
**Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Division of Business Partnerships**

Notice of Request for Grant Applications (RGA)

State Training and Employment Program

State Fiscal Year 2015

**This Request for Grant Applications is dependent upon
appropriation of funds by the Alaska State Legislature**

Date of Issue: January 15, 2014

Project Timeline

July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015

Eligible Applicants:

**Government agencies, private businesses, employers, and
non-profit organizations providing training or employment
assistance services**

**Grant applications must be submitted through EGrAMS
by 5:00 p.m., February 28, 2014**

Questions about the content of this Request for Grant Applications should be directed to:

Christine Sanderford or Julie Frizzell, Program Coordinators
State Training and Employment Program
Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Division of Business Partnerships
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Anchorage, AK 99501
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(907) 269-2002 (907) 269-4590

EGrAMS is an **E**lectronic **G**rants **A**dministration and **M**anagement **S**ystem. It can be accessed from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development website:

labor.alaska.gov/bp/egrams/home.htm

or through the *myAlaska* web site:

myalaska.state.ak.us/home/app

Questions about EGrAMs should be directed to:

EGrAMS Help Desk
907-465-4893
dol.dbp.egramshelpdesk@alaska.gov

Americans with Disabilities Act - Auxiliary aides and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. To make arrangements for auxiliary aides or services, please contact the Division of Business Partnerships at (907) 269-3576 no later than ten (10) working days prior to the application deadline. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. All grant recipients or sub-contractors must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

SECTION I: PROGRAM INFORMATION

Overview and Purpose: The purpose of the State Training and Employment Program (STEP) is to enhance the quality of in-state job training and employment assistance and to make in-state job training and employment assistance more easily available to employers, employees, and future employees by supplementing or leveraging existing training and employment assistance programs.

When composing your grant proposal, it is important to provide clearly written responses with concise details relevant to each question in the application. Successful applications will provide thorough, straight-forward responses without the inclusion of excessive information.

STEP funds may not be used to replace other funds allocated for training or services for the purpose of reducing costs, such as maintaining operations during periods in which there are no STEP related activities.

Unless approved by the department, financial resources of the program may not be used to construct, modify, or otherwise alter existing equipment and facilities, or to finance acquisition of new equipment and facilities to improve physical access to training.

Scope of Services Requested: In accordance with AS 23.15.620(b), funds must be used to:

1. train more program-eligible individuals than would otherwise have been trained without the financial resources of STEP; or
2. expand existing training programs; or provide training and support services that cannot be paid by other sources of funds.

A recipient of a grant awarded under the program may use the grant to provide any of the following training services to eligible participants:

Industry Specific Training – Industry specific training is for industries that need trained workers with industry-recognized skills, competencies, or certifications. This includes, but is not limited to, union and non-union journeyman training and registered apprenticeships.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) – Training provided by an employer at the work site while the employee is learning the job requirements of the position, including apprentice training in a registered apprenticeship program under 29 U.S.C. 50. OJT is intended to compensate the employer for the extra cost associated with hiring and training an individual who does not meet the minimum requirements of the position. An OJT agreement may reimburse an amount negotiated with the Division of Business Partnerships, generally not to exceed 50 percent of the participant's wages.

Customized Job-Linked Training – Customized institutional or classroom job-linked training must meet specific workforce development needs of an employer so that participants acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to remain employed or advance in employment. Employers must have expressed a willingness to hire participants who

successfully complete the training. Participants who successfully complete the training must be hired within a reasonable timeframe.

Registered Apprenticeship – provides the opportunity for workers seeking high-skilled, high-paying jobs to earn a wage while in training and assists employers in building a qualified workforce. Upon completion of a Registered Apprenticeship program, participants receive an industry issued, nationally recognized credential.

Employment assistance services as defined in AS 23.15.641(b) may be funded in conjunction with training offered in one or more of the three areas identified above.

The following industries have been identified as priority industries for Alaska, and training supporting these industries will receive the highest consideration:

- Construction
- Education
- Health care
- Hospitality and tourism
- Information technology
- Natural resource development
- Registered Apprenticeship
- Seafood harvesting and processing
- Transportation

Training supporting other industries will be considered to the extent that employer demand, commitments to hire, and wage commitments exceeding the state's median wage can be demonstrated.

Any support services provided to participants considered essential to achieving the performance outcomes, including, but not limited to, transportation to training sites; lodging, meals, and local transportation; tools; supplies; and licenses or certifications, must be included in the grant application. If the grant applicant is unable to provide the necessary support services, it is incumbent upon the grant applicant to either form a partnership with an organization that can provide the services, or subcontract the services to another organization. In either case, the services must be included in the detailed budget submitted in response to this RGA.

Grant proposals providing only support services, either to participants or to the project, without also providing training contributing to the required performance outcomes will not be considered.

Applicant Eligibility: To be eligible for a STEP grant, the applicant must offer training services that meet the requirements of STEP, and be a governmental agency, a private business, an employer, or an organization exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. 501 (c)(3) (Internal Revenue Code). Services necessary to support participants during the training can be included in the proposal; support-only proposals will not be considered. Applicants must demonstrate that:

- the applicant's accounting system is organized and maintained in accordance with 8 AAC 87.70(a), promotes efficiency, ensures compliance with program requirements, and can

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- be reviewed at the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's direction with not more than a reasonable amount of effort and expense; and
- the applicant will use the grant funds only as allowed under the STEP statutes, AS 23.15.620 – 23.15.660.

Participant Eligibility: To be an eligible participant, a person must, immediately before beginning training or receiving benefits under the grant financed by this program:

- 1) be a resident of Alaska, defined for this program as someone who has been physically present in the state for at least 30 days and intends to remain in the state; and
- 2) have worked in a position covered by unemployment insurance (defined in AS 23.20, or similar provisions in another state) at any time during the five years immediately preceding the application for services; and
- 3) need training to improve the person's prospects for obtaining or retaining employment; and
- 4) be employable but not currently employed and
 - receiving unemployment insurance benefits; or
 - has exhausted the right to unemployment insurance benefits within the past three years; or
- 5) be employed, but liable to be displaced because of
 - reductions in overall employment within a business; or
 - elimination of the worker's current job; or
 - a change in conditions of employment requiring that, to remain employed, the employee must learn substantially different skills that the employee does not now possess.

Performance Outcomes: It is expected that:

- training will result in an increase in wage and salary earnings after training; or
- increase the prospect of employment in a training-related occupation at a wage commensurate with the training received; and
- at least 95 percent of participants receiving training will enter or advance in employment following training, or maintain their employment as a result of the training.

Funding: There are no limitations on funding levels for individual grants; however, costs must be reasonable and comparable to industry standards for the type of training proposed.

SECTION II: GENERAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

Application: Applications will only be accepted through EGrAMS, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships (hereinafter "Division") Electronic Grants Administration and Management System. Application information shall not

be treated as public information any time prior to the notices of award or denial, but is subject to public disclosure after the notices are issued. Upon receipt, all applications and their contents become property of the Division.^{AI}

Application Deadline: Only applications received by the deadline will be considered; EGrAMS will not allow submittal of applications past the submission deadline.

Cost Reimbursement Grants: Grants awarded are cost reimbursement grants; no advance payments will be made. Costs incurred by the applicant, including, but not limited to, the cost for the preparation and submission of an application, prior to the full execution of the grant agreement, are the sole responsibility of the applicant.

Budget Costs: The applicant must provide a detailed budget that reflects the anticipated costs of the project. The budget must be reasonable and practicable, account for the expenditure of all funds prior to the end of the FY 2015 fiscal year, and will be assessed and evaluated by a review committee. Unless specifically approved by the Division, incentives, promotional items and memorabilia, gifts, and souvenirs are not allowed.

Grantee Contribution: A grantee contribution includes all resources, including cash, in-kind, and leveraged, used by the applicant to support grant activity and outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to provide a contribution to the greatest extent feasible. Although contributions are not a requirement for an award, applicants that provide contributions demonstrate an additional commitment to meeting the objectives of the program.^{AI}

Grantee contributions specified in the budget require expenditure documentation and will be considered in the overall grant performance evaluation that occurs at the end of the grant period.

SECTION III: AWARD/DENIAL PROCESS

Application Review: The Division will perform an initial review of all properly submitted applications. All complete, responsive, and eligible applications will be evaluated by a review committee, which will make funding recommendations to the Division. Applicants whose applications are not deemed complete, responsive, or eligible will be notified..

Evaluation: A review committee will evaluate applications using the evaluation criteria specified in EGrAMS. The Division will consider the results of the review committee's assessment along with other relevant criteria and information, including budgetary information, training schedules, and state priorities, when making funding recommendations to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development commissioner. The Division may request additional information from applicants if it is needed to make funding recommendations. The commissioner is solely responsible for making all award or denial decisions under this solicitation.

Results of Application Review and Evaluation: Each application approved by the commissioner will be provided a written Notice of Intent to Award. Upon issuance of a Notice of Intent to Award, the application will move to grant negotiations with the Division. The

Division reserves the right to revoke a Notice of Intent to Award if it is subsequently found to be in error, made on the basis of inaccurate information, or not in the best interest of the state.

An applicant whose application is not recommended for an award will receive a written Notice of Award Denial. Applicants receiving a Notice of Award Denial have ten working days to request reconsideration.^{AI}

Grant Negotiations: The Division will negotiate the grant award amount, performance, reporting levels, and any conditions to a grant award that it determines are prudent and in the best interest of the state. All grants awarded under this solicitation are contingent upon the appropriation of sufficient funds by the Alaska legislature or the federal government, as applicable. In the event that funding is withdrawn, reduced, or limited in any way after the effective date of the grant agreement, grants awarded are subject to termination, reduction, or re-negotiation subject to the new funding limitations or conditions imposed by the legislature.

Due Diligence: All grant recipients and any sub-contractors or sub-recipients receiving over \$25,000, which are not state agencies, are required to go through a multi-step due diligence process to demonstrate their suitability to receive grant funds. Applicants that fail to meet a due diligence condition will be allowed five working days to correct the deficiency or the grant award may be withdrawn.^{AI}

SECTION IV: GRANT TERMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Certificate of Insurance: The types of insurance coverage required are specific to the project. If an applicant is not able to provide a Certificate of Insurance certifying the minimum coverage, the applicant must provide documentation to demonstrate it will obtain the necessary insurance coverage within 30 days of receipt of award.^{AI}

Progress Reporting: Grant recipients must complete and submit progress reports in EGrAMS. Progress reports must include narrative updates on the progress of the project and statistical data related to the grant recipient meeting the goals and objectives of the project scope. Upon completion of the project, the grant recipient is required to submit a final progress report.

Equal Opportunity Responsibilities: Grant recipients must disseminate, and prominently display in a conspicuous location, the *Equal Opportunity Is the Law* notice, providing initial and continuing notice that it does not discriminate on any prohibited basis. Grant recipients will also maintain a signed copy of the *Equal Opportunity is the Law* certification form from each subcontractor or partner, and from each organization that receives services under this grant. All organizations that provide training or services for which participants must apply or register must maintain a signed copy of the *Equal Opportunity is the Law* certification form from each applicant or registrant.^{AI}

Release of Information: Success stories and photographs are critical components to the continuation of the program and can be submitted at any time, but the grant recipient must submit three success stories by the completion of the grant period. Grant recipients must keep a Photo Consent and Release form on file for each participant included in a photograph.

Financial Reporting: It is critical to the success of the program that grant funds are fully expended by the end of the award period. To ensure that budgets are on target, grant recipients are periodically required to demonstrate how their budget will be fully expended by the end of the period of performance. Grant recipients that are not meeting their planned expenditures may have their grant awards reduced.

The Division will provide electronic forms to request reimbursement of expenditures and submit quarterly reports and income reports. Reimbursement requests and grant contributions must be supported with clear and concise financial reports and expense documentation.^{AI}

Participant Data Collection and Reporting: Grant recipients will gather and record information pertaining to participant demographics and other information using a data collection system provided by the Division. Files, including applications and documentation of eligibility, must be kept for each participant.^{AI}

Monitoring: Grant recipients are subject to monitoring. This will include, but is not limited to, review of grant recipient files and records to ensure adherence to the project scope, objectives, goals, training schedules, financial, and equal opportunity compliance. Monitoring may be conducted on-site, through written requests for information, or by distance-delivery.

Correspondence, Publications, and Promotional Materials: Correspondence, publications, and promotional materials for this program will include the following statement: “This training is funded in part by the State Training and Employment Program through the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Business Partnerships Division.”

Record Retention: All records related to this grant agreement shall be maintained by the Grant Recipient for a period of six (6) years following the grant closeout, or until completion of an audit and/or resolution of audit findings, or pending litigation, whichever is longer. The Grant Recipient should request approval from the Grantor before disposing of any records.

Equipment Retention: Any equipment purchased with these grant funds with an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more that has a useful life of at least one year at the end of the grant period must be dispositioned according to directions obtained from the Division. Disposition of the equipment *may* require compensation to the State for any remaining value in the item.^{AI}

Confidentiality of Participant Information: In accordance Alaska Statute, all grant recipients, sub-recipients, or sub-contractors must keep social security numbers, identifying information, and personal information confidential in accordance with state and federal law. Failure to maintain the confidentiality of such information may subject a grant recipient to civil or criminal liability and is grounds for termination of any grant agreement.