Grant Operational Guidance

11/15/2019 Background: On 10/16/2019 the Connecticut Department of Labor was awarded $1,585,948 with up to $4,757,845.00 for the CT National Health Emergency (NHE) Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG). The “CT Works to Recover” program will provide workforce services to Connecticut’s diverse population by leveraging existing resources with new initiatives. In coordination with the CT Department of Labor, each of the state’s five workforce development boards will work together to provide both state-wide and local initiatives aimed at providing training, career services and support, employer out-reach and temporary disaster-related employment for selected participants (dislocated workers). The grant funding is used to combine and implement two state-wide initiatives with five regional initiatives. The members of the Workforce Opioid Advisory Board will oversee the statewide initiatives of hiring and placing qualified individuals as Peer Recovery Navigators in each AJC and the development of the Employer Recovery Friendly WorkPlace initiative. The CT Department of Labor Commissioner or his designee will serve in a coordinative role.

State-Wide Initiatives

1. Disaster Employment- American Job Center Peer Recovery Navigators

   In each region, at least one participant will be co-enrolled in the program and in an Apprenticeship as a Peer Navigator in training, following a career pathway designated under CT’s Certified Alcohol and Drug Counseling Apprenticeship Program. Selected participants will enter the career pathway in accordance with their attainment of education and experience to date. These participants will pursue training to advance along the career pathway in ways that are aligned with their individual goals, whether it is; to conclude training upon attainment of the minimum credential - Certified Peer Recovery Navigator/ Coach; or to continue with training for the next advanced credential -Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC); or ultimately to pursue the Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC), the most advanced credential.

   Each Peer Navigator in Training will be hired into a temporary disaster dislocated worker position funded through WIOA NHE/DWG Disaster Employment Grant; as needed, CT DOL will apply for a waiver to extend the duration of the Peer Recovery Navigator employment period. Each WDB or their provider will recruit and select the candidate(s) to fill the position of Peer Recovery Navigator. Upon the completion of the hiring, training enrollment and placement of the individual on the payroll of the WDB or a partner agency, Peer Recovery Navigator(s) will be
assigned to work in one of the comprehensive American Job Centers located in each region of the state.

Peer Recovery Navigators will assist the region’s Business Services Units with the recruitment of employers to become “Recovery Friendly Workplaces” (as described below) seeking to engage employers from those occupational areas recognized as most significantly impacted by the opioid emergency crisis: construction, food services, and health care. Navigators will also develop strategies to recruit program participants and will provide program participants with referrals that assist in removing barriers, assist them to obtain supportive services, counseling and treatment and to re-enter the workforce and earn a living wage. The Peer Recovery Navigator will assist the participant to determine whether to resume their most recent employment or to enter alternate employment that is best suited to promote their recovery efforts.

2. Recovery Friendly Workplace Employer Initiative

CT will join the growing number of states committed to providing employers with training on “Recovery Friendly Workplaces”. Recovery Friendly Workplaces (RFWs) support their communities by recognizing recovery from substance use disorder as strength and by being willing to work intentionally with people in recovery. RFWs encourage a healthy and safe environment where employers, employees, and communities can collaborate to create positive change and eliminate barriers for those impacted by addiction. Through AJC Business Service Units and with the assistance of Peer Navigators, each American Job Center will reach out to employers in the state of CT who wish to be designated by the Governor as “Recovery Friendly”. Employers wishing to be designated as Recovery Friendly must attend an orientation, complete a short training program, commit to a recovery friendly work environment and be subject to an annual review. Employers designated as Recovery Friendly will receive recognition by the Governor, a distinctive sign to display regarding their designation, be advertised as a Recovery Friendly Workplace and receive valuable referral options for those affected by substance abuse and mental health issues.

Local Initiatives

CT’s Workforce System is supported through federal, state, local and private funding at its American Job Centers which provide workforce services throughout the State of Connecticut through their local communities. Local initiatives funded under this grant will include money for assistance and employment training for:

1. Re-entering citizens

2. Low income and TANF recipients

3. Long - Term Unemployed (LTU), also known as P2E – Platform to Employment recipients

4. Other individuals who qualify through WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker status and who have been affected by the opioid crises and are interested in receiving vocational training in opioid recovery treatment.
Eligibility

In order to be eligible for services provided by the grant individuals must meet one of the following criteria:

1. A Dislocated Worker as defined by section 3(15) of WIOA legislation.
2. An individual temporarily or permanently laid off as a consequence of the disaster or emergency;
3. A long term unemployed individual unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks.
4. A self-employed individual who became unemployed or significantly underemployed as a result of the emergency or disaster.

Statement of Impact- Eligible participants for opioid-crisis Disaster Recovery DWGs are not required to have a history of opioid abuse or otherwise be personally affected by the opioid crisis to participate in grant-funded employment, activities, and services. Disclosure of impact is strictly voluntary as follows:

"Your answer to this question is voluntary. Do you a friend or any member of your family have a history of opioid use? Please answer "Yes" or "No."

Grant Activities

In addition to providing Disaster Relief employment to Peer Recovery Navigators, individuals will receive career, training and supportive services aimed at the reintegration of eligible participants who voluntarily disclose that they have been affected by the opioid crises and or career, training and supportive services to eligible participants who are on career paths to provide services for those affected by the opioid crises.

Career Services include training and job placement assistance to aid participants in finding and filling jobs in identified emerging or high demand sectors. The components of Career Services may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Career Readiness skills
2. In-depth assessments (optional)
3. Career Planning

Training Services and Work Based Training models include but are not limited to the following:

1. Traditional classroom training funded through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), including apprenticeship programs on the state’s Eligible Training Provider List; or
2. Connecting businesses and eligible participants to on-the-job or customized training programs and apprenticeships to help facilitate reemployment.

Supportive Services are a broad range of services that help ensure individuals can participate in employment and training activities or temporary disaster-relief employment. Supportive service
delivery must comply with any state and local supportive service policies. Services include but are not limited to the following:

1. Purchase and provision of items necessary for participants to perform disaster-relief employment;

2. Healthcare, mental health treatment, addiction treatment, or other forms of outpatient treatment that may impact opioid addiction and related, underlying, or complicating conditions;

3. Additional services needed to facilitate post-training employment of participants impacted by the opioid crisis;

4. Linkages to community services, including services offered by partner organizations designed to support grant participants;

5. Assistance with child care and dependent care; and

6. Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.

Note: WDB’s must not spend more than 20 percent of their DWG award on supportive services for participants.

Confidentiality Medical information

Under applicable law, grant recipients must maintain the confidentiality of medical information obtained about an individual. Medical information must be kept confidential even if the individual volunteers the medical information without being asked. Information regarding an individual’s disability is included in information that must be kept confidential, but any medical information obtained must be kept confidential (whether or not the individual has a disability). See TEGL 4-18 for additional information.

Participants should be encouraged to complete the attached Waiver to Release information for the sole use of grant effectiveness in serving participants only. (See attachment 1- Participants Release for Confidential Data)

CTHires

All Opioid NHE participants will be entered into CTHires, the system of record for WIOA Title I. Individuals should be enrolled as Dislocated Workers in the system under any of the 12 categories as indicated on the Employment Tab in the WIOA Application. As indicated below most participants will be enrolled under Category 12.

Category 12: Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) eligible: Individual does not meet criteria outlined for Dislocated Workers in categories 1 - 8 above, but is an individual that meets DWG eligibility outlined under WIOA Title I(D) National programs, Sec. 170(b)(1)(A) workers affected by major economic dislocations OR Sec. 170(b)(1)(B) workers affected by an emergency or major disaster.

When verifying through Category, 12 self-attestation is allowable as indicated previously in this guidance. Copies of the self-attestation may be uploaded to the system. Other medical or sensitive
documentation should be maintained off-line in a separate file with a case note indicating “additional verification offline”. (See attachment 2 - Sample Self-Attestation)

Activities: The following activities will be added to CTHires which are specific to this grant.

ONG- Disaster Related Employment Peer Navigator  
ONG- Comprehensive and Specialized Assessment  
ONG- Concurrent WIOA/NEG Programs and Services  
ONG- Intensive Career Guidance/Planning  
ONG- Referral to Intensive service/counseling  
ONG- Registered Apprenticeship Training  
ONG- ITA Approved NDWG Training  
ONG- Intensive Career Readiness Training  
ONG- Needs Related Payment  
ONG- Supportive Service payment  
ONG- Direct Job Placement  
ONG- OJT Training Private Employer  
ONG- Referral to AJC Workshop  
ONG- Specialized work support activity to remove barriers

For additional information on enrollment and services in CTHires see Attachment 3 – CTHires Data Entry for National Health Emergency Opioid Grant.
Additional clarification on Eligibility:

In regards to categories of eligibility as defined above:

1. A Dislocated Worker as defined by section 3(15) of WIOA legislation. - Use any of the regular dislocated worker participation requirements and verifications.

   "Your answer to this question is voluntary. Do you a friend or any member of your family have a history of opioid use? Please answer "Yes" or "No."

   a.) Yes = They may be enrolled.

   b.) No or do not wish to answer = They may be enrolled but **only** if they are pursuing training in a field related to mitigating the emergency. ie Health Care or Counseling.

2. An individual temporarily or permanently laid off as a consequence of the disaster or emergency; - In this case use Option 12 because regular Dislocated Worker language does not allow for emergency only a disaster. Use #12 as a verification.

   "Your answer to this question is voluntary. Do you a friend or any member of your family have a history of opioid use? Please answer "Yes" or "No."

   a.) Yes = They may be enrolled.

   b.) No or do not wish to answer = They may be enrolled but **only** if they are pursuing training in a field related to mitigating the emergency. ie Health Care or Counseling.

3. A long term unemployed individual unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks. In this case use Option 12 because unlike regular DW participants in this category, the TEGL provides nothing indicating that the participant must be meet the criteria of being laid off and long term unemployed.

   "Your answer to this question is voluntary. Do you a friend or any member of your family have a history of opioid use? Please answer "Yes" or "No."

   a.) Yes = They may be enrolled.

   b.) No or do not wish to answer = They may be enrolled but **only** if they are pursuing training in a field related to mitigating the emergency. ie Health Care or Counseling.

4. A self-employed individual who became unemployed or significantly underemployed as a result of the emergency or disaster.

In this case use Option 12 because regular Dislocated Worker language does not allow for emergency only a disaster. Use #12 as verification.

   "Your answer to this question is voluntary. Do you a friend or any member of your family have a history of opioid use? Please answer "Yes” or "No."

   a.) Yes = They may be enrolled.
b.) No or do not wish to answer= They may be enrolled but *only* if they are pursuing training in a field related to mitigating the emergency. i.e. Health Care or Counseling.

For CTHires and category described above may be used and the participant can still be enrolled in grant under Grant Type= Opioid National Dislocated Worker Grant.