

# RFP FAQ for Clean Economy Occupations Grant

Updated August 1, 2024

## What is the goal of the Clean Economy Occupations Grant?

This grant is fully funded through a \$3,000,000.00 appropriation from the State of Minnesota. This funding is intended to support existing registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) most impacted by the transition to a clean economy to upgrade programs and train apprentices and upskill incumbent workers in new technologies.

## Who can apply for Clean Economy Occupations funding?

Applicants must be a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) in the State of Minnesota. This includes, but is not limited to, RAPs in the public sector, private sector, municipalities and unions.

## What is the period of performance for this grant? Is there a chance the end date can be extended?

The period of performance for this grant is six months from the execution of the contract. Given the focus of the grant and the types of eligible expenses for this grant, we anticipate grantees will spend funds rapidly with no need to extend the period of performance.

## What's the process for getting grant funding?

All eligible applications will be reviewed by a committee. After the review, DLI's commissioner will determine awards and DLI staff will notify awardees. Prior to any grant spending, grantees must undergo a risk assessment and a fully executed contract will need to be signed.

Prior to a contract, the grant awardee will need to register in the State of Minnesota's SWIFT system. Registration can be completed before grant awards are made. You can find information on the SWIFT website:

<https://mn.gov/mmb/accounting/swift/>

And here is a link to the SWIFT help desk if you have additional questions:

<https://mn.gov/mmb/accounting/swift/help-desk/>

## What is registered apprenticeship (RAP)?

Registered apprenticeship is a successful and innovative employee training model that can be designed to meet employers' needs to recruit, train and retain 21st century talent. From day one, an apprentice earns, learns and works for their employers as they receive structured on-the-job (OJT) training and related classroom instruction (RTI). RAPs help businesses develop highly skilled and motivated employees, reduce turnover rates, increase worker productivity and lower the cost of recruitment.

## How is registered apprenticeship different from other types of work-based training models?

Eligible registered apprenticeship programs have gone through steps to register with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry.

There are several factors that differentiate registered apprenticeship (RAP) from other training models.

1. Registered apprentices earn wages from their employer while training
2. RAPs provide both on-the-job training and accompanying related classroom training
3. OJT learning is conducted on an actual job site under the watchful eye of a mentor
4. The completed training results in an industry-recognized and portable credential

### **What is an incumbent worker?**

For the purpose of this grant, an incumbent worker is an individual already employed with a registered apprenticeship program sponsor before program enrollment, but who needs training to upgrade their skills, advance in their career, or retain their current position in apprenticeship occupations and industries. To qualify as an incumbent worker, an individual must have an established and documented employment history with the employer for six months or more.

### **What does it mean to have a pre-approved training curriculum?**

If you currently have a registered apprenticeship program (RAP) with proprietary curriculum you do not need to receive pre-approval. Pre-approval is required for third-party related training instruction that is not currently part of your RAP training. DLI apprenticeship staff review and approve curriculum that would be incorporated into an apprenticeship program.

### **What industries are considered clean economy?**

For the purpose of this grant, clean economy fields are considered to be in the energy and energy efficiency sector, including but not limited to renewable energy production, storage and transmission. Other areas could be electric vehicle repair, heat pump installation, geothermal installations, solar, wind, semiconductors, etc.

### **Do applicants need to identify specific registered apprenticeship programs, or are just types of industries or occupations okay?**

Specific registered apprenticeship programs will need to be identified.

### **Is an Office of Apprenticeship (OA) approved program that serves MN residents and MN apprentices eligible to apply for this grant?**

An OA approved program that serves MN residents and MN apprentices is eligible for these grant funds only if it is registered with the MN State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) [Minnesota Department of Labor & Industry (DLI) – Apprenticeship] with a clean economy occupation.

### **How much funding can our organization apply for?**

There is up to \$3,500,000 available. Applicants can apply for up to \$200,000 per grant. No match is required. No overlapping grants are allowed. Grantees must have submitted their final report and invoice before reapplying for additional funding.

### **What is an allowable professional development expense?**

Professional development expenses are for instructors (not apprentices) and can include course fees, whether the training is online, hybrid or in-person, and other training costs. The training must entail knowledge and skills regarding clean economy occupations.

It can also include hotel, transportation (includes mileage, air / train / bus / taxi fare) and per diem for meals.

The maximum reimbursement for meals, including tax and gratuity, shall be calculated as follows:

Breakfast - \$10.00

Lunch - \$13.00

Dinner - \$19.00

### **How can we find out what the allowable reimbursement rate is for staff travel expenses?**

Grantee travel will be reimbursed at the applicable IRS rate. In 2024, the current IRS rate is \$.67/mile.

### **I'm not sure I understand how to calculate for Administrative costs? Please explain.**

For the CLEO grant, applicants can include administrative costs of up to 5% of their total expenses. This 5% is calculated by adding up the eligible expenses to create a sub-total that is multiplied by .05 to create the additional allowable amount for administrative costs.

Correct way to calculate: sub-total = \$95,000, multiply by .05 for \$4750, resulting in a total of \$99,750

Incorrect way to calculate: total budget of \$100,000, deduct 5% (\$5,000) for administrative costs where sub-total is \$95,000

Qualifying expenses are those incurred by grant recipients in support of the day-to-day operations of their organization. These overhead costs are the expenses that are not directly tied to a specific program purpose. Administrative costs may include, but are not limited to: administrative oversight, accounting support, insurance and facilities.

Applicants will need to provide backup documentation for any requested reimbursements as part of the financial monitoring purposes.

## **Registered Apprenticeship**

### **What is Apprenticeship Minnesota?**

Apprenticeship Minnesota helps employers develop and register apprenticeship programs (RAPs) and promote workforce diversity through outreach and education. Employers design their own RAP that provides apprentices with specific skills, training and job-related instruction tailored to the company's needs.

### **What are the minimum age requirements for registered apprentices?**

Apprenticeship programs registered with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) serve and train workers who are 18 years and older.

### **Do registered apprenticeship programs require specific qualifications for people to become an apprentice?**

Many registered apprenticeship training programs require that apprentices have a high school diploma or equivalent, a valid driver's license and reliable transportation; however, requirements differ slightly based on the program.