



INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF
WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT



Request for Application (RFA)
for
Next Level Jobs – Rapid Recovery Funding

Released by:

Indiana Department of Workforce Development

June 11, 2020

Revised June 15, 2020

Responses Due: Friday, June 19, 2020 by Noon (EST)

Background and Purpose

As a part of the Indiana [Governor's Workforce Cabinet](#) (GWC) "Rapid Recovery for a Better Future" [initiative](#), the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is pleased to announce this Request for Application (RFA) for Next Level Jobs - Rapid Recovery (NLJ-RR) funding. This grant will be a one-time award of funding to Indiana Regional Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) who submit proposals and are approved for funding in accordance with the requirements outlined in this RFA.

In order to accelerate Indiana's economic and workforce recovery from COVID-19, the state is dedicating federal funding available through the Coronavirus Aid, Recovery and Economic Security (CARES) Act to increase short-term education and training opportunities for more than 10,000 Hoosiers through an expanded Next Level Jobs (NLJ) program.

The DWD is committed to providing access to outstanding education and training for Hoosiers to earn a high-value certificate in one of Indiana's in demand, high-growth job fields through the expanded Workforce Ready Grant-Rapid Recovery (WRG-RR) program. As a part of the Rapid Recovery initiative, Indiana will also expand the NLJ Employer Training Grant (ETG) program to provide employers with the comprehensive support they need for short-term recovery and long term growth. To support this commitment, DWD is soliciting applications/proposals from WDBs to utilize available funding to provide Hoosiers with short-term credentials through the WRG-RR and support employers who train, hire and retain new and current employees in high demand jobs through the ETG.

The ideal candidates for WRG-RR training opportunities are those working towards obtaining their HSE through an adult education program, and those interested in pursuing jobs that require more than a high school education, but less than an associate's degree. Successful grant applications will prioritize strategies to promote co-enrollment of WIOA Title II adult education students into WRG-RR training. In addition, priority consideration will be given to those proposals demonstrating an executable strategy to dedicate at least twenty-five percent (25%) of available ETG funding to minority, women and veteran-owned businesses.

All grant proposals and activities must be in compliance with the requirements further outlined in 2 CFR 200, the WRG Non-Credit Bearing Implementation and Procedures Manual and the Employer Training Grant Process Manual. Updates to both the WRG and ETG manuals will be provided upon award of funds.

Eligibility, Funding Information and Grant Term

Eligibility

Eligibility for this grant award is limited to the twelve (12) Indiana Regional Workforce Development Boards.

Funding Source and Award Amount

Funding for the NLJ WRG-RR grant and expanded ETG is provided through the federal CARES Act. The amount of funding awarded to each WDB will be based on demonstration of need and a successful approach to utilizing these funds included in response to this RFA as further detailed in the proposal instructions. DWD reserves the right to adjust grant award amounts prior to award based on availability of funding.

Use of Grant Funds

The applicant is required to submit a proposal that describes the intended use of the grant funds with a detailed narrative of costs for each activity. Applicants should provide a complete Project Budget utilizing the template provided. Administrative costs are limited to 10% of the total award amount.

WORKFORCE READY GRANT RAPID RECOVERY FUNDS:

WRG-RR funds will be used as a per customer reimbursement. WRG-RR funds shall be paid in two (2) phases:

1. Seventy percent (70%) of the cost of the program shall be paid if the WRG-RR participant is present on the first day of training, AND
2. Thirty percent (30%) of the cost of the program shall be paid after the WRG-RR approved training provider provides documentation that a WRG-RR participant has completed the training program and is prepared to sit for an industry-recognized certification exam.

In order for a provider to be eligible to receive WRG-RR funds the program must:

1. Provide training that has been WRG-RR approved,
2. Appear as WRG eligible on Indiana's eligible training provider list, and
3. Accept WRG-RR's two phase funding scheme.

EMPLOYER TRAINING GRANT FUNDS

Employers may qualify for ETG funds of up to \$5,000 per employee with a maximum reimbursement of up to \$100,000 per employer for eligible programs. Priority consideration should be given to utilizing ETG funding to support minority-, women- and veteran-owned businesses. Updated guidance regarding funding reimbursement for the expanded ETG will be provided at the time of ETG award.

Grant Period

The grant term is anticipated to begin on July 1, 2020 and **all funds must be spent by December 30, 2020**. As a result of the short period for which these funds will remain available, DWD will closely monitor NLJ-RR grantee's enrollment and performance. DWD reserves the right to and will reallocate funding if the performance of a grantee is determined to be unacceptable.

Expectations

Partnerships

Grant award recipients are expected to utilize a portion of available WRG-RR funding to provide training opportunities to WIOA Title II adult education students. Priority consideration will be given to applications that include strategies for partnering with adult education providers to serve this student population.

For ETG funding, priority consideration will be given to those proposals demonstrating an executable strategy to dedicate at least twenty-five percent (25%) of available ETG funding to minority-, women- and veteran-owned businesses.

Reporting

Award recipients will be required to provide to DWD a monthly update on project activities, expenditures and budget, requested technical assistance, and performance outcomes. In addition, regional operations directors may be asked to report out on project progress at the quarterly field operations meeting and during regional monitoring visits.

For ETG funding, all employer interactions and activities shall be timely recorded in the Client Relationship Management (CRM). Failure to reflect employer interactions and activities clearly and timely in the Client Relationship Manager (CRM) will result in loss of ETG awards.

At the conclusion of the grant term, award recipients will be required to submit a final report summarizing performance outcomes achieved as a result of the project, expenditures, and lessons learned.

Compliance with Laws

Award recipients shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances. These requirements will be further defined in the grant award.

Application Format and Submission Requirements

Application Format

Interested WDBs should submit a complete and responsive Proposal electronically to policy@dwd.in.gov no later than five (5) pm EST on Thursday, June 18, 2020. All applications submitted in response to this RFA must include:

1. Proposal Contact Information,
2. Project Description, and
3. Project Budget.

The entire application, including appendices, should include the region number and name of the WDB applying for the grant. The Project Description should not exceed four (4) to eight (8) pages.

Proposal Contact

The contact person should be identified in the email submission of the Proposal and should be an individual who can respond to questions from DWD regarding the proposal during the RFA review period. The contact person should be knowledgeable of the proposal, reasonably available to discuss the application, and authorized to provide information on behalf of the WDB.

Submission Deadline

All applications should be submitted by Noon (12 PM) (EST) on June 19, 2020. DWD will review applications in the order that they are received. DWD is under no obligation to review any applications submitted after the submission deadline.

All questions regarding this RFA should be submitted to policy@dwd.in.gov on or before June 16, 2020.

Submission Process

Complete applications (including attachments) must be submitted electronically via email to policy@dwd.in.gov. The subject line of the email should state "Region #, Name of Workforce Development Board, Next Level Jobs Rapid Recovery Grant."

The contact person listed on the cover email will receive a confirmation email from policy@dwd.in.gov and may be contacted by DWD during the proposal evaluations with specific questions regarding the application.

Proposal Content

Section I - Project Description

The Project Description should include strategies for utilizing NLJ-RR funding to provide Hoosiers with access to training through the WRG-RR program and employers with funding to support the training, hiring and retention of employees in priority sectors through the ETG.

Successful proposals will include the topics outlined below:

1. Statement of Need (10 points)
 - Identify the types of training / certifications of greatest need with respect to education and training within the project's proposed service area.
 - Has COVID-19 had an impact on or otherwise changed the demand for training or certifications in particular job fields? If so, please describe.
 - How has the business community in your region been impacted by COVID-19?
2. WRG-RR Strategy and Target Audience (20 points)

- Please include the amount of funding requested.
 - Which certification programs do you intend to offer?
 - How many participants do you intend to enroll in WRG-RR training opportunities utilizing this funding? Please provide an estimate of participants per certification.
 - Describe your strategy for recruiting candidates to participate in this program.
 - Describe your strategy to utilize the requested funding within the term of the grant.
 - What, if any, additional resources are needed to implement the proposed strategies?
3. Program and Provider Partnerships (20 points)
- Which WRG eligible training providers do you anticipate using? Describe your plan to manage the issuance of WRG-RR fund to WRG-RR eligible training providers. Explain.
 - Are there any training providers that offer eligible WRG-RR programs that you would like to refer to, but who are not presently WRG eligible? What programs do they offer?
 - Describe how you intend to partner with Title II Adult Education (AE) providers in your area to connect AE students with WRG-RR training opportunities.
 - How many AE students do you anticipate being able to co-enroll in the WRG-RR program?
 - Please describe the current makeup of minority-, women- and veteran-owned businesses in your community.
 - How will the Region target MBE/WBE/VBE? What local partners will be tapped to support in this process?
4. Employer Training Grant (20 points)
- What are the primary challenges to employers in your community in responding to and recovering from the pandemic?
 - How do you plan to assess the impacted businesses in your area and target ETG resources to assist those employers in economic recovery?
 - How many employers does the WDB anticipate serving with ETG funds? Please see [Attachment B](#) for a copy of your region's past performance data in serving employers with these funds.
 - The use of the CRM to conduct interactions and activities with employers is required. Describe your Region's plan to ensure the CRM records for all employer interactions and activities are recorded and kept current.
 - What additional resources do you need in order to successfully utilize ETG funds?

Section II – Project Budget

The proposal must include a detailed budget plan and narrative for utilization of grant funds within the grant term. A budget template and instructions have been provided as attachments to this RFA.

The Project Budget is worth thirty (30) points and will be scored based on a number of factors including:

1. The amount of funds allocated to each line item,
2. Alignment with the Rapid Recovery for a Better Future initiative and other DWD priorities, and
3. Overall cost per WRG-RR participant.

Evaluation Criteria

Review and Selection Process: A committee of three (3) to five (5) DWD employees will evaluate grant proposals for responsiveness to this RFA. Applications that fail to meet the requirements of this RFA may not be considered for funding. Decisions to award grants will be determined in DWD’s sole discretion based on compliance with and responsiveness to the requirements of this RFA.

Each proposal will be scored by the DWD scoring team using a one hundred (100) point scale utilizing the following rubric:

Category	Point Value
Project Description	70
Project Budget	30
Total Possible Points	100

Proposal Review and Timeline

Activity	Date
RFA Issued	June 11, 2020
RFA Questions Due	June 16, 2020
RFA Responses to Questions Issued	June 17, 2020
Proposals Due	June 19, 2020 by 12 PM (EST)
Anticipated Notification of Awards	Week of June 22, 2020