

ARPA was enacted on March 11, 2021 to provide relief to address the continued impact of COVID-19 on the economy, public health, state and local governments, individuals and businesses. A component of ARPA is the State Fiscal Recovery Fund (SFRF) which provided funds to North Carolina to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery. These programs are in keeping with the spirit of both North Carolina's "First in Talent" Plan and Governor Cooper's NC Job Ready Initiative.

Each grant provides an opportunity to engage with new partners and/or provide innovative and enhanced services that are not easily administered through current Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) guidelines.

NCWorks Small Business Work-Based Learning Grant funding may be used to establish work-based learning opportunities targeting small- and micro-businesses (i.e., businesses with 25 or fewer employees) to bridge the gap for business retention and expansion. Emphasis should be placed on Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB), industries significantly impacted by the pandemic, or businesses located in an economically distressed Tier 1 or Tier 2 county.

NCWorks Substance Use Disorder Recovery Grant funds may be utilized to further implement and enhance programs to assist local communities impacted by the opioid epidemic and other substance use disorders (SUDs). The goal is to increase workforce participation and job retention of individuals in recovery through an increase in education, knowledge, and workforce skills, and by ensuring they are ready to work. These efforts may include training in soft skills required in the workplace, providing access to postsecondary educational opportunities for training specific to high-demand employment sectors, and offering support for job retention.

NCWorks Reentry Support Grant funding may be used to provide comprehensive services to Justice-Involved (JI) individuals focusing on their specific challenges and job search needs post-release. In addition to this funding opportunity, NCWorks Reentry staff will provide information on expungement clinics, vital records appropriation, certificates of relief, letters of explanation, and resume writing within correctional facilities.

ACTION

All participants served under the ARPA grant must be registered in NCWorks.gov and co-enrolled in WIOA Title I. Eligibility information for each participant, including specific information identified for the grant initiative, must be entered in NCWorks.gov. Specific activity codes and NCWorks data entry instructions must be adhered to for those served under the ARPA grants (reference Attachment B). It is extremely important that ARPA-applicable activities and charges are not coded with WIOA codes. Grant participants will be tracked as other WIOA enrollments and are included in performance.

Reporting Requirements

Monthly status reports during the life of the grant are required to be submitted to the applicable points of contact for each respective grant (internally by the 5th of each month; to DWS by 10th of each month). Quarterly status reports and quarterly financial updates during the life of the grant are required to be submitted to the applicable points of contact for each respective grant (internally by the 5th of each month; to DWS by 10th of each month after the applicable quarter). Reports will cover areas such as partnership updates, solutions implemented, challenges encountered, participants enrolled, demographics of participants, expenditures, and other details (reference Attachment C).

Applicable only to the Small Business Work-Based Learning Grant, Salesforce reporting for employer information only (participant information is to be entered in NCWorks) must be updated for the prior month no later than the 10th of each month.

Project Evaluation

Quarterly check-in calls and semi-annual on-site visits will be conducted by the respective Grant Program Managers.

Upon closeout of the grant, a final evaluation and summary of the project are required to be submitted to the applicable points of contact for each respective grant, which will include an analysis of the project's challenges, successes, expenditures, and promising practices, and a template about how the project could be sustained locally and replicated in other regions, if deemed a success. The evaluation will also identify each goal and whether the measures were met, exceeded, or not, and an explanation of successes and failures.

Reference DWS OG 04-2022 dated 8/23/22

Attachment A: Summary of ARPA Grant

Attachment B: NCWorks data entry for ARPA-funded services

Attachment C: ARPA Reporting Templates

Attachment D: ARPA Activity Terminology

Attachment E: ARPA Standard Operating Procedures

Attachment F: ARPA Monitoring Handbook

Creation Date

January 2023