



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS WORKFORCE SKILLS CABINET

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Massachusetts Skills Capital Grant Program *Grant Program Guidelines*

The Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC) was created by an Executive Order of Governor Charlie Baker on February 26, 2015. The Cabinet aligns the Executive Offices of Education, Labor and Workforce Development, and Housing and Economic Development toward a comprehensive economic growth agenda. The Cabinet is charged with creating and implementing a strategy to ensure that individuals can develop and continuously improve their skills and knowledge to meet the varying needs of employers in the Commonwealth. The Workforce Skills Cabinet has adopted criteria to guide its collaborative work:

- **Be Demand-Driven:** Meets a business-driven need, as documented in the funding application and verified in the funding review, award, and implementation.
- **Leverages Partnerships:** Builds connections between and among educational institutions (including middle/high schools, community colleges, and state colleges/universities), and between educational institutions, private sector businesses and non-profit organizations.
- **Reflects Regional Plans:** Reflects existing regional economic development, workforce development, and higher education plans to meet the business-driven need.
- **Maximizes Increase in Skilled Workers:** Leads to an increase in the number of skilled workers in a cost-effective way to meet business-driven hiring needs, and, to the greatest extent possible, focuses on improving the skills of students or individuals facing barriers to employment.
- **Leverages other funding:** Builds on other sources of local, state, federal and private funding to meet common goals.
- **Builds on Proven Programs:** Supports or expands a program that has shown proven results, or is based on a model that has shown proven results.
- **Demonstrates Sustainability:** Shows evidence of the ability to sustain a contribution to the workforce pipeline.

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As part of the Workforce Skills Cabinet’s work to align resources to better meet common goals, the former Manufacturing Training Equipment grants (administered by EOHED) and the Vocational Opportunity Challenge grants (formerly administered by A&F) have been combined into one unified and integrated program - the Skills Capital Grant Program. Through this program, the WSC seeks to increase the capacity and quality of vocational training and education by providing funds to eligible schools and institutions for the purchase and installation of vocational-technical equipment.

Program Overview

A. Purpose: The purpose of the Skills Capital Grant Program is to incentivize and enhance the development of workforce training for in-demand industries at high schools, community colleges, and other vocational training providers across the Commonwealth. This program will award grants for the purchase and installation of equipment to support vocational and technical training that results in attainment of superior skills for those preparing to enter the workforce.

B. Grant Program Highlights:

Total Grant Program	\$9,200,000 (available in FY2016)
Grant Size	Minimum Grant: \$50,000 - Maximum Grant: \$500,000
Eligible Applicants	Massachusetts schools, institutions, and organizations that provide career/vocational technical education programs, including all Chapter 74-approved vocational tech schools, community colleges, and providers of training programs that meet the federal Perkins Act definition of career and technical education.
Use of Grant funds	Direct purchase of vocational training equipment and related costs of installation.
Goals	The purchase and installation of vocational training equipment should meet at least one of the following goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the number of students enrolled in <i>existing</i> programs - Establish new programs to meet demonstrated demand - Applications that significantly improve the quality of <i>existing</i> programs to meet new market demands, but do not result in an increase to the number of new students, will be considered.
Terms of Award	Grants will be awarded as cost reimbursement contracts, with an anticipated contract start date of March 1, 2016. All purchases of equipment and grant expenditures must be completed by June 30, 2016.
Matching Funds Preference	<i>While the grant program does not require a match at this time, applicants are highly encouraged to demonstrate cash and/or in-kind match commitments, and applications with match committed will be given preference in the review.</i>

C. Target Populations: This program is intended to benefit students enrolled in eligible schools and vocational programs, who are preparing and training to enter the workforce. The program seeks to support eligible schools that are providing workforce skills training for high demand industries, such as advanced manufacturing, information technology, hospitality, and life

sciences. Applicants will be required to identify the target industries for their training and to demonstrate the demand for jobs and career opportunities in that industry.

- D. Application Schedule:** Complete applications must be submitted electronically to eochedgrants@state.ma.us by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 29, 2016,

Request for Proposals Released	December 18, 2015
Proposals Due	January 29, 2016
Grant Awards Announced	February 2016
Anticipated Contract Start Date	March 1, 2016
Funding Disbursement	<i>On a rolling basis, upon verification of approved purchases and related installation costs.</i>
Contract End Date	June 30, 2016

General Contracting Information

- A. Program Administration:** This program is offered by the Massachusetts Workforce Skill Cabinet and funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through its capital budget. The grant application process will be administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, in coordination with the Workforce Skills Cabinet.
- B. Grants Range and Matching Requirement Preference:** Applicants may submit applications requesting grants between \$50,000 and \$500,000. While match is not required, it is strongly encouraged and reviewers will give preference to those applicants that have secured a cash match and/or in-kind donations of equipment, instructor time and cost, infrastructure investments and other support.
- C. Eligible Purchases:** The intent of the program is to allow qualified programs to purchase training equipment. One-time installation costs may be included in the request, as well as requests for minor renovations necessary for the successful installation and usage of the equipment. The main purpose of the funding is to purchase equipment, not to renovate classroom space.
- D. Reimbursement**
- Awards are structured as cost-reimbursement grants, meaning that recipients are expected to incur expenses before receiving any funds from the Commonwealth. EOHEd will accept purchase orders as 'incurred expenses' to help facilitate cash flow for recipients who may have difficulty incurring expenses before receiving funds. EOHEd will provide invoicing forms and instructions.
 - Upon submission of complete invoices with proper documentation, payments will be disbursed via electronic fund transfer ("EFT").
 - In compliance with the Office of the State Comptroller rules and regulations, no grant recipient shall expend grant funds until a contract has been fully executed with EOHEd. Upon contract execution recipients will be allowed to incur costs. Costs must be incurred between contract execution and up to, including, June 30th. No expenses

- incurred after June 30th will be reimbursed by this program. Requests for reimbursement may be submitted to EOHED no later than August 5th.
- d. Grantees will forfeit any remaining award unused after the contract expires. EOHED shall give due consideration to any extenuating circumstances presented in writing by the applicant and may waive this restriction at its discretion.

Grant Program Details

A. Eligibility

- a. Applicants may apply for no more than one grant.
- b. Massachusetts schools, institutions, and organizations that provide career/vocational technical education programs, including all Chapter 74-approved vocational tech schools, community colleges, and providers of training programs that meet the federal Perkins Act definition of career and technical education.
- c. Successful applicants from a prior year will be expected to have completed their projects or be near completion. A prior year grant award will not render an applicant ineligible to receive additional awards.

B. Review of Applications

- a. The review committee may be comprised of designees from the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Executive Office of Education, Executive Office of Administration and Finance, as well as representatives from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Higher Education, and various other government, business, and/or industry leaders.
- b. Reviewers will evaluate applications and determine the eligibility of each applicant and the application's relevance to meeting the needs of high-demand industries.
- c. Grant recommendations will be presented to the Workforce Skills Training Cabinet for final approval.

- C. Selection Criteria:** Applications will be selected based on overall scores in the following areas, with a possible total of 100 base points and 10 bonus points:

Selection Criteria	Base Points	Bonus Points
Demand-Driven	20	NA
Leverages Partnerships	15	NA
Reflects Regional Plans	10	NA
Maximizes increase in Skilled Workers	20	Up to 10 additional points if focusing on individuals facing barriers to employment
Leverages existing state and federal funding or private sector resources	5	NA
Builds on Proven Programs	20	NA
Demonstrates Sustainability	10	NA

- a. **Demand-driven:** Applicants should show strong evidence that the program, for which they will be purchasing and installing equipment to support, is meeting the needs of employers in their region. Strong evidence may include data from a research-based

report or study, a letter of support from the Regional Workforce Investment Board confirming that there is a high demand in the specified program, or a letter of support from one or more employers.

- b. **Leverages Partnerships:** Applicants should show strong evidence that the program, for which they will be purchasing and installing equipment to support, is operated in close partnership with other organizations in their region, including educational institutions, to increase the program's reach and capacity. Partners may include Regional Employment Boards (REBs), career centers, two and four-year public and private universities and colleges, vocational technical or comprehensive high schools, economic development associations, adult basic education providers, local/regional employers and/or manufacturing associations, and community based organizations.
- c. **Reflects Regional Plans:** Applicants should demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the Regional Workforce Board plan for their area and should show evidence of how the proposed funding aligns with the plan. Workforce Board Plans can be found on <http://www.mass.gov/massworkforce/resources/wib/>.
- d. **Maximizes Increase in Skilled Workers:** Applicants should explain how the grant funding will provide for one or more of the following:
 - i. Increase in number of students able to participate in an *existing* program
 - ii. Creation of a new program to meet demonstrated demand.
 - iii. Increase in the availability of the equipment outside of the organization's normal working hours (e.g. after 5 PM or on Saturday or Sunday)
 - iv. Increase in the availability of the equipment to students from partnering organizations.
 - v. No increase in the number of participating students, but an improvement in the skills of the students who are able to participate in the program, because equipment will be replaced or updated.

In addition, applicants are especially encouraged to focus on increasing access for veterans, minorities, women, and under/unemployed adults facing barriers to employment. An individual with barriers to employment is an unemployed individual with one or more socio-economic challenges that must be addressed if attainment and maintenance of employment is likely to be successful. For example, minorities, low-income individuals, individuals with disabilities, veterans, CORI, etc. Applications will receive selection preference if they can demonstrate how the program will focus on these populations.

- e. **Leverages other state, federal or private funding:** Applicants should explain how the proposed funding will complement or leverage other state, federal or private funding. Examples of existing statewide resources include grants funded through the Urban Agenda Grant Program (EOHED), Advanced Manufacturing Training Program Workforce Development Grants (EOHED), the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (EOLWD, Commonwealth Corporation), Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund (EOLWD, Commonwealth Corporation), grants from foundations or federal government, and core funding for vocational technical education programs and community colleges.

- f. **Builds on Proven Programs:** Applicants should demonstrate that their funding proposal will improve the quality and capacity of a program that has achieved high quality and consistent results, or that the program is based on other programs that have achieved such results. For example, the program is accredited, or has been evaluated by a third party to determine its effectiveness. The applicant should also demonstrate the ability to successfully implement new initiatives and expend grant funding on a timely basis.
- g. **Demonstrates Sustainability:** Applicants should show evidence of the ability to sustain the expanded or improved program, including resources to maintain and operate the new equipment.