



National Governors Association
Center for Best Practices
444 North Capitol Street
Suite 267
Washington, D.C. 20001-1512

Phone (202) 624-5300
Fax (202) 624-5313
www.nga.org/Center

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NGA Policy Academy on Aligning the Education and Training Pipeline to the Needs of the Economy

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Purpose:	To assist states and territories in aligning their education and training systems to the needs of their economy
Proposals Due:	July 2, 2014, by 5:00 p.m. ET
Selection Announcement:	By early August 2014
Funding Available:	Up to \$170,000 in grant funds and services
Period of Performance:	August 2014 – June 2016
First Policy Academy Meeting:	October 16-17, 2014
Bidders' Conference Call:	Thursday, May 22, 2014, 1:00pm – 2:00pm ET Phone: 866.394.9509 / Access code: 886-4136#
Eligibility:	States, commonwealths and territories with full NGA membership benefits
NGA Center Contacts:	Garrett Groves, Senior Policy Analyst 202-624-5253 or ggroves@nga.org Iris Palmer, Senior Policy Analyst 202-624-5312 or ipalmer@nga.org

PURPOSE

This policy academy will support states and territories planning and taking action to better align their education and training systems to the needs of their economy. By increasing the number of citizens with a postsecondary degree or relevant workforce certification, far more people will have access to the middle class and beyond, companies will have a better prepared workforce and the state will experience the benefits of a stronger economy.

BACKGROUND

A postsecondary degree or relevant workforce certification is the “new minimum” for the future workforce to meet the demands of the emerging job market and access a middle-class life or beyond. Fifty years ago, nearly 80 percent of jobs required only a high school diploma or less, and most paid a good wage. Today, that number has dropped to 35 percent for jobs available to high school graduates and dropouts, and more than two-thirds of those jobs pay less than \$25,000 a year. The emerging economy will provide few well-paying jobs for workers who merely have a high school education or less.

To draw attention and highlight solutions to this issue, National Governors Association (NGA) Chair Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin launched a yearlong effort to better prepare Americans to work in the new economy through improved postsecondary education and workforce training. [*America Works: Education and Training for Tomorrow's Jobs*](#) raises awareness about the benefits for individuals, businesses, and state economies when governors act to raise their population’s educational attainment and better align their education and training systems with the likely future demands of employers.

The interim initiative report issued at the NGA Winter meeting, [*America Works: The Benefit of a More Educated Workforce to Individuals and the Economy*](#), defines the current mismatch between today’s workforce’s educational attainment and the demand of tomorrow’s employer. The report also frames the crux of the problem and the four components of the solution.

Based on the framing of Governor Fallin’s initiative, prior work of NGA’s education and workforce divisions, and the ongoing need of states, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) is conducting a competitive process to choose up to eight states and territories for intense technical assistance to strengthen the connection between their education and training systems and the needs of their economy.

Applying states and territories not selected for the policy academy may enter a secondary selection process for up to four states or territories to be chosen at random to receive a small grant and limited services from the NGA Center. More information on those services and the selection process are included in the *Technical Assistance and Support* and *Selection Process* sections on pages 5 and 11 respectively.

POLICY ACADEMY DESCRIPTION

Through the NGA policy academy, the selected states and territories will receive grants, technical assistance from the NGA Center and outside experts, and opportunities to learn from each other. The focus of the academy, consistent with the framing of the Chair’s initiative, is to help the selected states and territories make progress in the four following integrated components:

- Articulate and implement a strong vision connecting the education and training systems with the needs of the economy so more Americans achieve the “new minimum” of a postsecondary degree or certificate with labor market value to gain access to the middle class and beyond;
- Integrate and use education and workforce data to inform policy, track progress, and measure success;
- Build industry and education partnerships to get results; and
- Modify the use of resources and incentives to support the attainment of the integrated vision.

The precise mix of policies and priorities that a governor may initiate to close specific educational attainment gaps will depend on the state’s unique economic composition and demographics, the current educational attainment of its citizens, and the quality of its education and training pipeline.

There are numerous strategies and actions within each component that a state or territory can propose as part of its application as demonstrated by the examples below. **The first two bullets (bolded) under each component are required elements to be accomplished by the end of the policy academy. If your state or territory has already accomplished one or more of the required elements, then your application should show how your plan will build on those elements.** Attachment C provides more detailed information on the required elements. They represent the foundation upon which the applicant should build its plan to address its unique challenges in aligning the education and training systems with the needs of the state’s or territory’s economy. The required elements also represent a common area of work that policy academy states will be able to collaborate on and learn from each other as the policy academy participants focus on the following four components:

I. Vision: Articulate and implement a strong vision connecting education and the workforce to have more Americans achieve the “new minimum.”

Governors can publicly articulate a vision to connect the education pipeline—kindergarten through 12th grade (K–12), career tech and workforce training programs, and higher education—with the needs of their state’s economy. The declaration should contain specific goals, actions, policy changes, and metrics to assess progress towards achieving stronger results for a state’s citizens and its economy. The vision should elevate the message that a relevant postsecondary workforce certification or degree is the “new minimum” for achieving a middle-class lifestyle or beyond. Examples of actions include:

- **Designate a structure to coordinate strategic priorities and plans across education, training and economic development agencies to increase alignment of the entire education and training pipeline;**
- **Develop measurable goals, including educational attainment goals, and strategies that together represent a means to achieve the vision and determine who is responsible for achieving progress under each goal and strategy;**
- Conduct an assessment of the many state and national initiatives taking place in the state that could be better coordinated and aligned for greater impact; and
- Enact and support policies to better prepare:
 - high school students for college or career training (for example, rigorous K-12 student standards, dual-credit courses, career-tech or high school career pathway programs); and
 - unemployed and underemployed adults for high-wage careers (for example, revised high school equivalency credentials, strengthened adult career training, adult career pathway programs).

II. Data: Integrate and use education and workforce data to inform policy, track progress, and measure success

Many states and territories are building longitudinal data systems to provide better information on the supply of talented workers across the entire education and training pipeline. Governors can ensure: that those systems are designed to answer key policy questions important to the state; that the education and training information is connected to workforce data on future employment needs; and that high-quality data products are disseminated to state and local policymakers and institutional leaders to help set policy, budget, and programmatic priorities. Examples of actions include:

- **Identify and answer key policy questions to improve the alignment between the education and training pipeline and workforce needs.** Examples of key policy questions include:
 - How many students complete high school prepared for college or career training—level work? How many students leave high school with college credit and industry credentials?

- What are the quality, capacity, and efficiency of postsecondary education and workforce training providers?
- How many and what percentage of college or career training program graduates get high-wage jobs?
- **Create a “Talent Supply and Demand Dashboard” (some means to share those data in an actionable format) for the state;**
- Support the alignment and use of education, workforce, and economic development data, including longitudinal data systems and current labor market data to answer key policy questions and establish policy and budget priorities;
- Request a review of the reports and analyses produced by the state’s education, workforce and economic development systems to identify priority data products that inform the decisions of policymakers and ways that they may be refined or improved. The review could also result in the elimination of reports and requirements that are not adding sufficient value to the state, provided they are not federally required.

III. Partnerships: Build industry and education partnerships to get results

Governors can provide state support to help strengthen partnerships between industry leaders and education and training partners to improve alignment between their states’ education and workforce training systems and the needs of their economy. State support for seeding and growing industry partnerships with the education and training systems may be led by a state workforce investment board (WIB), a preschool-to-grade 20 (P-20) council, or another statewide entity. Governors can identify and promote active and emerging regional partnerships that connect education and training pipelines to high-wage careers within key industries in their states’ economies. Examples of actions include:

- **Establish, or affirm, the state structure to support and coordinate state and regional industry-education partnerships;**
- **Utilize rigorous criteria to identify high-quality partnerships, expand where appropriate and fill gaps as needed;**
- Bring together leaders from industry and education to agree on standards, competencies and a system of quality credentials tied to emerging high-wage careers.

IV. Resources & Incentives: Modify the use of resources and incentives to support the attainment of the integrated vision

There are many federal and state funding streams that feed into improving education, workforce training, and economic development. There are also non-financial incentives that vary across states. Governors can change the current use of those funds and incentives in the state’s education and workforce training systems to better align results and improve quality in meeting the needs of state employers. Examples of actions include:

- **Develop or update an asset map of state and federal funding and programs to identify opportunities to increase alignment between the state’s/territory’s education and training pipeline and the needs of its economy;**
- **Enact or broaden performance funding mechanisms to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of a state’s postsecondary, workforce, and career tech systems; and**
- Develop or refine a policy agenda to enact legislative or programmatic reforms needed to strengthen incentives in support of the vision.

In addition to the required elements identified above, there are several additional required activities for participation listed on page 10.

BENEFITS FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE POLICY ACADEMY

Selected states and territories should realize at least the following benefits from participating in the policy academy:

- Formation and implementation of a state action plan to align the state’s efforts to improve its education and training pipeline with the workforce needs of the state’s economy;
- Opportunity to strengthen relationships amongst key policymakers across the state;
- Creation of policies and systems that directly support work across the education, workforce training and economic development silos;
- Access to NGA Center staff experts, other national experts and state leaders who will share best practices and lessons learned as well as support the implementation of the plan; and
- Grants to support the implementation of the plan.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

The NGA Center will provide several forms of support to selected states and territories including:

- **Sub-grants or services** of up to \$170,000 for travel and related costs for in-state meetings of key state policymakers, staffing to coordinate planning and implementation across multiple systems and agencies, communications, and consulting contracts for subject matter experts;
- **Travel support** for state teams of up to six people to attend three policy academy meetings;
- **Two in-state policy workshops** of up to two days each to help the leadership team refine the state’s action plan;
- **Monthly technical assistance calls** with NGA Center staff; and
- **Additional targeted technical assistance** from NGA Center staff and other national experts for individual states based on their action plans and progress made.

Applying states and territories not selected for the policy academy may choose to enter a secondary selection process for up to four states or territories that will receive:

- **Sub-grants** of up to \$10,000 for travel and related costs for in-state meetings of key state policymakers, or consulting contracts for subject matter or communication experts;
- **Travel support** for state teams of up to two people to attend three policy academy meetings;
- **One in-state policy meeting** of up to two days to help the leadership team refine the state’s action plan;
- **Quarterly technical assistance calls** with NGA Center staff and other states selected through the secondary selection process.

Details of the secondary selection process are provided in the *Selection Process* section on page 11.

Timeline

Following is the tentative schedule for the policy academy:

May 22, 2014	Bidders’ call, 1:00pm – 2:00pm (ET). The NGA Center will host a voluntary conference call for all interested states and territories to learn more about the RFP process, proposal content, submission requirements, and to ask any questions.
July 2, 2014	Proposals due by 5:00 p.m. (ET).
Early Aug 2014	State and territory selection
Within 2 weeks of selection	Conference call for all selected states and territories. The NGA Center will host a conference call with selected states and territories to orient them to the policy academy and outline next steps.

August 2014 – March 2015	<p>First in-state policy workshop and site visit. NGA Center staff will plan an in-state visit with the policy academy leadership team in each state.</p> <p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Meet with state teams to refine the state’s action plan and identify possible opportunities and roadblocks related to the state’s proposed plan</i> • <i>Identify possible technical assistance resources and desired consultants</i> • <i>Review the state’s transition plan to maintain momentum and commitment to the policy academy across state agencies</i> • <i>Finalize the budget</i>
Ongoing	Monthly status call with NGA Center staff and policy academy states and territories
October 16-17, 2014	<p>First policy academy meeting</p> <p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Inform participants of emerging research and share best practices across policy academy states</i> • <i>Support participating states and territories in collaborating on common challenges and strategies</i> • <i>Refine state action plans, measures of success and planned budget allocations</i>
March – November 2015	<p>Second in-state policy workshop and site visit</p> <p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gauge progress with state team (accomplishments, roadblocks, plans for moving forward)</i> • <i>Share best practices</i> • <i>Explore state plans for navigating transitions and maintaining momentum for policy academy activities</i> • <i>Review/revise state action plans</i>
June 2015	Interim progress and financial reports due
June/July 2015	<p>Second policy academy meeting</p> <p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discuss roadblocks and successes</i> • <i>Share best practices and tools to spur progress</i> • <i>Share strategies and policy implications particular to each state’s action plan</i> • <i>Refine or revise state action plans</i>
Fall 2015	<p>Third policy academy meeting</p> <p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Share insights and lessons learned</i> • <i>Solidify a roadmap for implementation and sustaining momentum</i> • <i>Prepare for the 2016 legislative session and any political transitions</i>
June 30, 2016	Policy academy concludes
June 30, 2016	Final financial and program reports due

Required Proposal Content and Selection Criteria

State and territory proposals will contain five items: 1) cover letter from the governor with signatures of support or separate letter(s) of support from the state workforce lead, the economic development lead, the state K-12 chief and the higher education executive officer; 2) a letter of support from the entity that will serve as the fiscal agent for the sub-grant, if not the governor's office; 3) the proposal describing the state's definition of the problem, proposed activities, leadership team, and sustainability strategies; 4) a state action plan using the template provided; and 5) a budget using the template provided and a budget narrative. If applicable, the proposal needs to directly address the possibility of political transition and recommitment of a new administration. The proposal **cannot exceed 15 pages**. The page limit does not include the cover letter or letters of support, the state action plan, the budget, or budget narrative. The entire application packet should be submitted as a single PDF document (see Attachment E for submission checklist).

COVER LETTER AND SIGNATURES OR LETTERS OF SUPPORT

The cover letter, signed by the governor, should briefly articulate the state's or territory's interest in and desired outcomes related to the policy academy and must designate a leader for the state's or territory's efforts. Letters of support, or signatures of support on the cover letter, are also required from at least the state workforce lead, the state economic development lead, the state K-12 chief and higher education executive officer.

Include contact information for the team leader designated by the governor and the primary contact person who will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the state's or territory's actions within the policy academy. Contact information should include title, mailing address, telephone number and email address. **Indicate in the cover letter if your state or territory would like to be included in the secondary selection process described in the *Selection Process* section for applicants not selected for the policy academy.** The cover letter/letters of support do not count against the 15 page limit.

FISCAL AGENT LETTER

If the governor's office is not the fiscal agent, then a letter of support is needed from the entity designated as the fiscal agent for the sub-grant. The letter must identify the person responsible for all fiscal issues for the sub-grant. Please provide contact information for that person. The fiscal agent letter does not count against the 15 page limit for the proposal.

STATE OR TERRITORY ACTION PLAN

The state or territory action plan template provides an overview of the state's proposed strategies and activities in each of the four policy components. For each strategy or activity there is space for additional information on the lead people or organization, the resources required, the timeline and deliverables and the measures of progress. The template does not count against the 15 page limit for the proposal, and can be found in Attachment A.

BUDGET PROPOSAL AND NARRATIVE

The budget template provides an overview of how the state or territory proposes allocating up to \$170,000 in grant funds and resources over the entire period of the policy academy. The budget proposal does not count against the 15 page limit for the proposal, and can be found in Attachment B. The budget narrative is described below in the proposal section, and does not count against the 15 page limit.

PROPOSAL

Following is a summary of required proposal content and scoring values assigned to each category for the selection process. **The proposal shall not exceed 15 pages. Any information provided beyond the 15th page will not be read.**

Category	Description	Value
<p>Definition of the Problem</p>	<p>In this section, please discuss the state’s or territory’s challenges in aligning its education and training systems with the needs of the economy and the problems that result (e.g. insufficient educational attainment among residents to match expected industry demand, skill gaps in specific industries or geographic areas, leakages in the education and training pipeline). Please provide sufficient context for those problems as it pertains to the state’s unique economic composition, demographics, the current educational attainment of its citizens or the quality and capacity of the education and training pipeline. Applicants should use relevant data wherever possible to demonstrate the magnitude and prevalence of problems.</p>	<p>10 points</p>
<p>State or Territory Action Plan</p> <p>Please complete the state or territory action plan template provided in Attachment A.</p> <p>The action plan template does not count to the 15 page maximum.</p> <p>For additional guidance in creating the action plan, please see the Guiding Questions for Designing a State or Territory Action Plan provided in Attachment D.</p>	<p>The policy academy aims to assist states and territories with addressing the problems described above by making improvements in the four policy component areas (vision, data, partnerships, resources and incentives).</p> <p>In this section, please complete the action plan template (Attachment A) and provide a narrative of the state’s or territory’s proposed strategies and activities for deeper work during the policy academy. Applicants must describe work that will take place in each policy component, as well as incorporate each of the required elements (for more information see pages 3-4 and Attachment C) or show how the state is building upon any required elements completed prior to the policy academy. Where appropriate, please describe how each proposed activity or strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses the problem(s) identified above; • Improves alignment across state agencies or departments; and • Strengthens, expands or builds on previous work in the state. <p>In this section, please also provide an overview of how the proposed activities in the action plan fit together into an integrated approach. Please include in that overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single timeline for major activities and deliverables across all of the proposed strategies and actions. • A brief description of other large state efforts or national initiatives the state or territory is participating in that can be woven into the work of the policy academy to achieve greater impact and alignment (e.g. Complete College America, JFF’s Pathways to Prosperity, CLASP’s State Alliance for Career Pathways, U.S. Department of Labor or Department of Education grants, other NGA policy academies). • Several short-term and long-term indicators of overall success for the state’s proposed work that correspond to the four policy components (vision, data, partnerships, resources and incentives). 	<p>50 points</p>

<p>Budget Proposal and Narrative</p> <p>Please use the budget template in Attachment B provided for the budget proposal. The budget and narrative does not count to the 15 page maximum.</p>	<p>Each policy academy state or territory will be awarded up to \$170,000 in grants or services to support its planned activities. In this section, please fill out the budget proposal template (Attachment B) and provide a detailed budget narrative to explain how the proposed use of funds will best help the state complete its action plan. Any large in-kind contribution of resources should also be discussed in the budget narrative. If funds will be used for staffing, please identify the individual(s) or the position(s) that grant dollars will subsidize, the amount of time allocated for this grant, any matching funds or other dollars that will be used to support the position(s), and a plan for sustaining staff after the policy academy has ended.</p>	<p>20 points</p>
<p>Cross-Agency Leadership Team</p>	<p>As noted in the first required element under the vision component, each state or territory must designate a leadership structure and process to direct the state’s efforts to align the education and training pipeline to the needs of the economy. In this section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify each senior staff person, including their role and responsibility, appointed to serve on the cross-agency leadership team that will guide and manage the state’s proposed activities. Please also identify: 1) who the governor designated to direct the leadership team’s overall activities; and 2) the key person(s) responsible for managing the day to day activities of the state’s participation in the policy academy. • Demonstrate that there will be sufficient staff capacity to support the proposed policy academy activities. <p>At a minimum, the team should include the following representatives to ensure that key state policymakers across business, economic development and the education and training pipeline are represented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor’s office senior official; • State workforce lead or deputy (e.g. Department of Labor Secretary, state workforce investment board director) • State economic development lead or deputy; • State K-12 Chief or deputy; • State higher education executive officer or deputy; and • Industry leaders (e.g. state chamber representative, state business roundtable representative, state workforce investment board chair, industry association presidents) 	<p>10 points</p>
<p>Cross-Agency Sustainability Strategy</p>	<p>In this section, please describe your plan for maintaining the state’s momentum during the policy academy and commitment from the cross-agency leadership team to support the work. In particular, please include transition planning activities that are required due to elections or anticipated changes in key leadership positions.</p>	<p>10 points</p>

Required Activities for Participation

ELIGIBILITY

The policy academy is open to all states and territories currently in good standing with NGA. Inquiries regarding membership standing should be directed to Bill Gainer at 202.624.5329 or bgainer@nga.org.

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES FOR SELECTED STATES OR TERRITORIES

The policy academy will require substantial preparation from state and territory attendees before each policy academy meeting, active team participation throughout the policy academy process, and a strong commitment to implement the state's action plan. In addition, participating states and territories are required to:

- **Demonstrate direct involvement from the governor** and a commitment to action in each of the four components.
- **Participate in scheduled conference calls.** Following state or territory selection, the NGA Center will host a conference call with participating states to orient them to the policy academy and outline next steps. Subsequent conference calls will be held for all state and territory teams on a monthly basis throughout the project period.
- **Revise its action plan as needed and measure progress of implementation.** Throughout the policy academy, the NGA Center will work with each participating state or territory to: 1) further develop the state action plan provided in the policy academy application; 2) update that plan throughout the policy academy to take advantage of lessons learned and to capture new opportunities; and 3) measure progress on the indicators of success to demonstrate the positive changes that have come about as a result of the team's efforts.
- **Attend the three policy academy meetings.** The NGA Center will provide states and territories with funding to send up to six team members to each of the three policy academy meetings. During the meeting, teams will learn about emerging research and share lessons learned with the other policy academy states. In addition, they will work with NGA Center staff and policy academy faculty to further develop or refine their state action plans.
- **Convene at least two in-state policy workshops.** Staff from the NGA Center will conduct at least two in-state site visits of up to two days each to help the leadership team refine the state's or territory's action plan and provide on-site technical support as needed.
- **Submit an interim progress and financial report.** The NGA Center will collect an interim progress report and an interim financial report from each state or territory on their activities and corresponding accomplishments, challenges encountered, and solutions. The NGA Center will provide the team leader with a template and more detailed requirements for the reports by approximately March 2015.
- **Final evaluation summary and lessons learned report and final financial report.** At the conclusion of the policy academy, participating states and territories will be required to submit a written narrative report that summarizes the team's action plan, accomplishments and challenges to date, demonstrates progress as measured by short and long-term indicators, and outlines future plans to sustain the work. Participating states and territories will also be required to submit a final financial report. The NGA Center will provide the team leader with report templates and more detailed requirements for the reports in spring 2016.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be followed when submitting the application:

- A "page" is 8.5" × 11", single-sided, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Single space all text in the application.
- Use 11 font or larger.
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.
- **See Attachment E for submission requirements checklist.**

SELECTION PROCESS

The NGA Center will name a panel of external subject matter experts and NGA Center staff to review and score the proposals based on the criteria outlined above. The panel will make recommendations to the NGA Center on the states or territories that should be invited to participate in the policy academy. The NGA Center shall make the final decision. **States and territories will be notified by early August 2014.**

Applying states and territories not selected for the policy academy may choose to enter a secondary selection process for up to four states and territories that will be selected at random to receive a smaller grant and set of services from the NGA Center, as detailed above in the *Technical Assistance and Support* section. States and territories will be eligible for the secondary selection process provided that:

1. The state or territory indicated on its cover letter that it would like to be included.
2. The state or territory met the minimum criteria for the policy academy and received a score in the panel review process; and
3. The state or territory scored in the top 75 percent of the remaining applicants not selected for the policy academy.

The winners of the secondary selection process will be announced along with the winners of the policy academy competition by early August.

VOLUNTARY BIDDERS' CALL

The NGA Center will host an optional call **on May 22nd, 2014 from 1:00pm to 2:00pm (ET)** for states and territories interested in submitting a proposal. Following are instructions for accessing the call:

1. 866.394.9509/ access code: 8864136#

The purpose of the call is to provide clarifications about the RFP and policy academy. Participants can ask questions about the proposal content, criteria, and process.

Requirements for Financial Awards

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

Selected states and territories will receive sub-grants or services of up to \$170,000 to cover activities and resources that include or are related to any of the following activities:

1. **Meetings** – States may use grant funds to host in-state meetings involving members of the core team and other key state and local policymakers on issues related to the state's action plan.
2. **Statewide Summit** – States should consider planning a statewide summit during the policy academy to communicate the state's vision and engage key state and local partners in planned activities and strategies designed to attain the vision.
3. **Staffing** – States may use grant funds for staff time to coordinate planning and implementation across multiple systems and agencies. The individual(s) covered by grant funding is not required to be employed by any particular agency. However, that individual should have sufficient authority to coordinate the work and ensure significant progress is made on the plan.
4. **Consulting services and analysis** – The NGA Center and national experts will serve as subject matter experts in the policy academy. States may use grant funds for any additional consulting services and analysis necessary to complete its proposed activities.
5. **Facilitation** – While the NGA Center will provide meeting facilitation and guidance for two in-state policy workshops with the cross-agency leadership team and other key partners at the statewide level, states may use grant funds to provide additional facilitation and consulting services for key partner meetings at the state or regional level.

6. **Communication** – States may use grant funds for services to develop a professional communication plan for engaging policymakers and state residents in the vision and generating further support across the state.
7. **Travel** – While the NGA Center will support state team members’ travel to the three policy academy meetings, grant funds may be used to offset the cost of travel to in-state meetings or by team members for out-of-state travel to learn from states that are engaged in reform efforts and are employing best practices.
8. **Publication** – States may produce new reports, data tools or resources that can be published or otherwise distributed publicly.

In order to benefit from economies of scale, the NGA Center may coordinate the purchase of consulting services, analysis, tool development, etc., where multiple states or territories have decided to procure sufficiently similar services.

No portion of the grant may be used for lobbying.

SUB-GRANT TERMS

The NGA Center will enter into a sub-grant agreement with grantee states and territories. The agreement will cover the period from August 2014 to June 2016. Final programmatic and financial reports will be due to the NGA Center no later than June 30, 2016.

Upon submission of a proposal, the NGA Center will send a confirmation of receipt along with a copy of the NGA sub-grant terms and conditions. The state or territory should review the terms and conditions and notify the NGA Center of any requested changes. The NGA Center reserves the right to accept or decline any proposed changes to the terms and conditions. Significant proposed changes, which could affect the agreement’s timely execution, may impact the selection of a state or territory.

Sub-grant funding will be disbursed to the governor’s office or an entity designated by the governor’s office in the state’s application. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the grant will be disbursed upon execution of the sub-grant agreement. An additional twenty-five percent (25%) of the grant will be disbursed by June, 2015, based on demonstrated need and spending. The remaining funds will be provided by December 31, 2015, based on demonstrated need and spending. If a state or territory has a sizable balance and no clear expenditure plan at any time during the period of performance, the NGA Center has the right to allocate all funds except the first payment on a cost reimbursement basis. Payment of grant funds will be conditional on satisfactory progress of the state’s action plan and compliance with the grant terms. Invoices and financial and programmatic reports must be consistent with the NGA Center’s funding and reporting regulations.

Submission Information

Proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. (ET) July 2, 2014. Only one proposal per state or territory will be accepted. Please include all proposal materials (see Attachment E for checklist) into a single PDF file and submit to Iris Palmer (ipalmer@nga.org) and Kelle Parsons (kparsons@nga.org).

Disclaimer

This request for proposal is not binding on the NGA Center, nor does it constitute a contractual offer. Without limiting the foregoing, the NGA Center reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any or all proposals; to modify, supplement, or cancel the RFP; to waive any deviation from the RFP; to negotiate regarding any proposal; and to negotiate final terms and conditions that may differ from those stated in the RFP. Under no circumstances shall the NGA Center be liable for any costs incurred by any person, state, or territory in connection with the preparation and submission of a response to this RFP.

ATTACHMENT A: State or Territory Action Plan Template

For each strategy or activity listed below, please provide a brief description or answer for each category in the space provided.

COMPONENT 1 – VISION: Declare a Statewide Vision to Connect the Education and Training Pipeline with the Needs of the State’s/Territory’s Economy				
Governors can publicly articulate and lead a vision to connect the education and training pipeline (K-12, career tech and workforce training programs, and higher education) with the needs of their economy. The declaration should include specific goals, actions, and metrics to assess progress to achieve stronger results for the state’s citizens and its economy.				
Proposed Strategies/Activities to Strengthen this Component:	Lead People & Key Organizations	Resources (grant funds, state funds, state staff support, NGA staff support, etc.)	Timeline & Deliverables	Measures of Progress and Success
1. Regular convening of the STEM Education Innovation Alliance	Gene Sharatt , Executive Director, Washington Student Achievement Council Marcie Maxwell , Senior Policy Advisor, Governor’s Office Eleni Papadakis , Executive Director, Workforce Board Caroline King , Chief Policy Officer, Washington STEM			
2.				
3.				

4.				
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COMPONENT 2 – DATA: Integrate and use education and workforce data to inform policy, track progress, and measure success

Governors can support the alignment and use of education, workforce, and economic development data, including longitudinal data systems and current labor market data, to answer key policy questions and establish policy and budget priorities.

Proposed Strategies/Activities to Strengthen this Component:	Lead People & Key Organizations	Resources (grant funds, state funds, state staff support, NGA staff support, etc.)	Timeline & Deliverables	Measures of Progress and Success
1. Creation of a STEM education and workforce dashboard	Jim Schmidt, Director, Washington State Education Research Data Center			
2.				

3.				
4.				

COMPONENT 3 – PARTNERSHIPS: BUILD INDUSTRY-EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS TO GET RESULTS

Governors can strengthen state structures (e.g., P-20 Council, state Workforce Investment Board) to launch new or improve existing partnerships that support more precise alignment between their state education and workforce training systems and the needs of their economy. Governors can also support and promote active and emerging regional partnerships that connect education and training pipelines to high-wage careers within key industries in their economies.

Proposed Strategies/Activities to Strengthen this Component:	Lead People & Key Organizations	Resources (grant funds, state funds, state staff support, NGA staff support, etc.)	Timeline & Deliverables	Measures of Progress and Success
1.				
2.				

3.				
4.				

COMPONENT 4 – RESOURCES AND INCENTIVES: Modify the Use of Resources and Incentives to Support the Attainment of the Integrated Vision
Governors can identify and change the current use of funds and incentives in the states’/territories’ education and workforce training systems to better align results and improve quality in meeting the needs of their economies.

Proposed Strategies/Activities to Strengthen this Component:	Lead People & Key Organizations	Resources (grant funds, state funds, state staff support, NGA staff support, etc.)	Timeline & Deliverables	Measures of Progress and Success
1.				
2.				

3.				
4.				

ATTACHMENT B: Budget Template

Instructions:

- Total budget amount may not exceed \$170,000 in dollars and services
- Additional information regarding budgeted line items may be requested after award.
- Travel and lodging must be consistent with state guidelines.
- Consultant fees and honorarium expenses exceeding \$1000 per day, not including travel and per diem, require written justification
- Travel and meals are not reimbursable unless the participants are on out-of-town travel status

<u>Cost Category</u>	<u>Grant Amount</u>	<u>In-Kind Amount</u>
Convening Expenses (e.g. space rental, audio/visual, food and beverage)	_____	_____
Summit Planning Expenses (e.g. space rental, audio/visual, food and beverage)	_____	_____
Staffing Expenses (e.g. salaries, benefits)	_____	_____
Consulting/Analysis Expenses (e.g. additional consulting or contracting services)	_____	_____
Facilitation Expenses (e.g. contract for services provided)	_____	_____
Communication Expenses (e.g. professional consultants, design work, media)	_____	_____
Travel Expenses (e.g. air and ground transportation, per diem)	_____	_____
Reporting Expenses (Contract with report writer, editing, design, printing)	_____	_____
Other Expenses (specify: _____)	_____	_____
GRANT TOTAL:	=====	=====

GRANT TOTAL (must not exceed \$170,000)

No portion of the grant may be used for lobbying.

ATTACHMENT C: Details on the Required Elements of the Four Components for Participation in the Policy Academy

The required elements of the four key components listed below serve as the foundation for state's or territory's work in the policy academy. Applicants are required to incorporate each of the elements listed below into its action plan or build upon the elements below if completed prior to the policy academy.

***Vision:** Articulate and implement a strong vision connecting education and the workforce to have more Americans achieve the "new minimum."*

- **Designate a structure to coordinate strategic priorities and plans across education, training and economic development agencies to increase alignment of the entire education and training pipeline with the needs of the state's economy.** The governor will designate a leadership structure to direct the state's efforts to align the education and training pipeline with the talent needs of industry. This process should include participation from the Governor's office and industry members, as well as senior-level participation from each state agency or organization directing relevant programs or initiatives. A working group will also be identified to organize and conduct the tasks laid out by the leadership structure, and include staff members from each key state agency or organization.
- **Develop measurable goals, including educational attainment goals, and strategies that together represent a means to achieve the vision and determine who is responsible for achieving progress under each goal and strategy.** The state will declare (or refine) a statewide vision that connects the education and training pipeline to the needs of the state's economy. The declaration should include specific goals and actions to achieve stronger results for a state's citizens and its economy, as well as metrics to assess progress and success.

***Data:** Integrate and use education and workforce data to inform policy, track progress, and measure success.*

- **Identify and answer key policy questions to improve the alignment between the education and training pipeline and workforce needs.** The state will identify (or refine) a set of key policy questions that are tied to the state's vision and answer them to improve policy, practice and results.
- **Create a "Talent Supply and Demand Dashboard" (some means to share those data in an actionable format) for the state.** The state will create or strengthen a dashboard that at a minimum measures the state's current educational attainment and compares it to the level of educational attainment required for new jobs forecasted in the state's economy over the short-term (2-5 years) and the long-term (10+ years). The dashboard should help identify specific large gaps in the state's education and training pipeline that are preventing attainment of the governor's vision.

***Partnerships:** Build industry-education partnerships to get results*

- **Establish, or affirm, the state structure to support and coordinate state and regional industry-education partnerships.** The state will establish, or affirm, the state structure that provides support and technical assistance to regional or state-level partnerships between industry leaders and the education and training systems. This group will develop a plan for scaling effective partnerships and assisting the development of new partnerships, as appropriate.
- **Use rigorous criteria to identify high-quality partnerships, expand where appropriate and fill gaps as needed.** The state will adopt a list of criteria for high-quality industry-education partnerships and use it to create a map documenting existing high-quality partnerships in the state that are in key industries prioritized by the state. The state can then use the map to expand the effective partnerships and fill gaps in industry specific partnership, as appropriate.

Resources and Incentives: Modify the use of resources and incentives to support the attainment of the integrated vision

- **Develop or update an asset map of state and federal funding and programs to identify opportunities to increase alignment between the state's/territory's education and training pipeline and the needs of its economy.** The state will develop or update an asset map of the relevant state and federal funding streams and programs that support the current education and training systems. The map can then be the basis to identify opportunities to change programs or better allocate funds aligned to the governor's vision;
- **Enact or broaden performance funding mechanisms to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of a state's postsecondary, workforce, and career tech systems.** The state will shift accountability and funding mechanisms of particular education or training programs away from inputs and towards progress on desired outcomes to better meet the needs of the state's economy.

ATTACHMENT D: Guiding questions for designing state or territory action plan

Vision: *Articulate and implement a strong vision connecting education and the workforce to have more Americans achieve the “new minimum”*

1. Has the governor articulated a vision to improve the state’s education and training pipeline, grow the economy and align the two efforts to enhance the quality of life for all of the state’s residents?
2. Does the vision have clearly stated goals and strategies that together represent a means to achieve the vision, and are they measurable?
3. Do the goals target specific gaps in the state’s education and training pipeline that can be filled in both the short-term (2-5 years) and the long-term (10+ years)?
4. What is the state structure or process for coordinating the state’s efforts under the leadership of the governor’s office and with the involvement of industry leaders?
5. Is it clear who is responsible for achieving progress under each goal and strategy?

Data: *Integrate and use education and workforce data to inform policy, track progress, and measure success*

1. What policy questions tied to the vision and its implementation do you wish you could answer but are unable to now due to a lack of good data?
2. Where are there gaps within and between the education, training and labor market data systems that prevent you from answering key questions that can drive improvement in the system?
3. To what degree is information shared with the state’s postsecondary institutions and other practitioners to improve their alignment with the needs of the state’s economy? How are they using that data to better serve their students?

Partnerships: *Build industry and education partnerships to get results*

1. Do you have a state organizational structure (e.g. State WIB, P-20 Council) that identifies and supports high-quality partnerships between industry, education and workforce training institutions at the state and local level? What is the level of support and cooperation that this organization receives from other relevant state departments and agencies?
2. Do you have/use criteria to identify strengths and weaknesses of existing partnerships? If so, how is it used to strengthen existing partnerships and promote new or emerging partnerships?
3. Is it known how many high-quality partnerships are currently active in areas identified as economic priorities for the state?
4. Are there processes in place that measure the results from these partnerships?
5. Are there opportunities to support new or emerging partnerships that may target gaps in the education and training pipeline for key industries identified by the state?

Resources and Incentives: *Modify the use of resources and incentives to support the attainment of the integrated vision*

1. Have recent efforts been made to map the state and federal resources available to the entire education and workforce training system?
2. Have state policies and other incentives associated with the accountability and regulatory structure in the education and training system been reviewed to identify opportunities for reform and innovation?
3. Does the state have the education and training capacity required to fill gaps identified in the education and training pipeline for key industries in the state?
4. Which state programs or systems currently have incentives in place that allocate funding based on a set of outcome or performance metrics?
5. Are there opportunities to expand existing performance-based funding programs or propose new ones?

ATTACHMENT E: Checklist of submission requirements

- Cover letter and signatures/letters of support (the direct involvement of the governor and senior leaders from the participating agencies and partner organizations should be describe either in the letter(s) and in the proposal);
- Fiscal agent letter, if applicable;
- Proposal (no more than 15 pages) including how the required elements from each of the four components in the action plan (see pages 3-4 and Attachment C) will be accomplished during the policy academy or built upon during the policy academy if your state/territory has already undertaken one or more of the required elements. The required elements are:
 - Designate a structure to coordinate priorities and plans;
 - Develop measurable goals, strategies, and clear lines of responsibility;
 - Identify and answer key policy questions;
 - Create a “talent supply and demand dashboard” to share data and focus action;
 - Establish, or affirm, the state structure to support and coordinate state and regional industry-education partnerships;
 - Utilize rigorous criteria to identify high-quality partnerships, expand or fill gaps as necessary;
 - Develop or update an asset map of state and federal funding and programs;
 - Enact or broaden performance funding mechanisms to increase effectiveness and efficiency of the state’s postsecondary, workforce and career tech systems.
- State/territory action plan;
- Budget and budget narrative