



RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND TRAINING

Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals

Real Jobs Rhode Island

Issue Date: July 31, 2015

NOTICE

A Prospective Applicant that has received this document from the RI Department of Labor and Training or the RI Department of Administration, Division of Purchasing websites or any other source is to check throughout the open period for any changes or additional materials related to the Implementation Grant Solicitation. Questions regarding the solicitation are to be e-mailed to DLT.REALJOBS@DLT.RI.GOV and are to include the Prospective Applicant's contact name, organizational affiliation and an email address to ensure an email response. Prospective applicants can view the questions and responses regarding the solicitation on the following websites: www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs and www.purchasing.ri.gov. The opportunity to ask questions regarding the solicitation will end on October 14, 2015, nine (9) days prior to due date of the solicitation.

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
Department of Labor & Training

KEY INFORMATION SUMMARY SHEET

Solicitation for Grant Proposals: Real Jobs Rhode Island

Solicitation Issue Date: Friday, July 31, 2015

Solicitation Issuing Office: Department of Labor and Training- EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Grant Officer: **Robert D. Kalaskowski**

Proposals are to be sent to: Department of Labor and Training
1511 Pontiac Avenue
Cranston, RI 02920
Attention: **Mallory McMahon**

Pre-Proposal Conference: Tuesday, August 4, 2015 at 1:30 P.M.
Rhode Island College – Alger Hall, Room 110
600 Mount Pleasant Avenue
Providence, RI 02908

Submission of Questions: Questions regarding the solicitation are to be e-mailed to DLT.REALJOBS@DLT.RI.GOV and are to include the Prospective Applicant's contact name, organizational affiliation and an email address to ensure an email response. Prospective applicants can view the questions and responses regarding the solicitation on the following websites: www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs and www.purchasing.ri.gov. The opportunity to ask questions regarding the solicitation will end on October 14, 2015, nine (9) days prior to due date of the solicitation.

Closing Date and Time: October 23, 2015 at 3:30 p.m.

Awards Issued: November 16, 2015

Grant Duration: The funding period for the Real Jobs Partnerships will be from November 16, 2015 to November 15, 2020. The Partnership will initially be authorized for three years, until November 15, 2018, with an option to renew for an additional two years. Funds will be reauthorized on a yearly basis based upon annual approval, and allocations will be based on available funds and performance of the workforce training plan.

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To view and download all required appendices, please visit www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs.

SECTION 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Department of Labor and Training (DLT or the Department) is issuing this Solicitation for Grant Proposals from qualified organizations to collaboratively partner with the State of Rhode Island and other entities to implement workforce training plans that meet employers' workforce needs, advance the skills of Rhode Island workers, grow the State's economy, and increase sustainable employment for working families.

1.2 Abbreviations and Definitions

For purposes of this Solicitation for Grant Proposals, the following abbreviations or terms have the meanings indicated below:

- a. **Certificate of Good Standing (also known as a "Certificate of Status" or "COGS")** – An official document from the Rhode Island Division of Taxation that indicates the status of the entity as of the date on the certificate. If an entity is in good standing, it means the entity is properly registered with the Division, all documents and fees required to be submitted to the Division have been received, and that no other State agency has notified the Division that the entity is delinquent in tax payments. Government entities and community colleges are not eligible to obtain a COGS.
- b. **Convener** – An individual or organization that starts the dialogue, assembles a shared set of facts about potential target industries and needed skills and builds a base of additional potential partners that will support the plan's development. The convener must have credibility with industry and the trust of a diverse set of program partners. The ideal convener will have the discipline and credibility to let industry partners set their own agenda and chart the course for the partnership, while balancing the interests of all potential partners. As a practical matter, the convener plays a critical project management role, including managing activities, logistics, outreach, coordination and drafting of the Real Jobs Partnership (RJP) workforce training plan.
- c. **DLT or the "Department"** – Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training.
- d. **Fiscal Agent** – Individual within the Lead Applicant organization who is responsible for performing all financial management duties of the grant and accepts responsibility for the proper use of grant funds, managing and documenting grant expenditures (including disbursement to Subgrantees), and submitting financial reports for the grant.
- e. **Grant Officer** – The State representative who will manage the resulting grant awards. The Department may change the Grant Officer or delegate the duties of the Grant Officer to others at any time by written notice to the Lead Applicant.
- f. **High-Demand Occupation** – An occupation that has a significant presence within target industries and is in demand by employers.
- g. **Identifiable Skill** – The attainment of proficiency in a specific work-related skill that is likely to lead to existing and future job advancement and improvement in an individual's earning potential.
- h. **Implementation Grant (IG)** – Funding to implement a Real Jobs Partnership workforce training plan.
- i. **Incumbent Worker** – For the purposes of the Real Jobs RI program, this is an individual already employed in the Target Industry.

- j. **Job Skills Training** – Job skills training that results in an Identifiable Skill or credential. Proficiency can be defined by industry standards or a target industry’s own statement of proficiency.
- k. **Lead Applicant** – The entity designated by the Partnership to serve as the Fiscal Agent for the partnership for the purposes of the Implementation Grant. The Lead Applicant will also be responsible for managing the grant and all aspects of implementing the workforce training plan.
- l. **Planning Grant (PG)** – Modest funding to assist awardees in assembling Real Jobs Partnerships, identifying high priority skills and workforce needs of that industry based on data, employer experience and the solutions and tactics to address high priority skills, workforce gaps, potential job shortages and planned growth need areas. The culmination of a Planning Grant is a plan to place Rhode Islanders in jobs at partner companies.
- m. **Project Schedule** – A programmatic and fiscal blueprint of all of the Lead Applicant’s Project Activities. It is a consolidated outline of all activities and projected expenditures. This Project Schedule allows DLT to track the progress of implementation and anticipate quarterly expenditures for each Grantee.
- n. **Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI)** – A new state-funded, competitive workforce and economic development grant Program and a workforce and economic development platform on which Rhode Island’s training efforts can achieve maximal effectiveness.
- o. **Real Jobs Partnership (RJP) or “Partnership”** – A designation achieved when a partnership with a minimum of five employers and two diverse entities wins a Real Jobs Rhode Island Implementation Grant. A Real Jobs Partnership will enter into a memorandum of understanding with DLT that lays out the terms with which it will operate to advance workforce objectives. These objectives include but are not limited to the future projects by the Partnership that DLT will fund. New efforts of a Real Jobs Partnership will be subject to a DLT approval process that will be developed with the RI Department of Administration to ensure transparency (both financial and programmatic) and efficacy, but will not be a competitive bidding process; subject to available funding; and, must demonstrate a strategically significant advance in the Partnership’s capacity to meet all the employment needs of Rhode Island’s economy.
- p. **Region** – Under RJRI, the definition of “region” is flexible. It can be determined by industry labor markets that are already known or understood, rough concentrations of populations, commuter patterns or industry hubs. A region can cut across Local Workforce Investment Board areas and state lines, and even incorporate multiple economic development areas.
- q. **Sector** – Under RJRI the definition of “sector” is flexible. It can be determined by similar categories of Bureau of Labor Statistics NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) codes, but also by skill sets that cut across traditionally defined NAICS sectors. “Information Technology,” for example, can serve as a sector for the purposes of RJRI sector despite cutting across numerous NAICS-defined sectors.
- r. **Solicitation for Grant Proposals (Solicitation)** – This Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals under the Real Jobs RI Program. A successful Planning Grant Proposal is not a prerequisite to seek an Implementation Grant Proposal.
- s. **Subgrantee** – Any person or entity that will receive Real Jobs RI funding through the Lead Applicant, and is not a direct employee of the Lead Applicant, is a Subgrantee. Funding could be for the purposes of providing training, performing recruitment activities, etc. Subgrantees must be members of the Real Jobs Partnership and are accountable to the Lead Applicant for use of the funds provided.
- t. **Target Industry** – A group of employers closely linked by a common product or service, workforce skills, similar technologies, supply chains, or other economic ties.

- u. **Training Module** – An identifiable part of a workforce training plan in which some number of identifiable skills are taught. Modules often have a curriculum, and that curriculum may cover a broad range of topics (e.g. CNC machining, basic literacy and dispute resolution skills). Modules also tend to be repeatable, and their development, therefore, is a valuable innovation which the state encourages.
- v. **Work readiness training** - Training for the purpose of assisting and supporting jobseekers in overcoming individual barriers to employment and developing the skills required by industry necessary to maintain employment and to qualify for skills training opportunities. Work readiness training includes occupational skills development, GED preparation, literacy advancement, financial stability services, including financial coaching, credit counseling, transportation, child care, and other barriers deemed relevant by the partnership. It can be a comprehensive approach that addresses core competencies and industry skills and standards to address skills gaps.
- w. **Workforce training plan (WTP)** – Plan prepared by the Real Jobs Partnership to address immediate, short-term, or long-term skills shortages identified by the employer partners and which outlines recruitment, training and placement strategies. The plan may also include work readiness training, other career preparation and/or industry identified essential workplace skills. While the details of the plans cannot be determined in advance because each must be driven by employer demand, all plans must have end or renewal dates, and specific deliverables and benchmarks to which Partnerships can be held accountable. Real Jobs Partnerships will be funded in accord with the workforce training plans they are approved to undertake under Real Jobs Rhode Island. While Real Jobs Rhode Island can and seeks to fund costs associated with capacity building (e.g. administration, capital costs, etc.), payments will be made largely or entirely on the basis of achieving specific outcome targets.

1.3 Number and Amount of Grant Awards

- 1.3.1 There is no set limit on the number of Implementation Grants that will be funded.
- 1.3.2 DLT’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.
- 1.3.3 Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a grant request that does not exceed \$150,000. Grant requests in excess of that amount will be considered on a case-by-case basis, must be fully detailed and justified; however, the amount may be reduced in the actual award.

1.4 Grant Duration

- 1.4.1 The grant period for a Real Jobs Partnership is for up to five years, from November 16, 2015 through November 15, 2020. The Partnership will initially be authorized for three years, until November 15, 2018, with an option to renew for an additional two years. Funds will be reauthorized on a yearly basis based upon annual approval, and allocations will be based on available funds and performance of the workforce training plan.
- 1.4.2 Applicants can request shorter grant periods. The Department strongly recommends that the proposal reflect a workforce training plan that will commence within the first year of funding.
- 1.4.3 All contract awards are subject to the availability of funds and the execution of a contract and Memorandum of Understanding that is acceptable to both the selected respondent and the DLT. DLT will review the progress of program design and development and achieved outcomes and performance metrics at mutually agreed upon times throughout the grant period and, at minimum, on an annual basis.

1.5 Grant Officer

The sole point of contact in the State for purposes of this Solicitation for management of all grants awarded is the Grant Officer at the address listed below:

Robert D. Kalaskowski
RI Department of Labor and Training
1511 Pontiac Avenue
Cranston, RI 02920-4407
E-mail: ROBERT.KALASKOWSKI@DLT.RI.GOV

The Department may change the Grant Officer at any time by written notice.

1.6 Pre-Proposal Conference

A Pre-Proposal Conference (Conference) will be held on August 4, 2015 at 1:30 pm at Rhode Island College, Alger Hall, Room 110, located at 600 Mount Pleasant Avenue, Providence, RI 02908. All prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to attend in order to facilitate better understanding of the expectations of the solicitation and for the preparation of the proposal submissions. Relevant questions and answers will be posted to the Real Jobs RI website at www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs. Questions regarding the solicitation are to be e-mailed to DLT.REALJOBS@DLT.RI.GOV and are to include the Prospective Applicant's contact name, organizational affiliation and an email address to ensure an email response. Prospective applicants can view the questions and responses regarding the solicitation on the following websites: www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs and www.purchasing.ri.gov. The opportunity to ask questions regarding the solicitation will end on October 14, 2015, nine (9) days prior to due date of the solicitation.

1.7 Proposals Due (Closing) Date and Time

Proposals, in the number and form set forth in Section 4, "Proposal Submission Format" must be received by Real Jobs RI staff at the address listed on the Key Information Summary Sheet by 3:30 pm local time on **Friday, October 23, 2015**. A receipt will be given to the individual submitting the application. If the proposal submission is mailed, it must be received by Wednesday, October 21, 2015. Hand delivery is preferred.

Proposals may not be submitted by e-mail or facsimile.

1.8 Grant Award Basis, Authority and Disclosures

Final approval for each grant awarded shall be determined by the Director of the Department of Labor and Training, based on the recommendations of the Review Committee and taking into account other factors, such as geographic distribution, industry diversity, economic and workforce market conditions, the potential for state and sector economic growth and populations served. (See Section 5, "Grant Evaluation and Selection.")

The authority for the award of funding for the Real Jobs Rhode Island Implementation Grant is not governed by the provisions, otherwise, of Rhode Island Procurement Regulations Section 1 et seq. pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws § 37-2-13. Instead this grant is being solicited under Section 10 of the Rhode Island Procurement Regulations pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws § 37-2-13, called, "Expenditures that are not Procurements." DLT's justification for use of this authority, as well as the internal procedures it will use to make decisions for this program will be posted on the Real Jobs RI website before the first Real Jobs Rhode Island Implementation Grants are awarded, and will remain on the website for the duration of the program.

1.9 Funding Authority

This grant is being funded under the authority of the RI DLT and derives funding from a variety of sources, including but not limited to:

- 1) The Governor's Workforce Board pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws §42-102-6(e)1
- 2) Governor's Set Aside pursuant to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 29 U.S.C.A. §3163(a)
- 3) Sector NEG US DOL pursuant to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 29 U.S.C.A. §3225(b) and Workforce Investment Act, 29 U.S.C.A. §2918
- 4) US DOL Incentive Grant pursuant to Workforce Investment Act, 20 U.S.C.A. §§9211, 9273
- 5) WIA / WIOA pursuant to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 29 U.S.C.A. §§33101 et seq. and Workforce Investment Act, 20 U.S.C.A. §§9201 et seq.

SECTION 2 – ELIGIBILITY

2.1 Goals of Real Jobs RI

2.1.1 Program Purpose

2.1.1.1 The purpose of the Real Jobs RI program is to create industry-led partnerships to advance the skills of the State's workforce, grow the State's economy and increase sustainable employment for working families. It is a competitive workforce and economic development grant program that is industry-led. It is flexible and innovative, designed to ensure that Rhode Island employers have the talent they need to compete and grow while providing targeted education and skills training to Rhode Island workers. This includes both career advancement strategies for incumbent workers, training for unemployed Rhode Islanders, and support for individuals with specific barriers to employment.

2.1.1.2 The Real Jobs RI program is specifically designed to fulfill the following goals:

- address business workforce needs by focusing on industry-driven sector strategies that seek immediate and long-term solutions to sustained skills gaps and personnel shortages;
- address the needs of workers by creating formal career paths to jobs, and sustaining or growing middle class jobs;
- encourage mobility for Rhode Island's most hard-to-serve jobseekers through targeted work readiness training; and,
- foster better coordination among the public and private sectors and workforce, economic development, and education partners around the State.

2.1.1.3 To achieve these goals, Real Jobs RI requires the formation of Real Jobs Partnerships. These are collaborations of stakeholders led by industry (groups of employers in the same industry, or in different industries with similar workforce needs) that also may include any of the following kinds of organizations: nonprofits, community-based organizations, two and/or 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.

2.1.2 Core Elements

2.1.2.1 Workforce Training Plan

2.1.2.1.1 Support from the State for a Real Jobs Partnership will always be tied back to the workforce training plans developed by the partnership in the original Implementation Grant and in the future as the partnership moves forward. Workforce training plans are finite, measurable, and perspicuous; i.e. they involve a specific number of employers, who have a need for a specific number of employees, and have made a plan to target specific pipelines of potential employees who need a specific intervention to be ready to work for those specific employers. It is the perspicuity of these plans that allows the State, the intermediary and the employers to measure their efficacy. Real Jobs RI will be insistent on measuring results and seeking opportunities to tie funding to performance. Real Jobs Partnerships must be committed to participating in rigorous evaluations of their plan's impact on trainees, employers and the targeted industry sector.

2.1.2.2 Comprehensive Plan

- 2.1.2.2.1 While all Real Jobs Rhode Island partnerships will be funded to carry out their workforce training plans and be judged by how well they execute them, Real Jobs RI explicitly recognizes that it is crucial for the economic future of the State of Rhode Island to make strategic investments in the capacity of business-led Partnerships to carry out numerous workforce training plans to address workforce supply and demand. Further, we recognize that organizations will learn how to carry out more effective workforce training plans through the application and coordination of executed plans. Having a number of well functioning workforce networks with identifiable intermediaries capable of “moving at the speed of business” provides the link connecting employees and programs that prepare them to work in vibrant sectors of the state’s economy and will give Rhode Island an advantage in the recruitment and retention of these employees. Excellence in this area will also provide more opportunity for Rhode Islanders to participate meaningful workforce training. Therefore, while the workforce training plan is the most basic unit of the Real Jobs Rhode Island program, each Real Jobs Partnership will be required to produce its own Comprehensive Plan within the first year of funding.
- 2.1.2.2.2 In a Real Jobs Comprehensive Plan, the Partnership, in consultation with the support of the Real Jobs staff, will contemplate its mission and the capacity it believes it can or should strive to reach. This Real Jobs Comprehensive Plan will be iterative and revised yearly, responding to the experience of the partnership in the previous year’s work. These plans will be public (posted on the DLT website), should be brief, and are meant to develop specific goals and metrics for the future development or maintenance of specific efforts described in particular workforce training plans executed by the partnership. In other words, within the Real Jobs Comprehensive Plan, the Real Jobs Partnership will capture in writing the work it seeks to do in a finite time-horizon in the term of the “unit” of a workforce training plan.

2.1.3 The Real Jobs Partnership: A Workforce Intermediary

- 2.1.3.1 The Real Jobs Rhode Island program seeks to identify, support and help grow workforce intermediaries in strategic sectors of the state’s economy. Workforce intermediaries are partnerships that organize and work with employers, employees, government agencies and other organizations to solve problems within sectors and help grow sectors by becoming experts on the organizations and businesses, as well as available public and private resources. They are the backbone of their sector.
- 2.1.3.2 It is the intent of the Real Jobs RI program that the Real Jobs Partnerships become the intermediaries within their industries. These intermediaries will be able to facilitate better designed, more coordinated and more effective training programs due to their knowledge of the industry. Real Jobs RI endeavors to be driven by the demand for a workforce that actually exists in our state’s economy. The premise of the program is that workforce intermediaries (some of which have already been seeded by the Governor’s Workforce Board) are best aligned with current demand. Therefore close, cooperative partnerships that are or will become workforce intermediaries will yield the maximum amount of public good that this program seeks.

2.1.4 Bridging the Gap Between Workforce and Economic Development

- 2.1.4.1 Real Jobs Rhode Island also endeavors to disrupt the misleading distinction between workforce and economic development. It is becoming increasingly clear that healthy economic growth is tied to the availability of a talented workforce capable of adding value at every step of a business’ activities. For this reason those enterprises that grow in an “ecosystem” in which they can find the right workforce succeed where others fail. This is one of the reasons in thriving economies one finds that similar enterprises tend to “cluster” together – they share an available pool of talent. By collaborating closely with workforce

intermediaries Real Job RI will feed its existing clusters of economic activity and strategically grow new ones.

2.2 Purpose of Implementation Grants

- 2.2.1 Real Jobs funding for Implementation Grants will be awarded to support Real Jobs Partnerships in implementing workforce training plans designed to address industry workforce skills gaps and employ or advance workers within a targeted region or sector. These plans will:
- identify target industry sectors in regions across the State;
 - support Real Jobs Partnerships in target industries to include multiple employers and a diverse array of other partners;
 - be driven by industry leaders, identify critical skill gaps and other workforce needs and develop industry-led strategies to meet those workforce needs, particularly in high-demand occupations;
 - provide industry-led, responsive and innovative training programs aimed at improving employment opportunities at all skill levels including, but not limited to, work readiness, barrier-removal or academic remediation strategies and/or career advancement for incumbent workers;
 - as needed, develop any other human resource or management strategies that are responsive to industry partnerships' critical occupations, skills shortages and address employment demands; and,
 - suggest outcome targets based on available data against which success of the plan can be measured.
- 2.2.2 The quality of a partnership will always be assessed and later judged by the promise and specific, pre-determined outcomes of its workforce training plans, such as placement rates of workers, retention of workers and improvement in wages for workers. The Real Jobs RI innovation is that the plans of its Partnerships respond to a real need. Real Jobs RI will drive innovation because its plans will demand consensus and resolution from its public, private and non-profit sector partners. The successful implementation of executed workforce training plans as measured by pre-determined outcome targets will drive the Real Jobs RI model and be the prime factor in future funding decisions.
- 2.2.3 Implementation Grant Proposals should seek to create workforce training plans that support most, if not all, of the following goals:
- satisfy employer workforce needs through a planning process led by employers;
 - move workers into better jobs through work readiness, barrier-removal or academic remediation strategies;
 - help unemployed Rhode Islanders gain employment through customized training that is designed to meet current employer workforce needs;
 - include career advancement strategies, particularly for incumbent workers;
 - maximize collaboration through direct financial or in-kind contributions by members of the target industry; and,
 - include braiding of other public or philanthropic funding streams or in-kind support.
- 2.2.4 Where possible, DLT aims to use pay-for-success style contracting where outcome targets are determined up-front and performance against those targets are measured. Some payments may be performance based and tied to the achievement of performance targets. Targeted outcomes will be informed by workforce training plans and the state's independent analysis and can include metrics like the number of successful job placements, number of job retentions (in a defined time period), time reduction in vacancy rates, reduction in recruitment costs, increased wages, etc. Applicants are strongly encouraged to suggest evidence-based outcome targets and data sources for the measurement of such outcomes.

2.3 Eligible Applicants

- 2.3.1 The Lead Applicant may be any of the following:
- employer;
 - nonprofit organization;

- two and/or four year institution of higher education;
- local Workforce Board;
- industry association;
- labor union;
- local government;
- local or regional economic development entity; or,
- other relevant partner entities at DLT's discretion.

2.3.2 The Lead Applicant shall be the Fiscal Agent for this Grant.

2.3.3 If the Lead Applicant is not Rhode Island-based or does not have a strong presence in Rhode Island, the proposal must justify this entity's choice for that role. In general, a Real Jobs Partnership that includes out-of-state partners will have to show the benefit to Rhode Island students, workers and prospective workers as well as Rhode Island's economy.

2.3.4 An eligible Real Jobs Partnership must have **at least five (5) employers** from the target industry and **representatives from two (2) diverse entities**, which include nonprofits, community-based organizations, two and/or 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.. All of these entities are to be identified in the Real Jobs Partnership Membership List at Appendix D.

2.3.5 An entity may be a member of more than one Real Jobs Partnership.

2.4 Real Jobs Partnership Workforce Training Plan Expenses – Eligible and Ineligible

2.4.1 All expenses requested to be paid for with Real Jobs RI grant funds must be expenses of the Real Jobs Partnership workforce training plan and its implementation. The need for, and reasonableness, of all costs must be fully justified and detailed in the Budget Summary and Narrative Form (Appendix H).

2.4.2 Eligible expenses may include reasonable project management costs. All proposed project management expenses must be fully explained and justified in the Budget Summary and Narrative Form (Appendix H). DLT may limit the percentage of grant funds that may be used for project management costs. If costs are allocated or percentages of salaries or other items are identified the full expense must also be identified; i.e. the Program Manager's salary is \$75,000, and he/she will be spending 15% of their time on the grant for a total of \$11,250.

2.4.3 Costs that are not allowable from Real Jobs RI funds may be allocated as direct support or in kind donation of a Real Jobs Partnership member.

2.5 Training Activities and Training Providers

2.5.1 If a workforce training plan submitted by October 23, 2015 includes proposed training that clearly requires approval or certification from any state or national entity, such as training that will result in a national certificate or college credit, proof of approval will be required by the proposal submission deadline of October 23, 2015.

2.5.2 In cases where such approvals are required and have not been obtained prior to the October 23, 2015 deadline, the Lead Applicant must provide documentation that the application for approval has been made and a schedule showing the process and dates for approval. (See Section 4.1.6)

- 2.5.3 In the event that, subsequent to proposal submission, it is determined that approval is required by the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner or any other regulatory entity, DLT will work with such Real Jobs Partnerships and the regulatory entity on a case-by-case basis to address the approval process.
- 2.5.4 Work Readiness Training refers to training for low- and no-skilled workers and can constitute any type of training that helps prepare these individuals for occupations defined to be high priority in an industry because of existing or projected shortages. Support services such as childcare, transportation, or case management may be included in work readiness training if they alleviate or address a barrier for participants. All types of training – such as computer skills, language skills, math for manufacturing, basic educational improvement – are included as long as these skills are identified as important for the long-term success of the participants in preparing for a specific occupation.
- 2.5.5 Prior to disbursement of grant funds, DLT reserves the right to request additional information about any Faculty or Training Provider.
- 2.5.6 Training providers that receive grant funds are Subgrantees and must comply with the requirements in Section 3.3.

2.6 Grant Rounds

- 2.6.1 This is the 2nd Solicitation for grant proposals under the Real Jobs RI program.
- 2.6.2 In April of 2015 the competitive Solicitation for Planning Grant Proposals was issued and was awarded on July 31, 2015. **This document is the Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals.**
- 2.6.3 This competitive round is open to **all applicants, including those who did not apply for or receive a Planning Grant.**
- 2.6.4 Awardees of this grant round will be eligible for additional funding opportunities available only to Real Jobs Partnerships.

2.7 Implementation Grant Timeline

July 31, 2015	Implementation Grant Solicitation released
August 4, 2015	Implementation Grant Solicitation Pre-Proposal Conference
October 14, 2015	Deadline for questions concerning the Solicitation
October 23, 2015	Deadline for Submission of Proposals in Response to this Solicitation
October-November	DLT review of Proposals
November 16, 2015	Award of Implementation Grants
November 16, 2015 – November 15, 2020	Funding Period

SECTION 3 – SCOPE OF WORK

3.1 Designing a Real Jobs Partnership

3.1.1 The development of the Real Jobs Partnership workforce training plan must be “industry-led.” This means true business focus and leadership in preparing the Proposal. DLT will require evidence that multiple employers were active participants in developing the workforce training plan.

- For examples of industry-led partnerships, please go to the Real Jobs RI Resources page at <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs/resourcesApps.htm>.
- For information about current Real Jobs RI Partnerships, go to <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs> to find summaries and other information.
- Visit the Real Jobs RI Directory at <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs/Connect.htm> to explore existing Partnerships and to find potential Partners.

3.1.2 Building a Real Jobs Partnership

3.1.2.1 Real Jobs Partnerships may coalesce in any number of ways. For example, they may start with a group of employers in an existing target industry who are currently working together to alleviate shortages of skilled employees. Other partnerships may be the result of labor market data analysis by a regional workforce board or an education stakeholder group looking to identify target industries with workforce training needs; nonprofits and local departments of social services who band together to improve the lives of residents through skills training and seek employers with common training needs; or a regional economic development specialist who recognizes a common need in an industry within a region and begins the process of collaboration.

3.1.2.2 These partnerships are strategic because: they are carefully ***built to include all necessary partners before training is designed***; they cut across traditional workforce, education and social services system silos; they consider the economic realities of an industry in assessing skills gaps and training needs; and they are broader than the development of customized training for one employer.

3.1.3 Structure of the Real Jobs Partnership

3.1.3.1 An eligible Real Jobs Partnership is a collaboration that brings together **a minimum of five (5) employers** and representatives **from two (2) diverse entities**, which include nonprofits, community-based organizations, two and/or 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.

3.1.3.2 Partnerships must designate a Lead Applicant that will serve as the Fiscal Agent for the Partnership for the purposes of the Implementation Grant. The Lead Applicant will also be responsible for managing the Grant, implementing the workforce training plan and for designing and executing the Comprehensive Plan.

3.1.4 Lead Applicant Qualifications

3.1.4.1 A strong Real Jobs Partnerships will identify a Convener, Lead Applicant and/or a partnership member who can demonstrate experience and knowledge in one or more of the following areas:

- ability to coordinate a team of partners in pursuit of a common goal;
- lead or assist in the development of appropriate program development and activities utilizing evidence-based models; and,

- ability to conduct ongoing management and/or administration of a program to meet performance targets and achieve goals.

3.1.5 Leveraged Resources – Real Jobs Partnerships are encouraged to leverage additional resources for the implementation of the workforce training plan.

3.1.5.1 DLT will give preference in the evaluation process to Real Jobs Partnerships that maximize the potential of the collaboration through **direct financial or in-kind contributions** by members of the target industry. Contributions from non-industry Real Jobs Partnership members are also encouraged.

3.1.5.2 Additional leveraged resources include braided funding from other public, private or philanthropic sources.

3.1.6 Creating the Workforce Training Plan

3.1.6.1 Real Jobs seeks to meet industry workforce needs. Therefore, workforce training plans are expected to have the explicit goal of training a workforce for existent, or soon-to-be-existent, positions. Successful plans will lead to participants being hired by employer partners at the conclusion of their training. To that end, it is important that a Real Jobs Partnership’s workforce training plan include a means for employers to connect with, recruit, and/or interview training participants for job vacancies. In some instances innovation on more efficient signaling with a segment of the labor market could constitute a whole Real Jobs Partnership plan.

3.1.6.2 For Incumbent Workers, it is expected that industry will provide evidence of career advancement in the form of title promotion, wage increases or similar evidence.

3.1.7 Requirements of the Workforce Training Plan

3.1.7.1 The RJP workforce training plan must be both data-driven and experience-driven.

3.1.7.2 A demonstration of data-based evidence of the shortages in skilled employment within the target industry over a sustained period of time or as projected, based upon planned large-scale programs (e.g. large construction or transit projects) or large-scale industry changes (e.g. health care) and identification of specific high-demand occupations or sets of occupations at different skill and salary levels within the identified target industry. BLS/LMI Data is one source of such data, but even better are the actual identified hiring experiences and needs of the companies within the partnership.

3.1.7.3 Real experiences from target industry employers regarding actual and projected gaps in skills training and work readiness. In development of the plan, prospective grantees should focus on ways to obtain input from a broad base of employers in their target industry and region in order to define common workforce needs. Some industries may have more internal data whereas other industries may rely more heavily on the experience of industry partners.

3.1.7.4 Both qualitative and quantitative measures of employer and industry needs. Real Jobs Partnerships should take into account both qualitative data provided by the target industry through varied collection methods (interviews, surveys, focus groups, roundtable discussions, etc.) and quantitative labor market and industry-specific data. Plans should demonstrate an understanding of high-demand occupations in industry, projected job growth by occupation, analysis of gaps between supply and demand of employees, understanding the root causes of these gaps, and characterizing the needed skills to close any gaps. Based on this information, plans should propose data-driven outcome measures and targets for their partnership, such as a measure of the unmet demand for partnerships employers and the industry as a whole, the number of individuals expected to complete the proposed training, the number of trained individuals

expected to gain or improve employment and wage outcomes, and a quantifiable target for such improvement.

3.1.8 The Comprehensive Plan

3.1.8.1 All Real Jobs Partnerships that receive Implementation Grant funding **will be required to submit a Comprehensive Plan by the conclusion of the first year of funding.** A Comprehensive Plan describes the RJP's vision for the industry sector and the necessary steps to achieve this vision. As the partnership evolves this will most likely take the form of multiple workforce training plans. Real Jobs RI program staff will assist Partnerships in this endeavor, and DLT will establish administrative processes and procedures to fund subsequent training proposals and plans developed by the Real Jobs Partnership.

3.1.9 For current/intended **Governor's Workforce Board Industry Partners only**, the Comprehensive Plan, due within the first year of funding, must include:

3.1.9.1 A narrative explanation of how the entity will continue to meet the obligations under the terms of each program, and how the Partnership proposes to combine the GWB funding streams (and obligations) into a Memorandum of Understanding that incorporates and complies with the administrative obligations required by Real Jobs RI processes.

3.1.9.2 The partnership must ensure that the proposal combines and/or leverages the priorities, funds and resources of each program to ensure that it meets the required collaboration of a Real Jobs Partnership; maximizes the return on the investment of the proposed partnership and meets the demands of the industry sector.

3.2 Fundamental Elements of the Partnership

3.2.1 **Employer members** of the Real Jobs Partnership are expected to make specific contributions and performance commitments to support the Partnership and implementation of the workforce training plan. Commitments may include financial and in-kind contributions including, but not limited to, providing staff time, faculty or subject matter experts, facilities, data analysis, on-the-job-training, supplies, etc. Commitments must include interviewing successful training participants and hiring participants for existing jobs vacancies.

3.2.2 Other Real Jobs Partnership members are also expected to make specific commitments and contributions to support the Partnership and implementation of the workforce training plan. The goal of the business led partnerships is to develop industry specific workforce training plans that address labor supply and demand to hire a skilled workforce.

3.2.3 Any provider identified as a work readiness trainer must be a member of the Real Jobs Partnership.

3.2.4 All Real Jobs Partnership members should be aware of the goals, outcomes, and responsibilities set forth in their Proposal. Real Jobs Partnerships will enter into a written MOU that clearly lays out the structure and management of the grant. It will include the roles and responsibilities, financial commitments and contributions and the expectations of each RJP member. The MOU should create the necessary mechanisms for addressing any conflicts that may arise, ownership of any items purchased or developed with grant funding, dissolution of the consortium and any other pertinent issues. Real Jobs Partnerships selected for Implementation Grant Funding may be required to enter into such an MOU as part of their Grant Agreement.

3.3 Requirements of Lead Applicants and Partnership Members

3.3.1 The Lead Applicant must provide the following:

- Certificate of Good Standing (CGS) (where applicable);
- the most recent two years' Audited, Reviewed or Compiled Financial Statements. If the Lead Applicant is a community college or state agency, a web link to audited financials may be provided in lieu of a hard copy; and a,
- Federal Tax ID Number.

3.3.2 All Real Jobs Partnership members, including the Lead Applicant, must submit Letters of Commitment that clearly state what they will contribute to the Project (in-kind and/or financial resources) and how they will participate in the implementation of the workforce training plan and/or other Partnership activities.

3.3.3 Lead Applicants must provide the following specific information and documentation to DLT *for each Subgrantee*, using the form at Appendix D:

- Total Real Jobs RI funding projected to be allocated to the Subgrantee;
- The performance expected of the Subgrantee (e.g. number of referrals to training, or number of completions of a training);
- Certificate of Good Standing (where applicable); and,
- Federal Tax ID Number.

If the Lead Applicant or any Subgrantee are government entities or otherwise are not subject to obtaining a Certificate of Good Standing or a tax ID number, please note that in the Proposal.

3.3.4 Should the Lead Applicant select a Subgrantee after the Award has been made, a Project Modification must be submitted to DLT for approval. Disbursement of funds may be delayed or adjusted if the modification is not approved by the department.

3.4 Grant Administration and Reporting

3.4.1 Partnership goals, training outcomes, and financial expenditures, including leveraged resources, will be assessed quarterly throughout the life of the Grant. Grantee progress will be measured against outcomes and goals defined by the Partnership in this Implementation Grant Proposal and agreed upon in any subsequent grant agreements prior to the disbursement of funds.

3.4.2 All Grantees will be required to track and report participant information, training outcomes, and 'return on investment' metrics for employers as well as Rhode Island taxpayers. These measures will be finalized prior to the awarding of Implementation Grants and may include, but not be limited to:

- Participant Information
 - Gender
 - Race/Ethnicity (optional)
 - Zip Code
 - Social Security #
 - Educational Attainment
 - Employment Status upon entry and exit of training
 - Hourly wage upon entry and exit of training
- Training Outcomes – The number of people:
 - Enrolled;
 - Trained;
 - Receiving a Credential; and,
 - Employed in training-related occupations.
- "Return on Investment" metrics
 - Retention

- Productivity
- Customer Satisfaction

As the Real Jobs RI program seeks to blend and braid funding sources to maximize the impact of the program, Grantees may be asked to track measures that are unique to the specific state or federal program that is providing funds. The Federal Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA), for example, requires measures related to Entered Employment, Employment Retention, Earnings, Credentialing and Skills Gains.

As Grantees will necessarily be collecting personal information from participants as well as other potentially confidential or proprietary information from employer partners, it is expected that Grantees will regard electronic data and other manually maintained records on individual persons, employers, and others as confidential, to be held in trust, and will protect data against unauthorized disclosure and/or use.

Real Jobs RI Grant Advisors will provide technical assistance with regards to reporting and performance tracking. The Department seeks to develop a simplified and streamlined reporting system to make the reporting process as straightforward and efficient as possible.

- 3.4.3 A general format for reporting these outcomes will be posted on www.dlt.ri.gov/reajobs. Grantees will be notified via communications from the Real Jobs RI team. Additional customized metrics will be required of each awarded RJRI Partnership. Funding will be tied to achievement of performance metrics. The partnerships should identify quantifiable measures that demonstrate the return on investment of the workforce training plan in meeting the workforce supply and demand for the industry and that ensures that participants are ready to work and are hired at the completion of the training effort.
- 3.4.4 At the time of award, the final budget will be negotiated between the Lead Applicant and Real Jobs RI program team. These negotiations will include a schedule of quarterly projected expenditures that support and reflect the implementation of the workforce training plan and related activities as outlined in the Project Schedule. This is a collaborative and consensus process initiated between the Lead Applicant and Real Jobs RI program team.
- 3.4.5 Grant funding will be disbursed according to a negotiated Project Schedule and may be conditioned upon the attainment of performance metrics and program goals. Any unused funds must be returned to DLT with the final financial report.
- 3.4.6 Real Jobs RI Grant Advisors will be closely engaged with all Real Jobs Partnerships that receive Real Jobs RI funding, providing plan-specific support and technical assistance. This support includes but is not limited to site visits and regular meetings between Lead Applicants, partners and staff responsible for implementing the workforce training plan. Grant Advisors will work with Partnerships to highlight accomplishments of training programs and implement technical assistance plans for outcomes that are not reached.
- 3.4.7 Fiscal oversight will consist of submission of quarterly and fiscal year end expenditure reports, request for proof of expenditures, periodic on-site fiscal monitoring, and/or an audit of Real Jobs RI funds expended by the Lead Applicant and its Sub-grantees and any vendors.
- 3.4.8 A Final Report will consist of a narrative briefly describing the Partnership, the unique features and proposed goals, the key elements in the implementation of the workforce training plan; the effectiveness and outcomes of funded training and, other pertinent related Real Jobs Partnership activities. This report will provide data that demonstrates quantitative outcomes and compares the projected outcomes to actual program impact; where applicable, it is to include a rationale for the failure to meet any projected goals. Appendices to the report should include: any completed studies, surveys, reports or other work products. The Partnership must provide a final accounting of funding and resources used in the implementation of the grant in a final expenditure report.

- 3.4.9 DLT reserves the right to revoke Implementation Grant funding from the recipient entity of any grant and require the return of unspent funds if the goals and timelines consistent with the approved Implementation Grant are not met.
- 3.4.10 The receipt of a Real Jobs RI grant is not meant as an endorsement of a recipient. Use of the receipt of a Real Jobs RI grant for marketing or promotional purposes unrelated to recruitment of individuals to be served under the grant is prohibited and may result in the loss of current funding or refusal for future funding.
- 3.4.11 As a condition of grant funding, all Real Jobs Partnership Members must be willing to participate in any third-party evaluation commissioned by DLT. Participation may include providing data and/or participating in surveys and interviews.

SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL FORMAT

4.1 Grant Submission Requirements

A Proposal is considered complete if it contains the following documents, with original signatures where indicated. Proposals that do not have all of these documents with original signatures where required may not be reviewed.

4.1.1 Proposal Cover Page

- Submit one cover page.
- Include all requested information.
- See form at Appendix A.

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.

4.1.3 Table of Contents

4.1.4 Executive Summary

- A clear and concise outline of the Proposal that should not exceed one page.

4.1.5 Proposal Narrative

- A description of the need for an Implementation Grant, as well as a detailed description of required elements, as delineated in Appendix B.

4.1.6 Proposal Narrative Supporting Documents

- Resume(s) of Project Manager and Key Personnel
- Data Source List (Appendix C)
- Workforce Training Module Overview (Appendix E)
- Workforce Training Module Template (Appendix F)
- Documentation of any necessary training approval and/or exemption from approval
- Resume(s) of any Faculty or Training Providers
- Participant Template (Appendix G)
- Budget Summary and Narrative Form (Appendix H)

4.1.7 Information and Documentation Required of all Real Jobs Partnership Members

- All Real Jobs Partnership Members
 - Information required in Real Jobs Partnership Membership List (Appendix D, Tab 1)
 - Letters of Commitment (See Sec. 3.2)
- Lead Applicant
 - Certificate of Good Standing (where applicable)
 - The most recent two years' Audited, Reviewed or Compiled Financial Statements
 - Federal Tax ID Number
- Subgrantees
 - Information required in Subgrantee Information List (Appendix D, Tab 2)
 - Certificate of Good Standing, where applicable
 - Federal Tax ID Number
- Any MOU's

4.1.8 Assurances Form

- Submit one for entire Proposal.

- See form provided at Appendix J.

4.1.9 Fiscal Agent Form

- Submit one Fiscal Agent Form.
- See form provided at Appendix K.

4.2 Grant Submission Format

- 4.2.1 All pages of the Proposal Narrative must use one-inch margins and be numbered.
- 4.2.2 Proposal Narrative must use line spacing of at least 1.5 and 12-point font. Charts may use single spacing and a 10-point font.
- 4.2.3 Two originals with signature and **five (5) copies of the proposal should be submitted in hard copy**. Standard size (8½” x 11”) paper of regular weight should be used.
- 4.2.3.1 Hard copy submissions should include tabbed dividers for each numbered section in Sec. 4.1 above. Applicants are welcome to use sub-dividers within each section.
- 4.2.4 One electronic copy of the Proposal should be submitted on a USB flash drive or CD. To the extent possible, please provide stand-alone electronic files for each numbered section in Sec. 4.1, with Appendices C-H saved in Excel (rather than PDF) format.
- 4.2.5 The prescribed Cover Page must be the first page of the proposal.
- 4.2.6 The following items, combined, may not exceed 25 pages.
- a. **Table of Contents** (Sec. 4.1.3)
 - b. **Executive Summary** (Sec. 4.1.4) (max 1-page)
 - c. **Proposal Narrative** (Sec. 4.1.5 and Appendix B)

All forms, appendices, and supporting documents are excluded from the 25-page limit.

SECTION 5 – GRANT EVALUATION AND SELECTION

5.1 Grant Evaluation

- 5.1.1 Initial screening of written applications to ensure that submission requirements were met and all required sections were included.
- 5.1.2 Proposals will be evaluated on criteria that include, but are not limited to:
- likelihood that the proposal will successfully achieve its stated outcomes, as well as the magnitude of those outcomes;
 - demonstrated expertise in the industry sector;
 - ability to monitor success and measure outcomes;
 - ability to manage and oversee a partnership in order to achieve targeted outcomes; and,
 - demonstrated willingness and capability to collaborate effectively with state government organizations, sector partners, and others.
- 5.1.3 Proposals will be evaluated by a Review Committee established by DLT. The Review Committee will be composed of representatives from DLT as well as several other state agencies, including Commerce RI.
- 5.1.4 If necessary, oral presentation of the proposal may be required.
- 5.1.5 Final approval for awards will be determined by the Director of the Department of Labor and Training, based on the recommendations of the Review Committee and taking into account other factors, such as geographic distribution, industry diversity, economic and workforce market conditions, the potential for state and sector economic growth and populations served.
- 5.1.6 DLT may require that proposals be combined to maximize and advance efforts of an industry to address workforce supply and demand through a workforce training plan.
- 5.1.7 Upon request, DLT will provide feedback on proposals that do not receive funding.
- 5.1.8 Preference will be given to plans that demonstrate:
- maximum collaboration through direct financial or in-kind contributions by members of the target industry; and,
 - braiding of other public or philanthropic funding streams or in-kind support.

SOLICITATION FOR GRANT PROPOSALS APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Cover Page Template

APPENDIX B – Proposal Narrative

APPENDIX C – Data Source List

APPENDIX D – Real Jobs Partnership Membership List and Subgrantee Information

APPENDIX E – Workforce Training Module(s) Overview

APPENDIX F – Workforce Training Module Template

APPENDIX G – Participant Template

APPENDIX H – Budget Summary and Narrative Form

APPENDIX I – Characteristics of a Strong Real Jobs Partnership Workforce Training Plan

APPENDIX J – Assurances Form

APPENDIX K – Fiscal Agent Form

PLEASE NOTE: All Appendices are available as Word and Excel documents on the Real Jobs RI website at www.dlt.ri.gov/realjobs. Please visit the site to download these documents so that you may complete them electronically.

*****END OF DOCUMENT*****