

Outreach and Marketing for the Public Workforce Development System: Exploring the Possibilities!

Q & A Document

Date of Webinar: October 27, 2022

Video Link - <https://vimeo.com/764679576/b0413b7e5c>



PREFACE

This is a follow-up Technical Assistance (TA) resource document for the webinar held by the Next Level Now Collaborative on October 27, 2022, on WorkforceGPS titled: [Outreach and Marketing for the Public Workforce Development System: Exploring the Possibilities!](#)

This webinar provided strategies from peers in the field on approaches to conducting outreach and marketing of public workforce system services. The session addressed ways to reach marginalized communities more effectively, clarified options available to grantees using Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds, and provided an opportunity to share new ideas, as well as tried and true practices that work in reaching new participants and business customers.

The speakers included:

Moderator:

Jennifer Friedman, Regional Administrator, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration

Presenters:

Addison McKown, Manager of Strategic Communications, [Employ Indy](#)

Aaron Moon, Adult and Dislocated Worker Project Director, [Arizona@Work Pinal County](#)

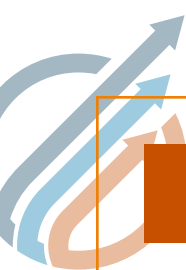
Mike Postma, Outreach Coordinator, [Workforce Development, Inc.](#)

This document was created to answer the questions asked during the webinar. The following topics had additional questions from webinar attendees and are covered in this document:

- **Allowable Costs** – page 3
- **Using Social Media** – page 7
- **Reverse Referrals** – page 9
- **Grants for Marketing and Outreach Funding** – page 10
- **Miscellaneous** – page 10

Additionally, you will see a [Submit Request](#) button at the end of each topic section. Please use this resource to ask additional questions regarding the topic and/or request specific TA with any challenge you are facing.





Allowable Costs

Question: Can WIOA funds be used to purchase a mobile American Job Center (AJC) van and pay related expenses (i.e., insurance, fuel, maintenance)?

Answer: The Uniform Guidance defines “motor vehicle” as general-purpose equipment ([2 CFR 200.1](#)), and these costs are allowable under the Cost Principles. Costs incurred for upkeep of equipment, which neither add to the permanent value of the property nor appreciably prolong its intended life, but keep it in an efficient operating condition, are allowable ([2 CFR 200.452](#)). All factors of allowability, as outlined in [2 CFR 200.403](#), must be met, and in some circumstances, prior written approval from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Division (USDOL – ETA) may be required. If the motor vehicle benefits two or more programs, the cost of the mobile AJC and the costs to maintain the vehicle must be allocated to the other programs based on the relative benefit received ([2 CFR 200.405\(d\)](#)).

If Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) formula funds are being used, please refer to your State procurement processes for guidance ([2 CFR 200.317](#)). For grant recipients that are not State grant recipients, procurement standards, as outlined in [2 CFR 200.318 to 200.327](#), must be followed. Use of Federal funds for such purchase must ensure that the price being paid is fair and reasonable in addition to the below standards on allowability.

Lastly, it is highly encouraged that the workforce entity leverages its relationships with other partners that serve the same community or partners that may have the same purpose or mission when purchasing the mobile AJC van, as well as the cost of operating, staffing, and maintaining a mobile AJC unit.

Question: How do I know if costs are allowable or allocable to the program?

Answer: As found in the Cost Principles of the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR part 200), all costs that are charged to your DOL- ETA award must meet the following general criteria to be allowable ([2 CFR 200.403](#)):

- Be necessary and reasonable for the performance of your USDOL/ETA award and be allocable to the award.
- Conform with Federal law, guidelines, and grant terms.
- Be consistent with policies and procedures. Costs must be incurred to support your DOL/ETA award, consistent with governing statutes, regulations, and your policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both Federal and non-Federal awards.
- Receive consistent treatment. Costs must receive the same accounting treatment as costs that your organization incurred in similar circumstances.
- Must be in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).
- Cannot be included as a cost or used to meet cost-sharing or matching requirements of any other Federal award except as specifically provided by federal law or regulation.
- Be properly and adequately documented.



Allowable Costs • Continued

A cost is allocable to your DOL-ETA grant if the goods or services involved are chargeable or assignable to that grant in accordance with relative benefits received ([2 CFR 200.405](#)). This standard is met if the cost:

- Is incurred specifically for the DOL-ETA grant.
- Benefits both your DOL-ETA and other Federal awards or non-Federal awards and can be distributed in proportions that may be approximated using reasonable methods; and
- Is necessary to the overall operation of your DOL-ETA grant.

When testing for reasonableness of a cost, consider the prudent person test. In the prudent person test, your organization must consider: Would a prudent person use federal funds to purchase such items? Would you have used your own funds to purchase such items?

You must be able to demonstrate that outreach activity costs meet all the factors of allowability before they can be charged to your DOL-ETA grant. If your organization is unable to demonstrate any of the factors cited above, DOL-ETA may determine that these are unallowable costs to your grant. Please reach out to your FPO if you need clarification on the allowability of any outreach activity costs.

Question: What is the perspective on using WIOA funds to promote job fairs through paid job search engines like Indeed or ZipRecruiter?

Answer: Public relations costs are allowable only when they are required to keep the public informed on DOL-ETA award matters. In contrast, advertising can include program outreach activities and other specific purposes necessary to meet the requirements of your federal award. Before using job search engines, ask yourself: Do the search engine and job fair meet the needs of your local area/ community?

In addition, review state policy and procedures for any additional restrictions.

However, other alternatives to promoting job fairs could cast a potentially wider net, and your organization may already have access to these tools. Here are some options you may consider when developing a virtual outreach strategy.

Social media – Create Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Tik Tok, and LinkedIn accounts for your organization and utilize these platforms to promote the job fair (or other specific program services). Social media is a fantastic way to stay connected to populations in all geographic areas served. You can select from the list of common social media platforms to raise awareness of your program, strengthen relations within the community and remain cost-effective.

Examples of social media strategies include:

- Following other local community-based organizations on Twitter
- Liking and/or reposting relevant Facebook stories
- Congratulating individuals on their successes on LinkedIn
- Sharing photos and short clips of success stories on your Instagram
- Tag individuals and/or partners (Always make sure you have the permission of individuals before using names and/or photos)



Allowable Costs • Continued

Webpage – Your web page should serve as a one-stop shop for participants and community members seeking to engage with your organization. Your organization will benefit from keeping the webpage current and easy to navigate while featuring engaging videos and images. Consider having a community outreach page on your website to advertise your efforts in the community and to promote your job fair. Also, remember to reach out to partners to request that they link your homepage to their websites.

Emails – Send email blasts to potential partners in and outside the AJC system. Ask if this information can be shared on their social media, with their email distribution list, or via their newsletter(s). In return, propose to do the same in partnership.

While we recognize that a virtual presence may increase your viewership, a virtual platform does not reach areas with limited Internet access. Consider physically conducting outreach and recruitment activities in rural areas where internet connectivity may be an issue. In this regard, remember that most public libraries and schools are always great options for partnership because of their internet connectivity.

Question: How much information is required on the outreach item to justify it as a program outreach vs. an unallowable promotional item?

Answer: The outreach material must contain information that promotes the DOL award per the [Stevens Amendment](#). There is no specific amount of information that is required.

When issuing statements, press releases, or any document that describes your project or program funded by Federal dollars (in whole or in part), you must include the following information:

1. Percentage of the total costs of the program or project that will be spent with Federal money.
2. Dollar amount of Federal funds for the project or program; and
3. Percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the project or program that will be financed by non-governmental sources.

The intent of marketing or advertising your organization through outreach is to educate the public about your award and how you can meet the public's specific needs. The use of promotional items such as t-shirts with logos, keychains, pens, memorabilia, etc., is considered an advertising effort with the sole purpose of promoting your organization which is an unallowable cost under the terms and conditions of your DOL-ETA award as these items do little to educate the public about your award.

Feel free to contact your [Federal Project Office](#) (FPO) or ETA Regional Office for more information on this requirement.

Allowable Costs • Continued

Question: Can you provide any information about EO statements and TTY numbers required in outreach materials? How much is required?

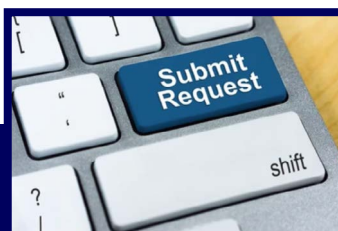
Answer: All outreach and marketing materials should be accessible to people with disabilities. Materials developed with Federal funds should be accessible to people with disabilities in a way that is comparable to those without disabilities. You can refer to Government Services Administration's (GSA) website on accessibility ([Section508.gov](https://www.section508.gov)) as a resource. GSA is the government's technical advisor for digital accessibility and provides guidance and training in numerous areas.

Question: What are some tips or reminders when determining whether to use federal funds for outreach and marketing?

Answer: Regardless of how you decide to conduct outreach and marketing, any cost incurred must have a programmatic purpose and must benefit your DOL-ETA award. The intent of marketing, outreach, and advertising your DOL-ETA award is to educate the public about your award, how it can meet the public's needs, and how it can best serve and strengthen the local community. Costs to maintain the image of your organization or advertise your organization are unallowable costs to your DOL-ETA award as these activities serve no benefit to your DOL-ETA award.

As with all award costs, please review [2 CFR 200.402-411: Basic Considerations](#) of the Uniform Guidance. Here you will find the basic considerations when charging costs to a federal award: necessary, reasonableness, and allocable.

Please reach out to your FPO if you need clarification on allowability of public relations and advertising costs.



[SUBMIT A REQUEST ABOUT ALLOWABLE COSTS](#)



Using Social Media

Question for EmployIndy (Presenter): How did you initiate using TikTok or other social media? How do you start an influencer partnership?

Answer: EmployIndy utilized current student participants to serve as influencers on TikTok and other social media platforms. Creating content about experiences with different programs amplified the services through social media accounts. This is a different spin on social media influencers, but it does continue to help with brand/program awareness and peer-to-peer promotion, which built trust amongst different student populations.

EmployIndy recommends using paid advertising on social media when there is a sign-up deadline. For example, a paid digital campaign was used when the Modern Apprenticeship application window was in an open stage. Recently, however, Facebook and Instagram changed their rules about paid advertising for jobs, which negatively impacted paid apprenticeship campaigns. EmployIndy is still seeing a substantial number of impressions; however, with Snapchat, ads are geo-fenced to surrounding areas of participating high schools.

Question: Do you have a social media manager?

Answer: No. Each communications team member is assigned a project, and they handle all social media for the project(s).

Question: What text message service do you use?

Answer: [Canvas](https://gocanvas.io/) – <https://gocanvas.io/>

Question: Did you use any non-WIOA funding that covers outreach?

Answer: Arizona@Work answered by stating that outreach funding was 100% WIOA and really didn't cost much more than staff time.

Minnesota answered by stating that they accessed other state grants, as well as local and regional foundations that had marketing as an allowable cost.

Question: Do you use any digital signage? If so, which software do you use?

Answer: Arizona@Work uses an 80-inch TV/display was used which was accompanied by a thumb drive to rotate various campaigns and events in JPEG format. This display is also in the resource room of the County's one comprehensive center.

Question: Where did you place your flyers?

Answer: For Arizona@Work, the events are mostly advertised on social media pages. When doing so, we knew we were successful when people started tagging others they know. The posts were shared repeatedly. Fliers were created, printed, and posted in a few public libraries and laundromats as well.

Using Social Media • Continued

Question: Using the targeting model – did you do a mass outreach, or did you target certain areas?

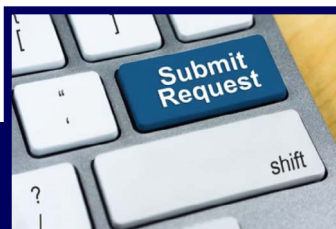
Answer: Arizona@Work conducted county-wide outreach that encompassed the entire local area via community-based social media pages and groups, various county outlets, and email distribution to partner programs. For perspective, the county has a population of approximately 500K.

Question: Do you use paid social media, and if so, how would you recommend making a case for paid social media?

Answer: Minnesota Workforce Development, Inc. uses paid social media sometimes, and the case that is made for it is the same made for any other advertising such as newspaper, radio, etc. Social Media allows the user to be very targeted and to know the amount of money spent towards a specific demographic that is the focal point of outreach. In particular, social media is where younger clients spend their time versus reading newspapers or watching local tv. Another bonus for social media is that the user receives a good set of data on the number of impressions, views, etc., that traditional media can't deliver.

Question: Is there a minimum number of paid ads on Facebook that make it worthwhile?

Answer: It depends on the reason you want to use paid ads. If you are working on engagement of a specific demographic, then you may want to narrow your audience. However, it should be noted that narrowing your audience typically has higher costs for paid ads. Check out these resources for more info on paid ads on Facebook. [When is Paying for Engagement Worth It? How Much Should You Spend on Facebook Ads?](#)



SUBMIT A REQUEST ABOUT USING SOCIAL MEDIA



Reverse Referrals

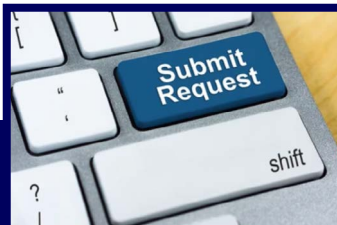
Question: Can you give more details regarding the ‘reverse referrals?’ (i.e., how does it work, how did you reach out to business, how many referrals do you get with this method, and were there any legal limitations?)

Answer: Arizona@Work identified the business community as an underutilized marketing and outreach resource for workforce development services. First, we identified a few employer champions—businesses that we frequently help with job orders—those that seemed to be a good fit and proposed work-based learning as a cost savings solution to expand their targeted recruitment talent pool. We used employer interviews and On-the-Job-Training (OJT) recruitment events to identify the work-based learning candidates.

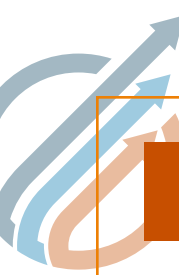
Employers interviewed candidates, and if they were a good fit for OJT, the candidate was referred to workforce development staff for additional screening, enrollment, and work readiness support as applicable. As word of mouth got around, interest grew beyond our initial employer champions, and we got more referrals than initially anticipated. Approximately sixty in half of a program year.

Question: When implementing ‘reverse referrals,’ did you come across any legal limitations, or would it come down to local laws?

Answer: The only legal limitation with a reverse referral is to ensure the candidate is eligible for WIOA, TANF, or Youth funding before they begin the training or employment with the business.



SUBMIT A REQUEST ABOUT REVERSE REFERRALS



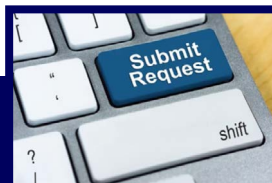
Grants for Marketing and Outreach Funding

Question: Are there examples of (non-WIOA) grants—or info on how to go about finding them—for marketing and outreach funding?

Answer: Minnesota has a variety of competitive grants that are open for us to apply for on a biannual basis. Many of these have marketing as an allowable cost. We also apply for and receive grants from local & regional foundations that can fund some of these efforts. Other states may have similar grants with marketing as an allowable cost. Also, research grants from local and regional foundations and non-profits that may be able to fund some of these efforts.

Question: Can you suggest any corporations that are willing to donate food for events since that is a funding limitation?

Answer: Walmart, Costco, Sam's, and other warehouse chains are often able to make such donations. Remember to approach it as part of their marketing budget in exchange for signage or recognition as a sponsor.

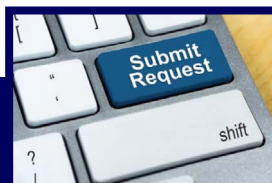


SUBMIT A REQUEST ABOUT GRANTS FOR MARKETING & OUTREACH FUNDING

Miscellaneous

Question: Is there any outreach/marketing that USDOL is doing at the National Level that state workforce boards can support and align with (i.e., messaging and initiatives, ways to amplify state work through national channels)

Answer: The "[Yes, WIOA Can!](#)" initiative aims to clarify how flexible WIOA funds can be under existing policies and how WIOA can be leveraged by states and local government, workforce boards, unions, employers, and community-based organizations to promote "innovation, equity, and job quality" across the U.S. workforce development system.



SUBMIT A REQUEST ABOUT ADDITIONAL TOPICS



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Any cost incurred** must have a programmatic purpose and must benefit your DOL-ETA award.
- When **testing for reasonableness of a cost**, consider the prudent person test. In the prudent person test, your organization must consider: Would a prudent person use Federal funds to purchase such items? Would you have used your own funds to purchase such items?
- The intent of marketing or advertising your organization through outreach is to **educate the public about your award** and how you can meet the public's specific needs.
- Social media costs are allowable as long as you educate the public about your award, how it can meet the public's needs, and how it can best serve and strengthen the local community and when the basic considerations of charging costs to a Federal award are met: **necessary, reasonableness, and allocable**.
- **Think creatively** about how to use mutually beneficial partnerships to conduct outreach.
- **Create awareness surrounding services**. Don't advertise for brand awareness with Federal funds.
- The "[Yes, WIOA Can!](#)" initiative aims to clarify how flexible WIOA funds can be under existing policies.



ABOUT US

The Next Level Now (NLN) Collaborative will serve as U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training's hub for delivering strategic, short- and long-term technical assistance (TA) to the public workforce system and partners, assisting them at the state and local level as they improve services, quality, and outcomes for jobseekers and employers. In addition to developing and disseminating field-requested TA tools and resources, the NLN Collaborative will facilitate peer learning opportunities and information sharing, make subject matter experts accessible to increase efficacy and performance, and offer assistance in applying evidence-based practices for all users. Learn more about the NLN Collaborative, access and request TA through the [Collaborative's website](#).

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