



American Rescue Plan Act Workforce Training Grant Program

Application Guidelines

Governor Greg Gianforte

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DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKFORCE TRAINING GRANT PROGRAM

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Workforce Training Grant Program provides up to \$3,000 per eligible employee receiving training to reimburse businesses for costs associated with training new and existing full-time workers. The business should be able to demonstrate an increase in revenue, capacity and/or production/manufacturing as result of the training process. The Montana Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development Advisory Commission allocated \$10 million for the program.

DEFINITIONS:

Disabled Veteran: An honorably discharged member of the armed forces with a disability rating of 30% or higher. Acceptable form of verification is a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs stating the disability rating, (commonly known as a veteran's civil service preference letter).

Employee: To be considered an employee of the business, the individual must be listed on the business' Montana Department of Labor's Unemployment Report (UI-5), Business Owners, who are not listed on the UI-5 form, are not considered an employee and would not be eligible for training reimbursement.

Eligible Business: Eligible applicants are Montana based business who are in good standing with the Montana Secretary of State or Tribal Government. Eligible business must be a for-profit, sole proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company, limited liability partnership, corporation or non-profit.

Eligible Training Providers: An eligible trainer must be a National or Montana accredited trainer. If they are a Montana training provider, the provider must be registered with and in good standing with the Secretary of State.

Full-Time Job: Employee must be located in Montana and is in a predominantly year-round position that requires an average of 35 hours of work per week.

In-house or on-the-job training: Training that is being conducted by existing employees. Eligible training would need to provide upscale, retrain or new skills. General training such as on-boarding would not be eligible.

Incentive: Business will be awarded a \$500 incentive for each new position that meets the criteria below and provides training:

- A qualified disabled person; and/or
- Disabled veteran; and/or
- Native American (must provide tribal identification); and/or
- Post-correctional facility release/pre-release center participant; and/or
- Creates a new job that pays at least \$51,000/year or \$24.52/hour,

The incentive would be on top of the training being conducted for an eligible activity and paid out at the end of the contract period. The business must be able to prove that the new hire qualified under the above criteria and received training.

Match: Businesses are required to provide \$1 for \$1 match. The wages of the trainee during the training can be used for match. If the employee's wages are being reimbursed by another state agency, they are NOT considered match.

Montana Based Business: Must have a physical location in Montana with eligible employees located in Montana.

Performance Metrics: The proposed training should lead to an increase in capacity, production and/or revenue to the business. The business will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the performance status.

Qualified Disabled Person: A person who has a disability certification from the Montana Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS).

Post Correctional Facility Release: Includes individuals released from the Montana Department of Corrections, city or county correctional facility, residents of a pre-release center, parolees or probationers or persons enrolled in a Department of Corrections work release program. Acceptable forms of verification include parole certificate, discharge certificate, or letter of verification from a case manager, Department of Corrections or parole officer.

Wage Requirement: Pay trainees at least the average weekly wage that meets or exceeds the lesser of 170% of Montana's current minimum wage.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible business would apply directly to the program. Applications are only accepted on <https://www.submittable.com/> (need actual link)

Businesses are excluded from receiving funds if they are on the federal or state debarment lists or engaging in a business activity that is federally excluded like cannabis.

GRANT AWARD CEILING AND THRESHOLDS

The Department ultimately determines the size of the grant. Training costs must be supported by a budget.

Grant contracts will not exceed 12 months from the date of approval by the Governor's office.

The maximum grant award is \$3,000 for each new and/or existing job up to 70 total jobs (70 employees x \$3,000 = \$210,000). Any bouses earned will be allowed to exceed the maximum of \$210,000.

Once an award is made, the business can allocate the funds as needed for the individual jobs; however, training of a specific job cannot exceed 25% of the total allocation. For award less than \$15,000, the maximum training grant would be \$3,000 per job. For example: some employees may be in a position that only requires \$2,000 of training while other employees may need \$7,000 as long as the total investment did not exceed 25% threshold.

Businesses may only have one open ARPA Workforce Training Grant. If the business successfully completes a prior award, the businesses may reapply if the prior grant is officially closed out by the Department and the proposed training would be for either different jobs and/or different type of training. The Department reserves the right to recommend a reduced award and/or limit the type of training on subsequent awards.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

The grant award may only be used for direct costs associated with education or skills-based training for new or existing jobs. All necessary and incidental costs of providing workforce training and education directed to the new jobs are eligible for a grant. This includes all direct training costs, such as:

- In-house or on-the-job training which would be based on the instructor's wage at the time of training.
- Subcontracted services with eligible training providers.
- Miscellaneous direct training costs (such as employee training-related travel).
- Expenses incurred by the business to participate in a national or MT accredited apprenticeship training program or listed on the DLI Eligible Training Provider list.
- Training assessment and testing.

Eligible costs that are not tied directly to specific employees must be pro-rated amongst all the participants who receive the training regardless if they are eligible for receiving training reimbursement. The pro-rated costs are then allocated to each eligible

employee receiving training for which reimbursement is requested. The pro-rated costs will then count towards the maximum training cost per eligible net new job.

The following are not eligible for grant monies:

- the purchases of equipment to be owned or utilized by the training provider.
- training that was paid by another federal or state agency; and
- salary or wages paid to employees during training are eligible for match, but do not count towards an eligible cost of training.

GRANT APPLICATION SUBMITTAL PROCESS

The Montana Department of Commerce is the primary point of contact for initiating a grant application and working through the process leading to a grant award.

The business would submit the application to the Department of Commerce with the following minimum information:

- Application form.
- Copy of the business' most current profit & loss statement and statement of current production or capacity, if applicable. This statement will establish the base to determine if the performance metrics are being met.
- Business Plan containing information that is sufficient for the Department to obtain an adequate understanding of the business to be assisted, including the products or services offered, estimated market potential, management experience of principals, current financial position, and details of the proposed venture.
- 12-month training plan for both new and existing jobs which describes the training curriculum and resources. The training plan includes a detailed budget justifying the funding level request.
- Hiring Plan, if proposing to train new jobs.
- Most current Montana Department of Labor's Unemployment Insurance Form (UI-5).
- If hiring new employees, please provide procedures for outreach, recruitment, screening, selection, training and placement of workers.

The Montana Department of Commerce may request additional information as needed and applicants are encouraged to include any additional information supporting the proposed business expansion project.

The Montana Department of Commerce will make recommendations to the Montana Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development Advisory Commission based on determination of eligibility and the proposal scoring and ranking

process described below. The Commission will make a recommendation to the Governor's office for the final decision on awards.

PROJECT SCORING, AND RANKING CRITERIA

A maximum of 50 points are available during the scoring process. Eligible business will be scored based on the information contained in the application. All applications will be placed in order of highest score to lowest score when presented to the commission.

1. Ratio of new hires to existing workers, example: a business currently has ten full time employees, and they propose to hire and train 5 new employees the ration would be 50% (5/10=50%) Maximum 10 points:

No new hires = 0 points

1% - 10% = 1 point

11% - 20% = 2 points

21% - 30% = 3 points

31% - 40% = 4 points

41% - 50% = 5 points

51% - 60% = 6 points

61% - 70% = 7 points

71% - 80% = 8 points

81% - 90% = 9 points

91% or higher = 10 points

2. If the average wage of all employees for the company is less than \$25,499 per year, then no points are awarded. If the Average wage of all employees for the company is \$25,500 - \$50,999 per year, then 5 points are awarded. If the average wage of all employees for the company is greater than \$51,000 per year, then 10 points are awarded.
3. If the employees receiving training are in the top 25 occupations identified on the Department of Labor and Industries' annual workforce demand list, 10 points will be awarded. [Link to List Here](#)
4. If any of the trained employees will receive a certification from an accredited training facility or post-secondary institution, 10 points will be awarded.
5. If the business is located in an urban area 5 points will be awarded. If the business is located in a rural are 10 points will be awarded.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

Completed applications must be submitted at least 5 weeks prior to the next scheduled Economic Transformation, Stabilization and Workforce Development Advisory Commission. Dates of meetings and deadlines will be posted **HERE**. Completed applications will be evaluated for eligibility, scored, and ranked for presentation to the Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce development Commission and approval of the Governor. If there are funds remaining after the first round of applications, additional rounds of applications will be accepted with deadlines to be set at a later date.

MANAGEMENT OF FUNDS

The business may receive grant funds periodically over the contract period upon documenting the incurring of training expenses and the meeting the required wage rate.

The business will be required to obtain and maintain general liability insurance with minimum combined single limits of \$1 million per occurrence and \$2 million aggregate per year. The Department is to be covered as additional insured on the policy.

The business will submit quarterly status reports on project performance including a status report of the project and the most current Profit & Loss statement.

The business agrees to provide access to all payroll and employment records for in-state operations including authorization to review unemployment insurance and training records.

REQUEST FOR FUNDS

Funds may be requested by sending a letter on the Company's official letterhead signed by two individuals, one of which must be the contact listed in the contract or the individual who signed the contract, with the following information included or attached:

- Names and current jobs of employees being trained including whether the jobs are full-time jobs.
- Current hourly wage rate of trainees and any changes to wage rate through the project.
- Summary of the training program and overall goal (certifications, skills, new jobs filled by trainees, etc.) for each trainee.
- Summary of training accomplished for the period in which funds are being requested.
- Total cost and breakdown of costs and supporting documentation for each new job for which funds are being requested.
- Amount requested for each trainee.
- Amount of matching funds expended to date.

- Total amount requested and total remaining under the contract.
- Signed training logs that have been acknowledged by both trainers and trainees for all on-the-job and in-house training.
- Copies of any training certificates that may have been issued as a result of the WTG training.
- Any other pertinent information related to the grant and progress on the training plan.
- Documentation necessary to show an increase in revenue, production or capacity as a result of the training/hiring.
- Information of employees is needed for audit purposes, such information is otherwise expected to be kept confidential in the interests of those individuals' privacy interests.

NOTE: If the Grantee has outstanding debt with the State of Montana, disbursements through the training program could potentially be impacted.