Tip Sheet for New Project Directors

Staff turnover is part and parcel of grant programs. A change in project directors often slows down activities and confronts new staff with a flood of new information and responsibilities. We created this New Project Director Tip Sheet to consolidate valuable resources in one place and help new project directors for Scaling Apprenticeship grants accelerate the transition into their new role.

SETTLING IN AND GETTING CONNECTED

Being a project director means having responsibilities in program operations. This includes regular contact with grant funders. You should be aware of and familiar with the Department of Labor (DOL) system in place to assist you. This includes your Federal Program Officer (FPO), who is the only source for guidance on the scope of work for your grant, the DOL’s Employment and Training Administration (ETA) National Office, to whom your program is required to submit quarterly performance reports, and the Technical Assistance (TA) provider DOL engaged to support your program improvement needs. The checklist below will ensure you are in touch with the right people.

- Make sure to connect with your grant’s FPO.
- Email ScalingApprenticeship@dol.gov to make sure you are listed as an official contact to receive relevant information from DOL. Add that address to your contacts to prevent emails from being diverted by spam filters.
- Register for WorkforceGPS, DOL’s online TA portal, so you can sign up for Scaling Apprenticeship webinars. Check the box for “H-1B-Scaling Apprenticeship” to receive e-lerts when new resources are added. Go to the H-1B Scaling Apprenticeship Community to find key resources, and learn how to connect and interact with the community and your peers.
- Make sure to connect with your grant’s assigned TA coach. The coach will check with you regularly to discuss your grant’s progress and needs. She or he will also be able to connect you with TA resources.
PARTNERSHIPS AND TEAM BUILDING

Project directors are expected to communicate with college staff and industry partners. Here are some ideas for how to keep everyone up to date.

- Establish a monthly meeting for all key staff involved in grant implementation across your college (if you are a single-site grantee), or the grant managers at each of the colleges within your consortium.

- Convene your industry partners to ensure their needs are being met by your program. Resources to engage employers are available on the Scaling Apprenticeship Community.

GRANT COMPLIANCE

Part of the role of a project director is following grant rules and administration duties. These resources have been compiled to help new project directors keep up with grant management.

- Read the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) amendments (especially the second one), and review the most recent Policy Clarifications along with other resources on the Foundational Scaling Apprenticeship Grant Resources page.

- Read the initial grantee package transmitted to your organization, including your grant’s Statement of Work and any modifications that have been made, and the grant terms and conditions.

- Watch the Scaling Apprenticeship Grantee orientation webinar to learn more about training activities related to the grant, what a high-quality apprenticeship program looks like, award regulations and the modification process.

- Review the DOL training for ETA Competitive Grant Program Basics in the RISE module. It provides a comprehensive overview of the entire lifecycle of a grant.

- View the SMART 3.0 Webinar Training Series and other general grant management resources, such as the grantee handbook and quick-start action plan, on helpful strategies in navigating the administration and financial management of their grants.

- Familiarize yourself with whether your grant is involved in the DOL National Evaluation. If you’re not sure, send an email to ScalingApprenticeship@dol.gov.

- Review DOL’s Core Monitoring Guide which provides a framework and starting point for all on-site grant monitoring responsibilities by ETA.
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Project directors are responsible for reporting grant activities to DOL staff. Check out the following resources to learn what information to report and how to effectively report grant information.

✔ Review your college or consortia’s specific performance targets and understand how the goals are allocated among grant partners.

✔ Review past Annual Performance Reports and Quarterly Narrative Reports that were submitted on behalf of your college/consortium.

✔ Watch the H-1B Scaling Apprenticeship Performance Reporting Orientation Webinars 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 for an overview on the reporting system to provide information to ETA about the grant, quarterly performance reporting guidance, and to see how data submitted is aggregated – or obtain a detailed briefing on this from staff responsible for this function.

✔ Check out the Key Grantee Performance Reporting Resources Parts 1 and 2 for assistance on determining the documentation necessary to support the reporting requirements of your grant award package.

✔ Review the process for data collection established for your grant.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Over the years, DOL has invested in a myriad of online resources to improve the capacity of its grantees to deliver high-performing programs. The resources below provide learning opportunities related to apprenticeship programs.

✔ Watch for invites to webinars, peer learning calls, and other resource announcements from the ScalingApprenticeship@dol.gov mailbox. This will be the primary source of grant information.

✔ The Scaling Apprenticeship Community offers learning opportunities via webinars, resources, blogs, and more. To start, take a look at the Apprenticeship: The Basics page and learn about apprenticeships with the Introduction to Apprenticeship Toolkit, Quick-Start Toolkit, Registered Apprenticeship 101 Bootcamp.

✔ Visit SkillsCommons.org to view Open Educational Resource materials produced by ETA grantees, and join the SkillsCommons IMPACTcommunity that uses storytelling to share solutions for challenges found in today’s higher education settings.

✔ Join the grantee mailing list to participate in peer conversations in your industry sector. Email TA4ScalingApprenticeship@manhattanstrategy.com to add your contact to the list.