

**Governor's
Workforce
Board**

Rhode Island

Today's Vision... Tomorrow's Opportunity.



Commerce RI

Express Export Grant Application

FY 2015

An Incumbent Worker Training Grant Program

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

Constance A. Howes
Chair

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SECTION I - GENERAL INFORMATION

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Export Express Grant Program is to solicit applications for workforce improvement programs designed to increase the export/international trade skills of the incumbent workforce. As a result of improving this capacity, the applicant must indicate how the business/organization will become more efficient, productive and competitive in the global marketplace. The goal of the Export Express Grant is to improve the international trade skills and knowledge of the Rhode Island workforce, leading to increased exports from the state of Rhode Island, global competitiveness, and job creation.

B. JOB DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Job Development Fund (JDF), created by statute in 1992, is a state fund financed entirely by Rhode Island employers and administered by the Governor's Workforce Board. The Export Express Grant program is funded by the JDF in an effort to assist employers to improve the skills of their current workforce in the area of international trade as well as the effectiveness of their business/organization.

C. AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE

At least \$80,000 has been allocated for approved projects within this initiative. Businesses may apply more than once in a fiscal year; however, the maximum amount awarded to an individual business/organization will be \$5,000 per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30).

Applicants are responsible to contribute a minimum of 50% of the allowable training expenses.

D. INQUIRIES

John Riendeau
Director of Business Development
Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
315 Iron Horse Way, Suite 101, Providence, RI 02908
401.278.9100 x162 | 401.273.8270 fax
Email: jriendeau@commerceri.com
Web: www.commerceri.com

E. SCHEDULE OF APPLICATIONS DATES

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis as long as funding is available.

G. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Applicants may submit proposal electronically (preferred method) to jriendeau@commerceri.com or by mail to:

John Riendeau
Director of Business Development
Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
315 Iron Horse Way, Suite 101, Providence, RI 02908

All applications must be filled out completely. A complete application consists of the proposal cover sheet, narrative and budget sections.

H. DURATION OF FUNDING

Funding for this initiative will be on a monthly basis beginning July 1, 2014 and ending on June 30, 2015. Awardees of these grant funds are required to complete their training activities within 180 days of their contract award date.

J. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Any Rhode Island for profit or not for profit organization may apply if they currently contribute to the Job Development Fund. This can be verified by contacting the RI Division of Taxation at 401-574-8710. Labor organizations, trade associations, or consortia of employers are also eligible to apply for training of their members. In this case, all participating member companies must contribute to the Job Development Fund. The names and RI Employer Identification Numbers for all participating organizations must be provided for verification purposes. Eligible applicants must be current on all Rhode Island tax obligations, must be in good standing with all divisions and programs administered by the Department of Labor and Training and must not have been debarred (prohibited) from contracting with an agency that administers federal funds.

K. ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES / PARTICIPANTS

Applicants may request grant assistance for projects that train their incumbent employees or members (if a trade or labor organization) that have been employed for at least six (6) months. All trainees must be Rhode Island based employees. Volunteers and board members are not eligible to participate in the training. Allowable training is flexible and should be based upon the employer's needs. Reimbursable activities cannot occur prior to the actual start date of the grant. Export Express Grants are meant to be used for short term training needs; therefore all training must take place within 180 days of the funding award date.

L. REVIEW PROCESS

Each proposal will be reviewed and evaluated for consideration by the Commerce RI review panel to ensure that the proposed training activity/activities are consistent with the Export Express Grant Program.

M. LIMITATIONS

This grant offering does not commit Commerce RI to award a contract or to pay for any of the costs in the preparation of a proposal.

Commerce RI reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, the right to cancel this offering in part or in its entirety, the right to fund any proposal either in part or in full, and the right to waive any and all requirements of the offering if it is in the best interest of the State of RI or Commerce RI to do so.

All contract awards are subject to the availability of funds and the execution of a contract that is acceptable to both the selected respondent and Commerce RI.

N. MONITORING

Rhode Island General Law requires that Commerce RI and the GWB provide for fiscal and accounting controls to monitor and audit all grant awards. Eligible applicants must agree to retain and preserve all records for three (3) years beyond the end of the contract period.

Monitoring consists of an on-site review of all program and fiscal grant activity. Back-up documentation of grant fund expenditures and the required applicant's cost are verified during the monitoring visit. Failure to provide documentation may result in the repayment by the recipient of all funds received.

SECTION II – APPLICATION

Grant Proposal Cover Sheet Export Express Grant

Section 1 – Applicant Information

Name of Applicant: _____

Street Address: _____ City/Town: _____ Zip Code: _____

Contact Person / Title: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Business / Organization Website: _____

Industry Sector: _____

Rhode Island Employer Registration Number (Not FEIN): _____

Section 2 – Applicant Profile

For Profit: Yes

Non-Profit: Yes

Trade Organization: Yes

Labor Organization: Yes

Consortia of Employers: Yes

Total number of employees of business/organization: _____

Total number of RI based employees of business/organization to be trained through this grant: _____

Have all employees to be trained been employed with you for at least six months: _____

Section 3 – Funding

Total amount of Express Grant assistance requested: \$ _____

Section 4 - Certification

(The name below must be of an individual with authority to enter into legally binding agreements on behalf of the applicant.)

If selected for award, I, the undersigned, agree to meet the requirements of the Rhode Island Job Development Fund for a grant award. I certify that all information contained in this application and proposal is true and accurate and understand that falsification of information may be cause for non-review or award revocation. I certify that the applicant organization is in compliance with all contributions; payment in lieu of contributions, interest or penalty charges due under Rhode Island unemployment law, in good standing with Workforce Regulation and Safety and has not been debarred from contracting with any agency that administers Federal funds. As an Eligible Applicant, I understand that I must be current on all Rhode Island tax obligations, must be in good standing with all divisions and programs administered by the Department of Labor and Training and must not have been debarred (prohibited) from contracting with an agency that administers federal funds. I understand that I have acquired no property or other right by virtue of submitting this application. If awarded, I agree to comply with the terms and provisions of this proposal.

I attest to the following:

- Proposed training activity must enhance the skills of Rhode Island employees so that they have a better understanding of international trade and international trade processes and procedures as they relate to their business.

- Applicant must seek long-term international trade opportunities.
- Applicant must manufacture a product with 51% US content, provide a service, or increase the product's value through design, manufacturing, or other locally adjusted service. All eligible products or services must benefit the Rhode Island's economy, contribute to its growth, or increase jobs.
- Applicant must have the potential, resources, and commitment to deliver product and services overseas.

Name: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____

Please read carefully and fill out each section completely; answer each question fully and provide all information requested

Narrative Section 5: Needs Statement & Program Narrative

A. Give a description of your business/organization including products and/or services.

B. Identify your current workforce challenges and explain how the requested training will enable your business/organization to improve its export sales potential, global competitiveness, productivity, and/or improve the international trade skills of your workforce.

C. Please answer the following questions in reference to training activities.

- *Who will participate in the training?*
- *Who will conduct the training?*
- *What training programs are planned under this grant? Be as specific as possible.*
- *Where will the training take place?*
- *When will the training take place? Include start/end dates and number of hours for each training activity.*

NOTE: Lengthy, wordy responses are unnecessary and will not enhance funding prospects.

Narrative Section 6: Outcomes and Evaluation

- A. Address how the effectiveness of the training will be measured and evaluated in meeting the organization's needs (post-training expectations).
- Describe the intended outcomes for the proposed training.
 - Describe how the training will be evaluated using quantifiable outcome measures.
 - Define the measure of success that will be used to evaluate the training. Include information on the individual(s) conducting the evaluation and how results will be used to improve company processes.
 - Up to 10% of the total grant award can be used for evaluation purposes. However, there must be a clear explanation of how these funds will be used.

B. Below is a list of some possible training outcomes. Please indicate which, if any, you expect to achieve with the training that you are proposing. If your project is funded, you will be asked to compare these projected outcomes with your actual outcomes to help evaluate the effectiveness of the training.

Expected Employee Outcomes: Check all that apply

- | | <u># of Employees</u> |
|--|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wage Increase | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Job Creation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Promotion | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retention | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Skills Acquisition | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry Recognized Certificate | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College Credits | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Expected Company Outcomes section: Check all that apply

- Increase International Sales
- New Global Markets
- Better Understand Foreign Market/Develop Market Entry Strategies
- Meet Foreign Import Requirements/Product Standards
- Increase Customer Satisfaction in Foreign Markets
- Increase Productivity
- Increase Quality
- Other _____

Narrative Section 8: Budget and Budget Narrative

Grant Funds: The amount requested should only include allowable activity taking place that will be reimbursed with grant funds. Grant funds cannot be used to purchase equipment, compensate employees while in training or pay for travel related expenses. The maximum request for these Express Grants is \$5,000.

Grant Recipient Cost: Grants will be entered into on a cost reimbursement basis. This means that the grant recipient must pay for the complete cost of the training and then request reimbursement of 50%. For example: If the total training cost is \$5,000, 50% (\$2,500) is reimbursable with grant funds. NOTE: Applicants may apply to receive Bonus Funding to support their training. See Section III for details.

EXAMPLES OF ALLOWABLE AND NON-ALLOWABLE COSTS FOR TRAINING EXPENSES

Allowable Training Expenses	Non-Allowable Costs
Tuition and training provider fees	Equipment including hardware and software
Training materials and supplies	Lost worker productivity
Software that is used 100% for training activities	Grant preparation or administrative costs
Cost of evaluating the training (10%)	Travel expenses, meeting space, lodging, food
In-house trainer wages and benefits	Wages while in training and fringe benefits cost
	Curriculum development

A. Budget Detail

Follow the budget format below. Each expense line item must reflect the 50/50 percent split between grant funds and the applicant's cost.

Expense Item	Total Cost 100%	Grant Funds Requested 50%	Applicant's Cost 50%
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

B. Budget Narrative

The budget narrative must correspond to the expense items listed in the budget and explain how the costs were determined. The budget narrative should be set up in the exact order as the program section and budget line items for easy reference. For each line item of the budget, provide a description below of how costs were determined. (Example: 1 trainer @ \$30 per hour for 60 hours of training = \$1,800.00)