

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 Objectives:

- 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.
- Facilitate collaboration among industry, government, and education to support workforce re-entry

Programs should be designed to serve clearly defined returner populations and address the specific barriers those populations face in re-entering and remaining in the workforce.

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

Applicants and others interested in the Return-to-Work Program RFP are invited to a virtual RFP information session.

When:

- July 15, 2026, 11:00 am – 12:00 p.m.
- October 7, 2026, 11:00 am – 12:00 p.m.
- April 15, 2027, 11:00 am – 12:00 p.m.

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:

- [Register here 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 Utah Works 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 meetings. Below are the dates when proposals must be submitted by to ensure they are reviewed, and recommendations can be made to the Talent Board:

- May 19, 2026
- June 26, 2026
- August 28, 2026
- October 30, 2026

Proposal Submission and Due Date

Proposals should be submitted via our Salesforce Grant Management system. Instructions will be provided.

- Proposals Due: No later than 5 p.m. on the date listed in the Review Cycle dates above. Proposals submitted after 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 Ready Board

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

Award notification to awardees

- Upon the Talent Ready Board's final decision, the contact listed in the application will receive an email notification of awards.

Award Start Date

- Institutions should anticipate a start date of the first day of the second month after the proposal date. For example, a proposal due on December 8 should anticipate a start date of February 1.

Submission Process

Each organization will upload its proposal documents via Salesforce Grant Management system. 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 Worksheet](#)
- Disclosure of all state funds received by the business (2024 H.B. 335)

Professional Associations will be required to submit the following documents:

- Proposal Narrative
- [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 11 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 award will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis, beginning with an initial 20% disbursement upon execution of the agreement to assist with program launch or sustainment. The remaining balance will be disbursed upon review of quarterly reimbursement requests based on the actual number of trained participants, calculated at a cost per participant. Payments are contingent upon verifiable progress toward grant deliverables, such as certificates of completion, and are subject to approval by Talent Ready Utah. Reimbursement requests must be submitted using the provided TRU template on the 10th day of April, July, October, and January. Final reimbursement will be issued after a final summary report is completed. 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. Additional contractual requirements and conditions of award are outlined in the 'Contractual Requirements and Award Conditions' section below and will be incorporated into the final agreement.

CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS AND AWARD CONDITIONS

Awardees will be required to enter into a formal agreement with Talent Ready Utah (TRU). By accepting funding, recipients agree to comply with the following requirements:

Acknowledgment of State Funding

- All public communications, including statements, press releases, program materials, and solicitations, must clearly include:
 - Percentage of total program costs financed with TRU funds

- Total dollar amount of TRU funding awarded
- Percentage and dollar amount of total program costs financed by non-governmental sources

Program Budget and Disbursement Structure

- Awardees must adhere to the approved program budget and funding allocation, including total award amount and cost per participant
- An initial disbursement of 20 percent will be issued upon execution of the agreement
- The remaining balance will be distributed through reimbursement based on performance and participant outcomes
- All disbursements are contingent upon compliance with reporting requirements and verification of program performance

Compliance with Laws and Regulations

- Awardees must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and requirements throughout the duration of the agreement

Independent Contractor Status

- Awardees shall perform all services as independent contractors and not as employees or agents of the State of Utah, the Utah Board of Higher Education, or the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education

Insurance Requirements

- Awardees must maintain appropriate insurance coverage for the duration of the agreement, including:
 - Workers' compensation insurance as required by law
 - Commercial general liability insurance
 - Commercial automobile liability insurance, if applicable
- Proof of insurance must be provided prior to execution of the agreement
- Failure to maintain required coverage may result in termination of the award

Assignment and Subcontracting

- Awardees may not assign, transfer, or subcontract any portion of the agreement without prior written approval from TRU

Indemnification

- Awardees are responsible for the actions of their employees, agents, and subcontractors
- Awardees assume liability for program-related activities as defined in the agreement

Public Information

- Award agreements, associated documentation, and reporting materials may be subject to public disclosure in accordance with the Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA)

Termination

- TRU reserves the right to terminate the agreement for cause or convenience in accordance with the terms outlined in the contract
- Failure to comply with program requirements, reporting obligations, or funding guidelines may result in termination and recovery of funds

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 quarterly reporting data to Talent Ready Utah during the duration of the award.

Quarterly reporting shall include:

- Participant data, to include
 - Number of students enrolled by program
 - Number of students who have completed the program
 - Number of students who have entered directly into related employment by program

Final narrative reporting shall include:

- The number of overall participants in the program (events, conferences, networking webinars, etc);
- The number of participants directly trained by the program;
- How program participants learned about or were referred to the program;
- A summary of the reasons why participants took breaks 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 including when they stopped and the reasons why;
- The number of participants hired or still employed at the end of the program;
- A summary of the specific occupations this program is serving, including the occupations, position qualifications, and starting wages;
- A summary of the events, support services, and training offered to participants;
- An updated outline of the program reflecting any changes from the original proposal;
- 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. 5
- [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 bidders who submitted proposals for additional information and/or revisions.

Proposal Debriefing

A request for a debriefing meeting must be emailed to TRUgrants@ushe.edu within five business days of the applicant receiving notification of an unsuccessful proposal. Talent Ready Utah will acknowledge receipt of the debriefing request within three business days.

The 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.

For general questions regarding the Utah Works Grant and application process, please contact us via email at 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:

Proposal Outline

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 and retention in the workforce.
- Define the targeted return-to-work population and the primary barriers they face
- Describe how the program is intentionally designed to address those barriers
- Explain how the program connects participants to employment opportunities or supports retention in employment
- Identify employer partners and their role in hiring or supporting participants
- Provide projected outcomes, including enrollment, completion, employment, and retention.
- How will you conduct outreach to your targeted population and market the program to achieve goals?

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.
- Programs must demonstrate a clear pathway from participation to employment or continued employment for the targeted population.

Performance/Outcomes – 10 points

- Provide the projected number of individuals who will start, finish, and be successfully hired through the program.
- Provide projected employment and retention outcomes and describe how they will be tracked
- How will the awardee track performance/outcome data?
- Describe how feedback from the employer(s) will be obtained and utilized to improve the program's quality.

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.