



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity

OFFICE OF EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

JB Pritzker, Governor

WIOA NOTICE NO. 23-NOT-03

TO: Chief Elected Officials
Local Workforce Innovation Board Chairpersons
Local Workforce Innovation Board Staff
WIOA Fiscal Agents and Grant Recipients
WIOA Program Services Administrators
Illinois workNet® Operators
WIOA State Agency Partners
Other Interested Persons

SUBJECT: Program Year 2024 (PY'24) Apprenticeship Illinois Expansion Grant Funds Application

DATE: April 15, 2024

I. SUBJECT INDEX

Statewide Apprenticeship Illinois Expansion
Planning

II. PURPOSE

To provide information to all Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIBs) on the availability of Statewide Apprenticeship Illinois Expansion funding to (a) embed the apprenticeship “navigator” functions within the business services team (BST) and appoint a person as the point of contact (POC) and apprenticeship specialist for their area/region and (b) create regional industry sector partnerships and/or employer collaboratives that engage businesses and develop new strategies for communicating the value of Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) and workforce diversity to employers, while proactively creating equity strategies that lead to historically underrepresented communities and underserved populations entering and succeeding in registered apprenticeship programs.

III. ISSUANCES AFFECTED

- A. References:
U.S. DOL Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) No. 24-03: State Apprenticeship
Expansion Formula

U.S. DOL Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 20-15, Change 1: New Apprenticeship USA Brand Information and Updated Technical Assistance Resources for Expanding and Modernizing Registered Apprenticeship Programs

IV. PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The US Department of Labor (USDOL) issued Funding Opportunity Announcement 24-03 that outlines \$50 million in formula grants for States to expand registered apprenticeships. USDOL provides the formula funding to increase the State's ability to serve, improve, and strategically expand the national apprenticeship system. This funding opportunity is the second of an anticipated five-year program. Illinois' share of the formula funding for PY 2024 is \$1,689,825, which will have an expected performance period from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. The continuation of funding is subject to the discretion of USDOL and contingent upon the availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the State's projects, and adequate stewardship of federal funds. Note that the issuance of grants under this notice is contingent on Illinois receiving the PY 2024 award from the USDOL.

V. APPRENTICESHIP IN ILLINOIS

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, as of March 2024, Illinois has approximately 424 Registered Apprenticeship programs with approximately 20,474 apprentices. These programs have been vetted by industry and are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor.

Apprenticeship Illinois Framework

The State of Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) has developed the [Apprenticeship Illinois framework](#) that focuses on expanding apprenticeships and work-based learning/training opportunities. Workforce strategies like registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) help ensure a robust and equitable approach by connecting job seekers to quality employment in priority industry sectors. RAPs are an industry-driven, flexible training model that can be customized to meet the needs of businesses across multiple industries and enable employers to develop and train their future workforce while offering career seekers affordable paths to secure quality, high-paying jobs. Registered Apprenticeship programs (RAPs) are vetted, approved, and validated by the USDOL.

Apprenticeship Navigator (now Specialist) Roles and Responsibilities

Since the apprenticeship model is employer-driven, successful and sustained apprenticeship expansion requires effective business engagement strategies. Awareness and education are vital to helping businesses understand the value of apprenticeship and how it can provide solutions to their workforce challenges. To increase business outreach capacity, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and the IWIB Apprenticeship Illinois Committee instituted the concept of Regional Apprenticeship Navigators to build the foundation for apprenticeship expansion in Illinois. Additionally, Apprenticeship Navigators were established to increase capacity for program development and expansion by working with Apprenticeship Intermediaries.

Since the establishment of Apprenticeship Navigators, it has become apparent that the navigator functions are greater than just one person. To intentionally expand apprenticeship

and work-based learning, more than just one person must understand apprenticeships and their value to employers, potential apprentices, their communities, their region, and the state. Therefore, the State used the first round of the USDOL State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF) funds to envision the *Apprenticeship Navigator 2.0*, where these functions are embedded within the existing business services team (BST). However, a point of contact is still necessary to coordinate efforts of the BST and the larger integrated business services teams (IBST) and lessen confusion for employers. Therefore, with SAEF round 1, the “*Apprenticeship Navigator*” evolved to “*Apprenticeship Specialist*,” since the navigator functions would be executed by multiple persons within the BST and IBST at different levels.

The Apprenticeship Specialists are a key point of contact in their area for businesses who want to start an apprenticeship program. The Specialists work with businesses as well as Intermediaries, education and training providers, DOL Apprenticeship Training Representatives (ATR), and other key partners. Between the Specialists and Intermediaries, they create an apprenticeship network by conducting outreach to employers, managing relationships with partners, coordinating regional stakeholders, providing technical assistance to support program design and development, assuming the administrative tasks of being an apprenticeship sponsor, identifying multiple sources of funding, and identifying ways to reduce the risks for employers to implement or expand RAPs and work-based learning.

To sustain and expand the Apprenticeship Illinois Network, the State will focus resources on coordinating the Apprenticeship Specialist roles and responsibilities within the local integrated business service teams that include representatives from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core partners and other local workforce, education, and economic development partners. See Appendix I for more information.

The State provides Specialists and other team members with training and support in the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s [Talent Pipeline Management \(TPM\)](#) framework, which is a strategy to help address chronic regional and local skill gaps. The TPM strategy has shown success in Illinois when recruiting employers to sponsor apprenticeships, create consistent messaging, address barriers, and provide opportunities to align workforce solutions. Apprenticeship Specialists directly support the creation of industry sector partnerships using the TPM framework. See Appendix II for more information on Talent Pipeline Management.

Integrated Business Service Teams

Local Integrated Business Service Teams (IBST) promote, market, connect, and provide access to initiatives that allow businesses to access and implement available workforce programs and services applicable to their needs. The State’s workforce board’s Integrated Business Services Team Workgroup created Illinois’ [Integrated Business Services Framework](#) to coordinate better and support business engagement across the State. It recommended that local workforce areas’ business services teams work with other partners to implement the Framework. Integrated business service teams successfully implementing this framework are positioned to perform the navigator functions for expanding apprenticeship. See Appendix III for more information on the Integrated Business Services Framework.

State of Illinois Program Year 2024 Apprenticeship Expansion Plan

Illinois' second round application to the USDOL for this funding combined the five goals into four, to expand RAPS to build on existing systems and strategies to fulfill the vision of embedding an apprenticeship ecosystem at the state, regional, and local levels.

- Goal 1: Coordinate and Expand Services to Workers and Career Seekers
- Goal 2: Coordinate and Expand Services to Employers
- Goal 3: Coordinate and Expand Services to Education, Training, Workforce, and Economic Development Partners
- Goal 4: Planning and System Development

For this next round, the State must develop and implement the second year of the plan that includes key expansion efforts, which should build on previous years' modernization, expansion, and equity efforts. It is imperative that Illinois build statewide capacity to increase the number and quality of RAPS through stronger alignment with the education and workforce systems. For SAEF round 2, the USDOL has placed greater emphasis on workforce and education alignment, especially CTE. Following are the four goals.

Goal 1: Coordinate and Expand Services to Workers and Career Seekers

Goal one will increase the annual number of apprentices beginning and completing Registered Apprenticeship Programs. Illinois will (a) identify, support, and replicate successful models and apprenticeship intermediary programs, which includes recruiting intermediaries, DEIA training, marketing, identifying successful models, replicating successful models, supporting intermediaries and participants; (b) identify and address challenges or barriers for individuals to enter, remain, and complete programs, which includes creating awareness around challenges and barriers, preparing for entry, designing and implementing optimal practices for retention; and (c) create awareness of resources and programs among communities and individuals, which includes data driven marketing and communication activities.

Goal 2: Coordinate and Expand Services to Employers

Goal two will directly increase employer participation in Registered Apprenticeship Programs. We will continue to embed apprenticeship development support within existing business services teams. These teams will provide technical assistance and support services to employers to help them navigate the apprenticeship system, and we will provide these teams with even more training than year one provided. We are focusing our business services teams as navigators to be at the most engaged level with businesses. Under this goal, Illinois will (a) increase employer engagement and awareness of the benefits of work-based learning programs including apprenticeships, which includes marketing and aligning business engagement efforts among multiple partners such as apprenticeship specialists, community colleges, other state agencies, and other educational, training, workforce, and economic development professionals to make the process easier for employers; (b) support the development of industry sector partnerships that identify workforce needs and encourage them to participate in work-based learning programs including apprenticeships, which includes training in and implementing Talent Pipeline Management and other collaborative efforts; and (c) address challenges or barriers for employers creating, registering, and/or implementing Registered Apprenticeship programs, which includes surveying employers; creating effective incentives; developing programs and materials.

Goal 3: Coordinate and Expand Services to Education, Training, Workforce, and Economic Development Partners

Goal three will increase knowledge, capacity, and collaboration of statewide apprenticeship partners. Leadership, greater coordination, and dedicated capacity at the regional level is needed to support the development and sustainability of new programs across industry sectors in a way that aligns systems and makes it easier for new employers and apprentices to navigate opportunities. Under this goal, Illinois will (a) provide grants to Local Workforce Innovation Area Integrated Business Services Teams to offer proactive marketing and comprehensive assistance and support to employers, community colleges, high schools, other potential sponsors who want to begin new apprenticeship programs and ensure the quality of the program; (b) build stakeholders' knowledge of the system and system components through research and professional development; and (c) create strong regional and statewide partnerships and increase collaboration among stakeholders through ongoing partnership engagement.

Goal 4: Planning and System Development

Goal four is the planning and system development needed to expand outreach across the state, regions, and local communities. Here we will refine Illinois' model of apprenticeships, determine apprenticeship messaging and outreach, consider challenges and opportunities for collaboration and referrals, and identify system gaps and needs. Under this goal, Illinois will (a) improve expansion efforts through planning, research, and evaluation, incorporating the research and best practices into continuous planning and system improvements; (b) create an inclusive core planning group representing all stakeholders; and (c) solidify and support the Apprenticeship Ecosystem statewide by identifying and communicating new and existing funding sources, partners, and other players in the ecosystem. The major activity in year two for the core planning group is to begin the development of the competitive funding strategy and application for next year.

VI. COMPONENTS

This notice outlines the actions that the State of Illinois is taking to provide LWIBs with the resources needed to serve employers and partners to expand apprenticeships. This notice encourages LWIBs to apply for apprenticeship expansion funds to support the strategies outlined in FOA-ETA-24-03 to expand the State's apprenticeship system.

A. Program Goals

Statewide Apprenticeship Expansion funds will support local and regional business services teams to develop and implement apprenticeship expansion strategies in their region and local workforce communities. The program activities for the local workforce areas through this funding are centered around the four goals, as proposed by Illinois to the USDOL in FOA-ETA-24-03, and should encompass the re-envisioning and evolution of the apprenticeship navigator functions embedded within the BSTs, which can be found in Appendix I. DCEO will work with partners to achieve goals at the State and local levels (see Appendix IV). Grantees are expected to work with the State to accomplish the following activities and goals.

Goal 1: Coordinate and Expand Services to Workers and Career Seekers

- Support curriculum development that meets the needs of emerging sectors and employers within your region directly related to RAPs or preparing individuals for RAPs.

- Support apprenticeship intermediaries including but not limited to community colleges, high schools, CTE programs and other workforce partners.
- Identify and implement customer-centered DEIA strategies around recruiting and retaining all workers, including historically underrepresented populations, through supportive services and barrier reduction funds.

Goal 2: Coordinate and Expand Services to Employers

- Work with employers to identify the workforce needs and offer new incentives and services to establish new or expand existing apprenticeship programs as appropriate.
- Support the establishment of industry sector partnerships and industry-specific employer collaborations including the expansion of TPM strategies.
- Support the Apprenticeship Committee sponsored business-to-business outreach activities including employer roundtables and focus groups across the state.
- Provide information and support to registered apprenticeship program sponsors

Goal 3: Coordinate and Expand Services to Education, Training, Workforce, and Economic Development Partners

- Identify the *Apprenticeship Specialist* point of contact that will serve as a subject matter expert that supports and records the apprenticeship expansion efforts and impacts.
- Educate the local business services team members about the Apprenticeship Illinois programs, services and initiatives.
- Proactively collaborate and convene partners as necessary to ensure alignment, consistent messaging, and progression of establishing programs (Note: It is expected that grantees convene their IBSTs at least once a quarter in addition to interacting on a regular basis.)
- Follow up with partners to support the provision of business services to employers including but not limited to apprenticeships and other work-based learning initiatives.

Goal 4: Planning and System Development

- Document the Regional Apprenticeship Ecosystem: Conduct and document a landscape analysis of your region on programs, partners, and employers.
 - Under programs, identify existing registered apprenticeships, non-registered apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, youth apprenticeships, and other work-based learning programs.
 - For partners, identify both existing and potential partners in your region, which should include intermediaries, community colleges, school districts, CTE programs, alternative training providers, chambers of commerce, economic development partners, industry associations, community-based organizations, unions, DOL Apprenticeship Training Representatives (ATRs), and other existing business services partners.
 - For employers, identify employers in the region utilizing apprenticeship and work-based learning, which could include their industry, occupation(s), training providers, type of program, use of funding, etc.
- Work with program partners to plan and coordinate the provision of business services including but not limited to the following:

- Identifying available funding sources that could be used to cover some costs of creating or implementing a program, which includes the Apprenticeship Education Tax Credit, WIOA funds, CTE funds, other grants.
- Developing procedures to coordinate and collaborate with BST partners to support meetings with employers who want to develop and expand apprenticeship programs
- Coordinating the outreach and marketing of apprenticeship and work-based-learning programs. This could include but is not limited to providing presentations in partner meetings and events to talk about the benefits of apprenticeships and how the Apprenticeship Specialist can help find partners, funding, and even help create the program. This also includes customizing local marketing and outreach materials.

B. Program Activities and Outcomes

Specific project outcomes, goals, and deliverables must be included in the proposal.

Applications must consist of projected outcomes provided in Attachment A. Proposals will clearly articulate how the activities funded under this grant would expand apprenticeships in Illinois. The activities and outcomes will include, but are not limited to the:

- Number of new businesses engaged
- Number of sponsors that receive apprenticeship expansion support
- Number of partners from underutilized areas that receive apprenticeship expansion support
- Number of businesses that receive incentives
- Number of outreach events (seminars, workshops, stakeholder events coordinated)
- Number of attendees at outreach events
- Number of industry sector partnerships/employer collaboratives developed
- Number of industry sector partnerships/employer collaboratives supported
- Number of new Registered Apprenticeship programs developed
- Number of existing Registered Apprenticeship programs expanded
- Number of new RAPs on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)
- Number of new Pre-Apprenticeship programs developed
- Number of existing Pre-Apprenticeship programs expanded
- Total number of new employers engaged that adopt apprenticeship programs as a result of the grant project
- Number of IBSTs engagements focused on apprenticeship expansion programs, projects, or initiatives per quarter
- Number of new registered apprenticeship programs in active development per quarter

C. Program Funding

The Department anticipates awarding approximately \$1.5 million for the apprenticeship expansion efforts in local areas. The anticipated funding range per grant is \$75,000 to \$175,000 based on the activities and potential impact of the grant. LWIBs are encouraged to work with regional partners (including, but not limited to, other LWIBs, community colleges, and other economic and workforce development partners) to streamline the management of apprenticeship expansion. Consideration will be given to the geographic distribution of awards. LWIBs must utilize funds to support apprenticeship expansion activities. Requests must be reasonable, necessary, and directly related to the purpose of this notice.

D. Application Submission

Applicants must electronically submit all the information in Attachment A: PY '24 Statewide Apprenticeship Illinois Expansion Grant Funds to CEO.OET.Grants@illinois.gov.

- Project Narrative
- Integrated Business Service Team Information
- Projected Outcomes
- Uniform Budget
- Budget Narrative
- Project Implementation Plan

Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling, first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted. Applications must be received by June 3, 2024, to guarantee a funding commitment by June 30, 2024.

E. Application Review

A staff team from the Office of Employment and Training will review the applications on a first-come, first-served basis until all the available funds have been committed. Applications will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Regional and Local Needs;
- Impact of the Project;
- Geographic Distribution of Awards; and
- Cost.

F. Reporting Requirements

Grantees will be required to record and report program activities in Illinois workNet. This program activity and outcome data will be included in the quarterly reports for this grant.

G. Fiscal Management and Monitoring

This program is funded by the USDOL Apprenticeship SAEF Grants (*assistance listing number 17.285*). The funding for this grant will be provided on a reimbursement basis, and pre-award costs will be allowed. All costs must be associated with allowable apprenticeship expansion activities and must be documented in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards located at 2 CFR Part 200. This grant will be included in the annual monitoring of the local workforce areas by the Office of Employment and Training, as appropriate.

VII. ACTION REQUIRED

Local Workforce Innovation Boards, Local Workforce Area Directors, and Business Service Teams are requested to review this notice, identify apprenticeship expansion activities, and apply for funding as appropriate.

VIII. INQUIRIES

Inquiries related to this application funding notice should be directed to the Office of Employment and Training Regional Managers Annamarie Dorr AnnaMarie.Dorr@Illinois.gov, Bryan Ellis Bryan.Ellis@Illinois.gov, or Kelly Lapetino Kelly.Lapetino@Illinois.gov.

IX. EFFECTIVE DATE

This notice is effective on release.

X. EXPIRATION DATE

This notice will remain in effect until June 30, 2025.

Sincerely,



Julio Rodriguez, Deputy Director
Office of Employment and Training

JR:jl

Appendix I - Apprenticeship Navigation Network

Appendix II - Talent Pipeline Management (TPM)

Appendix III - Framework for Integrated Business Service

Appendix IV - Apprenticeship Expansion Plan State and Local Activities

Attachment A – PY '24 Statewide Apprenticeship Illinois Expansion Grant Funds Application