State of Oregon

OFFICE OF WORKFORCE INVESTMENTS

WORKFORCE READY GRANTS

Round One: Building Capacity for Workforce Programs

Request for Applications

HECC # 21-142

OregonBuys # S-52500-00003513

Date of Issue:	June 29, 2022
Application Due Date:	August 13, 2022, 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time
Award Announcement:	Approximately September 9, 2022

For questions, clarifications, or if you need this material in a different format, please contact the Office of Workforce Investments at FutureReadyOregon@hecc.oregon.gov

1. **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

The State of Oregon, acting by and through the Higher Education Coordinating Commission ("HECC"), is issuing this Request for Applications ("RFA") on behalf of the Office of Workforce Investments ("OWI").

The State of Oregon has committed to supporting the educational and training needs of Oregonians through the establishment of Future Ready Oregon also known as SB 1545 (2022). Future Ready Oregon, is a comprehensive $200M investment package that supports the education and training Oregonians need for family-wage careers, prioritizing underserved communities.

Workforce Ready Grants are one component of Future Ready Oregon and represent a total investment of $95M. Workforce Ready Grants will be made available to workforce service providers and community-based organizations that administer workforce programs in the health care, manufacturing and technology industry sectors and prioritize equitable program participation by individuals from priority populations.

Workforce Ready Grants are being made available for application in phases.

2. **GRANT OPPORTUNITY AND PURPOSE**

This RFA is for Round One of Workforce Ready Grants. In Round One, HECC will release up to $9.8 million in grants. Round One grants will fund organizational investments and can be referred to as capacity-building grants. Round One grants are intended to broaden the type, number, and capacity of organizations that comprise Oregon's workforce system. By expanding representation in the workforce system, HECC hopes to increase the availability and usage of culturally and linguistically appropriate workforce services.

Round One grant funds can be used for the following activities intended to increase the grantee's capacity to launch, expand, sustain, or support workforce programs in the health care, manufacturing and technology industry sectors:
- Hiring staff or contracting for services
- Developing strategies and plans to launch, expand, sustain or support workforce programs including program development
- Preparing for future workforce funding opportunities, including future rounds of Workforce Ready Grants
- Purchasing equipment, technology or other supplies
- Paying for administrative costs
- Any other activities necessary to increase the organization's capacity to launch, expand, sustain, or support workforce programs in the health care, manufacturing and technology industry sectors

Round One grant funds are for capacity building activities from the period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023; therefore successful applicants' grant funds must be fully-expended by June 30, 2023.

Applying for or receiving funds in Round One will not impact an applicant's ability or need to apply for future rounds of funding.

3. **RFA SCHEDULE**

The table below represents a tentative schedule of events for this RFA. All times are listed in Pacific Time. All dates listed are subject to change.

Description	Date	Time
RFA Issuance	June 29, 2022	
Optional Application Coaching and Guidance available through the Technical Assistance providers described in Section 7 below	June 29, 2022 to August 13, 2022	
Optional Information Sessions for Potential Applicants	July 6, 2022	2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (see Section 7 below)
	July 13, 2022	10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (see Section 7 below)
	July 20, 2022	5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. (see Section 7 below)
Application Due Prior to	**August 13, 2022**	**11:59 p.m.**
Notice of Award (approximate)	September 9, 2022	
Issuance of Grant Agreement (approximate)	September 23, 2022	

4. **COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

Individuals within a community, and communities within a larger society, need the ability to shape their own present and future, and the HECC believes that workforce development and education are fundamental aspects of Oregon's ability to thrive. Equity is both the means to success and an end that benefits us all. Equity requires the intentional examination of systemic policies and practices that, even if they have the appearance of fairness, may in effect serve to marginalize some and perpetuate disparities. The data is clear that Oregon demographics have been changing to provide rich diversity in race, ethnicity, and language. Working toward equity requires an understanding of historical contexts and the active investment in changing social structures and practice over time to ensure that individuals from all communities have the opportunities and support to realize their full potential.

Creating a culture of equity requires monitoring, encouragement, resources, data, and opportunity. The HECC applies its Equity Lens to all aspects of its work. Additionally, Future Ready Oregon as a concept, originated in the Racial Justice Council's Workforce Workgroup, with the intent to do things differently. That means investing differently, encouraging innovation, and intentionally bringing new partners into our workforce system. Future Ready Oregon also places an emphasis on serving priority populations which include, but is not limited to, communities of color, women, low-income communities, rural and frontier communities, veterans, persons with disabilities, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes, older adults and individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.

HECC has worked to operationalize the spirit of Future Ready Oregon and our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in this grant making process through the following actions;

- Consulting with partners to inform our planning in an effort to develop an inclusive, low barrier grant process
- Focusing the first round of funding on capacity building grants to enable a more diverse group of organizations the time and funding to plan and prepare for future workforce development activities and funding opportunities
- Hosting a series of information sessions designed to provide potential applicants an opportunity to ask questions and receive guidance (see Section 7 below for more information)
- Contracting with Technical Assistance providers to provide potential applicants technical assistance and coaching through the funding application process (see Section 7 below for more information)
- Prioritizing priority populations in the scoring criteria (see Section 7 below for more information)
- Soliciting engagement in the scoring process from a diverse mixture of organizations, entities and partners
- Providing funding upfront to applicants that demonstrate a need for immediate funds (see Section 6 below, and Attachment B, for more information)

5. **GENERAL APPLICANT GUIDELINES**

Eligible applicants must be either a workforce service provider or a community-based organization.

Workforce service providers include:
- nonprofit and public workforce education, training, and career services providers
- governmental entities that provide workforce development services

Community-based organizations include:
- nonprofit organizations that are representative of a particular community or specific segments of a community and are located within or in close proximity to the community they serve
- culturally-specific organizations who serve a particular cultural community, are primarily staffed and led by members of that community and demonstrate intimate knowledge of the lived experience of that community, including, but not limited to:

- The impact of racism or discrimination on the community
- Specific disparities in access to services and resources experienced by the community
- Community strengths, cultural practices, beliefs and traditions

General Applicant Terms:

- HECC may require clarification to understand any of the applicant's scored criteria. Any necessary clarifications or modifications will be made before executing any award and may become part of the final Agreement.
- Submission of an Application does not constitute an agreement between the HECC and applicant, nor does it secure or imply that applicant will be selected to receive funding.
- All costs associated with applicant's submission of an application are the sole responsibility of the applicant and shall not be borne by HECC or the State of Oregon.
- By applying, applicant accepts all of the terms and conditions of this RFA. No grant funds will be released prior to all program conditions being met and funding agreements executed.

6. GRANT AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS & FUNDING INFORMATION

- HECC anticipates awarding numerous Grant Agreements.
- The grant funds are State of Oregon General Funds (meaning, they do not include federal requirements).
- HECC reserves the right to reopen the RFA as necessary, as it deems in its best interest.
- HECC reserves the right to amend agreements resulting from this RFA for additional time and/or funds, if in HECC's best interest to do so.
- HECC may disperse awards upon execution of Grant Agreements, if articulated as a need by the grantee in their application and if HECC's best interest to do so.

Reporting Requirements:
All applicants will be required to provide progress reports, as well as final report(s) to HECC. Report components and timelines will be described in detail in the Grant Agreements.

Allowable Uses for Grant Funds:

Applicants shall provide a budget estimate for funding that details the following Allowable Costs:

- Organizational investments and capacity building, including, but not limited to:
    - Hiring staff
    - Developing organizational development strategies
    - Purchasing equipment, technology or other training-related supplies
    - Covering administrative costs including the costs to complete grant project oversight and grant organizational administration
    - Any other activities necessary to create, administer or expand workforce programs in the healthcare, manufacturing and technology industry sectors.

These Round One grant funds are for the above-described Allowable Costs from the period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

7. **SUBMISSION**

Resources Prior to Submission:
HECC will hold three optional Information Sessions for Potential Applicants. Attendees can expect to hear background information on Future Ready Oregon, learn more about the purpose of these grants and how an applicant's application will inform the scoring process. Attendees will also have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about the application process and Future Ready Oregon. Subject to technology limitations, HECC will post recordings of the sessions alongside the RFA on the HECC Grant and Contracting Opportunities webpage here.

The optional Information Session dates and times are as follows:
- July 6, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., register/join here*
- July 13, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., register/join here*
- July 20, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., register/join here*

*Once registered, an email with the link to the meeting will be sent to you. Email FutureReadyOregon@hecc.oregon.gov if you do not receive this link.

HECC has contracted with the below-named contractors to provide potential applicants coaching and technical assistance through the RFA process. Potential applicants can expect to receive assistance and guidance in determining their eligibility and in preparing their applications from the Technical Assistance Providers. This service is being made available to all potential applicants at no cost. To access this service please call or email one of the following options (they are not listed in any particular order):

Technical Assistance Provider #1:   Upward Development, LLC
Attn: Andi Kemp (they/them)
541-870-0588
andi@upward-development.com
Website: https://upward-development.com

Technical Assistance Provider #2:   William (Bill) Weismann
dba Grassroots Northwest
503-422-2502
grassrootsnw@comcast.net
Website: www.grassrootsNW.com

Technical Assistance Provider #3:   Next Level Nonprofit Consulting LLC
Attn: Lynn Egli and Ann Craig
541-760-5435 and 541-829-1850
lynn@nextlevelnonprofitconsulting.com
Ann@nextlevelnonprofitconsulting.com
Website: https://nextlevelnonprofitconsulting.com

Submission Requirements:
- All applications shall be submitted via the web-based Application found here: Workforce Ready Grants Round One: Building Capacity for Workforce Programs - Workforce Ready Grants (smapply.io)
- Submissions received after August 13, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time may not be accepted.

8. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The successful applicants will be selected based on the following scored criteria:

a) How the project is intentionally tailored to advance opportunities for individuals from priority populations and their unique needs. (15 points)

b) The extent to which the project results in long-term, sustainable impacts for individuals from priority populations. (15 points)

c) The applicant's demonstrated experience serving individuals from priority populations. (15 points)

d) How the applicant's project will further the workforce development system and the efforts of Future Ready Oregon. (12 points)

e) How the applicant intends to engage with employers in the health care, manufacturing and technology industry sectors to provide workforce development opportunities. (12 points)

f) How well the applicant demonstrates how the activities described in the project plan will contribute to the project's success. (10 points)

g) How the applicant intends to collaborate with one or more of the following entities: (8 points)
   - Other workforce service providers or community-based organizations;
   - Kindergarten through grade 12 schools
   - Community Colleges
   - Education and training partners
   - Local workforce development boards
   - Economic development organizations
   - Industry associations
   - Universities

h) How reasonable the expenses documented in the project budget are in relation to the project. (8 points)

i) How the applicant will leverage the use of other funding sources, including federal funds and private sector contributions, toward workforce programs and opportunities. (5 points)

Total: 100 Points

Miscellaneous Evaluation Information

Evaluation of applications are based on the criteria in this RFA. In appropriate circumstances, HECC reserves the right to partially fund applications in discrete portions or phases. If HECC chooses to partially fund an application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the application or portion thereof, was evaluated and

selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process. Funded applications through this RFA does not guarantee future funding. When or if additional funding becomes available, HECC reserves the right to issue additional awards under this RFA through the remainder of the biennium. These awards will not require further competition. Any additional selections will be made in accordance with the terms of this RFA and HECC.

HECC at any point reserves the right to reopen the RFA as necessary or may solicit programs if it is in the best interest of HECC.

9. **PUBLIC RECORDS**

All information and records submitted to the HECC are subject to disclosure under the Public Records Law, ORS 192.311 to 192.478. If Applicant believes that any information or records it submits to the HECC may be a trade secret under ORS 192.345(2), or otherwise is exempt from disclosure under the Oregon Public Records Law, Applicant must identify such information with particularity and include the following statement:
- "This data is exempt from disclosure under the Oregon Public Records Law pursuant to ORS chapter 192[insert], and is not to be disclosed except in accordance with the Oregon Public Records Law, ORS 192.311 through 192.478."
- If Applicant fails to identify with particularity the portions of such information that Applicant believes are exempt from disclosure, Applicant is deemed to waive any future claim of non-disclosure of that information.

10. **LIST OF ATTACHMENTS TO THIS RFA:**
- Attachment A: Link to OWI Workforce Ready Grant Application
- Attachment B: Project Plan
- Attachment C: Project Budget
- Attachment D: Application Certification Sheet

ATTACHMENT A
LINK TO OWI WORKFORCE READY GRANT APPLICATION

Please click on the following link to access the web-based Application: Workforce Ready Grants Round One: Building Capacity for Workforce Programs - Workforce Ready Grants (smapply.io)

The questions below are being provided as a underline preview only so that applicants know what questions are asked. Applicants MUST submit their information and answers through the above link.

Preview of Questions:

Legal Applicant Name or Organization:	
Physical Address (City, State, Zip)	
Employer Identification Number (EIN):	
Program Contact:	
Email Address:	
Phone:	
Fiscal Contact:	
Email Address:	
Phone:	

1. Please indicate which type of eligible applicant you are, based on the following definitions:
   - **Workforce Service Provide**r- This includes nonprofit and public workforce education, training, and career services providers and governmental entities that provide workforce development services.
   - **Community-based Organization**- This includes nonprofit organizations that are representative of a particular community or specific segments of a community and are located within or in close proximity to the community they serve and culturally-specific organizations. Culturally-specific organizations serve a particular cultural community, are primarily staffed and led by members of that community and demonstrate intimate knowledge of the lived experience of that community, including, but not limited to:
     - The impact of racism or discrimination on the community
     - Specific disparities in access to services and resources experienced by the community
     - Community strengths, cultural practices, beliefs and traditions

2. Explain how your organization meets the definition of the eligible applicant type you selected. (text box)

3. Which priority population(s) do you plan to serve? (*check all that apply*)
   - ☐ communities of color
   - ☐ women
   - ☐ low-income communities
   - ☐ rural and frontier communities
   - ☐ veterans
   - ☐ persons with disabilities
   - ☐ incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals
   - ☐ members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes
   - ☐ older adults
   - ☐ individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community
   - ☐ Other (please describe: _____)

4.   Which industry sector is your project related to? (*check all that apply*)
   ☐   Health Care
   ☐   Manufacturing
   ☐   Technology

5.   Describe your project and explain how it will increase your capacity to launch, expand, sustain or support workforce programs in the industry sector(s) indicated. (text box)

6.   Describe how your project is intentionally tailored or designed to advance opportunities for individuals from priority populations. (text box)

7.   Describe the extent to which your project may result in long-term, sustainable impacts for individuals from priority populations. (text box)

8.   Describe your experience serving individuals from priority populations. Please include examples of your experience and information on if your experience is with the population(s) your project will benefit or other populations. (text box)

9.   Describe how you will engage with employers from the industry sector(s) indicated to provide workforce development opportunities. Include details on if these are existing or new partnerships. (text box)

10.   Which of these entities will you engage and collaborate with? (*check all that apply*)
   ☐   Other workforce service providers or community-based organizations
   ☐   Kindergarten through grade 12 schools
   ☐   Community Colleges
   ☐   Education and training partners
   ☐   Local workforce development boards
   ☐   Economic development organizations
   ☐   Industry associations
   ☐   Universities
   ☐   None of the above
   ☐   Other (please specify)

11.   Describe how you plan to engage and collaborate with the entities indicated. Include details on if these are existing or new partnerships. (text box)

12.   At the end of this form, you will be required to upload a project plan. Please describe how the activities in the project plan will contribute to the project's success.

13.   At the end of this form, you will be required to upload a project budget. What amount of grant funds are you requesting?

14.   In regards to your project budget, please describe any funding sources, including state, federal, or private sector contributions that will be leveraged for this project. (text box)

You will then be prompted to:
Complete and upload Attachment B: Project Plan
Complete and upload Attachment C: Project Budget
Complete and upload Attachment D: Application Certification Sheet

ATTACHMENT B
PROJECT PLAN

Instructions:

Please complete a Project Plan to submit as part of your Application (linked above in Attachment A). The below is an example of a Project Plan broken down by major objectives/milestones, the key tasks involved and anticipated start and end dates. ***Your planned activities must be completed during the period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 202*3**. This Project Plan template is being provided as a tool. You may add additional categories, lines, or use an alternative format as long as it addresses the same components.

Major Objective/Milestone	Key Task	Start Date	End Date

ATTACHMENT C
PROJECT BUDGET

Instructions:
Please complete a Project Budget to submit as part of your Application. The below is an example of a budget broken down by grant activity, type and fiscal quarter. ***Note that grant funds must be for expenses during the period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.***

Applicant's Name: _____	Jul 1, 2022-Sept 30, 2022	Oct 1, 2022-Dec 31, 2022	Jan 1, 2023-Mar 31, 2023	Apr 1, 2023-Jun 30, 2023
GRANT ACTIVITIES:				
Name of Grant Activity 1:_____				
Program Costs are as follows:				
[*Specify the costs on this line and below. For example: paid work experience, tuition and fee assistance for workforce programs, wraparound workforce development services, development of culturally- and/or linguistically-specific career pathways, fund organizational investments, etc.*]	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Name of Grant Activity 2:_____				
Program Costs are as follows:				
[*Specify the costs here. For example: paid work experience, tuition and fee assistance for workforce programs, wraparound workforce development services, development of culturally- and/or linguistically-specific career pathways, fund organizational investments, etc.*]	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Name of Grant Activity 3:_____				
Program Costs are as follows:				
[*Specify the costs here. For example: paid work experience, tuition and fee assistance for workforce programs, wraparound workforce development services, development of culturally- and/or linguistically-specific career pathways, fund organizational investments, etc.*]	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
[*Add additional Grant Activities as you need here.*]	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
[*Specify the costs here. For example: paid work experience, tuition and fee assistance for workforce programs, wraparound workforce development services, development of culturally- and/or linguistically-specific career pathways, fund organizational investments, etc.*]	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Administrative Costs for completing the above Grant Activities:				

[*Specify the administrative cost rate here. For example: 10% of the total Program Costs, or more if needed by your entity*]	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
TOTALS:	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

[**Note to Applicants:** if you need some or all of the requested funding at the start of the grant period, please indicate that, and your reasoning why, in your Project Budget with a footnote or using an additional page.]

ATTACHMENT D
APPLICATION CERTIFICATION SHEET

Legal Name of Applicant: _____

Address: _____ **City, State, Zip:** _____

State of Incorporation: _____ **Entity Type:** _____

Contact Name: _____ **Telephone:** _____ **Email:** _____

Any individual signing below hereby certifies they are an authorized representative of Applicant and that:

1. If awarded a Grant, Applicant agrees to perform the scope of work and meet the performance standards set forth in the final negotiated scope of work of the Grant.

2. I have knowledge regarding Applicant's payment of taxes and by signing below I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, Application is not in violation of any tax laws of the state or a political subdivision of the state, including, without limitation, ORS 305.620 and ORS chapters 316, 317 and 318.

3. Applicant does not discriminate in its employment practices or service delivery with regard to race, color, creed, age, religious affiliation, political affiliation or belief, gender, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or citizenship status. When awarding subgrants, Applicant does not discriminate against any business certified under ORS 200.055 as a disadvantaged business enterprise, a minority-owned business, a woman-owned business, a business that a service-disabled veteran owns or an emerging small business. If applicable, Applicant has, or will have prior to grant agreement execution, a written policy and practice, that meets the requirements described in ORS 279A.112, of preventing sexual harassment, sexual assault and discrimination against employees who are members of a protected class. HECC may not enter into an agreement with an anticipated grant price of $150,000 or more with an Applicant that does not certify it has such a policy and practice. See https://www.oregon.gov/DAS/Procurement/Pages/hb3060.aspx for additional information and sample policy template.

4. Applicant and Applicant's employees, agents, and subcontractors are not included on:

   A. the "Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons" list maintained by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States Department of the Treasury found at: https://www.treasury.gov/ofac/downloads/sdnlist.pdf., or

   B. the government-wide exclusions lists in the System for Award Management found at: https://www.sam.gov/SAM

5. Applicant certifies that, to the best of its knowledge, there exists no actual or potential conflict between the business or economic interests of Applicant, its employees, or its agents, on the one hand, and the business or economic interests of the State, on the other hand, arising out of, or relating in any way to, the subject matter of the RFA. If any changes occur with respect to Applicant's status regarding conflict of interest, Applicant shall promptly notify the State in writing.

6. Applicant certifies that all contents of the Application (including any other forms or documentation, if required under this RFA) and this Application Certification Sheet are truthful

and accurate and have been prepared independently from all other Applicants, and without collusion, fraud, or other dishonesty.

7. Applicant understands that any statement or representation it makes, in response to this RFA, if determined to be false or fraudulent, a misrepresentation, or inaccurate because of the omission of material information could result in a "claim" (as defined by the Oregon False Claims Act, ORS 180.750(1)), made under Contract being a "false claim" (ORS 180.750(2)) subject to the Oregon False Claims Act, ORS 180.750 to 180.785, and to any liabilities or penalties associated with the making of a false claim under that Act.

8. Applicant certifies it will comply with the Pay Equity law, ORS 652.220, if applicable.

9. Applicant is registered, or will be registered be registered if awarded a grant agreement, in the state's electronic procurement system, called OregonBuys. [Registration is free, by clicking the blue "Register" button found here: https://oregonbuys.gov/bso/.]

---------------------------------------   ---------------------------------------

Authorized Signature   Date

(Printed Name and Title)