



Workforce Training and
Education Coordinating Board

2008-10 High Skills, High Wages Strategic Fund Request for Proposals Frequently Asked Questions

Updated November 19, 2008

1. Do participants (trainees, job seekers, workers, etc.) need to be Workforce Investment Act (WIA) eligible (i.e., eligible as Dislocated Workers, WIA Adults or WIA Youth)?

No. But applicants should keep in mind that the funding source is, indeed, WIA and thus, activities and participants should be tied to WIA intent. In other words, the bulk of initiative outcomes and benefits should accrue to the WIA program. The review committee will evaluate proposals' alignment to WIA. Also, participants in Strategic Fund initiatives are required to be deemed eligible to participate in a federal program, such as proof of eligibility to work in the US.

2. Can equipment be purchased using Strategic Fund funding?

Yes, but it must meet the following guidelines and be approved by the Workforce Board prior to purchase (a request form will be made available to Strategic Fund contractors). Equipment is defined as items that have a per unit procurement cost of \$5,000 or greater and a durable life of one or more years.

General guidelines for equipment purchases:

- Must justify why other funds are not available (i.e., funding of last resort)
- Must show benefit of equipment to the WIA program
- Must get prior approval from the Workforce Board
- Must indicate there was competitive procurement
- Must tag and inventory

3. Is this a grant or a contract?

Contracts will be issued to proposals that are approved for funding. The word "grant" is used in the RFP to mean a "project" or "initiative" funded by the Strategic Fund. Organizations making proposals to the Strategic Fund are most often referred to as "applicants" and those awarded funds are most often referred to as "contractors" or "recipients".

4. Are contract dollars available for the whole contract period, or on a fiscal year basis?

Yes, because the fund source is federal Workforce Investment Act, funds are available for the entire contract period ending June 2010.

5. Can a proposal be a hybrid between a planning and implementation grant?

No. In your proposal you need to specify one or the other. That being said, it's acceptable for an implementation initiative to be more heavily focused on planning but still have workforce strategies that will be implemented.

6. Has there been a determination on how many planning and implementation projects will be funded?

No. It depends on how many proposals are received, recommended by the review committee and approved by the Workforce Board's executive director.

7. What does “leveraged match” mean?

See *Section 1, Leadership, Partnership & Leveraging Requirements* for specific information. Leveraged match refers to cash and/or in-kind resources applicants raise from sources other than the Strategic Fund toward the activities contained in the proposal. There is not a specified match amount applicants are expected to leverage for the Strategic Fund. That being said, the review committee will expect to see you leveraging resources and co-investments in your initiative as an indicator of regional prioritization of the cluster. If incumbent or new hire training is included in your initiative, we do expect that you will negotiate a cash and/or in-kind match with the employers directly benefiting from their employees being trained.

8. Can match for incumbent worker training be from other partners besides employers?

Yes, but it is important to work with the employers to secure some investment when their employees are being trained. Examples of in-kind match from employers are in the RFP in *Section 2, Proposal Guidelines, number 6*.

9. For implementation grants with training components, does the training have to be for middle wage jobs?

Because of the funding source (Workforce Investment Act), the focus should be on middle skill jobs, those that require more than a HS Diploma but less than a 4-year college degree. We understand that, often, creating training projects for a group of employers may entail some training activities for positions outside the definition of “middle skill jobs.” While this is fine, we want to see that on the whole, trainings are focused on the middle, including creating pathways for lower-level workers to move into the middle. We don’t want dollars focused on training upper management, executives, directors, and so-on.

There is not a specific wage level that must be met or exceeded specified in the Strategic Fund RFP. Rather, regions should use their own regional workforce and economic development plans to set wage criteria for training. Depending upon the area, that may be referred to as the “living wage” or “self sufficiency wage.” The review committee will be scanning for the quality of the types of positions expected to be trained.

10. If a business or labor organization is interested in pursuing a Strategic Fund proposal, do they need to find a Workforce Development Council (WDC) that is interested in that cluster in order to pursue grant? If WDC is interested and they are working with someone else, is the business or labor organization out of luck?

Yes they need to find a WDC and Associate Development Organization (ADO) to partner with. A WDC (jointly with at least one ADO) can apply for more than one grant (proposal). The review committee and executive director will, however, look to balance Strategic Fund investments across the state.

11. Can partners include entities in other states, such as a training provider located in Oregon?

Yes, but the Strategic Fund initiative must benefit Washington residents. Also, if there is a Washington-based partner, such as a community or technical college, with like capacities and within commuting distance for residents of the region, it must be included over the out-of-state partner. In other words, the region should first look to all possible in-state partners and resources before reaching out of state.

12. How much of an initiative’s budget can be spent on administration?

The administration limit is 5 percent of the contract budget. This should be included in *Attachment B, Budget Summary Worksheet* (last line item).

13. Please elaborate on the formatting instructions (beginning of *Section 2, Proposal Guidelines*).

Single space, 12 font - smaller font in footnotes and tables is fine, but make sure it’s still readable. The page limit is 10 pages. When printing hard copies for submittal, please print on

both sides to conserve paper and bulk. But the page limit is still 10 pages, which prints on to 5 double-sided pages (not 10 double-sided pages!).

14. On Page 18 of the notes version of the RFP, under Section C: Leveraging Resources, you use the term "co-investment". Could you please provide your working definition of co-investment?

Co-investments are resources you and your partners bring together and invest in a particular initiative. The idea is that more than just one party/organization is investing in the initiative.