PIPELINE Project Dual Training Grant
Request for Application

Overview

The Minnesota Legislature created the PIPELINE Project in 2014 to expand dual training programs in Minnesota. In 2015, the Minnesota Legislature provided funding for Dual Training Competency Grants[1] under the Minnesota PIPELINE Project. The grant program, administered by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE), will provide grants to employers to train student/employees to achieve industry-recognized competency standards along with a collaborating training provider. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) have identified those standards under the Minnesota PIPELINE Project.

All dual training programs must include structured on-the-job training with related instruction through a training provider in one of the following areas:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Health Care Service
- Information Technology

OHE requests applications from employers who have developed or are developing a dual training program with a training provider to deliver the related instruction to students/employees. The employer must employ the student/employees participating in the PIPELINE Dual Training Program no later than the commencement of the training.

Industries, Occupations, Competency Standards, and Credentials

A competency standard[2] is defined as the specific knowledge and skills necessary for a particular occupation.

DLI has identified competency standards for the following industries and occupations. Employers may only use dual training grants to meet competency standards in the following industries and occupations:

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[1] Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §136A.246
[2] Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §175.45, Subd. 2

Industry: Advanced Manufacturing
- Machinist/CNC Operator
- Maintenance and Repair Worker
- Mechatronics
- Welder

- Quality Assurance/Food Safety Supervisor
- Flexo Technician

Industry: Agriculture
- Agronomist
- Mechanic, Industrial Truck
- Swine Manager
- Swine Technician (Grow Finish)

- Swine Technician (Sow Farm)
- Quality Assurance/Food Safety Supervisor

Industry: Health Care Services
- Health Support Specialist
- Medical Assistant
- Psychiatric/Mental Health Technician In-Patient

- Psychiatric/Mental Health Technician Out-Patient
- AD RN to BAN/BSN

Industry: Information Technology
- Security Analyst
- Service Desk/Front Line Support or Computer User Support Specialist

- Software Developer
- Web Developer - Back End
- Web Developer - Front End

DLI has created planning guides detailing competency standards for each of the above industries and occupations. These guides will help employers and training providers develop a dual training program. The planning guides are available at the following links:

[Advanced Manufacturing Occupations Planning Guide](#)
[Agriculture Occupations Planning Guide](#)
[Healthcare Services Occupations Planning Guide](#)
[Information Technology Occupations Planning Guide](#)

As DLI approves additional competencies through the competency council process, the industries and occupations eligible for dual training grants will be expanded for future grant award cycles.

In addition to each student/employee attaining competencies, please be aware that all dual training programs must result in an industry-recognized credential at the end of the complete training program, but not necessarily at the end of the grant.

Funding Availability

This is the second release of the request for application for the biennium. First round applicants were awarded a sum of $490,548.09. The total amount of remaining funding for this grant round is $2,419,541.91 (split between FY16 $479,451.91 and FY17 $1,940,000). We will begin awarding from FY16, and then continue funding from FY17, until the remaining funds are exhausted. Any additional grant rounds will be contingent on any remaining funds after this round of grants.

The maximum individual grant award is $150,000 per employer applicant and $6,000 per individual student/employee. We will award grants after review of the review committee and approval from the Commissioner of the Office of Higher Education. Any related instruction training costs over $6,000 per individual will be the responsibility of the grantee or individual student/employee to pay.

Each student/employee may only receive funding from this grant once for a single occupation. A student/employee is not eligible to train for more than one occupation under this grant.

Eligible Applicants

An employer or an organization that represents a group of employers is eligible to apply for a Dual Training Grant, if they meet all of the following conditions:

1. The employer has a student/employee(s) or will hire a new student/employee(s) who will be trained in one of the above occupations for which competency standards have been identified by DLI.

2. The student/employee has not attained the competency standard(s) prior to the commencement of the planned training.

3. The student/employee has not received training under this grant before.

4. The student/employee's location of employment is in Minnesota.

5. The employer must enter into an agreement with an approved training provider detailing the related instruction prior to grant application (Related Instruction Training Agreement).

Required Employer Match

A large employer, whose annual revenue exceeds $25,000,000[3] in the previous calendar year, must pay for at least 25 percent of the training provider's charge for each student/employee.

If an employer's annual revenue is under $25,000,000, and is not providing a match of at least 25 percent, the employer will need to submit a financial statement with their grant application indicating annual revenue under $25,000,000 in the previous calendar year.

Application Instructions

Application Content

This grant application requires information from multiple entities. The Employer or Organization/Agency is the applicant and is therefore responsible for compiling all materials from all parties.

Applicants are required to submit complete applications. After our initial review, we may ask an applicant to supply additional information to complete the application. If the application is not complete, and any requested follow up information and/or documentation is not provided, those applications will not be considered, as they will be incomplete. In order for the application to be considered complete, please submit the following materials:

1. **Dual Training Competency Grant Employer Application** to be completed by the employer applying for the grant.
2. **Organization/Agency Information Form** (only if an organization is applying on behalf of multiple employers) as well as the application listed in item 1 above, for every employer under the grant application.
3. A **Related Instruction Training Agreement** completed and signed by the training provider(s) and employer applicant.
   a How the credential, degree, or certificate issued by the training provider at the end of the training, is industry-recognized,
   b Possible list of classes that the student/employee will take to obtain the credential, degree, or certificate (i.e. a list of classes written in the letter, or attachment to the form, such as a printout from the training provider's website),
   c The length of the program to obtain the credential, degree, or certificate,

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[3] Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §136A.246 Subd. 6

d   How the trainers are qualified to provide the training, and
e   The total cost of the training.
4. A **financial statement** from the previous calendar year indicating annual revenue under $25,000,000, only if an employer is **not** providing a match of 25% of the cost of training.

Application Submission

We have created a secure website to upload your documentation. You must submit all application materials by secure upload to:

> https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/ssl/pipeline/index.cfm
> Password: **p28U*y@M**

The deadline for upload is ***Sunday, May 22, 2016, by 11:59 pm***. We will not consider incomplete or late applications. All costs incurred in responding to this application request will be the responsibility of the applicant. Applications must provide detailed responses to all the items outlined in the Request for Applications.

We will post frequently asked questions to our website (http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2160) beginning April 22, 2016, and will update this list every Friday thereafter until ***May 20, 2016.*** Prospective applicants who have any additional questions regarding this grant application may e-mail questions to Tim Larson, the Grants Specialist at timothy.e.larson@state.mn.us. Any questions submitted after noon on ***May 20, 2016*** will not be answered.

Application Evaluation

The application review committee will consist of staff from OHE and DLI, plus an external reviewer. We will review applications first to verify that the following minimum eligibility requirements have been met. Applications that fail to meet minimum eligibility requirements will not advance to the scoring phase of the review.

Minimum Eligibility Requirements

We will consider the following on a pass/fail basis:

1. OHE received the application on or before ***May 22, 2016, by 11:59 pm***.
2. The application describes how the dual training program meets PIPELINE occupational competency standards identified by DLI (Application Narrative)
3. Training will result in an industry-recognized degree, certificate, or credential upon successful completion of the training (Application Narrative)

Scoring Criteria

The Review Committee will score the applications based in the following criteria and points:

1. The training accurately describes a robust and complete program – 40 Points
    Note: This criterion has three components, and will be judged separately to come to a composite score. Maximum points listed above.

    a. Description of the related instruction program from the Related Instruction Training Agreement (s) – 15 Points (Related Instruction Training Agreement)
    b. Qualifications of trainers meet industry-recognized standards to instruct the student/employees to attain the competency standard - 10 Points (Related Instruction Training Agreement)
    c. Description of on-the-job training – 15 Points (Application Narrative)

2. Per student/employee cost of training and employer match minimizes costs to student/employees – 15 Points (Application Narrative)
3. Student/employees will have additional employment opportunities as a result of the training – 15 Points (Application Narrative)
4. Projected increase in compensation for student/employees as a results of the training – 15 Points (Application Narrative)
5. The number of recent high school graduates to be trained as part of the dual training grant – 15 Points (Application Narrative)

Additional Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will also be factors in the evaluation:

1. Balance of grant recipients whose work site is within and outside the metropolitan area.[4]
2. Balance of grant recipients across industries and employer size.
3. Aggregate state and regional need for student/employees with the competency as described in the application.

Grant Provisions

Below is an overview of some of the requirements, terms and conditions of this program.

Timeline

- April 18, 2016 – Request for Application Issued
- April 22, 2016 – Frequently Asked Questions Release 1
- April 28, 2016 – Webinar meeting for interested applicants at 10:00 AM CST
- April 29, 2016 – Frequently Asked Questions Release 2
- May 6, 2016 – Frequently Asked Questions Release 3
- May 13, 2016 – Frequently Asked Questions Release 4
- May 18, 2016 – Webinar meeting for interested applicants 10:00 AM CST
- May 20, 2016 – Frequently Asked Questions Release 5/Final Release
- May 22, 2016 – Applications due no later than the end of the day 11:59 PM CST
- End of May, 2016 – Committee begins review of applications
- End of June, 2016 – Selected grantees announced and contract negotiations begin
- Beginning of July through August 2016 – Orientation sessions with OHE
- August 22, 2016 – Grants begin, but only upon full execution of all documentation
- December 31, 2016 – First report due
- June 30, 2017 – Second report due

Webinar Meetings

On April 28, 2016 and May 18, 2016, the Office of Higher Education will hold a webinar for all interested applicants. The first webinar meeting will be to walk through the application and answer any initial questions you may have. There will also be a representative from the Department of Labor and Industry available to answer questions on program development.

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[4] Metropolitan counties are defined in Minn. Stat. §473.121, Subd. 2.

The second webinar meeting will be to answer any final questions you may have to complete your application. The webinars are free and optional to attend. The presentation will be recorded and available for viewing afterwards.

The link to the webinar will be available at http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2160.

Frequently Asked Questions

We will only accept questions until Noon CST on May 20, 2016. The deadline to submit applications is May 22, 2016, 11:59 PM CST. You may submit questions to the Grants Specialist Coordinator, Tim Larson, at timothy.e.larson@state.mn.us.

Orientation Session

It will take approximately one month for the review committee to make recommendations to the commissioner. Final decision notifications will be announced after the commissioner has reviewed and approved applications by the end of June 2016.

If your organization is selected as a grantee, we will require the authorized representative from the training provider and your student/employees to attend an orientation session with OHE. This session will be used to introduce the student/employees to the program and help them begin their paperwork. We will also meet with the authorized representatives of the employer and related instruction training provider to walk through the grant contract and user agreement. If necessary, a representative from DLI will be available to speak with both the employer and related instruction training provider about program development.

This session can be held at your place of employment, or at the Office of Higher Education, if space cannot be arranged. The orientation session should last approximately 3 hours (1 hour meeting with the student/employees, 2 hour meeting with the authorized representatives) and will be arranged individually with each employer grantee.

Registering to do Business with the State (Vendor Number)

All grant recipients and related instruction training providers must have a vendor number in order to receive payment from the State of Minnesota. If awarded, the grantee and related instruction training providers must have this number prior to the execution of the grant contract or user agreement. If you already have a vendor number, but cannot remember it, please contact the Minnesota Management and Budget Vendor helpline at (651)201-8106 or email efthelpline.mmb@state.mn.us.

To register for a vendor number, please go to the vendor registration portal. You will need your organization's federal tax ID number in order to register.

Vendor Registration Portal:
https://supplier.swift.state.mn.us/psp/fmssupap/SUPPLIER/ERP/h/?tab=SUP_GUEST

Grant Disbursement Schedule

We will disburse the grant funds directly to the training institution/program. They will apply these funds to each student/employee's account as applicable. We will not disburse more than the total grant award to any one grantee, nor a total disbursement for any one student/employee over $6,000.

In addition, training institutions eligible for federal and state student aid programs will be responsible for awarding grant funds to the student/employee accounts less the amount of any Pell grant and Minnesota State Grant the student is awarded. The training provider is responsible for refunding the unapplied amount of the grant to OHE.

To that end, in order for the Office of Higher Education to make payment on this grant, if a student/employee is attending a Pell and/or MN State Grant eligible institution, then that student/employee must file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid at https://fafsa.ed.gov.

The state will promptly pay all invoices upon 30 days' receipt of the invoice and all required supporting documentation.

Grant funds must be completely expended by June 30, 2017.

Reimbursements for Travel

The State will not reimburse or pay for any travel and subsistence expenses actually and necessarily incurred by the applicant as a result of the applying for the grant, being awarded the grant, or throughout the grant period.

Grant Reporting and Monitoring Deadlines

All grant recipients are required to submit two evaluation reports to OHE. The first report is due by December 31, 2016. The second report is due by June 30, 2017. The reports must evaluate and measure the extent to which the training met the outcomes of the training program and the individual student/employee. An example of the reporting form will be posted to OHE's website at http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2160.

The employer must submit a data file, in the file format provided by OHE, incorporating the following data elements for each student/employee:

1. The complete names of the student/employees that participated in training,
     i. A list of student/employees who satisfactorily completed course work as part of this grant,
     ii. A list of student/employees who started, but did not complete course work,
2. The list of names and dates attended at the training provider,
3. Whether each student/employee successfully completed the training,
4. Competencies attained through training,
5. Any real wage change for the student/employee,
6. Any credential, degree, or certificate that the student/employee received as a result of the training,
7. Any position change as a result of the training,
8. A record for each student/employee indicating how grant money was spent, including reporting on any other Federal Pell and/or Minnesota State Grants awarded to the student/employee, and any applicable employer match,
9. Hours employed pre and post training by the employer,
10. Indication of current employment status of the student/employee, and
11. Location of student/employee employment throughout the training.

We may add reporting requirements to the related instruction training provider depending on the completeness of the reports from the grantee.

Additionally, the grant recipient must submit to monitoring of the grant program in compliance with state grant making rules.[5]

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[5] Pursuant to Office of Grants Management Policy 08-10

Eligibility for future dual training grants is contingent on fulfillment of reporting and monitoring requirements.

Audits

The grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee, training institution/program, or other parties that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the granting agency (OHE) and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate, for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date, receipt and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.[6] Examples of documents that may be audited include, but are not limited to, training records, financial reconciliation of documentation, and employment records of the student/employee regarding the grant.

General Application Requirements

Conflicts of Interest

OHE will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest[7], both in reference to applicants and reviewers. Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- a grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to OHE due to competing duties or loyalties

- a grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed or discovered, the applicant or grantee will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

Application Contents Accuracy

By submission of an application, the applicant affirms that the information provided is true, correct and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential grant award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification.

Public Data

All data created or maintained by OHE as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data and private data, see below on private data) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed)[8].

The only exception is that all name, address, and grant amount request of the applicants are public data once the applications are opened.

All remaining data in applications (except trade secret data) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).

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[6] Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §16B.98
[7] Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §16B.98 and Office of Grants Management Policy 08-01
[8] Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §13.599

Private Data: Please be aware that all data collected on individual student/employees is considered private[9] and is not subject to a public data request, unless otherwise stated by statute or at the request of the legislative auditor.

Attachments

Application Documents (required)

The following are the forms required for a complete application.
- Employer Application;
- Organization or Agency Information; and
  (Only to be used if an organization in making application on behalf of multiple employers)
- Related Instruction Training Agreement

Application Documents (optional)
- Training Plan Worksheet

Review Documents
These attachments are <u>for your information only</u>, and used in the selection process by the review committee.
- Grant Review Score Sheet

Grant Documentation

These attachments are also <u>for your information only.</u>
If selected as a grantee, you and your student/employees will be completing the documents listed below. We will have further instruction after the grant award. However, if you have questions on this documentation, please let us know.
- Grant Contract
- User Agreement
- Work Plan and Budget with Employer Match or
- Work Plan and Budget without Employer Match and
- Student/Employee Form (to be completed by each student/employee prior to the commencement of training)

These forms will be used throughout the grant cycle to track each individual student. We will have more information on how to complete these forms during the orientation session.
- Reimbursement Spreadsheet
- Report Spreadsheet (coming May 2, 2016)

Contact Information

Please direct questions regarding this request for application to:

Tim Larson
Grants Specialist Coordinator
Minnesota Office of Higher Education
1450 Energy Park Drive, Ste 350
St. Paul, MN 55108
Email: timothy.e.larson@state.mn.us
Phone: (651) 259-3946

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[9] Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §13.32