

REGIONAL WORKFORCE IMPACT PROGRAM: FAQ

- Q: There are two different dates included in the information released: programs that began after March 3, 2021, and projects that began after May 17, 2021.
 - o **A:** This was an oversight in our final review of the guidance. Please use the May 17, 2021, date.

- Q: Can these funds be used for salary?
 - o **A:** We cannot pay salaries; however, we can support contracted services specific to the proposed project(s).

- Q: Will there be another funding round?
 - o **A:** Not at this time. This program is designed to fully fund each region the amount that has been allocated.

- Q: If an application is submitted prior to July 30, 2022, will it be reviewed and awarded early?
 - o **A:** We will review all applications after the July 30 deadline. We cannot guarantee review or funding approval before that date.

- Q: Can these funds be utilized to establish a local grant program?
 - o **A:** No. Creating local grant programs is not within the intent of the RWIP. Local sub-recipients must be pre-determined and identified in the application. Funds should be used on projects that will create the greatest impact on workforce in the community and/or region.

- Q: Can the RWIP be used to create a scholarship fund?
 - o **A:** No. Funds may be used to offset training program participation costs for in-demand occupations but holding the grant in a scholarship fund is outside of the intent of this program. Funds must be used by June 30, 2023, or they will need to be turned back to the state.

- Q: How do we connect with another organization to partner with?
 - o **A:** If you need help getting connected with economic developers, the regional council, etc., in your region, please let us know. We are happy to help you.

- Q: What does it mean that only one application per region will be accepted?
 - o **A:** The intent of the grant is to promote collaborations within each region to address workforce challenges caused or exacerbated by COVID-19. Within this one application you can identify multiple projects, that have the intent to impact communities within the region.

- Q: Does it have to be the regional council that submits the application for the region?
 - o **A:** No. Each region must decide which organization will submit the application on behalf of all partners involved in implementing project(s) in your region's proposal. Once your region has identified the lead applicant, please notify Katie Ralston Howe (keralston@nd.gov) as all communication should be streamlined through this organization and the primary point of contact.

- Q: Can the RWIP be used to assist with student loan debt or wage match (i.e. Operation Intern)?

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- **A:** Direct payment to, or on behalf of individuals, is not an eligible use of funds. If sub-recipients are needed to execute identified projects, funds must be paid to a registered organization.
- We encourage organizations to explore the North Dakota Career Builders program for skilled workforce scholarship and loan repayment opportunities.
- Q: Can funds be used for security deposits, applications fees to help low-income households secure housing, or rental assistance programs?
 - **A:** Direct payment to, or on behalf of individuals, is not an eligible use of funds. If sub-recipients are needed to execute identified projects, funds must be paid to a registered organization. Housing projects under the RWIP should focus on the most productive and/or effective use of the funds and aim to impact the most people possible.
- Q: Funds to purchase complex for transitional or temporary housing for the homeless or hard to house individuals.
 - **A:** This may be allowable given the population being served and the multi-unit complex which will meet the needs of several individuals and/or families, thereby supporting their success in the workforce.
- Q: Is it possible for funds to be used as incentives for recruiting efforts to support these industries?
 - **A:** Direct payment to, or on behalf of individuals, is not an eligible use of funds. If sub-recipients are needed to execute identified projects, funds must be paid to a registered organization.
- Q: For new programs addressing workforce challenges in the region, are program buildout and capacity building eligible uses of funds?
 - **A:** Contractors can be paid with these funds; however, applicants must identify how the program will be sustained without grant funds covering the contractor's fees after June 2023.
- Q: For workforce upskilling, are testing fees an eligible expenditure?
 - **A:** Yes, as long as the funds are not directly be paid/reimbursed to the individual. The cost of testing fees should be built into the upskilling program budget.
- Q: What is acceptable information that shows "evidence-based solutions" relative to pandemic impact?
 - **A:** Evidence-based solutions should utilize data to articulate why a particular project is being included and the projected impact it will have. Applicants may wish to include similar examples from other cities or states to reinforce the impact their project may have.
- Q: Can universities or colleges participate as a sub-recipient to assist executing the initiatives included in a region's application?
 - **A:** Yes, Institutions of postsecondary education; school districts and private schools; and businesses are eligible sub-recipients.

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- Q: Can a project provide services to out-of-state individuals and businesses that generate money for the project to help it be sustainable?
 - **A:** No, projects and business identified in the proposal must be located in North Dakota. Funds to individuals are not an eligible expense.

- Q: Are businesses allowed to apply for grants?
 - **A:** No; however, they may be a sub-recipient if they are a part of the region's proposed solution. We encourage businesses to explore the Technical Skills Training grant or Workforce Innovation Grant as they were created for business.

- Q: Can funds be used for childcare assistance to help families return to work?
 - **A:** If funds are distributed to a licensed childcare facility, this may be eligible.

- Q: Are county or city dollars eligible to be applied as part of the 25% match requirement? A: Please see General Match Requirements starting on p.9 of the grant guidance for complete listing of eligible match sources. Can proposals address multiple categories identified in the grant guidance?
 - **A:**Yes.

- Q: Can programs/projects address a region's entire population and have specific areas highlighting underserved stakeholders or must all stakeholders be members of underserved populations?
 - **A:** We do not expect that each citizen in a region will be impacted by these grant dollars. We encourage regions to focus on their greatest workforce needs that were caused or exacerbated by the pandemic.

- Q: The federal ARPA guidance indicates an end date of December 31, 2024, to have all funds obligated. Why is the contract end date June 30, 2023?
 - **A:**The 67th Legislative Assembly provided a \$15 million appropriation for this initiative in SB 2345 during the Special Legislative Session in November 2021. This bill authorizes the Department of Commerce the use of funds through the end of the current biennium, which ends on June 30, 2023.