The State of Illinois has posted a *Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)* to fund projects that demonstrate how apprenticeship programs can be developed and administered across workforce, education and economic development organizations throughout the State.

Illinois recognizes apprenticeships are a proven work-based learning strategy connecting individuals to a career pathway. The State increased the number of Registered Apprenticeships from 13,754 in Federal Fiscal Year 2016 to 15,186 in Federal Fiscal Year 2017. Although a solid foundation is in place, Illinois recognizes more resources are required to meet the goal of expanding Registered Apprenticeships 25% by 2020. The purpose of this NOFO is to request proposals from eligible organizations capable of implementing the apprenticeship expansion priorities of Illinois’ Unified State Plan and the Illinois Apprenticeship Committee the support of Apprenticeship Intermediaries and Regional Apprenticeship Navigators.

*Apprenticeship Intermediaries*

Intermediary organizations act as apprenticeship program sponsors and perform administrative responsibilities such as registering businesses and apprentices, tracking activities, and reporting results. This eases the burden for businesses, particularly small companies that do not have the personnel to execute such tasks. In this model, the *Apprenticeship Intermediary* sponsors or administers the apprenticeship programs, coordinates with employers to hire apprentices, facilitates the provision of related technical instructions and other components of the program. This NOFO will support *Apprenticeship Intermediary* activities including the funding of apprenticeship demonstration projects.

*Regional Apprenticeship Navigators*

A strong apprenticeship program requires building and maintaining effective partnerships between the business, workforce system, and education/training providers. The objective of the *Apprenticeship Navigators* is to expand apprentice sponsorship by employers and intermediaries in existing and new occupations throughout the state. This NOFO will support business outreach with employers and workforce professionals to expand the use of apprenticeship as a work-based learning strategy.

**Eligible costs**

It is expected that 4-7 grants of $50,000 to $500,000 will awarded under this NOFO. The goal is to fund 2-3 projects in northern Illinois, 1-2 projects in central Illinois, and 1-2 projects in southern Illinois. Funding awards will correspond with the project’s anticipated outcomes and deliverables. The Department of Commerce may elect to award larger amounts based on strength of application or performance during the grant period. The Department of Commerce expects to award $1-3 Million in Apprenticeship Expansion grants.

**Eligible Applicants**

The Department of Commerce places special emphasis on partnerships and sustainability within the Governor’s Economic Development Regions (EDRs) throughout the State of Illinois. Applicants should document how the project will impact workforce, education and economic development and be replicated throughout the State (if applicable). Proposals will be accepted from Organizations with the administrative capacity and a history of successfully implementing innovative pilots and other priority projects are eligible to apply for funding.

**Information Sessions & NOFO WEBISTE**

The Department will coordinate the information sessions listed below to review the program guidelines and grant application submission requirements. For more information, please visit the NOFO webpage at: [www.illinoisworknet.com/apprenticeshipnofo](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.illinoisworknet.com_apprenticeshipnofo&d=DwMFAg&c=jrLYy3FV6j9HoN3FfGW-SLJoSRpiMyAzztY4B1tagEk&r=fgV49XVYrLisBQ1XXc-CW4ZlDPez_shYMIWT6xmzjpM&m=VXC16ieRon3_6JuIT88PVGkWVrmZ7TCR95D-eLT8YQ8&s=G6mNB9fS1_LpuubuH-MwLVIDIyiyv27mwlGLQdq58BE&e=)

*NOFO Webinar*

August 8, 2018

Date/Time: August 8, 2018, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm (CDT)

Webinar Link: <http://siuccwd.adobeconnect.com/nofo/>

Conference Number: 866-803-3878

Register here: <https://apprenticeshipnofowebinar.eventbrite.com>

*Bidders’ Conferences/Workshops*

The workshops will have two sessions:

* Session 1 – Apprenticeship Grant Opportunity (10 AM – 12 PM)
* Session 2 – Workforce Grants 101 (1 PM – 3 PM)

**Chicago, IL** – August 14, 2018, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Bilandic Building, 5th Floor Auditorium, 160 N LaSalle St, Chicago, IL 60601

Register here: <https://grantworkshopchicago.eventbrite.com>

**Naperville, IL** – August 15, 2018, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

NIU Naperville, 1120 E Diehl Rd, Naperville, IL 60563

Register here: <https://grantworkshopnaperville.eventbrite.com>

**Marion, IL** – August 21, 2018, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

State Regional Office Building, 2309 West Main Street, Marion, IL  62959

Register here: <https://grantworkshopmarion.eventbrite.com>

**Collinsville, IL** – August 22, 2018, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Illinois State Police, [1102 Eastport Plaza, Collinsville, IL](https://www.google.com/maps/place/1102+Eastport+Plaza+Dr,+Collinsville,+IL+62234/@38.676989,-90.0227207,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m8!1m2!2m1!1s1102+eastport+plaza+drive+collinsville+il!3m4!1s0x87df5514fb0c82d9:0x88549675a52f034e!8m2!3d38.676989!4d-90.020532) 62234

Register here: <https://grantworkshopcollinsville.eventbrite.com>

**Springfield, IL** – August 23, 2018, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

SIUC Center for Workforce Development

Lincoln Land Community College, Montgomery Hall

2450 Foundation Drive Suite 100, Springfield, IL 62703

Register here: <https://grantworkshopspringfield.eventbrite.com>

**Rockford, IL** – August 29, 2018, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Regional Design Center, 315 North Main Street, Rockford 61101

Register here: <https://grantworkshoprockford.eventbrite.com>