

## Notice of Funding Opportunity

State Agency Name: **Iowa Department of Workforce Development**

Funding Opportunity Title: **Iowa Language Learners Job Training Program**

Announcement Type: **Initial**

Iowa Workforce Development is requesting proposals from qualified applicants to support the Iowa Language Learners Job Training Program.

### IMPORTANT DATES

- Deadline: Grant applications are due by January 13, 2023, **at 12:00 p.m.** Central Standard Time. Grant applications will not be accepted until December 14, 2022.
- Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) will host a webinar to provide information and an opportunity for a live Q&A on Tuesday, December 20, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. CST. More information will be provided on the Future Ready Iowa website: <https://www.futurereadyiowa.gov/iowa-language-learner>

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

#### 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Iowa Language Learners Job Training Program is to develop a long-term sustained program designed to reduce barriers in language within the workplace. Applicants must be employers who are expanding an existing program or creating a new program. Programs will provide dual language instruction for current employees to increase English language proficiencies as it relates to duties, policies or procedures for work-related tasks to be performed. Employee participation in the program shall be voluntary. Language courses are encouraged to be conducted onsite at the place of employment or at consortium members' locations. The hours of instruction per week must be included in the application. Instructors can be certified instructors with fluency in English and the primary language of the students (such as those who possess a teaching degree or certificate); have documented language proficiency credentials for non-native English speakers such as a TOEFL exam or IELTS; or have previous experience serving as an instructor in similar trainings with valid employer references.

The applicant will be required to submit a plan that details a language training program targeted toward reducing language barriers within the workplace and opportunities for participants to advance within their careers.

As a condition of receiving moneys appropriated under this funding opportunity, the subrecipient of the funds shall testify upon the request of any committee or subcommittee of the State of Iowa General Assembly regarding the expenditure of such moneys.

#### 2. Funding Priorities

There are no listed priorities associated with this award.

### **3. Performance Measures**

All applications must include performance measures that logically connect a project's goal(s) with proposed activities and demonstrate an overall change in language proficiencies. Required performance measures to be addressed within the application include but are not limited to:

1. The anticipated number of new language learning programs established for employees.
2. The anticipated number of employees participating within the various programs.
3. The anticipated number of employees completing and/or exiting the various programs.
4. An anticipated measure of increase in language proficiency within the workplace as demonstrated via evaluation tools.
5. The anticipated percentage of participants that receive a pay increase or promotion due to the program participation or increase of responsibilities.
6. Current employee retention rates along with the anticipated percentage of employee retention after the program.

All projects **must** contain a plan for sustainability of the outcome beyond the grant period.

### **4. Program Authority**

The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds are awarded to States in Section 9901 of the American Rescue Plan Act. Governor Reynolds has allocated a portion of these funds to provide for this program.

### **5. Definitions**

*"Applicant"*: an employer and/or employer consortium submitting applications in response to a NOFO located in Iowa.

*"NOFO"*: Notice of Funding Opportunity and any included attachments, exhibits, schedules, or addenda.

*"Participant"*: a reportable individual who has received grant-assisted services.

*"Consortium"*: A group of two or more employers or businesses, at least one of which must be a private employer. Existing partnerships are eligible and encouraged.

*"Cohort"*: a group of individuals taking part within the same learning experiences at the same time.

*"Subgrantee"*: a legal entity to which a subgrant is awarded and which is accountable to the grantee for the use of the funds provided.

*"Employer"*: To be eligible for this grant opportunity, an employer is defined as a business or entity that provides goods or services, controls and directs workers and pays W-2 wages to a minimum of 25 full-time employees. When counting employees for purposes of determining

the number of employees, only full-time employees will be counted. Independent contractors and subcontractors do not count as employees.

*“Full-Time Employee”*: Any employee who works an average of 32 to 40 hours per week consistently.

*“High Demand Occupation”*: an occupation that is within the job categories of: Advanced Manufacturing Production, Installation and Maintenance, Construction & Engineering, Education, Engineering, Healthcare & Biosciences, Information Technology, Information Technology & Mathematics, Management, or Business & Financial Operations.

## **AWARD INFORMATION**

### **1. Estimated Available Funds**

The State of Iowa has identified \$5,000,000 to support the Iowa Language Learners Job Training Program Grant. The source for funding will be the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Pub L. No. 117-2, Section 9901 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

### **2. Estimated Award Amount**

Grant funding awarded through IWD may vary in amounts as determined by the scope of the project. Funding decisions are made as funding is available. IWD is not obligated to provide the maximum grant amount requested and may award multiple projects. Minimum awards will be set at \$5,000.

NOTE: Employers will be required to provide documentation supporting the required private spend. The grant award will be paid out on a 50/50 reimbursement match basis.

### **3. Project and Award Period**

In order to request grant funds, successful applicants must provide proof in the application that private match funds are readily available. Projects must be completed, and all grant funds utilized, within an 18-month time period, and any unexpended funds must be returned to IWD thereafter. No costs incurred prior to 12/01/2022 or after 10/31/2024 are eligible. The business may decide to operate multiple cohorts within this period; however, each cohort will only be eligible for funding up to 32 weeks.

Awardees must provide a detailed report of the progress of the project and the use of funds every quarter, beginning from the date the Memorandum of Understanding between the applicant and the State is fully executed.

### **4. Use of Funds**

As a condition of receiving the funds appropriated under this request for proposal (RFP), the subrecipient shall testify upon the request of any committee or subcommittee of the State of

Iowa General Assembly regarding the expenditures of such funds.

All funds requested through the Budget Narrative and Budget Summary Form should provide justification for the costs and the majority of the funds requested should closely match the program priorities. Grant funds provided may be used on:

- Program supplies such as computers, software, or headsets
- Instructor wages for up to four hours per week, up to 32 weeks
- Curriculum such as textbooks, workbooks, and curriculum software
- Transportation expenses (only if program occurs offsite of the workplace)
- Grant administration expenses up to 5% of total awarded funds

Ineligible uses of reimbursement funds include, but are not limited to:

- Capital expenditures
- Food, gift vouchers and/or conference travel expenses
- Employee wages
- Fringe benefit expenses

Employee wages are not an eligible reimbursement expense; however, employers that pay their employees for their time spent in the language program may submit proof of wage payments. These wage payments can be considered towards the 50% employer match for the program (up to four (4) hours per week per participant.)

Funds are administered as reimbursement only and no advance payment options are available.

Language courses are encouraged to be conducted onsite at the place of employment or at consortium members' locations. To ensure transportation is not a barrier to employees, if the language course is unable to be conducted onsite the employer is responsible for including a transportation plan with their application designed to reduce barriers for the employee.

In addition to English language instruction, employers may also provide support to English speakers to learn another language to better communicate with staff or as an aid to recruitment and retention of staff.

### **5. Type of Award**

Awards will be awarded to employers who are expanding an existing program or creating a new program. Applicants will be evaluated based on the employer business size compared to the size of workforce not proficient in the English language when awarding funds. There is no maximum amount for this award.

**Small businesses:** (minimum of 25 but fewer than 75 full-time employees)

**Medium sized businesses:** (75 to 249 full-time employees)

**Large businesses:** (250 or more full-time employees)

## **6. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds**

This is a 50/50 cost sharing agreement in which ARP SLFRF funds will be utilized to cover 50% of the proposed project costs and the remaining 50% will be funded by private investment. Applicants must provide proof of the existence of the required private investment. Acceptable proof must be a certified statement from an FDIC – insured financial institution holding the funds. In the absence of a statement from a financial institution, an affidavit from a certified public accountant can be used to certify the existence of the required private investment. Awardees will submit reimbursement requests on a quarterly basis providing appropriate documentation of incurred expenses related to the program. Approved eligible expenses will be reimbursed at 50% of the total eligible expenditures. Wages paid to program participants for class hours are not an eligible reimbursement expense, however wages paid for class hours may be submitted as the 50% private investment.

## **7. Reporting Requirements**

Successful applicants will be required to submit a Quarterly Narrative Progress Report each quarter, and a final report to IWD on specific grant activities funded with this award.

The report will summarize project activity outputs, performance outcomes and other deliverables and key performance indicators of the project, including but not limited to:

- a. Demographic information of participants.
- b. Total number of participant enrollment.
- c. Number of new additional language learning programs established for employees.
- d. Total number of participants actively enrolled within various programs.
- e. Total number of participants completing training.
- f. Total number of participants exiting the program without completing training.
- g. Total number of participants completing training and attaining an industry-recognized credential.
- h. Measure of language proficiency increase within the workplace as demonstrated via evaluation tools created by the applicant.
- i. Percentage of participants that receive a pay increase or promotion due to program participation or increase of responsibilities.
- j. Percentage of employees not enrolled in this program that receive a pay increase or promotion.
- k. Percentage of employee retention from before and after the program.

This report will also require a summary of lessons learned and an ongoing plan for sustainability. Successful applicants will also be required to provide measurement tools and metrics used to determine the success of the program.

Quarterly Financial Reports must include invoices, receipts, expenditures, as well as any clarifying statements to document how the funds were spent and certify the funds were used in accordance with the grant application and grant program. The report must include, but is not necessarily limited to:

- a. Date funds received.
- b. Amount of funds received.
- c. Amount of funds provided by the employer.
- d. Expenditures that account for how private and public funds were expended.
- e. Number of participants that entered the program and completed the program.
- f. Wage information both prior to entering the program and upon completion.

Financial Quarterly Reports will not be processed until after the Quarterly Narrative Progress Reports requirements are satisfied. All final documentation for reimbursement and reports issues no later than December 15, 2024.

The Subrecipient, as a non-federal entity carrying out a federal award on behalf of the State of Iowa, shall be considered a subrecipient as defined in the Uniform Guidance (2CFR Part 200) and is subject to the policy requirements placed upon subrecipients by regulations including, but not limited to, the Uniform Guidance and 31 CFR 35.

Retain all records relating to project cost, including supporting documents through December 31, 2032, and to make such records and documents available to Iowa Department of Workforce Development personnel upon request for audit.

#### **PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

The executed grant agreement will specify conditions for payment and payment schedule. Reimbursements will be made only after all quarterly reporting documents have been submitted and requirements are satisfied.

#### **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Eligible applicants include businesses, non-profits and consortiums of employers in good standing with the State of Iowa. Applicants must plan to operate this program onsite at the location of employment or a consortium members' location and pay participants for wages earned while participating within the program.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to cultivate partnerships where appropriate. Grantees must comply with all applicable provisions of State and federal laws pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, and equal employment opportunity.

All non-federal entities that spend \$750,000 or more in federal awards during the entity's fiscal year, including ARPA funds, must have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year compliant with 2 CFR 200 Subpart F. This audit must cover the compliance of the entity with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the federal award, as well as the fair presentation of the entity's financial statements, pursuant to the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR part 200).

## **APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **1. Electronic Submission Instructions**

Applicants must submit applications electronically at [www.iowagrants.gov](http://www.iowagrants.gov). Applicants should create an account and begin the application in advance of the deadline. For registration guidance, refer to “IowaGrants.gov New User Registration Instructions” (see Appendix C).

Each application must include a Program Contact, which will be the email and phone number we use to contact for questions and to notify regarding the outcome of the grant application.

Official email communication from IWD regarding this application will be issued from [iowa.grants@webgrantsmail.com](mailto:iowa.grants@webgrantsmail.com) or [sara.bath@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:sara.bath@iwd.iowa.gov). Applicants are required to ensure these communications are received and responded to accordingly.

### **2. Content**

Applicants will enter or attach the following components of a complete application in [www.iowagrants.gov](http://www.iowagrants.gov):

- **General Information:**
  - **Cover Sheet**
  - **Program Information**
  - **Program Description (short description)**
- **Defined Barriers/Description of Need**
- **Program Plan Narrative/Training Approach**
- **Partnerships/Collaborations (if applicable)**
- **Program Retention, Measurement and Evaluation**
- **Program Sustainability and Organizational Capability**
- **Budget Narrative & Budget Spreadsheet**
- **Letters of Support Attachments**
- **Minority Impact Statement**
- **Authorization, Assurances, and Certification**

See Appendix A for further instructions and application guidance.

### **3. Submission Dates and Times**

Please see the Important Dates section at the beginning of this announcement for the submission deadline. IWD reserves the right to extend the submission deadline, and any notice of such extension will be posted on IWD’s website and/or IowaGrants.gov.

Attempted submission of a completed application after the stated due date and time will not be

allowed by the system. If a submission is attempted after the published date and time, the applicant will receive a notice stating, "The Funding Opportunity is closed."

## **APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **1. Criteria**

Defined Barriers/Description of Need	10 points
Program Plan Narrative/Training Approach	35 points
Partnerships/Collaborations	10 points
Program Retention, Measures & Evaluation	20 points
Program Sustainability & Organizational Capability	15 points
Budget Narrative & Budget Spreadsheet	10 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 points</b>

See Appendix B for a full description of criteria and a scoring rubric.

### **2. Review and Selection Process**

IWD will conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of completed applications received through Iowa Grants by the stated deadline in response to this NOFO. IWD will use an evaluation committee to review, evaluate and recommend an award based on the results of the scoring criteria. The evaluation team will consist of 3-5 members and will use the scoring criteria listed in this section to review applications. A review team will use the criteria listed in this section to review applications under this funding announcement.

### **3. Applicant Clarification**

Some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to their application, including changes to their budget. This information is used by IWD staff in making funding recommendations. Applications may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked clarifying questions. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of applications from consideration.

### **4. Selection for Funding**

Decisions to award grants and the funding levels will be determined per application based upon compliance with the requirements of this funding announcement. Applicants may be selected to enter into a grant agreement, finalizing grant terms, budget, and scope-of-work provisions, at which time the final decision to make a grant award will be made. Submission of an application is not a guarantee of an award.



## **AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)**

Please direct any questions regarding this NOFO to:

Sara Bath  
Iowa Workforce Development Manager  
[sara.bath@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:sara.bath@iwd.iowa.gov)

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Technical Assistance (TA) will be provided throughout the application process, in the form of public questions and direct support.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

1. If an applicant fails to meet any eligibility criterion at the time of an application deadline, the application may still be considered for review if deemed appropriate by IWD; however, the State of Iowa will not make an award until all eligibility criteria are met.
2. Applications that are deemed to be priority may be weighted above those that are not deemed priority based on this NOFO.
3. IWD reserves the right to request additional information from applicants to evaluate applications.
4. IWD, at their sole discretion, reserves the right to reject all applications; to reject individual applications for failure to meet any requirement; to award in part or total; and to waive minor defects and non-compliance. Such a waiver will not modify the program requirements or excuse the applicant from full compliance with program specifications or grant agreement requirements if the grant is awarded. Submission of an application confers no right to an award or to a subsequent grant agreement.
5. All application submissions become the property of IWD. If funds are awarded, the contents of all applications will be in the public domain at the conclusion of the selection process and will be open to inspection by interested parties, subject to exceptions provided in Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other provisions of law.
6. IWD is not obligated to award any grants under this program, pay any costs incurred by the applicant in the preparation and submission of an application or pay any grant-related costs incurred prior to the grant beginning date.
7. All decisions by IWD are final.
8. Upon IWD's approval, the successful applicant will receive a grant agreement via email from IWD. The applicant has 10 business days to sign the grant agreement. If the agreement is not executed within 10 business days, IWD reserves the right to cancel the award. IWD, at their discretion, may extend the time period for executing the grant agreement.
9. Any grant agreement awarded by IWD shall include specific provisions, terms, and conditions.