



# INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING Program Guidelines

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

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## Program Overview

When workers lack needed training and businesses experience skill gaps, the company's ability to compete, expand and retain workers can be compromised. Florida's Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Program, funded by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and administered by CareerSource Florida addresses such needs. The Incumbent Worker Training Program is to provide grant funding for continuing education and training of incumbent employees at existing Florida businesses. The program will provide reimbursement grants to businesses that pay for preapproved, direct, training related costs. Currently, companies may receive a reimbursement rate up to 50 percent or 75 percent (see Funding Priorities below for details).

The program helps established Florida businesses upgrade the skills of current employees, which provides enormous benefits including:

### For employers:

- Increased Competitiveness
- Skilled Workforce
- Increased Productivity
- Increased Profits
- Company Growth
- Reduced Turnover

### For employees:

- Advancement Opportunities
- Increased Job Opportunities
- Industry Recognized Credentials
- Job Retention
- Transportable/Transferrable Skills

## Incumbent Worker Definition

For the purposes of the Incumbent Worker Training program, an Incumbent Worker is defined as follows:

- At least one employee of the applicant business, working at least 37.5 hours per week and receives a W2 from the employer.
- At least 18 years of age.
- A citizen of the United States or a non-citizen whose status permits employment in the United States.
- A Florida resident working at a physical location in Florida; and
- Employed six months before the signature date of the application.

## Available Funding & Maximum Awards Amount

The total amount of funding available for all training projects in 2024-2025 is \$3 million. A notification will be posted on [careersourceflorida.com](https://careersourceflorida.com) when funds are no longer available.

For the year beginning July 1, 2024, the maximum amount is \$100,000 per grant per company. A company may be treated as a single company or multiple companies depending on the number of locations and Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN). If each location operates under a different FEIN, each location will be considered a separate company and will need to submit separate applications to receive separate awards. If the locations operate under one FEIN, it will be considered one company and will therefore need to join its training efforts, submit one application, and receive one award.

## Company Eligibility

Companies applying for an Incumbent Worker Training grant must meet the following criteria:

- Applications submitted on or after July 1.
- Be a “for-profit” company, or,
- Be a hospital operated by nonprofit or local government entities in the State of Florida.
- In operation for a minimum of one (1) year prior to the application date (as verified on [sunbiz.org](https://sunbiz.org)).
- Describe how the training is related to the competitiveness of the business and the employee receiving training.
- Demonstrate a commitment to retain or avert the layoff of employees receiving training.
- Demonstrate financial viability by providing:
  - The most recently filed IRS Form 941 (if the business is a corporation) or a most recently filed copy of the 1040 Income Tax Return with Schedule SE (if the business is a Sole Proprietorship).
  - [Tax Clearance Letter](#) from the Florida Department of Revenue dated within 90 days (about 3 months) of application submittal.
  - A letter from your bank, on the bank letterhead, verifying your company has done business for at least the last six (6) months and is in good standing will be required or a credit check will be completed.
  - W-9 form (2024).
  - Compliant with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and with 29 C.F.R. Part 37.
  - Have at least one full-time employee (must be Florida Resident and 1 employee receives W-2). The employee’s W-2 must match the company name that is on the application. For a sole proprietor where the business owner is the only employee, the sole proprietor may be considered as the full-time employee.
  - Have not received an award in the previous or current program year [This does not include applicants that match the requirements of funding priority of 1 & 2].
  - The FEIN on all documents must be the same.

**The following businesses are not eligible to apply for funds under this program:**

- Not-for-profit agencies or organizations. [Note: This does not apply to hospitals operated by nonprofit or local government entities in the State of Florida.]
- Retail establishments.
- Entities whose administrations only comprise volunteers.
- Local workforce development boards and its administrative entities.
- Labor unions.
- Federal, state, county, or city governmental entities [Note: This does not apply to hospitals operated by nonprofit or local government entities in the State of Florida.]
- Businesses that received an Incumbent Worker Training grant award in the current or previous program year. [This does not include applicants that match the requirements of funding priority of 1 & 2].

## **Funding Priorities**

With a focus on helping Florida's small businesses, the grant reimburses companies 50 percent for pre-approved training costs. For companies that meet specific criteria, the reimbursement percentage is increased to 75 percent.

Funding priority shall be given in the following order:

1. Businesses that provide employees with opportunities to acquire new or improved skills by earning a credential on the [Master Credentials List](#).
2. Hospitals operated by nonprofit or local government entities provide nursing opportunities to acquire new or improved skills.
3. Businesses whose grant proposals represent a significant upgrade in employee skills.
4. Businesses with 25 employees or fewer, businesses in rural areas, and businesses in distressed inner-city areas.
5. Businesses in a qualified targeted industry or businesses whose grant proposals represent a significant layoff avoidance strategy.

While this priority may not necessarily include an increased reimbursement percentage, applications that meet one of these conditions will receive priority during times of limited funding.

## **Allowed Costs**

**With proper documentation, the following direct training costs/expenses are reimbursable through the Incumbent Worker Training grant:**

- Tuition/training/course cost and/or instructors' wages capped at:
  - \$40/hour for company employees delivering the training.
  - \$300/instructor hour for vendor training.
- Curriculum development: No more than 25 percent of each approved course cost will be allowed for curriculum development. Most of the grant amount will be dedicated to training.
- Textbooks/manuals: capped at \$100 per textbook and/or manual (limited to course content only – no certification or exam preparation materials). No more than 50 percent of each approved course cost will be allowed for textbooks.
- Related costs: (limited to copies or slides at \$.03 per copy, training DVDs or tapes).

## **Disallowed Costs**

- Employee/trainee wages and fringe benefits.
- Compensation or consultant fees.
- Capital improvements.
- Travel.
- Food.

- Membership fees/dues.
- Conferences.
- Test/exam Fees.
- Company website design and development, website hosting and maintenance, software upgrade, advice on computer selection for purchase and upgrade.
- Purchase of employee assessment systems or systems usage licenses.
- Equipment.
- Annual membership for online courses.

## Training Services

The Incumbent Worker Training Program provides flexibility regarding the type(s) of training and the training provider(s). Based on the needs of the company and its overall workforce development needs, the company chooses its training and training provider that provides employees with opportunities to acquire new or improved skills by earning a credential on the [Master Credentials List](#). More specifically, the training can be:

- Provided by a Florida-based public or private educational institution, a private training company or private instructor\*, a company employee, or a combination of training providers.
- At the company's facility, training provider's facility, or a combination of locations.
- Occupational skills training designed to meet the special requirements of a business or Industry professional development (i.e., leadership training).
- Training in strategies to improve the efficiency of business operations.
- Technical/hard skills training such as computer software training.
- Delivered in person or online.

**The following are examples of trainings that cannot be funded:**

- CPR and first aid.
- New hire orientation.
- Diversity and sexual harassment.
- English as a second language.
- Degree programs.
- Workplace literacy or soft skills.
- Training that takes place where food and/or beverages are included.
- Training that includes the purchase of equipment (such as iPads or other equipment/supplies/devices that can be used outside of training) in the cost of the training.

\*Private training companies, institutions and instructors may be utilized upon a review that includes, but is not limited to, accreditation and licensure and prior approval by CareerSource Florida. The training provider's website address and instructor's resumes must be provided.

## Application Process

The Incumbent Worker Training Program application must be completed online (emailed, mailed, or faxed application will not be accepted). A [sample application](#) can be used to prepare for the online application. The online application is the only document that may be used to apply for the Incumbent Worker Training grant. The email used to create an account needs to use the company's domain name or be an account associated with the business.

**\*PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION AT LEAST 45 BUSINESS DAYS PRIOR TO THE DESIRED START DATE OF YOUR TRAINING. Awards are made monthly.**

Failure to submit the application at least 45 business days prior to the desired start date of your training may cause valuable training to be missed; however, submittal within this time limit does not guarantee that the approval date will be on or before your training start date.

Due to a potentially high volume of applications and limited funding, applicants not awarded during the current fiscal year will need to submit a new application the following fiscal year.

## Review and Approval

**Application Receipt** – An automated email from the application system will notify you by email that the application has been submitted. If you do not receive this, the application has not been submitted. The status of your application will change to “under review” once it has been submitted. A holiday or a large influx of applications may cause a delay in the sending of this email.

**Due Diligence Review** – Your application will be reviewed for completeness to include the provision of all items requested on the checklist. The Clearance Letter from the Department of Revenue will be reviewed to ensure the company is not delinquent on any state taxes (any outstanding balances from the Department of Revenue will cause an application to be denied).

**Credit Assessment** – As part of the due diligence phase, a letter from your bank (on bank letterhead) verifying your company has done business for at least six (6) months and is in good standing will be required or a credit check may be completed.

The applicant will receive an additional email if the review reveals missing information.

**Please note:** Incomplete applications will delay the approval process, and the application will return to the queue.

## Section 1: Employer Identification

Employer Identification must be completed by the business seeking training through the Incumbent Worker Training program. This section must be completed in its entirety before exiting the application. This section cannot be revisited – once you leave this section you will not be allowed back in to edit.

## Section 2: Training Project and Provider Information

The company must complete a Training Summary Detail for **EACH** training course requested. A training provider is defined as a person or entity that provides employment-related, customized training and includes public schools (technical centers, community colleges, and universities), private institutions, training consultants, vendors, employer associations, and/or business trainers. The following applies to training services:

- It can be conducted at the businesses’ facility, at the training provider’s facility or at a combination of sites.
- Instructors can be either full- or part-time educators or professional trainers from the business.
- Should include specific objectives (what is to be accomplished through the training).
- Should include expected outcomes (the anticipated outcomes should directly assist the company in increasing its competitiveness, viability and/or profitability).

## Section 3: Training Program Budget

The budget is reviewed for accuracy and compared to the training project. The Grants Manager should be able to easily correlate the items from the training project to the training budget. Additionally, an analysis is conducted to ensure the cost per trainee is reasonable as compared to the type of training being delivered.

**\*Average trainee wages must be included in the application. Trainee wages are the wages an employee will receive while in training. \***

#### **Section 4: Anticipated Outcomes of the Training Project**

The anticipated outcomes are reviewed to ensure the training will directly assist the company in increasing its competitiveness, viability and/or profitability; allow it to create or save jobs; reduce turnover; and/or increase the trainee(s) short- or long-term wages. Additionally, it is important that a brief statement be provided for each anticipated outcome. Failure to include this information (and clearly outline the statements in terms of each outcome) will delay the review of your application.

#### **Supporting Documentation**

The company should also upload the following:

- [Tax Clearance Letter](#) from the Florida Department of Revenue.
- 941 Tax Form.
- W-9 (2024).
- A letter from your bank, on the bank letterhead, verifying your company has done business for at least the last six (6) months and is in good standing will be required or a credit check will be completed.

The applicant will receive an additional email if the Phase II review reveals missing information.

#### **Notification of Grant**

Once the application has been reviewed, an email will be sent to the company contact listed in the Incumbent Worker Training application advising of the pre-approval and the pre-approved grant amount.

#### **Grant Contract**

Within a few weeks of the grant approval, the contract between CareerSource Florida and the business will be prepared and sent electronically through DocuSign for signature. The contract will then be returned via email to CareerSource Florida for signature. Once received, CareerSource Florida will execute the contract through DocuSign. The fully executed contract will then be emailed to the company. Training and reimbursements may begin after a fully executed contract has been received.

The first reimbursement can be requested once the contract has been executed by Career Source Florida's Chief Financial Officer. Training which began before the execution of the contract may not be reimbursed.

All grant projects shall be performance based with specific measurable performance outcomes, including the completion of the training project and number of employees trained.

#### **A. Contract Terms**

Training and reimbursements may begin only after a fully executed contract has been executed. The contract will set forth all processes and expectations for administering, implementing, and completing the training. Contract commence date will be the date of the CareerSource Florida CFO. **All contracts not executed within 45 days will be voided.**

#### **Length of Contract**

Training must be completed within 12 months of the date of the executed contract. From there, the company will have 60 days (about 2 months) to submit final reimbursement

requests for training completed during the contract period.

## B. Extensions

There is no provision in the contract for extensions. A business is expected to have carefully assessed its training needs so that it will apply only for the funds needed for training that can be completed in a 12-month time limit.

## Reimbursement Rate and Process

Adequate documentation of the training is required for all expenses incurred and paid.

***Businesses must provide at least 50 percent of the requested direct training costs, i.e., instructor's wages/tuition, curriculum development, and textbooks and manuals. Some exceptions may apply.*** Please note that if the instructor is a business employee, the business will be required to provide a minimum of 50% of the \$40 per hour cap.

Businesses may request reimbursement as frequently as needed during the 12-month period.

Reimbursements will be made in direct correlation with the business's training progress. The percentage of funds reimbursed must stay equal to or less than the percentage of trainees that have been trained to date. All reimbursement must be submitted within 60 days (about 2 months) of the contract end date. Reimbursement requests received after the 60-day cutoff will not be processed. Further instructions will be made available to the business upon contract execution.

## Reporting Requirements

- Training Progress Reporting: The Incumbent Worker Training program staff expects to have ongoing communication with businesses regarding the progress of training. If training and reimbursement requests occur monthly, this is sufficient.
- Six Month Status Report: Businesses are required to submit a six-month status report regarding its usage of funds and training plans for the remainder of the grant period. This report can be accessed on the application portal welcome page.
- Failure to submit this report to the Grants Specialist on or before the six-month mark may render the contract canceled. The Incumbent Worker Training Program Office will advise of the specific requirements of this report, including content, time limit, and other matters, with information to be included with a copy of the executed contract.
- Final Training Evaluation: At or near the end of the contract or at the time of your final reimbursement request, an Incumbent Worker Training Evaluation on the training project is required no later than 60 days (about 2 months) from the end of training. This report can be accessed on the application portal welcome page. Once the evaluation is received, the final reimbursement will be released. (Businesses will also need to keep accurate records of the project's implementation process to certify that all information provided for the purpose of requesting reimbursements and reporting training activity is accurate and true for a period of at least five years).
- Trainee Data Submission Form: In addition to the reporting requirements listed above, there are specific reporting requirements regarding the individual employees who have received training.
- The information, at a minimum, will include:
  - Legal Name of Trainee.
  - Social Security Number\*.
  - Verification of Citizenship Status.
  - Date of Hire.
  - Job Title.

To ensure the security of your data, trainees' personal information should be submitted electronically -when submitting reimbursement requests through the application portal. We will

not accept submissions that contain personally identifiable information via any other means.

Trainees' personal information should be submitted electronically, along with reimbursement requests through the application portal, ensuring this information is transferred using the latest encryption technologies. All personally identifiable information (PII) is stored in Salesforce, a platform-as-a-service (PaaS) that maintains a comprehensive set of compliance certifications, including SOC 2. As an additional layer of security, social security numbers are stored using field-level encryption. Access to all PII is strictly controlled.

On an annual basis, CareerSource Florida sends one file containing all Social Security numbers from all companies receiving Incumbent Worker Training funds to the Florida Education & Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) administered by the Florida Department of Education. The agency conducts long-term follow-up and accountability studies. Incumbent Worker Training staff will discuss the methods for secure transmittal with the business upon request.

\*Please note: the social security numbers reported are verified in the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) database. The provision of incorrect or falsified information may be construed as fraud, therefore making any expended funds immediately due and payable back to CareerSource Florida.

## Program Forms

There are specific forms required and provided for use with your grant. These forms include:

- Trainee Data Form.
- Reimbursement Request Form.
- Sign-in Sheet for Vendors.
- Sign-in Sheet for Employee Led.
- Training Expense Summary Report.
- Substitution Request Form.
- Curriculum Development (if applicable).
- Manuals and textbooks (if applicable).

Some of these forms and reimbursement instructions are provided by the Grants Specialist via email as an Excel workbook approximately 10 days after we have received a fully executed contract. If this information is not received, please contact us.

## Substitution Requests

The business is expected to assess its immediate training needs and apply only for funds needed to meet those needs within a 12-month time limit. The application is approved based on the training outlined in the proposal. If the approved training needs to change, a substitution can be requested on the form provided to change the course prior to the training. There is a maximum of two substitution requests per lifetime of the grant. The Grants Manager will evaluate the request and notify the business via email of the approval or denial of the substitution.

## Technical Assistance

The CareerSource Florida staff are available to provide technical assistance throughout the process, from the application stage throughout contract execution, contract management and fiscal closeout.

An individual or organization may assist a business or group of businesses in the application process; however, that individual/organization may not be compensated with grant funds.

## Other Training Resources

There are additional training programs at the local and state level designed to support Florida businesses by providing training grants. A business can apply for an Employed Worker Training grant (Customized Training is training designed to meet the specific requirements of an employer or group of employers, with the commitment that the employer(s) will retain current employees or hire individuals who successfully complete the training) or an On-the-Job Training grant (On-the-Job Training is training conducted by an employer that is provided to a paid participant while engaged in productive work in a job that provides knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job) through its [local workforce development board](#). The [Quick Response Training](#) grant is available through the [CareerSource Florida](#) website.

Businesses can use these grants concurrently; however, the grants cannot subsidize the other's training and cannot cover the same training costs. Receipt of other federal training funds, i.e., through the local workforce development board or Quick Response Training must be disclosed in your Incumbent Worker Training application.

**If you have any questions or need assistance in completing the application, please contact CareerSource Florida Grants Manager Malissa Counts at 850-759-4349.**