



Request for Applications (RFA)

STEM Workforce Talent Pipeline Development Grant Round II

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Purpose:** To strengthen partnerships between secondary education, postsecondary education, Nevada's STEM industries, and workforce development resulting in sustainable training programs that provide in-demand, industry-recognized STEM training, skills, and credentials to students and lead to full-time jobs in STEM industries in Nevada.
- Proposals Due:** January 17, 2022 at 5:00pm PT
- Funding Available:** \$500,000
- Bidder's Call:** December 15 at 1:00 p.m.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85385342515?pwd=aGJJYWt1V0EyTFp4ai9pT3phOWI4dz09>
- Eligibility:** Eligible applicants for a STEM Workforce Talent Pipeline Grant are public or private postsecondary education or workforce development providers; public K-12 school districts or individual public high schools; and STEM industry associations or businesses.
- Website:** Please check <http://osit.nv.gov> regularly for updates. Additionally, information about past awardees can be found on the OSIT website.
- Questions:** If you have questions about the grant opportunity, it is strongly encouraged that you contact Brian Mitchell prior to submitting an application.
- Contact:** Brian Mitchell
775-687-0987 or blmitchell@gov.nv.gov
- Tracey Howard
775-687-0989 or T.Howard@gov.nv.gov



Request for Applications – STEM Workforce Talent Pipeline Grant

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, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

This grant opportunity focuses on the transition of students to life and work beyond high school. Nevadans with only a high school diploma experience higher unemployment rates and have lower lifetime earnings than those with postsecondary education. Unemployment rates for youth that are high school graduates and not enrolled in higher education are about twice the overall rate. Further, many areas of Nevada experience lower rates of postsecondary enrollment following high school graduation, perpetuating cycles of underemployment and poverty.

A skilled workforce is critical to Nevada's continued economic development and diversification. Likewise, postsecondary education and skills training help students qualify for jobs that provide family-sustaining wages. A recent OSIT report found that STEM jobs requiring less postsecondary education than a bachelor's degree pay a wage premium of nearly 50% over non-STEM jobs requiring a similar level of education¹.

In an effort to smooth the transition from high school to the workforce and provide students with in-demand, industry-recognized skills required by Nevada's growing STEM economy, OSIT invites applications for a STEM Workforce Talent Pipeline Grant.

SECTION I: DESIRED OUTCOMES

Goals:

OSIT, through STEM Workforce Talent Pipeline Grants, seeks to strengthen partnerships between industry, secondary education, and postsecondary education and workforce development resulting in sustainable training programs that provide in-demand, industry-recognized STEM training, skills, and credentials to students and lead to full-time jobs in STEM industries. The overarching goals of the grant program are to:

- 1) Increase the number of students that earn STEM industry-recognized credentials shortly after high school graduation leading to entry-level employment in high-skill, high-wage, in-demand STEM industry sectors;
- 2) Create a seamless transition from high school to postsecondary education that leads to increased STEM credential attainment among all students, but especially those students from underrepresented groups;
- 3) Create sustainable and scalable models of secondary + postsecondary + industry partnerships that create talent pipelines to meet the needs of industry within the region; and
- 4) Create systemic change by improving partnerships between colleges, school districts, and regional employers.

¹ [http://osit.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ositnv.gov/Content/Reports/STEM%20Jobs%202019%20Final%20\(rev.1\).pdf](http://osit.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ositnv.gov/Content/Reports/STEM%20Jobs%202019%20Final%20(rev.1).pdf)

Applicant Consortium:

Applicants are required to form a consortium made up of the following three entities: 1) a public high school or public school district, 2) a public or private postsecondary workforce development or education institution or provider, and 3) at least one employer. The consortium will work together to leverage their collective resources and those of the grant to develop a STEM Talent Pipeline. The consortium will designate a lead applicant to act as a fiscal agent and grant manager.

SECTION II: PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Talent Pipeline Program Structure:

Funds from a grant award must be used to support the development and implementation of a STEM workforce development program that will provide skills training for entry-level, “middle-skills” STEM jobs requiring technical skills and/or an industry-recognized credential. Middle-skills STEM jobs account for half of all STEM jobs and pay on average \$53,000 per year. The program must result in completers receiving a STEM-related credential or certificate endorsed by the employers in the consortium. There is flexibility for the consortium partners to design the program in a way that meets their needs. At a high level, the program structure must contain the following elements:

- 1) The program must begin while students are still in high school.
- 2) The program should include an application process.
- 3) Students must complete course work to earn a high school diploma while participating in the program.
- 4) The program must include an internship or other work-based learning experience with at least one of the employer partners.
- 5) Students that successfully complete the program and pass requisite examinations must receive an industry-recognized credential or certificate.
- 6) Employer partners must commit to interviewing all students who complete the program and earn the industry-recognized credential.

The consortium partners have the flexibility to:

- 1) Determine where students learn.
- 2) Determine who teaches the postsecondary courses or industry training.
- 3) Identify the appropriate industry-recognized credential or certificate.
- 4) Design the program to meet the needs of employers.

Funding Timelines

All State funds must be spent before the end of the State fiscal year. Ideally, applicants will spend all funds prior to the end of the current fiscal year. However, OSIT understands that some programs may need to spend funding beyond the end of the current fiscal year in order to fully launch the program. Therefore, awarded applicants have the option of spending grant funds entirely in the current fiscal year (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022) or dividing requested funding between the current fiscal year and the next fiscal year (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023). Applicants must describe in their budgets during which fiscal year funds will be spent. OSIT is unable to grant extensions to these timelines and all funds not spent before the end of the corresponding fiscal year must be returned to the State.

Allowable Uses of Funding:

Funding must be used for initial start-up costs, defined either as capital or programmatic expenses. A capital expense is defined as a long-term physical asset directly involved in the learning process, such as equipment, machines, software, or devices, which can be used by multiple cohorts of students. A programmatic expense is defined as one-time expenses related to curriculum or program development, such as the purchase of curriculum from a third party or the salaries and benefits of persons developing the program or curriculum that can be used by multiple cohorts of students. Funding may also be used to pay for postsecondary tuition expenses as well as the costs associated with obtaining the certification or credential for the first cohort of students. Applicants using grant funds for student tuition must have a clearly articulated plan to fund ongoing costs for future cohorts. Funding should not supplant existing funding.

Funding may be used to:

- Plan the development of the Talent Pipeline program, including salaries and benefits, stipends, or extra-duty pay;
- Develop or purchase new curricula or teaching materials;
- Develop articulation agreements;
- Design new industry-recognized credentials or certificates that meet the needs of employers in the consortium;
- Provide professional development to high school or postsecondary instructors;
- Purchase classroom supplies or equipment directly related to and exclusively used by the program;
- Renovate classroom space;
- Develop substantial work-based learning experiences for students participating in the program; and
- Develop marketing strategies and materials.

Unallowable Uses of Funds

- Funding cannot be used to supplant existing funding (state or federal);
- Funding cannot be used for recurring expenses including:
 - o Salaries of professors or instructors;
 - o Equipment or supplies used exclusively by adults;
 - o Food, beverage or other hosting expenses; or
 - o Indirect costs or the costs of complying with the grant reporting requirements.

Targeted STEM Industry Sectors

OSIT has prioritized the following STEM industry sectors for funding. Applications seeking funding for other industry sectors which present a strong needs assessment and strong support from employers will also be considered.

- IT, Computing, and Computer Science
- Cybersecurity
- Healthcare
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Diesel Technology
- Construction, Welding, Electrical, and other STEM-related trades
- Automation Technology
- Autonomous Systems



SECTION III: AWARD INFORMATION

Awards Process:

A competitive process will be used to distribute up to \$500,000. All responses that meet the minimum requirements outlined below in Section IV will be scored by a review team selected by OSIT. Respondents are required to include a detailed scope of work and a detailed budget in their responses to this RFA. OSIT reserves the right to determine the number of awards for each grant cycle, based on funds available and projects selected.

Strong applications will (described in greater detail below): bring other funding sources to supplement funding from the State, bring more than one employer as a partner in the consortium, incorporate a high-quality work-based learning experience into the program, make equity a priority, and be able to start enrolling students at the earliest possible date.

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 Pipeline Grant consideration.

Questions: Applicants are encouraged to ask questions of OSIT throughout the application period and prior to submission. OSIT will post and periodically update a Frequently Asked Questions document on its website.

1. Cover Sheet (Pass/Fail)

Format: The cover sheet must not exceed one (1) page, use Times New Roman 12-point font, and is not included in the 10-page narrative limitation and must contain the following information:

- **Lead Applicant Information**
Lead applicant name, full mailing and physical address, phone number, and state vendor ID number
- **Consortium Partners Information**
Names, full mailing and physical addresses, phone numbers



- **Project Information**
Title, county location, and proposed dollar amount
- **Project Director Information** (overall project responsibility)
Full name, title, organization, mailing and physical address, daytime & evening phone, email address
- **Project Contact** (daily project contact – if different than director)
Full name, title, organization, mailing and physical address, daytime & evening phone, email address
- **Fiscal Agent Contact** (daily contact for fiscal matters– if different than Project Contact)
Full name, title, organization, mailing and physical address, daytime & evening phone, email address

2. Project Abstract (Pass/Fail)

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 goals and expected results or outcomes;
3. The targeted STEM industry and occupation; and
4. A list of the members of the consortium, including members' roles and responsibilities.

3. Budget Narrative & Detailed Spreadsheet (10 points possible, up to 10 additional bonus point 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 detailed budget spreadsheet, use the template located in Attachment B. The detailed budget spreadsheet does not have a page limit.

The applicant is required to submit 1) a budget narrative, and 2) a 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 does not count towards the 10-page limit of the Project Narrative.
- 2) The budget plan should be completed 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. See Attachment B for additional instructions.
- 3) Matching funds (up to 10 additional bonus points possible): Matching funds are not required. However, applicants are encouraged to bring additional funding to the project. Matching funds may be cash or in-kind. Examples of cash matching funds include institutional funding, Perkins or other federal grants, state grant funding, or funding from industry partners. Examples of in-kind matching funds include equipment, workspace, classroom space, the



monetary value of time contributed by professional and technical personnel, or professional services valued at a fair market rate. NOTE: The value placed on loaned or donated equipment may not exceed its fair rental value. The value placed on donated time or 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. Please include documentation to back up the valuation of in-kind match. Applicants that match grant funding at a one-to-one will receive 10 bonus points.

4. Project Narrative (90 points possible)

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. Please respond to each question below and please number your response.

A. Needs Assessment (15 points possible)

Provide data and analysis of why the proposed program is needed. Please respond to each question individually below and please number your response.

- 1) Identify the STEM industry and occupation targeted by the application.
- 2) Provide a clear and concise overview of the current labor market and industry skills gap faced by employers in the industry targeted by the application, illustrated with local labor data. Include projections for future demand.
- 3) Describe the credentials or certificates and skills that are needed by the targeted occupation.
- 4) List the average entry-level wage.
- 5) Describe existing training options, efforts or resources, if any, in the region and their limitations to meet the needs of employers.
- 6) Provide an overview of the student population you plan to serve including the population's need for this program. Include data on race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and current college going rate.

B. Work Plan (30 points possible)

Provide a detailed work plan with specific data and information that describes how the proposed project and grant activities address the needs identified in the Needs Assessment. In your work plan, please respond to each question below and please number your response.

- 1) A big picture overview of the program from enrollment to employment. Include how long the program will take to complete.
- 2) A list of all consortium partners and a more detailed description of the role each will play. Consortia must include at least one of each of the following: a public secondary school or district, a postsecondary or workforce institution or provider, and an employer. Provide a copy of the letter, agreement, or memorandum of understanding that formalizes the consortium as a separate attachment.
- 3) A detailed description of the program that includes:



- a. when and how students are enrolled;
 - b. whether any coursework, career and technical education (CTE) prerequisites or experience is required;
 - c. a list of the courses students will take as a part of the program;
 - d. when and where the students will take the courses;
 - e. whether the courses currently exist or would need to be developed prior to the start of the program;
 - f. how the program will incorporate work-based learning (defined as including career exploration, job shadowing, internship, youth apprenticeship, or career development and training);
 - g. the knowledge, skills, and abilities students will master as a part of the program;
 - h. the industry-recognized credential or certificate that students will earn upon completion;
 - i. whether the credential is stackable and if so, provide a list of the next credentials in the sequence;
 - j. a list of the soft skills, employability skills, or other non-technical learning elements that will be included in the program to help students prepare for work;
 - k. supports and assistance from consortium partners to program completers as they transition to work; and
 - l. a list of employer partners that will guarantee an interview to each program completer.
- 4) A timeline, in table format, of project phases from award of funds to the completion of the first cohort of students; include measurable goals for each project phase.
 - 5) A marketing plan outlining how the consortium partners will reach out to and recruit possible trainees to participate in the training program and retain students accepted into the program.
 - 6) A detailed diversity action plan that includes strategies to recruit, retain, and assist underrepresented groups in STEM to complete the program. Examples of underrepresented groups include racial or ethnic minorities, females, veterans, persons in poverty, and persons with disabilities. Do the strategies outlined go beyond existing efforts? If not, explain why existing efforts are sufficient. Note: applications that state that programs will be available to "all students" will not be considered sufficient.

C. Impact Analysis (15 points possible)

The Impact Analysis must include the following information in table format. Justification should be given for how estimates were determined.

- 1) The estimated number of students per cohort, including the estimated number of students in subsequent cohorts if different from the initial cohort.
- 2) The estimated number of students per cohort that come from underrepresented groups in STEM. Examples of underrepresented groups include racial or ethnic minorities, females, students whose parents are active duty military or veterans, students in poverty, and students with disabilities.
- 3) The total requested funding from the state (not including match) divided by the total number of students served per calendar year.
- 4) The total cost charged to the student to complete the program including tuition, books, and examination fees (not including living expenses) before scholarships or grants.
- 5) The amount of time necessary to complete the training- if variable, please explain.
- 6) The estimated training program completion rate.



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

D. Sustainment Plan (20 points possible)

A significant component of this program is creating training programs that can continue to produce a qualified workforce after grant funds have been exhausted. Please answer the following items individually:

- 1) Please list all projected ongoing expenses, including dollar amounts, associated with this program.
- 2) Please describe how the applicant will fund these ongoing expenses including the funding source.
- 3) It is expected that each funded program will continue indefinitely beyond the first cohort of students without continued funding from OSIT. Please include a statement of institutional commitment from each partner in the consortium to continue the program indefinitely beyond the first cohort of students.

E. Data Collection & Evaluation (5 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. All programs will be judged on whether students complete the training program and earn the corresponding certification, credential or degree, and whether program completers are employed in the corresponding career field to the training program. Please describe each of the following individually:

- 1) Please list the goals of the project.
- 2) Please describe how the success of the training program will be evaluated.
- 3) What data will be collected to measure the success of the program and how will it be shared with OSIT?

5. Letters of Commitment (5 points possible)

Format: Letterhead with signature.

Each member of the consortium is required to submit a letter of commitment. A letter of commitment must be on letterhead and signed by an authorized representative. Letters of commitment must outline the roles and responsibilities of the partner as identified in the work plan section. Form letters and letters of support will not be accepted. Letters of commitment do not count toward the 10-page limit.



Submission Timeline and Instructions

Submit one (1) electronic copy of the application (including narrative, budget, and letters of commitment) in a single pdf by 5:00 p.m., January 17, 2022, to: Brian Mitchell- **blmitchell@gov.nv.gov**

Applications must be received by the date and time above. Applications received after the date and time 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.
- Use local statistics rather than national statistics.
- Submit applications early in case revisions need to be made.

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 Attachment A. 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 the available grant funding during this grant round. In cases where the ranked applications may “tie”, OSIT reserves the right to consider Section B “Work Plan and Impact Analysis” scoring independently to determine placement.

To avoid disqualification, all application areas must be concise, complete and follow all formatting rules. Denial letters 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 the end of the corresponding fiscal year. Grantees must specify in their application the length of time needed to spend funds. 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.

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. All grant awards are subject to audits during and within three years after the grant award reporting period has concluded.

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 the 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. Fiscal reports must include an accounting of both State funding and match that has been expended. The quarterly reports and final evaluation must include the performance measures proposed in the application. OSIT maintains the right to withhold approval of grant expenditures 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 OSIT within five days of the posting of the grant awards. Requests for reconsideration must be in writing and must 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 for seeing 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 the 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.



Nevada Governor's
Office of Science,
Innovation and
Technology

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

Thank you for your interest in applying for STEM Workforce Talent Pipeline 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 award contract.



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 and Abstract	Maximum Points: P/F Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Needs Assessment	Maximum Points: 15 Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Work Plan & Impact Analysis	Maximum Points: 45 Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Sustainment	Maximum Points: 20 Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Evaluation and Data Collection	Maximum Points: 5 Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Budget Plan	Maximum Points: 10 Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Letters of Commitment	Maximum Points: 5 Reviewer Score	Comments/Recommendations
Additional Possible Points		
Match	Up to 10 Points	

