



CALL FOR IDEAS
Workforce Solution Grants
Prepare for and Connect to Sustainable, Living Wage Career Pathways
Release Date: February 15, 2023

The Department of Commerce is seeking project proposals that identify and accelerate innovative, evidence-informed approaches to supporting justice impacted Philadelphians prepare for and connect to sustainable career pathways that pay a living wage.¹ Proposals must be able to be implemented and evaluated for impact over a 12-month period.

Applicants must describe how they will intentionally identify, elevate, and address the specific challenges of justice-impacted Philadelphians when preparing for and entering the workforce.

Applicants can propose a **new program design** or the addition of one or more innovative, evidence-informed component(s) to **an existing workforce program**.

For the purpose of this funding opportunity, “evidence-informed” is defined as using research, data and best practice recommendations to structure the design and evaluation of new and innovative solutions to an existing or emerging workforce challenge. Evidence can include an applicant’s primary data from pilot programs run on a small scale.

Applicants must demonstrate that their proposed innovation(s) will lead to greater outcomes in one or more of the following areas:

- Connection to sustainable, living-wage employment (*highest priority*)
- Employer involvement in curriculum development/training
- Completion of job training
- Increased education and/or industry-recognized credentialing
- Development and demonstration of work readiness skills
- Development and demonstration of industry-specific skills
- Increased job retention and/or career pathway progression

Up to a total of \$350,000 will be awarded to between two (2) and three (3) project proposals. Awards will range in size from \$100,000 to \$250,000 and proposed budgets will be reviewed carefully to ensure costs align to program design and projected impact.

Applicant Eligibility

Eligible applicants include public, private, and non-profit organizations with the expertise and capacity to implement, evaluate, and report on the impact of their proposed innovation(s) over an eight-month period. Applicants must be financially stable, in compliance with all state and federal guidelines as a non-profit or for-profit organization, and in tax and regulatory compliance with the City of Philadelphia.

Note: The City of Philadelphia’s participation rate goal is 35 percent for minority-, woman-, or disability-owned businesses (M/W/DSBEs). Applicants are expected to consider this in their proposal with regard to any contractors, subcontractors, and/or vendors required to implement their proposed initiative(s).

Timeline

Call for Ideas Released	February 15, 2023
Deadline to submit questions or requests for clarification, in writing to Talent.Development@Phila.gov	February 28, 2023
Deadline to submit “Intent to Apply” email to Talent.Development@Phila.gov <i>An MS word version of this document and all questions and answers will be sent upon receipt of the “Intent to Apply.”</i>	March 8, 2023 by 5 pm
Deadline for Submitting Proposals to Talent.Development@Phila.gov	March 17, 2023 by 5 pm
Announcement of Awards	April 3, 2023

Application Guidelines

Project proposals must clearly identify how funding will be used to support and connect Justice-Impacted individuals to family sustaining jobs. Specifically, Commerce is seeking proposals that accelerate innovative, evidence-informed approaches to helping Philadelphians dislocated from low-wage employment prepare for and connect to sustainable, living wage career pathways.

Innovations should be evidence-informed and can focus on any number of workforce program components, including but not limited to: Employer engagement in program design, job seeker recruitment, creative virtual training, barrier removal, job connection and retention, financial incentives for job seekers and/or employers, additional or adapted training curriculum, staff training and deployment, etc.

For the purpose of this funding opportunity, “evidence-informed” is defined as using research, data, and best practice recommendations to structure the design and evaluation of new and innovative solutions to an existing or emerging workforce challenge. Evidence can include an applicant’s primary data from pilot programs run on a small scale.

Priority consideration will be given to applicants that fulfill the City’s goals for inclusion of minority-, woman-, or disabled-owned businesses (M/W/DSBEs).

No more than 15 percent of proposal budgets can be dedicated to administrative costs.

The Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division will make final funding decisions based on recommendations from a review committee comprised of individuals representing multiple City departments, economic and workforce development institutions, philanthropy, and the local business community.

Submission Instructions

Proposal narratives (not to exceed 8 pages, single spaced, 12-point font) should be submitted as a single PDF document with a cover sheet (see APPENDIX A) and a minimum of one (1) Employer Commitment Forms *Employer does not need to be current Fair Chance Hiring Employer (see APPENDIX B).

Appendices do not count toward the page limit. The completed Budget Template (see APPENDIX C) should be submitted as a separate Microsoft Excel document.

Proposals must be submitted via email to Talent.Development@Phila.gov by March 17, 2023 by 5 pm. The subject line should read: Call for Ideas: [name of project idea] – submitted by [name of applicant organization].

Narrative Components

Part 1: Summary of Proposed Evidence-Informed Innovation

Applicants must thoroughly describe the evidence-informed innovation(s) they are proposing to implement, including the intended impact. Proposed innovations must incorporate the following components:

Population of Job Seekers

Project proposals must engage Philadelphia job seekers who meet the following criteria:

- 18 years of age and older
- Justice-impacted individuals (those who have been incarcerated or detained in a prison, local jail, juvenile detention center, or any other carceral setting, those who have been convicted but not incarcerated)
- Limited education and/or workforce credentials

Please include information on how you will recruit or mechanisms for referrals to ensure population of job seekers listed above.

Jobs and Industries

Project proposals must prepare and provide participants the opportunity to compete for specific full-time (35 hours/week minimum) job opportunities that pay a minimum starting wage of \$15/hour.

Employer Engagement

Project proposals must describe the role employer partners will perform in informing curriculum development, program design, and implementation. Additionally, applicants will be required to submit Employer Commitment Forms (see APPENDIX A) from one or more employers outlining their commitment to considering, interviewing, and/or hiring program graduates for open positions. Commitment from employers must ensure that at least 80% of program participants that complete the

program will be interviewed and there are open jobs readily available for them.

Part 2: Alignment to Quality Standards

Project proposals must demonstrate alignment to a minimum of three (3) of the *Workforce Professional Alliance (WPA)*'s standards of quality. ² Priority consideration will be given to proposals that align to four (4) or more standards. Quality Standards are as follows:

- Ensures Fit: An organization will utilize an intentional screening process that assesses the applicant's readiness based on motivation, skill set, and ability to persist to completion. Where a fit does not exist, the organization will maintain and leverage a strong referral network.
- Outcome-focused Design: An organization will maintain an outcome-focused design that is informed by evidence-based best practices and clearly articulates training goals and outcomes connected to gainful employment.
- Stakeholder-informed Curriculum: An organization will develop and maintain an industry and employer informed curriculum that meets the needs of its participants and employer partners.
- Career-oriented Skills Development: An organization will ensure that participants connect to immediate job opportunities after training and complete the program with practical skills that increase their chances of employability in a stable, living-wage job.
- Ongoing Support for Mentoring and Training: An organization will create opportunities for practice with coaching and feedback that will occur during and after the completion of training.
- Built-in Feedback Mechanisms and Evaluation: An organization will embed assessment measures that incorporate feedback from all stakeholders, maintaining internal and external evaluation practices that create significant ROI for participants, employers, and funders.

Part 3: Commitment to Racial Equity

Applicants must articulate their organization's commitment to racial equity, and specifically describe how racial equity will be defined, measured, and achieved through the proposed innovation(s).

Part 4: Description of Expected Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy

Applicants must clearly explain the rationale and expected impact of their proposed evidence-informed innovation(s). Specifically, proposals must describe how many job seekers will be engaged and how many will achieve the following outcomes:

- Connection to sustainable, living-wage employment (*highest priority*)
- Completion of job training
- Increased education and/or industry-recognized workforce credentialing
- Development and demonstration of work readiness skills
- Development and demonstration of industry-specific skills
- Increased job retention and/or career pathway progression

Applicants must describe the output and outcome metrics they will use to measure impact, including a description of how data will be collected, analyzed, and reported. Strong applicants will further quantify how much additional impact (e.g. individuals trained, placed, etc.) this funding will generate, versus their current scale of impact. Strong applications will serve at least 10 job seekers per program.

Part 5: Staff Qualifications

Applicants must provide the names, titles, and professional qualifications of all staff members essential to the design and delivery of the proposed innovation(s).

Part 6: Project Timeline

Applicants must provide a detailed project timeline that includes key activities and milestones between over the next 12 months. The timeline should be inclusive of all activities required to achieve the intended impact.

Part 7: Cost Proposal

Applicants must provide a detailed cost proposal and completed Budget Template (see APPENDIX C).

The budget must include all costs that will be charged to the Commerce Department for the proposed services required to complete the project, as well as a good faith estimate of leveraged funds required to achieve the proposal's objectives, both secured and pending.

Allowable Costs

Funds may be used for costs associated with delivering training and placement activities, and other services to prepare participants for success in the targeted occupation(s), to optimize opportunities for participant learning and career development, and to achieve placement for participants. Funds may be used to support the following:

- Outreach, recruitment, assessment and selection
- Support services needed to ensure participants' success, such as transportation, child care, text books, uniforms and tools
- Training delivery, including classroom and formal on-the-job training
- Stipends for participating in training and work experience
- Staff time for partnership and program coordination, job development, case management and data entry

APPENDIX A: APPLICANT COVER SHEET

Date: _____

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Organization			
Mailing Address			
Website			
Minority-, Woman-, or Disabled-Owned or Led Organization		<i>(if yes, please indicate which)</i>	
Contact Person for the Application (name and title)			
Email		Phone	
Project Lead (name and title) (if different from grant contact)			
Email		Phone	

GRANT REQUEST INFORMATION

Project Title	
What is the total budget for the proposed project?	
How much are you requesting through this Call for Ideas?	

EMPLOYER PARTNER INFORMATION *(please add lines as needed)*

Employer Partner	Industry	Point of Contact	Position Title

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

CHECK	Application Component
Application Narrative	
	Part 1: Summary of Proposed Evidence-Informed Innovation
	Part 2: Alignment to Quality Standards
	Part 3: Commitment to Racial Equity
	Part 4: Description of Expected Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy
	Part 5: Staff Qualifications
	Part 6: Project Timeline
	Part 7: Cost Proposal
Appendices	
	Appendix C: Application Cover Sheet
	Appendix D: Employer Commitment Form (minimum of 1)
	Appendix E: Completed Budget Template

APPENDIX B: EMPLOYER COMMITMENT FORM

Date: _____

EMPLOYER PARTNER INFORMATION

Employer*			
Mailing Address			
Industry			
Website			
Minority-, Woman-, or Disabled-Owned Business		<i>(if yes, please indicate which)</i>	
Total Number of Employees			Minimum Hourly Wage
Contact Person for the Proposed Project (name and title)			
Email		Phone	

**Note, the Department of Commerce will not contact employers directly as part of the review process.*

TALENT NEEDS

Please describe your hiring needs over the next 12-18 months, including the number of projected openings that could be filled by graduates of the proposed program. How could the program help you meet those needs?

PROJECT SUPPORT

How will you support implementation of the proposed program? Please check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Inform training curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conduct mock interviews with program participants
<input type="checkbox"/>	Share information on company culture and expectations with program participants	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide career exposure opportunities to program participants
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please explain):		

INTERVIEW AND HIRING COMMITMENT

Are you committed to interviewing qualified program graduates for open positions?
YES or NO

Are you committed to hiring qualified program graduates for open positions?
YES or NO

Employer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name and Title: _____

APPENDIX C: BUDGET TEMPLATE

Budget Template can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/CFI-Budget-Template>

