



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

2027

RELEASED AUGUST

**Employment Programs
for Young Adults with
Disabilities**

IMPLEMENTATION GRANT



Employment Programs for Young Adults with Disabilities



APPLICATION

Click here to begin your application and submit your proposal.



PRIMARY CONTACT

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QUESTIONS

Bidders can submit questions and sign up for notifications. Click here to learn more.



WEBSITE

www.commcorp.org

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SECTION ONE: GRANT PROGRAM GOALS & FUNDING AVAILABILITY

- A. *About the Initiative:*** The Employment Program for Young Adults with Disabilities is administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, in support of the Healey-Driscoll Administration's efforts to improve workforce outcomes for young adults with disabilities. This grant initiative is funded through a General Appropriation Act line item in the State Budget (7003-0607).
- B. *Definitions:*** For the purposes of this solicitation the following terms are defined as follows:
- a. Applicant(s): organization(s) applying to receive funds, accountable to grant terms and responsible for coordinating all activities of the Grant Program.
 - b. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): a formal, yet non-binding agreement signed by both parties that is intended to express the goodwill between Partners. This is not a legally binding contract.
 - c. Training Provider(s): Any organization that provides workforce training for the proposed program.
 - d. Service Provider(s): Any organization that provides wrap-around services to support the addressable population.
 - e. Employer Partner(s): An organization with operations in Massachusetts that employs Massachusetts residents and is committed to collaborating with a lead Applicant to consider program participants for future job vacancies.
 - f. Partner(s): Organization(s) that are committed to collaborating on the implementation of the Grant Program. Examples may include partners that provide primary recruitment support, training services, or employment placement assistance.
 - g. Partnership(s): collectively all the Partners working together to implement the Grant Program.
 - h. Participants: eligible individuals enrolled in the grant program.
 - i. Grant Program: The proposed training, case management, wrap around support and job placement Grant Program.
 - j. Letter of Commitment (LOC): formal, yet non-binding document where a Partner expresses intent to support and/or contribute resources to Applicant.
 - k. Underemployment: There is no universal definition of underemployment. For the purposes of the Employment Program for Young Adults with Disabilities, underemployment is defined as the underutilization of a worker: the underuse of a worker because their job does not use their skills or offers them too few

hours. **This program** *recognizes that organizations serving individuals with disabilities may use different definitions of underemployment based on the populations they serve and their program models. If your organization uses a different definition of underemployment, please describe it in the PY27 Program Narrative Form, Section C: Target Population, Question 1.*

- C. Grant Initiative Goals:** Commonwealth Corporation is seeking applications from eligible applicants to prepare young adults with disabilities in Massachusetts for successful employment by:
- Providing occupational skills training aligned with in-demand industries, occupations, and employer workforce needs
 - Partnering with employers to prepare participants for available job opportunities and ensure they earn the skills, credentials, and competencies required for entry into targeted occupations
 - Offering work-based learning and hands-on work experience opportunities that support skill development and career readiness
 - Placing participants into unsubsidized, paid employment
 - Delivering post-placement supports that promote continued skill development, employment retention, and long-term career success.
- D. Funding Availability & Grant Award Amount:** Approximately \$900,000 is available for this grant program. Anticipated grant awards can range between \$10,000 to \$200,000 based on a competitive proposal process. Commonwealth Corporation anticipates funding five (5) to seven (7) grants.
- E. Investment per Participant Benchmark:** The most competitive applicants will demonstrate an overall investment of less than \$8,500 per participant enrolled and less than \$15,000 per job placement.
- F. Minimum and Maximum Participant Enrollment:** There is no minimum or maximum participant enrollment requirement for this grant program. However, applicants should propose enrollment targets that align with the cost-per-participant and cost-per-placement benchmarks outlined above (E).
- G. Program Outcomes Expectations:** The lead applicant will have 12 months to deliver their Grant Program. The Grant Program design must include a set of services that are necessary for eligible Participants to secure employment, measured by Participants securing and retaining a job (unsubsidized) for at least 30 days during grant period.

H. **Match Requirement:** Match is not required.

I. **Allowable Costs:** Funds may be used for costs associated with delivering training and placement activities, and other services to prepare participants for success in the targeted occupation(s), to optimize opportunities for participant learning and career development, and to achieve placement for participants. Specifically, funds may be used to support the following:

- Outreach, recruitment, assessment, and selection
- Support services needed to ensure participants' success, such as transportation, childcare, textbooks, uniforms and tools
 - Support services may also include accommodation supports such as noise canceling devices, screen reader technology, interpretation services, etc.
- Training delivery, including classroom and formal on-the-job training
- Stipends for participating in training and work experience (e.g. internships)
- Staff time for Grant Program coordination, job development, case management and data entry

SECTION TWO: ELIGIBLE LEAD APPLICANTS & PARTNERS

- A. ***Eligible Applicants:*** Eligible lead applicants are community-based organizations, training or service providers, or agencies or entities who are able to receive state funding and are deemed eligible by Commonwealth Corporation with:
- Demonstrated success and expertise in preparing young adults with disabilities for employment, providing them with occupationally specific skills training, placing them in unsubsidized paid positions, and providing post-placement support that leads to employment retention and,
 - Evidence of effective partnerships with employers that engages them in program design and delivery has resulted in placements and retained unsubsidized paid employment of young adults with disabilities in targeted occupations at the employers' workplaces.

- B. ***Employer Partners and Partnership Requirements:*** Applicants must submit a separate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Letter of Commitment (LOC) for each employer partner. Applicants are required to include at least one employer partner for each proposed target occupation. A single employer partner may satisfy this requirement for multiple occupations if the MOU or LOC clearly identifies each occupation for which the employer is committing to consider program participants.

All MOUs or LOCs submitted must clearly state the employer's role in the partnership, describe the level of commitment to the program, and include information about current vacancies and average entry level wages in the target occupation(s). MOU agreements will be considered more competitive than LOCs and must be signed and dated by both the lead applicant and the employer partner within the application year (2026). Find employer partner LOC/MOU instructions and an example [here](#).

Note:

- All employer partners must have operations in Massachusetts and employ Massachusetts residents in the Applicant's identified target occupation(s).
 - The lead applicant may serve as an additional employer partner but may not serve as the required employer partner.
- C. ***Additional Partners:*** Lead Applicants are **not required** to collaborate with partners to deliver their proposed program. However, Applicants that choose to collaborate with partners that have a significant role in their proposed programming (such as serving as the primary recruitment support, training provider, employment placement support, etc.) must provide an MOU or LOC that outlines the nature of the partnership.

This documentation should clearly describe each partner's roles, responsibilities, and terms of collaboration. MOU agreements will be considered more competitive than LOCs. Find partner LOC/MOU instructions [here](#).

SECTION THREE: TRAINING PROGRAM DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

A. *Target Populations:* Applicants must propose to serve eligible participants as described by the following criteria:

- Unemployed or underemployed and,
- Have a diagnosable disability and,
- Between 18 and 35 years old and,
- Massachusetts resident and,
- Not enrolled in high school as of program start (may or may not have previously earned a high school diploma or HiSET/GED)

B. *Target Occupations:* Applicants must provide training and placement services that prepare participants to meet regional workforce skill requirements and obtain employment in in-demand occupation(s).

Applicants will be required to apply under one of the following Target Occupation models and adhere to the requirements associated with that model. There is no preference for which model Applicants choose, provided that all model requirements are met.

- **Single Target Occupation Model:** Applicants identify a single target occupation and corresponding training program that leads to potential employment outcomes in that occupation.
We recognize that some occupations share the same required skills and credentials for entry. Therefore, Applicants may propose a training program that prepare participants for training in aligned target occupations, if the required skills and credentials are identical and can be attained through a single, unified training program.
- **Multiple Target Occupations Model:** Applicants identify multiple target occupations, each supported by their own dedicated training program that leads to potential employment outcomes. Detailed information must be provided for each proposed training program and associated target occupation included in the application.

C. *Program Design Requirements:* Applicants must include the following components in their proposed program:

- Career and work readiness training
- Training cohort(s) (which may consist solely of eligible program participants or may include a mix of individuals, some of whom are not funded by this grant)

- Occupational skills training directly related to demand occupations identified by the employer partners
- Work-based learning experience (including but not limited to internships, micro-internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, or project-based learning opportunities in a work setting)
- Job development and placement in unsubsidized, paid positions
- Post-placement support
- Coaching and case management
- Support services and resources as needed to participate in training and transition to work

D. *Outcome Expectations:* Competitive applications will place at least 50% of enrolled participants into an unsubsidized job placement (measured by 30-day employment retention) within 30 days of contract end date. Commonwealth Corporation has established an *exemplary* provider target placement rate of 65% of enrollees based on findings from the report, “[The 2023 Youth Transition Report: Outcomes for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities](#)” published by the Institute for Educational Leadership. Applicants may propose a different placement rate along with an explanation. This explanation should cite specific performance rates documented for a similar program design serving a similar population.

SECTION FOUR: ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- A. *Participant Level Data Reporting Requirements:*** Grantees will be required to collect certain pieces of information about all participants. As such, grantees will be required to maintain all reasonable and appropriate security procedures and practices necessary to protect participants' personal information from unauthorized access, destruction, use, modification, disclosure, or loss. Grantees will be required to enter this participant-level data into a web-based data reporting tool that is securely hosted by Commonwealth Corporation. Data elements will include but are not limited to: identifiers (including social security number), demographics (including disability status), employment status, previous education, services received (including enrollment date and training details), and outcomes achieved for all participants. Grantees will be required to enter this data on participants as soon as it becomes available; timeliness and completeness of data will be assessed by Commonwealth Corporation staff and discussed at Technical Assistance meetings with the Commonwealth Corporation Program Manager.
- B.** Grantees will be required to share their process for verifying the eligibility of program participants for programming as well as their process for verifying job outcomes.
- C. *Program & Fiscal Monitoring:*** Grantees will be required to submit the following reports using templates supplied by Commonwealth Corporation:
- **Narrative Reports:** This report will be due no more frequently than monthly and will include an update and reflection on progress in meeting performance measures and reporting on the project's successes and challenges.
 - **Reversion Report:** This report will be due no more than 90 days before the contract end date. This report will reflect any anticipated funds that will be unspent by contract close out.
 - **Final Report:** This report will be submitted within 30 days of the contract period's end date and will document what was achieved through the investment of these funds. This report will inform future funding practices and provide information that could be used more generally among organizations doing similar work. The format for this report will be provided to grantees after a contract is awarded.
- D. *Fiscal Monitoring:*** Commonwealth Corporation is responsible for ensuring that organizations receiving grant funds:
1. Have the fiscal systems, including operating internal controls, and program systems needed to meet select federal, state, and other (e.g. foundation) requirements, as applicable

2. Meet the terms of the grant award outlined in the contract with Commonwealth Corporation
3. Provide quality services to program participants
4. Expend grant funds only for allowable activities

To fulfill this responsibility, Commonwealth Corporation may require one or more of the following:

- Review of requested backup documentation
- A virtual Fiscal Monitoring Desk Review
- An in-person Fiscal Monitoring site visit per contract year.

Additional information will be provided after a contract is awarded should the need arise. All expenses should be documented and preserved such that they can be provided to Commonwealth Corporation upon request within 48 hours of the request.

- E. *Payment:*** Funds will be disbursed on a cost reimbursement basis. Grantees will submit expenses monthly using a cloud-based template, supplied by Commonwealth Corporation and shared via Microsoft SharePoint/Teams. Grantees will only be reimbursed for expenses incurred during the period of the contract. Grantees are required to maintain and submit, upon request, back-up documentation for expenses.
- F. *Technical Assistance:*** Each grantee will be assigned a Commonwealth Corporation program staff who will provide technical assistance, in turn each grantee must assign a main point of contact at their organization who is accountable for the grant. The Commonwealth Corporation program staff will be available to support grantees through the duration of the grant, answering questions about operational issues as well as providing technical assistance to ensure grantees meet their performance outcomes. This includes three community of practice meetings, one site visit per contract period, and bimonthly technical assistance sessions.
- G. *Project Terms and Conditions:*** Grantees will be required to abide by the Commonwealth Corporation's Standard Contract Terms and Conditions which will be provided during contract negotiation. Applicants may review these terms and conditions prior to applying by contacting yawd@commcorp.org to request a copy. In addition, all final contracts are subject to negotiation of a final statement of work.

SECTION FIVE: PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

- A. *Proposal Evaluation Process:*** Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation will be evaluated by the Commonwealth Corporation. Representatives of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development may participate in this process.

The review process will consist of the following steps:

Step 1: Threshold Criteria Screening

Submissions will be screened for completeness, conformity to the program requirements and timeliness of response. Submissions that are incomplete, non-conforming, or late may not be considered.

Step 2: Compliance Screening

Commonwealth Corporation will conduct an analysis to ensure all applicants are in compliance with state and federal law. Applicants are encouraged to review these criteria and ensure they are complying prior to submitting an application. Commonwealth Corporation will conduct, at minimum, the following reviews to ensure compliance:

- Ensure applicants are in good standing with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. The Commonwealth Corporation will conduct this screening by reviewing the Certificate of Good Standing (C.O.G.S.) submitted in the Grant Application Package.
- Ensure applicants are in full compliance with all obligations to the Department of Unemployment Assistance, Department of Industrial Accidents, and any other obligations to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Ensure Applicants do not appear on any debarment list and are not in any way prohibited from doing business with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This requirement shall apply to all Partners, not simply the Applicant.

Step 3: Review Committee

A review committee will review and score all eligible submissions. Review results will be documented. EOLWD and Commonwealth Corporation reserve the right to request additional information from any applicant to ensure that the review committee has a complete understanding of the program concept.

Category	Point Value
Detailed program design that addresses the required training program design requirements as outlined in Section 3C.	50
Applicant and/or partner organizations demonstrate a proven track record of successfully recruiting, coaching, and providing comprehensive support services to young adults with disabilities or similar populations, resulting in successful preparation for and placement into unsubsidized employment. Applicants also demonstrate the organizational qualifications, capacity, and experience necessary for effective grant management, fiscal coordination, and coordination of program resources.	20
Well-defined employer and additional partner MOUs/Letters of Commitment (LOCs) detailing the strength of the partnership commitments and the extent to which all required information outlined in Sections 2b and 2c is included.	15
Budget aligns with the proposed program design, and the proposed enrollments and outcomes are appropriate given the expenses of the program and proposed implementation timeline.	15

Step 4: Notification of Grant Award Status

All applicants will be notified of their award status by email.

B. *Additional Terms:* In addition to the scoring system outlined above, Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to consider submissions that, in our sole judgment, are complete and responsive to the solicitation's requirements and include all required application components. Additionally, Commonwealth Corporation and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development reserve the right to consider other criteria in making competitive awards among comparably qualified applicants. Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to reject any and all applications, or to accept any and all applications, in whole or in part, if deemed to be in the interest of the Commonwealth Corporation or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to do so. This Request for Proposals (RFP) does not commit Commonwealth Corporation to award any contracts. Upon submission, all applications become the property of Commonwealth Corporation. Commonwealth Corporation is not responsible for electronic submissions that are not received by Commonwealth Corporation. Commonwealth Corporation also reserves the right to renew and extend the contract beyond the initial contract period if funding is available in future years.

C. *Appeals:* Appeals of funding decisions may be filed with Molly Jacobson, President and CEO, Commonwealth Corporation, 33 Harrison Avenue, 3rd Floor, Boston, MA 02111.

Appeals must be filed within fifteen days of the date of Commonwealth Corporation's notice to unsuccessful bidders. The President and CEO, and Administration may decide to hold an informal review of the decision, and may decide to grant an appeal, deny an appeal, or modify an award based on information provided during the informal review.

D. Audited Financial Statements and Verification of Fiscal Management Capacity:

Applicants that are selected for an award may be required to submit a copy of the organization's most recent audited financial statement prior to the execution of a final contract. In addition, prior to the grant award, Commonwealth Corporation staff may review an organization's fiscal systems and internal controls to verify that the organization has the capacity to manage public grant funds and administer the program. Applicants are required to submit a completed W-9 form as part of the application process with a valid signature within the past 12 months of the submission date. Grantees selected for funding are required to submit an updated [W9 form](#) if changes occur to the grantee's legal name, tax ID number, business address, or upon request by Commonwealth Corporation. Grantees are also responsible for ensuring that the information they've provided to CommCorp remains current and shall supplement this information in the event of updates or changes.

SECTION SIX: SUBMISSION SCHEDULE & INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION

A. Submission Schedule

Activity	Date
Request for Proposals Released	August 3, 2026
Live Webinar and Q&A	August 18, 2026, 12:00-1:15PM EST (Link)
Deadline to Submit Written Questions	August 31, 2026
All Answers to Written Questions Posted on Website	September 2, 2026
Applications Due No Later Than	September 21, 2026, by 5:00 PM EST
Application Clarification and Notification Period (CommCorp staff may follow up with questions on application material or notification of award)	September 22, 2026- December 11, 2026
Anticipated Contract Start Date	January 11, 2027
Anticipated Contract End Date	December 31, 2027

Clarification Period:

A live webinar, followed by a Q&A session, will be held for interested applicants on **August 18, 2026, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.**

Interested applicants may register for and attend the webinar using the following link: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/qge-8bvpRCy_dRAwDXmNRA

Questions about this grant program will be accepted in writing until 5 PM on August 31, 2026. Please submit questions and/or sign up to receive email notifications when new responses are posted via the following link:
<https://commcorp.formtitan.com/ftproject/yawdrfpqa>.

All questions will be responded to and posted on Commonwealth Corporation's website at www.commcorp.org. All potential applicants are advised to check the Commonwealth Corporation's website periodically for additional information and updates until submissions are due.

Response Deadline: Applications may be submitted at any time while the RFP is posted. All applications submitted prior to the submission deadlines will be reviewed within that cycle.

Application Submission Instructions: Grant Application Packages are due on September 21, 2026, by 5:00 PM EST. Please upload your submission electronically to the following link: <https://commcorp.formtitan.com/ftproject/yawdrfp>. To upload

your submission, you will need to submit the required attachments and complete an online application form.

Applicants should review all application components before submission to ensure that all required information has been completed. A confirmation email will be sent once an application has been successfully submitted. If you do not receive a confirmation email, please contact yawd@commcorp.org before the application deadline to verify that your application was received.

Grant Application Package – Required Documents: The documents listed in the table below make up the required components of the Grant Application Package. Instructions and templates for each required document can be found [here](#) and at the bottom of the Summary of Attachments table below. Failure to submit any required documents or material may result in disqualification of the application.

Applicants must use the official template forms provided for the following required attachments: PY27 YAWD Program Narrative Form, PY27 YAWD Application Budget, and PY27 YAWD Training Work Plan. Applicants may not alter, recreate, substitute, or use application forms from previous years in place of the provided templates. All responses must be completed directly within the official templates. **Any submission that does not use the required templates will not be reviewed or considered.**

Summary of Attachments		
What to Upload/File Format	Description of Attachments	Required
1. Certificate of Good Standing (C.O.G.S.) <i>Upload as a PDF.</i>	Certificate must be: - From the MA Department of Revenue - Dated within the last 6 months	Yes
2. Certificate of Compliance (C.O.C.) <i>Upload as a PDF.</i>	Certificate must be: - From the MA Department of Unemployment - Valid and compliant at the time of application submission (dated within 30 days of application submission)	Yes
3. IRS W-9 Form <i>Upload as a PDF.</i>	Form must be: - Completed, signed, and dated on or after September 21, 2025. - Reflect your legal name and address as registered with the IRS - Match the entity to be contracted	Yes
4. PY27 YAWD Program Narrative <i>Upload as a Word document using the narrative form linked at the bottom of the chart.</i>	Form must be: - Have all required narrative questions in the Program Narrative Form completed - Adhere to the specified word limits for each question.	Yes
5. PY27 YAWD Application Budget <i>Upload as an excel file using the excel template linked to the bottom of the chart.</i>	Complete all six of the following workbook sheets: 1. Budget Summary 2. Budget Form 3. Internal Staff Sheet 4. Supportive Services Sheet 5. Contracted Services Sheet 6. Outcome Chart	Yes
6. PY27 YAWD Training Work Plan <i>Upload as an excel file using the excel template linked to the bottom of this chart.</i>	Complete <i>all</i> requested details such as industry, target occupations, projected enrollment and completion numbers, delivery format, training and cohort timeline, and credentials participants will earn.	Yes

7. MOUs or Letters from Employer Partners <i>Upload a separate PDF file for each employer partner.</i>	The purpose of employer partner letters/ MOUs is to demonstrate how employer partners will collaborate with the proposed program. Carefully review the required employer partner instructions and ensure that each MOU/Letter includes the following: • Clearly states the employer partner's role in the partnership • Describes the employer partner's level of commitment to the program • Identifies the target occupation(s) for which the employer partner is considering program participants • Includes information about current vacancies in the target occupation(s) and average wage of those positions If submitting an MOU, MOU must be signed and dated by the employer partner and the Applicant during application year (2026).	Yes
8. MOUs or Letters from Additional Partners <i>Upload a separate PDF file for each partner.</i>	Applicants that collaborate with partners who have a significant role in their proposed programming must provide an MOU or LOC. Carefully review the Partnership MOU Instructions and ensure that each document: • Clearly describes the partner's role and responsibilities related to the proposed program • Outlines the terms of collaboration between the parties If submitting MOU, MOU must be signed and dated (2026) by the partner and Applicant.	Only if applicable
Applicant Profile Worksheet <i>Do not upload this form.</i>	This worksheet is provided to help organize responses that are required in the online application portal. The worksheet includes questions about the lead applicant, employer partners, and other partners' addresses, organization structure, and contact information.	No, but content in worksheet is required for the online application
Click Here to Download the RFP Attachment Instructions/Required Templates		



Employment Programs for Young Adults with Disabilities