Rapid Response Incentive Program
Community College Workforce Development

Request for Proposals

Issued by:

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
One Ashburton Place, Room 1401
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
## Contents

Summary ............................................................................................................................................... 3

Grant Purpose and Priorities: .............................................................................................................. 3

Eligibility ................................................................................................................................................ 5

Applicants: ........................................................................................................................................ 5

Proposal Requirements ......................................................................................................................... 6

Project Abstract ................................................................................................................................ 6

Project Narrative ................................................................................................................................. 6

Applicant Information ........................................................................................................................ 6

Employer Information ........................................................................................................................ 6

Employer/Industry/Market Need .......................................................................................................... 7

Project Characteristics/Structure .................................................................................................... 7

Evaluation & Reporting ...................................................................................................................... 10

Educational Alignment ...................................................................................................................... 11

Budget Information .......................................................................................................................... 11

Submission Instructions .................................................................................................................... 11

Awards ................................................................................................................................................ 12

Policies ............................................................................................................................................... 12

Grant Disbursement ........................................................................................................................ 12

Publicity ............................................................................................................................................. 13

Solicitor Responsibility ...................................................................................................................... 13

Performance ...................................................................................................................................... 13

Legal Disclaimer ............................................................................................................................... 13

Proposed Budget .............................................................................................................................. 14
Summary

The Rapid Response Incentive Program authorizes the Commissioner of Higher Education to issue grants to community colleges enabling their timely response to the workforce development needs of regional employers. Qualifying proposals shall establish workforce training programs within 90 days of a request received from an employer and/or establish accelerated degree and certificate programs that are responsive to the scheduling needs of working adults. Proposals that address employers’ needs to increase their workforce in support of business growth or the relocation of a business into the Commonwealth will receive priority consideration. Qualifying programs may also address employers’ needs to enhance the skills and knowledge of their current workforce in response to changing industry requirements or competitiveness challenges.

The Rapid Response Incentive Program will commit up to $500,000 for qualifying workforce training projects in Fiscal Year 2016. The funding range for individual projects is anticipated to be between $25,000 and $75,000 per project, although the final award amount will be based upon the merits of each proposal and the scope of employer and worker needs. We anticipate that five to 10 proposals will be awarded funding.

Grant awards from this program will be made on a rolling basis until all funds are fully committed, or through December 31, 2015. Grant funds must be expended or encumbered by the community college on or before June 30, 2016. Requests for extensions beyond this deadline will not be approved and any unspent or unencumbered funds must be returned to the Department of Higher Education.

Grant Purpose and Priorities:

The Rapid Response Incentive program provides funds for Massachusetts’ community colleges to respond in a timely manner to the training needs of regional employers and is focused on two critical workforce development objectives: 1) to design and deliver high-quality training programs which address the workforce development needs of employers, and 2) to address the training needs of unemployed and underemployed workers who seek to acquire essential skills to help them secure new jobs or to upgrade the skills of currently employed workers to meet changing skill requirements for existing jobs.

Therefore, this grant program will fund:
1) Projects aimed at responding within 90 days to workforce training requests received from a local employer or a consortium of employers related to filling new jobs, or for workforce skills training for current workers in existing jobs;

2) Programs that establish accelerated degree and certificate attainment which are responsive to the scheduling needs of working adults;

While addressing an employer’s workforce development needs, proposed projects are also expected to address the needs of workers in various stages of job readiness including: 1) new workers developing industry relevant competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) that enable them to enter a targeted industry; 2) displaced workers seeking to build competencies necessary for re-employment in their current industry or to enhance and transfer prior competencies to enter a new industry; or 3) incumbent workers needing to enhance their current knowledge and skills to address changing industry requirements and to maintain or advance their workplace competitiveness.

Qualifying proposals will describe industry, employer and regional labor market conditions that warrant the need for training of current or new employees. Examples may include but are not limited to: (a) workforce increases based upon employer expansion or relocation into the Commonwealth or expansion into new regions across the Commonwealth, (b) training to serve new clients or customers in new or expanded markets, (c) training in the use of new equipment to improve quality and efficiency, (d) training in new technologies or business practices to maintain product or service competitiveness, (e) training in systems and procedures to meet new regulatory requirements, (e) training of new workers projected as replacements for anticipated near term retirements.

In addition to the above, projects should address opportunities for applicant community colleges to build sustainable capabilities or to increase capacity for workforce training and employer engagement through:

- Faculty development
- Seamless curriculum pathways with multiple entry/exit/reentry points
- Industry contextualized curriculum
- Education technology
- Internship programs for students
- Support systems for adult learners
- Mutually beneficial partnerships, enabling expanded or enhanced workforce training
Proposals should leverage existing resources and/or workforce initiatives of similar characteristics when possible. Proposed strategies should, where possible, align with and/or reference the MA Department of Higher Education industry sector workforce plans. These include:

1) Nursing and Allied Health
   - Allied Health-Direct Care Workforce Plan: A foundation for Our Future.
2) Information Technology and Computer Science
   - Technology Talent Initiative Workforce Plan
3) Advanced Manufacturing
   - Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Plan
4) STEM
   - Massachusetts’ Plan for Excellence in STEM Education: Version 2.0 Expanding the Pipeline for All

Eligibility

Applicants:

Applicants must be one of the fifteen Massachusetts community colleges. Projects must be responsive to a specific employer’s need (or consortium of employers) and will require partnership with at least one but could include multiple employers.

Projects are also encouraged to promote partnerships with other higher education institutions, vocational technical education programs, Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop Career Centers and other community-based organizations to deliver workforce training programs that most effectively address the training needs of employers, and their current or prospective workers.
Proposal Requirements

**Project Abstract**

Not more than one page. Include the following:

- Name of project
- Name and address of employer requesting training support
- Names and roles of other partner organizations
- Summary description of the project, including:
  - Type of project (e.g. Workforce Training, Accelerated Degree or Certificate program scheduled for working adults)
  - Target Population Served (e.g. New Workers, Displaced Workers, Incumbent Workers, )
  - Jobs impact e.g. expanded workforce, relocated jobs, new skill requirements for existing jobs
  - Project timeline and planned outcomes
  - Key Project Personnel
  - Employer and/or campus proposed matching funds (encouraged but not required).
  - Amount of grant request
  - Alignment with DHE industry sector workforce plans

**Project Narrative**

Not to exceed 10 pages, with standard 1” margins, 1.5 line spacing and 11 point font.

**Applicant Information**

- Community College
- Contact Person
- Title
- Telephone Number
- Email Address

**Employer Information**

- Name of Employer(s) (if more than one employer, use additional page)
Employer/Industry/Market Need
This section should address the industry, employer and regional labor market needs for the proposed project and how the proposed project will prepare participants to meet those needs, including:

- How the program will address specific employer’s needs.
- How the program will address the unique needs of each workforce (incumbent, displaced, new workers).
- The number of trainees required/anticipated to be enrolled, completing and promoted or placed in jobs.
- The demographics of the target trainee population.
- A description of the role the employer(s) will perform in job development and placement of individuals who successfully complete the program.

If training is for new hires,

- Identify whether the positions contemplated by the proposal are currently open and/or budgeted.

In the case of existing employees,

- Indicate any anticipated change in employment status (e.g. part-time to full-time, upgrade to higher position, wage increase).

Project Characteristics/Structure
This section should describe modalities of training delivery, including:

A. Training Design

- Describe the training objectives to be achieved during the project period and intended outcomes beyond the project period. For example, if the project is intended to prepare
un/underemployed workers for jobs, then the objectives should include identifying the percentage of participants who will enroll, complete the program and be placed in a training related position. If it is a program to upgrade the skills of a business’s current employees, then the objectives should include identifying the problem the business is attempting to solve with the proposed training investment and the metrics the business will use to determine whether the program addressed the problem.

- Instructional format, classroom, campus-based, onsite, online, hybrid.
- Adult student learning needs addressed through On-the-job training, hands-on experiential model, tryout employment, etc.
- Start and end dates of training and/or number of cycles of training, as well as length and schedule of training.
- Credit, non-credit training or a combination of both.
- Credentials earned upon completion of the training.
- Certification testing as a prerequisite for employment.
- Role of partners, if any, in support of the delivery of training, e.g. other postsecondary institutions, WIB’s/REB’s, Vocational Technical Schools, community based organizations, etc.
- Sustainable capabilities and capacities that will be developed and maintained at the campus as a result of this project.

B. Recruiting

- Necessary qualifications, if any, of potential participating trainees/students.
- Method that will be used to recruit potential students, and the role of employers in this process.
- The role (if any) of the local Workforce Investment Board and One-Stop Career Center in identifying, recruiting, screening and supporting potential trainees.
C. Complementary Funding

Funding sources from other agencies of state government may address related workforce development challenges and offer complementary training and support services. We are interested in understanding how the DHE’s Rapid Response program may be supportive of initiatives that have previously been funded through other sources. This information is sought only to better inform the design of this program and will not impact our consideration of nor recommendation of a grant award for a proposal submitted in relation to this RFP.

- Is the employer eligible for funding through the Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund Program (http://www.commcorp.org/sites/home.cfm?ID=30) and has that employer been granted workforce training fund dollars for this program now or in the past? Please share why Rapid Response funding is sought as an alternative or complementary source of funding.

- If applicable, please also share whether the community college or the employer has received/been part of a Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund grant (http://commcorp.org/areas/int.cfm?ID=12&sub=166) and how that award relates to the program proposed in this application.

- Are the participants in this proposal recipient of the Massachusetts Apprenticeship Initiative (MAI) and the Sector National Energy grant. Both of these grants are funded by the U.S. Department of Labor.

- Are there other funding sources the community college may rely on to support the proposed project?

- If the applicant received Rapid Response funds in FY15, please share the results and summary impact of that funded project.

- Please detail the amount and nature of any funds the employer and/or the college will be matching for delivery of the proposed program (not required).

D. Accelerated Certificate or Degree Program for Working Adults

If the community college proposes an Accelerated Certificate or Degree Program to address the scheduling needs of working adults, describe the changes that will be adopted to enable students to obtain their degree more rapidly. For example:
• Changes to prerequisite academic or skill requirements of the academic program.

• Modifications of curriculum content or specific curriculum changes.

• Changes in the number of required courses.

• Changes to the semester scheduling to accelerate the acquisition of a degree, such as fewer weeks, multiple start-end dates, etc.

• Scheduling changes will be adopted to enable working adults to participate.

• Training before the start of the work day or shift and at the end of the work day or shift.

• Saturday training sessions.

**Evaluation & Reporting**

Project proposals will demonstrate a strong commitment to formative and as practical given the time constraints of the grant, summative evaluation protocols. Grant funds may be requested to support ongoing project evaluations or for a new evaluation implementation. Funds for evaluation should not exceed 5% of the grant total.

Year-end status reports will be due based on the timeline for each individual program. All written reports should include the following elements:

• Narrative of project implementation including what went right according to what was proposed as well as unanticipated challenges and how you addressed those challenges.

• Evaluation report of the program/project’s effectiveness and quantifiable outcomes. Include highlights both positive and negative.

• Participant data, including:
  
  o Students enrolled
  o Students retained
  o Students completed
  o Certifications/degrees attained
  o Job Placements

• Partner involvement and activities executed
• Expense Report (actual and forecast)

Successful applicants will be informed of the due date for their status report in their award letter.

Educational Alignment

Please describe how this program aligns with other educational offerings at your college, including:

• Alignment with Degrees and/or Certificates: Does the community college offer training programs, degrees and/or certificates in the proposed industry and/or occupation? If yes, identify the relevant training programs, degrees or certificates.

• Completion Potential: If the community college offers or has offered a related training program, degree or certificate in the past, what has been the rate of completions in prior years?

• Job Placement Record: If the community college has offered a related training program, degree or certificate, what has been the job placement rate for students who have completed?

Budget Information

• A proposed budget is required. Please fill out the attached budget found on the last page of this RFP. The budget was created to automatically tabulate totals. To activate this automated feature, double click on the table within the budget document.

• In addition, please include a detailed explanatory budget narrative that supports each line of your detailed budget request.

• Be sure to also include supporting detail regarding any employer match, as well as any match from the college itself.

Submission Instructions

Proposals will be accepted at any time after the public posting of this RFP. Proposals should be formatted following the instructions outlined in the “Proposal Requirements” section of this RFP. A conference call will be scheduled within two weeks following the release of this RFP to respond to questions. Information regarding the exact date and time and call-in number will be posted on the
Department of Higher Education website to participate and receive further instructions, please register by sending an email to the address shown below. FAQs will be posted to CommBuys after the session is completed. We will award grants to selected proposals on a rolling basis until the authorized funds are expended or through December 31, 2015.

**Please submit your completed proposal via email to:** Keith Connors, Senior Program Manager of the STEM Pipeline Fund at kconnors@bhe.mass.edu. Make sure to write “**Rapid Response Proposal**” in the email heading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RFP Timeline</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Release Date</td>
<td>October 14, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Session</td>
<td>October 19-23 – Reference DHE website for details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals Due</td>
<td>Rolling until December 15, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Awarded</td>
<td>Rolling up until January 15, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-End Status Report Due</td>
<td>August 31, 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Awards**

The Rapid Response Incentive Program commits $500,000 for qualifying workforce training projects in FY16. The funding range for individual projects is anticipated to be between $25K and $75K per project although the final award amount will be based upon the merits of each proposal and the scope of the employer and worker need. We anticipate awarding anywhere from five to 10 proposals.

**Policies**

**Grant Disbursement**

Following the applicant’s acceptance of the award letter, and the execution of the Standard Contract, or the Interagency Service Agreement, and any other required documents, the applicant can expect to receive disbursements on a schedule consistent to the needs of the project.
**Publicity**

Grant recipients are obligated to acknowledge the funding source in all print materials, websites and press releases. The acknowledgement of the funding source contributes to the overall name recognition and branding of the Rapid Response Incentive Program.

**Solicitor Responsibility**

Solicitors may not alter (manually or electronically) the grant application language or any grant application component files. Modifications to the body of the grant application, specifications, terms and conditions, or application which change the intent of this grant application are prohibited and may disqualify a response.

All costs associated with responding to this RFP are the sole responsibility of the responding organization. The DHE reserves the right to use any and all ideas included in any response without incurring any obligations to the responding firm or committing to awards for the proposed services. Responses become the property of the DHE.

**Performance**

Any funds distributed to successful applicants are done so with the expectation that the college will deliver the programs as described and serve the numbers of participants detailed in the application. If the applicant is for some reason unable to fulfill the program described in the original proposal, we reserve the right to recover funds distributed.

**Legal Disclaimer**

This RFP does not represent a contractual agreement by the DHE to any applying organization. Selected organizations will enter into a contractual agreement with the DHE upon award.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL RESPONSES AND THE RIGHT TO CANCEL THIS REQUEST FOR QUALIFIED PROPOSALS (RFP) AT ANY TIME PRIOR TO AWARD.
Proposed Budget

Please complete the table below with a breakdown of the requested funding from the Rapid Response Incentive Fund program. Upon completion of the table, please provide an additional Budget Narrative that includes specific details of each budget item in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Total Grant Funds Requested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Salaries:</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe Benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractual Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Supplies &amp; Materials</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition &amp; Stipends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Costs (10% Max)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plus Private Matching Funds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rapid Response Project: ___________________________ Project Manager: ___________________________

Calculate Unit Cost/Student and enter here: $_______

Calculate Unit Cost/Instructor and enter here: $_______