



INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF
WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

Request for Application (RFA)
for
Program Year 2021 / 2022 Performance
Support Grant(s)

Released by:

Indiana Department of Workforce Development

July 7, 2021

Proposals Due: August 10, 2021 by 12:00 pm (EST)

Background and Purpose

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is pleased to announce this Request for Application (RFA) for Program Year (PY) 2021 Performance Support Grants. This grant will award 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. DWD may elect to award funds through one or more grants to WDBs utilizing a combination of federal and state funding.

DWD seeks to support the endeavors of Hoosiers in improving their skills and embarking on a rewarding career. Correspondingly, DWD has amplified its efforts in engaging and serving employers that seek a better-skilled workforce. The purpose of this funding opportunity is to encourage the development and use of innovative practices resulting in improved performance outcomes for prospective jobseekers and employers.

Successful grant applications will align with the DWD theme of “connecting people and employers through engagement with continued transparency and accountability, while celebrating, valuing and prioritizing equity, inclusion and diversity.” Additionally, applications should demonstrate alignment with Indiana’s [WIOA State Plan](#) goals and strategies. Selected proposals will demonstrate how the project will result in improved performance outcomes for job seekers and employers, as well as a plan for sustainable implementation of proposal strategies after the expiration of grant funding.

DWD encourages applicants to consider projects that build upon evidence-based or promising practices to serve jobseekers or employers through underutilized strategies, and/or will build proof of concepts that could be replicated across the broader workforce system. In awarding these grants, DWD intends to prioritize funding for initiatives aligned with one or more of the categories below.

1. Capacity Building
2. Services to Target Populations
3. Business Services and Employer Engagement
4. Youth Engagement

Through this funding opportunity, DWD seeks to achieve the following performance outcomes:

- Increased Labor Participation (in general or for target populations),
- Decreased number / percent of long term unemployed,
- Improved employment outcomes for target populations,
- Increased credential attainment leading to improved employment outcomes, and
- Increased youth engagement.

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

DWD will dedicate up to \$26 million (\$6,000,000.00) from a variety of state and federal funding sources including, but not limited to the DWD WIOA discretionary allocation, Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready and Employer training grants, and other funding that may be available. The amount of the grant award will be based upon the strength of the application. Current and past utilization of other, DWD-issued, non-formula grants may also be considered in evaluation of applications and available funds. Grant applications may not be approved for the full amount of the request. DWD reserves the right to adjust the 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. Administrative costs are limited to 10% of the total award amount. Projects should complement, but not duplicate existing programs.

Applications should include a combination of short-term initiatives that can be initiated within thirty (30) to sixty (60) days of grant award, and mid- to long range strategies that will take one or more months to plan and begin incurring expenditures. DWD intends that funding budgeted for short-term initiatives should be expended within six (6) to nine (9) months of grant award. Applicants will be required to include both a project timeline and anticipated budget timeline as a part of its application.

Grant Period

The grant term is anticipated to begin on September 1, 2021 and all funds must be obligated by March 31, 2023. DWD intends that funding proposed for short-term initiatives should be expended within six (6) to nine (9) months of grant award.

Expectations

Desired Outcomes

Successful applications will include project(s) that can contribute to desired state performance goals including:

- Increased Labor Participation (in general or for target populations),
- Decreased number / percent of long term unemployed,
- Improved employment outcomes for target populations,
- Increased credential attainment leading to improved employment outcomes, and
- Increased youth engagement.

Applicants should identify which of the above indicators the proposed project(s) has the potential to directly impact or influence. If the proposed project(s) is expected to have an indirect impact on or does not relate to one of the above indicators, applicants should describe the leading indicators it will measure to demonstrate project performance.

Partnerships

A successful workforce development system is dependent on effective partnerships and the commitment of local / regional workforce agencies, elected officials and government partners, not-for-profit organizations, education and training providers, the business community and a variety of other stakeholders all working to address critical workforce issues. Grant award recipients are expected to identify ways to leverage or develop partnerships to further project goals and outcomes.

Project Implementation Plan and Timeline

Applications must include a project(s) timeline and a timeline for anticipated use of funding during the grant term (Budget Timeline). Proposals should include a mix of project activities to ensure timely use of funding (i.e., short-term or shovel ready projects, planning activities, longer term initiatives).

Following grant award, award recipients may be required to submit a detailed project implementation plan.

Reporting

Award recipients will be required to input student level data, grant activity outcomes, and other planned expenditures into a provided data system which shall be updated no less than monthly. 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.

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, lessons learned, and a discussion of how the project or any tools developed as a part of the project could be replicated as a best practice and/or rolled out for statewide implementation.

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.

Proposal Content

Section I - Applicant Information

The proposal should contain a completed proposal cover page included as Attachment A to this RFA.

The proposal should include the signature of the WDB chair and if different from the WDB chair, the WDB authorized signatory. The authorized signatory is the individual who has the authority to negotiate, enter into, and sign grants on behalf of the WDB.

Section II – Project(s) Description

The proposal should include a high-level overview of the proposed project. If the proposal includes a request for funding for several initiatives, please address the topics below for each individual project. Successful proposals will describe the topics outlined below.

1. What is the intended scope of the project(s)?
2. What are the identified areas of need this project(s) will address and how will it meet those needs?
3. How does this project(s) align with one or more of the priority areas of focus (Capacity Building, Services to Target Populations, Business Services and Engagement, Youth Engagement) for this funding opportunity?
4. What new or existing partnerships, including WIOA core partnerships, will be leveraged?

Section III – Project Implementation

Please provide a detailed timeline for project development and implementation that includes:

- Major project activities and milestones,
- Timelines for completion of each activity, and
- The deliverables associated with project activities.
- Please identify those project activities or initiatives that can be launched within the next thirty (30) to sixty (60) days (i.e., short term) and those which will require additional planning prior to project launch (long term).

If the proposal includes a request for funding for several initiatives, please include a project development and implementation plan for each individual project.

Section IV - Project Outcomes and Performance

If the proposal includes a request for funding for several initiatives, please include project outcomes information for each individual project.

1. Describe the intended outcomes for the project(s).
2. If the project(s) involve direct client services, how many participants will be served as a part of this project(s)?
3. How will you determine whether the project has been successful? What methods, assessments or other tools will you use to measure success?
4. How will project(s) support DWD goals of (1) increased Labor Participation (in general or for target populations); (2) decreased number / percent of long term unemployed, (3) improved employment outcomes for target populations, (4) increased credential attainment leading to improved employment outcomes, and/or (5) increased youth engagement.

Section V – Project Budget and Budget Narrative

The proposal must include a detailed budget plan, timeline and narrative for utilization of grant funds within the grant term. A Budget Template has been provided as Attachment B to this RFA. If the proposal includes more than one distinct project, please include a proposed budget for each project. Applicants should also include a preliminary request for Employer Training Grant and/or Workforce Ready Grant funding in the space designated on the Budget Template. DWD will consider these requests as it evaluates how these programs will be rolled out in the upcoming fiscal year.

The Budget Narrative should address the following:

1. Why are WIOA formula and other traditional funding streams insufficient to meet identified need for the project?
2. How will you ensure timely utilization of these funds?
3. How will these funds be used to complement other regional grants (i.e., WIOA formula funds, Disaster Recovery and Employment Recovery, Workforce Ready and Employer Training Grants) or bridge any perceived gaps in funding availability?
4. Discuss the plan for sustaining the project(s) after the funding period ends.

Evaluation Criteria

Review and Selection Process: A team of three (3) to five (5) DWD staff (Grant Evaluation Committee) will evaluate grant proposals based on responsiveness to this RFA and the criteria outlined below. Prior to scoring any applications, all members of the Grant Evaluation Committee will complete a conflict-of-interest disclosure.

Applications that fail to meet the responsiveness criteria outlined in this section may not be scored and considered for funding. Decisions to award grants and the funding levels associated with each award will

be determined in DWD's sole discretion based on compliance with the requirements of this RFA and the quality of the grant proposal as determined using the evaluation criteria outlined below.

Responsiveness Criteria: To satisfy the responsiveness criteria for this RFA and be considered for award and funding, an application must (1) satisfy all of the application requirements outlined in the section of this RFA titled "Application Format and Submission Requirements", and (2) includes a completed cover page including name and contact information, (3) all items outlined in Proposal Content, Sections II – V above.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria:

Proposals will be scored out of a possible 100 points. The point value associated with each category is identified below, as well as the associated factors the Grant Evaluation Committee will take into consideration when evaluating proposals.

1. Project Description (30 points)
 - The proposal features a clear, thorough and well-developed plan that is suitable for this funding opportunity.
 - The proposed project is innovative and aligns with one or more of the priority focus areas outlined in this RFA.
 - The proposal includes a description of how the proposal will address identified gaps or needs.
 - The proposed project focuses on a priority population or high-impact, high-growth industry sector.
 - The proposal describes how the region will leverage new or existing partnerships, including WIOA core partnerships to achieve outcomes.
2. Project Implementation (25 points)
 - The proposal provides a thorough, detailed and realistic timeframe for project implementation.
 - The implementation plan includes major project activities, timelines for completion of the activities, and the deliverables associated with the project activities.
 - The proposal includes a clear and realistic plan for sustainability and/or leads to a replicable best practice.
3. Project Outcomes and Performance (30 points)
 - The proposal identifies specific project outcomes, goals and deliverables, including how the propose project(s) support DWD performance goals.
 - The proposal includes a reasonable method for determining project success. For projects working directly with individuals, this includes a demonstration of understanding of WIOA performance measures.
4. Project Budget and Budget Narrative (15 points)

- The proposal contains a realistic and detailed budget plan and narrative for utilization of funding within the grant period.
- The budget narrative includes proof of financial need for the award that is not met by available funding sources.
- The applicant documents and remains on target with the expenditure of current DWD issued funds.

Application Format and Submission Requirements

Application Format

All applications submitted in response to this RFA must:

1. Be formatted on 8 x 11-inch paper using 11- or 12-point font. Tables may be used to present information using a 10-point font.
2. The project proposal should not exceed ten (10) pages in length. The cover page, project budget, budget narrative and any appendices are not included in the page limit for the application.
3. The entire application, including appendices, should include the region number and name of the WDB applying for the grant.
4. All pages, including the appendices, should be sequentially page numbered.

Proposal Contact

The contact person identified on the cover sheet 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 during the RFA evaluation period 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 August 10, 2021. DWD is under no obligation to review any applications submitted after that time.

All questions regarding this RFA should be submitted to **Katie Stern, DWD Grants Manager** at kstern@dwd.in.gov on or before July 16, 2021.

Submission Process

Complete applications (including attachments) must be submitted electronically via email to Katie Stern, DWD Grants Manager at kstern@dwd.in.gov. The subject line of the email should state "Region #, Name of Workforce Development Board, WIOA Support Grant."

The contact person listed on the cover letter will receive a confirmation email from the DWD Grants Manager and may be contacted by DWD during the proposal evaluations with specific questions regarding the application.

Proposal Review and Timeline

Activity	Date
RFA Issued	July 7, 2021
RFA Questions Due	July 16, 2021
RFA Responses to Questions Issued	July 22, 2021
Proposals Due	August 10, 2021 by noon EST
Proposal Evaluations	August 11 – 20, 2021
Anticipated Notification of Awards	August 23, 2021
Effective date of grant award	September 1, 2021