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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Office of the Secretary

Combating Exploitive Child Labor Through Education in Sierra Leone and Liberia

AGENCY: Bureau of International Labor Affairs, Department of Labor.

Announcement Type: New. Notice of Availability of Funds and Solicitation for Cooperative Agreement Applications.

Funding Opportunity Number: SGA 05-03.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: Not applicable.

Key Dates: Deadline for Submission of Application is July 11, 2005.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, will award up to U.S. \$5 million through one or more cooperative agreements to an organization or organizations to improve access to and quality of education programs as a means to combat exploitive child labor in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Projects funded under this solicitation will provide educational and training opportunities to children as a means of

removing and/or preventing them from engaging in exploitive work or the worst forms of child labor. The activities funded will complement and expand upon existing projects and programs to improve basic education in the countries. Applications must respond to the entire Statement of Work outlined in this solicitation. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, activities under these cooperative agreements will provide the direct delivery of quality basic education to working children and those at risk of entering work, and will result in their enrollment, persistence, and completion of an education or training program.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), announces the availability of funds to be awarded by cooperative agreement to one or more qualifying organizations for the purpose of expanding access to and quality of basic education and strengthening government and civil society's capacity to address the education needs of working children and those at risk of entering in work in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The overall purpose of USDOL's Child Labor Education Initiative, as consistently enunciated in USDOL appropriations FY 2000 through FY 2005, is to work toward the elimination of the worst forms of child labor through the provision of basic education. Accordingly, entities applying under this solicitation must develop and implement strategies for the prevention and withdrawal of children from the worst forms of child labor, consistent with this purpose. ILAB is authorized to award and administer this program by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005, Pub. L. 108-447, 118 Stat. 2809 (2004). The cooperative agreement or cooperative agreements awarded under this initiative will be managed by ILAB's International Child Labor Program (ICLP) to assure achievement of the stated goals. Applicants are encouraged to be creative in proposing cost-effective interventions that will have a demonstrable impact in promoting school attendance and completion in the geographical areas where children are engaged in or are most at risk of working in the worst forms of child labor.

1. Background and Program Scope

A. USDOL Support of Global Elimination of Exploitive Child Labor

The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimated that 211 million children ages 5 to 14 were working

around the world in 2000. Full-time child workers are generally unable to attend school, and part-time child laborers balance economic survival with schooling from an early age, often to the detriment of their education. Since 1995, USDOL has provided close to U.S. \$400 million in technical assistance funding to combat exploitive child labor in approximately 70 countries around the world.

Programs funded by USDOL range from targeted action programs in specific sectors to more comprehensive efforts that target the worst forms of child labor as defined by ILO Convention 182. Convention 182 lists four categories of the worst forms of child labor, and calls for their immediate elimination:

- All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labor, including force or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- The use, procurement or offering of a child for prostitution, production of pornography or pornographic performances;
- The use, procurement or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs, as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- Work which, by its nature or by the circumstances by which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety, and morals of children.

In determining the types of work likely to harm the health, safety and morals of children, ILO Recommendation 190 considers the following: work which exposes a child to physical, psychological or sexual abuse; work underground, underwater, at dangerous heights or in confined workplaces; work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools or handling or transporting heavy loads; work in an unhealthy environment including exposure to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels or vibrations damaging to the health; and work for long hours or night work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises.

From FY 2001 to FY 2005, the U.S. Congress has appropriated over U.S. \$180 million to USDOL for a Child Labor Education Initiative to fund programs aimed at increasing access to quality, basic education in areas with a high incidence of abusive and exploitive child labor. The cooperative agreement(s) awarded under this

solicitation will be funded through this initiative.

USDOL's Child Labor Education Initiative seeks to nurture the development, health, safety and enhanced future employability of children around the world by increasing access to and quality of basic education for working children and those at risk of entering work. The elimination of exploitive child labor depends, to a large extent, on improving access to, quality of, and relevance of education.

In addition to providing direct education and training opportunities to working children and those at risk of engaging in exploitive work, the Child Labor Education Initiative has four goals:

- i. Raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilize a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures;
- ii. Strengthen formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school;
- iii. Strengthen national institutions and policies on education and child labor; and
- iv. Ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

B. Barriers to Education for Working Children, Country Backgrounds, and Focus of Solicitation

Throughout the world, there are complex causes of exploitive child labor as well as barriers to education for children engaged in or at risk of entering exploitive child labor. These include: Poverty; education system barriers; infrastructure barriers; legal and policy barriers; resource gaps; institutional barriers; informational gaps; demographic characteristics of children and/or families; cultural and traditional practices; and weak labor markets and enforcement.

Although these elements and characteristics tend to exist throughout the world in areas with a high incidence of exploitive child labor, they manifest themselves in specific ways in the countries of interest in this solicitation. Therefore, specific, targeted interventions are required in the countries. In Sierra Leone and Liberia this project must provide or facilitate the delivery of educational services to at risk or working children, support the collection of data on this target population, and build the capacity of national institutions to address child labor and education issues. For this project, applicants must be able to identify the specific barriers to education and the education needs of

specific children targeted in their project (e.g., children withdrawn from work, children at high risk of dropping out of school and joining the labor force, and/or children still working in a particular sector) and how direct education service delivery, capacity building and policy change can be used to address particular barriers and needs. Brief background information on education and exploitive child labor in the countries of interest is provided below.

For additional information on exploitive child labor in Sierra Leone and Liberia, applicants are strongly encouraged to refer to *The Department of Labor's 2004 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* available at <http://www.dol.gov/ILAB/media/reports/iclp/tda2004/overview.htm> or in hard copy from Lisa Harvey, U.S. Department of Labor, Procurement Services Center, telephone (202) 693-4570 (this is not a toll-free-number) or e-mail: harvey.lisa@dol.gov.

Barriers to Education for Working Children in Sierra Leone and Liberia

In 2000, UNICEF estimated that 71.6 percent of children aged 5 to 14 years in Sierra Leone were working. Estimates are unavailable for Liberia. Reports indicate that, in both countries, a majority of working children are unpaid. Many work in family businesses and on family subsistence farms. Children also work for low wages as domestic workers. Street children in Monrovia, Freetown and other major cities number in the thousands. Many of these children are contracted by adults to steal, beg and work as street vendors. Children have also been reported to work in alluvial diamond fields in both countries, some under forced labor conditions.

Trafficking in persons is a problem, particularly in Sierra Leone. Although reports of trafficking in persons in Sierra Leone have declined with the demobilization of child soldiers following the end of the civil conflict, children continue to be trafficked to countries in West Africa, including Liberia, for labor and commercial sexual exploitation, as well as to Lebanon, Europe, and North America. From Liberia, children are trafficked to Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire, some for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. Internally, within both Liberia and Sierra Leone, children are trafficked from rural to urban areas and to diamond mining areas for purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor. In Sierra Leone, the government has made efforts to address this problem through the creation of a multi-sectoral

Trafficking in Persons Action Committee and has held anti-trafficking training for police officers. Child prostitution is an increasing problem in both countries. In addition, experts expect the incidence of HIV/AIDS in Sierra Leone and Liberia will grow as these countries emerge from the isolation of war. Young people are considered to be particularly at risk of infection and the effects of the disease on caregivers are expected to leave many children vulnerable to child labor.

Throughout the past decade, child soldiers were common among government armed forces and rebels groups in Sierra Leone and Liberia. As of 2004, there were no indications of children serving in government forces in either country. Former rebel combatants in Liberia, however, continue to forcibly recruit children in Liberia and Sierra Leone to serve as porters, laborers, and sex slaves. Former child soldiers and war-affected children have been found to be especially vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. There are indications that many former child soldiers in Sierra Leone and Liberia have been re-recruited by fighting forces in Cote d'Ivoire.

The Government of Sierra Leone established a National Commission for War-Affected Children to provide support to demobilized child soldiers and children who are separated from their parents. Official demobilization and reintegration programs for former fighters in Sierra Leone, including nearly 7,000 former child soldiers, ended around the beginning of 2004. These programs offered little assistance to the thousands of abducted women, girls, and the children born to them during their service to fighting forces in Sierra Leone. Several international organizations implemented programs to assist these girls during the later stages of demobilization.

Sierra Leone's National Youth Policy, approved in 2003, is also intended to target assistance to groups whose needs may have been neglected, such as young girls. Child Welfare Committees were trained to provide support to girls and to child diamond miners, but funding for these efforts has been limited. The Government of Liberia recently established a National Commission on Child Labor intended to support efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor within the country, particularly among children made vulnerable by war. However, the Commission has had difficulty operationalizing their charter and objectives.

Reports indicate that approximately 21,000 child soldiers still require demobilization in Liberia, including an

unknown number of abducted girls. Despite a peace agreement in Liberia in August 2003, demobilization and reintegration programs have been slow to start. The programs are expected to provide former child soldiers with access to healthcare, skills training, family tracing and reunification, and to increase awareness and improve the capacity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and agencies to address the immediate and longer-term needs of former child soldiers. Provisions for girls and women were also included.

Statistics on education in Sierra Leone and Liberia are minimal. In both countries, nearly half of primary school age children are not enrolled in school. Persistence rates are also low with approximately one-third of students in Liberia reaching grade five. Rates of enrollment, retention, and completion tend to be lower among girls and among children in areas of rapid resettlement, camps for Internally Displaced Persons and refugees, remote rural areas, and areas hardest hit by the war.

Several recent programs are expected to improve education in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The Government of Sierra Leone has created a National Education Action Plan that emphasizes improving the quality and relevance of education, expanding access to primary education, especially for girls and the rural poor, and enhancing the planning and management capacity of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. In both Sierra Leone and Liberia, UNICEF has launched projects to renovate schools, distribute teaching materials and equipment, retrain teachers, and promote girls' education.

Many areas of rapid resettlement, areas hardest hit by the war, and remote rural areas continue, however, to lack basic social services, including education. This absence of services has led to an increased migration to municipal and provincial capitals, where basic services and schools are already operating beyond capacity. Although primary school construction has received significant support from donors, many of these newly constructed schools lack qualified teachers, curricula, staff, and much needed resources and support. Viable non-formal education, accelerated education, vocational training, and other alternative educational opportunities are also scarce, and lack qualified staff, resources and support.

Years of conflict have left many students, including former child soldiers, severely traumatized and some physically disabled. Abuse experienced by many abducted and war-affected girls

has left them especially vulnerable, and some with young children requiring care during school hours. During the conflict, many students missed years of schooling, resulting in classrooms populated by many overage students. For these young people, the services that are available to them are often inadequate to meet their special needs. Appropriate educational, vocational and social services for youth between the ages of 12 and 18 are considered to be particularly critical due to the potentially volatile nature of this age group.

Some teacher training and community programs have included special training for adults working with former child soldiers, war-affected children, and children engaged in or at risk of engaging in the worst forms of child labor. Some social protection and educational programs, curricula, policies, and resources have also been revised and made more suitable for this population. However, there continues to be a need for more relevant and adequate teaching techniques; resources and teaching tools; formal, vocational and alternative educational programs; life skills training; social services; community support; policies and programs; and opportunities for young people to develop into productive and responsible citizens.

Note to Applicants: All applicants must have country presence, or partner with an established and eligible organization within the target countries.

2. Statement of Work

Taking into account the challenges of educating working children in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the applicant must implement creative and innovative approaches to promote policies and services that will enhance the provision of educational opportunities for children involved in or at risk of entering exploitive child labor. Projects funded under this cooperative agreement solicitation must focus on direct education service(s) delivery to targeted children, including the provision of educational services that address the specific gaps/challenges that working or at-risk children from attending or staying in school.

USDOL defines educational services and/or training opportunities as follows: (1) Non-formal or basic literacy education, as demonstrated by enrollment in educational classes provided by the program. These classes may include transitional, leveling, or literacy classes so that a child may either be mainstreamed into formal school and/or can participate in

vocational training activities; (2) Vocational, pre-vocational, or skills training, as demonstrated by enrollment in training courses in order to develop a particular skill (e.g., mechanics, sewing); (3) Mainstreaming/ Transitioning into the formal education system, non-formal education, vocational, pre-vocational, or skills training after having received assistance from the project to enable them to enroll in such programs. The assistance provided by the project could include one or more of the following services: the provision of school meals, uniforms, books, school supplies and materials, tuition and transportation vouchers, or other types of incentives that enable the child to be enrolled in an education program; and (4) Formal school enrollment, by directly supporting a child's enrollment, retention, and completion in the formal school system. Similar to the assistance provided under mainstreaming, assistance provided by the project could include one or more of the following services: the provision of uniforms, books, school supplies and materials, tuition and transportation vouchers, or other types of incentives that enable the child to be enrolled and maintained in the formal school system.

Activities such as awareness raising and social mobilization campaigns, psychosocial services for children, improvements in curriculum, teacher training or improvements to school infrastructure are important for improving access to and quality of basic education. While grantees are encouraged to address the needs of working children in a comprehensive manner, these activities will not be considered as direct services for individual children. Rather, direct services are those that meet the basic needs of individual children that are direct beneficiaries of the project.

Through improved policies and direct education service delivery, as applicable, the expected outcomes/ results of the project are to: (1) Reduce the number of children engaged in or at risk of entering exploitive child labor, (2) increase educational opportunities and access (enrollment) for children who are at risk of, engaging in, and/or removed from exploitive child labor, particularly its worst forms; (3) encourage retention in and completion of educational programs; and (4) expand the successful transition of children from non-formal education programs into formal schools or vocational programs.

The applicant must identify a target number of urban and/or rural children engaged in or at risk of engaging in exploitive and/or worst forms of child

labor in Sierra Leone and Liberia, who would be the direct beneficiaries of a Child Labor Education Initiative project, and the geographic areas of greatest need. Direct beneficiaries are children who are withdrawn or prevented from entering exploitive child labor, particularly its worst forms, by USDOL-funded projects. Children withdrawn from exploitive work are those children who were found working and no longer work as a result of a project intervention. This category also includes those children who were engaged in exploitive work and as a result of a project's intervention now work shorter hours under safer conditions. Children prevented from entering work are those children who are either siblings of (ex) working children or those children who are considered to be at high risk of engaging in exploitive work. In order to be considered withdrawn or prevented, the child must benefit from educational or training opportunities. This is measured by enrollment into school or training programs. The project's strategy must be to remove these children from, or to prevent them from entering, child labor and to provide them with educational and other services to prevent them from engaging in such exploitive and/or worst forms of child labor in the future.

In preparing the application, in order to identify gaps, unmet needs, and opportunities that could be addressed through a USDOL Child Labor Education Initiative project, applicants must conduct a needs assessment to make a preliminary identification of the current working and educational status of the children who the applicant proposes as beneficiaries. It is expected that the information gathered during this assessment will be refined after award. The assessment, with data sources, must include information on the incidence and nature of exploitive child labor, particularly the worst forms, among target children, hours of work, age and sex distribution of the proposed beneficiaries, educational performance relative to other children, if available, and any research or other data that might indicate correlations between educational performance and hours of work. Applicants are also encouraged to propose strategies for collecting further data on exploitive child labor and children's participation in schooling in the early stages of the project's baseline data collection.

When developing their proposed strategy and writing the application, applicants must consult and make reference to relevant literature and documents relating to child labor and the education of target children in Sierra

Leone and Liberia. Furthermore, the application must demonstrate familiarity with existing child labor, education and social welfare policies, plans and projects in Sierra Leone and Liberia, which the applicant is using to inform project design for target children.

Applicants will also be evaluated on their knowledge of other donors' programs as they pertain to the education of target children in Sierra Leone and Liberia. In identifying unmet needs, gaps and opportunities not being addressed by existing programs and current efforts, and in proposing their own strategy, applicants must show how their knowledge of the school calendar and the requirements of basic, non-formal, and vocational education systems will be used to develop an approach that successfully enrolls children in educational programs as quickly as possible without missing an academic year or program cycle. The applicant must identify the direct cost per child of maintaining the child in the educational program, and of withdrawing the child from exploitive/hazardous or worst forms of child labor. These costs must be realistic, and based on existing costs of similar programs. Applicants must design and implement a project monitoring system that allows for the tracking of direct beneficiaries' work and school status. In addition, as child labor projects tend to be implemented in resource-poor environments where government education and labor inspection systems may be limited, applicants are encouraged to work with local stakeholders to develop sustainable child labor and education monitoring systems, including community-based systems, that can complement government efforts to monitor children's working and educational status beyond the life of the project and enforce each country's child labor and education laws. The applicant must also identify organizations in Sierra Leone and Liberia, including types of local organizations (*e.g.*, rural, indigenous), which could potentially implement or contribute to a future project. Applicants are encouraged to develop approaches that support youth participation within efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Due to similarities in the nature of child labor and the challenges faced by the current education systems in Sierra Leone and Liberia, as well as cross-border issues such as trafficking and refugee migration between the two countries, applicants must submit one application that proposes strategies that seek to prevent or eliminate exploitive child labor through the promotion of

education alternatives for children in both countries. Strategies should include approaches that are country specific, as well as regional, that address child labor and education issues in both countries. The application must also take into account cross-cutting themes that could affect project results, and meaningfully incorporate them into the proposed strategy, either to increase opportunities for, or reduce threats to, successful implementation. In Sierra Leone and Liberia these include: (1) The enduring impact of the civil war in terms of increasing children's vulnerability to exploitive labor and decreasing their access to quality educational opportunities; (2) The impact of HIV/AIDS in terms of increasing children's vulnerability to exploitive labor and decreasing their access to quality educational opportunities; (3) The incidence and nature of child trafficking for exploitive labor internally within Sierra Leone and Liberia and internationally, geographical areas from which children are trafficked and areas receiving trafficked children, as well as factors contributing to the supply of and demand for trafficked children; (4) Barriers that could prevent the withdrawal of children from exploitive work and prevent their participation in education programs; (5) Factors affecting the quality and relevance of education available to children; (6) The level of awareness of worst forms of child labor and the importance of education, especially for girls, among key stakeholders; and (7) Cross-border issues that might impact child labor trends in Sierra Leone and Liberia, and opportunities for cooperation and collaboration among efforts to reduce the worst forms of child labor in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The application should consider existing efforts to combat exploitive child labor and promote education for children being undertaken by government, international organizations, and civil society, including community-based and youth-led efforts, and gaps in services that these efforts may not have addressed.

In the course of implementation, each project must promote the goals of USDOL's Child Labor Education Initiative listed above in Section I(1)(A). In addition, each project funded under this solicitation must provide educational and training opportunities to children as a means to remove them from and/or prevent them from engaging in exploitive work. Because of the limited resources available under this award, applicants are expected to

implement programs that complement existing efforts and, where appropriate, replicate or enhance successful models to serve a greater number of children and communities. However, applicants must not duplicate the activities of existing efforts and/or projects and are expected to work within host government child labor and education frameworks. To avoid duplication, enhance collaboration, expand impact, and develop synergies, the cooperative agreement awardee (hereafter referred to as "Grantee") must work cooperatively with national stakeholders in developing project interventions. Applicants are expected to consider the economic and social contexts of the countries when formulating project strategies and to recognize that approaches applicable in one country may not be relevant to others.

USDOL will notify host government ministry officials of the proposed project. During the preparation of an application for this cooperative agreement solicitation, applicants may discuss proposed interventions, strategies, and activities with host government officials and civil society organizations.

Partnerships between more than one organization are also eligible for award and are encouraged, in particular with qualified, target country-based organizations in order to build local capacity; in such a case, however, a lead organization must be identified, and relationships with partner organizations receiving funds must be codified in an appropriate joint venture, partnership, or other contractual agreement. Copies of such agreements should be submitted as an attachment to the application, and will not count toward the page limit.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to enroll at least one-quarter of the children targeted by the proposed program in educational activities during the first year of project implementation. Under this cooperative agreement solicitation, vocational training for adolescents and income generating alternatives for parents are allowable activities. **Please note:** USDOL reserves the right to approve or disapprove alternative income-generating activities after award of the cooperative agreement. Permissible costs relating to alternative income-generating activities for target families may include, but are not limited to, skills training, tools, equipment, guides, manuals, and market feasibility studies. However, as stated in Section IV(5)(B)(i), Grantees and sub-contractors may not provide direct cash transfers to communities, parents, or children.

Although USDOL is open to all proposals for innovative solutions to address the challenges of providing increased access to education for the children targeted, the applicant must, at a minimum, follow the outline of a preliminary project design document presented in Appendix A, and, within that format, address all criteria, factors, and required descriptions identified in Sections IV(2), V(1)(A), VI(3)(A) and VI(3)(D). This response will be the foundation for the final project document that must be approved within six months after award of the cooperative agreement.

If the application does not propose interventions aimed toward the target group or geographical area as identified, then the application will be considered unresponsive and will be rejected.

Note to All Applicants: Grantees are expected to consult with and work cooperatively with stakeholders in the countries, including the Ministries of Education, Labor, and other relevant ministries, NGOs, national steering/advisory committees on child labor, education, faith and community-based organizations, and working children and their families. Grantees should ensure that their proposed activities and interventions are consistent with those of the countries' national child labor and education frameworks and priorities, as applicable. Grantees are strongly encouraged to collaborate with existing projects, particularly those funded by USDOL, including Timebound Programs and other projects implemented by the International Labor Organization's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO/IPEC).

As discussed in Section V(1)(D), up to five (5) extra points will be given to applications that include committed non-Federal resources that significantly expand the project's scope. However, applicants are instructed that the project budget submitted with the application must include all necessary and sufficient funds, without reliance on other contracts, grants, or awards, to implement the applicant's proposed project activities and to achieve proposed project goals and objectives under this solicitation. If anticipated funding from another contract, grant, or award fails to materialize, USDOL will not provide additional funding to cover these costs.

II. Award Information

Type of assistance instrument: Cooperative agreement. USDOL's involvement in project implementation and oversight is outlined in Section VI(2). The duration of the project(s) funded by this solicitation is four (4) years. The start date of program activities will be negotiated upon

awarding of the cooperative agreement, but will be no later than September 30, 2005.

Up to U.S. \$5 million will be awarded under this solicitation. USDOL may award one or more cooperative agreements to one, several, or a partnership of more than one organization(s) that may apply to implement the program. A Grantee must obtain prior USDOL approval for any sub-contractor proposed in the application before award of the cooperative agreement. The Grantee may not sub-grant any of the funds obligated under this cooperative agreement. See Section VI(2)(B) for further information on sub-contracts.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Any commercial, international, educational, or non-profit organization, including any faith-based, community-based, or public international organization capable of successfully developing and implementing education programs for working children or children at risk of entering exploitive work in the countries of interest is eligible to apply. Partnerships of more than one organization are also eligible, and applicants are strongly encouraged to work with organizations already undertaking projects in the countries of interest, particularly local NGOs, including faith-based and community-based organizations. In the case of partnership applications, a lead organization must be identified, and the relationship with any partner organizations receiving funds must be set forth in an appropriate joint venture, partnership, or other contractual agreement. An applicant must demonstrate a country presence, independently or through a relationship with another organization(s) with country presence, which gives it the ability to initiate program activities upon award of the cooperative agreement. See Section V(1)(B)(ii). **Please Note:** Applications from foreign government and quasi-government agencies will not be considered.

All applicants are requested to complete the Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants (OMB No. 1225-0083), which is available online at <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/grants/bkgrd.htm>. The capability of an applicant or applicants to perform necessary aspects of this solicitation will be determined under the criteria outlined in the Application Review Information section of this solicitation (Section V(1)).

Please note that to be eligible, Cooperative Agreement applicants classified under the Internal Revenue Code as a 501(c)(4) entity (see 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(4)), may not engage in lobbying activities. According to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, as codified at 2 U.S.C. 1611, an organization, as described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, that engages in lobbying activities directed toward the U.S. Government will not be eligible for the receipt of Federal funds constituting an award, grant, cooperative agreement, or loan.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds

This solicitation does not require applicants to share costs or provide matching funds. However, the leveraging of resources and in-kind contributions is strongly encouraged and is a rating factor worth up to five (5) additional points.

3. Other Eligibility Criteria

In accordance with 29 CFR Part 98, entities that are debarred or suspended from receiving federal contracts or grants shall be excluded from Federal financial assistance and are ineligible to receive funding under this solicitation. In judging organizational capacity, USDOL will take into account not only information provided by an applicant, but also information from USDOL, other Federal agencies, and other organizations regarding past performance of organizations that have implemented or are implementing Child Labor Education Initiative projects, or other projects or activities for USDOL and other Federal agencies (see Section V(1)(B)). Past performance will be rated by such factors as the timeliness of deliverables, and the responsiveness of the organization and its staff to USDOL or grantor communications regarding deliverables and cooperative agreement or contractual requirements. In addition, USDOL will consider the performance of the organization's key personnel on existing projects with USDOL or other entities, the frequency of the organization's replacement of key personnel, and the quality and timeliness of such key personnel replacements. Lack of past experience with USDOL projects, cooperative agreements, grants, or contracts is not a bar to eligibility or selection under this solicitation.

Faith-based organizations may apply for Federal funds under this solicitation. Neutral, non-religious criteria that neither favor nor disfavor religion will be employed in the selection of cooperative agreement recipients. Similarly, neutral, non-religious criteria

that neither favor nor disfavor religion must be employed by Grantees in the selection of project beneficiaries and sub-contractors.

In addition, per the provisions outlined in Section 2 of Executive Order 13279 and 29 CFR 2.33(b), the U.S. Government is generally prohibited from providing direct financial assistance for inherently religious activities. Funds awarded under this solicitation may not be used for religious instruction, worship, prayer, proselytizing or other inherently religious activities.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address To Request Application Package

This solicitation contains all of the necessary information and forms needed to apply for cooperative agreement funding. This solicitation is published as part of this **Federal Register** notice. Additional copies of the **Federal Register** may be obtained from your nearest U.S. Government office or public library or online at http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/index.html.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Applicants must submit one (1) blue ink-signed original, complete application in English, plus two (2) copies of the application. The application must consist of two (2) separate parts, as well as a table of contents and an abstract summarizing the application in not more than two (2) pages. The table of contents and the abstract are *not* included in the 45-page limit for Part II. Applicants should number all pages of the application.

Part I of the application, the cost proposal, must contain the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance and Sections A–F of the Budget Information Form SF 424A, available from ILAB's Web site at <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/grants/bkgrd.htm>. Copies of these forms are also available online from the General Services Administration Web site at <http://contacts.gsa.gov/webforms.nsf/0/B835648D66D1B8F>

[985256A72004C58C2/\\$file/sf424.pdf](http://contacts.gsa.gov/webforms.nsf/0/985256A72004C58C2/$file/sf424.pdf) and [5AEB1FA6FB3B832385256A72004C8E77/\\$file/Sf424a.pdf](http://contacts.gsa.gov/webforms.nsf/0/5AEB1FA6FB3B832385256A72004C8E77/$file/Sf424a.pdf). The individual signing the SF 424 on behalf of the applicant must be authorized to bind the applicant. The budget/cost proposal and any other accompanying charts or graphs must be written in 10–12 pitch font size.

Part II, the technical proposal, must provide a technical application that identifies and explains the proposed program and demonstrates the applicant's capabilities to carry out that proposal. The technical application must identify how the applicant will carry out the Statement of Work (Section I(2) of this solicitation) and address each of the Application Evaluation Criteria found in Section V(1).

The Part II technical application must not exceed 45 single-sided (8½" x 11"), double-spaced, 10 to 12 pitch typed pages, and must include responses to the application evaluation criteria outlined in Section V(1) of this solicitation. Part II must include a preliminary project design document submitted in the format shown in Appendix A and discussed further in Section VI(3)(A). The application must include the name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address (if applicable) of a key contact person at the applicant's organization in case questions should arise.

Applications will only be accepted in English. To be considered responsive to this solicitation, the application must consist of the above-mentioned separate parts. *Any applications that do not conform to these standards may be deemed unresponsive to this solicitation and will be rejected.* Standard forms and attachments are *not* included in the 45-page limit for Part II. However, any additional information not required under this solicitation will not be considered.

3. Submission Dates, Times, and Address

Applications must be delivered (by hand or mail) by 4:45 p.m., Eastern Time, July 11, 2005, to: U.S. Department of Labor, Procurement Services Center, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room N–5416, Washington, DC 20210, Attention: Lisa Harvey, Reference: Solicitation 05–03. Applications sent by e-mail, telegram, or facsimile (FAX) will not be accepted. Applications sent by non-Postal Service delivery services, such as Federal Express or UPS, will be accepted; however, the applicant bears the responsibility for timely submission. The application package must be received at the designated place by the date and time specified or it will be considered unresponsive and will be rejected. Any application received at the Procurement Services Center after the deadline will not be considered unless it is received before the award is made and:

A. It is determined by the Government that the late receipt was due solely to

mishandling by the Government after receipt at USDOL at the address indicated; and/or

B. It was sent by registered or certified mail not later than the fifth calendar day before the deadline; or

C. It was sent by U.S. Postal Service Express Mail Next Day Service-Post Office to Addressee, not later than 5 p.m. at the place of mailing two (2) working days, excluding weekends and Federal holidays, prior to the deadline.

The only acceptable evidence to establish the date of mailing of a late application sent by registered or certified mail is the U.S. Postal Service postmark on the envelope or wrapper and on the original receipt from the U.S. Postal Service. If the postmark is not legible, an application received after the above closing time and date shall be processed as if mailed late. "Postmark" means a printed, stamped, or otherwise placed impression (not a postage meter machine impression) that is readily identifiable without further action as having been applied and affixed by an employee of the U.S. Postal Service on the date of mailing. Therefore, applicants should request that the postal clerk place a legible hand cancellation "bull's-eye" postmark on both the receipt and the envelope or wrapper.

The only acceptable evidence to establish the date of mailing of a late application sent by U.S. Postal Service Express Mail Next Day Service-Post Office to Addressee is the date entered by the Post Office clerk on the "Express Mail Next Day Service-Post Office to Addressee" label and the postmark on the envelope or wrapper on the original receipt from the U.S. Postal Service. "Postmark" has the same meaning as defined above. Therefore, applicants should request that the postal clerk place a legible hand cancellation "bull's-eye" postmark on both the receipt and the envelope or wrapper.

The only acceptable evidence to establish the time of receipt at USDOL is the date/time stamp of the Procurement Service Center on the application wrapper or other documentary evidence of receipt maintained by that office.

Confirmation of receipt can be obtained from Lisa Harvey, U.S. Department of Labor, Procurement Services Center, telephone (202) 693-4570 (this is not a toll-free number) or e-mail: harvey.lisa@dol.gov. All applicants are advised that U.S. mail delivery in the Washington, DC area can be slow and erratic due to concerns involving contamination. All applicants must take this into consideration when preparing to meet the application deadline.

4. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

5. Funding Restrictions

A. In addition to those specified under OMB Circular A-122, the following costs are also unallowable:

i. Construction with funds under this cooperative agreement is subject to USDOL approval and ordinarily should not exceed 10 percent of the project budget's direct costs and is expected to be limited to improving existing school infrastructure and facilities in the project's targeted communities. USDOL encourages applicants to cost-share and/or leverage funds or in-kind contributions from local partners when proposing construction activities in order to ensure sustainability.

ii. Under these cooperative agreements, vocational training for adolescents and income-generating alternatives for parents are allowable activities. However, Federal funds under these cooperative agreements cannot be used to provide micro-credits, revolving funds, or loan guarantees. **Please note:** USDOL reserves the right to negotiate the exact nature, form, or scope of alternative income-generating activities after award of the cooperative agreement. Alternative income-generating activities may include, but are not limited to, skills training, tools, equipment, guides, manuals, and market feasibility studies.

iii. Awards will not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs.

B. The following activities are also unallowable under this solicitation:

i. The Grantee may not sub-grant any of the funds obligated under this cooperative agreement. Sub-granting may not appear or be included in the budget as a line item. In addition, Grantees may not provide direct cash transfers to communities, parents, or children. The funding for this program does not include authority for sub-grants and, as a matter of policy, USDOL does not allow for direct cash transfers to target beneficiaries. USDOL, however, would support the purchase of incidental items in the nature of "participant support costs" under OMB Circular A-122, Attachment B, No. 34, which are necessary to ensure that target children have access to schooling. These participant support costs may include such items as uniforms and school supplies, and the provision of tuition and transportation costs in the form of vouchers to the provider of services. If an applicant proposes the provision of

participant support costs, the applicant must specify: (1) Why these activities and interventions are necessary, and how they will contribute to the overall project goals; and (2) how the disbursement of funds will be administered in order to maximize efficiency and minimize the risk of misuse. The applicant must also address how participant support costs being funded by the project will be made sustainable once the project is completed.

If proposed participant support costs are approved by USDOL, these items must be purchased or paid for directly by the Grantee or its sub-contractor(s), as opposed to handing cash directly to children or other individuals.

ii. Under these cooperative agreements, awareness raising and advocacy activities cannot include fund-raising or lobbying of the U.S. Federal, State or Local Governments (see OMB Circular A-122).

iii. In accordance with OMB Circular A-122, funds awarded under this cooperative agreement may be used to cover the costs of meetings and conferences, as long as the primary purpose of such an event is the dissemination of technical information. These costs include meals, transportation, rental of facilities, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conference.

iv. USDOL funds awarded under this solicitation are not intended to duplicate or substitute for host-countries government efforts or resources intended for child labor or education programs. Thus, Grantees may not provide any of the funds awarded under this cooperative agreement to foreign government entities, ministries, officials, or political parties. However, sub-contracts with foreign government agencies may be awarded to provide direct services or undertake project activities subject to applicable laws and only after a competitive procurement process has been conducted and no other entity in the countries is able to provide these services. The Grantee must receive prior USDOL approval before sub-contracting the provision of direct services to foreign government agencies.

v. Applicants are reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibit transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. It is the legal responsibility of the Grantee to ensure compliance with these Executive Orders and laws. This provision must be included in all sub-

contracts issued under the cooperative agreement.

vi. The U.S. Government is opposed to prostitution and related activities, which are inherently harmful and dehumanizing, and contribute to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. U.S. non-governmental organizations, and their sub-contractors, cannot use U.S. Government funds to lobby for, promote or advocate the legalization or regulation of prostitution as a legitimate form of work. Foreign non-governmental organizations, and their sub-contractors, that receive U.S. Government funds to fight trafficking in persons cannot lobby for, promote or advocate the legalization or regulation of prostitution as a legitimate form of work. It is the responsibility of the Grantee to ensure its sub-contractors meet these criteria. (The U.S. Government is currently developing language to specifically address Public International Organizations' implementation of the above anti-prostitution prohibition. If a project under this solicitation is awarded to such an organization, appropriate substitute language for the above prohibition will be included in the project's cooperative agreement.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lisa Harvey. E-mail address: harvey.lisa@dol.gov. For a list of frequently asked questions on USDOL's Child Labor Education Initiative Solicitation for Cooperative Agreement, please visit <http://www.dol.gov/ILAB/faq/faq36.htm>.

V. Application Review Information

1. Application Evaluation Criteria

Technical panels will review applications written in the specified format (see Section I, Section IV(2) and Appendix A) against the various criteria on the basis of 100 points. Up to five additional points will be given for the inclusion of non-Federal leveraged resources as described below in Section V(1)(D). Applicants are requested to prepare their technical proposal (45 page maximum) organized in accordance with Appendix A, and address all of the following rating factors, which are presented in the order of emphasis that they will receive, and the maximum rating points for each factor.

Program Design/Budget-Cost Effectiveness: 45 points.

Organizational Capacity: 30 points.

Management Plan/Key Personnel/Staffing: 25 points.

Leveraging Resources: 5 extra points.

A. Project/Program Design/Budget-Cost Effectiveness (45 Points)

This part of the application constitutes the preliminary project design document described in Section VI(3)(A), and outlined in Appendix A. The applicant's proposal must describe in detail the proposed approach to comply with each requirement. Applicants will be rated based on their understanding of the child labor and education context in the host countries, as well as on the clarity and quality of information provided in the project design document.

This component of the application must demonstrate the applicant's thorough knowledge and understanding of the issues, barriers, and challenges involved in providing education to children engaged in or at risk of engaging in exploitive child labor, particularly its worst forms; best-practice solutions to address their needs; and the policy and implementing environment in the selected countries. When preparing the technical proposal, the applicant must follow the outline provided in Appendix A, and at minimum include a description of:

i. *Children Targeted*—The applicant must identify which and how many children are expected to receive direct and indirect services from the project, including the sectors in which they work, geographical location, and other relevant characteristics. Please refer to Section I(2) for USDOL's definition of educational services and training opportunities for children targeted under this solicitation.

Children are defined as persons under the age of 18 who have been engaged or at risk of engaging in the worst forms of child labor as defined by ILO Convention 182, or those under the legal working age of the countries and who are engaged or at risk of engaging in other hazardous and/or exploitive activities. Under this solicitation, at-risk children are defined as siblings of working children, or children living in areas with a high incidence of exploitive child labor.

ii. *Needs/Gaps/Barriers*—The applicant must describe the specific gaps/educational needs of the children targeted that the project will address.

Note: The number of children targeted by the project must be commensurate with the need in the geographical area or sector where the project will be implemented. In addition, the budget proposed should take into account the type of work in which the target children are currently engaged.

iii. *Proposed Strategy*—The applicant must discuss the proposed strategy to address gaps/needs/barriers of the

children targeted and its rationale. Applicants will be rated based on the quality and pertinence of proposed strategies. Please refer to Section I(2) for USDOL's definition of educational services and training opportunities for children targeted under this solicitation.

iv. *Sustainability Plan*—The applicant must discuss a proposed plan for sustainability of project efforts. To USDOL, sustainability is linked to project impact and the ability of individuals, communities, and a nation to ensure that the activities or changes implemented by a project endure. A project's impact is manifested at the level of individuals, organizations, and systems. For individual children and their families this would mean a positive and enduring change in their life conditions as a result of project interventions. At the level of organizations and systems, sustained impact would involve continued commitment and ability (including financial commitment and policy change) by project partners to continue the actions generated by the project, including enforcement of existing policies that target child labor and school attendance. Applicants will be rated based on the pertinence and appropriateness of the proposed sustainability plan.

v. *Description of Activities*—The applicant must provide a detailed description of proposed activities that relate to the gaps/needs/barriers to be addressed, including training and technical assistance to be provided to project staff, host countries nationals and community groups involved in the project. The proposed approach is expected to build upon existing activities, government policies, and plans, and avoid needless duplication. Please refer to Section I(2) for USDOL's definition of educational services and training opportunities for children targeted under this solicitation.

vi. *Work Plan*—The applicant must provide a detailed work plan and timeline for the proposed project, preferably with a visual such as a Gantt chart. Applicants will be rated based on the clarity and quality of the information provided in the work plan.

Note: Applicants are also encouraged to enroll one-quarter of the targeted children in educational activities during the first year of project implementation.

vii. *Program Management and Performance Assessment*—The applicant must describe: (1) How management will ensure that the goals and objectives will be met; (2) how information and data will be collected and used to demonstrate the impacts of

the project; and (3) what systems will be put in place for self-assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement. **Note to All Applicants:** USDOL has already developed common indicators (enrollment, retention, and completion) and a database system for monitoring children's educational progress that can be used and adapted by Grantees after award. Grantees will be responsible for entering information on each project beneficiary into this database system. Further guidance on common indicators will be provided after award, thus applicants should focus their program management and performance assessment responses toward the development of their project's monitoring strategy in support of the delivery of direct education and training opportunities to working children and those at risk of engaging in exploitive work, and the four goals of the Child Labor Education Initiative set out in Section I(1)(A). Because of the potentially significant links between hours worked, working conditions, and school performance, Grantees are encouraged to collect information to track this correlation among project beneficiaries. Applicants proposing innovative methodologies in this area will be rated more highly.

Please note: In addition to reporting on the common indicators, applicants will be expected to track the working status, conditions, and hours of targeted children, including the withdrawal of children from exploitive/hazardous working conditions. Applicants are also expected to explore cost-effective ways of assessing the impact of proposed services/interventions to indirect beneficiaries.

Applicants are expected to budget for costs associated with collecting and reporting on the common indicators (enrollment, retention, and completion), data management, tracking the working status children, and assessing the impact of services/interventions to indirect beneficiaries.

viii. *Budget/Cost Effectiveness*—The applicant must show how the budget reflects program goals and design in a cost-effective way to reflect budget/performance integration. The budget must be linked to the activities and outputs of the implementation plan listed above. The budget proposed should also take into account the type of work in which the target children are currently engaged.

This section of the application must explain the costs for performing all of the requirements presented in this solicitation, and for producing all required reports and other deliverables. Costs must include labor; equipment; travel; annual single audits or

attestation engagements (as applicable); midterm and final evaluations; and other related costs. Applications are expected to allocate sufficient resources to proposed studies, assessments, surveys, and monitoring and evaluation activities, including costs associated with collecting information for and reporting on the common indicators. In addition, the budget should include a contingency provision, calculated at 5% of the project's total direct costs, for unexpected expenses essential to meeting project goals, such as host countries currency devaluations, security costs, etc. USDOL will not provide additional funding to cover unanticipated costs. Grantees must obtain prior approval from USDOL before using contingency funds. If these funds have not been exhausted toward the end of the project period, USDOL and the Grantee will determine whether it is appropriate to reallocate the funds to direct educational or training services or return the funds to USDOL.

Grantees should also budget for a facilitator-led project launch meeting in the target countries, which will allow key stakeholders to discuss issues of project design and monitoring.

When developing their applications, applicants are also expected to allocate the largest proportion of resources to educational activities aimed at targeted children, rather than direct and/or indirect administrative costs. Higher ratings may be given to applicants with low administrative costs and with a budget breakdown that provides a larger amount of resources to project activities. All projected costs should be reported, as they will become part of the cooperative agreement upon award. In their cost proposal (Part I of the application), applicants must reflect a breakdown of the total administrative costs into direct administrative costs and indirect administrative costs. This section will be evaluated in accordance with applicable Federal laws and regulations. The budget must comply with Federal cost principles (which can be found in the applicable OMB Circulars). An example of an Outputs Based Budget has been provided as Annex B.

Applicants are encouraged to discuss the possibility of exemption from customs and Value Added Tax (VAT) with host government officials during the preparation of an application for this cooperative agreement. While USDOL encourages host governments to not apply custom or VAT taxes to USDOL-funded programs, some host governments may nevertheless choose to assess such taxes. USDOL may not be able to provide assistance in this regard.

Applicants should take into account such costs in budget preparation. If major costs are omitted, a Grantee may not be allowed to include them later.

B. Organizational Capacity (30 Points)

Under this criterion, the applicant must present the qualifications of the organization(s) implementing the program/project. The evaluation criteria in this category are as follows:

i. *International Experience*—The organization applying for the award has international experience implementing basic, transitional, non-formal, or vocational education programs that address issues of access, quality, and policy reform for vulnerable children including children engaging in or at risk of engaging in exploitive child labor, preferably in the countries of interest.

ii. *Country Presence*—Given the need to provide children engaged in the worst forms of child labor with immediate assistance in accessing educational and training opportunities, applicants will be evaluated on their ability to start up project activities soon after signing a cooperative agreement. Having country presence, or partnering with in-country organizations, presents the best chance of expediting the delivery of services to children engaged or at risk of engaging in the worst forms of child labor. In their application, applicants must address country presence; outreach to government and NGOs, including local and community-based organizations; and the ability of the organization to start up project activities in a timely fashion. Applicants may submit supporting documentation with their application demonstrating country presence and/or outreach to host government ministries and NGOs in each country. These attachments will not count toward the page limit.

Within 60 days of award, an applicant, or its partners, must be formally recognized by the host governments using the appropriate mechanism, e.g., Memorandum of Understanding or local registration of the organization. An applicant must demonstrate, independently or through a relationship with another organization(s), the ability to initiate program activities upon award of the cooperative agreement, as well as the capability to work directly with government ministries, educators, civil society leaders, and other local faith-based or community organizations.

iii. *Fiscal Oversight*—The organization shows evidence of a sound financial system.

If the applicant is a U.S.-based, non-profit organization already subject to the single audit requirements, the

applicant's most recent single audit, as submitted to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse, must accompany the application as an attachment. In addition, applications must show that they have complied with report submission timeframes established in OMB Circular A-133. If an applicant is not in compliance with the requirements for completing their single audit, the application will be considered unresponsive and will be rejected.

If the applicant is a for-profit or foreign-based organization, a copy of its most current independent financial audit must accompany the application as an attachment.

Applicants should also submit a copy of the most recent single audit report for all proposed U.S.-based, non-profit partners, and sub-contractors that are subject to the Single Audit Act. If the proposed partner(s) is a for-profit or foreign-based organization, a copy of its most current independent financial audit should accompany the application as an attachment. Applicants may wish to review the audits of prospective organizations before deciding whether they want to partner with or sub-contract to them under an Education Initiative cooperative agreement.

Note to All Applicants: In order to expedite the screening of applications, and to ensure that the appropriate audits are attached to the proposals, the applicant must provide a cover sheet to the audit attachments listing all proposed partners and sub-contractors. These attachments will not count toward the application page limit.

USDOL reserves the right to ask further questions on any audit report submitted as part of an application. USDOL also reserves the right to place special conditions on Grantees if concerns are raised in their audit reports.

Note to All Applicants: If a copy of the most recent audit report is not submitted as part of the application, the application will be considered unresponsive and will be rejected. In addition, if the audit submitted by the applicant reflects any adverse opinions, the application will not be further considered by the technical review panel and will be rejected.

iv. Coordination—If two or more organizations are applying for the award in the form of a partnership or joint venture, they must demonstrate an approach to ensure the successful collaboration including clear delineation of respective roles and responsibilities. Although each partner will bear independent legal liability for the entire project, the applicants must identify a lead organization and must submit the joint venture, partnership, or

other contractual agreement as an attachment (which will not count toward the page limit). If a partnership between two or more organizations is proposed, applicants are encouraged to outline the deliverables, activities, and corresponding timeline for which each organization will be responsible for completing.

v. Experience—The application must include information on previous and current grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts of the applicant with USDOL and other Federal agencies that are relevant to this solicitation, including:

- (a) The organizations for which the work was done;
- (b) A contact person in that organization with his/her current phone number;
- (c) The dollar value of the grant, contract, or cooperative agreement for the project;
- (d) The time frame and professional effort involved in the project;
- (e) A brief summary of the work performed; and
- (f) A brief summary of accomplishments.

This information on previous grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts held by the applicant must be provided in appendices and will not count against the maximum page requirement. USDOL reserves the right to contact the organizations listed and use the information provided in evaluating applications.

Note to All Applicants: In judging organizational capacity, USDOL will take into account not only information provided by an applicant, but also information from the Department and others regarding past performance of organizations already implementing Child Labor Education Initiative projects or activities for USDOL and others. Past performance will be rated by such factors as the timeliness of deliverables, and the responsiveness of the organization and its staff to USDOL or grantor communications regarding deliverables and cooperative agreement or contractual requirements. In addition, the performance of the organization's key personnel on existing projects with USDOL or other entities, whether the organization has a history of replacing key personnel with similarly qualified staff, and the timeliness of replacing key personnel, will also be taken into consideration when rating past performance. Lack of past experience with USDOL projects, cooperative agreements, grants, or contracts is not a bar to eligibility or selection under this solicitation.

C. Management Plan/Key Personnel/Staffing (25 Points)

Successful performance of the proposed work depends heavily on the management skills and qualifications of

the individuals committed to the project. Accordingly, in its evaluation of each application, USDOL will place emphasis on the applicant's management approach and commitment of personnel qualified for the work involved in accomplishing the assigned tasks. This section of the application must include sufficient information to judge management and staffing plans, and the experience and competence of program staff proposed for the project to assure that they meet the required qualifications.

Note that management and professional technical staff members comprising the applicant's proposed team should be individuals who have prior experience with organizations working in similar efforts, and who are fully qualified to perform work specified in the Statement of Work. Where sub-contractors or outside assistance are proposed, organizational lines of authority and responsibility should be clearly delineated to ensure responsiveness to the needs of USDOL.

Note to All Applicants: All key personnel must allocate 100 percent of their time to the project and be present within the target countries. Key personnel positions must not be combined. Proposed key personnel candidates must sign letters of agreement to serve on the project, and indicate availability to commence work within 30 days of cooperative agreement award. Applicants must submit these letters as an attachment to the application. (These will not count toward the page limit.) If key personnel letters of agreement to serve on the project are not submitted as part of the application, the application will be considered unresponsive and will be rejected.

i. Key personnel—The applicant must identify all key personnel candidates proposed to carry out the requirements of this solicitation. "Key personnel" are staff (Project Director, Education Specialist, and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer) who are essential to the successful operation of the project and completion of the proposed work and, therefore, as detailed in Section VI(2)(C), may not be replaced or have hours reduced without the approval of the Grant Officer. If key personnel candidates are not designated, the application will be considered unresponsive and will be rejected. **Note:** preference may be given to applicants who propose qualified key personnel who have extensive experience in the host countries.

(a) *A Project Director* who will be responsible for overall project management, supervision, administration, and implementation of the requirements of the cooperative agreement. He/she will establish and

maintain systems for project operations; ensure that all cooperative agreement deadlines are met and targets are achieved; maintain working relationships with project stakeholders and partners; and oversee the preparation and submission of progress and financial reports. The Project Director must have a minimum of three years of professional experience in a leadership role in implementation of complex basic education programs in developing countries in areas such as: education policy; improving educational quality and access; educational assessment of disadvantaged students; development of community participation in the improvement of basic education for disadvantaged children; and monitoring and evaluation of basic education projects. Consideration will be given to candidates with additional years of experience including experience working with officials of ministries of education and/or labor. Preferred candidates must also have knowledge of exploitive child labor issues, and experience in the development of transitional, formal, and vocational education of children removed from exploitive child labor and/or victims of the worst forms of child labor. Fluency in English is required and working knowledge of the official language of the target countries, or at least one of the official languages if there is more than one, is preferred.

(b) *An Education Specialist* who will provide leadership in developing the technical aspects of this project in collaboration with the Project Director. This person must have at least three years of experience in basic education projects in developing countries in areas including student assessment, teacher training, educational materials development, educational management, and educational monitoring and information systems. This person must have experience in working successfully with ministries of education, networks of educators, employers' organizations and trade union representatives or comparable entities. Additional experience with exploitive child labor/education policy and monitoring and evaluation is an asset. A working knowledge of English is preferred, as is a similar knowledge of the official language(s) spoken in the target countries.

(c) *A Monitoring and Evaluation Officer* who will oversee the implementation of the project's monitoring and evaluation strategies and requirements. This person should have at least three years of progressively responsible experience in the

monitoring and evaluation of international development projects, preferably in education and training or a related field. Related experience can include strategic planning and performance measurement, indicator selection, quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methodologies, database management, and knowledge of the Government Performance and Results Act. Individuals with a demonstrated ability to build capacity of the project team and partners in these domains will be given special consideration.

Information provided on key personnel candidates must include the following:

- The educational background and experience of all key personnel to be assigned to the project.
- The special capabilities of key personnel that demonstrate prior experience in organizing, managing and performing similar efforts.
- The current employment status of key personnel and availability for this project. The applicant must also indicate whether the proposed work will be performed by persons currently employed by the applying organization or is dependent upon planned recruitment or sub-contracting.

ii. *Other Professional Personnel*—The applicant must identify other program personnel proposed to carry out the requirements of this solicitation. The applicant must also indicate whether the proposed work by other professional personnel will be performed by persons currently employed by the organization or is dependent upon planned recruitment or sub-contracting.

iii. *Management Plan*—The management plan must include the following:

- (a) A description of the functional relationship between elements of the project's management structure; and
- (b) The responsibilities of project staff and management and the lines of authority between project staff and other elements of the project.

Note: Applicants will be rated based on the clarity and quality of the information provided in the management plan.

iv. *Staff Loading Plan*—The staff loading plan must identify all key tasks and the person-days required to complete each task. Labor estimated for each task must be broken down by individuals assigned to the task, including sub-contractors and consultants. All key tasks should be charted to show time required to perform them by months or weeks.

v. *Roles and Responsibilities*—The applicant must include a resume, as

well as a description of the roles and responsibilities of all key and professional personnel proposed. Resumes must be submitted as an attachment to the application and will not count toward the page limit. If resumes of key personnel candidates are not submitted as part of the application, the application will be considered unresponsive and will be rejected.

At a minimum, each resume must include: the individual's current employment status and previous work experience, including position title, duties, dates in position, employing organizations, and educational background. Duties must be clearly defined in terms of role performed, e.g., manager, team leader, and/or consultant. The application must indicate whether the individual is currently employed by the applicant, and (if so) for how long.

D. Leveraging Resources (5 Points)

USDOL will give up to five (5) additional rating points to applications that include committed non-Federal resources that significantly expand the dollar amount, size and scope of the application. These programs or activities will not be financed by the project, but can complement and enhance project objectives. Applicants are also encouraged to leverage activities, such as micro-credits, revolving funds, or loan guarantees, which are not directly allowable under the cooperative agreement. To be eligible for the additional points, the applicant must list the source(s) of resources, the nature, and possible activities anticipated with these resources under this cooperative agreement and any partnerships, linkages or coordination of activities, cooperative funding, etc. Staff time of proposed key personnel may not be submitted as a leveraged resource.

2. Review and Selection Process

The Office of Procurement Services at USDOL will screen all applications to determine whether all required elements, as identified in section IV(2) above, are present and clearly identifiable. If an application does not include all of the required elements, including required attachments, it will be considered unresponsive and will be rejected. Once an application is deemed unresponsive, the Office of Procurement Services will send a letter to the applicant, which will state that the application was incomplete, indicate which document was missing from the application, and explain that the technical review panel will be unable to rate the application.

The following documents must be included in the application package in order for the application to be deemed complete and responsive:

- i. A cost proposal.
- ii. A technical proposal.
- iii. The applicant's most recent audit report.
- iv. Resumes of all key personnel candidates.
- v. Signed letters of agreement to serve on the project from all key personnel candidates.

Each complete application will be objectively rated by a technical review panel against the criteria described in this announcement. Applicants are advised that panel recommendations to the Grant Officer are advisory in nature. The Grant Officer may elect to select a Grantee on the basis of the initial application submission; or, the Grant Officer may establish a competitive or technically acceptable range from which qualified applicants will be selected. If deemed appropriate, the Grant Officer may call for the preparation and receipt of final revisions of applications, following which the evaluation process described above may be repeated, in whole or in part, to consider such revisions. The Grant Officer will make final selection determinations based on panel findings and consideration of factors that represent the greatest advantage to the government, such as cost, the availability of funds, and other factors. If USDOL does not receive technically acceptable applications in response to this solicitation, USDOL reserves the right to terminate the competition and not make any award. The Grant Officer's determinations for awards under this solicitation are final.

Note to All Applicants: Selection of an organization as a cooperative agreement recipient does not constitute approval of the cooperative agreement application as submitted. Before the actual cooperative agreement is awarded, USDOL may enter into best and final negotiations about such items as program components, funding levels, and administrative systems in place to support cooperative agreement implementation. If the negotiations do not result in an acceptable submission, the Grant Officer reserves the right to terminate the negotiation and decline to fund the application. In addition, USDOL reserves the right to further negotiate program components after award, during the project design document submission and review process. See Section VI(3)(A).

Award of a cooperative agreement under this solicitation may also be contingent upon an exchange of project support letters between USDOL and the relevant ministries in the target countries.

3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Designation decisions will be made, where possible, within 45 days after the deadline for submission of proposals. USDOL is not obligated to make any awards as result of this solicitation, and only the Grant Officer can bind USDOL to the provision of funds under this solicitation. Unless specifically provided in the cooperative agreement, USDOL's acceptance of a proposal and/or award of Federal funds does not waive any cooperative agreement requirements and/or procedures.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

The Grant Officer will notify applicants of designation results as follows: Designation Letter: The designation letter signed by the Grant Officer will serve as official notice of an organization's designation. The designation letter will be accompanied by a cooperative agreement and ICLP's Management Procedures and Guidelines (MPG).

Non-Designation Letter: Any organization not designated will be notified formally of the non-designation and given the basic reasons for the determination.

Notification by a person or entity other than the Grant Officer that an organization has or has not been designated is not valid.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

A. General

Grantee organizations are subject to applicable U.S. Federal laws (including provisions of appropriations law) and regulations, Executive Orders, applicable Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars, and USDOL policies. If during project implementation a Grantee is found in violation of U.S. government laws and regulations, the terms of the cooperative agreement awarded under this solicitation may be modified by USDOL, costs may be disallowed and recovered, the cooperative agreement may be terminated, and USDOL may take other action permitted by law. Determinations of allowable costs will be made in accordance with the applicable U.S. Federal cost principles.

Grantees must also submit to an annual independent audit. Single audits conducted under the provisions of OMB Circular A-133 are to be submitted by U.S. based non-profit organizations to meet the annual independent audit requirement. For foreign-based and

private for-profit Grantees, an attestation engagement, conducted in accordance with U.S. "Government Auditing Standards," that includes an auditor's opinions on (1) compliance with the Department's regulations and the provisions of the cooperative agreement and (2) the reliability of the Grantee's financial and performance reports must be submitted to meet the annual audit requirement. Costs for these audits or attestation engagements should be included in direct or indirect costs, whichever is appropriate.

The cooperative agreements awarded under this solicitation are subject to the following administrative standards and provisions, and any other applicable standards that come into effect during the term of the cooperative agreement, if applicable to a particular Grantee:

- i. 29 CFR Part 2 Subpart D—Equal Treatment in Department of Labor Programs for Religious Organizations; Protection of Religious Liberty of Department of Labor Social Service Providers and Beneficiaries.
- ii. 29 CFR Part 31—Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Labor—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- iii. 29 CFR Part 32—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs and Activities Receiving or Benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance.
- iv. 29 CFR Part 33—Enforcement of Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs or Activities Conducted by the Department of Labor.
- v. 29 CFR Part 35—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance from the Department of Labor.
- vi. 29 CFR Part 36—Federal Standards for Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance.
- vii. 29 CFR Part 93—New Restrictions on Lobbying.
- viii. 29 CFR Part 95—Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and other Non-Profit Organizations, and with Commercial Organizations, Foreign Governments, Organizations Under the Jurisdiction of Foreign Governments and International Organizations.
- ix. 29 CFR Part 96—Federal Standards for Audit of Federally Funded Grants, Contracts and Agreements.
- x. 29 CFR Part 98—Federal Standards for Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants).

xi. 29 CFR Part 99—Federal Standards for Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.

Applicants are reminded to budget for compliance with the administrative requirements set forth. This includes the cost of performing administrative activities such as annual single audits or attestation engagements (as applicable); closeout; mid-term and final evaluations; project-related document preparation, including deliverables; as well as compliance with procurement and property standards. Copies of all regulations referenced in this solicitation are available at no cost, online, at <http://www.dol.gov>.

Grantees should be aware that terms outlined in this solicitation, the cooperative agreement, and the MPGs are all applicable to the implementation of projects awarded under this solicitation.

B. Sub-Contracts

The Grantee may not sub-grant any of the funds obligated under this cooperative agreement. Sub-granting may not appear or be included in the budget as a line item. However, sub-contracts may be included as a budget line item.

All relationships between the Grantee and partner organizations receiving funds under this solicitation must be set forth in an appropriate joint venture, partnership, or other contractual agreement. Copies of such agreements should be provided to USDOL as an attachment to the application; copies of such agreements will not count toward the page limit.

Sub-contracts must be awarded in accordance with 29 CFR 95.40–48. Sub-contracts awarded after the cooperative agreement is signed, and not proposed in the application, must be awarded through a formal competitive bidding process, unless prior written approval is obtained from USDOL.

In compliance with Executive Orders 12876, as amended, 13230, 12928 and 13021, as amended, Grantees are strongly encouraged to provide sub-contracting opportunities to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions and Tribal Colleges and Universities.

C. Key Personnel

As noted in Section V(1)(C), the applicant must list the individuals who have been designated as having primary responsibility for the conduct and completion of all project work. The applicant must submit written proof that key personnel (Project Director, Education Specialist, and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer) will be available

to begin work on the project no later than 30 days after award.

After the cooperative agreement has been awarded and throughout the life of the project, Grantees agree to inform the Grant Officer's Technical Representative (GOTR) whenever it appears impossible for any key personnel to continue work on the project as planned. A Grantee may nominate substitute key personnel and submit the nominations to the GOTR. A Grantee may also propose reducing the hours of key personnel; however, a Grantee must obtain prior approval from the Grant Officer for all such changes to key personnel. If the Grant Officer is unable to approve the key personnel change, he/she reserves the right to terminate the cooperative agreement or disallow costs. **Please note:** As stated in Section V(1)(B)(v), the performance of the organization's key personnel on existing projects with USDOL or other entities, and whether the organization has a history of replacing key personnel with equally qualified staff, will be taken into consideration when rating past performance.

D. Encumbrance of Cooperative Agreement Funds

Cooperative agreement funds may not be encumbered/obligated by a Grantee before or after the period of performance. Encumbrances/obligations outstanding as of the end of the cooperative agreement period may be liquidated (paid out) after the end of the cooperative agreement period. Such encumbrances/obligations may involve only specified commitments for which a need existed during the cooperative agreement period and that are supported by approved contracts, purchase orders, requisitions, invoices, bills, or other evidence of liability consistent with a Grantee's purchasing procedures and incurred within the cooperative agreement period. All encumbrances/obligations incurred during the cooperative agreement period must be liquidated within 90 days after the end of the cooperative agreement period, unless a longer period of time is granted by USDOL.

All equipment purchased with project funds must be inventoried and secured throughout the life of the project. At the end of the project, USDOL and the Grantee are expected to determine how to best allocate equipment purchased with project funds in order to ensure sustainability of efforts in the projects' implementing areas.

E. Site Visits

USDOL, through its authorized representatives, has the right, at all

reasonable times, to make site visits to review project accomplishments and management control systems and to provide such technical assistance as may be required. If USDOL makes any site visit on the premises of a Grantee or a sub-contractor(s) under this cooperative agreement, a Grantee shall provide and shall require its sub-contractors to provide all reasonable facilities and assistance for the safety and convenience of government representatives in the performance of their duties. All site visits and evaluations are expected to be performed in a manner that will not unduly delay the implementation of the project.

3. Reporting and Deliverables

In addition to meeting the above requirements, a Grantee is expected to monitor the implementation of the program; report to USDOL on a semi-annual basis or more frequently if deemed necessary by USDOL; and undergo evaluations of program results. Guidance on USDOL procedures and management requirements will be provided to Grantees in the MPGs with the cooperative agreement. The project budget must include funds to: plan, implement, monitor, report on, and evaluate programs and activities (including mid-term and final evaluations and annual single audits or attestation engagements, as applicable); conduct studies pertinent to project implementation; establish education baselines to measure program results; and finance travel by field staff and key personnel to meet annually with USDOL officials in Washington, DC or within the project's region (e.g., Africa, Asia, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, and Europe). Applicants based both within and outside the United States should also budget for travel by field staff and other key personnel to Washington, DC at the beginning of the project for a post-award meeting with USDOL. Indicators of project performance must also be proposed by a Grantee and approved by USDOL in the Performance Monitoring Plan, as discussed in Section VI(3)(D) below. Unless otherwise indicated, a Grantee must submit copies of all required reports to USDOL by the specified due dates. Exact timeframes for completion of deliverables will be addressed in the cooperative agreement and the MPGs.

Specific deliverables are the following:

A. Project Design Document

As stated in Sections I(2) and IV(2), applications must include a preliminary

project design document in the format described in Appendix A, with design elements linked to a logical framework matrix. (Note: The supporting logical framework matrix will not count in the 45-page limit but should be included as an annex to the project document. To guide applicants, a sample logical framework matrix for a hypothetical Child Labor Education Initiative project is available at <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/grants/bkgrd.htm>). The preliminary project document must include all sections identified in Appendix A, including a background/justification section, project strategy (goal, purpose, outputs, activities, indicators, means of verification, assumptions), project implementation timetable, and project budget. The narrative must address the criteria/themes described in the Program Design/Budget-Cost Effectiveness section (Section V(1)(A) above).

Within six months after the time of the award, the Grantee must deliver the final project design document, based on the application written in response to this solicitation, including the results of additional consultation with stakeholders, partners, and USDOL. The final project design document must also include sections that address coordination strategies, project management and sustainability.

B. Progress and Financial Reports

The format for the progress reports will be provided in the MPG distributed after the award. Grantees must furnish a typed technical progress report and a financial report (SF 269) to USDOL on a semi-annual basis by 31 March and 30 September of each year during the cooperative agreement period. However, USDOL reserves the right to require up to four reports a year, as necessary. Also, a copy of the Federal Cash Transactions Report (PSC 272) must be submitted to USDOL upon submission to the Health and Human Services—Payment Management System (HHS—PMS).

C. Annual Work Plan

Grantees must develop an annual work plan within six months of project award for approval by USDOL so as to ensure coordination with other relevant social actors throughout the countries. Subsequent annual work plans must be delivered no later than one year after the previous one.

D. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Grantees must develop a performance monitoring and evaluation plan in collaboration with USDOL, including

beginning and ending dates for the project, indicators and methods and cost of data collection, planned and actual dates for mid-term review, and final end of project evaluations. The performance monitoring plan must be developed in conjunction with the logical framework project design and common indicators for reporting selected by USDOL. The plan must include a limited number of key indicators that can be realistically measured within the cost parameters allocated to project monitoring. Baseline data collection is expected to be tied to the indicators of the project design document and the performance monitoring plan. A draft monitoring and evaluation plan must be submitted to USDOL within six months of project award.

E. Project Evaluations

Grantees and the GOTR will determine on a case-by-case basis whether mid-term evaluations will be conducted by an internal or external evaluation team. All final evaluations must be external and independent in nature. A Grantee must respond in writing to any comments and recommendations provided in the mid-term evaluation report. The budget must include the projected cost of mid-term and final evaluations.

VII. Agency Contacts

All inquiries regarding this solicitation should be directed to: Ms. Lisa Harvey, U.S. Department of Labor, Procurement Services Center, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N-5416, Washington, DC 20210; telephone (202) 693-4570 (this is not a toll-free number) or e-mail: harvey.lisa@dol.gov. For a list of frequently asked questions on USDOL's Child Labor Education Initiative Solicitation for Cooperative Agreement, please visit <http://www.dol.gov/ILAB/faq/faq36.htm>.

VIII. Other Information

1. Materials Prepared Under the Cooperative Agreement

Grantees must submit to USDOL, for approval, all media-related, awareness-raising, and educational materials developed by the Grantee or its sub-contractors before they are reproduced, published, or used. USDOL considers such materials to include brochures, pamphlets, videotapes, slide-tape shows, curricula, and any other training materials used in the program. USDOL will review materials for technical accuracy and other issues.

In addition, USDOL reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish,

or otherwise use for Federal purposes, and authorize others to do so, all materials that are developed or for which ownership is purchased by the Grantee under an award.

2. Acknowledgment of USDOL Funding

USDOL has established procedures and guidelines regarding acknowledgement of funding. USDOL requires, in most circumstances, that the following be displayed on printed materials:

"Funding provided by the United States Department of Labor under Cooperative Agreement No. E-9-X-X-XXXX."

With regard to press releases, requests for proposals, bid solicitations, and other documents describing projects or programs funded in whole or in part under this cooperative agreement, all Grantees are required to consult with USDOL on: acknowledgment of USDOL funding; general policy issues regarding international child labor; and informing USDOL, to the extent possible, of major press events and/or interviews. More detailed guidance on acknowledgement of USDOL funding will be provided upon award to the Grantee(s) in the cooperative agreement and the MPG. In consultation with USDOL, USDOL will be acknowledged in one of the following ways:

A. The USDOL logo may be applied to USDOL-funded material prepared for worldwide distribution, including posters, videos, pamphlets, research documents, national survey results, impact evaluations, best practice reports, and other publications of global interest. A Grantee must consult with USDOL on whether the logo may be used on any such items prior to final draft or final preparation for distribution. In no event will the USDOL logo be placed on any item until USDOL has given a Grantee written permission to use the logo on the item.

B. The following notice must appear on all documents: "This document does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government."

3. Privacy and Freedom of Information

Any information submitted in response to this solicitation will be subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act and the Freedom of Information Act, as appropriate.

Signed at Washington, DC, this 23rd day of May, 2005.

Lisa Harvey,
Grant Officer.

Appendix A: Project Document Format

Executive Summary

1. Background and Justification
 2. Target Groups
 3. Program Approach and Strategy
 - 3.1 Narrative of Approach and Strategy (linked to Logical Framework matrix in Annex A)
 - 3.2 Project Implementation Timeline (Gantt Chart of Activities linked to Logical Framework matrix in Annex A)
 - 3.3 Budget (with cost of Activities linked to Outputs for Budget Performance Integration in Annex B)
 4. Project Monitoring and Evaluation
 - 4.1 Indicators and Means of Verification
 - 4.2 Baseline Data Collection Plan
 5. Institutional and Management Framework
 - 5.1 Institutional Arrangements for Implementation
 - 5.2 Collaborating and Implementing Institutions (Partners) and Responsibilities
 - 5.3 Other Donor or International Organization Activity and Coordination
 - 5.4 Project Management Organizational Chart
 6. Inputs
 - 6.1 Inputs provided by USDOL
 - 6.2 Inputs provided by the Grantee
 - 6.3 National and/or Other Contributions
 7. Sustainability
- Annex A: Full presentation of the Logical Framework matrix
- Annex B: Outputs Based Budget example (A worked example of a Logical Framework matrix, an Outputs Based Budget, and other background documentation for this solicitation are available from ILAB's Web site at <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/grants/bkgrd.htm>).

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BILLING CODE 4510-28-P

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employment and Training Administration

Proposed Collection; Comment Request

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a pre-clearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA95) [44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)]. This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired

format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. Currently, the Employment and Training Administration is soliciting comments concerning the proposed new collection of data concerning the operation and accuracy of state worker profiling models. A copy of the proposed information collection request (ICR) can be obtained at no charge by contacting the office listed below in the addressee section of this notice.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office listed in the addressee section below on or before July 26, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Scott Gibbons, Office of Workforce Security, U.S. Department of Labor, Room S-4231, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20210. e-mail: gibbons.scott@dol.gov; phone: 202-693-3008; fax: 202-693-2874.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Scott Gibbons, e-mail: gibbons.scott@dol.gov; phone: 202-693-3008; fax: 202-693-2874.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS), as specified in Pub. L. 103-152, is a system that attempts to identify UI claimants with a high potential for exhausting their regular benefit entitlement and directs them to re-employment services to hasten their return to work. Under this program, the worker profiling model is responsible for discriminating between those claimants who are likely to exhaust their UI benefits and those who are not.

In spite of the importance the model plays in this process, limited research has been done to determine how effective states are at targeting those most likely to exhaust their benefits. There are barriers to performing clear research on this topic. The purpose of this study is to improve state worker profiling models by: (1) Establishing an approach for evaluating the accuracy of worker profiling models, (2) applying this approach to current state models to determine how effective they are at predicting Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefit exhaustion, and (3) based on the results, developing guidance on best practices in operating and maintaining worker profiling models. Ideally, we would like to evaluate every state's profiling model. In order to accomplish this goal, the proposed data collection will be mandatory.

II. Review Focus

The Department of Labor is particularly interested in comments which:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

III. Current Actions

This project has two primary objectives. The first objective is to collect information concerning the characteristics of worker profiling models that states currently use. To accomplish this, a survey on the operational and structural aspects of the worker profiling models will be sent to states. The second objective is to evaluate the accuracy of predictions from worker profiling models. To accomplish this, a methodology to evaluate model performance has been developed. Data provided by states will be used to measure and analyze the accuracy of state worker profiling models, and to identify, to the greatest extent possible given the available data and analysis results, factors correlated with good or poor model performance. A report detailing the results of the analysis and the collected survey information will be produced. This report will summarize the analysis into conclusions and/or suggestions (i.e., best practices) for how states can improve systems that are under-performing.

Type of Review: New.

Agency: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

Title: Evaluation of State Worker Profiling Models.

Affected Public: State Government Workforce Agencies.

Cite/Reference/Form/etc.: See chart below.

Total Respondents: 53.