
Request for Applications

STEM Workforce Challenge Grant

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Purpose:** To spark the creation of lasting partnerships between industry and workforce training providers resulting in sustainable training programs that provide in-demand, industry-recognized STEM skills to training recipients and lead to full-time jobs in STEM industries.
- Proposals Due:** January 11, 2016
- Funding Available:** Up to \$150,000
- Bidder's Call:** November 13, 2015 at 10 a.m.
- Eligibility:** Eligible applicants for a STEM Workforce Challenge Grant are Nevada's Community Colleges or State College, private career colleges located in Nevada that provide technical training, Chambers of Commerce, non-profits, Regional Development Authorities (RDA's), businesses, employee associations, and city and county governments.
- Website:** Updates to the Frequently Asked Questions document will be posted at <http://osit.nv.gov>. Please check the website regularly for updates.
- Contact:** Jodi Bass, Grants and Projects Analyst
775-687-0990 or jbass@gov.nv.gov

Request for Applications –

Governor’s Office of Science, Innovation and Technology

INTRODUCTION:

The Governor’s Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT) of Nevada was established by the Legislature (NRS 223.600) to promote, coordinate and align education, workforce, and economic development and diversification efforts in the areas of science, innovation and technology.

After being hit harder than any other state during the recession, Nevada’s economy is growing. The State’s economic development strategy has resulted in significant growth across a variety of industry sectors that require Nevada employees to have at least some training in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). However, employers often encounter difficulty finding workers with the skills they require. A skilled workforce is critical to Nevada’s continued economic development and diversification. Likewise, education and skills training help workers qualify for jobs that provide family-sustaining wages. A recent Brookings Institution report found that STEM jobs pay a wage premium of nearly 50% over non-STEM jobs requiring a similar level of education¹.

In an effort to enhance Nevada’s workforce with in-demand, industry-recognized skills required by Nevada’s growing STEM economy, OSIT invites applications for a STEM Workforce Challenge Grant. First proposed as an economic development strategy by the Brookings Institution in its report *Cracking the Code on STEM*, and endorsed by the Nevada System of Higher Education, these grants were funded by the Nevada Legislature at the request of Governor Brian Sandoval.

SECTION I: DESIRED OUTCOMES & TRAINING PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Purpose:

The State, through STEM Workforce Challenge Grants, seeks to spark the creation of lasting partnerships between industry and workforce training providers. These partnerships must result in:

- 1) the identification of STEM-specific skills needed by employers in Nevada; and
- 2) the creation of programs that provide the education and skills training to workers that match the needs of employers;
- 3) are aligned with present and future workforce needs in Nevada as identified by relevant labor market information (LMI); and
- 4) are sustainable after grant funds have been exhausted.

Types of Training Programs, Accepted and Prohibited Uses of Funding

Funds from a grant award must be used to support the development and implementation of programs that will train individuals for “middle-skills” STEM jobs requiring technical skills and postsecondary credentials below a bachelor’s degree. Middle-skills STEM jobs account for half of all STEM jobs and pay on average \$53,000². Funding must be used for initial start-up costs, defined as capital costs or programmatic (i.e. curriculum development) costs. Funding can be used to create new programs or expand existing programs with a track record of success. Funding cannot be used for maintenance or on-going expenses, such as student tuition or instructor salaries. Funding cannot be used to continue or maintain existing programs. If expansion funding is requested, applicants should clearly describe how grant funding will

¹ Brookings Institution, *Cracking the Code on STEM*. 2014

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Reports/2014/11/nevada-stem/BMPP_NevadaSTEM_full-report-web-final.pdf?la=en

² Ibid.

add to existing capacity. Training must result in completers receiving a STEM-related nationally recognized industry credential, certificate or associate's degree.

Targeted Training Recipients

Proposed projects should provide training for and develop the STEM-specific, in-demand skills of one or more of the following target populations, leading to new or improved employment opportunities in Nevada:

- 1) incumbent workers;
- 2) displaced workers; and/or
- 3) traditional postsecondary students (18-24).

SECTION II: AWARD INFORMATION

Awards and Matching

A competitive process will be used to distribute grants of up to \$150,000 per award. Grantees will be required to match grant funding at least 1:1, with either cash, in-kind, or a combination of both. Proposals matching with cash will be allocated additional weight in scoring. Please see the Match Requirements section below for more details. Grantees also will be required to include a detailed scope of work and a detailed budget in their applications. OSIT reserves the right to determine the number of awards for each grant cycle, based on funds available and projects selected.

Spending Timeframes

All funding received from the state must be spent by June 30, 2016. However, training for the initial cohort may conclude at a time beyond June 30, 2016. All awardees are required to submit progress reports on project activities, including training, program completion, and employment results throughout the entire length of the reporting period, regardless of when state funds are spent. Please see the Reporting Requirements section below for more details.

Match Requirements

There is a 1:1 match requirement for this grant. Match may be either in-kind or cash. However, up to eight (8) preferential points are awarded to applications that include cash match. Additionally, up to four (4) preferential points are awarded on projects that provide a match of either type of more than 1:1. Grantees that have been awarded projects that have in-kind valuation must include those activities in their program and evaluation reports. All in-kind match is subject to review and prior approval. Funds that are used as a match for any other program or unrecovered indirect costs cannot be used as match.

The following may be used as in-kind match:

- Equipment, office supplies, workshop or classroom materials, workspace or classroom space, training materials or equipment.
- The monetary value of time contributed by professional and technical personnel and other skilled and unskilled labor if the services they provide are an integral and necessary part of the funded project. NOTE: The value placed on loaned or donated equipment may not exceed its fair rental value. The value placed on donated services must be consistent with the rate of compensation paid for similar work in the organization or the labor market. Fringe benefits may be included.
- Professional services valued at fair market value.
- An audited or identified indirect cost rate of up to 10% may be used as in-kind match.

Additional information regarding match may be found in the Frequently Asked Questions on the OSIT website. Questions about match listed below or not listed below should be directed to OSIT.

SECTION III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligible applicants for a STEM Workforce Challenge Grant are Nevada's Community Colleges or State College, private career colleges located in Nevada that provide technical training, Chambers of Commerce, non-profit organizations that specialize in workforce training, Regional Development Authorities (RDA's), STEM-related businesses, employee associations, and city and county governments.

SECTION IV: APPLICATION & SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A comprehensive, well-written application provides all the information necessary for a complete evaluation. The OSIT review committee will use the rubric located in Attachment A to evaluate applications. A complete application will include the following five (5) components listed below and described later in greater detail. Each section inside the grant should include headings and subheadings.

- 1) Cover Sheet
- 2) Project Abstract;
- 3) Project Narrative;
- 4) Budget Plan;
- 5) Letters of Commitment.

Incomplete applications or applications that did not follow the submission requirements, including the formatting requirements described in detail below, as of the filing deadline, will be disqualified and will not be scored for STEM Workforce Challenge Grant consideration.

1. Cover Sheet (1 point possible)

Format: The cover sheet must not exceed one (1) page, is not included in the 10-page narrative limitation and must contain the following information:

- **Applicant Information**
Organization name, full mailing and physical addresses, phone number, fax number, federal tax ID number, DUNS number, and website (if applicable)
- **Project Information**
Title, county location, and proposed dollar amount
- **Project Director Information** (overall project responsibility)
Full name, title, mailing and physical address, day-time & evening phone, email address
- **Project Contact** (daily project contact – if different than director)
Full name, title, mailing and physical address, day-time & evening phone, email address

2. Project Abstract

Format: The Project Abstract must not exceed one (1) page, it must be double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides of 8½ by 11 size (letter size) paper.

The project abstract must succinctly summarize the proposed project and should include:

1. A brief summary of the project;
2. Specific objectives and/or goals;
3. Any unique features and innovation of the project;
4. Collaboration and partnerships; and
5. Expected results and/or outcomes.

3. Project Narrative

Format: The Project Narrative must not exceed ten (10) pages, it must be double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides of 8½ by 11 size (letter size) paper.

The following information must be contained within the Project Narrative:

A. Needs Assessment (14 points possible)

- 1) Provide a clear and concise overview of the current labor market industry skills gap faced by employers in the industry targeted by the application, illustrated with local labor data, technology limitations and/or training limitations.
- 2) Outline other efforts or resources, if any, currently being undertaken to remedy this gap.

B. Work Plan and Impact Analysis (35 points possible)

Provide a detailed work plan with specific data and information that describes how the project links with the proposed grant activities, and addresses the needs identified in the Needs Assessment.

The **Work Plan** should include:

- 1) the target industry and occupation;
- 2) the target population (such as incumbent workers, displaced workers, or traditional postsecondary students) including the location within Nevada trainees will come from;
- 3) a description of the curriculum and the end result of the training program, including what type of nationally recognized industry credential, certificate or degree program completers will receive; what skills completers will have; and what types of jobs completers will be qualified for;
- 4) a timeline of project phases from award of funds to the completion of the first cohort of trainees, include measurable goals for each project phase;
- 5) the stakeholders consulted and how their comments influenced the design of the training program;
- 6) a description of how the grant applicant will reach out to and recruit possible trainees to participate in the training program;
- 7) a description of a career counseling or job placement plan to assist program completers find employment at the conclusion of training;
- 8) a description of a governance plan that includes the roles of each partner and an organization chart, identifies the project manager, and the resources, including any in-kind contributions, that the partners bring to the project; and
- 9) an articulation how the program fits in with the broader goal of creating a STEM-educated workforce in Nevada.

The **Impact Analysis** should include the following information. Justification should be given for how estimates were determined.

- 1) the estimated number of trainees per cohort;
- 2) the estimated cost to train each student;
- 3) the estimated training program completion rate;

- 4) the estimated number of training recipients who will have full-time employment in the target industry as a result of grant-funded programs; and
- 5) the estimated starting wage of program completers.

C. Sustainment Plan (20 points possible)

A significant component of the STEM Workforce Challenge Grant is creating training programs that can continue to produce a qualified workforce after grant funds have been exhausted. Please describe:

- 1) how project activities will continue after the grant funding is exhausted including any changes in the roles of the partners;
- 2) future projected costs after training for the first cohort of participants is completed and how funds will be obtained; and
- 3) how the project will provide long-term value to the target industry and population, and the state.

D. Data Collection & Evaluation (14 points possible)

This section should include performance evaluation measures. As a reminder, data collection is not a performance measure but used in developing and evaluating the measure. Please describe:

- 1) the goals of the project;
- 2) how will the success of the training program be evaluated; and
- 3) what data will be collected to measure the success of the program.

4. Budget Narrative & Plan– (10 points possible)

Format: The budget narrative must not exceed one (1) page, it must be double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides of 8½ by 11 size (letter size) paper. For the budget plan, use the template located in Attachment B.

Applicant is required to submit a 1) budget narrative and a 2) budget plan.

- 1) The budget narrative must demonstrate a clear and strong relationship between the program’s expenses and the program’s goals and activities. The budget narrative should be detailed, reasonable and adequate, cost efficient, and should align with the proposed work plan. From the budget narrative, the reviewer should be able to assess how the budget expenditures relate directly to the goals of the program. The Budget Narrative should also describe which program expenses will be paid for with grant funds and which program expenses will be paid for with match. The budget narrative does not count towards the 10 page limit of the Project Narrative.
- 2) The budget plan should be completed in in the template provided in Attachment B. Costs should be broken down into individual line items. All project costs should fall in either the “Capital Expenses” or “Programmatic Expenses/Curriculum Development” categories.

State grant funding must be spent on or before June 30, 2016.

5. Letters of Commitment- (6 points possible)

Format: Letterhead with signature.

Applicant is required to submit letters of commitment from each partner. Letters should be on letterhead and signed. Letters should outline how the partner will contribute to the project and what commitments they will make, including any committed match. Letters of commitment do not count towards the 10 page limit of the Project Narrative.

Submission Timeline and Instructions

Submit one (1) electronic copy of the application in a single pdf and six (6) paper copies of the application by 5:00 p.m., January 11, 2016 to:

Jodi Bass
Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology
100 North Stewart Street, Suite 220
Carson City, NV 89701
jbass@gov.nv.gov

Applications must be received, not postmarked, by the date above. Applications received after the date above will not be considered.

Tips & Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Ensure budget figures are mathematically correct, and the total of the budget summary matches the total on the title page;
- Use only whole dollar amounts;
- Observe page limits (any pages over the page limit will not be reviewed);
- Follow stated formatting guidelines;
- Respond to all sections of the application; ensure the thread that ties the application sections together are related;
- Supplanting - Grant funds may not be used to replace federal, state, or local funds that are currently being used or are forthcoming;
- Spell out acronyms at initial use. Eliminate jargon whenever possible;
- Do not assume reviewers are familiar with existing projects;
- Read the Request for Application (RFA) carefully; and
- Use local statistics rather than national statistics.

SECTION V: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Grant Review and Selection Process

Eligible applications are reviewed, evaluated, and competitively scored by a review committee using the scoring matrix located in Section V. Applications selected to receive a grant award will enter into a contract with OSIT in compliance with the State of Nevada regulations. OSIT reserves the right to award all, part or none of available grant funding during this grant round. In cases where the ranked applications may “tie”, OSIT reserves the right to consider Section C “Work Plan and Impact Analysis” scoring independently to determine placement.

To avoid disqualification, all application areas must be concise and complete; certifications must be signed and dated; objectives must be measurable. Denial letters, with scoring disclosure, will be sent to applicants that are not funded.

Grant Commencement and Duration

Project implementation must be initiated within thirty days (30) after funding is awarded. Requests for an exception to this rule must be justified and submitted in writing within thirty days of award. At the discretion of OSIT, the grantee risks losing the award if the project does not commence as required.

All grant funding must be spent by June 30, 2016. Grantees must specify in their application the length of the proposed training program, if the initial training period will end after June 30, 2016 (see reporting requirements below). Projects must demonstrate sustainability beyond the initial reporting period. By submission of the grant application and acceptance of the award, the grantee is certifying its intention to continue and sustain the program beyond the initial grant implementation award. There is no expectation of funding beyond awarded grant funds.

Reimbursement Notice

The STEM Workforce Challenge Grant is a reimbursement grant. Grantees are expected to pay for expenses upfront from their budgets and will be reimbursed for eligible expenses listed on the approved award budget after a review of the expense request form and appropriate backup. Under certain circumstances, an advance of funds for specific, approved start-up costs may be requested by the grantee.

Fiscal Responsibilities

All recipients of funding are required to identify a fiscal agent if the grantee is not its own fiscal agent. All recipients of funding are required to establish and maintain accounting systems and financial records to accurately account for awarded funds. Accounting systems for all projects must ensure the following:

- Funds are not commingled with funds from other grant sources.
- Funds specifically budgeted and/or received for one project cannot be used to support another.
- All grant awards are subject to audits during and within three years after the grant award reporting period has concluded.
- The accounting system presents and classifies historical cost of the grant as required for budgetary and auditing purposes.

Reporting Requirements

All recipients of funding are required to submit quarterly fiscal reports, quarterly progress reports, and a final evaluation. Recipients have the option of submitting monthly reports in lieu of quarterly reports. The final evaluation is due within thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the reporting period. The reporting period is defined as the period of time from the day the grant is awarded to conclusion of the training program for the first cohort of trainees. Grantees must specify the length of the program in their applications in order to calculate the reporting period. Grantees must continue to submit quarterly reports and a final evaluation even after all state funding has been spent. The quarterly reports and final evaluation must include the performance measures proposed in 2(e) of the application. OSIT maintains the right to withhold payments if reporting requirements are not met in a timely and efficient manner.

Additional Information

Financial obligations of the State payable after the current fiscal year are contingent upon funds for that purpose being appropriated, budgeted, and otherwise made available. In the event funds are not appropriated, any resulting contracts (grant awards) will become null and void, without penalty to the state of Nevada.

All materials submitted regarding this application for OSIT funds becomes the property of the state of Nevada. Upon the funding of the project, the contents of the application will become contractual obligations.

Reconsiderations

Any applicant whose application has been filed according to the rules governing the grant process and who is aggrieved by the awards made pursuant to these rules may request reconsideration.

Submit requests for appeal to the OSIT within five days of the posting of the grant awards. Requests for reconsideration must be in writing and clearly state how OSIT has erred in following the administrative rules governing the grant process or the procedure outlined in the program RFA. OSIT will schedule a public meeting to hear the reconsideration as expeditiously as possible so all funds can be distributed in a timely fashion, and a final decision will be rendered within

30 days subsequent to such meeting. Notice of the approval/denial of the appeal will be conducted by legal counsel. This procedure concludes the review process.

Bidding Process

The grantee must follow all applicable local, state and/or federal laws pertaining to the expenditure of funds. Proof of Invitation to Bid, contracts, and any other pertinent documentation must be retained by the grantee. Likewise, all local, state, and federal permits required for construction projects must be acquired by the grantee within 90 days after the contract is entered into.

Access for Persons with Disabilities

The grantee shall assure that persons with disabilities are not precluded from using OSIT grant funded facilities. Projects must meet requirements as set by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Maintenance and Operation

The grantee is responsible to see that OSIT grant funded projects are maintained and operated in a condition equal to what existed when the project was completed; normal wear and tear is accepted. Maintenance and operations standards should be adopted upon completion of the project.

Signs

Grantee shall post and maintain appropriate permanent signs or decals upon project sites or equipment acknowledging funding assistance from the appropriate grant fund upon start of the project or purchase of equipment.

Nondiscrimination

Projects funded with OSIT grant funds shall be available for public use, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, or national origin.

In any instance that the grant notice, award, rules, regulations and procedures are silent – prior written approval is required.

SECTION VI: OSIT CONTACTS

Grant Administration Contact:

Jodi Bass
Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology
100 North Stewart Street, Suite 220
Carson City, NV 89701
775-687-0989
jbass@gov.nv.gov

Thank your interest in applying for STEM Workforce Challenge Grant funding. You will be contacted if further information is required. Do not begin your project or incur costs until you have received, signed and returned a grant document with STEM Workforce Challenge Grant.

ATTACHMENT A: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Each proposed project will be evaluated for inclusiveness and succinctness of their application using the scoring matrix below.

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points & Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Cover Sheet	Maximum Points: 1 Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Needs Assessment	Maximum Points: 14 Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Work Plan & Impact Analysis	Maximum Points: 35 Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Sustainment	Maximum Points: 20 Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Evaluation and Data Collection	Maximum Points: 14 Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Budget Plan	Maximum Points: 10 Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Letters of Commitment	Maximum Points: 6 Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations

ATTACHMENT B: BUDGET TEMPLATE

Please be specific and include as much line-item detail as is reasonably possible. Use this space to provide more specific justification for expenditures mentioned in the Budget Narrative. Break down cost categories such as “equipment,” “travel,” “salaries,” “training,” or “supplies” to individual components so that it is clearly understood how funding will be spent. For example, for travel, list costs for flights, hotel, per diem, and transportation. All program expenses and all match should be accounted for.

Capital Expenses

Item	Quantity	Amount Paid with Grant Funds	Match-in-kind or cash	Description/Justification

Programmatic Expenses/Curriculum Development

Item	Quantity	Amount Paid with Grant Funds	Match-in-kind or cash	Description/Justification