**PROGRAM NARRATIVE APPLICATION**



**STEP 1**

**Need For Program and Target Occupation**

**Indicate your Blueprint Planning Region**

Massachusetts is divided into seven workforce planning regions, each with a workforce development blueprint that identifies priority occupations and industries. The regions are: Berkshire, Pioneer Valley, Central, Northeast, Greater Boston, Cape and Islands, and Southeast.

Your Blueprint Planning Region is the region you intend to target for recruiting program participants, delivering training and employment services, and placing participants with partner employers.

Here is a [link to a map to help you identify your Blueprint Planning Region.](https://masshiregreaternewbedford.com/resources-portal/state-regional/)

**List the Primary Cities/Towns for this Program.**

Blueprint Planning regions represent large territories. In this section, list the specific cities and towns within your Blueprint Planning region that you will be targeting to recruit participants, deliver training and employment services, and place participants with partner employers.

**Indicate your Target Occupation(s)**

WCTF/Donnelly grants support training and employment programs that prepare individuals for a specific occupation. Please list a single occupation, unless the training required is identical for more than one occupation.

**Indicate Your Target Population**

WCTF/Donnelly grants support training and employment programs that are designed to meet the specific needs of a group of individuals as they prepare for and transition to employment in a target occupation. Please provide the specific characteristics that describe your target group. These should include:

* Age range
* Highest previous level of education
* Whether they have recent work experience
* Whether they are currently employed or unemployed
* Whether they are proficient in English
* Whether they are computer literate
* Any other population characteristics that your program is specifically designed for, such as returning citizens, individuals in recovery, individuals with disabilities, or veterans
* Any other characteristics that are relevant to your program. For example:
* Are you targeting individuals who have been laid off from a specific sector or were recently employed in a specific set of occupations?
* Are you targeting individuals who are currently employed in a specific sector and will not be able to advance to your target occupation in that same sector without training and support?
* Are you targeting individuals who are currently employed in a specific occupation or set of occupations and will not be able to advance to your target occupation without training and support?

**Please note** – listing a broad range of characteristics or a generic description, such as unemployed and/or under employed, sends a message to proposal reviewers that you haven’t thought carefully about who would benefit from the program and whether you have the expertise and competence to recruit them and serve them effectively.  Proposal reviewers will look at your answers here and in 3. RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT and SELECTION, 4. TRAINING DESIGN and DELIVERY, 5. PARTICIPANT SUPPORTIVE SERVICES and COACHING to see whether your program design is aligned with the needs and characteristics of your target population.

**Please list the Primary Employer Partners for this specific program**

WCTF/Donnelly grants support programs that have been designed and will be delivered in partnership with **at least two** employer partners that have operations in Massachusetts, have vacancies in the target occupation and want to use your program to fill the vacancies.

* If you have more than two, list all of them.
* These should be the same employers that you list as Employer Partner Members in Part 4 PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS and CONTACT INFORMATION of your Part 1 Application Summary form.
* These should be employers that have signed an MOA or letter of commitment outlining the specific roles they will play in the program and their commitment to using the program as a source of qualified workers for vacancies in the target occupation at their companies. Each employer partner’s MOA or letter of commitment should also indicate the number of vacancies at their company that they hope to fill through the program.
* These should be the same employers you list in F. Demand Verification Chart.

**Please confirm that each employer partner has submitted an MOA/MOU or letter of commitment**

You are required to submit signed MOAs or letters of commitment from **each** of your primary employer partners. Answering **YES** indicates that you have these documents from each employer that you listed in E1 and that you are submitting them with your proposal. Answering **NO** indicates that you are not ready to submit a proposal.

**Please Note:** Checking YES but not actually having an MOA sends a message to reviewers that you have not carefully reviewed your application and all of the pieces.

**Demand Verification Chart**

Proposal reviewers use this chart to determine whether you have, among your employer partners, identified enough job vacancies in your target occupation over the period of your grant to place all of your program graduates. Pay attention to:

* Are all of the Employer Partners you listed in **E1** also listed in this chart? If not, this is a signal to proposal reviewers that you don’t have a viable relationship with some of your employer partners.
* Do the Target Occupation Titles match the Target Occupation(s) you listed in **C**.? If not, this is an indication that you are proposing a program for which there isn’t sufficient demand from your employer partners.
* All of the information in the table is required. “Required for Entry” means meets the employer partner’s hiring requirements for a worker in the target occupation.
* Proposal reviewers will compare the information you provide about skills required for entry and credentials required for entry to assess whether your program (specifically your answers in 4. TRAINING DESIGN and DELIVERY) is likely to prepare participants to meet your employer partners’ hiring requirements.
* Proposal reviewers will compare the total number of current and anticipated openings in this chart to the information you provide in 9. TRAINING TIMELINE, specifically the total number of participants you plan to have complete the program and enter new employment and the proposed average starting wage. You must provide evidence that there are sufficient vacancies to employ all of your program graduates at the target starting wage.
* Proposal reviewers will compare the information about the number of current and anticipated vacancies provided for each employer partner to the information they provide in their MOA or letter of commitment about the number of vacancies they hope to fill through the program.

**STEP 2**

**Target Population**

**Describe the specific target population you plan to recruit to participate in this training program.**

WCTF/Donnelly grants support training and employment programs that are designed to meet the specific needs of a group of individuals as they prepare for and transition to employment in a target occupation. Please provide the specific characteristics that describe your target program participants. These should include:

* age range
* highest previous level of education
* whether they have recent work experience
* whether they are currently employed or unemployed
* whether they are proficient in English
* whether they are computer literate
* any other population characteristics that your program is specifically designed for, such as returning citizens, individuals in recovery, individuals with disabilities, veterans, other
* any other characteristics that are relevant to your program. For example:
* Are you targeting individuals who have been laid off from a specific sector or were recently employed in a specific set of occupations?
* Are you targeting individuals who are currently employed in a specific sector and will not be able to advance to your target occupation in that same sector without training and support?
* Are you targeting individuals who are currently employed in a specific occupation or set of occupations and will not be able to advance to your target occupation without training and support?
* geographic location(s) (cities, towns or counties your population resides in)

**Please note** – listing a broad range of characteristics or a generic description, such as unemployed and/or under employed, sends a message to proposal reviewers that you haven’t thought carefully about who would benefit from the program and whether you have the expertise and competence to recruit them and serve them effectively.  Proposal reviewers will look at your answers here and in 3. RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT and SELECTION, 4. TRAINING DESIGN and DELIVERY, 5. PARTICIPANT SUPPORTIVE SERVICES and COACHING to see whether your program design is aligned with the needs and characteristics of your target population.

**Describe the track record and collective experience of partnership member organizations in working with the target population**

Proposal reviewers are seeking to understand whether the organizations that will be directly involved in delivering services are culturally competent and have had success in recruiting, engaging and serving your target population.

For each partnership member that will be directly involved in delivering services in your program, provide specific examples of previous or current programs or activities they have engaged in with your target population. The examples should be relevant to the role the organization will be playing in your program.

If a partnership member will be directly involved in service delivery but does not have relevant experience with your target population, provide information about how you will ensure that they provide services that are culturally competent and meet the needs of the target population.

**Provide an explanation of why your chosen population is an appropriate match with the proposed target occupation(s)**

Proposal reviewers are seeking to understand whether you have thought carefully about whether the requirements of the target occupation (schedule, work settings, previous experience, education, technical skills, physical requirements, salary) are a fit with the circumstances and needs of your target population.

Provide information about the attributes of your target population that are a fit with the occupation’s requirements. For any attributes that are not a fit, provide information about specific elements of your program that are designed to support program participants to address the gap.

If there are occupational requirements that are a mismatch with your population’s characteristics and cannot be addressed by the program, this is an indication you will not be successful supporting your target population to complete your program, become employed and retain employment in your target occupation.

Proposal reviewers will look at the requirements of your target occupation(s), the characteristics of your target population, your answers here and in 4. TRAINING DESIGN and DELIVERY, 5. PARTICIPANT SUPPORTIVE SERVICES and COACHING to see whether your occupational target and program design are aligned with the needs and characteristics of your target population.

**STEP 3**

**RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT, and SELECTION**

**Who (name, title, organization) will be responsible for recruiting participants?**

Proposal reviewers want assurance that there is a specific person/role within the partnership who will be responsible for overseeing participant recruitment. You should provide the individual/s names, title and organization names.  If the position is open, indicate the specific timeline for filling the position, the position title and name of the organization for which they will be working.

**Describe which methods (e.g. open houses, orientation, referrals, social media, radio, etc.) will be used to recruit participants.**

Please provide specific information about your recruitment strategy. Proposal reviewers are seeking to understand whether you have thought carefully about the most effective way to get information about your program to your target population.  For example:

* Are there specific media (radio station, local newspaper, community or religious institution bulletin) that they regularly engage with?
* If you are planning to use social media, how will you target it to ensure that it reaches your target population?
* Are there local organizations in your target geographic area that have agreed to help recruit participants? Why would these organizations be effective in reaching your target population?
* Have you considered the literacy and/or English language proficiency of your target population?
* If you are planning to hold information sessions or post flyers, what locations will you use and why?

Please note – simply providing a list of recruitment methods sends a message to proposal reviewers that you haven’t thought carefully about who would benefit from the program and whether you have the expertise and competence to recruit them.  Proposal reviewers will look at your answer here and in 2. TARGET POPULATION to assess whether your recruiting methods are aligned with the characteristics of your target population and are likely to be effective.

**Describe the assessment and selection process. What criteria will be used to determine candidates’ readiness and fit with the proposed program and target occupation? What process and tools with be used to determine whether prospective participants meet these criteria?**

Proposal reviewers are seeking to assess whether you are likely to be successful in enrolling participants who will complete your program, become employed or advance to a higher-level position, and succeed in their new job.

Begin by providing the specific criteria you will use to determine whether each candidate (with appropriate support) is likely to be able to benefit from and successfully complete your program.

1. Your selection criteria should include non-negotiable hiring requirements for your target occupation (provided by your employer partners) that you would not be able to address in the program. Examples include: criminal record, driving history, current substance use, specific strength/agility, working conditions (location, shifts).
2. Your selection criteria should also include indicators related to a candidate’s ability to benefit from and complete the program. These might include: specific literacy and numeracy levels and/or English language proficiency needed to participate fully in instruction and skill building, interest in and commitment to working in the target occupation, readiness and commitment to participating fully in all program components, including case management and support services.

Proposal reviewers will consider the known hiring requirements and working conditions for your target occupation and will look at your answer here and in 4. TRAINING DESIGN and DELIVERY to assess whether your selection criteria are relevant to the target occupation and to your training program.

Next, provide information about the specific methods and tools you will use to determine whether participants meet your selection criteria. Proposal reviewers will compare your list of selection criteria with your assessment methods to understand whether you have thought carefully about the best way to determine whether candidates meet the criteria.

* For example, if you have identified specific literacy, numeracy or English language proficiency levels, how will you determine whether a candidate meets them? How will you determine whether a candidate meets (or will be able to meet with program support) each of your employer partners’ non-negotiable hiring requirements?
* How will you help each candidate assess whether the target occupation is a good fit for them? How will you assess whether a candidate is ready to participate fully in all program activities?

**Describe how employers will be involved in designing and/or implementing the assessment and selection processes to promote alignment with the requirements of the targeted occupation.**

WCTF/Donnelly grant-funded programs require partnerships with employers who are committed to using the program as a source of qualified workers. Proposal reviewers are seeking evidence that participants in your program are likely to secure employment with your employer partners.

Employer engagement in identifying program selection criteria and participating in the selection process are key indicators of their commitment to the program and their interest in using it to fill vacancies in the target occupation.

Please provide information on how your employer partners have been or will be involved in identifying your program’s selection criteria.

Also, indicate whether your employer partners will participate in selecting program participants, and if so, describe how they will be involved.

**STEP 4**

**Training Design and Delivery**

**Who is the Training Provider?**

Provide the name(s) of the organization(s) that will be responsible for providing training to program participants. If there is more than one organization, provide the specific topic(s) each organization will be responsible for.

* These should be the same organizations that you list as Training Provider Partnership Members in Part 4 PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS and CONTACT INFORMATION of your Part 1 Application Summary form.
* Each training organization listed here (other than your organization) should be listed in your program budget narrative, in the Contracted Services section.
* If you have listed more than one organization, check your answers in B1 to ensure that the topics listed here are consistent with the topics you identified there.

**Describe the components / major topics of this training program.**

Provide sufficient detail to allow proposal reviewers to understand the program’s learning objectives and the specific skills and knowledge participants will develop. This should include both technical skills and knowledge, and relevant work readiness skills. Best practices in workforce development program design incorporates work readiness skill-building throughout the program and contextualizes it to the target occupation.

Proposal reviewers will consider your response here, the skills listed in the 1.F Demand Verification Chart, and the target population characteristics in 2A Target Population to determine whether your proposed program is likely to be successful in preparing your program participants to secure and retain employment in your target occupation.

If this is an existing training program, describe any changes or modifications made to the program, as applicable, and provide a brief rational.

If this is a new training program, describe the design and creation process. Include a timeline for completing the design.

Proposal reviewers will assess whether you are developing a new program, offering an existing program without changes, or modifying an existing program. They will also evaluate your readiness to implement the program on schedule based on your responses here and in Section 9. TRAINING TIMELINE. Additionally, they will consider whether existing programs need modifications to meet the needs of your target population or improve performance.

State whether your proposed program is an existing program or a new program.

* If you are proposing an existing program, indicate whether you plan to modify it. If so, provide details on the specific modifications and why they are necessary.
* If you are developing a new program, describe the process you will follow to develop the curriculum, lesson plans, and materials. Include information on the individual leading the design process and the organizations involved. Also, provide the estimated length of the design process (in weeks or months).

**Describe the planned delivery mode (e.g. in-person, synchronous online, online self-paced/asynchronous, hybrid)**

Proposal reviewers are seeking to assess whether the way(s) in which the program will be delivered are likely to be successful in supporting participants to develop the skills and knowledge you identified in B.1. They seek to understand how you will:

* incorporate hands-on knowledge development and skill building and
* reinforce and support the development of key knowledge and skills across major topics.

They will also review your answers here in the context of the participant characteristics you identified in 2A Target Population to determine whether your planned delivery methods will meet their needs. For example, if you are proposing an online program but are planning to serve individuals who are not computer literate or do not have English-language proficiency, proposal reviewers will conclude that you have not been thoughtful in your design process.

If your planned delivery mode is hybrid (a combination of in-person and online), list each topic and provide information about the delivery mode for each topic.

If your planned delivery mode is online or hybrid, provide information about how you will ensure that each participant has access to and can use required technology for online instruction and coursework.

**How many hours of instruction are incorporated within this training program?**

Provide the total number of hours of instruction. List each topic and provide the number of hours of instruction for each topic.

Proposal reviewers are seeking to determine whether the intensity of the program is a match with your target population’s needs. They are also seeking to assess whether the total and topic-specific hours of instruction are sufficient to build the knowledge and skills required for employment and employment retention in your target occupation. They will review your answers here, the skills required for entry you listed in 1.F Demand Verification Chart, and the target population characteristics you listed in 2A Target Population.

**How will you monitor and assess participant and program progress?**

Best practice workforce development programs establish learning objectives and incorporate frequent assessment of whether each participant is developing the targeted skills and knowledge associated with the learning objectives. This practice supports instructors and other staff to identify participants who need additional support to successfully complete the program. It also provides data to identify a potential need for program redesign. Finally, it supports your ability to assure prospective employers that individuals who have completed the program have mastered the skills and knowledge required for success in the target occupation.

Proposal reviewers are seeking to understand your methods and systems for conducting ongoing knowledge and skill building. A strong answer will include:

* The specific skills and knowledge participants will develop in the program,
* the method(s) you will use to assess participants’ progress in developing the targeted skills and knowledge,
* who will be conducting the assessment(s) (instructor, independent tester/evaluator, other), and,
* how frequently the assessments will take place.

Proposal reviewers will be looking for alignment between your answers here, in 4. B1 above and the skills required for entry you listed in 1.F Demand Verification Chart.

**List any industry-recognized credentials and/or certifications/licensure that participants will be prepared to earn (as applicable – if required for entry into the target occupation)**

Proposal reviewers will be looking for alignment between your answers here, in 4. B1 above and the credentials required for entry you listed in 1.F Demand Verification Chart.

**Describe how partners, including employer partners, will be involved in providing input and regular feedback about the training and education components to ensure they are aligned with (technical and non-technical) job requirements and lead to successful job placement or advancement in the targeted occupation(s)**

WCTF/Donnelly grant-funded programs require partnerships with employers that are committed to using the program as a source of qualified workers.

Proposal reviewers are seeking evidence that participants in your program are likely to secure employment with your employer partners. Employer engagement in initial development of the training program and ongoing employer engagement in continuous improvement (enhancing and redesigning the training program as needed) are key indicators of their commitment to the program and of the likelihood that participants completing the program will be qualified candidates for their vacancies in the target occupation.

Provide information about how your employer partners have been or will be engaged in developing the training topics, learning objectives, and instructional methodologies. Provide information about how your employer partners will be engaged in continuous improvement.

In addition to employer partners, WCTF/Donnelly grant-funded programs require partnerships with organizations that bring relevant expertise that does not exist in the lead organization.

List each of your additional program partners and provide information about how they have been or will be engaged in developing the training topics, learning objectives and instructional methodologies. Provide information about how your employer partners will be engaged in continuous improvement.

Proposal reviewers will be looking for alignment between your answers here and in Part 1 Application Summary form as well as the roles and responsibilities outlined for each partner in your signed MOUs/Letters of Commitment.

**STEP 5**

**Participant Supportive Services and Coaching**

**Who (name, title, organization) will be responsible for providing coaching and/or coordinating referrals to supportive services?**

Proposal reviewers want to know that there is a specific person within the partnership who is responsible for ensuring that each participant is provided with one-on-one support to ensure that they can successfully complete the program and secure employment in the target occupation.

Provide the individual’s name, title and organization name.  If the position is open, indicate the specific timeline for filling the position, the position title and name of the organization for which they will be working.

If more than one individual will be providing one-on-one participant support, provide the name, title and organization name of the individual who has overall responsibility and the names, titles and organization names of each individual who will be providing support.  If any positions are open, indicate the specific timeline for filling the position, the position title and name of the organization for which they will be working.

Each position listed above should be included in your Budget Narrative either in the Salary & Fringe section or, if provided by a partner organization, in the Contracted Services section. If the services will be provided by a partner organization, proposal reviewers will also be looking for alignment between your answers here and in Part 1 Application Summary form and the roles and responsibilities outlined for each partner in your signed MOUs/Letters of Commitment.

**Which supports will be made available to participants to help them overcome personal and structural barriers to successful completion and employment/advancement, as applicable (e.g., academic tutoring, financial counseling, public assistance navigation, stipend payments during training, transportation, childcare, tuition support, uniforms, tools, etc.)?**

Proposal reviewers are seeking assurance that you have a clear understanding of the personal and structural issues that are most likely to present a barrier to success for your target population and that you have been thoughtful in developing strategies to support participants in addressing the barriers.

Be specific. List each type of support that you will provide to participants and the reason for the support. If a type of support will be provided by a partner organization, provide the name of the organization.

Proposal reviewers will be looking for alignment between your answers here and in 2A Target Population. If the services will be provided by a partner organization, proposal reviewers will also be looking for alignment between your answers here and in Part 1 Application Summary form, and the roles and responsibilities outlined for each partner in your signed MOUs/Letters of Commitment.

Proposal reviewers will also be looking at your Budget Narrative in the Support Services section for evidence that you have allocated sufficient financial resources to address participants’ support services needs.

**How will all members of the program staff share relevant information with each other to ensure they are fully informed on a timely basis about each participant’s progress and needs for support?**

Proposal reviewers are seeking assurance that each participant will be provided with the support they need as issues arise.

Best practice incorporates a case management approach in which relevant program staff and staff of partner organizations and contracted organizations have a system for sharing information about each participant’s status and needs no less frequently than on a weekly basis. This could include a shared database, case conference meetings, attendance and participation reports and progress reports. This practice requires that participants agree in advance for their information to be shared as needed. It also requires that the program establish systems to protect participants’ confidential information when it is shared.

A strong answer will include:

* the method(s) by which relevant program staff and staff of contracted organizations will share information about each participant’s status and needs,
* the frequency the information will be shared,
* how you will ensure that participants have given permission for information to be shared, and
* how you will ensure that participants’ confidential information will be protected.

Proposal reviewers will be looking for alignment between your answers here and the roles and responsibilities outlined for each partner in your signed MOUs/Letters of Commitment.

**STEP 6**

**Job Development, Placement and Post-Placement Services**

**Who (name, title, organization) will be responsible for job development and placement/advancement services?  Retention services?**

Proposal reviewers want assurance that there is a specific person/role within the partnership who will be responsible for job development and placement/advancement services and retention services.  You should provide the individual/s names, title and organization names.  If the position is open, indicate the specific timeline for filling the position, the position title and name of the organization for which they will be working.

**Describe your planned job search, job development and job placement/advancement activities.**

The proposal reviewers will evaluate the strength of the job development, placement and post-placement services based on the details that you provide in this section.  You should describe the scope and sequence of activities in detail:

* Proposal reviewers will assess how you are maximizing commitments from employer partners to interview and hire graduates and how you are building on these commitments to grow your base of engaged employers over time with hiring demand for the target occupation.
* Proposal reviewers will want to understand in as much detail as possible how you are preparing participants to conduct a job search: resume preparation, mock interviews, work-based learning experiences and work readiness skills.  At what point in the program are you providing job search skills and what specifically are those skills?
* Proposal reviewers will assess how you are preparing participants to take advantage of retention and advancement services offered by your program and offered by their employer.  What are the specific opportunities that employers are providing for advancement opportunities?  What are your career coaching capabilities and services after a program graduate is placed into a job?

**How will you determine whether a participant has successfully completed the program and is ready for placement/advancement? Which partners will be involved in making this determination?**

Describe the program’s process for evaluating participants’ skill acquisition and learning.  Provide information about:

* when in the program this will occur
* the methods your program will use to evaluate skill attainment and any certification that is required for completion and hiring
* who will be involved in the process of evaluating whether a participant has successfully completed the program
  + For example, will employer partners be engaged in this process? If so, is this role included in their MOAs or letters of commitment?
  + Will training or case management partners be engaged in this process? If so, is this role included in their MOAs or letters of commitment?

**How will the relevant hiring managers at the employer partners be engaged to support decisions about which candidates are interviewed and hired/promoted?**

Please provide detail about when, how and what you will be communicating to employer partners about participants’ readiness for interviews and hiring.  This section should connect to your answer in 4. TRAINING DESIGN AND DELIVERY about how employers will be engaged in providing input into training and curriculum.

Proposal reviewers will assess the engagement of employers in getting to know participants throughout the program and how you are building intentional opportunities for employers to get to know and assess candidates through methods such as mock interviews, work-based learning opportunities, serving as guest speakers or instructors, and skill assessments.

**What services will be available to participants/graduates after they have been hired/promoted to promote retention?**

Please describe the specific methods that the program will use to routinely check in with graduates after they have been hired and any formal services that the program will be providing one-on-one or through group activities to help them identify and address any issues that might affect their ability to remain in their job.

Proposal reviewers will assess the accessibility and quality of these services in engaging and supporting participants in their first year of employment.

**What services will be available to employers after they have hired/promoted a participant?**

Please describe your model for engaging with employers after they have hired a program graduate, including routine check-ins, one-on-one and group employer engagement.

Explain how you will communicate the program’s retention and advancement services to employers. Outline the process and protocol you will use to routinely engage with employers to understand how the program graduate is doing and the assistance that your program will provide to address any retention and advancement issues.

**In partnership with employers, how will you work with program graduates to help them take advantage of specific opportunities for advancement within this occupational track?**

Please describe the processes that your program will use to:

* understand the advancement opportunities offered by employer partners and how participants can access these opportunities.
* communicate these opportunities to program graduates.
* support their preparation and engagement in these opportunities.
* communicate with employers about specific program graduates and support their access to and readiness for advancement opportunities.

**STEP 7**

**Program Staffing & Management and Budget**

**Is this a new or existing partnership? Describe the role of each partner in the partnership and demonstrate that collectively, the partners, including the lead applicant, have the required experience, capacity, and expertise to accomplish the goals of the program?**

Proposal reviewers will assess the experience and readiness of the partnership to carry out the program successfully based on prior experience, the collective capacity and strength of the partnership and the clarity of roles and accountability among partners to carry out the proposed program and meet the proposed program outcomes.

* Specify whether the partnership identified in your Application Summary form and represented in the MOA/letters of commitment is a new partnership for the purpose of applying for these grant funds or is an existing partnership.  If it is an existing partnership, cite the partnership’s past experience in running the program, its success and any changes you have made to improve its delivery of the program going forward.  Proposal reviewers will assess past performance and effectiveness and how the partnership has evolved over time to strengthen programming.
* Provide information about each partner organization’s role(s) in the partnership and their capacity and expertise to perform the role(s), including specific experience in working with the target population and/or preparing individuals for success in the target occupation. Proposal reviewers will review this information and compare it to all aspects of the program as described in Sections 1-6 to determine whether the partnership has the collective expertise and experience to be able to carry out the program as proposed and achieve the proposed outcomes.

**What is the management structure of the partnership? Who makes decisions?  Who staffs the partnership? Describe each staff member’s roles and responsibilities and indicate their experience and qualifications:**

Proposal reviewers are looking for a clear and functional management structure and decision-making process and a comprehensive staffing structure with appropriate experience and qualifications.

* Include the name and role of the individual who will convene the partnership and is responsible for the overall success of the partnership. Provide information about that person’s experience in leading this kind of an effort.
* Describe clearly the decision-making process: who will provide input, what the process will be for group discussion and decision-making and who will be the ultimate decision-maker.
* Describe the staffing structure of the partnership: list each staff member, the role they will play in the program, their experience and qualifications and how the staff work together to manage and carry out the program.  For example, how do they communicate about participants, how often do they meet, etc. If a position will need to be filled, list the title and role and required experience and qualifications and write “to be hired” next to it.

**Describe the level of decision-making authority the project/program manager will have and the manager’s access to key program and policy decision makers throughout the implementation period. What relationship will this position have to the partnership group? To whom is the project/program manager accountable?**

Proposal reviewers are interested in how senior the project/program manager is within the organization/partnership structure, the level of decision-making that they can make within the partnership, how well positioned the individual is to take decisions to the individual who is the senior policy and program decision-maker in the partnership, and how much access they have to all of the partners to utilize their talents, advice and resources.

* Provide information about the project manager’s title, where they sit within the lead organization, and to whom they report.  Describe their relationship to the partnership: are they a member or a convener, do they attend every meeting, do they have access to partners between meetings, can they ask for specific resources or advice from partners directly.

**Please clearly indicate which specialized positions will need to be hired for this grant program:**

Proposal reviewers will be looking at each program design element that you describe in your application to ensure that there is alignment with the staffing you describe in those sections of the proposal, this response, and your budget.  Specialized positions may include instructors, case managers or coaches, job developers and placement specialists, recruitment and outreach specialists, etc. Provide the list of the roles and titles that you will be hiring for the program.

**Please describe your discussions with regional planning teams such as MassHire Workforce Boards to ensure alignment with regional planning efforts. Please note that we will prioritize funding applicants who have strong evidence of support from their regions:**

As described in section 1A (Blueprint planning region), the state is divided into MassHire Workforce Board regions.  Each region has a MassHire Workforce Board and at least one MassHire Career Center.  The Workforce Board oversees planning, policy and allocation strategies for the region and the Career Center works directly with employers and job seekers in job search, training referrals and job matching services.

Proposal reviewers will be assessing alignment with the Workforce Board’s blueprint and the degree to which the program that you are proposing is leveraging resources in the region and adding critical training and service capacity for in-demand jobs.

* Provide information about meetings and communication that you have had with the MassHire Workforce Board and/or MassHire Career Center and any commitments that they have made to your partnership.  These commitments should also be reflected in and consistent with the Memorandum of Agreement and/or Letters of Commitment provided by the MassHire Workforce Board and/or Career Center.

**Please indicate the amount of the overall budget dedicated to this program:**

Proposal reviewers are assessing whether the lead organization and partnership is solely or largely dependent on the grant to pay for all or most of the organization’s budget or if the lead organization has a diversified budget with sufficient resources to share the costs of administration and overhead across several grant sources (or at least more than one).  The proposal reviewers are also interested in the organization’s overall financial health and ability to sustain programming beyond the grant period.

* If you were to be awarded this grant, what share of the lead organization’s overall budget would be going to the proposed program?

**Describe the measures you have taken to ensure the overall cost per participant and cost per employment outcome are reasonable for this program component. Please note that your budget narrative should show how you determined the cost per participant:**

Proposal reviewers will be reviewing your budget and cost per participant/employment outcome in the context of other similar programs and other competing applications.  They will be assessing whether the budget is aligned with the program design, needs of the target population, length and intensity of program and projected outcomes.

Ultimately, reviewers want to feel confident that the program is sufficiently funded to carry out the services that you are proposing, that the services are essential to achieving successful employment outcomes, and that there are no expenses that are either not aligned with the program design or are exceptional when compared with other organizations’ budgets.  This is particularly relevant for items such as staff salaries and travel expenses that may appear to be outside of a reasonable range for non-profit and public organizations.

* Provide the cost per participant and cost per employment outcome.  Explain the major areas of cost (such as training costs, tuition, stipends) that are the major drivers of the costs and why they are critical to the program design and participant success.  Tie the services that are being provided to the specific needs of the target population.
* Explain any extraordinary costs – budget items that are unusual or that are higher than the norm, why these are critical to the program design and success of participants and why they are higher than the norm.
* Please note that cost reasonableness is related to the needs of the target population, the hiring requirements for the target occupation and your experienced judgment about what it will take for the program and participants to be successful.  A higher cost per participant or outcome will not disadvantage your application if it is reasonable within the context of the populations you are serving, the occupation for which you are training and the services it will take for participants to be successful in attaining and retaining employment.

**STEP 8**

**Past Performance**

***We are interested in funding organizations that have a track record of success and qualifications/capacity with grant management, fiscal coordination, and implementation of workforce development programs***

**Have you delivered this program before? If so, please provide information about the funding source and the dates the program was offered:**

You should provide the dates that you delivered the program in the past and the funding source for those cycles. If this is a new program but you have delivered a similar program in the past, include that information here.  If you are new to the workforce development field and have not offered a program in the past, indicate that in your response.

**Is there funding currently available to deliver this same program over the same time period covered by this grant program? If so, what is the source of the funding? (We appreciate thorough responses and applicants will not be penalized for answering fully):**

Proposal reviewers want transparency about other funders of the same program in order to assess the capacity your partnership will need to run larger cohorts or additional cycles and to ensure that the cost of each cohort is not being paid for more than once.

If you are braiding funding (using funding from different funding sources to cover the full costs of a cohort), proposal reviewers want to be clear on precisely what budget items are being paid for by each source and how the dollars are complementary.

* Provide complete information about other funding sources, the timeline for those sources and precisely what those sources are funding: entire cohorts (and if so, which cohorts), additional services that will strengthen program outcomes, equipment, etc.  Please note that multiple funding sources are a potential strength in your application if reviewers have sufficient information to understand how this funding is providing for higher quality services, larger scale of people served, improved outcomes, and/or sustainability.

**For Applicants proposing a training and placement program for unemployed and underemployed workers (Option A). Please fill in the following chart below to provide a brief snapshot of your past performance in operating this program:**

**\*Please indicate whether this performance data is for delivery of the same program or a similar program.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Program Name** |  |
| **How many times have you offered this program and over what period of time (provide # of years)?** |  |
| **How many individuals have you enrolled to date?** |  |
| **How many individuals have completed to date?** |  |
| **How many individuals have been placed to date?** |  |

Proposal reviewers want to understand the historic performance of this program or a similar program in order to assess its effectiveness.

* In the table, provide the program name/s, the dates you offered the program, the total number of individuals who enrolled to date, the total number of individuals who completed the program to date, and the total number of individuals placed to date.  If you ran a recent cycle and individuals are still either in training or the placement phase, provide information about the number of  individuals enrolled in that cycle and the status of those participants (number still in training, number completed, number placed, number in placement phase).
* Reviewers will be looking at the percentage of enrollees who completed, the percentage of enrollees who were placed and the percentage of completers who were placed to gauge program effectiveness.

**For Applicants proposing a training and advancement program for incumbent workers (Option B). Please fill in the following chart below to provide a brief snapshot of your past performance in operating this program:**

***\*Please indicate whether this performance data is for delivery of the same program or a similar program.***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Program Name** |  |
| **How many times have you offered this program and over what period of time (provide # of years)?** |  |
| **How many individuals have you enrolled to date?** |  |
| **How many individuals have completed to date?** |  |
| **How many individuals have received wage increases as a result of the program to date?** |  |

Proposal reviewers want to understand the historic performance of this program or a similar program in order to assess its effectiveness.

* In the table, provide the program name/s, the dates you offered the program, the total number of individuals who enrolled to date, the total number of individuals who completed the program to date, and the total number of individuals who received a wage increase as a result of the program to date.  If you ran a recent cycle and individuals are still either in training or wage increases are in process, provide information about the number of individuals enrolled in that cycle and the status of those participants (number still in training, number completed, number received wage increases, number in process for wage increases. )
* Reviewers will be looking at the percentage of enrollees who completed, the percentage of enrollees who received a wage increase and the percentage of completers who received a wage increase to gauge effectiveness.

**If you have not operated this program before, please tell us briefly about a recent grant for a similar program that the lead applicant was responsible for managing:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Program Name** |  |
| **How many times have you offered this program and over what period of time (provide # of years)?** |  |
| **How many individuals have you enrolled to date?** |  |
| **How many individuals have completed to date?** |  |
| **How many individuals have received wage increases as a result of the program to date?** |  |

Proposal reviewers will be assessing the partnership and lead organization’s capacity to deliver a high quality workforce development program that results in strong completion and wage increase outcomes.

For a similar program, provide:

* In the table, provide the program name/s, the dates you offered the program, the total number of individuals who enrolled to date, the total number of individuals you completed the program to date, and the total number of individuals placed to date, or for incumbent workers, who received a wage increase. If you ran a recent cycle and individuals are still either in training, or if placements or wage increases are in process, provide information about the number of  individuals enrolled in that cycle and the status of those participants (number still in training, number completed, number placed or received wage increases, number in placement phase or in process for wage increases.  )
* Reviewers will be looking at the percentage of enrollees who completed, the percentage of enrollees who were placed or received a wage gain and the percentage of completers who were placed or received a wage gain.

**In reviewing the data provided in the chart above, as well as other performance metrics, did you consider your program successful?**

**a.** **If so, why?**

**b.** **If not, why and what will you do to address it in this program?**

Proposal reviewers will be assessing the partnership’s commitment to and capacity for being data-driven and engaged in continuous improvement.

* You should honestly assess whether the program met your quantitative goals **and** your funders’ quantitative goals. Provide specific metrics.
* If your program achieved performance metrics, provide your insights as to the elements that are critical to success, what you learned and any changes you have made to the program to strengthen its effectiveness.
* If your program did not achieve its performance metrics, explain what drove the lower outcomes, what you learned and how you have changed the program to address these drivers.

**Please describe a relevant strategy and/or innovation in workforce development that you have pursued or will seek to incorporate into your program to more effectively reach and serve more people from diverse backgrounds:**

Commonwealth Corporation is committed to funding programs that are reaching underrepresented populations and incorporate DEIB into their organizational and partnership culture and operations.  This question is focused on your partnership’s intentionality about recruiting and serving people from diverse backgrounds and your cultural and linguistic competence in offering a program that leads to strong results for diverse participants.

* Describe in detail a strategy or innovation that you have pursued or will seek to incorporate, what you are seeking to address through that strategy and how you will measure your progress/success.

**STEP 9**

**Training Timeline**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cycle # / Cohort #** | **#1** | **#2** | **#3**  **(as needed)** | **#4**  **(as needed)** | **Totals** | **Completion**  **Rate** |
| **Training Start Date (Month & Year)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Training End Date (Month & Year)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Planned Number of Participants Enrolled** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Planned Number of Participants Completing Training Program** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Planned Number of Participants Earning an Industry-Recognized Credential** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Goal # of Participants Entering New Employment (measured at 30 days retention)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Proposed Average Starting Wage (hourly)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Proposal reviewers will be assessing a number of elements in this section of the RFP:**

1. The number of cohorts that you are proposing to operate and how that relates to your staffing capacity and budget
2. The number of participants per cohort and alignment with your staffing capacity and budget
3. The alignment between the number of participants you are proposing to serve and the number of vacancies indicated in F. Demand Verification Chart in Section 1.
4. The proposed effectiveness of the program in supporting participant completion, placement or wage increases and credentialing as measured by success rates (# planned enrollees/# planned completions, # planned enrollees/# planned earning credential, #planned enrollees/# planned entering new employment (or # planned receiving wage increase)
5. The quality of employment as indicated by the proposed starting wage
6. The proposed outcomes (completion, credentialing and placement) as compared to historic performance

**In completing this chart, you should:**

* Provide a best estimate of starting date and completion date for each cycle, understanding that these dates may shift but the cycle time and the cycles/year will remain the same.
* Enter the number of participants you are planning to enroll for each cycle.  The total number of enrollments should not be significantly larger than the number of vacancies identified in F. Demand Verification Chart in Section 1. If it is, reviewers will conclude that you do not have sufficient employment demand for the number of people you plan to serve and that, if the majority of participants are successful in the program, you will not be able to place them in the target occupation.
* Provide a realistic estimate of the number of enrollees that will complete, earn an industry-recognized credential and enter new employment.  **These are metrics that you will be measured against if your program is funded.** If these numbers are significantly different than your historic performance, proposal reviewers will expect to see a compelling case for why to expect this level of improvement in your answer to question 8D.
* The proposed hourly wage should be consistent with the information provided in the F. Demand Verification Chart in Section 1.

**STEP 10**

**Focus on Job Quality (Optional)**

We are interested in supporting partnerships that have explicit plans to focus on job quality. ​​(See Section THREE: Program Design, A. Target Sector/Occupation(s) in the RFP.) Please provide responses to the following questions. Your responses will not be used to determine whether to award a grant to your partnership. They will be used to provide information to the Workforce Skills Cabinet and the WCTF Advisory Committee and may inform future funding opportunities.

This section is optional but encouraged. Applicants may answer some or all posed questions to showcase efforts on advancing job quality.

The questions below provide a guide for determining whether the employer partner/s you are working with are offering quality jobs, based on a number of quality job frameworks that have been developed by organizations such as the Aspen Institute and MIT Good Jobs initiative. It is a priority of the WCTF/Donnelly Success grants to fund partnerships providing programs that will result in quality jobs.

* If the employer partners you have identified do not meet some or all of the criteria outlined below, we suggest you engage in discussions with them to secure their commitment to work with the partnership to make progress toward them over the course of the grant. You may also want to engage with additional employers who do meet the criteria and are willing to engage in these discussions.
* Reviewers are seeking to understand whether your employer partners meet all or most of the criteria and, if not, whether they are willing to commit – in the MOA or Letters of Commitment – to explore these issues over the course of the grant. Have you delivered this program before? If so, please provide information about the funding source and the dates the program was offered:

**Compensation**: Have you and your partners (specifically the employer partners) had any discussions about how the compensation (wages, benefits and earning potential, including availability of full-time work) in the targeted occupation(s) meet living wage standards for your region? Have you used the Living Wage Calculator?

The [Living Wage Calculator](https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/25/locations) adjusts the living wage standard for the region based on household size and number of earners in the household.  Based on your target population, you may want to use one of the household formations as a guide for the living wage for the region and compare the data you collected in F. Demand Verification Chart in Section 1 to determine whether the jobs you are training for meet the living wage standard.

**If YES, what have been the results of these discussions?**

**If NO, have the partners (specifically the employer partners) committed to engaging in these discussions? Is this commitment included in your partnership MOA/Letters of Commitment?**

Describe conversations you have had with employer partners and any commitments they have made to engage in the discussion or plans to adjust their compensation package to meet living wage standards.  If the employer’s compensation does not meet living wage standards but they are willing to engage in discussions about it during the grant period, this commitment should be included in their MOA/Letter of Commitment.

**Scheduling: Do the employer partners offer stable hours of work and stable scheduling?**

Provide information about hours of work and scheduling following conversations you’re your employer partners.  The goal is to provide full-time employment with predictable and consistent hours around which a new hire can plan anticipated earnings, childcare and transportation.

**Scheduling: If the employer partners do not offer stable hours or work and stable scheduling, have they committed to engaging in job redesign to achieve this? Is this commitment included in your partnership MOA/Letters of Commitment?**

Describe conversations you have had with employer partners and any commitments they have made to engage in the discussion or plans to move toward full-time employment and predictable scheduling.

If the employer does not offer full-time employment or predictable scheduling but they are willing to engage in discussions about it during the grant period, this commitment should be included in their MOA/Letter of Commitment.

**Opportunities for Advancement: Do the targeted occupation(s) provide attainable opportunities for advancement and wage progression within a reasonable time frame?**

**If YES, what are they?**

Provide information about hours of work and scheduling following conversations you’re your employer partners.  The goal is to provide full-time employment with predictable and consistent hours around which a new hire can plan anticipated earnings, childcare and transportation.

**Opportunities for Advancement: Do the partner employers invest in supporting their entry-level employees’ career advancement?**

**If YES, in what ways do they do this?**

**If NO, have they committed to engaging with partnership members during the grant period to develop this capacity? Is this commitment included in your partnership MOA/Letters of Commitment?**

Provide information about the ways in which your employer partners support their entry-level employees’ career advancement. If they do not have formal mechanisms for supporting advancement but they are willing to engage in discussions about it during the grant period, this commitment should be included in their MOA/Letter of Commitment.

**Quality Supervision: Have you and your partners (including the employer partners) talked about the elements, criteria and environment for quality supervision, the skills supervisors need to have and how to support supervisors in developing these skills and incorporating them into their supervisory practice?**

Quality supervision is critical to employee retention and advancement. A possible measure of effective supervision is the retention rate of new employees in the target occupation and the applicant should explore this with the employer partner. If you and your partners (including employer partners) have discussed quality supervision, answer “Yes”. If you have not, answer “No”.

**Quality Supervision: If YES, what have been the results of these discussions and what are your planned activities/actions during the grant period? Is the commitment to carry out these activities reflected in your partnership MOA/Letters of Commitment?**

If you have had discussions with your partners (particularly employer partners) about quality supervision, describe what you learned, including information about how your employer partners train, support and assess supervisors’ effectiveness, the retention rate of new hires and the impact of quality supervision on employee retention.

If they do not have strategies and approaches for supporting quality supervision but they have agreed to specific strategies to address it, this commitment should be included in their MOA/Letter of Commitment.

**Quality Supervision: If NO, are the members of the partnership, including specifically the employer partners, planning to engage in this discussion during the grant period? Is this commitment reflected in your partnership MOA/Letters of Commitment?**

If you have not discussed strategies and approaches for supporting quality supervision but they have agreed to engage during the grant period in discussing and developing strategies to address it, this commitment should be included in their MOA/Letter of Commitment.

**Worker Voice/Engagement: Have you and your partners (including the employer partners) talked about how worker engagement/worker voice can be incorporated into job design for the target occupation?**

An essential aspect of a quality job is the opportunity for workers to engage in job design. For this to occur, employers need formal and systemic mechanisms for listening to their front-line employees, soliciting input and engaging them in the company’s mission and operations. If you and your partners (including employer partners) have discussed  their systems to support worker voice/engagement, answer “Yes”. If you have not, answer “No”.

**Worker Voice/Engagement: If YES, what have been the results of these discussions and what are your planned activities/actions during the grant period? Is the commitment to carry out these activities reflected in your partnership MOA/Letters of Commitment?**

If you have had discussions with your partners (particularly employer partners) about worker voice/engagement, describe what you learned, including information about their systems for engagement and how their culture fosters engagement and respect.

If they do not have strategies and approaches for supporting worker voice/engagement but they have agreed to specific strategies to address it, this commitment should be included in their MOA/Letter of Commitment.

**Worker Voice/Engagement: If NO, are the members of the partnership (including the employer partners) planning to engage in this discussion during the grant period? Is this commitment reflected in your partnership MOA/Letters of Commitment?**

If you have not discussed worker voice/engagement with your employer partners, but they have agreed to engage during the grant period in discussing and developing strategies to support it, this commitment should be included in their MOA/Letter of Commitment.

**Other: Please share, if any, additional aspects of job quality and related activities that your partnership plans to engage in during the grant period. Is the commitment to carry out these activities reflected in your partnership MOA/Letters of Commitment?**

Share other aspects of job quality and related activities that the partnership intends to engage in during the grant period and reflect this activity in the MOA/LOC.  This may include activities such as conducting surveys or focus groups of program graduates, wage and benefit comparisons across employers that hire for the target occupation, ongoing career coaching with alumni to identify advancement opportunities and barriers to advancement, sharing this information with employer partners and jointly working on strategies to address barriers.