



EDA AI Upskill Accelerator Pilot Program

Developing Your Concept & Proposal
AI Addendum
Technical Assistance Webinar
June 4, 2026

Purpose of the Webinar

- Learn how to shape your project to align with NOFO addendum requirements

Information shared in this presentation do not replace or supersede the contents in the AI Addendum. Please see the AI Addendum for complete instructions and information.

AGENDA

- Program Background
- Program Narrative Deep Dive
- Timeline
- Additional Webinars
- Next Steps
- Submission of questions

Information shared in this presentation do not replace or supersede the contents in the AI Addendum. Please see the AI Addendum for complete instructions and information.

Overview



U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Program Background

Overview

America's AI Action Plan

- **Prioritize** AI skill development as a core objective of relevant education and workforce funding streams.
- **Pilot** new approaches to workforce challenges created by AI, to include rapid retraining and addressing shifting skill requirements for entry-level roles.
- **Surface** scalable, performance-driven strategies that help the workforce system adapt and evolve with an AI-driven labor market.

Statutory Authority

EDA is utilizing its authority in 42 U.S.C. § 3154e to support this program.

- Authorizes EDA to make grants to support the development and expansion of innovative workforce training programs through sectoral partnerships leading to high-paying skilled jobs.

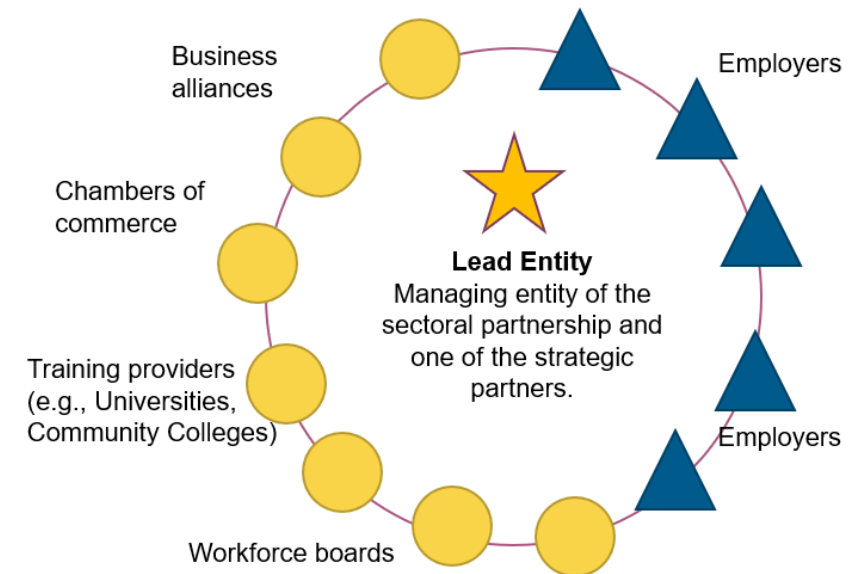
Program Goals and Design

***AI Upskill** is designed to support employer-led regional workforce training systems that equip American workers with practical AI skills required to effectively and efficiently, utilize AI-enabled technology within respective industries.*

Program Goals

- ✓ Provide American workers with job-ready AI skills for immediate application.
- ✓ Support workforce development that emphasizes strong employer engagement and commitments to drive regional economic growth.
- ✓ Identify and learn from sustainable models that effectively address AI upskilling.

Sectoral Partnerships



Funding Details

Funding & Awards

- \$25 million in awards
- Anticipate making 4-8 awards ranging from \$1-\$8 million each.

Match Rate

- Maximum allowable EDA investment rate is 60% but must meet Special Need.
- 40% match is required from all applicants.

Period of Performance

- 24-36 months
- Must begin training within 1 year of award.

Reporting Obligations

- Annual submission of key performance outcomes and compliance with all federal reporting requirements (Progress Reports and Financial Reports).

Eligible Entities

Eligible applicants for investment assistance include a(n):

- District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD);
- Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes;
- State¹, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions;
- Institution of higher education (IHE) or a consortium of IHEs;
- Public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a political subdivision of a State;
- Economic Development Organization; or
- Public-private partnership for public infrastructure.

¹ Under section 3(10) of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3122), the term “State” includes any State, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau.

Allowable Uses of Funds

Project Phases

System Development

Up to \$500K

Optional

Supports the identification and convening of employer partners and other organization to define industry needs and support related to the applied use of AI in the workforce.

Program Design

Up to \$2M

Optional

Supports the design of employer-driven skills training and making the investments necessary to enable its implementation (i.e. equipment)

Program Implementation

Up to \$8M

Required

Supports the delivery of employer-driven skills training programs that have been designed or refined through this program specific to the region, industry, and worker role.

Construction is not allowable under this addendum.

Building Your Sectoral Partnership

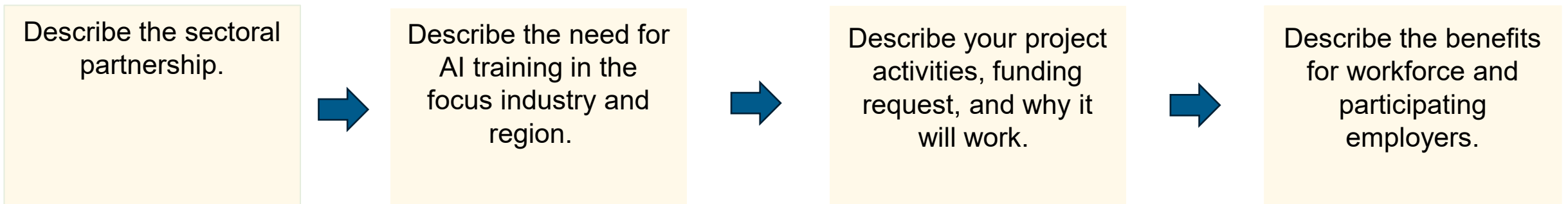


U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Project Narrative: Core Concept

The Ask:

Propose a sectoral partnership between entities eligible for funding under the AI Addendum and employers that will design and provide training to incumbent workers and new hires in industry aligned AI skills.



*Refer to page 47, Project Narrative for specific requirements.

Project Narrative: Core Concept

The Ask:

Propose a sectoral partnership between entities eligible for funding under the AI Addendum and employers that will design and provide training to incumbent workers and new hires in industry aligned AI skills.

Describe the sectoral partnership.

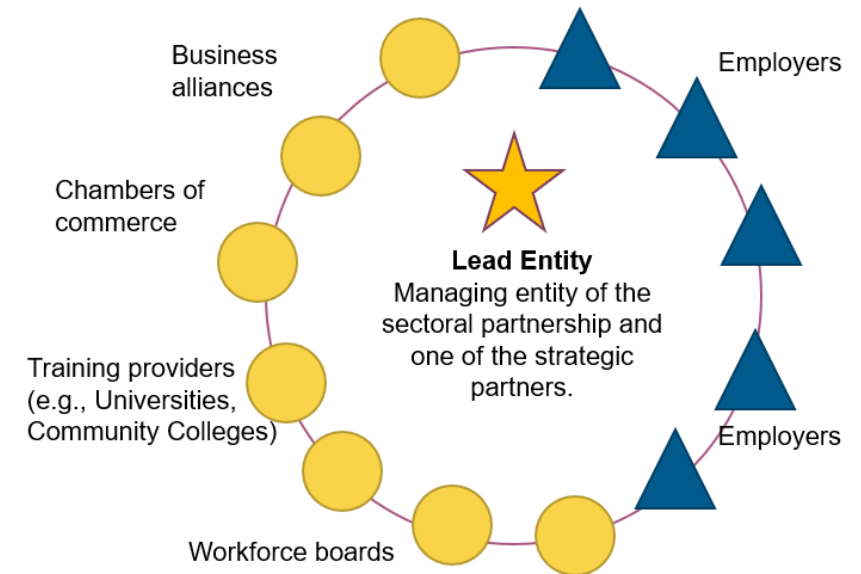
*Refer to page 47, Project Narrative for specific requirements.

Why the Sectoral Partnership Is Important

The sectoral partnership is the **backbone** of the entire project.

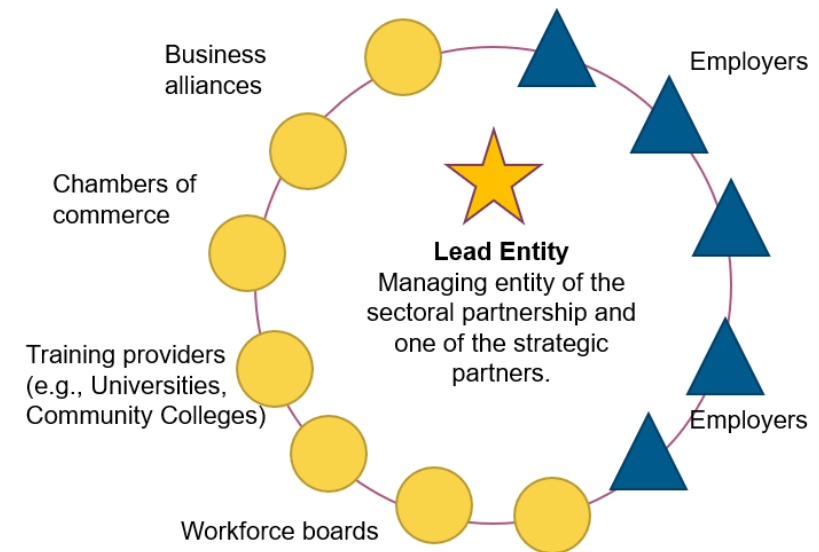
It brings together employers from the same industry, plus training providers, workforce boards, community organizations, and other stakeholders, to collaboratively design and deliver a workforce strategy that **directly meets industry needs**.

- Ensures projects are driven by real employer demand.
- Increases the likelihood that workers who complete training will move into high-paying, skilled roles that employers need filled.
- Creates coordinated, scalable, and sustainable models for workforce development.
- Helps ensure AI adoption actually happens, leading to measurable improvements in productivity, competitiveness, and outcomes.



What Sectoral Partnerships are Designed to Do

- Identify employer-validated AI skill needs for in-demand job roles.
- Shape the training strategy based on real workplace use of AI tools
- Align training providers to deliver industry-aligned curricula
- Coordinate recruitment of workers and employers
- Support placements and advancement into high-skill, high-wage jobs
- Ensure employers adopt AI-informed workforce strategies
- Provide data for evaluation and ROI measurement



Checkpoint 1: Building Your Sectoral Partnership

- Identify your industry.
- Think about who is in your sectoral partnership?

Identify Your Partner	Type of Organization	What is their role?	How do they add value to your project?
-----------------------	----------------------	---------------------	--

- Are there key roles missing?
- How do you govern, organize, and manage yourself throughout the project?

Sectoral Partnerships Actions– By Phase

Depending on the phase where your project begins, here's what your partnership should already have completed — and what still needs work.

System Development (Phase I)	Program Design (Phase II)	Program Implementation (Phase III)
• Build or formalize the sectoral partnership governance • Identify employer partners and define their roles • Map AI use cases across the industry • Identify worker skills needed to use AI tools • Convene training providers + employers + workforce partners • Begin establishing commitments	• Develop training models, curricula, and competency frameworks • Align training methods to employer-validated skill needs • Define recruitment and outreach strategies • Establish metrics, evaluation plan, and data collection processes • Build or secure needed training infrastructure • Refine employer commitments (hires, incumbent workers, data sharing)	• Delivering the AI-aligned training • Recruiting workers (incumbent, unemployed, underemployed) • Providing participant supports (equipment, materials, paid time) • Coordinating employer hiring/placement • Measuring program outcomes (placements, completions, productivity gains) • Collecting employer + worker data for evaluation • Demonstrating return on investment

Checkpoint 2: Identify your project's phases

Do you have sectoral partnership established with employer partners?

Do you have employer commitments?

Does your partnership know AI use cases across industries and worker skills needed?

NO

Start in
System Development

YES

Consider
Program Design

Program Design

Have you developed training models, curriculum, competency frameworks, and worker pathways to jobs with employer input?

Have you identified participant support needs?

Have you established impact metrics, evaluation plan, and data collection processes for your project?

Have you secured training and participant support providers for programming?

NO

Start in
Program Design

YES

Start in Implementation

Articulating Need For AI Workforce Training



U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Project Narrative: Core Concept

The Ask:

Propose a sectoral partnership between entities eligible for funding under the AI Addendum and employers that will design and provide training to incumbent workers and new hires in industry aligned AI skills.

Describe the sectoral partnership.



Describe the need for AI training in the focus industry and region.

*Refer to page 47, Project Narrative for specific requirements.

Describing the Need for AI Training in the Industry & Region

The AI Addendum requires all applicants to clearly demonstrate Special Need*.

- **Industry Significance**
The industry of focus must be a significant part of the region's economy.
- **Existing Use of AI**
The industry and associated employers must be already using AI in their operations.
- **AI is Critical to Future Competitiveness**
AI currently in use must be important to the industry's future performance and the region's economic health.
- **Workforce AI Training Need**
There must be a current, demonstrated need for AI workforce training to preserve or enhance competitiveness.

Checkpoint 3: Articulate the Need for AI Training in the Region

Four Key Elements of Special Need*

	Applicants Should Answer	Strong Proposals will:
Industry Significance	- What the industry's role in the local/regional economy, - How many people does/can the industry employ? - How the industry connects to regional economic development priorities?	- Use labor market data (Ex. BLS, Census, NERDE) - Industry output indicators - Regional workforce strategy references
Existing Use of AI	- What AI tools, systems, or workflows employers are already using; - How widespread adoption is; - What tasks are impacted (e.g., analysis, decision support, automation).	- Have clear examples from participating employers; - Have a description of current AI-enabled tools; - Include supporting evidence of AI product usage.
AI Critical for Competitiveness	- How AI is shaping the industry's productivity, growth, or competitiveness; - What happens if workers are not trained to use AI tools.	- Have commitments from employers - Evidence of emerging sector-wide AI trends - Identify regional economic implications (e.g., efficiency, output, supply chain integration)
Workforce AI Training Need	- What specific skill gaps prevent full AI adoption today? - What tasks/roles are being transformed by AI? - What hiring challenges or productivity losses are currently occurring? - How many workers need upskilling?	- Identify employer-validated competency gaps - Concrete examples of tasks workers cannot yet perform - Include data on unfilled positions, slow productivity, or stalled AI integration - Demonstrate evidence of employer demand for the training

Defining Your Project's Activities



U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Project Narrative: Core Concept

The Ask:

Propose a sectoral partnership between entities eligible for funding under the AI Addendum and employers that will design and provide training to incumbent workers and new hires in industry aligned AI skills.

Describe the sectoral partnership.



Describe the need for AI training in the focus industry and region.



Describe your project activities, funding request, and why it will work.

*Refer to page 47, Project Narrative for specific requirements.

Connecting Activities to the Need

- A. The proposed activities should solve the AI workforce challenge that has been identified.
- B. The funding request and corresponding budget narrative should match the work required in the phases identified.
- C. The application should show strong indicators that the activities will sufficiently address the workforce need.

Connecting Activities to the Need

- A. The proposed activities should respond to the AI workforce needs that have been identified.
- How are the activities proposed the right activities to address the workforce need identified?
 - How are the activities supporting training teaching the right skills?
 - How are the activities removing/addressing any identified barriers to accessing and completing training?
 - How are employers involved in shaping the proposed activities?

Connecting Activities to the Need

- B.** The funding request and corresponding budget narrative should match the work required in the phases identified.
- Does the proposed budget fully and clearly support the activities detailed?
 - Does the proposed budget fund the barriers or provide supports described, such as transportation, supplies, and career services?
 - Does the budget align to the proposed phases?
 - Does the budget support a reasonable cost per participant?

Connecting Activities to the Need

C. The application should show strong indicators that the activities will sufficiently address the workforce need.

- Have employers directly validated the proposed activities?
- Have employers committed to hiring or upskilling workers through the proposed activities?
- Is there evidence similar training methods have been successful?
- Is there a sustainability approach outlined?

Checkpoint 4: Identify Your Activities

- Does this activity directly address the AI workforce need we identified?
- Is the proper Lead entity identified?
- Are the activities in the right order?
- Is the timeline realistic?

Activity	Lead	Consultant	Timeline
• Conduct AI task and skills needs analysis	• Lead Entity (Applying organization)	• Sectoral Partnership, Employers, training providers, workforce board	2 months
• Develop and/or update AI-aligned curriculum and competency frameworks	• Higher Education partners; Training Providers	• Sectoral Partnership, Employers, Industry Subject Matter Experts	3-4 months
• Recruit Participants and conduct outreach	• Workforce Boards; Community Organizations	• Sectoral Partnership, Employers, Community Organizations	1-2 months before training launch; ongoing
• Deliver AI skills training	• Higher Education partners; Training Providers	• Employer partners for validation; Workforce boards for supports	3-4 months per training cohort
• Coordinate career advancement and job placement pathways	• Lead Entity; Workforce Boards	• Employer partners	Alongside training; ongoing
• Collect and report worker & employer data	• Lead Entity	• All partners providing data	At the start of each training; ongoing throughout grant period

Workforce & Employer Benefits

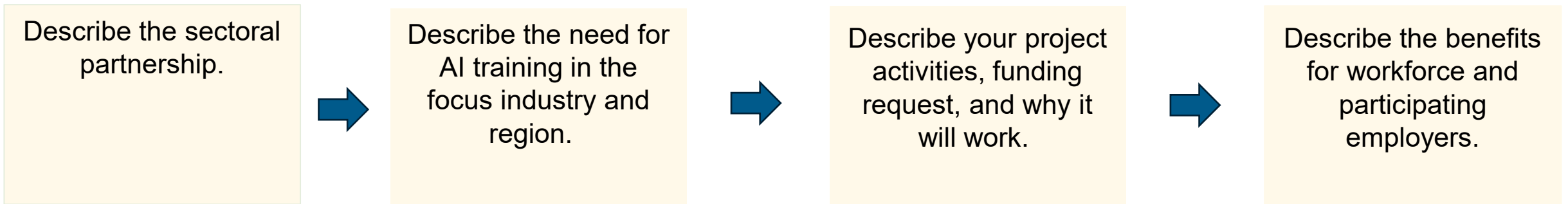


U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Project Narrative: Core Concept

The Ask:

Propose a sectoral partnership between entities eligible for funding under the AI Addendum and employers that will design and provide training to incumbent workers and new hires in industry aligned AI skills.



*Refer to page 47, Project Narrative for specific requirements.

Developing Project Benefits

- Outcomes of these projects will fall into two buckets:
 - 1) workers
 - 2) employer-level benefits
- Best Practices for Project Benefits
 - Ambitious yet achievable
 - Measurable
 - Justified with research, groundwork, and/or examples of where similar solutions have been implemented & benefits achieved
- Goals are incorporated into scopes of work. Progress must be reported on these goals up to five years after the award start date.
- Participant information and/or business information may be requested to verify data reporting. Applicants should also be prepared to participate in program evaluation activities required by EDA.

Worker Benefits

- Number of individuals **enrolled** in the training program;
- Number of individuals who successfully **complete** a training program;
- Number of participants **placed and/or retained in employment**;
- Number of program participants broken down by **occupation** type;
 - For each occupation, average wages and benefits for workers in the occupation in your region before and after training

Example: Worker Benefits

Table: Project Outcomes

Total Enrollments	Total Completions	Job Outcomes	
		Total Job Placements (New Hires)	Total Incumbent Workers Trained
500	450	200	200

Table: Project Outcomes by Occupation

Name of Job Supported by Training	Anticipated Number of Participants	Average Wages		Average Benefits
		<i>Before Training</i>	<i>After Training</i>	
Technician	50	\$25 per hour	\$33 per hour	Health, retirement, paid-leave (sick, vacation, etc.)

Employer Benefits

- Applications submitted to EDA will help us to better understand how employers are benefitting from using AI and workforce needs to maximize impacts.
- Employer benefits are business impacts due to incorporating AI into processes and training workers.
 - Examples include efficiency, productivity, reduced costs, profit, innovation, customer engagement, outreach, etc.
- Employer benefits can be industry- and occupation-specific, and applicants are required to define benefits for their participating employer partners.

Employer Benefits

Table: Employer-Level Benefits

Employer Benefit	Outcome Description	Baseline Condition	Target or Direction of Change	Measurement Method	Frequency	Employer Role in Measurement
<i>Provide a short name for the outcome</i>	<i>Provide a short description of the outcome.</i>	<i>Describe the metric in the status quo.</i>	<i>With effective training in AI skills, what is the desired change in the metric?</i>	<i>How will this information be collected?</i>	<i>How often will this information be measured? How often will this information be available?</i>	<i>How does the employer in the sectoral partnership provide this information?</i>
Efficiency	Reduce time spent on manual scheduling tasks	12 staff hours/week per site	Decrease in staff hours required	System use logs; time tracking	Quarterly	Submission of system reports from employer(s)

***Note:** These responses in the table are for illustrative purposes. Applicants should propose project outcomes that are ambitious yet feasible.

Pilot Program: Future Evaluation & Scalability

- The AI Upskill Accelerator is a pilot program, which means this funding opportunity places a focus on projects that can be evaluated rigorously during and after the period of performance to inform best practices and support the scaling and replication of successful programs, models, and approaches.
- Future evaluation:
 - Describe how the project's lessons learned could be valuable to other regions, industries, or employers
 - Describe how the applicant will rigorously evaluate the impact of project activities on worker and businesses
- Scalability:
 - Describe unique approach that project is taking to develop workforce skills in AI
 - Describe how approach taken will enable broader use and replication or expansion across workforce system

Project Narrative: Core Concept

Describe the sectoral partnership.

- Identify industry
- Determine current phase
- Describe current phase & needs



Describe the need for AI training in the focus industry and region.

- Identify AI use in industry
- Identify AI role in industry future competitiveness
- Identify workforce training needs



Describe your project activities, funding request, and why it will work.

- Determine activities & services to fill workforce needs
- Plan timeline for deliverables
- Forecast budget needs



Describe the benefits for workforce and participating employers.

- Determine # of participants
- Define employer benefits
- Describe evaluation, scalability, & sustainability for future impact

Competition Resources

- ❑ AI Addendum Overview Webinar (today)
- ❑ [AI Addendum](#)
- ❑ Recordings of Conducted Webinars *(updated throughout the competition)*
- ❑ [FAQs](#) *(updated throughout the competition)*
- ❑ Technical Assistance Webinars / Office Hours
- ❑ OIE Email (OIE@eda.gov)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WEBINARS*
AI Addendum Overview (today)
Developing Your Concept <i>June 4, 2026, at 12pm ET</i>
Budget Best Practices <i>June 9, 2026, at 12pm ET</i>
Submitting Your Application <i>June 11, 2026, at 12pm ET</i>
Data, Impact & Evaluation <i>June 23, 2026, at 12pm ET</i>

*Visit eda.gov/ai-upskill for upcoming webinar access.

**SEE
YOU
LATER**

A stylized illustration of a hand with orange skin and a teal sleeve, waving with two curved lines indicating motion.

Thank You!

- If applicants have questions or need assistance, they are welcome to email OIE@eda.gov .
 - Include in the subject line:
“AI Ready Workforce FY 2026”