

State of Illinois Uniform Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Summary Information

Awarding Agency Name	Commerce And Econ Opp
Agency Contact	John Barr (john.w.barr@illinois.gov)
Announcement Type	Initial
Type of Assistance Instrument	Grant
Funding Opportunity Number	FY26-1
Funding Opportunity Title	Job Training Economic Development Program
CSFA Number	420-30-0513
CSFA Popular Name	Job Training Economic Development Program
Anticipated Number of Awards	25
Estimated Total Program Funding	\$10,000,000
Award Range	\$250000 - \$750000
Source of Funding	State
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements	No
Indirect Costs Allowed	Yes
Restrictions on Indirect Costs	No
Posted Date	11/21/2025
Application Date Range	11/21/2025 - 01/16/2026 : 11:59pm
Grant Application Link	Please select the entire address below and paste it into the browser... https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/64f968e96ede49188b449ea98a118b3d
Technical Assistance Session	No

Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity Job Training and Economic Development Grant Program

NOFO ID: 0513-3185

For information about grants please visit:

<https://dceo.illinois.gov/dceo-grants.html>

A. Program Description

Notice of Funding Opportunity Intent

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (the “Department” or “DCEO”) is issuing this Notice of Funding Opportunity (“NOFO”) to eligible entities under the Illinois Job Training and Economic Development Grant Program (JTED) 20 ILCS 605/605-415 (JTED Act) and the rules adopted in support of the JTED Act, 56 Ill. Admin. Code Part 2660 (JTED Rules). The objective of this NOFO is to address the economic impacts experienced by employers and individuals who are either under-employed, unemployed, or underrepresented individuals facing one or more barriers to employment by providing career pathway opportunities and support services needed for successful re-entry or advancement into the labor force. Additionally, the NOFO offers flexible funding through barrier reduction services, which will support accumulated emergency costs for basic needs. The organization seeking to use funds for barrier reduction services must have policies and procedures to account for the grant funds and prevent fraud or misuse of barrier reduction funds.

It is anticipated that through this NOFO, approximately 1,000 individuals from the target populations may be served. If feasible, the Department anticipates providing funding for services through this NOFO in as many Economic Development Regions (EDRs) as possible, proportional to their populations.

Program Description

The Job Training and Economic Development Grant Program (JTED) was established in 1997 to respond to workforce shortages due to a strong job market and a lack of skilled workers to fill available positions. The legislation found that “despite the large number of unemployed job seekers, many employers are having difficulty matching the skills they require with the skills of workers; a similar problem exists in industries where overall employment may not be expanding, but there is an acute need for skilled workers in particular occupations. The State of Illinois fosters local economic development by linking the job training of unemployed, disadvantaged citizens with the workforce needs of local businesses and industry. Employers often need assistance in developing training resources that will provide work opportunities for individuals that are under-represented and/or have barriers to participating in the workforce. Additionally, JTED has focused on long-term unemployed individuals needing assistance to access the workforce to gain work experience and skills required to obtain family-sustaining employment.

In 2021, the Illinois General Assembly updated JTED to address the economic environment due to the impact of COVID-19. A JTED NOFO was released (November 2021) that addressed the pandemic's impact on the labor force and businesses. Forty-four grantees were selected through the merit review process. Grantees' programs addressed the needs of impacted sectors for a skilled workforce and individuals' needs for training or retraining to access a career pathway to sustainable employment.

The Department released a second JTED NOFO (November 2023) to address the continued impact the pandemic created on demand for skilled employees and the capacity for individuals to access family-sustaining employment and the ability to advance in a career pathway. Thirty-three grantees were

selected through the merit review process to provide services to the targeted populations with priority of service to immigrants and refugees, justice-involved individuals, and rural residents.

The Department is releasing this JTED NOFO focusing on services that address the economic impacts experienced by employers and individuals who are either under-employed, unemployed, or underrepresented facing one or more barriers to employment, defined as risk factors, by providing career pathway opportunities and support services needed for successful re-entry or advancement into the labor force.

Program Priorities

The Department requests applications that demonstrate proven approaches to offering career services, training, and placement of eligible individuals in employment or continued education. Applications will be accepted for projects that serve adults or youth populations per definitions, below; however, an applicant can only submit one application and must choose **which population to serve**. Participant eligibility and strategies to serve the identified priorities are outlined below.

JTED program regulations require that services be provided to the “target population,” defined as unemployed, under-employed, or under-represented individuals, including youth with one or more barriers to employment. The “target populations” is further defined in this NOFO under the *Program Definitions*. Eligibility also requires that the individual has a low-to-moderate income, is an Illinois resident, and is eligible to work in Illinois at the time of application to the program.

Program Definitions

This NOFO will use the definitions established in the JTED program statute, effective June 16, 2021, and the JTED Rules. Many of the JTED program definitions are contained within this NOFO supplement. Any terms not defined within this NOFO supplement may be found in Appendix A of this NOFO.

1. Eligible Entities

Eligible Entities are organizations that are eligible to apply for a grant award for this NOFO and are defined as employers, private nonprofit organizations (which may include a faith-based organization), federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) administrative entities, Community Action Agencies, industry associations, and public or private educational institutions that have demonstrated expertise and effectiveness in administering workforce development programs [20 ILCS 605/605-415(b)]. Local governments that are not WIOA administrative entities are not eligible to apply.

2. Eligible Training Providers

Eligible training providers are organizations such as secondary education institutions, a public or private college or university, an industry association, a registered apprenticeship program, or a community-based organization that is approved to provide training services by the appropriate accrediting body [20 ILCS 605/605-415(b)]. This includes Federal SNAP Employment and Training Providers (FSENT) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) providers. Applicants must provide detailed information about the training providers, including who, what, when, where, and duration of training (see Program Narrative section).

3. Targeted Industries, Occupations, and Growth Sectors

“Target Industries” must be in-demand industries identified in the Governor’s 5-year Economic Plan (<https://dceo.illinois.gov/econplan2024.html>), the State’s WIOA Unified

Plan (<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/IllinoisWIOAStatePlanPY2024-2027.pdf>) or any relevant local or regional level plans. See https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning/Pages/Plans_MOUs_Dashboard.aspx.

The sectors identified in the Governor's 5-year Economic Plan, which include, but are not limited to, the industries listed below. See: <https://dceo.illinois.gov/econplan2024.html>

- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Next Generation Agriculture, Ag Tech, and Food Processing
- Life Sciences
- Clean Energy Production and Manufacturing
- Quantum Computing, AI and Microelectronics

4. Target Population

The JTED program regulations require that services be provided to the "target population," defined as unemployed, under-employed, or under-represented individuals, including youth, who have one or more barriers to employment that are identified as risk factors. The following definitions apply to the "target population:"

- **"Low-income individual"** means an individual who receives, or in the past 12 months has received, or is a member of a family household that is receiving or in the past 12 months has received, assistance through:
 - Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP);
 - Childcare Subsidies through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program;
 - Medicaid;
 - National Housing Trust Fund (HTF), for affordable housing programs only;
 - Home Investment Partnerships Program, for affordable housing programs only;
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF);
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
 - Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (NSLP) and/or School Breakfast (SBP) programs;
 - Medicare Part D Low-income Subsidies;
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
 - Head Start and/or Early Head Start;
 - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC);
 - Section 8 Vouchers;
 - Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); or
 - Pell Grants; or
 - (i) Has income that is at or below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) for the size of their household based on the most recently published poverty guidelines by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); OR (ii) has income at or below 40 percent of the Area Median Income for its county and size of household based on data published most recently by the Department of House and Urban Development (HUD).
- **"Moderate-income individuals"** means individuals whose income is: (i) at or below 300 percent of the FPG of the size of their household based on the most recently published poverty guidelines by HHS; or (ii) at or below 40 percent of the Area Median Income for its county and size of household based on data published most recently by HUD.

- **"Unemployed individual"** means an individual who is without a job and who wants and is available for work. The determination of whether an individual is without a job, for purposes of this definition, shall be made in accordance with the criteria used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. "Unemployed individual" must include:
 - an individual who meets the definition of "unemployed individual" set forth above and is a low-income individual or moderate-income individual; or
 - an individual who is currently employed but received a notice of termination or lay-off from their current employer and will no longer be employed within ninety days, and is a low-income individual or moderate-income individual.
- **"Under-employed individual"** means an individual who is a low-income individual or a moderate-income individual and meets one the following:
 - working part-time but desires full-time employment; or
 - working in employment not commensurate with the individual's demonstrated level of educational and/or skill achievement; or
 - working in employment but would like to increase their skills to obtain a higher wage or promotion.
- **"Under-represented individuals with a barrier to employment" or "Under-represented individuals"** means low-income individuals or moderate-income individuals:
 - who reside in or receive services in a qualified census tract or disproportionately impacted area as defined below; or
 - have experienced one or more barriers to employment that are considered risk factors.

Targeted Communities (Qualified Census Tracts or Disproportionately Impacted Areas)

The JTED Program recognizes the disproportional impact of the pandemic-related recession on economically disadvantaged communities as defined by HUD's Qualified Census Tracts. Competitive applications will prioritize services within or to individuals that reside in identified "qualified census tracts," or "disproportionately impacted areas."

- **"Qualified Census Tract"** means a census tract, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, having 50 percent of households with incomes below 60 percent of the Area Median Gross Income (AMGI) or having a poverty rate of 25 percent or more.
- **"Disproportionately impacted area"** means those ZIP Codes most severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic that meet at least one of the following poverty-related criteria relative to other ZIP Codes within that region:
 - Share of the population consisting of children aged 6 to 17 in households with income less than 125% of the federal poverty level (FPL);
 - Share of the population consisting of adults over age 64 in households with income less than 200% FPL;
 - Share of the population in households with income less than 150% FPL; or
 - Share of the population consisting of children ages five (5) and under in households with income less than 185% FPL.

This link provides a map of the Qualified Census Tracts and Disproportionately Impacted Areas: <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/qctdiamap>.

Program Models

JTED funds will support training programs serving eligible adults or youth. Applicants may apply to administer an adult program, or a youth program, but not both. It is strongly encouraged to build Barrier Reduction services into the training program module. Additionally, applicants must use data to support why the target population was selected and how it serves the employers' and industry sectors' needs. Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to administer components described in the NOFO through JTED funding and leveraged/braided resources, if utilized, to integrate services.

JTED Category 1 - Adult Focus

Applications in Category 1 will address providing services to unemployed, under-employed, or under-represented adults who need the training to access employment or skill upgrades to advance in their employment. All applicants must demonstrate partnerships with employers and educational entities to create local or regional strategies. The types of supportive services that will be provided to adults that will support their success must be described in the application.

Additionally, applicants should consider incorporating Barrier Reduction funding into the training strategy to support participant completion of training and retention in employment. The list of allowable services is under "Program Services" of this NOFO.

When describing training services for **unemployed** adults, applications must include sector-specific occupational training combined with related work-based learning opportunities in a targeted industry described above; any stackable certifications or credentials for participants; and how essential employability skills, including digital and financial literacy and career readiness services, will be incorporated into the program design.

For applicants proposing to serve **under-employed** individuals, the application must include training strategies for skill upgrades or new skills. Additionally, applicants can propose serving incumbent workers through partnerships with local employers that need to upskill their workforce to address labor shortages. Partnerships for incumbent worker projects require that the employer identify the specific skillsets needed for entry-level positions or those needed to advance participants' careers. Proposals must include an overview of the existing curricula or address how a customized training approach will support the employer's productivity and increase the skill competencies of current employees or new hires. Elements of the training strategy should consider short-term credentials for entry positions and long-term training in a career pathway, facilitating advancement with the employer or within the industry sector.

Eligible adult participants for the JTED program are individuals **18 years or older** (or who will turn 18 years old within the first six months of enrollment) who live in Illinois and are eligible to work in Illinois. This includes those who are **unemployed, under-employed or under-represented**.

JTED Category 2 - Youth Focus

In Category 2 applications, the program design must actively involve educators—such as classroom instructors, curriculum developers, and academic advisors—who bring critical expertise in shaping learning environments that are responsive to student needs. Their role is essential in designing and delivering contextualized instruction that integrates academic content with real-world applications. Educators should collaborate with business leaders to co-develop a balanced curriculum that builds academic knowledge, employability skills (including digital literacy and digital financial literacy), and technical competencies aligned with industry standards. Additionally, the model must include a robust supportive services component, which may feature Barrier Reduction Funding. This funding helps equip

youth with the resources necessary to complete the program successfully and thrive in future academic pursuits or workforce opportunities.

Training must include one or a combination of the following industry-recognized credentials: a license recognized by the State or federal government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree with multiple entries and exit points, or entry into a Registered Apprenticeship Program. Employers must be included in leadership roles to guide the development of career pathways and opportunities to experience the workplace through related paid or unpaid work experiences, internships, pre-apprenticeships, or apprenticeships.

These training programs will create opportunities for youth to obtain marketable, in-demand skills and prepare them for jobs. Partnerships in this category must support and commit to leveraging resources to educate, train, support, and identify youth employment.

Eligible youth participants for the JTED program are young people ages **16 to 24** who live in Illinois and are eligible to work in Illinois. These include youth who are **unemployed, under-employed, or under-represented**—whether they're currently in school or out of school.

Program Requirements

The projects selected for funding through this NOFO will aim to alleviate the economic impacts faced by both employers and individuals who are unemployed, under-employed, or facing challenges in finding employment. These projects will provide employment and training services that follow the Illinois Career Pathways framework (<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL-Career-Pathways-Dictionary.PDF>) in the target industries identified in the NOFO. Strategies must be flexible enough to allow participants to succeed in establishing a family-sustaining career. Services described in the application must infuse equity into the entire spectrum of employment, from outreach to retention, as outlined below:

1. Equity-Focused Program Culture

Applicants must demonstrate how the program will increase participants' access, enrollment, completion, and retention. The application must outline how it will address industry barriers for target populations in hiring, advancement, retention, and earning through program models, partnerships, recruitment, and barrier-reducing services. Competitive applications will explain how the program develops digital skills aligned with the targeted industry/industries, including digital literacy, confidence, competence, use, and advanced skills. Finally, applicants must outline strategies for fostering a shared identity in the program and a welcoming, inclusive environment. The focus on equity should be evident in all aspects of program design and partnerships, including successful transition and retention.

2. Outreach and Recruitment

Applicants must provide details about their recruitment and outreach strategies to attract adults or youth to their programs, as applicable, when applying for this opportunity. Additionally, they must explain how their process will ensure fairness and inclusivity towards eligible participants. The outreach plan must align with data analysis that demonstrates the population to be served. It should also consider cultural relevance and identify occupational disparities to help applicants make informed decisions about their participation. Efforts must include:

- Comprehensive details for outreach and recruitment strategies to connect with individuals in the targeted population through culturally relevant media.

- Coordinated outreach and recruitment events with education, workforce, employer/industry organizations, and social service agencies to reach the targeted population.
- Methods of establishing relationships and engaging individuals in the targeted population, and how culturally relevant content will be utilized to inform individuals on the opportunities available, including:
 - Educating potential participants about occupations in the target industries and ensuring the opportunity aligns with their career interests.
 - Educating potential participants about digital literacy and digital skills training to facilitate accessing careers of interest.

3. Employer Engagement

Businesses are best suited to ensure that content for programs meets their needs for a skilled workforce. Therefore, employers should have a leadership role in developing and supporting career pathway programs that integrate work-based learning opportunities. Competitive projects will provide evidence of this business commitment and will include strategies that demonstrate how employers engaged in this process. Examples of these strategies include:

- Surveying the business community to understand and establish a plan to address employer workforce needs, including digital skills to access and perform onsite and remote work;
- Working with economic development agencies to expand business service activity;
- Utilizing business services teams to meet with individual employers to learn more about employer hiring and training challenges;
- Leveraging connections with Local Workforce Innovation Boards, industry associations, chambers of commerce, or other networks to identify employers in need of a skilled workforce;
- Conducting industry-specific events to create an intentional focus on an industry and a specific worker group;
- Inviting employers to present at local workshops to interview interested participants; and
- Working with employers to place program participants in work-based learning opportunities including, internships, on-the-job training, and/or apprenticeships.

4. Career Planning

Career planning is a customer-centered approach in the delivery of services to prepare and coordinate comprehensive career (employment) plans for participants that ensure access to workforce activities and supportive services during program participation and continuing for one (1) year after job placement. Successful career planning is a collaborative and ongoing process rather than a one-time activity. The process is individualized to the job seeker and prepares them for obtaining employment that leads to self-sufficiency and places them on a path for lifelong learning. Effective career planning includes assessment, career readiness activities, preparation, and training, along with appropriate job matching and placement, ending with one (1) year of follow-up. Providing supportive services and conducting follow-up is essential to the success of the jobseeker.

Key components include building rapport, effectively communicating, identifying appropriate services, convening key service providers, connecting participants with services, creating a strong employment plan, motivating and encouraging, following up after an appointment(s), monitoring services, and follow-up after job placement to ensure success. Additionally, keeping accurate, timely, and descriptive records of career planning efforts through appropriate case management is essential.

1. **Comprehensive Assessment**

A thorough assessment is the foundation for understanding the participant's employment goals, existing skills, and career readiness, and determining all barriers to employment that may exist. It is not a one-time activity. Nor is it a one-size-fits-all approach. Assessments help prepare participants to determine existing skills, identify those that require additional training, develop an employment plan, and connect them to services through appropriate referrals. At a minimum, the assessment process must be appropriate for the participant and address the areas below to inform the employment plan. Areas the applicant will need to assess include:

- Employment goals;
- Interest and skills inventory;
- Essential employability skills, including digital confidence, competence, and the use of digital financial literacy skills assessment;
- Basic Skills deficiency;
- Barriers to employment;
- Suitability for the desired training program;
- Review of training options that align with interest and skills inventory; and
- Determination of referrals.

Additionally, assessments must evaluate and identify the suitability of the participant when developing the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and the needed combination of services to address barriers. Suitability includes working with the participant on the following:

- Aligning career goals to interests, skills, and abilities;
- Reviewing occupational profiles and employment outlooks for the selected occupation. This not only includes wage information and training needed, but also includes what employees do on the job, the digital tools employees need to access, and the digital skills employees need to perform the job and participate in the benefits of employment;
- Exploring the career services that are needed to achieve the participants' employment goals;
- Researching the training services that are needed to achieve the participants' employment goal, which includes, but is not limited to:
 - Assessing the participant's preferred training delivery method (traditional classroom, virtual or remote, real-time immersive technology (virtual, extended, or augmented reality), or direct hands-on); and
 - Assessing the cost and the length of the training program;
- Considering work-based-learning opportunities including, but not limited to, Registered Apprenticeships, On-the-Job Training, Transitional Jobs, and/or work experience; and
- Finding the supportive services that are needed to achieve the participants' employment goals.

The information garnered from the comprehensive assessment is used to develop the Individual Employment Plan.

2. **Individual Employment Plan (IEP)**

Like the assessment, the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) is a living document that identifies employment and education goals as part of a career pathway, objectives, and the appropriate combination of services for the participant to reach the goals. The IEP is the basic instrument for the grantee to document the appropriateness of the decisions made about the combination of services for the participant, including referrals to other programs for specified activities. It is to be developed collaboratively with the participant to establish mutually agreed-upon goals. The IEP must be developed after an objective assessment and reflect the expressed interests and needs of the participant. At a minimum, the IEP must identify and document:

- Goals and Objectives:
 - Short-term (training or employment) goal(s);
 - Long-term (employment) goal(s) that clearly document the career pathway to attain the career objectives and include a review of the demand occupations list;
 - Intermediate objectives that will be required to meet the goals listed and required training components (remedial, pre-requisites, skills, work-based training etc.);
 - Provide a justification as to why the short-term and long-term goals are appropriate for the participant and must be:
 - Based on assessment information, an interview with the participant, and skills obtained from previous employment;
- Include an explanation of the skills gap that the IEP is designed to overcome. “Skills gap” is the significant gap between the skills required by the employer and the current capabilities of the applicant;
- Include barriers to employment and/or participant needs, if applicable;
- The appropriate sequence and mix of services to address the unique strengths, challenges, and needs of the participant to obtain the training or employment goal(s);
- Information on the eligible training programs and training providers that are available on the State of Illinois Eligible Training Provider List link provided here: <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/Training/Pages/WIOATrainingProgramSearch.aspx>. The IEP must document how the participant made an informed choice in selecting a training program;
- Identification of barriers and/or needs that may prevent the participant from obtaining employment or participating in training. The IEP must document the services that are provided to address the participant’s barriers, including but not limited to Career Services, Supportive Services, Needs-Related Payments, internet connectivity and affordability services, and referrals to partner agencies for additional assistance such as childcare, counseling, or other applicable programs;
- The direct link to one or more of the performance indicators; and
- A method for tracking progress and identifying next steps, including, but not limited to, follow-up on open goals, objectives, and services.

5. **Training**

Training services are critical to the employment success of many individuals. Programs must lead to measurable skill gains and industry-recognized or post-secondary credentials and align with the customer's choice for a career pathway. Specifically, the training identified must be consistent with the comprehensive assessment and IEP. Providing career pathways through

education and work-based learning assists in accelerating an individual's career advancement. The following services are types of training applicants can consider including in their program design.

1. **Occupational skills training, training for nontraditional employment**
Prepares participants for careers that are traditionally non-academic and directly related to a specific trade, occupation, or vocational skills leading to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by specific occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels.
2. **Skill upgrading and retraining**
Training is provided to assist with upgrading the skills and/or retraining the participants. Courses provide an occupational changing type of instruction to prepare individuals for entrance into a new occupation through instruction in new and different skills demanded by technological changes. Training will result in the workers' acquisition of transferable skills or an industry-recognized certification or credential.
3. **Entrepreneurial training**
Prepares entrepreneurs to either start a small business or expand an existing business, usually through the development of a business plan to operate a location-based or virtual business, and may include advanced digital skills training to operate a digitally powered business identified in the business plan.
4. **Job readiness training**
Includes job seeking and interviewing skills, understanding employer expectations, and enhancing a customer's capacity to move toward self-sufficiency.
5. **Adult education and literacy activities**
Includes activities of English language acquisition, acquisition of basic digital literacy skills through digital confidence, competency and use, and integrated education and training programs, provided concurrently or in combination with services provided in any of the services listed above or as part of work-based learning.

Private Business Vocational Schools (PBVS)

A training provider entity is required to submit an application to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) pursuant to the PBVS Act of 2012 when seeking to operate in Illinois, offer programs/courses of study in Illinois, add an extension site, change ownership of the institution, relocate the main campus, make changes to a program or the institution, or to be declared exempt from IBHE oversight. Approved institutions are required to submit an Annual Renewal application yearly, then every fifth year a 5th Year Permit of Approval application is required.

Note: Any training provider not governed by a certifying body (e.g., ICCB), must comply with PBVS. See <https://www.ibhe.org/pbvsapplications.html> for more information.

Steps to obtain PBVS approval:

1. Register
2. Select the appropriate application to (Permit of Approval or Exemption Application)

3. Once the Permit of Approval Application is complete, you will be required to submit a New Program of Study Application for each proposed program.

If you have system issues, contact: pbvs_apps@ibhe.org.

Note: State Food Safety Food Handler Training is approved by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training is approved by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration; Adult Driver Education training is approved by the Secretary of State.

6. Work-Based Learning / Work-Based Training

Work-based learning provides more opportunities for workers to earn income while gaining critical job skills. The following work-based learning services are allowed under this grant:

1. Pre-apprenticeship

A pre-apprenticeship program is designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program. The key components of a pre-apprenticeship include:

- Training and curriculum that directly aligns with a registered apprenticeship program;
- Access to digital skills acquisition, including basic digital literacy, digital confidence, competency, and use;
- Access to financial digital literacy and knowledge acquisition;
- Access to educational and career counseling, and other supportive services and/or barrier reduction funding;
- Hands-on learning activities connected to education and training activities, such as exploring career options and understanding how skills acquired through coursework can be applied to a future career;
- Opportunities to attain at least one industry-recognized credential; and
- A partnership with one or more registered apprenticeship programs that assist in placing individuals who complete the pre-apprenticeship into a registered apprenticeship program

2. Apprenticeship

An apprenticeship is an employer-driven, “earn while you learn” model that combines on-the-job training with job-related instruction in curricula tied to the attainment of industry-recognized skills standards. Workers benefit from apprenticeships by receiving a skills-based education that prepares them for good-paying jobs. Apprenticeship programs help employers recruit, build, and retain a highly skilled workforce. JTED funds may be used to pay for the technical training and on-the-job training costs of workers. JTED funds may also be used to provide supportive services and Barrier Reduction funds to participants that help them succeed in apprenticeship programs.

3. Work experiences or internships

Work experience and internships are planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period. Work experiences or internships may be paid or unpaid, as appropriate and consistent with other laws, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act. Work experiences or internships may be within the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector.

For youth, work experiences may also include:

- Pre-apprenticeship programs;
- Summer employment and other employment activities available throughout the school year;
- Internships and job shadowing; and
- On-the-job Training.

4. **Transitional jobs** (allowable under *Category 1 Adult*)

Transitional jobs are time-limited, wage-paid work experiences that are subsidized up to 100 percent. These jobs can be in the public, private, or non-profit sectors. Transitional jobs provide individuals with work experience and an opportunity to develop important workplace skills, including digital skills, within the context of an employee-employer relationship, in which the program provider generally acts as the employer, and with an opportunity to develop important workplace skills.

5. **On-the-job training**

On-the-job Training (OJT) provides reimbursements to employers to help compensate for the costs associated with skills upgrade training, including digital literacy, competency and use skills, for newly hired employees and the lost production of current employees providing the training (including management staff). OJT training can assist employers who are looking to expand their businesses and who need additional staff trained with specialized skills. OJT employers may receive up to 75% reimbursement of the wage rate of OJT trainees to help defray personnel training costs.

6. **Customized training**

Customized training is designed to meet the specific requirements of an employer or group of employers, with the commitment that the business or businesses employ an individual(s) upon successful completion of the training.

7. **Incumbent Worker (IW) Training** (allowable under Category 1)

Incumbent Worker Training provides services to employers with 250 or fewer employees. Employee trainees must meet the definitions of under-employed or have received notices of termination or lay-off. IW is designed to meet the needs of an employer or group of employers to retain a skilled workforce or avert layoffs. Incumbent Worker training can be used to either:

- Help avert potential layoffs of employees; or
- Obtain the skills necessary to retain employment, such as increasing the skill levels, including digital skills, of employees so they can be promoted within the company and create backfill opportunities for new or less-skilled employees.

7. **Supportive Services**

Supportive Services (Defined in Appendix A) provide participants with key assistance beyond career and training services necessary to achieve success. Applicants must provide their Supportive Service policy if they intend to provide these services through this grant. Examples of supportive services include but are not limited to the following:

- Linkages to community services;
- Assistance with transportation;
- Assistance with childcare and dependent care;

- Assistance with housing;
- Assistance with educational testing;
- Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities;
- Legal services, including background checks;
- Referrals to digital equity resources such as low or reduced-cost internet connectivity programs, devices, and digital solutions to facilitate remote work, at-home learning, or communications with employers or employability service providers;
- Referrals to the Illinois Comptroller for financial digital literacy training and banking enrollment and services;
- Referrals to health care and services such as immunizations, vision, and dental care;
- Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses, protective eye gear and other essential safety equipment;
- Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in postsecondary education classes; and
- Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.

8. Barrier Reduction Funds

Barrier reduction funding is devoted to increasing family stability and job retention by covering accumulated emergency costs for basic needs, such as housing-related expenses (rent, utilities, internet connectivity, etc.), transportation, childcare, digital technology needs, education needs, mental health services, substance abuse services, income support, and work-related supplies that are not typically covered by programmatic supportive services [20 ILCS 605/605-415(b)]. **Eligible entities must provide their Barrier Reduction Funding policy if they intend to provide these services through this grant.** At a minimum, all applicants for Barrier Reduction Funding will be required to:

- Describe the exact types of barrier reduction funding services to be provided (e.g., housing, transportation, childcare, internet connectivity, digital device, etc.);
- Demonstrate that the applicant has established policies for resource and service coordination with appropriate provider organizations;
- Demonstrate there is a need to use Barrier Reduction Funding to assist program participants in a manner related to the Job Training and Economic Development Grant, including a reason why these services are unavailable through other social service programs;
- Distinguish between when support services will be used compared to Barrier Reduction Funding and why Barrier Reduction Funding is the better option;
- Describe the population of individuals to be served, the region of the State to be served, the types of assistance to be provided to program participants, and the estimated total amounts and the amounts to be provided per participant;
- Describe the anticipated outcomes by using the Barrier Reduction Funding to assist program participants;
- Establish criteria, if offering emergency cash assistance, for determining the need and amount of cash being provided (Emergency cash assistance will need prior approval by DCEO) and referral to the Illinois Comptroller for a digital banking enrollment or solution; and
- Demonstrate that the applicant has policies and procedures to account for the grant funds and prevent fraud or misuse of barrier reduction funds.
- **See Appendix B for more details on allowable Barrier Reduction funding.**

9. Placement

The placement of program participants in jobs is one of the primary goals of the JTED Program. Successful applicants will utilize several job placement services, including:

- Outreach and networking with local employers on their anticipated employment needs;
- Engaging businesses in hiring and recruiting events and collaborating with workforce partners, including training providers and Chambers of Commerce, to identify employment opportunities, training needs, and gaps in services;
- Using the Virtual Job Fair (VJF) site in Illinois workNet to connect workers with employers. Job fairs can be set up by employers, grantees, Chambers of Commerce, legislators, etc., to provide job seekers information on how to prepare for a VJF and what to expect when attending the event, and it is a chance to speak with potential employers.

10. Follow-Up

Follow-up services after training completion are encouraged, as appropriate, for adult and youth participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment to support retention. Follow-up services must meet the needs of the participant and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Supportive services and/or Barrier Reduction services;
- Mentoring;
- Financial literacy education;
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services;
- Providing individuals with information about additional educational or employment opportunities, including digital literacy, digital confidence, competency, and use training;
- Counseling individuals about the workplace;
- Contacting individuals or employers to verify employment;
- Contacting individuals or employers to help secure better-paying jobs, additional career planning, and counseling for the individual;
- Assisting individuals and employers in resolving work-related problems;
- Connecting individuals to peer support groups; and
- Providing individuals with referrals to other community resources.

11. Program Assessment

Applicants must provide information about how their program models will be assessed and how this information will be used to enhance program delivery. Program assessment may include surveys of program graduates regarding overall satisfaction with the training activities delivered and appropriateness to the targeted job opportunities, surveys of employers concerning the comprehensiveness of coverage of required job skills, etc. The assessment plan should indicate how the results of the assessment activities will be used to continuously improve the training program.

12. Program Partners / Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

All applicants must have a current written agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with all the program partners that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner and lists their funding contribution. Applicants who enter an MOU with Eligible Training Providers should include details regarding the training program, including the length, location, class size, cost, and other important information. MOUs must be developed and signed within the NOFO

application timeframe. **MOUs established prior to the NOFO release date may be rejected, and the application may not be reviewed.** Please review the sample MOUs available as a resource at <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Pages/JTED2025.aspx>.

13. **Leveraged Funding**

Round 1 of JTED in 2021 supported Barrier Reduction ONLY programs. This NOFO does not include this option. However, it is encouraged for applicants to utilize other funding streams to maximize service capacity. A complementary training program can cover the cost of components like Training and/or Work-Based Learning/Work-Based Training, and JTED can be utilized for other components like Barrier Reduction, but the **ENTIRE** application must be completed that describes the training program and indicates how leveraged funds will be utilized. Tracking of services provided by the complementary grant will be required.

Performance Goals and Measures

Program goals and outcomes must be included in the proposal for each JTED Category and training program under consideration. Agreed-upon goals and outcomes will be tracked utilizing project management tools in the *Illinois workNet.com* workforce portal. Competitive applications will clearly articulate how the activities funded under each applicable Category in this NOFO support the negotiated goals and result in positive outcomes. Note: the grant funds should not supplant or replace the applicant's current operations.

Under this NOFO, an evaluation will be conducted to determine the impact of barrier reduction funding and the best methods for measuring results. Through Illinois workNet's case management system, assessments of barriers will be conducted and reported, and alignment and delivery of services will be reviewed and compared to outcomes. The intent of the evaluation is to set standards and baseline results for future programs utilizing barrier reduction funds.

1. **Performance Goals**

Grantees will be required to report performance data on the following activities and outcomes:

- Number of individuals enrolled in the program
- Number of individuals completing the program
- Number of individuals obtaining credential(s)
- Number of individuals that achieve a measurable skill gain
- Number of individuals placed in post-secondary education
- Number of individuals placed in unsubsidized employment
- Number of individuals retained in unsubsidized employment for 6 and 12 months
- Number of individuals experiencing a wage/benefit increase

Additionally, the JTED program will keep track of grant activities and outcomes utilizing the Illinois workNet system. These metrics will inform the Department of the efficiency and effectiveness of employment and training services provided under this NOFO. The activity and outcome metrics include (but are not limited to the following):

- Number of businesses engaged
- Number of individuals ***placed*** and number ***acquiring*** an Industry-Linked Credential, Certification, or License
- Number of individuals ***placed*** and number ***completing*** a Pre-Apprenticeship, United States Department of Labor (USDOL) Registered Apprenticeship, or other Apprenticeship Programs (see <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/ApprenticeshipIL/Pages/default.aspx>)

- Number of individuals **placed** and number **completing** OJT
- Number of individuals **placed** and number **completing** a paid work experience or internship
- Number of individuals **continuing** a Pre-Apprenticeship, Registered Apprenticeship, or other Apprenticeship Program at case closure
- Number of individuals achieving digital competency
- Number of individuals employed in the sector
- Number of individuals promoted in the sector

2. **Performance Standards**

Acceptable performance for a competitive application is set at 75% of the planned performance goals.

B. Funding Information

This grant program is utilizing State of Illinois General Revenue Funds appropriated by the General Assembly budget. Total amount of funding expected to be awarded through this NOFO is approximately \$10,000,000. Awards will range from \$250,000 to \$750,000. The Department expects to make approximately 25 award through this NOFO. Please note that the Department is not bound by these estimates and award ranges.

The period of performance is expected to be May 1, 2026 through April 30, 2028.

Allowable Costs

Grant expenditures must comply with the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200), the JTED statute (20 ILCS 605/605-415), and related rules (56 Ill. Admin. Code Part 2660) and must be reasonable and necessary to support one of the allowable grant activities set forth in 56 Ill. Admin. Code 2660.40. Specific allowable grant costs are listed below, and specific budget line items are identified in the uniform budget template:

- Expenses to design training curricula and related materials;
- Expenses to provide industry-linked skill training and work-based learning to individuals in the target population (e.g., instructor costs and curriculum materials, including digital devices required for digital literacy training);
- Expenses for the ongoing evaluation and refinement of the curricula and related materials;
- Expenses for the design and implementation of a needs assessment to determine specific skill shortages being experienced by one or more local industries;
- Expenses for the design and implementation of a needs assessment to determine the education and training needs of the target population relative to the skill needs of local industries;
- Expenses for the design of curricula and related materials for training programs designed for individuals in the target population to prepare them to meet identified skill labor shortages;
- Expenses for the delivery of industry-linked training and work-based learning to unemployed persons and placement of program completers into jobs in the target industries;
- Expenses for ongoing coordination of the Eligible Training Provider partners;
- Program participant wages;
- Expenses for career planning activities that provide one-on-one staff assistance and career counseling as defined under "Program Services;"
- Expenses incurred to meet grant administration requirements; and
- Any other costs determined to be reasonable and necessary to carry out the grant program activities as permitted and approved by the Department.

Grant Award and Payment Terms

Successful applicants will be invited to negotiate a grant with the Department.. The executed grant agreement(s) will specify conditions for payment and a payment schedule. In general, grantees will receive payments on a reimbursement basis and may be subject to proration dependent upon the grantee meeting performance targets. Each grant will have enrollment and outcome goals specific to the types of projects funded. Penalties for missing performance targets may be applied at the Department's discretion.

Grant Extensions

The Department may authorize the extension of projects awarded under this NOFO, including additional funding based on the activities, outcomes, and performance of the grant, as well as the availability of funds under the Job Training and Economic Development Grant Program.

Funding Requirements

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards: All applicants must be in compliance or agree to comply with the Uniform Administrative Requirements located at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170, 183 and 200.

Applicants must submit a project narrative that describes in detail how the award will be executed. The project narrative should include enough information for DCEO to understand the scope of the project, the budget, including a detailed breakdown of the costs associated with each budget line and any additional necessary detail to enable DCEO to manage the grant agreement activity against planned project performance. The Project Narrative must include evidence of capacity, quality and need as defined in Section E.1.

The release of this NOFO does not obligate the Department to make an award.

C. Eligibility Information

An entity must be registered in the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Grantee Portal, <https://grants.illinois.gov/portal/>, at the time of grant application. The portal will verify that the entity:

- Has a valid FEIN number (<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/get-an-employer-identification-number>)
- Has a current SAM.gov registration (<https://sam.gov>). SAM.gov registrations must be marked as "public" to allow the GATA Grantee Portal to expedite the review of the federal information;
- Has a valid UEI number (<https://sam.gov>)
- Is not on the Federal Excluded Parties List (verified at <https://sam.gov>)
- Is in Good Standing with the Illinois Secretary of State, as applicable (https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/business_services/corp.html)
- Is not on the Illinois Stop Payment list (verified once entity is registered in GATA Grantee Portal); and
- Is not on the Department of Healthcare and Family Services Provider Sanctions list (<https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/oig/Pages/SanctionsList.aspx>)

Entities on the Illinois Stop Payment List and/or the Federal Excluded Parties List at time of application submission will not be considered for an award.

An automated email notification to the entity alerts them of "qualified" status or informs how to remediate a negative verification (e.g., not in good standing with the Secretary of State). A federal Debarred and Suspended status cannot be remediated.

At this time, federal memo M-21-20 allows entities to apply for grant awards without a valid UEI number. The UEI number must be obtained prior to grant execution. The State of Illinois has adopted this guidance for the issuance of state awards also.

Pursuant to the policy of the Illinois Office of the Comptroller, to receive grant funds from the State of Illinois, a grantee must be considered a regarded entity by the IRS for federal income tax purposes. Disregarded entities will not be eligible to receive grant funds.

1. Eligible Applicants include:

Applicants must have demonstrated expertise and effectiveness in administering workforce development programs [20 ILCS 605/605-415(b)] and must meet the requirements outlined in this NOFO. Entities that are eligible to apply for the JTED NOFO consist of:

- Employers;
- Private nonprofit organizations (which may include a faith-based organization);
- Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) administrative entities;
- Community Action Agencies;
- Industry associations; and
- Public or private educational institutions

Local governments that are not WIOA administrative entities are not eligible to apply.

The Department complies with all applicable provisions of state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment and equal employment opportunity including, but not limited to: The Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/1-101 et seq.), The Public Works Employment Discrimination Act (775 ILCS 10/1 et seq.), The United States Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended) (42 USC 2000a-and 2000H-6), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 794), The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC 12101 et seq.), and The Age Discrimination Act (42 USC 6101 et seq.).

2. Cost Sharing or Matching.

Matching funds are not required; however, projects that include matching or leveraged funds from multiple funding sources will be given priority consideration. Consideration will also be given to projects that include plans that address ongoing sustainability beyond the grant period.

3. Indirect Cost Rate.

In order to charge indirect costs to a grant, the applicant organization must have an annually negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). There are three types of NICRAs:

a) Federally Negotiated Rate. Organizations that receive direct federal funding, may have an indirect cost rate that was negotiated with the Federal Cognizant Agency. Illinois will accept the federally negotiated rate. The organization must provide a copy of the federally NICRA.

b) State Negotiated Rate. The organization may negotiate an indirect cost rate with the State of Illinois if they do not have a Federally Negotiated Rate. If an organization has not previously established an indirect cost rate, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted through State of Illinois' centralized indirect cost rate system no later than three months after receipt of a Notice of State Award (NOSA). If an organization previously established an indirect cost rate, the organization must annually submit a new indirect cost proposal through CARS within six to nine

months after the close of the grantee's fiscal year, depending on the grantee's audit type requirements.

c) De Minimis Rate. An organization may elect a de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct cost (MTDC). Once established, the De Minimis Rate may be used indefinitely. The State of Illinois must verify the calculation of the MTDC annually in order to accept the De Minimis Rate.

All grantees must complete an indirect cost rate negotiation or elect the De Minimis Rate to claim indirect costs. Indirect costs claimed without a negotiated rate or a De Minimis Rate election on record in the State of Illinois' centralized indirect cost rate system may be subject to disallowance.

Grantees have discretion and can elect to waive payment for indirect costs. Grantees that elect to waive payments for indirect costs cannot be reimbursed for indirect costs. The organization must record an election to "Waive Indirect Costs" into the State of Illinois' centralized indirect cost rate system.

The following State University Facilities & Administration Rate and Base will apply to all State issued awards that contain either Federal pass-through funding or State funding.

RATE:

20% Rate for awards or programs administered On-Campus*

10% Rate for awards or programs administered Off-Campus*

BASE:

Base approved in the State Universities' current Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)

*Criteria for utilization of the On/Off campus rate is located within the general terms and conditions of Federal NICRA for each State University. If not clearly defined, State awarding agencies and officers will make final determination based upon the purposes of the grant scope.

Administrative Costs: It is expected that administrative costs, both direct and indirect, will represent a small portion of the program budget. Program budgets and narratives will detail how all proposed expenditures are directly necessary for program implementation and will distinguish between direct/indirect administrative and direct/indirect program

4. Freedom of Information Act/Confidential Information.

Applications and accompanying materials are subject to disclosure in response to requests received under provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1 et seq.). Information that could be proprietary, privileged, or confidential commercial or financial information should be clearly identified as such in the application materials. The Department will maintain the confidentiality of that information only to the extent permitted by law.

5. Other, if applicable.

Program Eligibility Criteria: All grant applicants must follow the program design and approaches outlined in this NOFO. Eligible program participants must meet criteria established in the NOFO under the applicable categories.

Additional Program Requirements: All applicants must be complying, or agree to comply, with all applicable federal and state laws and related regulations to be considered for an award, including, but not limited to:

- Job Training and Economic Development Grant Program, 20 ILCS 605/605-415 and related rules at 56 Ill. Admin. Code 2660.
- Protection of Personally Identifiable Information (see Identity Protection Act (5 ILCS 179/1) and the Personal Information Protection Act (815 ILCS 530/1).
- Uniform Administrative Requirements found at 2 CFR 200.

Applicant Rights: Submission of an application confers no right to an award or to a subsequent grant agreement. The Department is not obligated to award any grants under this program, to pay any costs incurred by the applicant in the preparation and submission of an application or to pay any grant-related costs incurred prior to the grant beginning date. Applicants may utilize the appeal process as stated in the Merit-Based Review Policy available in the Resource Library at www.grants.illinois.gov.

Applicants may submit one application for either an adult program or a youth program for this opportunity.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package.

Grant application forms are available at the web link provided in the “Grant Application Link” field of this announcement or by contacting the Program Manager:

JTED Program Grant Manager Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

Email: ceo.wd.policyandgrants@illinois.gov

2. Content and Form of Application Submission.

A standard application package must be submitted to and reviewed by DCEO. Each package must contain the following items:

- ☐ Uniform Grant Application in fillable PDF format.
 - Signature page must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
 - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
 - Can be signed digitally
- ☐ Uniform Budget utilizing the template provided by DCEO for this project.
 - The entire Excel document with all the tabs included, even if the tabs are not relevant to the grant opportunity, must be submitted.
 - Do not send a restricted version of the Uniform Budget.
 - Certification page must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
 - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
 - Can be signed digitally
- ☐ Conflict of Interest Disclosure.
 - Conflict of Interest Disclosure must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
 - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
 - Can be signed digitally
- ☐ Mandatory Disclosure.
 - Mandatory Disclosure must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission

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- Can be printed, signed, and scanned
- Can be signed digitally

This Notice of Funding Opportunity also requires the submission of the following other programmatic specific items as part of the program application:

- ☐ JTED Program Application. This a guided application and must be completed entirely.
- ☐ JTED Program Implementation Plan. This must be completed entirely and is a reference to the Program Application.
- ☐ Memorandum of Understanding or Partnership Agreements (if applicable)
- ☐ Certificate of approval from Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) for all training providers that are Private Business Vocational Schools. An entity is required to submit an application to IBHE relative to the PBVS Act of 2012 when seeking to operate in Illinois, offer programs/courses of study in Illinois, add an extension site, change ownership of the institution, relocate the main campus, make changes to a program or the institution, or to be declared exempt from IBHE oversight.
<https://www.ibhe.org/pbvapplications.html>

Please note there is a maximum upload of 10 documents in the web form that you submit the application, so combining files may be necessary.

3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM).

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal or State awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal or State awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

- (i) Be registered in SAM. To establish a SAM registration, go to <https://sam.gov> and/or utilize this instructional link: How to Register in SAM from the gata.illinois.gov Resource Library tab. SAM.gov registrations must be “public.”
- (ii) Provide a valid UEI number in the GATA Grantee Portal registration.
- (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal, Federal pass-through or State award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal or State awarding agency. The State awarding agency may not make a Federal pass-through or State award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the State awarding agency is ready to make a Federal pass-through or State award, the State awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal pass-through or State award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal pass-through or State award to another applicant.

4. Submission Dates and Times.

Applications for this opportunity must be submitted by 11:59PM on January 16, 2026.

Application materials must be submitted to the Department via electronic form at <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/64f968e96ede49188b449ea98a118b3d>.

The Department is under no obligation to review applications that do not comply with the above requirements. Failure to meet the application deadline may result in the Department returning application without review or may preclude the Department from making the award.

5. Intergovernmental Review, if applicable.

N/A

6. Funding Restrictions.

This opportunity does allow reimbursement of pre-award costs. Pre-award costs are incurred at the applicant's own risk and will not be funded if an award is not made. Pre-award costs for services in anticipation of an award may be allocable, where necessary for the efficient and timely performance of the program and are subject to 2 CFR 200.458 and, where permitted, in the final executed grant agreement. To be accepted, proof of services must meet the guidelines and requirements outlined within this NOFO and the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) [See 30 ILCS 708/125 (<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/documents/003007080K125.htm>)]. Costs associated with the development of a grant proposal are not allowed. Other restrictions can be found in Sections A, B, and C.

7. Other Submission Requirements.

Documents stored in Google Docs or other cloud-based servers are not allowed.

The applicant can receive a copy of their submitted application by checking the "Send me a copy of my responses" box at the bottom of the application submission form.

Applicants may confirm receipt of the application and documents by contacting the program contact listed in this NOFO.

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria.

Grant proposals will be reviewed through a competitive process and scored on a 100-point scale. The Department will establish the threshold for funding recommendations. Applications will be evaluated based on four key criteria: **Capacity**, **Need**, **Program Plan**, and **Budget**.

Both the **Program Application** and the **Program Implementation Plan (PIP)** will be considered during the merit review. It is essential that the information provided in the Program Application aligns with the details outlined in the PIP. The point distribution for each review category is outlined below.

SECTION 1: CAPACITY	POSSIBLE POINTS
Applicants must provide detailed responses that demonstrate their ability to successfully administer the proposed program. This section should include:	15
Staffing strategies including subcontractors, that will be used to ensure effective program administration and demonstrate organizational capacity.	5
Experience in delivering services outlined in the NOFO and executing similar projects within grant timelines.	5
Experience working with businesses in target industries, eligible training providers, and the target population.	5
SECTION 2: NEED	POSSIBLE

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Applicants must provide detailed responses that demonstrate their ability to successfully administer the proposed program. This section should include:	POINTS 15
Experience working with businesses in target industries, eligible training providers, and the target population.	5
Program aligns services with labor market trends, local/regional workforce plans, and employer needs to support high-demand industries and occupations.	5
Program addresses barriers faced by the target population and lead to family-sustaining careers, while also supporting employer stability in target sectors.	5
SECTION 3: PROGRAM PLAN	POSSIBLE POINTS 55
Applicants must provide detailed responses that demonstrate their ability to successfully administer the proposed program. This section should include:	
Demonstrated how equity is embedded throughout program design, delivery, and partnerships to ensure inclusive environments and outcomes for participants.	5
Demonstrated how outreach and recruitment strategies will be used to engage the target population through culturally relevant approaches.	5
Outlined how they will raise awareness and educate participants about career pathways and available support services.	5
Identified the role the employers and industry associations play in shaping the training programs and meet talent needs.	5
Explains how services will be tailored to participants' skill levels and employment barriers to support career advancement.	5
Explains how collaboration with training providers, workforce systems, and community-based organizations enhance service integration and participant impact.	5
Explains how training programs ensure participants earn industry-recognized credentials, licenses, or certifications aligned with viable career pathways.	5
Articulates the plan to efficiently deliver support services (e.g., needs assessment, referrals, funding) that address short- and long-term challenges.	5
Demonstrates how the program will promote unsubsidized employment, increased earnings, post-secondary progression, and job advancement for adult or youth participants.	5
Describes the timelines and milestones for program implementation, and how will the applicant assess and use feedback to improve training quality and delivery.	5
Describes the plan to continue supporting participants in their career pathways and sustain services after the grant funding period ends.	5
SECTION 4: BUDGET NARRATIVE/COST EFFECTIVENESS	POSSIBLE POINTS 15
Applicants must provide detailed responses that demonstrate their ability to successfully administer the proposed program. This section should include:	
Justifies key budget items and ensure cost effective program delivery aligns with expected outcomes. (This must correlate with the budget)	5
Indicates what partner organizations or subcontracts will be supported through the grant, and what services, funding amounts, and locations (<u>physical address</u>) are associated with each. (This must correlate with the budget)	5

Demonstrates what public and private funding sources, partnerships, and matching contributions will be leveraged to enhance program sustainability and return on investment. (This must correlate with the budget)	5
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2. Review and Selection Process.

Applications will be graded using the Merit Review Process and scored on the criteria specified in Section E.1. The Department will designate an Evaluation Committee to grade each application received for this funding opportunity. The final score of each Committee member will be calculated and an average of all scores will be the final applicant score. Decisions to award grants and the funding levels will be determined based on the applicant's response and compliance with the requirements of this NOFO. The Evaluation Committee and DCEO may consider the geographic distribution of awards throughout the state in making final funding decisions. Selected applications will enter into negotiations with the Department for a grant. The purpose of negotiations will be to arrive at acceptable grant terms, including budget and scope of work revisions, at which time the final decision to make a grant award will be made.

The Department reserves the right to request additional information from applicants for evaluation purposes. At its sole discretion, the Department reserves the right to reject all applications, reject individual applications for failure to meet any requirement, award in part or total, and waive minor defects and non-compliance.

The Merit Based Review process is subject to appeal per <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/meritappealreview.html>. However, competitive grant appeals are limited to the evaluation process. Evaluation scores may not be protested. Only the evaluation process is subject to appeal. The appeal must be submitted through the merit review appeal request form (<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/6444bed39ef140c589f002f53b9bc092>) within 14 calendar days after the date that the grant award notice has been published.

3. Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates, if applicable.

After the application period is closed, the Department will conduct a meritbased review of eligible applications. Successful applicants will receive a Notice of State Award (NOSA) to initiate the grant agreement phase. During this phase, you will be contacted by a grant manager to develop a grant agreement, which can be a months long process depending on complexity, cooperation, and conformity with all applicable federal and state laws.

The Department reserves the right to issue a reduced award, or not to issue any award.

F. Award Administration Information

1. State Award Notices.

The Notice of State Award (NOSA) will specify the funding terms and specific conditions resulting from the pre-award risk assessments and the merit-based review process. The NOSA must be accepted in the GATA Portal by an authorized representative of the grantee organization. The NOSA is not an authorization to begin performance or incur costs.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

Subrecipients and Subcontractors: Agreement(s) and budget(s) with subrecipients and subcontractors must be pre-approved by and on file with DCEO. Agreements can be submitted to DCEO when available. Subcontractors and subrecipients are subject to all applicable provisions of the Agreement(s) executed between DCEO and the grantee. The successful applicant shall retain sole responsibility for the performance of its subrecipient(s) and/or subcontractor(s).

Grant Uniform Requirements: The Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (30 ILCS 708/1 *et seq.*) (and its related administrative rules, 44 Ill. Admin. Code Part 7000), was enacted to increase the accountability and transparency in the use of grant funds from whatever source and to reduce administrative burdens on both State agencies and grantees by adopting federal guidance and regulations applicable to those grant funds; specifically, the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200).

Procurement: Grantees will be required to adhere to methods of procurement per the Procurement Standards (2 CFR 200.317 – 2 CFR 200.327).

3. Reporting.

Periodic Performance Report (PPR) and Periodic Financial Report (PFR)

Grantees funded through this NOFO are required to submit in the format required by the Grantor, at least on a quarterly basis, the PPR and PFR electronically to their assigned grant manager. The first of such reports shall cover the first three months after the award begins. Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.328, Periodic Financial Reports shall be submitted no later than 30 calendar days following the period covered by the report. Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.329, Periodic Performance Reports shall be submitted no later than 30 calendar days following the period covered by the report. Any additional reporting requirements will be disclosed in the NOSA. Grantees are required within 45 calendar days following the end of the period of performance to submit a final closeout report in the format required by the Grantor (See 2 CFR 200.344).

Monitoring

Grantees funded through this NOFO are subject to fiscal and programmatic monitoring visits by the Department in accordance with 2 CFR 200.337. They must have an open-door policy allowing periodic visits by Department monitors to evaluate the progress of the project and provide documentation upon request of the monitor. Program staff will also maintain contact with participants and monitor progress and performance of the contracts. The Department may modify grants based on performance.

Audit

Grantees shall be subject to Illinois' statewide Audit Report Review requirements. Terms of the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 (31 USC 7501-7507), Subpart F of 2 CFR Part 200, and the audit rules set forth under the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act Admin Rules shall apply (See 44 IL Admin Code 7000.90).

Project Reporting

Grantees will be required to document the participant enrollments and the services that are provided to every participant served under this grant and related outcomes within ten (10) days of providing the service in the Illinois workNet.com portal.

1. Project Reporting:

Grantees will be required to submit regular reports to document the progress of the project as part of the grant requirements. These reports include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Participant-level information, including services, outcomes, and demographics, available through the Illinois workNet™ or other reporting processes as directed by the Illinois Department of Commerce.
- Periodic Performance Report.
- Periodic Financial Report.
- A final narrative assessment of project outcomes that identifies promising practices and lessons learned to inform future workforce program implementation efforts.
- Other reporting deemed necessary by the Illinois Department of Commerce.
- Evaluation of all projects is required.

2. Success Story Submission in Illinois workNet:

Grantees are required to submit written testimonials for program participant successes published on Illinois workNet to show how programs are making a difference in people's lives. It is above and beyond a list of events or activities and describes a positive, significant and noteworthy change to the participant. It should show how participating in the program is making Illinois a better place to live – for individuals, families, organizations, businesses, and communities. For more information and examples, please see:

<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/UpdatesHelp/Pages/SuccessStories.aspx>

G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Grant Help Desk
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
Email: CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov

H. Other Information, if applicable

Submission of an application confers no right to an award or a subsequent grant agreement. The Illinois Department of Commerce is not obligated to award any grants under this program, pay any costs incurred by the applicant to prepare and submit an application, or pay any grant-related expenses incurred before the start date to grant. All decisions of the Illinois Department of Commerce are final.

Resources:

Below are items that applicants should familiarize themselves with to understand the application's requirements:

- State of Illinois Unified Workforce Plan **<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan>**.
- WIOA Regional/Local Plans by Economic Development Region
[https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning/Pages/Plans MOUs Dashboard.aspx](https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning/Pages/Plans_MOUs_Dashboard.aspx).

Technical Assistance:

Before applying for funding, several Technical Assistance (T.A.) sessions will be available on various topics, including Grant Writing, Business Engagement, Career Pathways, Equity, and other topics. All applicants are encouraged to attend the sessions. The information for T.A. sessions will be posted at:
<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Pages/JTED2025.aspx>.

Once a grant is established, participation in T.A. is required and will be provided throughout the grant period (in the form of webinars, regional meetings, and direct support). The T.A. schedule will be

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available and regularly updated on the JTED site:

<https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Pages/JTED2025.aspx>.

Successful applicants must agree to receive consultation technical assistance from authorized representatives of the Department. The grantees and collaborating partners will have required site visits, training, and in-person interviews. Successful applicants must attend webinars and training as scheduled and provided by the Department or a subcontractor of the Department and must budget accordingly.

JTED Program Development and Capacity Building: The Department welcomes written feedback regarding the effectiveness of the program design and the requirements outlined in this NOFO. Please address all feedback to:

JTED Program Grant Manager
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
Email: ceo.wd.policyandgrants@illinois.gov