

CALL FOR IDEAS
Workforce Innovation Grants
Prepare for and Connect to Sustainable, Living Wage Career Pathways

Response to Questions

The following questions were submitted on or before November 24, 2025 to Talent.Development@phila.gov. None of the responses are intended to supersede information included in the CFI document.

Section 1. Programmatic Requirements

- 1. For reporting purposes, should wage thresholds be defined strictly as \geq \$16.82/hour, or can programs propose higher local benchmarks when justified by industry standards?**
 - a. \$16.82/hour is the City's recommended minimum wage. Programs can propose higher benchmarks when justified by industry standards.
- 2. May programs target adults with *some college but no credential* (as identified in Ithaka S+R's Pennsylvania study) in addition to unemployed or underemployed residents?**
 - a. Yes.
- 3. Many young people ages 18-24 are still struggling to figure out what career they want to pursue, and our program is specifically designed to support this process. Instead of asking employers to agree 80% of program graduates, can applicants recruit more employers but ask them to commit to a lower percentage of interviews?**
 - a. The 80% can come from multiple employers combined—not just one employer needs to reach that level. Overall, it should amount to 80% of program completers being interviewed and that jobs are readily available.
- 4. Some of our graduates opt into career paths that require additional education or training. In addition to employment with an hourly wage of \$16.82 or higher, would matriculation into college or a more intensive job training program be considered a successful outcome?**
 - a. Yes, but priority for both grant pathways is connection to sustainable, living wage employment.
- 5. Is there flexibility around metrics or are there acceptable alternative metrics that the City would consider in the final scoring? (ex. would matriculation into college or a more intensive job training program be considered a successful outcome?)**
 - a. The City has implemented certain reporting guidelines and room for a narrative to show best faith effort and provide additional information/clarification if needed. This is where grantees can explain any barriers with employers and what job availability looks like.
- 6. For planning purposes, is there a target participant volume the City anticipates funded programs will serve, and are there priority demographics (beyond the 18+ age requirement) that applicants should emphasize in recruitment?**
 - a. Programs must engage job seekers who meet the following criteria. See also Appendix E of the Call for Ideas for Geographic and Economic Hiring Preferences.
 - 18 years of age and older
 - Limited education and/or workforce credentials
 - Limited or no work experience
 - Either:

- Currently engaged in, or recently separated from, low-wage employment
 - Historically under/unemployed
- 7. Is multi-language support considered a scoring factor, or is English-only instruction sufficient if aligned to participant needs and employer demand?**
- a. If English only instruction is aligned to participant needs and employer demand, then that is sufficient.

Section 2. Funding Requirements

- 1. Can funds be used to support curriculum redesign and faculty training associated with a noncredit program redesign, and is any institutional match or cost share required?**
 - a. Funds can be used for curriculum redesign and faculty training but no more than 20% of the proposed budget can be dedicated to administrative cost. There is no institutional match or cost sharing required.
- 2. Should the proposal include a sustainability plan or projected institutionalization strategy beyond the one-year funding cycle?**
 - a. This is not a requirement but would be helpful for reviewers.
- 3. What are the expectations concerning start date of the programming post funding?**
 - a. The planning period begins on February 1, 2026. The services to participants are expected to start once all contracts have been signed. The programmatic timeline should be included in the proposal.
- 4. Can these funds be used in conjunction with funding from The Good Jobs Challenge (GJC)?**
 - a. Yes, funds can be used in conjunction with GJC funds ([a Philadelphia Works federally funded program](#)) but should be complimentary to the current use of The Good Jobs Challenge dollars, such as filling any gaps that GJC dollars cannot support or fund.
- 5. What financial documents will be required for submission alongside the proposal?**
 - a. A complete programmatic budget will need to be submitted with the proposal. Other financial documents are not required but can be helpful to reviewers and can be submitted as additional attachments that do not count towards the page limit.
- 6. When are the funds expected to be released for those that are approved to be a grant recipient?**
 - a. Announcement of awards will be in late January. An initial percentage of the award amount will be distributed once all contracts are signed. Additional invoices will be submitted with reports.
- 7. Would this one-year program have the opportunity to renew for additional years?**
 - a. Budget allocations for workforce funding is subject to the yearly City budget approval process. Based on approved funding for FY27, the City will evaluate the option of additional Call For Ideas or the potential of extensions to those programs that meet or exceed projected outcomes in this first year. Potential grantees should not assume continuation of funding and work towards a sustainability plan to support the continuation of programs.
- 8. Can this funding opportunity apply to skills training programs that start before February 1, 2026, and/or may extend past January 30, 2027?**

- a. Funds from this grant should be spent within the 12-month period. Applicants must provide a detailed project timeline that includes key activities and milestones between February 1, 2026 and January 30, 2027. If a contract extension is needed, that can be discussed with the City team during contract negotiations.
- 9. For budgeting purposes, should technology-related expenses (such as software development, platform enhancements, AI token usage, hosting, and curriculum content creation) be categorized as program costs or administrative costs?**
 - a. Technology related expenses should be categorized as “program materials and supplies” or “other program operating costs”. Administrative costs include salaries, fringe benefits, general overhead costs, staff/management & rent/utilities.
- 10. Is there the opportunity for no-cost extensions?**
 - a. Requests for no-cost extensions can be discussed with the City team during contract negotiations. If necessitated, the City will take this into consideration for approval. The programmatic timeline should be included in the proposal.

Section 3. Application Process and Timeline

- 1. Are additional attachments allowed outside of the required appendices? If so, do they count toward the 8-page narrative limit?**
 - a. Additional attachments are allowed outside of the required appendices and do not count towards the 8-page narrative limit.
- 2. Is the required project timeline included in the 8-page narrative limit?**
 - a. The required project timeline overview should be included in the 8-page narrative limit but if additional information would be helpful for reviewers, a detailed version can be submitted as an attachment.
- 3. On the employer commitment form: “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?” Are applicants to add that on a separate sheet or will there be room on the form to answer those questions?**
 - a. There will be room on the form for the employer to answer those questions.
- 4. What is the scoring for the rubric?**
 - a. A sample scoring rubric can be found in Appendix D of the CFI.
- 5. What does the Intent to Apply entail? Are there requirements?**
 - a. No specific document or requirements. Please send an email to talent.development@phila.gov stating your organization will apply.
- 6. Is the City providing a standardized evaluation framework or logic model template, or should applicants develop their own outcomes and measurement tools?**
 - a. Applicants should be providing their own outcomes and measurement tools while keeping in mind the prioritized outcomes listed in the CFI. The City will provide reporting templates aligned with proposed outcomes and metrics.
 - i. Skilled Trades/Construction
 - Connection to sustainable, living-wage employment (highest priority)
 - Strengthened pathway into union apprenticeships

- Supporting participants from zip codes identified in the Geographic and Economic Hiring Preferences (See Appendix E for more information)
 - Increased education and/or industry-recognized credentialing
 - Increased job retention and/or career pathway progression
- ii. Innovative Industry Response Programming
- Connection to sustainable, living-wage employment (*highest priority*)
 - Employer involvement in curriculum development/training
 - Technical Assistance to support employers with growth and development of new pathways
 - Completion of job training
 - Increased education and/or industry-recognized credentialing
 - Increased job retention and/or career pathway progression
- 7. Will letters of support be accepted/considered? What about additional attachments such as our Impact Report, success stories, or other materials?**
- a. Yes, additional attachments are allowed outside of the required appendices and do not count towards the 8-page narrative limit.
- 8. What type of information would you like included in the Cost Proposal section of the Narrative? Would this be an explanation of the completed budget template, similar to a budget narrative?**
- a. The budget must include all costs that will be charged to the City 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. An explanation/justification of the completed budget template should be included in the proposal.
- 9. Can applicants count the partnership with the secondary training org as an eligible program and have them fill out the employer partnership form?**
- a. A workforce partner cannot be counted as an employer. A letter of support from a workforce partner org can be included alongside the required employer commitment forms. If an organization is applying with one employer, that needs to be stated in the proposal.
- 10. If a program has already had 2 cohorts, would this still be considered innovative enough to apply for this opportunity?**
- a. Yes, but it's encouraged to incorporate an innovative piece into your proposal—such as stipends for participants, supportive services or other resources that could increase retention or the success of participants.
- 11. Does the size of an employer partner (e.g., number of projected openings or overall company size) influence proposal scoring, or are all employer partners evaluated equally as long as they commit to interviewing program completers for living-wage roles?**
- a. All employers are evaluated equally as long as they are offering wages at \$16.82/hour or above.
- 12. Can employer partners be located outside Philadelphia as long as they are hiring Philadelphia residents into living-wage roles?**
- a. Yes.

- 13. Are there any City supports for employer partners who complete the Employer Commitment Form and participate in interview or curriculum-feedback activities, or should applicants plan to provide their own employer engagement supports?**
- a. Applicants should provide their own employer engagement supports. The City can support employers through different incentives such as the Quality Jobs Program, Employer of Choice or the Fair Chance Hiring Initiative.
- 14. Can applicants include multiple industries and/or multiple career pathways within the same industry as a part of our proposal?**
- a. Yes.
- 15. Could you please confirm whether submitting one proposal per track is allowed, or if applicants are limited to a single submission overall?**
- a. Applicants may submit one proposal per track.