



Governor's Workforce Board

RHODE ISLAND

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Request for Proposals Non-Traditional Apprenticeship Grants

**Governor's Workforce Board RI
RI Department of Labor & Training
1511 Pontiac Avenue, Building 73
Cranston, RI 02920**

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**Proposals must be submitted no later than
June 30, 2021**

**Daniel J McKee, Governor
State of Rhode Island**

**Mike Grey, Chair
Governor's Workforce Board RI**

Section 1 – Proposal Requested

The Governor's Workforce Board (GWB) is seeking proposals to develop non-traditional Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs within Rhode Island's largest and or growing industries. Real Jobs RI partnerships are strongly encouraged to apply as well as employers and other entities that fit the criteria but are not otherwise participating in a Real Jobs RI industry sector partnership.

Up to \$100,000 is available for this RFP. The GWB reserves the right to fund the proposal components in whole or in part. Maximum grant awards will be \$20,000.

Section 2 – Introduction and Intent

A. Introduction

The federal Department of Labor has recognized apprenticeship as an effective strategy towards increasing skills and employment; "Registered apprenticeship is an important talent development strategy and a critical post-secondary education and training alternative in the suite of options offered through the workforce system"¹

The Governor's Workforce Board Biennial Plan further prioritizes non-traditional apprenticeships through two strategy areas, Demand Driven Investments and Career Readiness and Pathways. Each of these priorities will stand to meet employers' and growing Industry needs, advance the skills of Rhode Islanders and strengthen coordination within the workforce network.

Non-trade apprenticeships are increasingly being recognized as effective pathways towards careers that offer family-sustaining wages and pathways from entry level to middle skilled or professional careers. The ability to 'learn and earn' through apprenticeship is mutually beneficial to employer and employee. A non-traditional or non-trade apprenticeship is considered to be one outside of the skilled trades. "Once primarily the 'best-kept secret' of the construction industry, the model is now being utilized around the country in non-traditional occupational areas such as Information technology and Healthcare. In many states apprentices earn college credits while employed in their RA program."² Emerging apprenticeship opportunities in non-traditional areas include such occupations as computer systems analysts and prosthetics technicians.

B. Intent

The intent is to establish new non-traditional apprenticeship programs in Rhode Island. This RFP will invest in new programs that prioritize new apprenticeships in high-growth, high-demand fields that build upon existing partnerships or establish new partnerships in workforce development and education that lead to in-demand occupations. The GWB is also interested in expanding the capacity for apprenticeship programs that work closely with Career & Technical Education, lead to postsecondary credit, show alignment with the GWB Biennial Plan Priorities and target historically underserved populations.

² *New Directions for Registered Apprenticeship in Rhode Island*; Building Futures, Fall 2012

Section 3 – Notifications to Applicants

- Potential applicants are advised to review all sections of this Request carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein will result in rejection of the proposal.
- Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this procurement are solicited. However, proposals which depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this Request will be rejected as being non-responsive.
- All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this Request, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content, shall be borne by the applicant. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.
- The State of Rhode Island has a goal of ten percent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements. For further information, visit the web site www.rimbe.org. To speak with an M.B.E. Officer, call (401) 222-6253.

Section 4 – Equal Employment Opportunity (RIGL 28-5.1)

§ 28-5.1-1 Declaration of policy. – (a) Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island state government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards and authorities, and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employment. This policy applies in all areas where the state dollar is spent, in employment, public service, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation. For further information, contact the Rhode Island Equal Employment Opportunity Office, at 222-3090.

Section 5 – Required Components

A. Applicant and Partners (15 points)

Applicants for the Registered Apprenticeship Grant Program must include:

1. Sponsor, which may be
 - i. Employer
 - ii. Group of employers
 - iii. Trade or employer association
 - iv. Labor organization

The GWB will place higher priority on those proposals which include multiple participating employers that are connected to demand driven industries.

2. Education and Training Provider. You may propose to work with an outside education and training partner or indicate your intention to develop and/or deliver the training in house.

If not included above, other partners *may* include:

- i. Community Based Organizations for referral or participant support
- ii. Secondary Schools
- iii. Community Colleges

Please describe all partners and provide MOAs for relevant partners.

B. Labor Demand: (15 points)

All applicants must demonstrate that the apprenticeship position is in a high demand occupation. Evidence may include LMI data, surveys of RI employers, skills gaps studies, wage data, among other sources. Demand may also be demonstrated by the acuity and scarceness of a skillset (an occupation may not have many annual openings, but those that are available may go unfilled year after year due to an absence of training and career ladders).

Please use these links for additional information on high demand occupations in Rhode Island
<https://www.brookings.edu/research/rhode-island-innovates-a-competitive-strategy-for-the-ocean-state/>

C. Participant information: (15 points)

Applicants should describe target population for whom the apprenticeship will focus on. Is the apprenticeship model open to entry level candidates? Or is it more advanced? Please describe the target education, training, and experience levels. Applicants should further describe any recruitment efforts that will focus on traditionally underrepresented populations, and/or veterans. Lastly, applicant should describe plans for assessment of educational and skill levels as well as participant interest in and awareness of intended occupation.

D. Program (40 points)

Applicants should describe the proposed Registered Apprenticeship program, how it will meet federal and state guidelines for apprenticeship programs, and how it will result in apprentices gaining high level technical and theoretical skills in the designated occupation. Applicants should describe current training efforts that may form the foundation or building blocks of apprenticeship. These training efforts may be underway through applicant or partners. RA programs which are built upon the foundation of existing, successful training and education collaborations will receive priority consideration as will those that yield or are actively pursuing potential for postsecondary credit.

Background/Foundation

What current activities is the applicant and/or partners engaged in that lays the foundation for an apprenticeship application and relationships with employer sponsors? Describe at least one training initiative and employer partnership that serves as a model or precursor for the proposed apprenticeship program. Of particular importance is the role of the employer partner in this design. Describe current and future commitment of the partner to the apprenticeship program.

Other successful models

What precedents, if any, exist nationally for the non-traditional apprenticeship program proposed? If the occupation is not currently on the list of registered apprenticeships, describe a model for a related occupation within the industry. Alternatively, describe a model of a process for adopting non-traditional apprenticeship as a workforce development strategy that you have considered in your design.

Rationale

Describe the rationale underpinning pursuing RA for this occupation within the target industry. How can RA further the aims of workforce development with this industry? What will RA add to current pathways?

Registered Apprenticeship Required Components

All RA programs must meet state and federal regulations for Registered Apprenticeships. These include:

1. Apprentice
 - a. 16 and older
 - b. Physically capable of performing work of trade
2. Program: All apprenticeship programs should include the capacity to learn a skill through practical, hands-on experience as well as classroom instruction on the theoretical background.
 - a. Total term of apprenticeship is a minimum of 2,000 hours of work experience.
 - i. Hybrid and Competency-Based programs must include mechanism for evaluation of skills gained
 - ii. Must include a schedule of work processes
 - b. Related instruction must be a minimum of 144 classroom hours/year
 - i. Classroom instruction can take place on site, in a partner school, or, in appropriate cases, online.
 - ii. Related instruction must be approved by the Registered Apprenticeship Agency as part of the Standards of Apprenticeship.
 - iii. Instructors must be either a RIDE licensed vocational education teacher or a subject matter expert. Such an individual must have demonstrated expertise in the target field.

Additionally, describe how training and education will be paid for. For the purposes of this RFP, all applications must include at minimum an outline of related instruction theoretical curriculum. Funds gained in this RFP may be used to write complete curriculum and design on the job training curriculum.

3. Wages:
 - a. Must include a progressively increasing schedule of wages. Wages must start at no less than the state minimum wage - currently \$11.50 unless a higher wage is required by other applicable federal or state law or by collective bargaining agreement.
4. Evaluation
 - a. As stated above, must include a mechanism for periodic evaluation of skills gained through apprenticeship.

Please see enclosed links for additional details on [state](#) and [federal](#) RA requirements.

F. Sustainability (15 points)

Prudent use of taxpayer resources means once an apprenticeship model is developed, it is consistently utilized by employers and industries to meet their talent needs. The GWB is committed to supporting and promoting Registered Apprenticeship as a vital component of workforce development and helping local workers to gain valuable skills and advance along career pathways. Applicants should demonstrate how the Registered Apprenticeship program will be sustainable; including sources of support for education, training, marketing, and integration with other education and training efforts. Sustainability may be demonstrated through evidence of strong employer support and commitment, integration with a education partners curriculum, or other means.

Section 6 – Period of Performance

The funding period for the grant is five months (August 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021) and funds must be spent within the contract period. The proposer's contract performance will commence upon execution of a contract and be evaluated on a quarterly basis.

Timeline:

The intent of this RFP is to solicit proposals for the design of at least one new RA programs in non-traditional occupations. Applicants are not expected to begin RA program within the funding timeframe, but to design and submit an application for an RA program to the RI State Apprenticeship Program as well as a final report to the GWB detailing grant-related activities. A tentative schedule of activities follows:

Development Phase: Dates: August 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021

Successful applicant(s) will begin work on designing program, creating curricula, and working out details of agreements with education/training partners and sponsors.

Approval Phase: Dates: January 2022

Successful applicant(s) will prepare and submit final program design to RI Apprenticeship Program

Implementation Phase: Q1 2022 ->

Section 7 – Payment

Payment will be according to a schedule negotiated between the GWB and the Partnership and may include reasonable upfront payments if approved by the GWB. Payment requests must include invoice and all supporting documentation in the manner and format required by the GWB.

Section 8 – Fiscal Management/Internal Oversight

Contractors are required to maintain complete and accurate records of all financial expenditures with supporting documentation. These records must be available to the GWB and other monitoring staff. Contractors are required to internally monitor fiscal activities to ensure compliance with the applicable federal cost principles. At a minimum, internal oversight will address the following:

1. Staff attendance and payroll disbursement have been properly documented;
2. Accounting records are traceable to the source document and the application of grant funds relating to authorizations, obligations, balances, liabilities, expenditures and income;
3. Program expenditures are supported by appropriate documentation; and
4. Budget allocations and expenditures comply with contracted obligations.

The lead agency must ensure that all funds expended are in compliance with the contract, applicable OMB guidelines and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Disallowed costs by the partner(s) agency will be the liability of the lead agency. No work is to be performed without authorization from GWB and receipt of a signed contract and an approved purchase order.

Section 9 – Adherence to State and Federal Laws & Regulations

The proposer must comply with the applicable state and federal laws, regulations and policies for each funding stream; including, but not limited to, labor laws; including child labor, OSHA, Right-to-Know and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Nepotism: No individual may be placed in an employment activity if a member of that person's immediate family is directly supervised by or directly supervises that individual.

Section 10 – Confidentiality

It is the responsibility of the successful proposer to limit access to personal and proprietary information generated in the course of the contract. All data stored and generated may only be used for the purposes of this program. The proposer must specify that all electronic data files are secure and access is limited on a need to know basis. Identity theft is a prime concern and must be guarded against at all times.

Section 11 – Selection Process

Evaluation of Technical Proposals

The GWB will commission a Technical Review Committee that will evaluate and score all proposals that were submitted on time, signed by the signatory authority of the respondent organization and are not debarred, suspended or voluntarily excluded from receipt of federal funds. All proposals meeting this test will be evaluated to determine whether the proposal is responsive to the proposer's duties and responsibilities as provided in the RFP.

The Board shall give substantial weight to the scores rendered by the grant reviewers; however, the Board shall have the discretion to award funding to any proposal that has met the eligibility criteria in order to accomplish a strategic objective of the Board.

Section 12 – Proposal Submission

Proposals must be submitted electronically (pdf proposal - budget submitted via excel) to Robert Kalaskowski at robert.kalaskowski@dlt.ri.gov on **Wednesday June 30, 2021 by 4:00pm**.

Proposals received after this time and date will not be considered.

Section 13 – Technical Assistance

Apprenticeship Rhode Island is an effort that is funded through the American Apprenticeship Initiative of the U.S. Department of Labor. Apprenticeship Rhode Island is available to interested applicants and may provide technical assistance with the development of their application.

For more information please visit <http://apprenticeshipri.org/>

Appendix C – Sample Memorandum of Agreement

Memorandum of Agreement

The undersigned parties to this Agreement hereby commit to support the program design, implementation, and objectives of the Registered Apprenticeship program proposal submitted by the parties. The parties further agree as follows.

Instructions: Include a separate section for each partner to this proposal, describing the core mission of the partner, and the role of the partner in the apprenticeship program that may apply to the partner.

[Name of Partner]

For each partner:

Signature _____

Name _____

Title _____

Organization _____

Date _____

GRANT PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

Governor's Workforce Board Registered Apprenticeship Program Grants

Lead Applicant Information

Name of Applicant:

Address:

Contact Person / Title:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Business / Organization Website:

Rhode Island Employer Registration Number (Not FEIN):

Partner(s) and Employer Sponsors

Funding

Total amount RA grant assistance requested: \$_____

Certification

(The name below must be of an individual with authority to enter into legally binding agreements on behalf of the applicant.)

If selected for award, I, the undersigned, agree to meet the requirements of the Rhode Island Job Development Fund for a grant award. I certify that all information contained in this application and proposal is true and accurate and understand that falsification of information may be cause for non-review or award revocation. I certify that the applicant organization is in compliance with all contributions; payment in lieu of contributions, interest or penalty charges due under Rhode Island unemployment law, in good standing with Workforce Regulation and Safety and has not been debarred from contracting with any agency that administers Federal funds. As an Eligible Applicant, I understand that I must be current on all Rhode Island tax obligations, must be in good standing with all divisions and programs administered by the Department of Labor and Training and must not have been debarred (prohibited) from contracting with an agency that administers federal funds. I understand that I have acquired no property or other right by virtue of submitting this application. If awarded, I agree to comply with the terms and provisions of this proposal.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____