
EARN Pre-Proposal Conference Questions and Answers
Updated: December 19, 2023

Question: Will you provide access to the presentation slides? Will the pre-proposal conference be recorded?

Answer: Yes, the presentation will be posted on the [EARN Maryland website](#). The pre-proposal conference will not be recorded.

Question: Are two partners required and if so, can one be out-of-state as long as the lead is in Maryland?

Answer: Each Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP) must include at least five employer or industry partners and two diverse entities. Please refer to the presentation for more information on the roles and responsibilities of each partner. A SIP may include partners based outside of Maryland but should justify the selection of an out-of-state entity in the proposal.

Question: Can the \$150,000 grant be spent in one year vs. two years?

Answer: Grant awards are for two years. Applicants may write a shorter budget if desired.

Question: Is there a match requirement of grant funding?

Answer: There is no match requirement but applicants must provide leveraged resources which can be cash or in-kind.

Question: Can you clarify what a sub-recipient is?

Answer: Section 1.2.26 defines a sub-recipient as any person or entity that will receive EARN Maryland funding through the Lead Applicant and is not a direct employee of the Lead Applicant. Subrecipients must be members of the Strategic Industry Partnership and are accountable to the Lead Applicant for use of the funds provided.

Question: How many awards will be made through this solicitation?

Answer: There is no set number of grants that will be funded. Labor's determination of award amounts will depend on several factors including but not limited to the number and strength of proposals received, the amount of funding deemed reasonable for individual plans, and the funds available at the time of award. Labor will also consider geographic and industry diversity when making awards.

Question: How many individuals are served in successful grants?

Answer: The Department does not impose a minimum number of individuals served. The SIP should consider their goals and what is reasonable based upon the services provided and the amount of the funding request.

Question: Is the maximum cost per training set at \$5,000?

Answer: There is no maximum cost per participant. The cost per participant is dependent upon many different factors, including target population, services rendered, and industry. Applicants should include costs that are reasonable to meet the goals outlined in the application and are encouraged to maximize leveraged resources.

Question: Is there a participant age requirement? Can this grant be used for school youth?

Answer: There is no age requirement but the primary focus of EARN is on short-term training opportunities that provide immediate benefit to jobseekers and employers alike. Applicants should prioritize training that leads to full-time, unsubsidized employment.

Question: How often do grantees have to report?

Answer: Grantees are required to report on a quarterly basis.

Question: We have a small workforce development program that engages an average of 10 people per year. But we place nearly 100% of people who graduate. Is this too small to be eligible for this grant program?

Answer: No.

Question: Can employers serve as the training provider if training incumbent workers?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Can you expand on the lead applicant? We're a supplier and have a few partners in the state. Would it be us or them?

Answer: The Department does not advise on which entity in a SIP is best suited to serve as lead applicant. It is important to consider the roles and responsibilities of the lead applicant when determining which entity is best suited to serve in that role.

Question: Can a state government division be a lead applicant?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Is there a minimum number of participants that have to be served under this grant?

Answer: No.

Question: Is \$150,000 for the full two year grant period different from previous years partnerships? If so, why did that change?

Answer: Historically, the Department has strongly recommended that funding requests not exceed \$150,000. In preparation for what is expected to be a highly competitive process, the Department is stipulating that requests not exceed \$150,000 so that funding can be distributed equitably across the State, reaching as many industries, regions, and jobseekers as possible.

Question: My business can provide services and essential skills such as mock interviewing, resume building, public speaking training, leadership skills and other soft skills. Would my business be considered an industry partner?

Answer: EARN focuses on providing technical skills in a given industry. Many SIPs also incorporate some of the components listed above, but those alone would not meet the goals of EARN.

Question: Can funding from this grant be used to offer ABE/GED classes for participants? Can this grant cover stipends for participants?

Answer: Yes.

Question: If an employer is the training provider, would seven partners still be required?

Answer: Yes.

Question: We do not provide placement services and solely dedicate our experience to technical skills development. Are we still eligible to apply?

Answer: Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear pathway to employment, credential attainment, and advancement. For SIPs focused on training incumbent workers, it is expected that evidence is provided to demonstrate career advancement in the form of title promotion, wage increases, or similar evidence.

Question: Can funding from this grant be used to cover gas cards and bus passes for participants?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Is there a way to list partners looking to find a match? We specialize in PM certification training like PMP, agile, lean Six Sigma and change management.

Answer: To facilitate connections, the Department will share contact information for individuals who attended the pre-proposal conference via email. If you do not wish to have your information shared, please contact Mary Keller by December 15th.

Question: Are there successful partnerships written up and shared publicly?

Answer: For information on successful partnerships, applicants are encouraged to review the [EARN Maryland Annual Reports](#). The report includes best practices and brief descriptions of each SIP funded through EARN.

Question: Can funding from this grant be used to cover childcare or elder care costs for participants?

Answer: Yes.

Question: We have several partners within the state (the entire state and regionally). Would we be eligible to submit proposals for each or do you recommend only submitting one for the largest population served?

Answer: The Department intends to fund proposals from regions across the State. An entity is eligible to submit more than one proposal but it should be noted that the Department will seek to award funds to unique entities. Additionally, a SIP is able to identify the entire state as the target region.

Question: Businesses that can provide the services listed (ie. curriculum development, outreach, translations, etc) be counted as the industry partners?

Answer: Please refer to the presentation for the roles of industry partners vs. diverse entities.

Question: Please confirm administrative/overhead costs/percentage allowed.

Answer: Yes, administrative and overhead costs are allowed but must be justified in the budget.

Question: Is this a reimbursement grant?

Answer: A first quarter disbursement of up to 15% of the grant award may be requested by the grantee. After the initial disbursement, the Department will disburse funds on a quarterly basis

pursuant to the grant agreement and based on projected expenditures and performance of the grantee, as determined by the Department.

Question: So diverse entities can be businesses, not just nonprofits?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Can a Workforce Development Board be part of multiple applications?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Can you clarify the fiscal reporting requirements? Can you share the fiscal reporting templates online?

Answer: On a quarterly basis, grantees are required to submit an invoice and expenditure report. The expenditure report includes expenses from the quarter and shows cumulative expenses so that the Department may monitor expenditures compared to the projected budget.

Question: Is there a company business requirement for being in business? Can startups be part of employer partners?

Answer: Yes.

Question: If you are a nonprofit and have a workforce development department can you be the main applicant and the workforce development group be the partner?

Answer: If the entity has a separate EIN, it can be included as a partner. The SIP must include at least five employer and industry partners and two diverse entities.

Question: What is required for leveraged resources?

Answer: Leveraged resources can be cash or in-kind. There is no percentage match required. Some examples of leveraged resources are training space, staff time, supportive services, etc.

Question: Can an organization applying as a Lead Applicant for one Strategic Industry Partnership provide a letter of commitment for another SIP?

Answer: Yes.