
EARN Maryland Winter 2021 Solicitation for Implementation Grants

Pre-Proposal Conference

December 7, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. Can the Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP) include out-of-state employers (Washington DC, PA, VA)?

Yes. EARN Maryland requires that either the training participant or employer be based in Maryland. For instance, an out-of-state resident may participate in training as long as they are employed by a Maryland employer. Similarly, a Maryland resident may be placed with a SIP employer that is based outside of Maryland.

2. Will today's PPT be shared on the EARN website or via email?

Yes, the PowerPoint will be shared on the [website](#).

3. Section 2.1.3 [of the Solicitation] references K-12 Programs as an eligible strategic partner. Your remarks are very focused on adult workers. Can EARN be used for workforce development of younger students?

The primary focus of EARN is on short-term training opportunities that provide immediate benefit to jobseekers and employers alike. That being said, the Department is open to considering training for other target populations, such as K-12.

4. Is training no and low-skilled workers valued over training incumbent workers in this program?

No, both are equal priorities for the EARN program.

5. Can leveraged resources be other state funding?

Yes.

6. What is a prompt, please?

The questions in Appendix B of the Solicitation are considered prompts.

7. Is there a suggested cost per participant?

The cost per participant is dependent upon many different factors, including target population, services rendered, and industry. For training targeting unemployed/underemployed individuals, the average cost per participant is typically around \$5,000. For incumbent workers, the cost is generally around \$1,000. Grantees should include costs that are reasonable to meet the goals outlined in the application.

8. \$150,000 is the suggested maximum request amount. Is that per year or entire grant period?

Applicants are encouraged to submit requests that do not exceed \$150,000 over the two-year grant period.

9. If you are a new Non-profit Organization how would you address the audit requirements?

If you do not have two years of audited financial statements, you would need to submit documentation stating that you do not have it available. The applicant would also need to certify that if awarded funding, the organization would comply with all grant requirements, including but not limited to submitting audited financial statements on an annual basis.

10. The number of employees needed to hire in the letter of support would include all employees needed or just projected hiring through this program?

A Letter of Support should include the number of individuals projected to be hired through EARN training.

11. What happens if it's identified that a piece of the application is missing after the submission date of March 7, 2021 at 4 pm?

Labor will perform a technical review of each application. If a required component of the application is missing, Labor staff will provide specific feedback with a required deadline for submission.

12. Can a participant who is not a U.S. citizen or green card holder be enrolled in an EARN funded training program if they are in the process of getting a work permit allowing them to work in the U.S. or do they already need to have approved permission to work?

Generally, individuals enrolled in EARN training should be eligible to work in the United States. Grantees may make exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

13. Can the grant be used to expand an existing SIP? Does the grant have to be used to create a brand new SIP? Newly created SIP or Existing SIP?

No. The Solicitation is for new Strategic Industry Partnerships.

14. Can grant funds pay for wages of the participants?

Yes.

15. Does the grant allow for planning/curriculum development period?

Yes. Training should begin within one year of award.

16. Can a College put forth more than one proposal?

Yes.

17. I am a strategic partner that is working with several employers in the state. Do I need to submit a proposal for each employer?

Proposals should be submitted on behalf of a Strategic Industry Partnership, which is comprised of at least five employer partners and two diverse entities. Proposals must be submitted for each SIP.

18. Can you expand a little more on 2.6.4- This competitive round is open to all Strategic Industry Partnerships that were not awarded EARN Maryland Implementation Grant Funds in previous rounds. Organizations who received funding in past rounds may apply with a new Strategic Industry Partnership?

This funding opportunity is for new Strategic Industry Partnerships. If your organization has been funded as a Lead Applicant applying on behalf of a Strategic Industry Partnership, the Solicitation process is not an appropriate fit.

19. Can staff be hired?

Yes.

20. Can other grant resources applied for but pending approval be utilized as leveraged resources or must funds have already been committed by the other agency?

Yes, as long as it is clearly denoted that such funding is pending.

21. Would the grant award be \$150,000 for the strategic partner or for each employer?

The grant award is for the purposes of implementing the Workforce Training Plan submitted by the Lead Applicant on behalf of the Strategic Industry Partnership. Funding goes to the Lead Applicant and should be spent in accordance with the budget submitted in the application.

22. Is EARN an acronym?

EARN stands for Employment Advancement Right Now.

23. Can a strategic partner be the employer but provide their employees to another partner in a temp style? If a strategic partner is actually doing the training itself but providing training that is utilized by other partners on a case-by-case basis?

Yes. However, the goal of EARN is to place individuals on a career pathway into permanent, full-time positions.

24. Are there any industries where you are specifically looking for proposals?

No.

25. I'm clear the entire application needs to be submitted in a single pdf, but less sure how many standalone appendices to also submit. "The submission should contain a PDF of the entire application, and each appendix should be submitted in standalone format.", does this include everything below including Narrative?

Yes. Appendices A-K should each be submitted as standalone documents.

26. Are training vendors considered "Sub Grantees"? How are you differentiating these?

A subgrantee is any person or entity that will receive EARN funding through the Lead Applicant and is not a direct employee of the Lead Applicant. So, if a training vendor is budgeted to receive EARN funding, they would be considered a subgrantee.

27. Is there a template to use for the 4.1.2 “Letter of Application”? (A letter of application signed by an individual who is authorized to commit the applicants to the requirements stated in this Solicitation). We understand that this a simple letter from our ED to you which outlines TUF's interest in applying and basic information on our proposal. Is that accurate?

There is no template for this.

28. When is a Certificate of Good Standing necessary?

A Certificate of Good Standing should be submitted for the Lead Applicant and any subgrantee that is not a government entity or an organization that is otherwise not subject to obtaining a Certificate of Good Standing.

29. To whom should “Letters of Commitment” be addressed?

Letters of Commitment should be addressed to the Grant Officer identified in the Key Information Summary Sheet on Page 2 of the Solicitation.

30. Is a certificate a sufficient output of the grant?

There is no requirement for students to earn an industry-recognized certification or credential. However, if one is available in a given industry and it aligns with skills gaps employer partners have identified, it is preferred.

31. Is commitment to interviewing sufficient for the employer partners and do we need to guarantee some % of placements?

There is no requirement for employers to guarantee hire, but the goal of EARN is for individuals to be placed into employment at the completion of training. Our average placement rate is around 80%.

32. Please see below two directions that seem to be in opposition. I am applying as Lead Applicant. I thought I would be managing the grant as the required Fiscal Agent as stated in 3.1.2. Conversely 3.1.5.1 in bold states the Grant Management and Workforce Training plan implementation must be an employee or contractor of the Lead Applicant? Which is correct?

Each Strategic Industry Partnership must designate an organization to serve as the Lead Applicant. As stated in 3.1.2 of the Solicitation, the organization designated to be Lead Applicant will also serve as the Fiscal Agent for the grant. Similarly, as stated in 3.1.5.1, all grant management and implementation must be led by an employee or contractor of the Lead Applicant.

33. I just want to be certain that SalesBoost is the proper “Lead Applicant” and that we submit all of our partners as “Subgrantees”.

The Department is unable to provide guidance on who in the SIP should be Lead Applicant. The Strategic Industry Partnership as a whole should determine which organization in the SIP is best suited to take on the roles and responsibilities of being the Lead Applicant. A Subgrantee is any person or entity that will receive EARN funding through the Lead Applicant and is not a direct employee of the Lead Applicant.

34. Strategic Industry Partners – Is this in reference to our strategic partnered organizations (i.e. BeeKeeper, SSP, etc.) or is this referring to the hotels/companies that we’re currently applying for in your state?

A Strategic Industry Partnership is defined as a collaboration that brings together a regional group that may include employers, nonprofits, community-based organizations, two and four year institutions of higher education, local workforce boards, local governments, regional or local economic development entities, local departments of social services, labor unions, K-12 Programs, industry associations, philanthropic organizations, other training providers and other relevant partners to identify common workforce needs for high-demand occupations within a target industry and develop and implement industry strategies to meet these common workforce needs and shortages.

35. We’re SAM certified. Are you able to see us in the system?

The Department does not utilize the System for Award Management System. Please refer to the Key Information Sheet on Page 2 of the Solicitation for submission instructions.

36. Should we include appendix E, F, G, and H for each of our partnered hotels/companies or is a rollup summary okay?

The applicant should submit one appendix for E, F, G, and H that encompasses the entire Strategic Industry Partnership.

37. Are tuition and fees an eligible budget item for registered apprentices through EARN funding?

Yes.