

Registered Apprenticeship Grant Request for Proposals Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 1/21/10

Registered Apprenticeship/Apprenticeable Occupations

1. What Is A Registered Apprenticeship?

A registered apprenticeship is a formalized career training arrangement between an employer and an employee during which the employee (i.e., apprentice) learns a highly skilled occupation through a combination of on-the-job learning and job-related education. The employer hires the apprentice and operates the training program individually, in collaboration with other employers, or in partnership with a joint apprenticeship committee. Registered apprenticeships also often involve a local education provider such as a technical/community college or private training institution. On-the-job learning takes place at the employer's site under the direction of an experienced professional in the occupation. The education provider offers the job-related education that supplements the applied learning in the workplace.

The duration of training and the skills and competencies required for mastery during a registered apprenticeship program are driven by the industry. Registered apprenticeships may be time-based, competency-based, or a hybrid of time- and competency-based.

Occupations benefiting from a registered apprenticeship arrangement typically have the following characteristics:

- They are clearly identified and commonly recognized throughout an industry;
- They are customarily learned in a practical way through a structured, systematic program of on-the-job supervised learning;
- They involve technical skills and knowledge that require a minimum of 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning to achieve the full performance level for the occupation; and
- They require job-related education to supplement the on-the-job learning.

A registered apprenticeship program is recognized by the federal government which ensures that the programs meet federally approved standards for job duties, job-related education, wages, safety, and health conditions. Certifications earned through registered apprenticeship programs are recognized nationwide as portable industry credentials.

Nationwide, more than 1,000 occupations in a wide variety of industries are recognized as apprenticeable. These occupations range from traditional skilled trades (e.g., automotive technician, electrician, maintenance mechanic, sheet metal worker, and tool and die maker) to new high-demand jobs including

computer programmer, computer service mechanic, dental assistant, laboratory technician, radiographer, and wastewater treatment plant operator.

2. Is there a list of registered apprenticeships we can consult to see if the occupations we are interested in apprenticing already have programs associated with them?

The US Department of Labor has published a list of registered apprenticeships. You may find this list at: <http://www.sctechsystem.com/ApprenticeshipCarolina/employerbenefits.htm> and click on "List of Apprenticeable Occupations."

3. If the apprenticeship I am interested in sponsoring does not appear on the "List of Apprenticeable Occupation", may I still apply for a grant?

Yes, any occupation would be eligible for consideration under the current initiative, as long as it meets the requirements of an apprenticeable occupation and is included within the scope of the seven target industry clusters listed in the announcement. Contact the US DOL Office of Apprenticeship or Apprenticeship Carolina to discuss the plan and determine if a proposal application is warranted and supportable. Contact information for both is provided on the Request for Proposals.

4. Would a program in Cosmetology qualify for funding under this solicitation?

The solicitation specifies that the registered apprenticeship must fall into one of seven sectors: Advanced Manufacturing; Construction Trades; Energy; Health Care; Transportation and Logistics; Information Technology; and Hospitality/Tourism. Since Cosmetology does not fit any of these categories, an application for Cosmetology is not encouraged.

5. May an occupation in Public Safety be considered under this solicitation?

While no occupation class has been specifically excluded under the apprenticeship initiative, the State Workforce Investment Board has recommended that applicants focus on the seven high-demand industries listed in the solicitation. If an occupation class like Public Safety has a majority of training elements that could qualify under one or more of the target industries (e.g., health care), then a proposal might be appropriate.

6. If an industry makes a case for an apprenticeship in an occupation not included on the target list, will the proposal still be considered for funding?

The Board has indicated that “preference will be given” to proposals supporting apprenticeships in the seven target industries. In the event that a proposal is submitted outside the target occupations and the reviewers find the proposal appealing, it will be up to the Board to decide if the project should be funded.

7. What is the reference document by which target occupations will be judged to be “recognized by the US Department of Labor (US DOL) as an apprenticeable occupation”?

In order to be eligible for funding, the targeted occupation must be either currently recognized as an apprenticeable occupation by US DOL or if not currently recognized, determined by the US DOL Office of Apprenticeship State Director to have a reasonable expectation of being recognized as apprenticeable. A list of apprenticeable occupations has been posted under Question #2 of this FAQ or may be obtained by contacting Apprenticeship Carolina at (803) 896-5287.

Potential sponsors of programs for occupations not currently recognized should contact the US Department of Labor South Carolina Office of Apprenticeship Director, Mr. Ron Johnson, at (803) 765-5547 or johnson.ronald@dol.gov. Upon consultation with the potential sponsor, the State Director will issue a standard letter of acknowledgement that the occupation has a reasonable expectation of being recognized as apprenticeable should it be deemed appropriate. This letter should be included with the proposal to meet this requirement.

Potential sponsors should be aware that more than 1000 occupations are currently recognized as apprenticeable by US DOL and the list is regularly expanding to include new occupations. In general, an occupation is considered apprenticeable if it meets the following criteria: 1) It is customarily learned in a practical way, through a structured, systematic program of on-the-job supervised learning; 2) It is clearly identified and commonly recognized throughout an industry; 3) It involves manual, mechanical or technical skills which require a minimum of 2000 hours of on-the-job learning; and 4) It requires job-related education to supplement the on-the-job learning.

8. Must the apprenticeship registration process be completed before a proposal is considered under this solicitation?

The full registration process does not have to be completed in order for a proposal to be considered, but the employer must show that it has begun the process and that it expects to have the process substantially completed by the time the grant is funded. For more information on the registration process, please contact Apprenticeship Carolina or the South Carolina US DOL Office of Apprenticeship. Contact information for both of these partners is listed in the solicitation.

Eligible Applicants/Apprentice

9. If I am already sponsoring a registered apprenticeship, may I apply for funding under this solicitation?

The purpose of the current solicitation is to recruit employers to support a registered apprenticeship. Funding of apprenticeship programs is intended for new hires and/or existing employees who are not currently a part of an apprenticeship program. Employers with established registered apprenticeship programs will qualify for funding under this solicitation if they are expanding their current program by hiring new employees or apprenticing current employees who are not currently in an apprenticeship program. Employers who already have an apprenticeship program are also eligible to apply for funding if they are establishing a new apprenticeship program for a different occupation.

10. May trade associations submit proposals to support apprentices in their member companies?

While trade associations are not prohibited from submitting proposals, the following precautions should be taken:

- The trade association must be eligible to receive federal funds and must be willing to comply with all regulations governing participant recruitment and recordkeeping.
- The trade association may submit a consolidated proposal but should include from each participating employer a letter written on company stationery stating how many apprentices the company will hire as part of the proposed project. The company should demonstrate an understanding of the official apprenticeship registration process in the letter. The trade association will be held to the number of registered apprentices its members state in the proposal and will be responsible for working with its members to place apprentices if one or more businesses fail to meet their stated enrollment goals.

11. If two different employers want to sponsor registered apprenticeships through a training institution or trade association, must two proposal applications be submitted or will one application suffice for this grant?

If two different employers are sponsoring registered apprenticeships for the same occupation and have the same requirements for successful completion of the program, one proposal will suffice. In this case, it would probably be best for the training institution to be the lead applicant/fiscal agent. If two different occupations are involved, one proposal application must be submitted for each occupation.

- 12. May an employer hire a participant who is already in training in one of the seven high-demand industry fields and put that participant into a registered apprenticeship program that requires completing the same training?**

Yes.

- 13. Would a worker who is changing occupational tracks qualify for an apprenticeship under this solicitation?**

Yes.

- 14. If an employer wants to upgrade the skill level of an existing employee, can this be done through the apprenticeship program if advanced standing is granted?**

We have not addressed the concept of advanced standing as part of the apprentice application process. However, since each proposal will be reviewed on its merits, an applicant wishing to include participants already along an apprentice path will want to address how advanced standing will apply. For example, the 3-month cost sharing for salary should be abbreviated proportionately to the time already completed by the program participant. That is, if the apprenticeship is shortened by 25% because of advanced standing, the 13-week salary cost sharing should be cut by 25% as well. An applicant responding to this solicitation should make a clear case for the establishment of an apprenticeship rather than an expansion of its existing program for on-the-job-training.

- 15. Is there a minimum number of apprentices that the SC Department of Commerce is expecting in any one program?**

There is no minimum number of apprentices required for any proposal to either be considered or funded. However, please be cognizant of the cost per apprentice relative to the occupational field.

- 16. Do apprentices have to be WIA eligible?**

No.

- 17. May QuickSkills SC program completers be selected as apprentices?**

Yes. Any QuickSkills SC program completers may be selected as apprentices as long as the job the employer is filling falls within the seven high-demand industries as outlined in the solicitation and the individual meets the minimum qualifications established by the employer sponsor for entry into the apprenticeship program.

Target Industries/Occupations

- 18. How broadly will the industry cluster: “advanced manufacturing” be interpreted, e.g., is textile manufacturing excluded?**

Advanced manufacturing includes all technologically-based manufacturing that relies on computers. With regard to textiles, advanced manufacturing might capture specialty textiles related to health or to fabrics that cannot be produced abroad.

- 19. May we write the grant for multiple occupations (e.g., Construction Trades Apprenticeships - electrical, plumbing, carpentry) under an industry sector or field?**

Yes, consolidation of occupations into a single proposal may be submitted by an applicant, and multiple employers may partner to support an apprenticeship program for multiple occupations in the same industry. Also see Questions #10 and #11.

Financial/Budget

- 20. What is the maximum funding for a single grant?**

The State Workforce Investment Board did not set a floor or ceiling for grant awards. Currently, there are 14 grantees from past solicitations. The grant awards for these recipients range in amounts from \$24,009 to \$197,219 with an average award amount of \$85,671. The average cost per apprentice is \$6,428, ranging from \$1,511 to \$15,611. The number of apprentices funded ranges from 3 to 105 with the average being 24.

- 21. How will alignment between the budget request and the proposed program be evaluated?**

The cost of activities proposed in the scope of work should align with the budget request and any leveraged resources. Funds requested for activities not included in the scope of work or activities in the scope of work not accounted for on the budget imply a misalignment of the program goals and budget.

- 22. As we understand the solicitation, current employees are eligible to be apprenticeship participants. However, can a company receive up to the 50% in wages for three months on current employees who are newly enrolled in an apprenticeship program?**

Current employees are eligible provided they are embarking on a higher level career path. For example, a maintenance technician earning minimum wage who wants to train for a welding job making \$7.50/hr through the apprenticeship program would qualify. However, if the employee is already working as a welder in the company and now this position is becoming apprenticeable, the worker would not qualify.

- 23. Will the funding be provided upon approval or as reimbursement after expenditures?**

Funding will be provided through a grant from the SC Department of Commerce. Funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis. An initial payment based on a pro-forma invoice may be made if circumstances dictate.

- 24. Is there a form that must be used to request payments?**

The SC Department of Commerce has developed a Request for Payment (RFP) form for grant recipients to use to request reimbursement for expenses incurred under a grant. A copy of the form will be sent to grant recipients once the award has been officially executed.

- 25. Apprenticeships generally run for two to three years, but the funding period will only support activities in the first year. How should an applicant address this?**

If a multi-year program is proposed, applicants will want to describe the entire program and indicate how the program will be sustained beyond the grant period.

- 26. If there are sub-recipients on the grant, how will reimbursements be conducted?**

Reimbursement checks from the SC Department of Commerce for all activities related to the grant supported program will be made payable to the lead applicant, which for this grant is also the fiscal agent. Sub-recipients will be reimbursed by the grant's fiscal agent. For example, if a training provider incurred tuition costs as part of the apprenticeship training program, the fiscal agent will be responsible for reimbursing the training provider directly.

27. What is the process for reviewing a grant proposal and making an award?

A proposal must be submitted as outlined in the solicitation. The proposal will be checked by Apprenticeship Carolina to ensure it meets the requirements for a registered apprenticeship program then forwarded to the SC Department of Commerce (SC DOC). SC DOC will distribute copies to proposal reviewers, who are members from the State Workforce Investment Board, to read and score the proposals. After reviewing the proposals, the readers will decide which ones merit funding. Proposals recommended for funding will be returned to SC DOC where the budget and scope of work will be reviewed. If necessary, negotiations will take place between the applicant and SC DOC to bring the budget and scope of work into alignment. Draft grant award documents will be prepared and sent to the applicant to review. Once approved by the applicant, the draft grant award documents will be finalized and sent to both SC DOC officials and the applicant for signature. When a fully executed set of grant award documents is received by SC DOC's apprenticeship program manager, the proposed project as outlined in the approved scope of work may commence.

QuickJobs

28. May funding from a grant award cover any costs of the pre-employment QuickJobs training?

It depends. Individuals completing a pre-employment QuickJobs program at a local technical college may be hired in order to continue their education and training while earning an apprentice wage. In order to qualify for support, the employer must document that the QuickJobs training that was completed pre-hire will either be credited toward required education time within the full registered apprenticeship program or align with the employer's minimum entrance requirements into the apprenticeship program. Please note, however, that it is more likely that the Board intended to develop a pathway to help QuickJobs graduates enter employment and advance rather than use the QuickJobs program as a separate instructional training program.

29. Where can I find additional information about QuickJobs?

Information about QuickJobs can be found at the end of this FAQ and at <http://www.sctechsystem.com/quickjobs.htm>.



***QuickJobs Training Initiative:
A Workforce Development Collaboration***

The South Carolina Technical College System, in collaboration with the State Workforce Investment Board, Local Workforce Investment Boards, local One-Stops, and the South Carolina Department of Commerce, has developed a statewide training initiative specifically designed to meet the needs of individuals eligible for “Workforce and Employment Services” under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 by enacting and expanding short-term training programs and facilitation of registered apprenticeships. These training initiatives lead to credentials and/or employment in the following five industry/workforce sectors depending on local demand: Advanced Manufacturing, Construction Trades, Energy, Health Care, and Transportation and Logistics. This training will also provide a foundation of technical and soft skills upon which participants can build upon to ensure continued employment and advancement in a changing professional environment.

The attached chart displays information related to the QuickJobs Training Programs. Additional information about QuickJobs can also be found at <http://www.sctechsystem.com/quickjobs.htm>.

QuickJobs Program Priorities						
Sector	QuickJobs Training Program Name	Approximate Program Duration	Credential	Further Opportunities	Projected Annual Job Openings in SC*	Average Hourly Earnings (Not Entry-Level)*
Advanced Manufacturing	Production Technician	160 Hours	Certified Production Technician (Manufacturing Skills Standards Council)	Computer Numeric Controls (CNC) Operator, Mechatronics/Maintenance Technician, Programmable Logic Controls (PLC) Technician, Registered Apprenticeship	286 (Machinist)	\$17.26
Advanced Manufacturing	Computer Numeric Controls (CNC)	160 Hours	National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) or Local Certification	CNC Programming, Registered Apprenticeship		
Advanced Manufacturing	Computer Numerical Controls (CNC)/Coordinate Measuring Machine (CCM) Fundamentals	240 Hours	National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) and/or Local Certification	Mechanical Engineer, Tool & Die, Advanced CNC Programming, Registered Apprenticeship		
Advanced Manufacturing	Industrial Maintenance	195 Hours	National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Core and Level 1 Certification	NCCER Levels 2-4 Certification, Degree Completion, Registered Apprenticeship	63	\$17.13
Advanced Manufacturing (Supports All Sectors)	Network Administration	150 Hours	Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)	CCNA Professional and Expert Certifications, Registered Apprenticeship	228	\$17.73
Construction Trades						
Construction Trades	Welding (ex. Basic, Pipe, ARC, TIG)	180-640 Hours	Various Certifications Through NCCER and American Welding Society (AWS)	Advanced AWS and NCCER Certifications, Associate Degree, Registered Apprenticeship	291	\$16.17
Construction Trades	Facilities Maintenance	400 Hours	NCCER Core, EPA Certification for Refrigerant Handling, Certified Apartment Maintenance Technician (CAMT), NSPF Pool & Spa Operator	CAMT Certification After One Year of Related Employment, Additional NCCER Certifications, Registered Apprenticeship	509 (Maintenance and Repair)	\$14.63
Construction Trades	Electrician	330 Hours	NCCER Core, Levels 1-2 Certification	NCCER Levels 3-4 Certification, Registered Apprenticeship	310	\$17.85

QuickJobs Program Priorities

Sector	QuickJobs Training Program Name	Approximate Program Duration	Credential	Further Opportunities	Projected Annual Job Openings in SC*	Average Hourly Earnings (Not Entry-Level)*
Construction Trades	Building Construction	168 Hours	NCCER Core and Level 1	Further NCCER Certifications, Registered Apprenticeship, Associate Degree	285 (Construction Equipment Operators)	\$15.03
Construction Trades	Construction Basics with Safety, Welding Specialty	188 Hours	NCCER Core and Level 1 Certifications and/or College Certification	NCCER or AWS Certifications		
Construction Trades	Heavy Equipment	192 Hours	NCCER Credentials for Each Piece of Equipment (Back Hoe, Excavator, Loader, Bull Dozer) and Local Certification	NCCER Core and Levels 1-3 Certification, Employer Certification, Registered Apprenticeship		
Energy	Energy Conservation	240 Hours	Local Technician Certification	HVAC Certification, Building Inspection	Not Available; Significant Demand with Infusion of ARRA Funding	\$14.99 (BLS Estimate)
Energy	Building Analyst/Energy Auditor	50 Hours	Building Performance Institute (BPI) Certification	Additional BPI Certifications (Manufactured Housing, Multifamily)		
Energy	Weatherization and Installer Technician	120 Hours	NCCER Core with Weatherization Specialization or NYSERDA-Based College Certification	Additional NCCER Certifications, Registered Apprenticeship		
Energy	Power Technology	Competency Based (Self-Paced with Internship)	Electrical Generating System Association (EGSA) Certification	Associate Degree, Registered Apprenticeship	66	\$30.95

QuickJobs Program Priorities

Sector	QuickJobs Training Program Name	Approximate Program Duration	Credential	Further Opportunities	Projected Annual Job Openings in SC*	Average Hourly Earnings (Not Entry-Level)*
Health Care	Nurse Assistant	120 Hours	State Certification	Phlebotomist, ECG/EKG Technician, Paramedic Technician, CNA Advanced, Licensed Practical Nurse, Registered Nurse, Registered Apprenticeship	524	\$8.83
Health Care	Patient Care Assistant/Clinical Medical Assistant	150-400 Hours Depending on the Number of Credentials	State CNA Certification, Certified Phlebotomist Through National Healthcareer Association or American Society of Phlebotomy Technicians, Certified EKG Technician NHA	Licensed Practical Nurse, Registered Nurse, Registered Apprenticeship	301	\$12.16
Health Care	Emergency Medical Technician, Basic	175 Hours	State Certification, National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians Certification	Advanced Emergency Medical Technician, Paramedic, Registered Apprenticeship	175	\$13.52
Health Care	Health Information Technician (Electronic Medical Records, Medical Billing and Coding, Medical Insurance, Healthcare IT)	200-425 Hours Depending on the Number of Areas/Credentials	Certified Medical Insurance Specialist (CMIS), Certified Medical Coder (CMC) Through Practice Management Institute, Certified Professional Coder (CPC) Through American Health Information Management Association or American Academy of Professional Coders and/or Local Credential	Additional Health-Based IT Credentials, Medical Office Management, Registered Apprenticeship	119	\$13.77

QuickJobs Program Priorities

Sector	QuickJobs Training Program Name	Approximate Program Duration	Credential	Further Opportunities	Projected Annual Job Openings in SC*	Average Hourly Earnings (Not Entry-Level)*
Transportation and Logistics	Commercial Truck Driving	180 Hours	South Carolina Commercial Driver's License	Additional Endorsements and Classes, Registered Apprenticeship	891	\$17.07
Transportation and Logistics	Warehousing & Distribution Specialist	100 Hours	"ExpertRating Certified Professional" (ExpertRating is an ISO 9001:2000 Organization)	Opportunities for Advanced Credentials and Supervisory Positions, Registered Apprenticeship	413	\$12.19
Transportation and Logistics	Freight Broker/ Agent	150 Hours	"ExpertRating Certified Professional" (ExpertRating is an ISO 9001:2000 Organization)	Opportunities for Advanced Credentials and Supervisory Positions, Registered Apprenticeship	24	\$18.09
Transportation and Logistics	Basic 911 Telecommunicator	320 Hours	Association of Public Safety Communications Professionals (APCO) Basic 911 Telecommunicator Certificate	APCO 911 Emergency Dispatcher, Associate Degree in Criminal Justice, Registered Apprenticeship	63	\$13.15

*Source: EMSI