

# TAP Accelerator: Upskill-Backfill RFP Frequently Asked Questions

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Question	Answer
1. When is the application deadline?	<b>February 28, 2017.</b>
2. How do we submit our application?	<b>We request that you email your application to us at <a href="mailto:Patrick.Woods@wtb.wa.gov">Patrick.Woods@wtb.wa.gov</a></b>
3. When will we know if we are awarded a grant?	<b>Grant award letters will be sent by March 31, 2017.</b>
4. Who should I talk to in order to receive ongoing clarifications?	<b>Please email all questions to <a href="mailto:Patrick.Woods@wtb.wa.gov">Patrick.Woods@wtb.wa.gov</a></b>  <b>You can also check for updated information and new FAQs on our website at: <a href="http://wtb.wa.gov/TAPAccelerator.asp">http://wtb.wa.gov/TAPAccelerator.asp</a></b>
5. If we are awarded a grant when and how will we receive funds?	<b>Applicants will receive funds in the following manner: funds will be awarded through contract with ESD; and Funds will be available when the contract is signed by both parties.</b>
6. Can multiple WDCs apply together for a grant?	<b>Yes, multiple WDCs may jointly apply for a grant. However, one WDC will need to be designated as the lead for administrative purposes.</b>
7. Must a business provide cash or in-kind contribution to participate?	<b>Yes, a business must provide cash or in-kind contributions.</b>
8. If there are multiple businesses must all of them provide cash or in-kind contributions	<b>Yes, all participating businesses must provide cash or in-kind contributions.</b>
9. Is there a pre-determined set of industry sectors, regions, which these funds are meant to ideally benefit from this funding?	<b>No, there is not a pre-determined set of industries. The only threshold concerning industry is that the project must involve at least two businesses and that the participating businesses contribute in cash or in-kind.</b>
10. Because project awards will come from WIOA funds, is there a match required from participating employers as dictated in legislation?	<b>The Upskill-Backfill concept aligns with the overarching principles of WIOA, and because the funding is federal, it requires strict adherence to all federal budget and contractual requirements. That said, the design of individual projects is independent of the specific programmatic requirements outlined in WIOA Processes and Procedures. Please bear in mind, though, that the ultimate goal of this initiative is to establish practices that can be funded within existing policy and resource structures. The more proposed projects can align with current policy and funding frameworks, the greater the likelihood of success in this regard. In other words, build your project proposal with the idea of duplicating funding that will allow for ongoing sustainability, which in turn will adhere to the requirements of each funding stream.</b>  <b>For example, if you are interested in WIOA as a sustainable funding stream, you should look at a <a href="#">2016 WIOA Policy (5607, Revision 1)</a>, which lays out a series of standards for participating employers regarding eligibility and their share of training costs.</b>
11. Are these WIOA funds subject to WIOA performance measures in addition to the requirements in the RFP?	<b>No, but if you intend to use WIOA funds to sustain your efforts when grant funding ends, you will have to show how your service design aligns with appropriate WIOA parameters and how it will help you meet or improve WIOA performance. These funds originate from the</b>

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	<p>WIOA Statewide Activities pool, commonly known as Governor’s Discretionary Funds. Governor Inslee has directed the use of these funds to accelerate TAP implementation and build an Upskill-Backfill service infrastructure. We will therefor make sure project parameters comply with relevant WIOA guidelines but allow for innovation to accomplish initiative goals.</p>
<p>12. In attachment E on page 20 there is a column titled “WIOA Funding”, is this the funding provided under the Upskill Demonstration Project we are applying for or is it additional WIOA related funding at a WDC may want to dedicate for this purpose?</p>	<p>The Column in attachment E on page 20 titled “WIOA Funding” is intended to cover the funds provided under the Upskill-Backfill Demonstration Project. If a WDC or other organizations intends to also use other WIOA funding it should be listed under the column “Leveraged Resources in Cash or In-Kind” and identify the type of WIOA funding.</p>
<p>13. How dependent on WIOA processes and procedures will these programs be, such as, in demonstrating eligibility of participants?</p>	<p>Eligibility determination should follow reasonable practices to validate need for services. You do not have to meet WIOA eligibility specifically. However, if you intend to use WIOA funds to sustain your project after the grant has ended, you will be expected to meet WIOA standards. This will be true of any funding stream you identify as a likely source for continuation funding.</p>
<p>14. Discretionary funds are usually still subject to WIOA eligibility criteria. Have you received permission from US Department of Labor for flexibility on eligibility?</p>	<p>If you look on page 7 of the grant RFP Guide, the review team will be sending applications to the board for approval, but before they do that, they will be working with their counterparts at ESD to be sure that proposals aren’t running afoul of eligibility and other requirements. The requirements for Statewide Activities funds are less restrictive than WIOA program funds. However, if you intend to use WIOA funds to sustain your program elements beyond the life of the grant, you will have to demonstrate alignment with WIOA requirements.</p>
<p>15. As incumbent worker training is new with WIOA, the baseline might be zero. Is this expected?</p>	<p>That could be the case. Mine for other data from partners, such as educational institutions and employers about any prior investments in incumbent worker development relevant to the workers you are targeting.</p>
<p>16. Who will make the decision on which applicants receive awards?</p>	<p>The review committee will forward approval recommendations to the Workforce Board. Final decisions on grant approval will be made by the Workforce Board at a public meeting on March 23, 2017.</p>
<p>17. Will a greater number of partners in the proposal increase the odds of being a successful applicant?</p>	<p>Applicants are encouraged to build functional and lasting partnerships into their proposal. How the partnership chooses to govern project implementation is equally as important as which partners are involved. Also, partners should be directly relevant to the scope of the project and its sustainability. All these factors will be important in the evaluation process as outlined in the <a href="#">RFP Guide document</a>.</p>
<p>18. Does the project have to include</p>	<p>Yes, every application must include <b><i>both</i></b> an Upskill and Backfill</p>

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<p>both Upskill and Backfill components?</p>	<p><b>component.</b></p>
<p>19. Is there only 1 application allowed for each WDC?</p>	<p><b>No, multiple applications are allowed from WDCs. The WDCs will serve as lead or co-lead applicant and fiscal agent for all grants, and will make the determination about which proposals are submitted from their region. Please see website for list of WDC contacts.</b></p>
<p>20. May I add partners after the approval?</p>	<p><b>Yes, you may, but you will need to inform grant management staff and provide information on the reasons for adding new partners.</b></p>
<p>21. May I remove partners after approval?</p>	<p><b>Generally yes, but you will need to inform grant management staff and provide information on the reasons for removing a new partner. Please note that you may be asked to negotiate further with the partner depending on the set of facts.</b></p>
<p>22. Are successful applicants required to report on all of the items on pages 10 &amp; 11 of the RFP Guide?</p>	<p><b>No, you are not required to report on all the items listed on pages 10 and 11, just the ones that are considered relevant to the proposal. However, you will be required to report on metrics in both the upskill and backfill aspects of your project that are highlighted in bold in the matrix on pages 9 and 10.</b></p>
<p>23. How can I find out additional information or submit additional questions?</p>	<p><b>Additional information and questions can be found on and submitted through our webpage:</b>  <a href="http://wtb.wa.gov/TAPAccelerator.asp">http://wtb.wa.gov/TAPAccelerator.asp</a></p> <p><b>This FAQ list will be updated through the deadline for applications submission February 28, 2017.</b></p>
<p>24. May organizations other than WDCs make applications?</p>	<p><b>Yes, any organization can submit an application, but they must include a WDC as a lead or co-lead and fiscal agent. Please note you should contact your WDC partner as soon as possible. See website for list of WDC contacts.</b></p>
<p>25. Is it presumed that TAP grants will be focused on implementation and not planning?</p>	<p><b>It's a combination. If you are bringing in new partners, there has to be a level of planning that gives confidence that you are doing something valuable. However, there has to be a measure for success in the implementation so that project results can be demonstrated.</b></p>
<p>26. Are there a minimum number of outcomes we are required to choose?</p>	<p><b>Focus on the bolded outcomes on pages 9 and 10 of the RFP Guide. Please choose all the outcomes that are relevant to your project. The review team will be checking to make sure that the outcomes you identify are appropriate for your project and reserve the right to work with applicants to ensure all appropriate metrics are reported. You are encouraged to <u>not</u> skimp on the outcomes section.</b></p>
<p>27. Does the 10 page limit exclude attachments?</p>	<p><b>Yes, the 10 page limit only applies to the actual narrative application. You may add the required attachments to your proposal and they will not be included in the page limit.</b></p>
<p>28. Can you talk more about the roles of the Workforce Development Councils? If you do not have an</p>	<p><b>The WDCs are involved at every step of the project. You must reach out to your WDC and have them be a lead or co-lead in the application. We are aiming for systemic reform, and they develop</b></p>

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<p>existing relationship with a WDC, are you at a disadvantage?</p>	<p><b>and manage the local workforce strategic plans that encompass the 22 federal and state funding streams within their jurisdiction. This plan is about developing new partnerships. There is also a large amount of administration that goes into managing a grant, and WDCs already have these systems in place.</b></p>
<p>29. Would the WDC administration costs be another line item in the RFP?</p>	<p><b>It isn't your budget alone. You are working with the WDC and they will guide you through that part of it. Your grant proposal and budget should be developed collaboratively, with all members of the partnership and reflect each member's contribution to the partnership.</b></p>
<p>30. Could you explain the language on page 3: "The Workforce Board understands that no one project application can possibly outline a strategy covering all aspects of implementing an upskill-backfill strategy for all talent development system participants."?</p>	<p><b>At the end of the grant, the Board hopes to identify an upskill-backfill strategy that supports all participants in the system, both jobseekers and businesses and their workers. The aim is to put together a range of funded projects that test the design elements and delivers the intended outcomes, and establishes sufficient confidence to encourage sustained funding support.</b></p>
<p>31. It appears that a WDC would need an incumbent worker training policy as well as a customized training policy. Is that correct?</p>	<p><b>No, statewide activities funding does not require that such a policy be in place. However, it will be important to recognize the WDC's policies as they relate to sustainability of your project model. The WDCs are working on incumbent training policies now. How WDCs make that decision may affect the ultimate design of the application, but they aren't connected to this RFP directly. The design of this proposal may help you design your WDC's policy.</b></p>
<p>32. There was a mention of planning grants. What are they, and when are they allocated?</p>	<p><b>These are separate funds from the UBI Demonstration Project Funds.</b></p> <p><b>The "planning" funds are available to each local WDC for planning and moving the TAP plan into implementation in a number of different ways. There is \$25,000 available per WDC. The funding template states the following "These funds are intended to aid local WDCs to quickly identify and build Upskill-Backfill policies and practices within their region. WDCs will engage local partners, including business and labor, and will codify practices in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), whenever practical. The WDCs will incorporate Governor Inslee's goals and considerations for an Upskill-Backfill initiative (attached to this application) as the principal guidance in the development of local strategies."</b></p>
<p>33. Is there an anticipated minimum dollar sized project?</p>	<p><b>We want depth and sustainability, so we decided that there should be 8 - 10 grant awards. If there is a smaller project that you feel merits consideration please talk to staff.</b></p>
<p>34. Will the Workforce Board entertain submission of more than one proposal from a particular WDC area?</p>	<p><b>Yes. We encourage submitting as many proposals as your area thinks are significant.</b></p>

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<p>35. Must the two employers be in the same sector, or may they relate to different occupations that cross sectors?</p>	<p><b>No, they do not have to be in the same sector. The only guideline is “two employers.”</b></p>
<p>36. Can an exception to the two employer requirement be made if the one employer is extremely large, such as, 5,000 plus employees?</p>	<p><b>We will look at this on a case-by-case basis. We will allow innovation where possible. Keep in mind that large employers have multiple pipelines with vendor and supplier relationships. If the employer is experiencing workforce or labor issues you can assume that there is some subset of their network that is also experiencing these shortages. So it might be a great opportunity for this large employer to reach out to their supply chain. You might also reach out to relevant labor organizations that represent the types of occupations your project is targeting.</b></p>
<p>37. What is the measurement period for upskill/ promotions and wage gains?</p>	<p><b>We will be requiring quarterly reporting. All dollars need to be spent by December 31, 2018 with some latitude for the next calendar quarter of 2019 on a case-by-case basis. We haven’t fully determined how and when we will be doing wage matching and tracking. We will concentrate on the first and second years after program completion for wage matching.</b></p>
<p>38. Is there a priority for backfill opportunities through promotion versus through higher productivity and competitiveness?</p>	<p><b>This is something we will look at on a case-by-case basis. Be sure to provide evidence of why you are certain there will be opportunities for new jobs. The evidence should also note how barrier populations will be included.</b></p>
<p>39. How should projects weigh proposing activities that are applicable/ scalable statewide against tailoring project activities to local or regional industries needs?</p>	<p><b>Grant awards are intended for projects that are scalable and sustainable. The evidence that a project model is worth scaling will be based on the achievement of results ties to the scope of your project. A highly successful local project will benefit the local area, but will also be replicable in other parts of the state.</b></p> <p><b>If you have an organization that is already state-wide, get in touch with the Washington Workforce Association, which represents all 12 WDCs across the state.) In your governance section, there needs to be a WDC that is the fiscal lead. That can be at the requestor’s discretion. Link: <a href="http://www.washingtonworkforce.org">http://www.washingtonworkforce.org</a></b></p>
<p>40. What is the intent of the “learning community” that will be convened during this grant?</p>	<p><b>We hope that creating the learning community will help us to arrive at a policy framework that will help us create a statewide Upskill-Backfill service infrastructure. The Learning Community will bring funded project partners together with other interested parties and technical experts to design a policy framework that can be widely supported and implemented well.</b></p>
<p>41. Due to the short application deadline, some of the proposal elements may be conceptual rather than concrete. Is this acceptable?</p>	<p><b>This is going to be a judgment call. There needs to be some solid information that can be implemented. If it conceptual, it also needs to be confirmable. Some can be subject to planning, but you need to clearly describe the process for us by which you will achieve measureable results.</b></p>

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<p>42. Are we only serving at-risk populations on the list of the 14 barrier populations?</p>	<p><b>It is important to note that the list of populations on page 3 of the Guide also includes “and Other Groups designated by the Governor.” There needs to be a compelling need statement, with supporting data, about why you are serving the population that you choose, if they are not on the list.</b></p>
<p>43. Would funding through other agencies, such as funding through the Department of Commerce for incumbent worker training be appropriate to list for sustainability in your proposal?</p>	<p><b>You really need to connect with the organization or agency that has the funding you want to use. We are looking for systemic sustainability, so if they commit to change their deployment strategies if this project is successful than it is illustrating sustainability.</b></p>
<p>44. Could the Upskill-Backfill Webpage have a Word version copy of the RFP Guidelines in order to help applicants (WDCs) in sharing document with various workgroups and partners?</p>	<p><b>Yes we will put a PDF version on the webpage:</b>  <a href="http://wtb.wa.gov/TAPAccelerator.asp">http://wtb.wa.gov/TAPAccelerator.asp</a></p>
<p>45. Can you clarify the response that was provided at the January 12 Session on the balance in scoring between results and administration</p>	<p><b>The scoring system was developed to help support the purpose of the funds. These projects are considered learning laboratories that will help instruct the state. It is essential that funded projects have committed partners willing to do the hard work of evaluating all aspects of a project’s implementation and results. The scoring emphasis on administration and the governance structure is meant to convey our interest in seeing that all partners are actively involved from beginning to end (sustainability), and in all aspects of the project. There is intended to be a healthy balance between specific project results and the ability to sustain successful project elements beyond the life of the project.</b></p>
<p>46. On Page 5 of the RFP it states, "We anticipate that these new administrative structures should be absorbed without necessity of significant additional administrative funds." Can you please indicate what you consider "significant additional administrative funds"? This demonstration project will require not only fiscal oversight and contract management but also project management at the WDC level to coordinate with employers, training partners, etc. while developing new shared data processes. We anticipate adding staff to this project that is not currently in our approved budget for this program year but could be added to subsequent PY budgets if successful.</p>	<p><b>The administrative funds connected with the statement on Page 5 of the Guidelines relate to general standard reporting and fiscal oversight requirements connected with Federal WIOA funds; these type of administrative reporting requirements are an ongoing part of a WDC's responsibilities and so it is envisioned that there will not be a sizeable increase in the workload and costs related to these specific activities. However the contract management, project management and custom fiscal management for the project are acceptable expenses when performed by the WDC, or other partner entity, and should be listed in the application.</b></p>
<p>47. Can existing Employer Tuition</p>	<p><b>Yes, the tuition assistance investment, as a part of the comprehensive</b></p>

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<p>Assistance programs be considered "cash or in-kind investment" for employer investment requirements? Employers may have tuition reimbursement programs that allow their employees to obtain additional skills training to upskill into higher-skilled, higher wage positions. If employers use those funds to advance their incumbent workers during the initiative, we believe this would meet the employer investment requirement.</p>	<p><b>upskill backfill proposal, would count towards cash and in-kind contributions.</b></p>
<p>48. If Employers serve on a committee (e.g. to provide subject matter expertise during curriculum development) could their time on this committee be considered their in-kind contribution? Small to mid-size employers may not have resources to provide cash contributions, but their knowledge and experience is critical in designing training programs that are relevant to their industry.</p>	<p><b>Yes, time in program-relevant meetings can be considered as a category of in-kind contribution, but may not qualify as substantial co-investment in the program's development and implementation. Evaluation of partnership contributions will be based on the rproject's design, the role of the partners, and the expected benefit for each of the partners or their constituents. For meeting time contributions, please use standard accounting methods for calculating time investments for an individual serving as a Subject Matter Expert SME.</b></p>
<p>49. On page 5 of the RFP it states "All partners will be expected to participate in the design of the project proposal and to sign the Assurances Document A, to be submitted with the application." Additionally on page 12 of the RFP it states " A signed copy of these Grant Assurances is required to be on file at the Workforce Training Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) of Washington prior to receiving funds for PY 2016. Due to the condensed timeline of this grant application may we submit that application with the verbal agreement of our employers, and continue to work with them to have the Grant Assurances document signed before funds are allocated? Many of the employers we are working with cannot fully commit without Leadership and/or Board approval, and that may not be possible in such a short time frame.</p>	<p><b>The intent of the Assurances Document is to garner full approval and develop a project with the expectation of co-investment. We understand the tight time-line connected with leadership or board approval and in order to support participation we recommend that you provide a signature from the leader that is participating in the project, with a note indicating that full approval is subject to Executive or Board approval on a specified date (if possible). However just a verbal approval and show of support is insufficient to generate the co-investment and expectation of participation we are hoping to develop through these proposals.</b></p>

Any further questions or comments can be sent to Patrick Woods at [Patrick.woods@wtb.wa.gov](mailto:Patrick.woods@wtb.wa.gov)