



NCWorks Commission

NCWorks Commission Policy Statement Number: CPS 05-2021

Date: August 12, 2021

Subject: NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants

From

Tom B. Rabon, Jr.
Chair, NCWorks Commission

Purpose: To transmit guidelines for the NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants. The Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) will provide \$1 million for the first year of the NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants. The DWS has developed policies and guidelines for reviewing and awarding NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants to Local Area Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) to participate in economic development activities and to foster the alignment of economic and workforce development, both priorities of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (Public Law 113-128).

Background: The North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions has created the NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants in response to the WIOA's priority to foster the alignment of economic and workforce development. These grants will allow Local Area WDBs to support local and regional economic development projects in targeted industry sectors. The grants are intended to assist in solving common workforce recruitment challenges that employers face related to skills gaps or workforce shortages. The grants will also show further commitment to employers who are investing in North Carolina by moving to or expanding within the state.

When businesses are choosing to locate or expand in North Carolina, their stability as a viable business can be compromised if they cannot find and hire the employees they need. Governor Roy Cooper has established three clear and concise priorities in his NC Job Ready initiative to make North Carolina's economy and workforce stronger – skills/education attainment, employer leadership, and local innovation. Employer engagement is critical to the implementation of this initiative, since it is the employer who will be taking the leadership of investing in their current and future employees.

The NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants will be awarded to Local Area WDBs to be used specifically for qualifying On-the-Job Training (OJT) for new employees and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) for current employees of a relocating or expanding business as part of an economic development project seeking state incentives.

In addition, other incentives may be added, including Work Opportunity Tax Credits and Federal Bonding, which will be specified within a formal support letter from DWS and addressed to the state economic development project manager. Each economic development project must have a total capital investment that exceeds the grant award amount. The DWS anticipates awarding grants annually depending on the availability of funding. The DWS reserves the right to amend this policy based on the availability of funds.

Action: North Carolina's Local Area WDBs may apply to DWS Business Services for NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants for qualifying OJT and IWT, not to exceed \$50,000 per economic development project, when working in partnership with local economic developers on recruitment, retention, or expansion projects that seek state economic incentives from the NC Department of Commerce.

Grants are awarded in addition to Local Area WDBs' grants offered in compliance with local area OJT and IWT policies. Grants are designated for the specific economic development project for which the application is made and are awarded for OJT trainings that reduce the skills gap of new employees and IWT trainings to existing employees of a relocating or expanding business.

Local Area WDBs are responsible for returning unexpended funds on the approved project.

Effective Date: July 1, 2021

Expiration: Indefinite

Contact: DWS Business Services

Attachment: NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants Application