Life Science Workforce Initiative Request for Proposals

In 2024, the Utah Legislature appropriated $2 million in one-time funds and an additional $2 million in ongoing funds for the Life Science Workforce Initiative. The initiative's goal is to prepare a workforce with the skills to meet the future needs of Utah's growing Life Science industries. This initiative aims to fund the creation or expansion of Life Science certificates, apprenticeships, and degrees that will prepare students for current and future careers in high-demand Life Science occupations.

Based on discussions and feedback from life science leaders, we have identified key occupations/focus areas essential for the future growth of the life science industry in Utah. These priority areas include interdisciplinary programs that emphasize entrepreneurial and sales skills, clinical lab certification, bioinformatics, software & system engineering, coding, medical writing, compliance, quality assurance, regulator affairs, and manufacturing/automation/robotics aimed at making production costs in the United States competitive. This strategic focus will ensure that the workforce is well-prepared to meet future demands. Proposals are not limited to these areas but will be given priority as being responsive to industry demand.

Grant Objectives

- Create and expand Life Science programs, including certificates, apprenticeships, and degree offerings, to enhance educational opportunities and meet the demands of the life sciences industry. This objective aims to provide comprehensive and diverse programs for students to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for high-demand life science occupations.
- Ensure students are well-prepared for in-demand occupations within the life sciences industry. This objective focuses on equipping students with the practical skills, industry-specific knowledge, and hands-on experience needed to succeed and excel in Life Science careers.

Eligibility

- The primary applicant must be a postsecondary institution within the Utah System of

Higher Education, according to Utah Code 53B-1-102.
- The application must include a partnership between at least one participating Life-Science employer and a postsecondary institution.

Life Science Industry Defined

Submissions should result in preparing students for employment in the following industries operating under the listed NAICS code:

Research, Testing, and Medical Laboratories

Research and Development in Nanotechnology 541713 44

Research and Development in Biotechnology (except Nanobiotechnology) 541714 191

Medical Laboratories 621511 166

Medical Devices and Diagnostics

Electromedical and Electrotherapeutic Apparatus Manufacturing 334510 37

Analytical Laboratory Instrument Manufacturing 334516 15

Irradiation Apparatus Manufacturing 334517 9

Surgical and Medical Instrument Manufacturing 339112 57

Surgical Appliance and Supplies Manufacturing 339113 52

Dental Equipment and Supplies Manufacturing 339114 10

Ophthalmic Goods Manufacturing 339115 3

Selected other medical device companies (various industries) multiple 35

Biosciences-Related Distribution Medical, Dental, and Hospital Equipment and Supplies

Merchant Wholesalers 423450 439

Ophthalmic Goods Merchant Wholesalers 423460 25

Drugs and Druggists' Sundries Merchant Wholesalers 424210 317

Therapeutics and Pharmaceuticals

Medicinal and Botanical Manufacturing 325411 55

Pharmaceutical Preparation Manufacturing 325412 78

In-Vitro Diagnostic Substance Manufacturing 325413 3

Biological Product (except Diagnostic) Manufacturing 325414 7

Program Length

This program aims to expand the number of skilled professionals entering high-demand Life Science occupations. The length of the program will correlate to the type of funding requested. One-time funding for pilot programs can be available for a maximum of two years.

Program Implementation Timeline

Applicants must include a detailed implementation timeline in their proposal. The timeline should consider the respective institution's curriculum review process, hiring, curriculum development, marketing, and admissions timelines.

Budget

Requested funding will be used solely for the direct costs associated with the program, such as the cost of instructors, marketing, curriculum development, staff and faculty training, or equipment and supplies. Outside of the cost of implementing a new program (i.e. equipment, curriculum development), the cost per student should be in line with the institution's cost per student. Funding for general administration is not allowed.

Allowed Budget Categories:
- Instructional Staff Salary and Benefits
- Curriculum development
- Staff and faculty training
- Equipment and supplies
- Consultant/SubContractors
- Marketing

Talent Ready Utah must approve changes to the program's final budget or program scope before they are made. If the grant funds are not used in compliance with the specified guidelines or if any disclosures are inaccurate or incomplete, Talent Ready Utah reserves the right to reclaim the awarded funds.

Consultants/Subcontractors

The use of consultants and subcontractors is allowable for this grant. Applicants must clearly identify the consultant/subcontractor they propose, the services the consultant and/or subcontractor will provide, and must clearly state how state funding will be spent for services provided by the consultant/subcontractor included in the proposed budget. The use of any consultant/subcontractor must comply with the institution's procurement/finance policies and is subject to the approval of Talent Ready Utah.

Funding and Payment Disbursement

The budget worksheet template provides several funding options. On both the Salary & Benefits tab and the Summary tab, two cells contain dropdown options labeled Period 1 and Period 2.

Period 1	One-Time	One-time purchase request for purchase of equipment, memberships, licensing agreement, etc
	Initial Period	Funding for the period October 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025, regardless of whether ongoing funds are being requested.
Period 2	No Request	No funding is being requested beyond the one-time request.
	Year 2 No Ongoing	Funding for July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026 is being requested, but ongoing funding is **not** being requested.
	Year 2 On-Going	Funding for July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, **and** ongoing funding is being requested.

This initiative offers one-time grant funding for equipment, curriculum development, and supply costs. The funding can be available for a maximum of two years for pilot programs that are not requesting ongoing funding.

Payment Disbursement

Grant funds for this initiative will be initially dispersed upon the execution of the memorandum of understanding by all parties. Year 2 No-Ongoing fund will also be dispersed via check in July, 2025. Ongoing funds will be added to the institution's base funding for FY26. Funding will continue as long as the Utah State Legislature continues funding and the institution continues to operate the proposed program.

Reporting and Data Collection

The institution shall report quarterly and provide an annual report for the first three years and as reasonably requested by Talent Ready Utah. Quarterly reports are due on the 10th day of April, July, October, and January.

At a minimum, the quarterly report will include:
- Number of students enrolled in the program.
- Number of students who have completed the program.
- Number of students placed in relevant employment.
- Number of faculty, instructors, and professors hired with awarded funds.

Annual reports are due the second Tuesday of September, with the first due September 9, 2025. As applicable to the program, and outlined in the memorandum of understanding, the annual report will include:

1. Enrollment
   a. Number of students enrolled in the program.
   b. Percentage increase or decrease from the previous year.
2. Graduation
   a. Number of students who have completed the program.
   b. Certificates or credentials awarded.
   c. Degrees conferred (provide a number by degree type).
   d. Graduation rates of students enrolled in the life science programs.
3. Job Placement
   a. Number of students placed in relevant employment.
   b. Median starting salary.
4. Industry Collaboration
   a. The number of partnerships established between higher education institutions and life science employers.

b. The number of internships and/or work-based learning opportunities facilitated through industry partnerships.

c. How the program has incorporated industry feedback into the curriculum.

5. Research, Innovation, and Commercialization
   a. Number of patents, publications, and other intellectual property generated by life science research as a result of the program.
   b. Amount of external funding secured for life science projects.
   c. The number of startups or spin-offs originating from life science research conducted within higher education institutions.

6. Continuous Improvement
   a. Annual assessments of life science program quality and relevance conducted by industry evaluators.
   b. Feedback from industry partners on the effectiveness of graduates in meeting workforce needs.
   c. Implementation of recommendations from program evaluations to enhance deep tech education quality and outcomes.

7. Administrative
   a. Number of faculty, instructors, staff, and professors hired with awarded funds.
   b. Key vacancies throughout the year.
   c. Budget summary.

Evaluation Criteria

The proposal review and evaluation process will be competitive and conducted utilizing a fair and objective process. An evaluation committee will review and score proposals using the scoring rubric below.

Category	Total Points	Weight
Introduction/Need Assessment	25	25%
Program Management	25	25%
Implementation	20	20%
Performance Outcomes	15	10%
Budget	15	20%
Total Possible Points	**100**	**100%**

If the evaluation committee requires further information to recommend, Talent Ready Utah may contact the respective institution that submitted proposals for additional information and/or revisions.

RFP Information Session and Questions
- **When:** June 13, 2024, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

  Applicants and others interested in the Life Science Workforce Initiative RFP are invited to a virtual RFP information session.
- **Where:** Zoom
- **What:** This information session is an opportunity to ask questions about the proposal requirements and online proposal submissions, with Talent Ready Utah staff present to share information and answer questions.
- **Register:** To register for the RFP information session and receive a meeting invitation, click here.

A recording of the RFP Information Session and emailed questions and responses will be posted on the Talent Ready Utah web page.

Proposal Timeline
The proposal must be submitted online here.
- Proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. on August 7, 2024.
- Proposals for this initiative will be reviewed quarterly if funds are available.

Proposal Review and Questions from the Review Committee
- All submissions will be initially verified. Applicants should be prepared to respond to requests for clarification or additional information.
- Applicants should be prepared to respond to final requests for clarification or additional information.

Life Science Talent Council Committee Recommendations to the Utah Board of Higher Education
- After reviewing the proposal, the committee will present its recommendations to the Talent Ready Utah Board.

Award notification to awardees
- Award notifications will be emailed to the contact listed on the application upon the

Utah Board of Higher Education's final decision.

Award Start Date
- Institutions should anticipate a start date after October 1, 2024.

Submission Process

Each institution will upload its application (proposal) documents via Google Forms. An automatic confirmation email will be sent verifying the receipt of the proposal submission. The following documents are required for each application:
- Proposal Narrative
- Budget Narrative
- Budget
- Per 2024 H.B. 335 State Grant Process Amendments, the current departmental budget for the department grant funds will be used.
- Letter(s) of Support

See **Instructions for Proposals** on page 9 for more details.

Proposal Debriefing

A debriefing meeting will be scheduled with an applicant upon request. The request must be emailed to TRUgrants@ushe.edu within five (5) business days after notification of an unsuccessful proposal is sent to the applicant. Talent Ready Utah will acknowledge receipt of the debriefing request within three (3) business days.

Discussion will be limited to feedback on the requesting applicant's proposal. Comparisons between proposals or evaluations of the other proposals will not be allowed. Debriefing conferences may be conducted by phone or virtually and will be scheduled for a maximum of 30 minutes.

If you have any questions regarding the Life Science Workforce initiative and application process, please email **TRUgrants@ushe.edu**.

Instructions for Proposals

Formatting

The proposal narrative should not exceed twenty pages in length. This includes cover, table of contents, attached graphs, and any appendices to the proposal. It does not include the budget worksheet, budget narrative, or letter(s) of support. A page is 8.5 x 11 inches, with 1-inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Page numbers and an identifier may be within the 1-inch margin. Use one of the following fonts: Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia. Applications submitted in any other font will not be accepted. Use a font that is either 12-point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch). All proposals should be converted and uploaded as a PDF.

Applicants must address each of the following criteria:

Introduction/Need Assessment	(25 points)
Program Management	(25 points)
Implementation	(20 points)
Performance/Outcomes	(15 points)
Budget	(15 points)

The following guidance may assist applicants in addressing each of the selection criteria. The below outline is based on the rubric used to evaluate the proposal:

Introduction/Need Assessment — 25 points
- Provide a detailed description of the proposed program.
- Describe how this program will prepare participants with the skills to meet the future needs of Utah's growing Life Science industries.
- Describe the state/regional workforce needs this program will meet.
- Provide a summary of the Utah employers anticipated to hire projected completers of the proposed program, including hiring requirements and qualifications for the high-demand position.
- How will this program support the addition of professionals entering the identified high-demand occupation?

Program Management — 25 points
- Describe the partnership between the institution and employer(s) to meet the workforce needs of the targeted high-demand occupation—confirmed with letters of

support.
- Discuss the curriculum proposed for the program.
- What credentials and/or certifications will be offered to participants?
- How will you conduct outreach and market the program?

Letter(s) of Support may include:
- How does the partner intend to support or contribute to the proposed program?
- Validation of the skills/credentials this program will offer.
- Commitment of materials, resources, and/or financial support to the proposed program.

Implementation — 20 points
- Provide a start-up implementation timeline/plan, including month and year.
- If the program will require curriculum review, curriculum development and/or design, provide the anticipated timeline.
- If the program will require the hiring of professional staff, provide the anticipated timeline.
- Provide a timeline for participants to complete the program.
- How does the institution plan to sustain the program's future growth?

Performance/Outcomes — 15 points
- For the first 3 years of the award, provide the projected number of students enrolled in the proposed new or expanded program; of those enrolled, how many you project to complete the program; of those who completed, the number that will be placed in relevant employment; and the number of faculty, instructors, or professors hired with awarded funds.
- How will work-based learning opportunities be infused into the program?
- How will the institution track performance/outcome data?
- Describe how industry/employer feedback will be obtained and utilized to improve the program's quality.

Budget Worksheet/Narrative — 15 points
Applicants must include a budget a narrative that describes and justifies requested budget items and costs. In your budget narrative, describe how the Budget Information, "Budget Category" totals were determined. For personnel salary costs, generally describe how estimates were determined by identifying what type of staff will support the project and how much time they will contribute to the project (in hours or workdays). Describe any proposed items of cost

that require prior approval including any anticipated subawarding, transferring, or contracting out of any work under the award. Identify any third-party cash or in-kind contributions that a partner or other entity will contribute to the project and describe how the contributions directly and substantively benefit the project. For in-kind contributions, identify the source, the amount, and the valuation methodology used to determine the total value.

Budget Worksheet
- Provide an outlined budget for the total program cost.
  - Tab 1: Provide the staff resources by title, role type, FTE allocation, and salary proposed and allocated to this budget.
  - Tab 2: An itemized budget detailing the planned use of grant funds, including how the funding will be allocated, tracked, and reported.
  - Tab 3: An overall summary of the budget that includes proposed outcomes and cost per student.