

# This Presentation for the FY 2026 Talent Search Pre-application Technical Assistance Webinar Highlighting Competition Priorities

The Talent Search Staff will be conducting a “Live” Question and Answer (Q&A) session at the end of today’s presentation using the Webinar Q and A box feature



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# Disclaimer

Do not rely solely on the information provided during the presentation or in this document. Please refer to the Application Notice and Instructions and the program regulations that are published in the Federal Register, as these are the official documents governing the Talent Search Grant Competition.

# Workshop Overview

- Talent Search Program Overview
- Absolute Priority
- Competitive Preference Priority
- Invitational Priority
- Questions and Answers

## Program Overview & Goals

Talent Search (TS) is a pre-college program that is administered by the Employment and Training Administration at the U.S. Department of Labor (Labor) on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The Talent Search program identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education.

**Goal:** The goal of TS is to increase the number of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds who complete secondary school and enroll in a postsecondary institution.

# Absolute Priority

**MANDATORY**

Projects or proposals that will do one or more of the following:

- (a) expand access to education services that accelerate learning such as high-impact tutoring,
- (b) expand access to one or more of the following at the high school or postsecondary level: distance education, pre-apprenticeships, or Registered Apprenticeships, including Registered Apprenticeships for in-school or out-of-school youth, or
- (c) expand access to programs or coursework that lead to in-demand, industry-recognized postsecondary credentials.

# Absolute Priority (a) High Impact Tutoring

- ▶ High-impact tutoring (HIT) is an evidence-based, structured, and in-school intervention designed to accelerate learning through intensive, small-group sessions.
  - ▶ Key components include highly trained tutors, 2–3 sessions per week (30–50+ minutes each),
  - ▶ Tailored instruction aligned with school curricula, and strong, consistent student-tutor relationships.

# Absolute Priority (b)

## *Registered Apprenticeship*

- Registered Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, receive progressive wage increases, classroom instruction, and a portable nationally-recognized credential.
- Visit <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/> to learn more!
  - The site is designed to connect career seekers, employers, sponsors, educators, and training providers to the resources and tools they need to learn about apprenticeship and take-action finding an apprenticeship, starting an apprenticeship program, or becoming a participating training provider.

# Absolute Priority (c)

## Industry Recognized Credential

- Recognized postsecondary credential means a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree, as defined in section 3(52) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

# III. Competitive Preference Priority

## Maximum Points: 0 or 5 points

For FY 2026, and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is a competitive preference priority. An application may receive a maximum of 5 additional points under the competitive preference priority. ED will not review or award points where an applicant fails to clearly identify the competitive preference priority that it wishes ED to consider for purposes of awarding competitive preference priority points.

10

\*This CPP should be done as a brief separate attachment, no more than 1 page recommended

# CPP 1 – Returning Education to the States

Projects or proposals that will be carried out by one or more of the following:

(a) State educational agencies (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(49)),

11

(b) State workforce development agencies or boards,

(c) State higher education agencies (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1003(22), or

(d) An Indian Tribe (as defined in 25 U.S.C. 5304(e)), Tribal organization (as defined in 25 U.S.C. 5304(l)), or Tribal educational agency (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7452(b)(3))

How many types of entities within each State can receive CPP points?

- Three types:

SEA

(5 Points)

SWDB

(5 Points)

SHEA

(5 Points)

How many “state-level applicants” can be designated by their Governor for the increased maximum award (up-to \$10,000,000)?

- Only **one** per State.

Single State-Level  
Increased Maximum  
\$ Applicant

# Maximum Project Funding

13

- For an applicant that has not been designated by their Governor as the state-level applicant, the annual maximum award is **\$1,000,000**.
- All applicants must serve a minimum of **500** participants annually.
- For one state-level applicant that has been designated by their Governor as the state-level applicant, or for any Indian tribe receiving points under the competitive priority, the maximum annual award amount is **\$10,000,000**.

# Invitational Priority

For FY 2026 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is an invitational priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1), we do not give an application that meets this invitational priority a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

# Invitational Priority- Talent Marketplaces

Projects that are designed to strengthen their career and personal counseling activities (as authorized in 402B(c)) to improve student persistence, postsecondary access and opportunity, and create a scalable data infrastructure that connects education to workforce outcomes by doing the following:

# Invitational Priority- Talent Marketplaces

(a) integrating learning and employment records (LER) with AI-enabled learner wallets to transform student support services into personalized, skills-based pathways to postsecondary success and employment, and

(b) expanding access to talent marketplaces composed of credential registries (e.g. publishing education and training programs in structured, open, linked, and interoperable data formats), skills based job description generators, LERs that connect Talent Search participants, employers, and education providers through a common currency of skills.

# Terminology Used

- ▶ Employment and Training Administration (ETA)
- ▶ Pre-apprenticeships – may refer to definition in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations at [20 CFR 681.480](#)
- ▶ Talent marketplaces – in Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) [Connecting Talent to Opportunity \(CTO\) Challenge](#) (scroll to third section of the blog)
  - ▶ Also in the [Challenge materials](#), see [Definitions and Key Terms](#)
- ▶ Learning and employment records (LER) – in the [CTO Challenge materials](#), see [Definitions and Key Terms](#) – Note that the CTO Challenge defines a LER as a digital tool maintained by a state workforce agency (SWA) for the purposes of that funding, but the common definition doesn't tie it to a SWA.
- ▶ AI-enabled learner wallets – this is not a term ETA has defined but is another way of talking about LER.
- ▶ Credential registries – in the [CTO Challenge materials](#), see [Definitions and Key Terms](#) – Note that the CTO Challenge defines a credential registry as one maintained by a SWA for the purposes of that CTO funding, but the common definition doesn't tie it to a SWA.
  - ▶ There's a very well known Credential Registry maintained by the nonprofit [Credential Engine](#).

# Questions and Answers

18

Please utilize the Q&A Feature to  
Post your Questions

Additional Questions after the webinar  
can be sent to  
**TalentSearch@ed.gov**