



Real Jobs RI April 2015 Solicitation for Planning Grant Proposals

FAQs

General Program Inquiries

1. What is the time frame for the Implementation Grant?

The timeframe is two years, but if it needs to be longer, we need to know why. It is not possible to provide a concrete timeline when we are trying to build a demand-driven program. We are going to have a process where, throughout the timeframe of the Implementation Grant, partnerships can pitch DLT new ideas that we will fund. The expectation is that this is an evolving process because you will not know everything that your businesses will need until the partnership begins implementing the plan. You may find you would like to go in a different direction based on initial outcomes. To pitch a new idea, you would submit documentation that reflects what you have determined in your collaborative partnerships and is based on what you have produced.

2. What is the grant cycle (start and end dates) for the Implementation Grant?

The Implementation Grant will begin in November 2015 and end in December 2017.

3. How long are the Real Jobs Partnerships?

Planning Grant awards are for three months, while Implementation Grant award are for two years. Continued funding of Real Jobs Partnerships will be subject to the availability of state and federal funds.

4. Once a partnership gets a grant, what happens three years down the road?

The state interest is in growing the economy. The goal is that that company/partnership will have achieved outcomes or have institutionalized successful strategies and models.

5. What happens after a company is awarded an Implementation Grant, and after a few years time will the company then incur costs?

The goal is that that company/partnership will have achieved outcomes or have institutionalized successful strategies and models.

6. Will the PowerPoint and the materials from the Pre-Proposal Conference be posted online?

You can view them, along with a copy of the Solicitation, at <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs/PlanGrant.htm>.

7. Do you typically provide the attendance sheet for others to view?

No, but we encourage you to register in the Real Jobs RI Directory to connect with other organizations that are interested in forming a partnership. You can register at <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs/Connect.htm>.

8. Who will be the Grant Advisor for my industry partnership?

Alyssa Alvarado will be the Grant Advisor for the defense and information technology industries. Julie O'Connell is the Grant Advisor for logistics and manufacturing. Robert Kalaskowski is the Grant Advisor for finance/insurance and the marine trades. Alyssa and Julie are joint Advisors for the hospitality industry. Alyssa and Rob share the construction industry, and Julie and Rob share the healthcare industry. Mallory McMahon is the Grant Advisor for the green sector. You can view their contact information on our website at <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs/ContactRJRI.htm>. Sectors that are not mentioned here will be assigned to a Grant Advisor once awards are made.

Technical Questions

1. Can a fiscal agent be the convener/lead applicant on more than one project?

Yes, within reason. We will try to determine if your organization has the capacity to take on that role in multiple partnerships.

2. Does the Convener need to be an incorporated entity?

No. The **Convener** is a role. It can be a person, but that person needs to have credibility within the industry in order to be able to bring different players to the table.

3. Is the Convener also responsible for ensuring compliance within the Partnership?

Compliance is part of the Fiscal Agent's responsibility. The Convener plays a critical project management role, including managing outreach, activities, logistics and coordination and drafting of the Real Jobs Partnership (RJP) workforce training plan. The Fiscal Agent acts on behalf of the Lead Applicant by performing all financial management duties of the grant and accepting responsibility for the proper use of grant funds. The Fiscal Agent is responsible for receiving and safeguarding grant funds. If award funds include federal funds, the grant recipient must comply with the Uniform Guidance.

4. Can State Agencies and Departments be part of a Real Jobs Partnership?

Specific proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but a State Agency can serve as a strategic partner within a Real Jobs Partnership. They would not, however, be considered an Employer Partner.

5. What defines an **innovative partnership?**

An innovative partnership would be a plan that has input from companies, and is something that they were not doing before. Prospective applicants should clearly articulate the business plan, the action steps, the budget, and any other details. Reference sections four and five in the Planning Grant solicitation to be sure to include all of the key elements in the proposal submission.

6. Are you looking for Planning Grants to target only one industry or can a Planning Grant look at a few to assess which would be the most effective?

Industry demand should drive partnership organization.

7. What if you are working with two industries that have the same need?

Then you have one industry **a** cross sector industry partnership.

8. Can Planning Grant funds be used to pay for a grant writer?

No, but they may pay for a consultant.

9. Are indirect costs allowed?

Indirect costs are allowed. When using federal funds the guidelines state that a rate must be requested in the absence of a federally approved rate. A the minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs may be used. More information can be found at www.dol.gov/oasam/boc/DCD-2-CFR-Guid-Jan2015.pdf.

10. Is it possible to have partners across state lines?

Yes, but an out-of-state partner cannot be the Lead Applicant. The proposal must also explain the rationale behind using an out-of-state vendor, as the purpose of Real Jobs RI is to stimulate Rhode Island's economy.

11. Fiscal agent: Do you have to be a 501(c)(3) to be the Fiscal Agent?

No, but if a business is listed as the fiscal agent, then the business must be registered in Rhode Island.

Proposal Format/Application

1. What is the Letter of Application requested in 4.1.2 under grant submission requirements?

The Letter of Application is a cover letter from the Lead Applicant, expressing their intent to apply for the Real Jobs RI Solicitation for Planning Grant Proposals.

2. Is there a page limit for the proposal narrative in the Planning Grant?

The proposal narrative is included in the application package, which may not exceed twenty pages. The page limit for the application package does not include the proposal cover sheet and other appendices. A list is below:

APPLICATION PACKAGE (These items, collectively, cannot exceed 20 pages)

Executive Summary

Table of Contents

Narrative (aka Appendix B)

EVERYTHING ELSE (no page limit)

Cover Page (Appendix A)

Preview of Workforce Training Plan (Appendix C)

Grant Management Plan (Appendix D)

Partnership Membership List (Appendix E)

Narrative Budget (Appendix F)

Budget Form (Appendix G)
Assurances (Appendix H)
Fiscal Agent (Appendix I).

3. What is a COGS, and how do I get one?

A **COGS** is a Certificate of Good Standing, which is a document that certifies that your business is authorized to conduct business in Rhode Island. It ensures that you are in good standing with the way you do business. A COGS can be obtained from the RI Secretary of State or the RI Division of Taxation. Certain entities, like RIDE or a public school, are not required to provide a COGS.

4. In Appendix E, **RJP Membership List, how many members' resumes do you really want to see there?**

We want to see the resumes of the key players, primarily the entities that will administer the plan and perform the functions of the partnership's Convener, Fiscal Agent, and/or Lead Applicant. It seeks the individuals who are the primaries in what the partnership is trying to accomplish, and demonstrates capacity in administering the grant.

5. When submitting a Planning Grant, can applicants utilize DLT staff and resources to acquire labor, wage, skills gap and projections data and statistics or to conduct studies to collect that data? Would they be part of the grant application or is DLT staff and resources available to all grantees?

DLT's Labor Market Information (LMI) Division publishes a number of publications on labor and workforce data that can be accessed on the [LMI website](#). If the information needed is not available, you may contact LMI for assistance. Their contact information is available [here](#).

6. Is DLT open on July 3rd, the day that the Solicitation for Planning Grant Proposals is due?

DLT will be closed on Monday, July 6th for the July 4th holiday. There will be a member of the Real Jobs RI team in the lobby to receive and timestamp proposals on July 3rd.

Partnership Plan

1. Some high-demand careers provide a necessary service, but offer low entry-level wages. Our partnership will create a career ladder that will provide new and incumbent workers with support to enter the field and continue developing their skills and credentials. Would you encourage

a partnership to submit a proposal that targets a lower-paying industry if there is a high demand for qualified staff?

We are looking for partnerships that are responsive to industry demand and fill current vacancies. We encourage proposals that fulfill these two requirements.

2. Would Real Jobs RI consider awarding grant funds for a career field that typically starts with low-paying wages?

Real Jobs RI will be awarding funds to Real Jobs Partnerships that create an industry sector training plan that addresses employers' workforce needs, advances the skills of Rhode Island workers, grows the State's economy, and increases sustainable employment opportunities for working families.

Selection Process

1. Is there an internal (DLT) preference for certain entities within certain sectors?

There is no internal preference for certain sectors or entities within those sectors. Certain sectors may benefit from multiple partnerships, and other sectors may be non-traditional. The goal of the Real Jobs Partnership is to grow the industry's capacity to put people to work.

2. Is there an objective decision process?

There will be an objective process. Final approval for each grant awarded shall be determined by the Director of the Department of Labor and Training, based on the recommendations of the Review Committee and taking into account other factors, such as geographic distribution and industry diversity.

3. Is it possible for you to include your selection criteria in an addendum or through the Q&A? Most RFPs through DOA have done this.

This is a grant program. Not an RFP. An RFP is made to buy goods and services. We are not buying goods and services. There aren't a number of explicit decision points as there would be if we were trying to buy IT services. The best approach is to look at the proposal format and make sure you have all the key elements and really articulate the plan. Look at sections four and five, which highlight those elements. It will be based on how you respond and how clearly you articulate the plan, how you are going to execute the plan, why your plan will work and the proposed budget. If we can provide you with some sense of measure, we will put it on our website.

4. If you are not chosen, are we going to have a meeting to debrief on why you were not chosen?

Staff can meet with applicants upon request to explain why the proposal was not funded.

5. Do you anticipate certain reasons right now why plans might be rejected?

Plans must be industry-led and demand driven. If they are not, they will be rejected.

Funding

1. Of the \$1.3 million in funding, how are you dividing that between the Planning Grant and Implementation Grant?

We have \$1.3 million allocated at the moment through the GWB. Approximately \$300,000 will be available for the Planning Grants and approximately \$1 million for the Implementation Grants.

2. The Planning Grant period lasts for three months, from July 2015 to October 2015. Does this mean that the funds have to be spent in that window?

Yes. Any unspent funds at the end of the Planning Grant period must be returned to DLT with the final financial and program narrative report.

3. Can the Implementation Grant pay for certain barriers to employment such as daycare and transportation?

Real Jobs RI is looking to braid funds from multiple sources to address the significant needs or challenges for a partnership. Suggestions that have been made in the past include identifying a daycare provider as a collaborative partner or solutions such as using in-kind contributions and leveraging of other resources.

Industry-Specific Inquiries

1. If a hospital is one of the employer partners, can another hospital in the same healthcare system count as a second employer partner?

Yes, but the proposal should still describe the relationship between the two hospitals for the purpose of the partnership.