

Notice of Funding Opportunity

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

Funding Opportunity Title: **Iowa Entry-Level Driver Training Program**

Announcement Type: **Initial**

Iowa Workforce Development is requesting proposals from qualified applicants to support the Iowa Entry-Level Driver Training Program.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Deadline: Grant applications are due by **February 3, 2023, at 11:59 a.m.** Central Standard Time. Grant applications will not be accepted until December 13, 2022.
- Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) will host a webinar to provide information and an opportunity for a live Q&A on **Tuesday, December 13th, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. CST.**

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Iowa Entry-Level Driver Training Program is to provide funding to reimburse Iowa-based employers, employer consortiums, and non-profits that provide Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT) either in-house or through partnership with third-party certified training providers located in Iowa. Training must meet the minimum federal standards that entry-level drivers are required to complete before being permitted to take certain CDL skills or knowledge tests. All training providers must be certified with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association (FMCSA) Training Provider Registry prior to reimbursement. If using outside training provider(s), reimbursement must go towards the cost of ELDT tuition. If all or a portion of training is provided in-house, reimbursement can be used towards wage reimbursement for instructors, the purchase of ELDT curriculum materials, and/or the maintenance of equipment/location necessary to continue to provide ELDT. For purposes of this grant, in-house training must consist of theory training and/or behind-the-wheel training as outlined by ELDT regulations.

Applicants must be Iowa businesses, employer consortiums, or non-profits who employ Iowa CDL drivers. Applicants may provide ELDT for prospective employees whose position will require that the employee apply for a Class A or B CDL, upgrade an existing CDL from Class B to Class A, and/or add a hazardous materials, passenger, or school bus endorsement. To be eligible for reimbursement, applicant must provide documentation that each driver has their driver training certification uploaded to the Training Provider Registry and have passed the CDL exam within 30 days of their last day of training. If the driver fails the first exam attempt, the applicant must show that the driver has taken and passed their exam within 14 days of their first failed attempt to be eligible for reimbursement.

NOTE: Participants of this program are encouraged to be residents of the state of Iowa. If the applicant is the training provider and is located in an Iowa county that borders another state,

then at least 75% of all participants trained must be Iowa residents by providing proof of an Iowa CDL certification. The remaining 25% of participants trained must be residents of the state(s) in which the Iowa border county borders by providing proof of the border state's CDL certification. If an applicant is a training provider located in an Iowa county that does not border another state, then 100% of all participants must be residents of Iowa.

The applicant will be required to submit an itemized budget describing expenses incurred completing ELDT training In-House or through a third party ELDT Training Provider.

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

Priority will be given to applicants with the ability to train and certify new and upgraded truck drivers continuously and in higher volumes.

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 the number of new and/or upgraded certified truck drivers.

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 located in Iowa submitting applications in response to a NOFO.

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

"Participant": A reportable individual/trainee who has received grant-assisted services.

"Cohort": A group of people participating within the same training and educated at the same time.

"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.

"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 full-time employees. When counting employees for purposes of determining the number of employees, only full-time employees will be counted (32 hours per week minimum). Independent contractors and subcontractors do not count as employees.

“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, Business & Financial Operations.

AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimated Available Funds

The State of Iowa has identified \$6,000,000 to support the Iowa Entry-Level Driver 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. Maximum awards will be set at \$400,000.

NOTE: Five percent (5%) of funds will be reserved for employers with 50 employees or fewer.

3. Project and Award Period

The first cohort training program must be scheduled to begin within four months of receipt of a fully executed contract agreement. Each cohort must be completed within a 60-day time period from the start date. Programs may contain multiple cohorts with certifying a minimum of 2 new or upgraded drivers per cohort. No costs incurred prior to 1/01/2023 or after 10/31/2024 are eligible. All receipts, reimbursement requests, proof of payment, and reporting documents must be claimed by sending to IWD by 12/01/24 or remaining award funds are forfeited. All SLFRF funds must be obligated by 12/31/2024.

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

General Guidance on the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

The funds for this award are provided by the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF), part of the American Rescue Plan. SLFRF requires that all costs be incurred during the period

beginning March 3, 2021 and ending December 31, 2024. Therefore, all costs incurred prior to March 3, 2021 and after December 31, 2024 are not eligible uses of these funds. The period of performance for SLFRF funds runs until December 31, 2026, which will provide recipients an additional two years during which they may expend funds for costs incurred (i.e., obligated) by December 31, 2024. Any award funds not obligated or expended within these timeframes must be returned to the State. Recipients of these funds will be held accountable to these funding timeframes.

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:

- ELDT Tuition for an Iowa-based, third-party training provider, up to \$2,500 per driver licensed in the state of Iowa or neighboring border state (See *Note* provided in the Purpose Statement for eligibility.)
- In-house training, net wage reimbursement for instructors providing the in-house training for up to \$2,500 per driver
- Curriculum and supplies for in-house training - textbooks, workbooks, curriculum software
- Staff wage expense to train a new instructor – net wages only
- Expenses to cover the FMCSA trainer certification if the Iowa-based business is not currently a certified trainer, up to \$10,000
- General maintenance and supplies necessary to conduct in-house training – vehicle(s) dedicated for training and skills pad (up to 25% of total award amount) including:
 - Initial measuring and striping the site on concrete and/or measuring and inserting markers in gravel
 - Interval remeasuring for correct course measurements
 - Regular snow removal
 - Paint maintenance
 - Signage
 - Lighting replacements and/or repairs
 - Fencing replacements and/or repairs
 - General or routine dedicated training vehicle(s) maintenance
 - Fuel charges for dedicated training vehicle(s)

Funds are administered as reimbursement only and no advance payment options are available. Applicants must provide an itemized budget describing expenses incurred completing ELDT training In-House and/or through a third party ELDT Training Provider located in the state of

Iowa. Employers who use the funds to cover the outlined costs cannot also charge employees for those same costs.

5. Type of Award

Awards will operate as a reimbursement award. Applicants may receive of up to \$2,500 towards each driver that they support completing ELDT with an Iowa-based, third-party training provider or towards each driver that completes ELDT in-house with the Iowa-based employer serving as the certified training provider. All training providers must be certified with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association (FMCSA) Training Provider Registry prior to reimbursement. If the Iowa-based business is not a certified FMCSA trainer, the award will provide up to \$10,000 toward the expenses attributed to the completion of the certification.

To be eligible for reimbursement, applicant must provide proof that each driver has their driver training certification uploaded to the Training Provider Registry and pass their Iowa, or bordering state (if eligible), CDL test within 30 days of their last day of training or their second attempt within 14 days of the first failed attempt. The training for the first cohort must begin within four months of this enacting of the fully executed contract agreement. Reimbursement will only be provided for the members of the cohort who passed their CDL test on the first or second attempt with an uploaded copy of the Iowa, or bordering state (if eligible), CDL along with submission of the request.

6. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds

There is no cost sharing or matching fund requirement associated with this award.

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 activities, outcomes and other deliverables of the project, including but not limited to:

- Demographic information of participants including home city and state,
- Information on the third-party training provider including name, city and state (if applicable),
- Total participant enrollment,
- Total of participants actively enrolled,
- Total participants completing training,
- Wage information before and after completing the training,
- Total participants exiting the program without completing training,
- Number of participants passing licensure exam on the first attempt,
- Number of participants passing licensure exam on the second attempt,
- Length of time per training,
- Total participants attaining an industry-recognized credential, and
- Number of new and upgraded certified drivers by certification/endorsement type.

This report may also include progress of the project award and details relating to the key performance indicators, lessons learned and ongoing plan for sustainability. Successful applicants will also be required to provide measurements tools and metrics used to determine the success of the program.

Financial Quarterly Reports will not be processed until after the Quarterly Narrative Progress Reports requirements are satisfied.

Quarterly Financial Reports must include invoices, receipts, expenditures, as well as any clarifying statements to document proof of payment, how the funds were spent and certify the funds were used in accordance with the grant application and grant program. IWD will require the following support for ALL expenses submitted for reimbursement, but is not limited to:

- a. Receipt or invoice with name of vendor, organization's name, date that falls within the period of performance, and description of goods or services provided,
- b. Proof of payment that includes the name of vendor, organization's name, amount that matches receipt/invoice and proof payment. Acceptable proof of payment includes:
 - Front and back of cancelled check, credit card statement, bank statement, etc. Screenshots from the financial institution or internal accounting system are not considered adequate proof of payment.

The report must include, but is not limited to:

- a. Date funds received,
- b. Amount of funds received,
- c. Amount of funds provided by the employer, and
- d. Expenditures that account for how private and public funds were expended.

PROCUREMENT POLICY

All successful applicants will be required to provide a copy of their procurement policy to IWD along with the return of their executed agreement. A procurement policy template will be provided upon request; however, it is the successful applicant's responsibility to consult with qualified and knowledgeable legal counsel to determine any specific rules or requirements that apply to their individual circumstances.

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 located in the State of Iowa in good standing with the State of Iowa. Applicants must employ Iowa-based CDL

drivers whose position will require that the employee apply for a Class A or B CDL, upgrade an existing CDL from Class B to Class A, or add a hazardous materials, passenger, or school bus endorsement.

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. 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 or Micheal.Cockrum@iwd.iowa.gov. Applicants are 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.

- **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**

- **Organizational Capability**
- **Budget Narrative & Spreadsheet**
- **Letters of Support Attachments**
- **Minority Impact Statement**

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	40 points
Partnerships/Collaborations	5 points
Program Retention, Measures & Evaluation	30 points
Organizational Capacity	10 points
Budget Narrative & Spreadsheet	5 points
TOTAL	100 points

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:

Micheal Cockrum
Iowa Workforce Development Manager
Micheal.Cockrum@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, to 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.

APPENDIX A: Iowa Entry-Level Driver Training Program Application Guidance

Please review the following guidance when preparing your grant application in IowaGrants.gov. The application gathers general information, narratives, budget information, and attachments. Each section includes prompts that must be addressed.

General Information

Complete Cover Sheet-General Information. On this form, applicants will enter basic information about their organization including:

- Contact information of your organization's Primary Point of Contact and may include an Authorized Representative
- Contact information of your organization's Fiscal Officer/Agent
- Identification of County(ies) participating, involved, or affected by the proposal
- Identification of Congressional District(s), Iowa Senate District(s), and Iowa House District(s) involved or affected by the proposal

Program Information

Enter basic information about their application including:

- Legal Organization Name (must match W-9 exactly)
- Organization type (Government, Nonprofit, Higher Education, Business, etc.)
- Business Address and Program Address (if different than business address)
- Primary Point of Contact Phone Number and Email Address
- Program's proposed start and end dates
- Amount requested
- SAM.gov unique identifier (awarded projects will be required to register with SAM.gov)

Program Description

Provide a brief summary (no more than three sentences) that tells us what you are proposing, the program goal, and the anticipated outcomes.

Defined Barriers/Description of Documented Need

This area provides the justification for your program proposal. Provide a description of the barriers your organization faces and how it relates to the needs of the employer, employees and community. Demonstrate the need for this program and how this information was obtained either through surveys, reporting data sets, job loss or satisfaction. Describe the relationship of this need to pandemic-related events.

Program Plan Narrative/Training Approach

Provide details of how this training plan related to the stated needs and barriers. Describe details of the training process supported by the grant funds including curriculum instruction information separated by hours, how the training will be delivered and total length of time. Include details of the number of participants in each training, expected certificates, skills and credentials participants will earn upon completion, and certifications of instructors. Describe how individuals

are recruited and selected for the training program, number of planned cohorts and anticipated number of individuals per cohort, include a description of occupations and wages, both prior to and post training. List any possible expansion options of the program within the business and to other businesses/community and how those decisions will be made.

Partnerships/Collaborations (if applicable)

Detail any collaborations and partners for the training program and how these play a key role in program success. Provide letters of support if utilizing a third-party training provider.

Program Retention, Measurement and Evaluation

Provide a staff retention plan that describes how participants will be retained once the program is completed along with past and current staff retention statistics. Provide a descriptive list of key tasks, performance measures, and outputs related to performance measures and how you will measure these. Describe the participant evaluation tool, and metrics used as success indicators for the program.

Organizational Capability

Describe details of the business such as years of operation, business's staff size, as well as various locations the business services or has a physical location. Describe the organizational structure of the business including how and who will be administering this program, including instructors.

Budget Summary and Budget Spreadsheet – Appendix D

Provide a descriptive budget narrative that further explains the budget spreadsheet. Explain items in column B of the budget spreadsheet proposed costs and how the costs were calculated.

Ensure the total grant funds requested in your application match the total amount included on the Budget Spreadsheet (Appendix D). Upload the completed Budget Spreadsheet (Attachment D) as an Excel document in the application forms section – **BUDGET MUST BE UPLOADED AS AN EXCEL FILE ON THE TEMPLATE PROVIDED.**

Application Attachments

Upload the following in the Attachment section of lowagrants.gov:

- Letters of commitment from key partners (combine and upload as a single PDF document). These are not reference letters, applicants must include a letter from any significant partner listed in the application that details the commitment.
- Completed Budget Spreadsheet form (Appendix D) (upload as Excel spreadsheet).

Minority Impact Statement

Pursuant to 2008 Iowa Acts, HF 2392 Iowa Code Section 8.11, all grant applications submitted to the State must include a Minority Impact Statement. This requires applicants to consider the potential impact of the grant's proposed programs or policies on minority groups. This form includes a series of questions for the applicant to complete identifying either a potential positive impact, negative impact, or no impact.

APPENDIX B: Iowa Entry-Level Driver Training Program Scoring Rubric

Defined Barriers/Description of Documented Need – 10 points

- Description of documented needs and barriers of business and community
- Describe how the pandemic played a role in this need or barrier

Program Plan Narrative/Training Approach – 40 points

- Describe the Entry-Level Driver Training program details and the anticipated impacts the program will have with employees and employers. Provide details of the training process, including:
 - Connections to identified barriers
 - Occupations including wage information
 - Curriculum instruction information, including hours of training, driving, and coursework
 - Details of how the training will be delivered and total length of training program
 - Credentials and/or certifications of instructors
 - Details of # of participants in each training and # of planned cohorts
 - Provide a detailed description how individuals are recruited and selected for the program
 - List possible expansion options within the business and to other businesses/community

Partnerships/Collaborations - 5 points:

- Define any collaborations and partners for the training program and key role(s)

Program Retention, Performance Measures & Evaluation- 30 points:

- Provide a staff retention plan that describes how participants will be retained once completed. Include past and current staff retention rates for staff in similar positions
- Program Tasks and Key Performance Measures – provide a list of key tasks, performance measures, and outputs to measure success rates related to performance measures
- Provide a description of a participant evaluation tool and the metrics used as success indicators

Organizational Capacity - 10 points:

- The years of operation, size of business including number of employees, operations, and locations
- Provide an overview of the organizational structure of the business, how/who will be administering this program, including instructors

Budget Narrative & Spreadsheet - 5 points:

- The attached budget should be downloaded from the budget spreadsheet provided in Appendix D. The applicant should complete this spreadsheet and include accurate details of how item costs are calculated, reflecting all expenses of the program. All budget items listed should be accurately discussed throughout the project design narrative where appropriate in how these items or staff will be used to support the program and participants.

APPENDIX C: IowaGrants.gov New User Registration Instructions

Are you new to IowaGrants.gov? Follow these basic instructions to create an account and begin your grant application.

1. Go to www.iowagrants.gov
2. Click “New Users Register Here.”
3. Enter your first and last name.
4. Choose an Account ID name. Please note, this will be your user ID in the system.
5. Click “Save Account Details.” You may receive a pop-up message that asks if you want to continue with your registration. Click “OK.”
6. Next, you’ll receive a confirmation email.
7. Open the confirmation email and follow the instructions. You will:
 - a. Click a confirmation link;
 - b. Choose security questions; and
 - c. Confirm a password.
8. Go to www.iowagrants.gov and into your account with your new username and password to finish activation.
9. Enter your basic information and select your Program Area of Interest. While the system instructions do not make this clear, it is important that you select a program area of interest from the drop-down list. This will expedite registration.
10. Click Register.
11. Your registration is now pending final system approval. You will receive a confirmation email once approval is complete.

If you have any questions regarding these instructions or want additional assistance, please contact Patrick Rice at patrick.rice@iwd.iowa.gov or 515-725-3666.

APPENDIX D: Iowa Entry-Level Driver Training Program Budget Narrative

Please refer to the Excel spreadsheet template provided in the Attachment section of IowaGrants.gov Funding Opportunity announcement.

Complete the budget spreadsheet to provide additional information and justification for the proposed budget.

Attach your final budget narrative to your application submission in IowaGrants.gov as an Excel file.