

Technical Skills Training Grant

Section I Grant Information

A. Background

In response to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Commerce received \$1,000,000 in Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) to provide grant support for workforce training programs for displaced workers seeking to develop the technical skills necessary to make a career change and remain gainfully employed in North Dakota. The ND Technical Skills Training grant program aims to offset the cost for program providers in their effort to support and retrain workers to fill available jobs within the state in accelerated, skills-based and hands-on programming. The Technical Skills Training grant was further recognized by the 2021 67th Legislative Assembly to continue to assist North Dakota's communities with workforce needs.

B. Purpose

The Technical Skills Training grant is designed to support eligible training providers in their efforts to design rapid, non-degree re-skilling programs, expand capacity in existing programs, and/or move training to virtual platforms in order to train displaced workers who will be re-entering the job market and those wishing to make a career change.

Record unemployment rates during the pandemic show that anticipated displaced workers will need to pursue work in industries in which they may not have any experience and will need special training in order to prepare. Such training can come at a great expense to individuals, companies, and education and training providers who have all experienced financial hardship due to the pandemic.

New and existing programs that are underway and began after March 1, 2020 may qualify for this grant in order to increase capacity and offset operation and participation expenses. The CRF requires that payments be used only to cover costs that were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020.

Maximum Amount: \$100,000 per program; with a 1:1 match; program recipients that have received previous Technical Skills Training Grant funds may only receive a total of \$100,000 for the life of the grant program.

A grant made under this program may be used for curriculum development, equipment, recruitment of participants, scholarships for participants, and training and certification for instructors. Grant funding may not be used to supplant funding for current operations;

including but not limited to salary/fringe, organizational operations, and indirect costs. The department may distribute funds after:

1. **The division of workforce development certifies that a proposed training program meets a critical workforce shortage in a target industry or other high-demand occupation and is expected to lead to employment in this state; and**
2. **The proposed recipient provides the department with detailed documentation of private sector participation, including the availability of one dollar of matching funds for each dollar of state funds.**

C. Eligibility

- Eligible applicants include North Dakota colleges and universities, business*, non-profit organizations*, and/or trades organizations/associations* in North Dakota.
- Training must take place in North Dakota.
- Majority of program participants must reside in North Dakota.

*Must identify training or certification program available.

D. Administration

The Technical Skills Training Grant is administered by the Workforce Development Division of the Department of Commerce. References to 'division' throughout this guide are in reference to the Workforce Development Division.

Send proposals to:

Melyssa Diebold

ND Department of Commerce

P.O. Box 2057

Bismarck, North Dakota 58502-2057

Phone: 701-328-5382

E-mail: mndiebold@nd.gov

Section II Grant Proposals

A. Proposal Requirements

Grant proposals should follow the format shown in Section B, Proposal Format (use format below as template). Proposals that fail to meet the criteria set in Part B will not be rated until clarification or additional information is sufficient for the proposal rating process.

B. Proposal Format

Complete proposals need to demonstrate a clear and concise explanation of the project, training, labor demand, and population served.

Grant applicants should complete the Technical Skills Training Grant cover sheet, Attachment I to this guide, to identify the proposal and provide signature by the head of the requesting organization and the agent designated to sign

form SFN 59313, *Request for Funds*. Proposal elements must include the following:

1. Project Description

Describe the project in general, the training involved, and demand:

- a. Identify the skills in which individuals will be trained and the target industries and/or high-demand occupations in the grantee's region that require those skills.
- b. Indicate whether the project leads to new skill training, stackable credentials, a certificate, and/or serves to enhance an existing program. Degree programs are not eligible for this grant.
- c. Explain the demand in North Dakota for the training in meeting a critical workforce shortage in a target industry or other high-demand occupation and how that demand was determined. This information will be used to determine whether the proposed project meets criteria for program eligibility. Cite information such as:
 - Identification of the occupations for which training prepares workers, and the fit of those occupations into the category of:
 - Governor's target industries (advanced manufacturing, energy, value-added agriculture, technology-based business and tourism); or
 - [High demand occupations](#) as determined by the Workforce Development Council and Job Service ND
 - Job Service North Dakota Labor Market Information (LMI) can be found online ([NDWIN - Home Page](#)). LMI provides 2-year and 10-year projections by occupation. Demand data must reflect the geographic area served by the institution/program. Local industry studies may also provide demand data. Data must not be percent-based alone. Include actual job numbers when providing data on job demand.
- d. Identify wage information for the occupations served through the training.
- e. Explain how and where the training will be provided.
- f. Explain the need for this project, such as preparing displaced workers to re-enter the workforce or training for individuals interested in making a career change; expanding program capacity; upgrading an existing program to align with new technology; meeting an unmet or under-met employer demand..
 - Internal training programs for incumbent workers are not eligible for this grant.
- g. Demonstrate business and industry involvement in the determination of need for the training.
- h. Identify partnership efforts that coordinate training, expand access to training and recruit trainees.

2. Project Impact

Show project responsiveness to employer demand:

- a. Identify the number of individuals projected to receive training/or be enrolled on or prior to November 30, 2021.
- b. Identify the projected start date for the first training session.
 - Programs that are already underway and began after March 1, 2020 may qualify.
- c. Identify the training length.
- d. Explain accessibility to training such as expanded/non-traditional locations, hours and delivery methods.

3. Budget Proposal.

The budget section will include a line item narrative that explains the budget breakout.

NOTE: Projects will require at least one dollar of private sector matching funds for each dollar of state funding requested. State and federal funds do not qualify as match.

NOTE: Match must be identified in the proposal. In some instances, match may not be fully obtained at the time the proposal is made. This is allowable, however in that instance, once match is identified, it must be approved by the Division and the grant agreement will be modified to describe the match.

NOTE: Funds under the Technical Skills Training Grant may not be used for degree programs or to supplant an existing approved budget, **including but not limited to salary/fringe, current organizational operations, and indirect costs.**

NOTE: Grant funds may **only** be applied to equipment, tools and materials for trainees, curriculum development to subcontractors, trainee recruitment costs, technology to offer virtual training, offsetting cost to participate in training program, and instructor training (i.e., registration only; travel and lodging expenses not allowed) as shown in the budget breakout format show below.

Budget Narrative:

- a. Identify total project cost, grant funds requested, match obtained, match pending
- b. Provide a description of the match (equipment donations or discounts, in-kind activities, cash donations) and the private sector entities supplying the match
- c. Describe how the match and match provider relate to the proposed training
- d. Explain any fund-leveraging and activities beyond match

Budget Breakout:

The budget breakout will be formatted as shown below.

Total Project Cost: \$_____

Grant Funds Requested

Equipment Breakout	Cost
Equipment Item	\$
Equipment Item	\$
Curriculum Development	\$
Trainee Recruitment Costs	\$
Instructor Training Breakout	
Registration	\$
Total Funds Requested	\$

Match Description

Equipment Breakout	Match Value
Equipment Item – donation or discount	\$
Equipment Item – donation or discount	\$

In-Kind Services Breakout	
In-kind description – i.e salary, travel (mileage/lodging only)	\$
In-kind description	\$
Cash – Business Providing Donation	\$
Total Match	\$

Section III Proposal Review and Approval

A. Proposal Review and Rating

Review and rating of proposals is conducted by the Workforce Development Division. The division will work with designated individuals to clarify proposals, verify match requirement, and to ensure completeness.

1. Proposals will be rated by the division, utilizing the SFN 59314, *Project Rating Form* (Attachment II)
 - a) Division can certify as meeting target industry/high-demand occupation requirements set forth in NDCC 54-60-22(1)(Pass-Fail)
 - b) Project Description (35 Points)
 - c) Project Impact (35 points)
 - d) Budget Proposal (30 points)

Total Points = 100

2. The division will certify demand in accordance with NDCC 54-60-22(1) in the review and rating process. Applications that score less than 65 points will not be awarded.

B. Grant Approval

The division will notify the grantee of the award by contacting the respective applicant. The notification will include:

1. Amount awarded.
2. Request that the applicant name an authorized agent as the contact with the division on the specific grant.
3. Request that the grantee contact Commerce prior to publicizing the award.

Section IV Grant Agreement

A. Grant Agreement Development

Upon approval of a grant proposal, the division will develop a grant agreement. The division will work with the authorized agent to finalize grant agreement details.

The budget breakout section of the grant proposal will be inserted into the grant agreement under Section 3, Compensation.

B. Match Requirements

1. General Match Requirements

- a) Cash, equipment, supplies and/or in-kind (i.e salary/fringe, mileage and lodging) may be used as match under the Technical Skills Training Grant.
- b) All match contributions must be properly valued by the donator and clearly identifiable from the grantee's records and have adequate supporting documentation.
- c) Match must be from the private sector.
- d) Match must be approved by the Division and must be directly related to the approved project.
- e) Project records must include documentation to demonstrate that match was used to support acquisition or provision of the approved grant project.
- f) All match used to support grant reimbursement must be used solely for this project during the grant agreement period.

2. Cash Match

- a) All cash match reported must be supported by documentation of the day the cash was received and the related accounting records that show the cash was used for the project.
- b) Cash match must be applied to the project and must be spent within the grant agreement dates of the project.

3. Equipment/Supplies Donation or Discount Match

- a) All equipment and supplies donation or discount match must be appropriately documented and valued at the time of use for the project.
- b) Match from equipment or supplies donation or discount must include documentation to support valuation of the donated/discounted item(s). The match contributor must describe the item(s), state the value, and explain how the value was determined. The match contributor must sign and date the document containing this information. **Note:** If the match contributor is unwilling to provide this information, the requestor will contact the Division for assistance in determining an alternate method.
- c) Donation of equipment or supplies received more than 12 months prior to use for the project must be revalued at the time it is applied as match to the project.

Note: Educational discount is an approved match, but the division discourages using this as a form of match.

4. In-Kind Match

- a) In-kind match is defined as temporary use of equipment, space or personal services. In-kind match can also include, but not limited to, salary/fringe and/or travel (mileage and lodging).

- b) Documentation of in-kind match must include a description of the process for determining the value of the services.
- c) If in-kind personal service is provided on a fixed contract amount, the documentation must include the services to be provided, the name of individual(s) providing the services and the time period in which the services are to be provided.
- d) If the in-kind personal service is provided based on an hourly amount the documentation must include a description of the services provided, the name of individual(s) providing the in-kind personal services, the hourly rate for the service and a time sheet with a hourly log reflecting the time services were provided.
- e) In-kind space must be valued at market rate for the area. Documentation must include the methodology for determining the rate and proof of rates for the market.

C. Reporting Requirements

1. Performance Reporting

Performance reporting for the Technical Skills Training Grant program is required under the Common Accountability Measures established by the Division of Workforce Development in compliance with NDCC 54-60-19(2). GRANTEE will submit the performance data as required in Attachment V, Workforce Division Performance Accountability Reporting. GRANTEE will send separate notification of delivery (exclusive of data) to the Department of Commerce via email to: mndiebold@nd.gov. **The subject line must read: Technical Skills Training Grant.**

2. Progress Narrative

Progress Narratives will be required by the 30th of each month.

The final report due November 30, 2021 with a post award narrative due December 30th, 2021.

Reporting must include a brief narrative of implementation progress and basic demographic information, which will include: number of participants enrolled per course/program, completion numbers to date, employment status, and early program departures. Narratives will be sent via email to: mndiebold@nd.gov. **The subject line must read: Technical Skills Training Grant.**

3. Expenditure Report/Request for Funds

Payment will be made to the grantee monthly. A complete SFN 59313 (Attachment III), Technical Skills Training Grant Reimbursement Request Form will be submitted by the 30th of each month.

Request for funds will include a clear description and valuation of match received to date.

Request for Funds forms will be sent via email to the following email address:

mndiebold@nd.gov **The subject line must read: Technical Skills Training Grant**

When no expenses have been incurred, resulting in no request for reimbursement, the grantee will send an email message indicating such. A brief summary status report on the progress of the project must be included.

Requests for funds must include invoices and documentation (i.e receipts, proof of payment) to support grant award and proof of match spent, documentation that match item was received, or in-kind applied, to support the amount being requested. This will ensure expenditures and match are being applied and track accurately, mitigating audit exception and reducing grantee and administrator monitoring workload.

Requests for funds must include supporting invoices for related expenses.

D. Grant Agreement Modification

The grantee will contact the division to get prior approval on changes to match, authorized use of grant funds, grant agreement term, or funding. Approved requests may be denied if not appropriate to the grant or may require grant agreement modification prior to implementation. A line item deviation from grant agreement budget of no more than 10% will be accepted without prior permission and will not require grant agreement modification. This deviation allowance does not include total grant agreement amount.

Grant agreement modifications should be completed during the grant agreement period.

E. Grant Agreement Closeout

Near the end of the grant agreement, the Division will notify the grantee via letter that the grant agreement has been closed. This notification signifies the end of the grant agreement and releases the administrator and the grantee from any further obligations under the grant agreement.

Section V Monitoring

The division will monitor at least 50% of all grants during the grant term. Monitoring via desk review is allowable if documentation can satisfactorily support the review. Monitoring times will be targeted to allow the grantee to have submitted at least one request for funds. This gives the monitor and grantee an opportunity to review the process more completely.

[Attachment I – SFN 61856 *Technical Skills Training Grant Application*](#)

[Attachment II – SFN 59314 *Proposal Rating Sheet*](#)

[Attachment III – SFN 59313 *Workforce Division Request for Funds*](#)

[Attachment IV – *Grant Agreement Template*](#)

[Attachment V – *Workforce Division Performance Accountability Reporting \(pending\)*](#)