

Request for Applications (RFA)

Group Sponsor Grant Opportunity

Issued by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) (SAEF3-Formula Round 3)

DWD is excited to announce the next round of State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF) Group Sponsor grants for 2026. We are accepting applications from employers, educational institutions, and other qualified organizations to become new Group Apprenticeship Sponsors or from those that have already been Group Apprenticeship Sponsors. This opportunity aims to create and expand high-quality apprenticeship programs that foster skill development, career readiness, and industry engagement. We invite organizations with a strong commitment to workforce development and education to apply.

Overview: Background and Purpose

The purpose of this RFA is to solicit applications from qualified organizations to facilitate the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) in the number of available programs, employer partners and individual participants, through group sponsorship. The outcome of this expansion will focus on the number of programs created, number of participants assisted, as well as the development of communities of practice through award recipients.

Funding for this opportunity is provided through the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Apprenticeship's State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF) grant, awarded to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development.

The overarching goal of the Group Sponsor RFA is to bring together multiple employer partners under a single USDOL-approved Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP).

By serving as a Group Sponsor, organizations create a shared apprenticeship infrastructure that:

- Expands access to fair, good-paying apprenticeship jobs for Hoosiers.
- Builds sustainable talent pipelines that strengthen local and regional economies.
- Reduces administrative burden by streamlining employer participation.
- Increase opportunities for employers of all sizes to establish and grow RAPs.

Group Sponsors assume the legal responsibility for ensuring RAPs are properly managed and operated in compliance with federal standards set by the U.S. Department of Labor (29 CFR Parts 29 & 30). This includes:

- Maintaining USDOL-approved Standards of Apprenticeship.
- Developing and enforcing apprenticeship program policies and procedures.
- Keeping required records for each apprentice.
- Using approved selection procedures.

- Maintaining Voluntary Disability Disclosure and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) documentation.
- Entering and maintaining program and apprentice data in the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Data System (RAPIDS).

Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply and must either have or obtain registered bidder status with Indiana and must maintain an active SAM registration (<https://sam.gov/>) through the grant period.

- Registered Apprenticeship Intermediary Organizations
- Accredited Postsecondary Institutions
- Regional Workforce Development Boards
- Current Group Sponsors
- Trade Associations
- Other qualified nonprofit or public entities capable of meeting program responsibilities

Funding Parameters and Availability

Total funds available including approximate award size(s), number of awards anticipated (e.g. Applicants may request up to \$30,000 for the creation of a new or expansion of existing Group Sponsorship Program, subject to available funding). Funding request limits are in direct correlation of group sponsorship's current program size.

Program size is determined by number of employers officially registered, in accordance with U.S. DOL processes, with Group Sponsor's RA program. Group sizing for this RFA round is as follows:

Program Award Level	Number of Employer Partners	Maximum Award Size
1 (new)	2+ employers	Up to \$20,000
2 (existing)	2-4 employers	Up to \$15,000
3 (existing)	5-7 employers	Up to \$20,000
4 (existing)	8 or more	Up to \$30,000

** Past group sponsor awardees may be eligible for 1 level gain with proof of program expansion achieved from last round of group sponsor funding awards.

Allowable vs. Unallowable Costs

Group Sponsor funds cannot be used in conjunction with other USDOL grants in regard to the cost of and/or charges to the following categories:

- Data Collection
- Program administration
- Program building/expansion
- Grant Administration (5% cap of total funds awarded)

Note: If applicant of this RFA applies for and is awarded funds through the Education & Advanced Manufacturing/Logistics Apprenticeship Grant RFA as well as this Group Sponsor RFA opportunity, the administrative and data/program funding will be withheld from the Education & Advanced Manufacturing/Logistics Apprenticeship Grant award due to a duplicative statement of work.

Period of Performance

The Period of Performance (PoP) for the SAEF3 Formula grant is July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2028. The Grant Period for the 1st round RFA awards is January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026. This initial award will have a delayed start and will contain subsequent award opportunities. However, all scope of work and responsibilities will fall into the stated PoP. Continuation of awards is contingent upon the availability of funds, grantee progress, and compliance with all terms and conditions of the award.

Match Requirements:

SAEF 3 Competitive Grant does not contain a fund match requirement for the grantee, partner, or participant within any component of the program depicted.

Payment Process:

The grantee will submit invoices for reimbursement, at minimum, on a quarterly basis for actual allowable costs incurred during the performance period. Reimbursement will not exceed the total award amount specified in the grant agreement. Payment requests must be submitted via instruction provided no later than 15 days after the end of each quarter.

Program Expectations

Characteristics of Group Sponsor Models:

Group Sponsor models are designed to make apprenticeship programs more accessible, collaborative, and sustainable. Key characteristics include:

- Shared Employer Participation: Apprentices are employed by the participating business rather than a single sponsor.
- Collective Responsibility: A group of employers jointly develops, manages, and sustains the apprenticeship program.
- On-the-Job Training: Each participating employer is responsible for delivering high-quality, work-based training aligned to the program's standards.
- Mentorship: Experienced employees provide apprentices with daily supervision, coaching, and skills instruction.
- Education Partnerships: Instructional providers collaborate with local employers to deliver industry-driven curricula and ensure apprentices are connected to high-quality career pathways.

Required Activities: (e.g. outreach, training, data reporting, etc.)

- All RAP participants must be entered into RAPIDS by Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor.

- All Quarterly Reports will be completed on a template that will be provided to grantees and then submitted to the Director of the DWD Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship.

Performance metrics:

Success of the grant is depicted by: 1) expansion of existing RAPs through addition of employer partners and 2) expansion of program participants added.

Specific performance numbers for individual group sponsor grantees will differ depending on the size of program and number of employer partners at time of award.

Participant eligibility and target populations:

- Employer partners must be in good standing and have completed all USDOL documentation required to join the awarded Sponsor's RAP.
- Participants/apprentices, must be 16 years of age or older and eligible to work in the United States.
- The target population for this funding opportunity will be merit-based. The grant opportunity aims to engage and grow talent pipelines and programs across the state.

Reporting:

The Grantee must submit quarterly reports to the OWBLA office within 15 days of the end of each calendar quarter (Q1-March 31, Q2-June 30, Q3-September 30, and Q4-December 31). All reports must be submitted following directional process provided. The following sections must be included:

- Performance Progress Report (Narrative): The Grantee must provide a quarterly narrative report detailing the status of all activities outlined in the approved Scope of Work.
- Quarterly Financial Data: The Grantee must submit quarterly reporting on expenditures incurred during the reporting period.
- Data and Evaluation Reporting: The Grantee must report on the quantitative performance metrics and evaluation data for assigned performance objectives.

RFA Application Information

Submission Dates & Instructions for Group Sponsorship Opportunity (Round 1):

- Submit application and all supporting documentation to the link provided: [Apply HERE!](#)
- Deadline: February 26, 2026, 5:00 PM ET
- Award Notifications: By March 15, 2026
- Grant Period for 1st round award: January 1, 2026 – May 29, 2027

Each grant application will require all documentation in checklist below. Total grant award for this round cannot exceed \$30,000.

Checklist:

- ☐ Completed electronic Application, all sections **(Scored)**
- ☐ Organizational eligibility statement (RAP sponsor ID & approved programs) **(Required)**
- ☐ Copy of signed MOUs of intended employer partners if new Group Sponsorship being developed **(Required if applicable)**
- ☐ Copy of Approved Standards of Apprenticeship for existing Group Sponsors **(Required)**
- ☐ Copy of Employer Agreements of RAP participation (Appendix D) **(Required)**
- ☐ Total Budget & Fiscal Accountability Form **(Scored)**