



Real Jobs RI July 2015 Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals

FAQs

General Program Inquiries

1. Do you have a list of the planning grant recipients with descriptions?

Yes. Please visit

<http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs/pdfs/PlanGrantRecipients.pdf>.

2. Do you suggest that if it is determined in the PG phase things may not work out, that we reach out to DLT to adjust things?

Communication is very important throughout the planning process with the RJRI team. If the Partnership is experiencing challenges it should contact its Grant Advisor for guidance and to assist in determining if the difficulties can be overcome. Every effort will be made to assist the Partnerships in being successful in their efforts. The Department anticipates that some might find in the PG process that the proposed plan is not feasible.

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

The funding period for the Real Jobs Partnerships will be from November 16, 2015 to November 15, 2020. The Partnership will initially be authorized for three years, until November 15, 2018, with an option to renew for an additional two years. Funds will be reauthorized on a yearly basis based upon annual approval, and allocations will be based on available funds and performance of the workforce training plan.

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

The Implementation Grant will begin in November 2015 and end in November 2020.

5. How long are the Real Jobs Partnerships?

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

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. Is there a goal for the total number of jobs expected from this program? We are just trying to get a sense of scale.

In the development of the solicitation the department reviewed data and considered the number of jobs the economy will produce on its own in each sector. Currently the department is working with several organizations including: Brookings Institute, Brown University, Deloitte, Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Opportunity@Work and the University of Rhode Island. Each is providing data and information to develop a baseline for the program and expected performance goals and metrics. The IG proposals will also be used as a key indicator of the workforce needed to fill existing vacancies and what new jobs will and can be generated by each of the Partnerships. The intent of this program is create and fund Partnerships that are employer driven, using industry experts to redirect how workforce training is designed to ensure jobs for program participants.

9. Where will data be available?

Data and information requests will be made available on the RJRI website.

10. In the overall mission: Is the DLT looking at all indicators across all different income, racial and ethnic groups longitudinally over time?

The Department is involved in longitudinal data studies with the Providence Plan and other state agencies to look at populations served by a variety of workforce and education programs. The information is used to inform

program operators and policy leaders as to what interventions may and may not be effective with certain populations. The main purpose of RJRI is to address the skill needs of the workforce, to fill vacant positions and to design employer driven training programs that can make that happen.

11. 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/ImpGrant.htm>.

12. 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>.

13. 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. Can a state agency be a lead applicant?

In the existing planning grants there are no state agencies that are a lead applicant. Many state agencies are partners on grants to provide workforce data and information.

6. 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.

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. 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 "de 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.

9. 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.

10. 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. We are seeing more and more the request for a Return on Investment (ROI) in grant proposals. It's a code word for accountability. What are you looking for, and what does it mean?

Generally, the term is used in reference to performance measures. It will be used to measure the amount of return on an investment relative to the [investment's cost](#) and the performance outcomes. We cannot tell you what the ROI is for your industry, sector or Partnership. You must determine that as you build your training plan to meet your identified needs. Others have identified the following sorts of measures: worker retention, quicker turn-around on vacancies and increased wages. DLT will work with the Partnerships to create individual metrics as well as establish measures that are universal.

2. Is the request for an ROI also looking at where people are when they start in terms of income, race and ethnicity?

Yes, the department understands that the training plans will target different pipelines and will therefore have different ROI measures based on the characteristics of the workforce.

3. Section 2.5, "Training Activities and Training Providers," (page 11) of the July 2015 Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals references that "proof of approval" is required for national certifications. Are you talking about the training provider's ability to conduct a training module/program?

This reference states that if there is training that requires a national certification, the training provider must be authorized to provide that training and award the certification. If a College or University is involved and says that it will result in or offer credit then the process and timeframe must be documented.

4. Would an application to get something approved suffice to satisfy Section 2.5, "Training Activities and Training Providers"?

If you are pursuing a college course/credit and a college or university is a partner in the development that would initially satisfy the intent. For those that are considering Apprenticeship Programs RJRI staff and others within the department can provide guidance on the steps and key elements required around the development and approvals of an apprenticeship program. Any program needing a certification should be addressed early on in the development so that the required outcome is achieved.

5. Does a partnership have to register a planned apprenticeship program before submitting an application for an implementation grant?

No, if the apprenticeship program is being developed as part of the partnership's training plan. However, partnerships should indicate when the program will be ready for registration as part of the project timeline.

6. Section 3.4.10 in “Grant Administration and Reporting” (page 18) addresses the use of Real Jobs RI grant funds for marketing or promotional purposes unrelated to the recruitment of individuals. Do we need to provide details about what is specifically connected to recruitment?

A plan should include details of what will be achieved and how. If the RJP is recruiting participants and uses funds for outreach and education, then it must be directly related to the workforce training plan.

7. If the plan is to focus on Incumbent Worker Training, should we include this cost or should we seek the grant through the GWB?

You should include any activity or cost that is needed and supports your training plan. It is our intent to blend a variety of DLT resources including JDF and federal workforce funds to support the partnerships.

8. If we have a GWB Innovative Partnership grant, can we use that?

Yes, other sources of funds can be identified and leveraged if available and aligned to the plan being proposed by the Partnership.

Partnership Plan

1. There is a huge emphasis on target industries. Our approach was more in line with a specific pipeline. Would you consider a more flexible definition of target industry or sector?

A proposal should include an identified pipeline and a connection to a job. The intent of the grant is to create an employer driven Partnership and workforce training plan that addresses an industry's need to fill current job vacancies and

to prepare and build a skilled workforce for an industry's anticipated workforce needs and planned growth.

- 2. Is there a cost for placement that you would be looking at to see how this compares to traditional training programs? Will that be criteria for deciding?**

More complicated training will cost more. If employer says they need it, and it results in high wage work, then so be it. There isn't a target figure up front. You can get federal cost per for certain training efforts, but it depends on the structure of the RJP. We have seen a variety of costs based on the type and extent of training needed.

- 3. 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.

- 4. 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. How many grants do you anticipate awarding?

The number of grants will be determined through the review process and the available state and federal funds that can be allocated based on the training plans and targeted workforce groups. The Department has identified approximately \$9 million of state and federal funds for the RJRI grant program with an initial funding of \$1.3 million of JDF resources. Funding will be contingent on state and federal laws and regulations and will be allocated based on proposed activities and performance.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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. 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.

- 2. Regarding the \$150,000 budget cap: it has been said that a Partnership could seek funds above the cap; however, it must be justified. What's the flexibility in doing that?**

You might have something that is really amazing that you want to propose and have a budget that exceeds the \$150,000 cap. The Department does not want the available funding to constrict a Partnership from achieving its goals. You will need to demonstrate why the amount is necessary and in the review process the department will consider the merits of the proposal.

- 3. There is a \$150,000 cap, but the grant is initially authorized for three years. Where does \$150,000 fit into budget?**

The \$150,000 is meant to be a soft cap, or a target, for the workforce training plan as it is defined in the Solicitation: a finite, measurable training plan. This training plan should take less than three years to do, and may only take a few months.

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.