

Colorado First and Existing Industry Job Training Programs FY 2024 Program Policies and Procedures

1. COLORADO FIRST REQUIREMENTS

- a. Colorado First (CF) Job Training Program funding is only for the customized training of net new hires employed by new or expanding businesses in Colorado. The net new hires must receive training that builds the skills necessary to increase employee productivity and wages and reduces the need for public support. "Net new hires" is defined as newly hired employees in newly created positions. Replacement new hires may not be funded.
- b. The CF Program provides training funds for either 1) full-time (32+ hours/week) permanent (regular) net new hires, or 2) full-time temporary net new hires if the employer's intent is to hire such employees for permanent (regular) employment upon training completion.
- c. Net new hires may be counted in a grant if hired within 12 months prior to the application submission date through the initiation date of training.
- d. Net new hires funded during the previous fiscal year are not eligible for CF grant funds in subsequent years.
- e. The CF per learner allowance may not exceed \$1,800 per learner (average across all trainings) per fiscal year.

2. EXISTING INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS

- a. Existing Industry (EI) Job Training Program funding is for the customized training of incumbent workers who are employed by established Colorado businesses. The funding is for training that supports adaptation to new technology and prevents layoffs.
- b. The EI program provides training funds only for current permanent (regular), full-time (32+ hours/week) employees.
- c. EI grant applicants must complete and submit a financial information form to the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) for approval.
- d. The EI per learner allowance may not exceed \$1,600 per learner (average across all trainings) per fiscal year.

3. CF AND EI GRANT ELIGIBILITY

- a. The Skill Advance Colorado grant program considers CF and EI applications from businesses in [Colorado key industries](#) as defined by OEDIT.
- b. Only for-profit companies and non-governmental 501(c)(3) organizations are eligible for funding. State agencies and government employees are not eligible for funding.
- c. Grant applicants are required to pay employees an average wage based on business location. At the time of grant application submission, grant applicants in urban counties must pay at least \$2.00 per hour more than the Colorado State required minimum wage, and grant applicants in rural counties must pay an average wage of at least \$.50 per hour more than the Colorado State required minimum wage.
- d. Businesses are eligible to apply for CF grants every fiscal year and EI grants every other fiscal year.
- e. Businesses are eligible to apply for more than one grant and for both programs within the same fiscal year; however, learners (employees) may not be duplicated across grants within the same fiscal year. Exception: CF-funded learners (employees) may be trained in a subsequent EI grant within the same fiscal year.

4. CF AND EI GRANT PARAMETERS

- a. The CF and EI programs fund training only for employees who have significant career opportunities and who require substantive instruction.
- b. The CF and EI programs do not provide funding for seasonal employees or employees in retail occupations.
- c. Requested training funds are capped at \$150,000 per application; total training funds are capped at \$200,000 per business per fiscal year.
- d. Grant award totals include a 12% administration fee that is retained by the college, with a minimum of \$1,500 and a maximum of \$12,500.
- e. Skill Advance Colorado funding supports only Colorado businesses and employees; and employees funded by the CF and EI programs must be residing and working in Colorado during the full training period of the grant.
- f. A Colorado-based employee of the business/grant applicant must be identified as the grant contact and act as the grant manager.
- g. Forty percent (40%) of training costs must be financed by the grantee in cash and/or in-kind contributions. Contributions must be related to the grantee's expenditures and may include learner training time (salary/fringe), grant and training management time (salary/fringe), training materials (purchases), and leased/rented equipment required to execute training. Expenditures mean actual purchases of items, consumption of inventory, or documented loss of revenue.
- h. Skill Advance Colorado grant applicants and grantees must consult with and operate under the guidance of a Skill Advance Colorado community college representative for grant application and submission assistance as well as grant management. Skill Advance Colorado community college representatives take the lead role to:
 - i. advise on and facilitate training needs assessment and grant application development and submission processes with the grant applicant;
 - ii. interpret program policies and procedures for the grant applicant and the grantee; and
 - iii. perform grant management duties with the grantee (including, but not limited to, policy and procedure interpretation; training execution and attendance monitoring; payment and reimbursement documentation collection; accurate completion of reporting documents; final report development; and grant compliance.)
- i. Grant-funded activities may not begin until the grant application has been approved by the Skill Advance Colorado application review committee. Grant-funded activities include, but are not limited to, developing/customizing curriculum, executing training, purchasing materials, signing vendor agreements, conducting travel, and paying invoices.
- j. Training attendance forms signed by learners and by the grantee, and an attestation of attendance data accuracy signed by the grantee, are required to be submitted with final reporting documents.
- k. A *Colorado First Learner Information Form* must be completed by each Colorado First-funded learner and submitted with the Final Report.
- l. On-site visits to grantees may be conducted by OEDIT, Colorado Community College System (CCCS) program administrators, and/or college representatives.
- m. In rare and extenuating circumstances, a grant extension to complete training may be approved by the Skill Advance Colorado administration team. Extension requests must be submitted via the college representative prior to the published training completion deadline and must be accompanied by a statement from the grantee describing the extenuating circumstance. The grantee must submit final reporting documents per the adjusted reporting deadline identified in the extension approval notification to avoid forfeiture of grant funds.
- n. Changes to training plans and related grant activities are not permitted without Skill Advance Colorado administration team approval. Approved grants may be revised a single time. Revision request submissions must include a new training budget, a newly signed and dated application narrative/Attestation reflecting the proposed changes, and third-party training vendor training cost quotes if applicable. Revised grants may not exceed the originally approved grant amount. Grant activities related to the proposed changes may not occur prior to revision approval.
- o. Grant-funded learners must be eligible to work in the U.S. Grantees must warrant that each employee employed by the Grantee within the United States is a United States citizen or, if not a United States citizen, is lawfully present in the state and authorized to work. In the Final Report, an authorized grantee/business representative (employee) must attest that
 - i. the organization has examined the legal work status of all employees named on the training attendance forms; has retained file copies of all documents required by U.S. Code Title 8, Section 1324a ("Unlawful Employment of Aliens"); and that no employment identification

- documents have been altered or falsified; and the grantee/business has not knowingly hired an unauthorized alien,
 - ii. and that the eligibility verification for all learners is in compliance with C.R.S. 24-76.5-101, et seq., if applicable, which prohibits certain public benefits for individuals who cannot provide verification of lawful presence within the United States.
- p. The Colorado First and Existing Industry Job Training Programs, their participating colleges, trainers, and grantees are subject to program compliance and auditing. In the case of an audit, colleges, grantees, and training providers are required to provide backup evidence and documentation upon request. Grantees must retain grant records for 24 months following grant closeout. Grantees shall permit the State or its designee to audit, inspect, examine, excerpt, copy and/or transcribe its records related to approved grants for a period of 24 months following grant closeout to evaluate the grantee's performance.

5. CF AND EI GRANT APPLICATIONS

- a. Applications are reviewed on a first come, first served basis.
- b. Grant applicants are not entitled to receive Skill Advance Colorado funding; grant approvals are at the discretion of the application review committee.
- c. All direct training costs must be broken out in the appropriate line items on the training budget. Lump sum or combined costs will not be considered.
- d. Grant applications may include training provided by the college (faculty, adjunct instructors, and staff); college contractors; qualified grantee employees; and, on a case-by-case basis, qualified third-party training vendors.

6. CF AND EI TRAINING ELIGIBILITY, REQUIREMENTS, AND COMPLIANCE

- a. Skill Advance Colorado-funded training must be short-term and substantially customized (contextualized/tailored content) to specific business needs and related to substantive, resume-building, and transferable employee skills.
- b. Training needs assessment, planning, and curriculum development/customization activities must take place prior to training execution.
- c. All training funded by Skill Advance Colorado must take place within Colorado.
- d. Essential/non-technical and hard/technical skills training are eligible for funding. If funding becomes limited, hard/technical skills training is prioritized.
- e. Training Funds Cap (excludes Colorado community colleges): Customer service, sales, and related training funding across all FY 2024 grants is capped at \$25,000 per training organization group (including, but not limited to, grantees and third-party vendors and their affiliates, subsidiaries, and common trainer(s) or person(s) with related involvement). Customer service, sales, and related training includes, but is not limited to, sales and customer service communication; business/client/customer engagement and/or development; customer outreach; marketing; and branding.
- f. Skill Advance Colorado does not fund:
 - i. training related to grantee/business orientation, personality assessments (i.e., DiSC, MBTI, CliftonStrengths, etc.), strategic planning, project planning, foundational/beginning/basic computer skills or office administration/productivity software (i.e., Microsoft Office Suite and Google Workspace), and non-customized training available at local colleges, workforce centers, and public or other service providers;
 - ii. training related to federal and state mandated training (e.g., OSHA, Commercial Driver's License (CDL));
 - iii. labor union-required or labor union-funded training; or
 - iv. consulting services.

7. CF AND EI GRANT AWARDS

- a. CF and EI grants are funded through an annual appropriation by the Colorado legislature and are contingent upon available funding.
- b. The Skill Advance Colorado application review committee strives to provide grant approval or denial notification approximately three weeks after the date of application submission to the committee by the college representative.
- c. If funding becomes limited, priority will be given to college and/or college contractor-provided training over third-party vendor-provided training.
- d. Preference for grant approval is given to Colorado small business applicants (fewer than 500 employees company/organization-wide).

8. CF AND EI FISCAL REQUIREMENTS AND COMPLIANCE

- a. Training cost reimbursement is permitted to take place
 - i. only after completion of each grant activity;
 - ii. for grant activities that occurring only between the grant approval date and the published grant activity completion deadline (see the *CF and EI Program Calendar*); and
 - iii. after receipt of full backup evidence by the grantee and college.
- b. Grantees are responsible for submitting the required backup evidence to the college prior to receiving reimbursement for executed grant activities. Backup evidence includes, but is not limited to, contracts, invoices, payment evidence, purchase receipts, travel documents/receipts, payroll information, Business-Specific Training Customization Outlines, Colorado First Learner Information Forms, and training attendance documents.
- c. Colleges and grantees may not render payment on any approved grant activity prior to the activity taking place, including deposits for services.
- d. Departures from the original approved training plan may reduce the amount of the reimbursable training costs. If the actual training cost is lower than the cost on the originally approved training budget, unused funds must be returned to CCCS via the grant closeout process.
- e. Grantees may be subject to forfeiture and/or return of approved funding if: the job creation goals are not met (CF grants); the approved training is not executed as proposed; the CF and EI Program Policies and Procedures are not adhered to; and/or the required, complete final reporting paperwork and backup documentation are not submitted to the representing college per the published *CF and EI Program Calendar*.

9. THIRD-PARTY TRAINING VENDORS IN CF AND EI GRANTS

- a. The Skill Advance Colorado program does not endorse any third-party training vendor. Third-party vendors are considered on a case-by-case basis.
- b. When a Skill Advance Colorado grant applicant has interest in pursuing training provided by a third-party training vendor, the applicant must consult and involve the Skill Advance college representative prior to planning vendor-provided training.
- c. Skill Advance Colorado grant applicants may not allow third-party training vendors to initiate training needs assessment or grant application development, interpret program policies and procedures, complete grant application documents or reporting documents, or serve as a program advisor or grant manager. (See section 4.h.).
- d. If third-party training is proposed in the application, grant applicants must include a Third-Party Training Vendor Attestation for each vendor with their grant application submission. The Attestation must be signed by the vendor prior to grant applicant including vendor's training in a grant application.
- e. If training is to be provided by a third-party training vendor, a detailed training cost quote must be submitted with the grant application. The quote must be on the vendor's letterhead, include a date, applicant name, training title(s), and reflect the training costs proposed. Contracts, agreements, invoices, and emails outlining training costs are not accepted as quotes. Expired quotes are not accepted.
- f. OEDIT, CCCS, and community colleges may not be obligated to reimburse the grantee in the case of conflicts between the grantee and a third-party training vendor, including, but not limited to, inability to execute training by either party, poor quality training, and financial or legal disputes.

The Skill Advance Colorado administration team reserves the right to change any provision or requirement of the policies and procedures above at any time. The change shall become effective immediately unless communicated otherwise.