

/Partnerships for Recovery Rapid Reemployment Program
Q&A
Updated 6/1/2021

New Q&A 6/1/2021

- Q: My organization is reviewing the terms off the Rapid Re-Employment Program and we were wondering if it would be possible to participate solely as an employer partner or if we would need to provide the training in house as well to achieve eligibility?
- A: Eligible lead applicants are Massachusetts based training providers with experience and existing training capacity to delivery occupational training to the target population for proposed targeted occupations. Partnerships **must include a minimum of one business** with operations in Massachusetts and that employ Massachusetts residents in the target occupation(s). Businesses can serve as the employer partner and partner with a training provider to deliver the training. Employer partner(s) must sign a MOA or letter of commitment, agreeing to utilize the program as a pipeline to fill vacancies.
- Q: Can we enroll Pell-eligible students in programs funded by this grant (and use Pell funding to defray training costs).
- A: The goal of this funding is to support the cost of recruitment, training for industry credentials and placement for targeted workforce programs that are not Pell Eligible based on length, duration, credit eligibility, accreditation, or other criteria. Simply stated you cannot braid resources by using these grant resources for student support and Pell/massGrant for the credit bearing academics. We strongly encourage colleges to design similar intensive or accelerated workforce oriented programs meeting Pell guidelines that meet local and regional needs.
- Q: The RFP indicated a preference for including basic education (ABE, GED, ESOL, math, computer/technology) as part of training activities. Would the costs to provide this training be included in the total funding cap, or would this be an additional, reimbursable cost?
- A: No specific preference is given for the inclusion of basic education, however, applicants should assess the needs of their target population and the hiring requirements of the target occupations and ensure the training program addresses those skill and development needs to ensure appropriate preparation of candidates. The full cost of the program would be included in the allowable cost of the program detailed in the RFP.

Q: Is this partnership is also available to do with private agencies who hiring C.N.A, HHA

A: Employer partners may be private employers.

Q: Do you have any personnel who can help to fill the actual application?

A: We do not provide technical assistance to complete the application.

Q: We are looking for some clarification on the allowable cost per student for Pharmacy Technician training. The RFP allows for \$3,000/ student. In the webinar it appeared that all programs were getting reimbursed at \$4,000.

A: Yes, confirming the allowable cost per participant for Pharmacy Technician is \$3K. The bidders' webinar included an example breakdown.

Q: Can we extend the placement deadline into January?

A: No. This is funded with CARES Act funding and must be completed by the end of December.

Q: Does the partnership needs to be done just with one career center or we can use two?

A: You may have more than once MassHire Career Center partner. I would encourage you to talk with both partners about how the fees will be shared between all three partners.

Q: If we receive \$4,000 in grant funding, do we have to cover the remaining cost of the program or will the student be allowed to apply for the Federal Pell grant and apply for federal loans to cover the balance?

A: No, the grant funds are intended to cover the costs associated with an individual's participation in the program and the individual should not be asked to pay out of pocket or utilize Pell or federal loans to participate.

Q: MassHire workforce board---is it national or state level?

A: Here's the links to find information about your local Workforce Board and Career Center:

- **List of MassHire Career Centers:** <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/find-a-masshire-career-center>
- **List of MassHire Workforce Boards:** <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/connect-with-your-local-masshire-workforce-board>

Q: Participant focus: To clarify, participants must be "people who lost their job as a result of COVID **OR** Individual is a Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) or Unemployment Insurance (UI) recipient (past or present) - MassHire will conduct the eligibility review." Are we responsible to account for this information upfront?

A: Yes. MassHire Career Centers will have the expertise to collect documentation in accordance with these guidelines. We recommend that you meet with them during your application development to walk through these guidelines and clarify roles and responsibilities.

Q: We would just like to double-check and confirm: our organization does culinary job training. We realize the RREP targets occupations in the healthcare, IT, finance/business, and transportation sectors. And, while hospitality is not prioritized in Greater Boston's blueprint, it is considered "critical to the region." Is there any chance we could be considered?

A: Applicants may propose an alternative occupation from those listed below, however, the target occupation must still be within one of the target sectors: Healthcare, Information Technology, Financial Services or Transportation or the Region's Blueprint critical or priority occupations. Applicants choosing this alternative approach, must demonstrate that the proposed occupation is in-demand, by citing labor market data, supporting employer demand data, or other relevant indicators.

Q: Since a lot of work and effort goes into recruiting and training candidates who are then hired by the employer partner, is there anything to stop the employer partner requesting that candidates sign a commitment that they will work for the employer partner post training for at least 3 months?

A: There are no terms of the solicitation document that would prohibit the terms of employment.

Q: If a potential trainee is working but is underemployed as a result of covid i.e. they are still getting unemployment benefits since as a result of working minimum hours, would they still qualify to be a training candidate under the program?

A: Yes, as long as they meet the criteria on page 9 of the RFP.

Q: I assume if someone is underemployed as a result of covid then they do not qualify since they would have to be deemed unemployed.

A: An expenditure will be deemed an eligible use of funds where it is used to provide training and job placement to an individual who **has experienced** an employment interruption due to COVID as evidenced by meeting one of the eligibility criteria on page 9 of the RFP. If someone is current underemployed, but working they can participate as long as they meet these criteria. It's possible that they did receive UI and are now working but have not been able to return to their original position or at the same number of hours. MassHire Career Centers will assist with determining eligibility.

Q: We are a private-sector medical transportation/ambulance company. We currently have a significant amount of vacancies for chair vans, EMTs, and Paramedics. Can the funding from this program be used to train EMTs to fill the positions we currently have available?

A: Applicants may propose an alternative occupation from those listed below, however, the target occupation must still be within one of the target sectors: Healthcare, Information Technology, Financial Services or Transportation or the Region's Blueprint critical or priority occupations. Applicants choosing this alternative approach, must demonstrate that the proposed occupation is in-demand, by citing labor market data, supporting employer demand data, or other relevant indicators.

Q: Our next training cohort will not end until mid November. May we still apply?

A: All training and placements must be completed by November 30, 2021 to allow 30 days to reach the final performance-based payment indicator of placement with 30 days retention.

Q: We are based in NH and approved in MA. We have trained many through the MA-based Career Centers (WIAO & TAA). Are we eligible to participate in this?

A: Yes, out-of-state entities that are licensed to be a Massachusetts provider for the specific proposed occupation are eligible if they are doing training physically in Massachusetts for residents of Massachusetts.

Q: I was recently approved for the Workforce Development Program as a training provider. I own my own company, and I am one woman show! Is there anyone to speak with who can explain this process, as I am really new to this process. Are there ways to market this opportunity, or partner with anyone to help me with this process? I have not worked with anyone yet, so am totally new to this.

A: Encouraged to follow up to rrp@commcorp.org to be connected with the right resources.

Q: We have trained many students in Mass and are a licensed occupational school in Mass. We are not a registered apprenticeship. Are we eligible?

A: Licensed schools in Massachusetts are eligible and training does not necessarily need to be for apprenticeships hours if not required for employment in the specific occupation. An example of eligible training would be if the training is working towards an industry credential aligned to an occupation as identified in the RFR.

Q: If an employer provides training, can they bid or must the bidder be an exclusive training company only?

A: In this example, the training provider would need to document how they are a separate organization recognized as a training provider by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts e.g. licensed school or registered as separate organization in TrainingPro. However, the HR department of a company that is not its own separate entity would not be eligible under this program.

Q: We are a nonprofit ESOL provider who wants to partner with our local community college as joint training providers. Is this allowable?

A: Yes. We encourage potential applicants to explore these types of local partnerships to address the needs of their communities. We look to expand opportunities like this in the future.

Q: Do you recommend we pursue multiple career centers or a single career center? if the latter, how should we prioritize those we reach out to?

A: We have seen applications with multiple MassHire Career Center partners. We encourage applicants to make that determination based on their employer partners locations and needs. It may make sense, for example, to engage multiple career centers if a key employer partner is multi-regional.

Q: I think the answer is 'yes' but want to confirm... we should not submit an application until we have a company who has committed to hiring, or at a minimum, having open vacancies with an intent to hire, the students we are seeking to train.

A: Applications need to include at least one employer partner upon submission of the application. They need to currently have vacancies. They do not have to commit to hiring every person. We are looking for them to indicate that they have vacancies and are willing to consider program graduates.

Q: In addition, are we responsible for sourcing the students or are there students currently in a queue who are seeking training. For reference, we are under the IT bucket.

A: MassHire Career Centers have beneficially relationships with many local entities. We encourage applicants as a first step to reach out to their local career center to have these conversations.

Q: Our program costs considerably higher (approximately 4x) than \$4,000. How do similar program cover the remaining costs?

A: If this is the case, please reach out to rrp@commcorp.org to let us know. These costs are based on publicly available pricing data for similar programs of similar training length. We also administer grants for other adult training programs that may allow funding at a higher level to account for more robust supportive services and more intensive program models. In the meantime, we encourage potential applicants to consider leveraging other state, federal, or private resources that may be available to support participating learners.

Q: If there are multiple training partners, will higher costs be allowable?

A: No. Costs are based a per participant basis.

Q: If a program is starting at the beginning of June, can some of the funding be retroactive? Or does an award have to be granted prior to the start of a program?

A: We typically need to approve and announce awards in advance. If you are in this situation, please reach out to rrp@commcorp.org

Q: If we train in many (or all) the sectors and have demand, is it better to submit one application, or a different application for each sector? Is it less likely to receive funding for different sectors?

A: While it is okay for organizations to submit proposals for multiple sectors in one application, it may be easier for a lead applicant to submit one application for each sector. We encourage submitting as soon as you are ready for a single sector/occupation, rather than waiting especially if employer partners in different sectors are on different timelines. If an applicant chooses to bundle an application and not all parts are fundable immediately, we will provide feedback on the portion that needs to be resubmitted.

Q: How quickly would the funding decision be made after a proposal is submitted?

A: Our goal is 30 days from submission to notification of award status. If you need a more rapid turnaround, please flag upon submission of your proposal.

Q: If you're looking to assist with getting funding to trainers, will there be assistance for filling out the applications and other documents before submission?

A: All potential applicants are encouraged to submit questions to rrp@commcorp.org, but there is not 1 on 1 assistance for completing an application.

Q: Do we need a grant writer to complete the application?

A: No. We aimed to design a narrative that can be completed by a program point person in partnership with employers. We encourage potential applicants to review the scoring criteria to see how we are determining whether a given proposal meets or does not meet the standards as outlined.

Q: Does RRP allow hybrid courses?

A: Yes, programs that propose a mix of in-person and remote learning options are allowable.

New Q&A 3/29/2021

Q: In Section III, under the target occupation charts, are the hours "advised" mandatory or can we propose a lower number of hours?

A: The hours listed in Section III are the required range of training hours. Training hours may include basic education, occupational skills training, work readiness and work experience. Applicants may propose a lower number of hours but should prorate the cost of the course appropriately based on the fee structure in Section III.

Q: The Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) & Patient Care Technician (PCT) occupations are listed in the RFP as having 150-200 hours for "advised hours of training" with "total funding up to \$3,000". Our training is 200+ hours for these occupations. Since the training hours are in the

higher 200-300 range, would we be able to receive funding in the higher range, so total funding up to \$4,000 for these occupations?

A: Yes, if your proposed course length is more than 200 hours you may request up to \$4,000 per participant to align with similarly allowable costs for longer training programs as described in Section 3 of the RFP.

Q: Are we able to propose a program for enrollment and employment benchmarks only? For example, if an occupation such as Bank Teller does not have an industry certification?

A: Applicants are required to provide training that results in an industry recognized credential required for entry into target occupation. If an industry recognized credential is not required for entry into the target occupation, applicants should specify what the entry requirements are for entry into the target occupation, including providing supporting evidence from the business partner(s), and demonstrate how the entry requirements will be met by the proposed program. industry credential” is inclusive of industry certification licensure (state or federal) and completion on hours of related instruction.

Q: What is required for documentation for participant eligibility? Is it self attestation?

A: As part of recruitment and enrollment, MassHire Career Centers will review criteria listed in Section 3B to determine eligibility and capture the COVID impact in the participant’s case record. The process will vary based on eligibility criteria, but has been designed to maximize existing systems and sources and to reduce documentation burden.

Q: Once we submit a proposal, are we able to submit an additional proposal at a later date for another program?

A: Yes

Previously Posted Q&A 3/12/2021

Q: If we are proposing multiple programs, should we submit one application per program, or combine them into one application?

Q: May an application contain more than one target occupation?

A: Applicants may propose to deliver more than one program within the same application. Applicants proposing more than one program **must include a minimum of one business** with operations in Massachusetts and that employ Massachusetts residents for each of the target occupation(s). We strongly encourage applicants to ensure they have the capacity to effectively manage multiple programs within the grant period and to ensure they are adequately addressing the volume of demand for hiring at their employer partners.

Q: If we should combine multiple programs into one application, could you please confirm if there would still be a 5-page limit for the narrative section?

A: Applications may include an additional 2 pages for the Program Narrative Form, if proposing more than one training program with different target occupations. Applications should not

exceed 7 pages for the narrative section, even if more than 2 programs with target occupations are proposed.

Q: Does an EMT count as a PCT?

A: No, these are different target occupations. Applicants may propose an alternative occupation from those listed on pages 7-8 of the RFP, however, the target occupation must still be within one of the target sectors: Healthcare, Information Technology, Financial Services or Transportation. Applicants choosing this alternative approach, must demonstrate that the proposed occupation is in-demand, by citing labor market data, supporting employer demand data, or other relevant indicators. Applicants utilizing this approach must propose a cost per participant that is consistent with the allowable cost and training hours on page 7.

Q: I am reviewing the RFP for the Recovery Rapid Reemployment Program, which mentions the requirement for an MOA or letter of commitment in Section 2, letter E. Could you tell me if there is a form or sample you would like us to utilize?

A: Yes, please see Part 4 on page 26 for a sample MOA.

Q: If our training program is currently funded by CommCorp. through the Sen. Donnelly Grant but funding is set to expire, can we submit a proposal to support the same program under the Partnerships to Recovery grant?

A: Organizations that have previously applied for or been awarded grants through Commonwealth Corporation are not prohibited from applying for the Partnerships to Recovery program. Applicants who may be applying to extend existing programs are strongly encouraged to ensure they have the capacity to effectively manage multiple programs within the grant period.

Q: Could we request funding for the current program we offer which trains for an occupation in healthcare that is not in the chart, and for the program we want to pilot that trains in an occupation listed in the chart in the RFR?

A: Applicants may propose to deliver more than one program within the same application. Applicants proposing more than one program **must include a minimum of one business** with operations in Massachusetts and that employ Massachusetts residents for each of the target occupation(s). We strongly encourage applicants to ensure they have the capacity to effectively manage multiple programs within the grant period and to ensure they are adequately addressing the volume of demand for hiring at their employer partners. Applicants may propose an alternative occupation from those listed on pages 7-8 of the RFP, however, the target occupation must still be within one of the target sectors: Healthcare, Information Technology, Financial Services or Transportation. Applicants choosing this alternative approach, must demonstrate that the proposed occupation is in-demand, by citing labor market data,

supporting employer demand data, or other relevant indicators. Applicants utilizing this approach must propose a cost per participant that is consistent with the allowable cost and training hours on page 7.

Q: Will funding requests for pilot programs be denied?

A: Applicants may propose to deliver new programs. Applicants proposing a new program must demonstrate a track record for operating a similar program and must ensure confidence in operating the program under a performance-based payment model.