



# HIRED

## *Higher Industry Readiness through Educational Development*

Arkansas Workforce Development  
Funding Opportunities  
Request for Proposal Overview



# Webinar Agenda

- Opening remarks and introductions
- Review the RFP Guidelines for Submission
  - General Information and Overview
  - RFP Process
  - Proposal Specifications
  - Appendices
- Highlight upcoming key dates and required actions
- Share links to web pages and contact email



# Questions?

- A form to submit your questions will be provided at the end of the webinar.
- We will answer you directly if your contact information is shared.
- A FAQ list will also be posted on the ADHE Workforce Grant Webpage.
- Please read the RFP in its entirety. Today's webinar is only an overview.

**Mike Rogers,**  
Chief Workforce Officer  
Governor's Office

**Dr. Ken Warden,**  
Commissioner  
Arkansas Division of Higher Education



**Cody Waits,**  
Director of Workforce Connections



**Dr. Tina Moore,**  
Director of Workforce Development



# General Information and Overview

# HIRED: Two Tracks of Funding

*Given the common intent and desired outcomes of the Workforce Initiative Act of 2015 and the 2024 Arkansas Workforce Strategy, a shared request for proposals and submission guidelines will be utilized for two tracks of grant funding.*

## **Track 1: Workforce Initiative Grant Program (T1WIG)**

- Planning Grant funding  
(up to \$25,000 for up to three months)
- Implementation Grant funding  
(up to \$4,000,000 over two years, not to exceed \$3,000,000 in Year 1)
- Potential Continuation Grant funding  
(up to \$1 million per year for up to three years)

## **Track 2: Arkansas Workforce Strategy Grants (T2WSG)**

- Implementation Grant funding  
(\$250,000 or more over two years)

\*Applicants will indicate track preference in the Letter of Intent and may select to be considered for both tracks.

# Funding Priorities

*Both T1WIG and T2WSG will prioritize and support proposals in the following targeted industry sectors and aligned to the 2024 Arkansas Workforce Strategy:*

- Advanced Manufacturing
  - Aerospace
  - Defense
  - Firearms and Ammunition
  - Food
  - Forestry Automation
  - Industrial Maintenance
  - Steel
- Energy Infrastructure and Utilities
- Emerging Technology Sectors
  - Lithium Mining and Battery Technology
  - Mobility and Transportation
  - Semiconductors
- Information Technology
  - Artificial Intelligence
  - Cybersecurity
  - Data Science
- Life Sciences
  - Bioinformatics
  - Innovative Healthcare
  - Medical Devices
- Logistics and Distribution
- Precision Agriculture
- Skilled Trades



# Important Workforce Sectors but NOT High Priorities for this Funding

*While the occupations in the following sectors are vital to our state, the intent of this funding will prioritize and support proposals for the previously identified targeted industry sectors. This list of examples is not exhaustive.*

- Broadband
- Healthcare: Nursing (CNA, LPN, RN, etc...)
- Law Enforcement/EMT/Fire
- Leadership/Retail/Entrepreneurship
- Tourism and Outdoor Economy

# Project Core Requirements

*Both T1WIG and T2WSG applications.*

- Enhance, expand, or create employer-driven career pathways to fill a critical, demonstrable state and/or regional workforce need.
- Develop and implement collaborative training programs that prepare workers for rapid entry into the workforce, upskill incumbent workers, provide recognized industry certifications, support apprenticeships, and/or award degree or non-degree credentials aligned to state and/or regional workforce needs.
- Demonstrate employer needs and expected outcomes through labor market data and clearly defined, measurable performance and effectiveness objectives, including employment and labor participation rates.
- Include representation from the following workforce alliance partners:
  - Two or more employers representing critical workforce needs in the state and/or region
  - Public or private Arkansas college(s) or university(s) that provide(s) workforce education and training
  - K-12 education system (required for T1WIG; optional for T2WSG)
  - A high school or secondary center that awards concurrent credit for career and technical programs (required for T1WIG; optional for T2WSG)

# Lead Applicants

- T1WIG: A public Arkansas institution of higher education will serve as the lead applicant and fiscal agent for all grant activities and execute a grant contract with the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE).
- T2WSG: Any employer, chamber of commerce, economic development organization, industry association, institute of higher education, private career education provider, local workforce board, or other non-profit workforce development entity may serve as the lead applicant and fiscal agent for all grant activities and may execute a grant contract with the Arkansas Department of Commerce (ACOM).



# RFP Process

# Letter of Intent

The initial step for **both tracks** is the submission of a brief Letter of Intent (see Appendix A) with general information and an overview of the project concept.

Following the review of Letters of Intent by state workforce development partners, applicants may be invited to submit a T1WIG Planning grant or T2WSG Implementation grant proposal.

**AN INVITATION TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL DOES NOT GUARANTEE FUNDING.**

- Solicitation/RFP available – June 24, 2024
- Letter of Intent due – July 8, 2024
- Invite to apply for T1WIG or T2WSG funding – July 22, 2024

# Planning Grant (T1WIG only)

Invited workforce alliances may apply for T1WIG Planning grants of up to \$25,000 for a period of up to three (3) months to support the development of employer-driven career pathways for in-demand industry sectors, with priority for regional strategic focus centers aligned with employer needs in targeted industry sectors listed in the General Information and Overview section. Phase I- Planning grants are the basis of Phase II- Implementation grant proposals.

**AWARD OF A PLANNING GRANT DOES NOT GUARANTEE AWARD OF AN IMPLEMENTATION GRANT.**

- Planning grant application opens for invited applicants – July 22, 2024
- Planning grant application due – August 5, 2024
- Planning grant notification of award – August 19, 2024
- Period of performance – August 19, 2024 – November 15, 2024

# Implementation Grants (T1WIG)

Workforce alliances awarded a planning grant will be invited to submit a Phase II-Implementation grant proposal. These competitive grants of up to \$4 million over two (2) years (not to exceed \$3 million in Year 1) will provide resources to implement projects planned during Phase I.

- Implementation grant application opens for Planning grantees – August 19, 2024
- Implementation grant applications due – November 15, 2024
- Application review and strategic negotiation period – November 15 - December 15, 2024
- Implementation grant notification of award – December 22, 2024
- Period of performance – January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2026

# Implementation Grants (T2WSG)

Invited workforce alliances may apply for Implementation grants of \$250,000 or more over two (2) years to support the development of employer-driven career pathways for in-demand industry sectors, with priority for regional strategic focus centers aligned with employer needs in targeted industry sectors listed in the General Information and Overview section

- Implementation grant application opens for invited applicants – July 22, 2024
- Implementation grant applications due – September 23, 2024
- Application review and strategic negotiation period – September 23 - October 28, 2024
- Implementation grant notification of award – November 1, 2024
- Awards allocated and MOUs finalized – December 15, 2024
- Period of performance – January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2026



# Continuation Grants (T1WIG only)

Continuation grants of up to \$1 million a year for up to three (3) years may be available for alliances that meet or exceed T1WIG Implementation grant outcome metrics and are selected by the state workforce development partners for continued support of state and regional workforce needs.

- Annually approved based on performance and continued justification of need
- Potential period(s) of performance – January 1, 2027 - December 31, 2029

Continuation Grant guidelines will be provided during the second year of performance of T1WIG Implementation grants.



# Proposal Specifications

# Letter of Intent

Applicants must submit a brief Letter of Intent (see Appendix A) that includes the following:

- Lead applicant and contact information
- Workforce alliance partners\*
- Targeted industry sector
- Brief project description with labor market justification
- Anticipated amount of funding request for Implementation grant
- Grant track preference

\*Lead applicant and required partners as listed in the Project Core Requirements in the General Information and Overview section must be identified. Additional partners may be added to the Planning and/or Implementation proposals, if invited to apply.

# Letter of Intent

- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Completed Letters of Intent must be submitted as a PDF to [Workforce.Grants@adhe.edu](mailto:Workforce.Grants@adhe.edu) by July 8, 2024.
- Following the review of Letters of Intent by state workforce development partners, on July 22, 2024, applicants may be invited to submit a T1WIG Planning grant proposal or T2WSG Implementation grant proposal.

# Planning Grants (T1WIG only)

- Section 1: Program Need (30%)
- Section 2: Program Plan (25%)
- Section 3: Strength of Partnership (25%)
- Section 4: Budget Plan (20%)

# Planning Grants (T1WIG only)

- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Completed Planning grant proposals must be submitted as a PDF to [Workforce.Grants@adhe.edu](mailto:Workforce.Grants@adhe.edu) by August 5, 2024.
- Completed proposals must include the following:
  - T1WIG Planning Grant Cover Sheet (Appendix B)
  - Proposal Narrative
  - T1WIG Planning Grant Budget Template (Appendix C)
- Planning grant proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by the state workforce development partners using the T1WIG Planning Grant Evaluation Rubric (Appendix D).
- ADHE will notify applicants of Planning grant awards and permission to proceed with an Implementation grant application by August 19, 2024.
- Planning grant awardees will receive one-time reimbursement for allowed (see Appendix H) actual expenditures submitted by January 31, 2025.

# Implementation Grants (T1WIG and T2WSG)

- Section 1: Program Need (25%)
- Section 2: Program Plan (25%)
- Section 3: Strength of Partnerships (25%)
- Section 4: Budget Plan (15%)
- Section 5: Sustainability (10%)

# Implementation Grants (T1WIG and T2WSG)

## Section 1: Program Need (25%)

Proposals must include a thorough description of the labor needs and specifically identify the skills gap employers in the state and/or region face and anticipate in the future.

Entities seeking grant funds must outline the proposed program and/or equipment needed and how creation of the program and/or acquisition of equipment will address those labor needs.

Essential Components:

- State and/or regional data demonstrating the need for action
- Clear linkages between grant activities and local needs
- Alignment with Arkansas economic and workforce goals



# Implementation Grants (T1WIG and T2WSG)

## Section 2: Program Plan (25%)

### Essential Components:

- Detailed project timeline and overview
- Measurable objectives for each phase of the project
- Project governance and accountability plan
- Pathways articulation and support
- Recruitment and retention plan
- Role of equipment request
- Performance assessment

# Implementation Grants (T1WIG and T2WSG)

## Section 3: Strength of Partnership (25%)

Proposals are required to address how the program plan incorporates each workforce alliance partner, as identified in the Project Core Requirements listed in the General Information and Overview section, in a meaningful role.

### Essential Components:

- Detailed description of role of each partner in implementation of the project
- Capabilities of each partner in ensuring project success
- Commitment letters from alliance partners

# Implementation Grants (T1WIG and T2WSG)

## Section 4: Budget Plan (15%)

Proposals will include a detailed financial plan that maximizes efficient and effective use of existing resources and a completed budget template.

### Essential Components:

- Clear alignment between funding request and grant activities
- Funding requests only for Allowable Expenses listed in Appendix H
- Workforce alliance match of at least 10% of the total request

# Implementation Grants (T1WIG and T2WSG)

## Section 5: Sustainability (10%)

Proposals will include a commitment and detailed plan for sustaining grant activities beyond the implementation period. Equipment requests will clearly specify how purchased equipment will continue to be linked to addressing labor and workforce needs beyond the grant period.

### Essential Components:

- Detailed plan for sustaining the program beyond the implementation grant funding period
- Detailed plan for maintaining communication and sharing resources among all the program partners beyond the grant funding period
- Identify availability of long-term resources to maintain and/or repair any equipment requested
- Describe plan for redistribution of equipment to meet additional workforce needs once the employer needs addressed by the proposal have been satisfied (if applicable)

# Implementation Grants (T1WIG and T2WSG)

- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Completed implementation grant proposals must be submitted by November 15, 2024, for T1WIG and by September 23, 2024, for T2WSG.
- Completed proposals must include the following:
  - Implementation Grant Cover Sheet (Appendix E)
  - Proposal Narrative
  - Partner Commitment Letters
  - Implementation Grant Budget Template (Appendix F)
- An application review and strategic negotiation period will allow collaboration among state workforce development partners and grantees for potential proposal modification to best meet state workforce and economic development goals.
- The state workforce development partners will review and evaluate implementation grant proposals using the Implementation Grant Evaluation Rubric (Appendix G).

# Implementation Grants (T1WIG only)

- ADHE will notify applicants of Implementation grant awards by December 22, 2024.
- Implementation grant funding for approved plans will be reimbursed for allowed (see Appendix H) actual expenditures incurred during the January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2026, period of performance and submitted by February 1, 2027.
- Grant recipients may submit requests for reimbursement monthly.
- A one-time, up to ninety (90)-day, no-cost extension may be granted if requested and approved by the Commissioner of the Division of Higher Education.
- Continuation Grant guidelines will be provided during the second year of performance of T1WIG Implementation grants.

# Implementation Grants (T2WSG only)

- ACOM will notify applicants of Implementation grant awards by November 1, 2024.
- Awards must be allocated and MOUs finalized between ACOM and lead applicant by December 15, 2024.
- Implementation grant funding for approved plans will be reimbursed for allowed (see Appendix H) actual expenditures incurred during the January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2026, period of performance and submitted by February 1, 2027.
- Grant recipients may submit requests for reimbursement monthly.



# Appendices



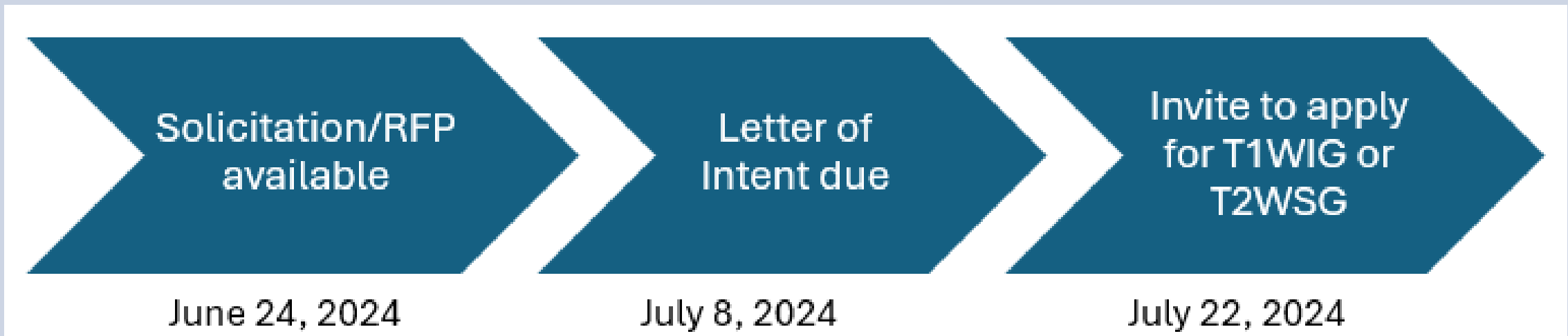
# Appendices

- **Templates in the RFP are for reference only.**
- **Use the provided fillable templates linked on the Workforce Grants webpage.**
- **Note the evaluation rubrics that will guide project selection.**
- **An Allowable Expenses list is provided for reference but does not guarantee approval of all requests.**



## Key Dates

# T1WIG and T2WSG





## Links

Email:

[Workforce.Grants@adhe.edu](mailto:Workforce.Grants@adhe.edu)

Question Form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/nV7hYyuvF5>

Arkansas Workforce Strategy:

<https://governor.arkansas.gov/arkansas-workforce-strategy/>

Webpage:

<https://adhe.edu/institutions/arkansas-workforce-initiative-grants-regional-workforce>

