

# **NORTHEAST MINNESOTA OFFICE OF JOB TRAINING (NEMOJT)**

## **TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

### **GUIDELINES**

**The NEMOJT Talent Development Program (TDP)** is a business-driven program designed to provide direct financial assistance to train existing employees (incumbent workers) to avert a layoff and/or improve the economic competitiveness of regional businesses. The program is intended to offset employer costs to train and upgrade the skills of current workers. The Talent Development Program provides reimbursement to eligible businesses for specific training costs accrued during the course of training. Eligible businesses must demonstrate that by receiving funding assistance through the program that their business will not only improve the skills of their workforce but also improve their business processes and competitiveness and/or avert a layoff.

#### **Who is an eligible employee for the Talent Development Program?**

An eligible employee is someone who is directly employed by the company at a facility located within Minnesota and meets the following requirements:

- Employee must be at least 18 years of age.
- Employee must work at least 32 hours per week.
- Employee must be committed to attending all trainings.
- Employee must earn an hourly wage above the state minimum wage.
- Employee must agree to cooperate with data collection requirements.

#### **Who is an eligible business for the Talent Development Program?**

An eligible business must be located in Minnesota and must be registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State's office as a(n): association, corporation, LLC, partnership, nonprofit, government entity (including school districts), or sole proprietor. This entity must have been in continuous operation for 18 months immediately prior to the application submittal. Training may be provided to individual employees or groups of employees. Companies that are in the process of a layoff are not eligible for TDP. If a layoff occurs in a company while they have an open TDP grant, the current workers will be able to complete the training. A group of employers who need the same training for their workers across organizations are encouraged to submit a joint application.

Talent Development Program funds are limited and are awarded on a first come-first served basis. The maximum award per employer each grant per year is \$25,000.00 and the initial training agreement duration may not exceed twelve months. *\*Maximum award may be adjusted based upon funding availability each program year.*

Only one application per business (based upon FEIN#) will be accepted per program year (July 1 – June 30). If a business has multiple sites, those sites must work together to submit one application. An application may include multiple sets of employees and multiple training courses.

Businesses administering a current Minnesota Job Skills Partnership (MJSP) award or similar grant are not eligible to receive TDP funds.

#### **What is the employer's responsibility?**

The business or small group of employers must complete a Talent Development Program application to be considered for a grant.

Businesses will be required to contribute a portion of the training costs through direct cost contribution or in-kind contributions. Applying businesses must clearly outline in-kind contributions. Examples of in-kind

contribution (in addition to any direct training costs) may include expenses associated with the use of space and equipment during the training project and trainee wages (including benefits) of employees during training. The level of contribution required is dependent on the size of the business as reflected below:

- At least 10 percent of the cost, for employers with 50 or fewer employees;
- At least 25 percent of the cost, for employers with 51 to 100 employees; and
- At least 50 percent of the cost, for employers with more than 100 employees.

The business will keep accurate records of the project's implementation process and certify that all information provided for the purpose of requesting reimbursements and reporting training activity is accurate and true, including evidence that the business has paid the training expenses in accordance with the terms of the agreement prior to requesting reimbursement of allowable training costs. Businesses may submit reimbursement requests with required support documentation on a monthly or quarterly basis or at the end of training.

All TDP grants are subject to federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and State Dislocated Worker Program reporting requirements and performance standards. All training sessions must have signed attendance sheets or digital confirmation of attendance. The business must submit to NEMOJT copies of all credentials, certificates of completion, or other documentation of the employee's participation within 30 days of the end of training to be considered eligible for reimbursement.

#### **What is NEMOJT's responsibility?**

NEMOJT will review the proposal from the individual employer(s) and notify the employer(s) of the award.

Once a grant is awarded, NEMOJT staff will track all participants using the Workforce One database and follow all required state and federal statutes. NEMOJT is responsible for collecting attendance sheets of training, training assessments or "tests" given if employees attend a workshop or seminar, and certificates of completion/credential. NEMOJT will assign staff to provide follow-up services with the business to ensure the training plan is being fulfilled.

#### **Who can provide training and what activities are included?**

Public or private educational institutions, trade associations, community-based organizations, economic development agencies, unions, or government agencies may provide incumbent worker training, and training can be conducted at the business's own facility, at the training provider's facility, or at a combination of sites.

Training must enhance the skills of participants and should result in some kind of credential for the employee; training should result in improved productivity, efficiency, or an increase in the employee's existing wages. Training opportunities should expand and improve an employee's workforce skills and develop his or her opportunities for growth or promotion within the company (or a future company.)

The business (or the employee with the employer's approval) will select the training provider. It may be a public or private trainer. All proposals must show an end date that completes training within 12 months of award date. All training should have specific start and end dates.

The Talent Development Program does not limit the kinds of training that businesses may request. Training may include industry or business-specific skills, technical and computer skills, and/or "soft skills," such as leadership and management training. NEMOJT strongly encourages training programs to be accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), which can be found on the Career One Stop website (<http://www.careeronestop.org/credentials/toolkit/find-certifications-help.aspx>.) The ANSI provides information about a variety of different types of certifications, including, but not limited to, Career and Technical

Education, Industry-endorsed, Job Corps Training, Military Occupational Specialties, and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCAA.)

The following are examples of the types of training that are acceptable:

- Training to gain or maintain an ANSI-recognized certificate/credential.
- Human Resource (HR) Certification (e.g., PHR, SPHR, GPHR, or SHRM). Please note that an HR training credential must be attained and a copy of the certification will be sent to NEMOJT within 30 days of completion.
- CD-10 training – training that teaches coding professionals how to become proficient in the ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS coding or other similar systems.
- Training for improved process efficiency as identified by industry professionals.
- Training from a national, regional, or state trade association that offers an independently certified training curriculum and testing.
- Training provided in conjunction with the purchase of a new piece of equipment.
- Upgrade of computer skills (e.g., Microsoft Excel, Access).
- Seminars/workshops/webinars are eligible, however they must have an assessment/test tied to it to be eligible for this program. ***Businesses must indicate in the application what assessment of skills is included for this type of training to justify it will improve economic competitiveness.*** Failure to include this may exclude the application from consideration.
- English Language Learning for managers or staff to enable them more effectively communicate with limited English employees.

These are examples of the types of activities that would **not** be covered by this grant; this is not a definitive list:

- Required/regulatory training mandated by a public agency or department is not eligible. These trainings may include, but are not limited to, EPA, Hazardous Waste, FDA, Workers Compensation, OSHA, etc.
- Training costs associated with professional fields in which continuous education is necessary to retain professional certification, such as Certified Public Accountants, degreed medical professionals, insurance providers, attorneys, etc.
- Training which would result in advanced degrees such as associate, bachelor, master, or doctorate.
- Training already being reimbursed by another state or federal training program (e.g., Minnesota Job Skills Partnership grants, National Emergency Grants, etc.).
- Training that leads to a professional license (e.g., doctors, lawyers, CPA accountants, etc.).
- Employee travel, food, or lodging costs related to program participation (if paid by the employer, these expenses could be considered towards the contribution requirement).
- Wages of trainees while being trained.
- Purchases of capital equipment or other durable (long lasting/reusable) training materials/equipment.
- Training in sectarian activities.

### **What kind of professional development for educators is eligible for funding under the Talent Development Program?**

Education is the first step in the development of the future workforce pipeline and it is critical that local educators have the skills to prepare students for careers in today's economy. Though educators have access to a myriad of workshops and seminars, training that is requested to be paid through TDP must have a clear and demonstrable impact on a class, student work- or college-readiness, or the district's capacity to offer courses that complement career and job readiness. This includes training and education that:

- Allows an instructor to enhance existing or create additional classes that teach industry-recognized curriculum or skill-based classes.
- Leads to an instructor's ability to teach high school concurrent enrollment classes .

- Provides an instructor the ability to function as a school work-based learning coordinator or career/technical education instructor.
- Enhances students' readiness for entering post-secondary education or technical training.
- Provides opportunities for students to explore careers or gain STEM-related credentials.

Workshops or seminars that create awareness around a particular issue but don't provide additional skills that can then be applied to enhance curriculum or directly impact students will not be eligible for funding. Schools are encouraged to collaborate on an application that provides training for teachers from multiple districts.

***Schools must clearly outline how the proposed training will impact students' career- or work-readiness in the application to be considered for funding.***

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ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST**

This form is intended to serve as a general guideline to help employers determine if a grant application should be completed on behalf of the business. Meeting the following conditions does not guarantee eligibility or a grant award.

**Business Eligibility**

The business must meet all of the following conditions to apply for Talent Development Program:

- The business is located in Minnesota.
- The business is registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State's office as a(n):
  - Association
  - Corporation
  - LLC
  - Partnership
  - Nonprofit
  - Sole Proprietor
  - Government Entities Including Local, County, State, and School Districts
- The business must be in continuous operation for 18 months immediately prior to the application submittal.
- The business is not in the process of a layoff of current employees.
- The business is not administering a current Minnesota Job Skills Partnership (MJSP) award, or similar grant.
- Preference will be given to businesses that provide wage and/or benefit level increases upon completion of the training and the existence of other training and advancement opportunities provided by the employer.

**Project Eligibility**

The training project must meet all of the following conditions to be eligible for funding:

- The business has discussed the project with NEMOJT staff and can demonstrate that its training needs cannot be met without assistance from the TDP.
- The training is in an eligible topic area.
- The business will match a portion of the training costs with cash and/or in-kind contributions dependent upon the size of the business (number of employees).
- Training will begin within six months of grant award and complete within one year of grant award date.