

***JOB TRAINING & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM***

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATION
FISCAL YEAR 2015**

**Illinois Department of Commerce and
Economic Opportunity**

Office of Employment and Training

December 2014

Pat Quinn, *Governor*

Adam Pollet, *Director*

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)
JOB TRAINING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
GRANT PROGRAM**

I. Program Description and Requirements

A. Program Background:

This Request for Application (RFA) is being issued under the auspices of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (the Department). The Job Training and Economic Development Grant Program (JTED) is authorized under Public Law 90-474 (20 ILCS 605/605-415).

Legislation was signed in 1998 to create the Job Training and Economic Development Grant Program. The program goals are to:

1. Foster local and regional economic development by linking the needs of the *low-wage/low-skilled employed worker* with the workforce needs of local industry.
2. Foster local and regional economic development by linking the needs of the *unemployed disadvantaged individual* with the workforce needs of local industry.

B. Program Description: (The Department awards grants in two categories)

Category I – Industry-Linked Training for Low-Wage/Low-Skilled Workers

A community-based provider partners with local employers in need of a better trained workforce for existing low-wage and low-skilled workers and newly hired disadvantaged persons. The community-based provider and local employers identify low-wage workers who are unable to advance in their careers due to inadequate skills. The community-based provider enters into partnership agreements with employers to design curricula and deliver skills training to the workers. The program increases the skill levels of the workers, as well as their earning potential and job advancement. [*Low-wage/low-skilled workers* are defined as workers who earn an hourly wage (or equivalent) that is equal to or less than 175% of the Federal Poverty Level for a family of three.]

Category II – Industry-Linked Training for Unemployed Disadvantaged Individuals

A community-based provider establishes partnerships with employers and works with local economic development organizations to develop and operate training programs for unemployed disadvantaged individuals that meet the skill needs of local industry. The community-based provider shall assess the employment barriers of local residents and work with local economic development organizations to identify the skill shortage needs of local industry. The community-based provider enters into partnership agreements with local employers to develop a skill curriculum for the unemployed disadvantaged individual that meets the local employer's needs and

establishes job placement opportunities after training. *Disadvantaged individuals* are defined as individuals who are between the ages of 16 and 72, and at least one of the following:

- (1) receives, or is a member of a family which receives, cash welfare payments under a federal, state, or local welfare program; OR
- (2) has, or is a member of a family which has, received a total family income for the six month period prior to application for the program involved (exclusive of unemployment compensation, child support payments, and welfare payments) which, in relation to family size, was not the excess of 70% of the lower living standard income level; OR
- (3) is receiving, or has been determined, within the last six month period prior to the application for the program involved, to receive, food stamps pursuant to the Food Stamp Act of 1977; OR
- (4) qualifies as a homeless person under subsection (a) and (c) of section 103 of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act; OR
- (5) is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the requirements of clause (a) or (b), but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet such requirements.

C. Program Requirements:

1. Eligibility:

To be eligible for a grant under either category, the respondent to this RFA must be a **not-for-profit organization with a local Board of Directors that directly provides job training services**. The not-for-profit organization must have a history of serving low-wage/low-skilled workers and/or disadvantaged individuals. Such organizations are referred to as "community-based providers" in the Act.

PLEASE NOTE: Applicants may only apply for one category. Grants will not be awarded to the same organization for both Category I and Category II programs.

2. Project Activities:

Activities that are allowable in Category I, Industry-Linked Training for Low-Wage/Low-Skilled Workers, are defined as activities required to:

- (a) develop training curricula specific to the skill needs of specific employers appropriate for low-skilled, low-wage employees and recently hired disadvantaged individuals;
- (b) provide industry-linked skill training to low-wage employees and recently hired disadvantaged individuals; and,

- (c) work cooperatively with local employers to evaluate and refine training programs for recently hired disadvantaged individuals and/or existing low-wage workers that will assist the targeted industries in meeting skill shortages.

Activities that are allowable in Category II, Industry-Linked Training for Unemployed Disadvantaged Individuals, are defined as activities required to:

- (a) assess the employment barriers of local residents who are unemployed disadvantaged persons;
- (b) work cooperatively with local economic development organizations to identify the unmet skill needs of one or more local industries;
- (c) work cooperatively with local employers from those industries to design and deliver training programs for disadvantaged persons that will assist the targeted industries in meeting skill shortages; and
- (d) place program completers into jobs in the targeted industries.

3. Sector Strategies Initiatives

The Illinois Workforce Investment Board highlighted the need to target training resources for occupations in sectors of the economy expected to drive the creation of good-paying jobs. Specifically, training must be targeted for occupations with shortages of skilled workers in these sectors. The five primary industry sectors are: healthcare; manufacturing; and, transportation/distribution/logistics, information technology and agriculture. These sectors have been identified as possessing high skill and wage positions with a shortage of qualified employees to fill them. The Local Workforce Investment Board may also target additional sectors depending upon the employment composition of their area and specific industry needs.

Consideration will be given to Category I community-based providers that are partnering with employers with regionally identified demand occupations; and through training, the low wage, low-skilled employees skills sets are upgraded which results in a higher wage/benefit job opportunity and career movement with the employer.

Consideration will be given to Category II community-based providers that have targeted regionally identified demand occupations to develop training for disadvantaged persons; and are partnering with local employers in need of skilled employees in these demand occupations offering high wage opportunities.

4. Application Format:

All applications must be submitted in the format prescribed by the department. The templates, (“Applicant Name - 2015 JTED Application.doc” and “Applicant Name- Applicant Certification Signature Page - 2015 JTED”), are provided to complete the application. Instructions for completing each section are included at the end of this file. Once you have completed the application the document needs to be renamed by replacing “Applicant Name” with your organizations name. *The application must to*

be submitted as a word document. The applicant certification signature page must be signed and submitted as a separate attachment renaming the file by replacing “Applicant Name” with your organizations name; this can be submitted as a PDF file. Any additional information required by the RFA that cannot be included in the application format needs to be submitted in a separate document and can be in a PDF file format. Proposals not prepared in this format may not be considered for funding.

5. Grant Period:

The period of performance will be from June 1, 2015 through May 31, 2017. The approved budget will cover expenses for the same period of time.

II. Selection Criteria

A. Basis for Award of Grant

The Department shall consider the following criteria in making a funding decision:

1. Prior JTED grantees performance in meeting the goals of the grant shall be considered in future grant awards and funding levels.
 - a. Category I program performance will be evaluated based on average wage gains and/or benefit increases of the workers after training is completed and job retention by workers for 90 consecutive days or 150 non-consecutive days, or promotions due to acquiring additional skills.
 - b. Category II program performance will be evaluated based on the job placement after training is completed, and job retention of the workers for 90 consecutive days or 150 non-consecutive days (working at least 30 hours per week).
2. All grantees will be evaluated on the following criteria:
 - a. prior experience of the community-based provider serving low-wage, low-skilled workers and unemployed disadvantaged individuals including welfare recipients;
 - b. the qualifications of personnel assigned to the proposed project
 - c. the level of participation of local employers, the Department will give additional points for employer partnership agreements that demonstrate a quality relationship with commitment to the training process and to job placement and advancement of trained participants.
 - d. the amount of match funds (either cash or in-kind) provided, for Category I the Department will give additional points to projects that include a cash or in-kind match by an employer in partnership with a community-based provider;
 - e. the quality of the proposed curriculum and related materials;

- f. the likelihood training will result in increased earnings and job retention for Category I and employment and job retention for Category II program participants;
- g. the reasonableness of the proposed costs in relation to the curriculum and the number of persons to be trained;
- h. occupations have been targeted in industries that are experiencing a demand for skilled employees and that will lead to gainful employment and to career path opportunities for the participants. The Department will give additional points to projects that provide training in regionally identified demand occupations and;
- i. letters of support included from targeted sector representatives such as Industry Associations, Councils, Local Economic Development Organizations and local workforce boards.

B. Review and Selection Procedures

A preliminary review will be conducted by the Grant Manager. The purpose of the preliminary review is to:

1. Verify that the applicant is an eligible respondent;
2. Verify that the CBO is in Good Standing with the Secretary of State;
3. Determine that the application is complete;
4. Was submitted timely;
5. Determine that the application is within the scope of this RFA; (Incomplete applications, applications from ineligible respondents, and applications outside the scope of this RFA will not be reviewed.), and;
6. Verify performance outcomes of existing or previous grantees.

Applications deemed acceptable from the preliminary review will be given final review by the Department. Grant applications will be reviewed on a competitive basis. Based on the review, applicants may be selected to enter into negotiations with the DCEO for a grant. The purpose of negotiations will be to arrive at acceptable grant terms, including budgetary and scope-of-work provisions. The final decision to make a grant award will be made by the Director of the DCEO. Presentations may be required by the bidders.

DCEO at its sole discretion, reserves the right for all funding decisions: to reject all applications; to reject individual applications for failure to meet any requirement; to award in part or total; and to waive minor defects and non-compliance. Submission of an application confers on you no right to an award or to a subsequent grant agreement. All decisions of the DCEO are final.

Under no circumstances should costs be incurred prior to the execution of the grant without the expressed written consent of the Department.

C. Application Orientation:

The follow Application Orientations will be offered:

Bidders Conference:

Date: December 17, 2014

Time: 10:00am – 12:30pm

James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph,
Chicago, IL 60601

The meeting is in room 2-025. This is on the second floor. Visitors will not have to go through security to get to this room. Visitors will take the escalator to the second floor or use the public elevator by the GNC. The room is down the hall that is located by the blood bank just past the SuperCuts.

Webinar:

Date: December 19, 2014

Time: 10:00am and repeated at 2:00pm

You will need to register for the webinar at the below site.

<http://jted2015.eventbrite.com/?s=31826791>

You will receive a link to the webinar after registration.

Call in number: 866-821-1611

D. Submission Information:

Respondents must follow the application format as defined above and submit the documents via email to tammy.stone@illinois.gov, also, one original and three copies must be mailed to:

**Tammy Stone
500 East Monroe
Springfield, IL 62701**

All proposals are due by the end of day on January 28, 2015. Please note that the conditions for submittal of applications, including the deadline, may not be waived or extended regardless of any circumstances resulting in delayed delivery of your proposal. Any application received after the deadline may be considered for review at the discretion of the DCEO. In such cases, the DCEO will determine if there are funds available to make additional grant awards. Please e-mail questions to Ms. Stone at Tammy.Stone@illinois.gov or call 217-557-5549.