

# Policy 12-724-Implementation of Workforce Development Services Under the Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training (QUEST) Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs)

<b>Reference State Policy:</b>	WIOAPL 24-01
<b>Board Approved:</b>	August 20, 2024
<b>Revision Approved:</b>	
<b>Effective Date:</b>	August 20, 2024
<b>Policy Obsoletes:</b>	

## Purpose

To define participant eligibility, allowable services, and other policy parameters to enable participating local workforce development areas (local areas) to implement and deliver QUEST 2 grant services.

## Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has had substantial impacts on the health and prosperity of the nation, its people, and its businesses. Populations experiencing especially harmful impacts include women, immigrants, lower-wage workers, people of color, people with disabilities, individuals who were formerly incarcerated, and other workers from historically-marginalized communities.

Recovery from the pandemic requires strength and resilience in industries critical to our economy's stability and growth such as the auto and advanced mobility industries. Efforts to create pathways to family-sustaining assembler, production worker and technician roles are critical to address job growth in the Auto and Advance Mobility Workforce that will expand due to the Electrical Vehicle sector.

To address the current shortage of workers in advanced manufacturing, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) applied for and received an \$5 million discretionary QUEST National Dislocated Worker Grant. This time-limited grant will be used to:

- Develop marketing and outreach to students, job seekers, and the public about pathways into electric vehicle and advanced manufacturing occupations;
- Provide training that builds the skilled workforce in professions that meets the needs of the electric vehicle and advanced manufacturing workforce;
- Ensure the timely delivery of appropriate, necessary career, training, and supportive services to eligible participants, including individuals from historically- marginalized populations and workers who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- Assist electric vehicle and advanced manufacturing employers in recruiting and hiring the workforce needed to build a best-in-class model to address the growing industry demand with a new workforce that achieves job resiliency.

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## State Requirements

As the state workforce agency and grantee, ODJFS shall:

- Submit grant applications, modifications, quarterly reports, and other communications to the Department of Labor (DOL) on behalf of the local areas;
- Assign a project manager to serve as the point-of-contact and coordinator of grant related resources and information;
- Review and approve implementation plans and budgets submitted by the regional sector partnerships;
- Manage grant funds including the determination of sub-award amounts;
- Manage incremental funding to local areas and potential revisions to such awards to address underspending, ensure maximum investment of the available resources, and take action designed to ensure ODJFS fully invests the available grant funds during the QUEST performance period; and
- Provide technical assistance to local areas, regional sector partners, and other stakeholders on the terms and conditions of the QUEST grant.

## Local Workforce Development Area Requirements

The QUEST grant is a national Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker grant issued to participating local areas under the authority of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) subgrant agreement between ODJFS and each local area. Therefore, local areas must implement the grant-funded services and activities in accordance with the terms and conditions of the WIOA subgrant agreement, along with the requirements found in this policy letter.

Pursuant to implementation of the QUEST grant, local workforce areas must submit a budget and implementation plan describing the service design, current or planned advanced manufacturing training programs in the region, planned number of individuals who will receive advanced manufacturing training, and other details for implementing the QUEST grant.

As changes to the local plan occur, such as the provision of new services not identified in the plan or significant changes in the number of planned participants, local areas must

work with the Industry Sector Partnerships to submit a revised implementation plan to the ODJFS-designated project manager explaining the changes as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after each change.

### A. Eligible Participants

The goal of Ohio's QUEST DWG is to enable individuals who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the social and economic inequities that the pandemic exacerbated, to enter, return to, or advance in high-quality jobs in the advanced mobility industry. The activities of the QUEST DWG will yield improved individual and community resilience to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance the ability of electric vehicle and advanced manufacturing providers to meet growing industry demand.

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Local areas shall ensure that individuals served under the QUEST grant have met all eligibility criteria, including those in 20 C.F.R. § 687.170 and the policy letter on adult and dislocated worker eligibility.

Individuals eligible to receive QUEST grant services must be one of the following:

1. A dislocated worker;
2. An individual temporarily or permanently laid off as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic;
3. A long-term unemployed individual; or
4. A self-employed individual who became unemployed or significantly underemployed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Note: Direct services, such as career, training, or supportive services, must be limited to the eligible participants above. Further, local areas should design and implement grant activities that prioritize services and outcomes for any underserved and historically marginalized populations that otherwise meet the eligibility categories above.

## B. Allowable Services and Activities

In planning and implementing services under QUEST grant, local areas should consider that the grant is meant to alleviate the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic through:

- Offering Career, Training, and Supportive services for eligible participants aimed at increasing the number of qualified professionals in the electric vehicle and advanced manufacturing fields;
- Providing a full array of workforce services to eligible participants; and
- Increasing engagement with and support for electric vehicle and advanced manufacturing employers to expand the number of workers entering careers in the industry. Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 03-23 Allowable Uses of Funds for Outreach Activities for Federal Formula and Competitive Grant Awards outlines allowable marketing and outreach expenses.

## Career Services

Local areas will provide basic and individualized career services, such as job search assistance, initial and specialized assessments of skill levels, career planning, and prevocational services, as outlined in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Policy Letter (WIOAPL) No. 15-08.1, Career Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers.

## Training

Training services provided under this grant may be provided to eligible individuals planning to enter employment in electric vehicle and advanced manufacturing careers within the local/regional economy. Only the costs of approved training programs leading to careers listed as critical need in Attachment B may be funded with QUEST dollars. This limitation applies to all training services funded by this grant including On- the-Job Training (OJT) and Occupational Skill Training.

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QUEST participants may be co-enrolled in, and receive braided funding from, other workforce programs such as the Dislocated Worker program. Long-term training may be supplemented with WIOA formula funds if the individual is eligible for WIOA formula funding and the training extends beyond the QUEST grant period.

### **Supportive Services**

Grant-funded supportive services, such as transportation, childcare, and housing assistance may be provided to grant participants in need of such services. Local areas should review their policies to ensure that the types of supportive services needed by individuals seeking to enter electric vehicle and advanced manufacturing careers.

Also, local areas should ensure the array of services will increase the likelihood that participants from historically-marginalized populations can successfully complete the training. These participants may require extensive help with barrier removal and financial support at levels not required by other population groups who are unaffected by cultural biases.

### **Other Allowable Services and Activities**

Services and activities may be delivered under the local area's existing policies applicable to dislocated workers, or the local workforce development board (local

WDB) may opt to implement new or revised policies specific to the QUEST grant. Examples of such policy revisions may include:

- Extending the length of training or increasing the maximum training funds available to participants who plan to enter electric vehicles and advanced manufacturing occupations that can meet growing demand; or
- Permitting funding for transitional jobs to help participants with barriers or from historically-marginalized populations to establish a work history, develop workplace skills, and enter or re-enter the workforce.

In addition to the allowable services for eligible participants identified above, local areas may use QUEST grant funds for other activities meant to meet growing demand and assist the target populations in entering and succeeding in electric vehicle and advanced manufacturing careers, such as:

- Incorporating electric vehicle-related work-based learning or entrepreneurial training in the program design for occupations listed in Attachment B;
- Assisting electric vehicle and advanced manufacturing employers in establishing apprenticeship training programs, including provision of funds for the related instruction (if allowable as occupational skills training) or funding for OJT as authorized in the local area policy; and

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- Reviewing intake and eligibility policies and procedures to reduce delays in services and eliminate eligibility requirements not required by law to enable the broadest participation in grant-funded services and to remove barriers that may hinder marginalized populations from accessing services.

Up to ten percent of the funds awarded to the local area may be used for administrative costs as defined in 20 C.F.R. § 683.215 that are associated with operating the grant.

### **Unallowable Services and Activities**

- QUEST funds may not be used to pay for incentive payments to participants.

### **Subrecipients and Contractors**

Local areas may enter subrecipient agreements or contracts with public entities, nonprofit organizations, and private-for-profit entities. The determination of subrecipient or contractor status must be based on the considerations in 2 C.F.R. § 200.331.

Competitive procurement of a provider that meets the definition of a subrecipient is not required but is recommended when feasible to increase the likelihood of obtaining the highest quality of services at the lowest cost.

Contractors must be competitively selected in accordance with federal, state, and

local procurement rules. For-profit contractors and subrecipients may keep the profits earned from performance of grant activities. The amount of profit must be negotiated as a separate element of the overall price of the services with consideration given to the complexity, risk, past performance, and industry profit rates in the surrounding geographical area for similar work.

Profits that are excessive or that are not justified using the aforementioned criteria will be disallowed and cannot be paid from grant funds.

### **Reporting Requirements**

Local areas must report participants served under the QUEST grant in the state's designated case management reporting system under the special grant office created for the grant. Within 30 days of participant enrollment and provision of each service, all services and activities must be entered into the case management reporting system special grant office section.

The outcomes of participants in the QUEST grant will not affect the local area's WIOA performance measures, unless the local area opts to co-enroll participants in local WIOA formula- funded programs.

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ODJFS, in partnership with the Ohio Auto & Advanced Mobility Workforce Sector Partnership, will determine additional performance standards to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the strategies, which may include periodic narrative reports or the need to enter trainee and outcome data in other reporting systems. Participating local areas will work with the other Industry Sector partners to comply with additional reporting mandates in the manner prescribed by ODJFS using the designated reporting system(s).

DOL also may evaluate Ohio's QUEST grant implementation by carrying out an impact or outcome analysis, a cost/benefit analysis, or return-on-investment (ROI) study, for example. ODJFS and its sub-recipients may be required to collect data elements to aid the evaluation. If DOL chooses to evaluate Ohio's QUEST grant, the participating local areas must agree to:

- Make records available to the evaluator on QUEST participants, employers, and funding;
- Provide access to staff, participants, financial records, and other relevant individuals and documents; and
- Comply with evaluation procedures specified by the evaluator.

Local areas must request cash draws and report expenditures and other financial information using the State's designated financial reporting system, including the client tracking detail for participant-level direct service costs.

## **Monitoring**

Local areas that issue subawards must assess the risk of non-compliance of each subrecipient and develop monitoring policies outlining the procedures, frequency, and methods for assuring that grant-funded services carried out by the subrecipient are compliant and for resolving any findings of non-compliance.

Through the state's monitoring system, ODJFS program and fiscal monitors will review the local area's implementation of QUEST grants, including participant file review and verification of actual expenditures, during the onsite monitoring review of the local area for compliance with all applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and guidance letters including this guidance letter. Any findings will be addressed through the state's monitoring resolution process.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A: Glossary of QUEST DWG grant terms

Attachment B: In-Demand Auto & Advanced Mobility Occupations

## **Technical Assistance**

For additional information or to request technical assistance, contact the project manager designated by the ODJFS Office of Workforce Development to oversee implementation of the QUEST grant.

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## References

<https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr803/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf>

USDOL, Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 2-22: QUEST Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grants Funding Announcement (July 5, 2022).

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/tegl-no-02-22>

USDOL, Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 03-23, Allowable Uses of Funds for Outreach Activities for Federal Formula and Competitive Grant Awards (September 6, 2023).

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/tegl-03-23>

2 C.F.R. § 200.331.

20 C.F.R. §§ 683.215.

ODJFS, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Policy Letter No. 15-02.1, Adult and Dislocated Worker Eligibility, (October 1, 2020).

<https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/jfs.ohio.gov/EBS/Programs%20Rules%20and%20Resources/Workforce%20Development/WIOA%20Policy%20Letters/WIOAPL15-02.1.pdf>

ODJFS, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Policy Letter No. 15-08.1, Career Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers, (June 6, 2017).

[https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/jfs.ohio.gov/EBS/Programs%20Rules%20and%20Resources/Workforce%20Development/WIOA%20Policy%20Letters/WIOAPL15\\_081.pdf](https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/jfs.ohio.gov/EBS/Programs%20Rules%20and%20Resources/Workforce%20Development/WIOA%20Policy%20Letters/WIOAPL15_081.pdf)

ODJFS, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Policy Letter No.15-11.3, Use of Individual Training Accounts, (September 27, 2021).

[https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/jfs.ohio.gov/EBS/Programs%20Rules%20and%20Resources/Workforce%20Development/WIOA%20Policy%20Letters/WIOAPL\\_15-11.3\\_-\\_Use\\_of\\_Individual\\_Training\\_Accounts.pdf](https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/jfs.ohio.gov/EBS/Programs%20Rules%20and%20Resources/Workforce%20Development/WIOA%20Policy%20Letters/WIOAPL_15-11.3_-_Use_of_Individual_Training_Accounts.pdf)

## ATTACHMENT A

### Glossary of QUEST DWG Grant Terms

Term	Definition
<b>Dislocated Worker</b>	<p>Any adult 18 years and older who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Has been terminated or laid off or has received a notice of termination or layoff; and is eligible for, or has exhausted entitlement to unemployment compensation; or has been employed for a duration sufficient to demonstrate attachment to the workforce, but is not eligible for unemployment compensation, and is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation; or</li><li>B. Has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff from employment as a result of a permanent closure of, or any substantial layoff at a plant, facility, or enterprise; or is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that the facility will close within 180 days; or</li><li>C. Was self-employed but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions; or</li><li>D. Is a displaced homemaker; or</li><li>E. Is the dependent spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty and whose family income is significantly reduced because of a deployment, a call or order to active duty, or a permanent change of station. (For further details, see WIOAPL 15-02.1)</li></ul>
<b>Displaced Homemaker</b>	<p>An individual who has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home and who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment; AND</li></ul>

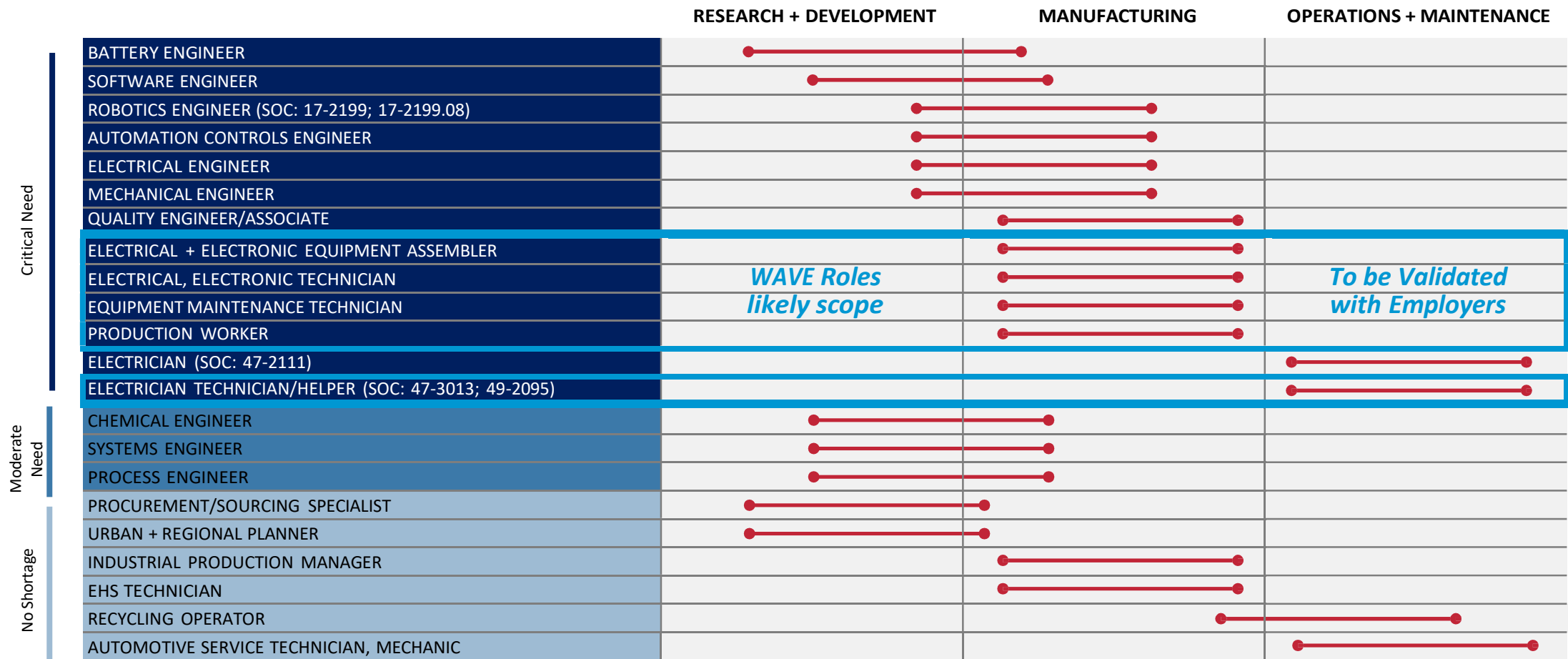


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income, OR</li> <li>• Is the dependent spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty (as defined in Section 101(d)(1) of title 10, United States Code) and whose family income is significantly reduced because of a deployment (as defined in section 991(b) of title 10, United States Code, or pursuant to paragraph (4) of such section); a call or order to active duty pursuant to a provision of law preferred to in section 101(a)(13)(B) of title 10, United States Code; a permanent change of station; or a service connected death or disability (as defined in section 101(16) of title 38, United States Code). (WIOAPL 15-02.1)</li> </ul>
<b>High-quality Jobs</b>	Also referred to as good jobs, occupations that pay an average wage of at least \$15/hour or the local living wage, whichever is higher, provide an average of at least 30 hours/week of paid employment, have transparent and nondiscriminatory hiring practices and clear paths for professional development and advancement, provide access to employer-provided benefits, including health care, paid vacation, and sick leave, prioritize worker health and safety and are in companies and organizations that support workers' rights.
<b>Historically-Marginalized Populations</b>	Groups of people who have been excluded from full participation in mainstream educational, economic, cultural, social, and political activities. Examples of marginalized populations include, but are not limited to, groups excluded due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, language, and immigration status. Marginalization occurs due to unequal power relationships between social groups.
<b>Individuals Temporarily or Permanently Laid Off as a Consequence of the COVID19 Pandemic Disaster</b>	A person who was laid off from employment permanently or temporarily between March 1, 2020, and April 10, 2023, including individuals who later returned to work,
<b>Long-Term Unemployed</b>	A person who meets one of the following

	<p>criteria, in descending order of priority for services:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Has a substantial employment history (i.e., at least 12 months of full-time or 24-months of parttime work experience), is currently unemployed, and has been unemployed for at least 15 of the past 26 weeks;</li><li>2. Is currently unemployed and has been unemployed for at least 15 of the past 26 weeks;</li><li>3. Is currently employed but had been unemployed for 15 of the past 26 weeks and is not currently self-sufficient based on local policy; or</li><li>4. Is either currently unemployed or working parttime, has not worked over 30 hours per week in any 15 of the past 26 weeks, has been seeking but unable to secure full-time employment, and is not currently self-sufficient based on local policy. (WIOAPL 17-06.1)</li></ol>

# In-Demand Auto & Advanced Mobility Occupations

The below shows perceived Auto & Advanced Mobility-related occupation shortages and scarcity as identified during stakeholder interviews and in desktop research. Addressing these critical shortages in the labor market will ensure employers have the skilled workers they need, while also providing workers new career opportunities and supporting the growth of local economies.



\* Occupations labeled as 'critical need' indicate there is low supply and high demand, those labeled 'moderate need' indicate there is a moderate supply and high demand, and those labeled 'no shortage' indicates current supply matches demand. The blue lines indicate where across the value chain each occupation is needed.