Return-to-Work Grant Request for Proposals

During the 2022 legislative session, the Utah State Legislature authorized a grant program for business entities through HB 333 to offer innovative Return To Work programs for employees throughout Utah. The purpose of this fund is to support business entities in developing new Return-to-Work programs or expanding existing ones.

Grant Goals
- Provide individuals opportunities to re-enter the workforce after an extended absence.
- Provide funding for innovative Return To Work programs that offer experience, training, and support for successful re-entry into the workforce.
- To team industry, government, and education to help individuals who want to re-engage in the workforce find meaningful professional opportunities.

Eligibility

- The primary applicant must be either a Utah employer 53B-33-109 (for-profit or not-for-profit) providing opportunities for participants to re-enter their workforce at their place of business, or a non-profit professional association facilitating the program on behalf of its members who offer such opportunities.

RFP Information Session
- **When:** September 24th, 2025, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

  Applicants and others interested in the Return-to-Work Program 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 submission. Talent Ready Utah staff present to share information and answer questions.
- **Register:** Click here to register for the RFP information session and receive a meeting invitation. A recording of the session will be posted on the Talent Ready Utah web page**.**

Review Cycle Dates:
Proposals for the Return-to-Work Initiative will be accepted on an ongoing basis. Proposals

will be reviewed by a review committee, and recommendations for funding will be presented to the Talent Board during their regularly scheduled meeting. Below is the dates when proposals must be submitted to ensure they are reviewed, and recommendations can be made to the Talent Board:

- October 30th, 2025
- January 8th, 2026

Proposal Timeline

The proposal must be submitted online [here.](here)

- Proposals Are Due no later than 5:00 p.m. on the date listed in the Review Cycle dates above. Proposals submitted after this time will be automatically considered during the next cycle.

Proposal review and questions from the Review Committee

- All submissions will be initially verified, and applicants should be prepared to respond to requests for clarification or additional information.
- After verification, the review committee will consider proposals, and applicants should be prepared to respond to final requests for clarification or additional information.

Review Committee recommendations to the Talent Board

- After the proposal review, the committee will present its recommendations to the Talent Board.

Award notification to awardees

- Upon final decision by the Talent Board, notification of awards will be sent by e-mail message to the contact listed in the application.

Submission Process

Organizations will complete the submission using the Google form, where all documents can be uploaded. An email auto-response confirming receipt of the proposal submission will automatically be generated. Business entities will be required to submit the following documents:

- Application

- Budget Worksheet

- Disclosure of all state funds received by the business (2024 H.B. 335)

Professional Associations will be required to submit the following documents:

- Application Form
- [Budget Worksheet](#)
- Disclosure of all state funds received by the association (2024 H.B. 335)
- Letter of Collaboration from their members agreeing to participate in the program and outlines the following:
    - Number of returners to be placed at the member(s)
    - Job title of the position the member(s) plans to place returners
    - Training and/or other services provided to the returners
    - Length of the returner experience

See **Instructions for Proposal** on page 8 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 business days after the bidder is notified of an unsuccessful proposal. Talent Ready Utah will acknowledge receipt of the debriefing request within three business days.

Discussion will be limited to 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.

Program Length

This grant aims to support innovative programs that facilitate and support individuals not currently participating in the workforce. Proposed programs must last at least one year but no longer than two years.

Budget

The requested funding must be used solely for the direct costs associated with developing a new Return-to-Work program or expanding an existing one. Funds cannot be used to pay the wages of individuals participating in the program or the typical and expected cost of a new employee i.e. laptop, software licenses, supervision, and onboarding. The awardee must use grant funds for expenses specific to the program, which may include:

- Salaries & Benefits (staff providing direct services for larger programs)

- Consultants
- Marketing
- Supplies
- Education & Training
- Support Services
- Memberships

Talent Ready Utah must approve changes to the program's final budget or program scope before they are made.

Consultants/Subcontractors

The use of consultants and subcontractors is permitted for this grant. Applicants must clearly identify the proposed consultant/subcontractor, specify the services they will provide, and allocate the corresponding funding in the proposed budget. The use of any consultant/subcontractor is subject to the approval of Talent Ready Utah.

Funding

Grant funds for this initiative will be disbursed over three periods during the grant period in accordance with 2024 H.B 335. Fifty percent will be disbursed upon the execution of the Memorandum of Understanding by all parties, 40 percent will be disbursed after the program's first report is accepted (month 7), and the remaining 10 percent will be disbursed after the second report (month 13) and the program is concluded. See Reporting and Data Collection below.

If the grant funds are not used in compliance with the specified guidelines or if any disclosures are inaccurate or incomplete, the state reserves the right to reclaim the awarded funds. It is imperative that all recipients adhere strictly to the requirements to avoid any potential financial repercussions.

The business entity shall submit to any audit by Talent Ready Utah or a third party to verify reported data.

Revenue Prohibition

No revenue shall be generated as a direct result of this proposed program. The grant funds are to be used solely for the purposes outlined in the memorandum of agreement signed upon award. Any revenue generated must be reported immediately, and appropriate measures will be taken, which may include returning the funds to the state.

Reporting and Data Collection

To support Talent Ready Utah in collecting best practices, it is necessary for us to collect data from our grant recipients. The awardee shall submit two reports a year. The first report will cover the program's first six months, and the second report will provide a summary of the last six months and a summary of the year. Reports are due on the 20th business day of the 7th and 13th months after the MOU is executed. The report is due on the next business day if the 20th falls on a weekend or holiday.

The report shall include:

- Participant data, to include:
  - The number of participants served by the program.
  - A summary of the reason why the participant took a break from the workforce.
  - A summary of how long the participants were not participating in the workforce.
  - For the participants who did not complete the program, provide a summary of when they stopped and the reason why.
  - The number of participants hired or still employed at the end of the program.
- Provide a summary of the specific occupations this program is serving, including a summary of the occupation, position qualifications, and starting wage.
- A summary of the events, support services, and training offered to participants.
- An updated outline of the program to reflect any changes from the original proposal.
- Any challenges, lessons learned, successes, or best practices experienced by the program, participants, or business; and
- Documents reconciling the funds awarded by the grant.

Resources

Below are some resources to assist you in planning for a Return-to-Work program.

- [Career Revive Resources](#)- Resources that support businesses to attract and retain women to work after a career break.
- [Introduction to Career Re-entry](#)- Provides a variety of organizations, websites, and resources that focus on re-entering the workforce.
- Fishman Cohen, Carol, "Return-to-Work Programs Come of Age" Harvard Business Review, September-October 2021, https://hbr.org/2021/09/return-to-work-programs-come-of-age
- [Returnship Programs](#): Ultimate Guide: A guide to returnship programs.

- [Cultivating diversity, equity, and inclusion:](#) How CIOs recruit and retain experienced women in tech
- [A Complete Guide to Implementing a Successful Return to Work Program](#)
- [STEM Reentry Taskforce](#)
- [Second Chance Business Coalition:](#) The Case for Second Chance Employment

Evaluation Criteria

The proposal review and evaluation process will be competitive, utilizing a fair and objective approach. The table below outlines the points and weights assigned to each section of the proposal. A reviewer will be responsible for a specific section and will assess how well the proposal addresses the questions provided in the outline. Reviewers will only evaluate the submitted proposal content.

Category	Total Points	Weight
Introduction/Need Assessment	25	25%
Program Management	25	30%
Implementation	25	20%
Performance Outcomes	10	10%
Budget	15	15%
Total Possible Points	**100**	**100%**

If the Evaluation Committee requires further information to make their recommendation, Talent Ready Utah may contact respective applicants who submitted proposals for additional information and/or revisions.

For general questions regarding the Return-to-Work Grant and application process, please email TRUgrants@ushe.edu.

See the Next Page for Proposal Instructions/Outline

Instruction for Proposal

Formatting

The proposal narrative should not exceed 10 pages in length. This includes a cover, table of contents, attachments, narrative, and research. A "page" is 8.5" x 11", with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Page numbers and an identifier may be within the 1" margin. Use one of the following fonts: Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia typeface. 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). Proposals should not exceed 10 pages, not including the budget worksheet or letters of support. All proposals should be converted and uploaded as a PDF file.

Applicants must address each of the following criteria:

Introduction/Need Assessment	(25 points)
Program Management	(25 points)
Implementation	(25 points)
Performance/Outcomes	(10 points)
Budget	(15 points)

The following guidance may assist applicants in addressing each of the selection criteria:

Introduction/Need Assessment — 25 points
- Provide a detailed description of the proposed new or expanded Return to Work Program.
- Describe how this innovative program will support a business need or priority.
- For an employer, discuss the specific industry and/or occupations this program is targeting, including a summary of the industry and/or occupation, position qualifications, and starting wage.
- For a professional association, please provide the name of your association members who have agreed to participate in the program, the title of the position(s) they plan to have available for participants, the position qualifications, and the starting wage. A Letter of Collaboration is required.
- Define the success of the proposed program.

Program Management — 25 points
- Provide a detailed overview of the experience, training, and/or support provided through the program and how it has been customized to support participants' successful

return to and retention in the workforce.
- Describe the training, support, resources, and/or policy changes within the organization to support a culture of belonging and success.
- Discuss the Return-to-Work population targeted for this program and the customized services and support you propose to provide to support their transition back into the workforce.
- How will you conduct outreach to your targeted population and market the program to achieve goals?
- Describe organizations, if any, that you will partner with to recruit, train, and/or support participants.

Implementation — 25 points
- Provide a start-up implementation timeline/plan (month/year).
- Provide a training timeline for participants to complete the program.
- How will participants enroll/register for the program?
- What services will be offered to support the participant in completing/engaging in the program?
- Describe how this program may lead to employment opportunities directly with your organization or association members upon completion.
- What best practices do you propose to design your return-to-work program?
- Describe how your proposed program incorporates those best practices.

Performance/Outcomes — 10 points
- Provide the projected number of individuals who will start, finish, and be successfully hired through the program.
- How will the employer/organization track performance/outcome data?
- Describe how feedback will be obtained to improve the quality of the program.

Budget — 15 points
- Outlined budget for total program cost on the budget worksheet:
  - Tab 1- Provide the staff resources by title, role type, FTE allocation, and salary being 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.
- Indicate any additional funding that has been secured or will be leveraged for this program.