

DEEP TECH TALENT INITIATIVE ONGOING FUNDS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

In 2021, the Utah System of Higher Education began awarding grants to institutions for the Emerging Tech Talent Initiative, also known as Deep Tech, through S.B. 96, Emerging Technology Talent Initiative. USHE's Deep Technology Talent Initiative, outlined in Board Policy R430, responds to Utah's demand for skilled professionals in deep technology. Initial awards were given under set terms in alignment with the requirements of S.B. 96 and Board Policy R430 to allow institutions to pilot the program and collect data and outcomes as outlined in the campus Memorandum of Understandings (MOU).

This invitation-only proposal request is for previous Deep Tech awardees who received funding in 2023 or were awarded conditional funding in 2025. This is the only opportunity for these institutions to apply for ongoing funds. Proposals for new programs will not be considered.

Grant Objectives:

- Continue to facilitate collaborations that create or expand multidisciplinary programs or stackable credential programs in undergraduate and graduate studies that prepare students to be workforce participants in deep technology jobs.
- Award ongoing funds for continued operations of Deep Technology Talent Initiative Programs.
- Assess the achievements of the currently funded Deep Technology Talent Initiative Program in terms of key deliverables, timelines, and outcomes.

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 private sector employer and a postsecondary institution.
- Only the following awards numbers are invited to submit proposals in response to this RFP:

DT20230011
DT20230013
DT20230015

DT20230017
DT20230016

RFP Information Session

Applicants interested in the Deep Tech Talent Initiative Ongoing Funds RFP are invited to a virtual RFP information session.

When:

- May 14, 2026, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Where:

- Zoom

What:

- This information session is an opportunity to ask questions about the proposal requirements and online proposal submissions, with Talent Ready 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 RFP Information Session will be emailed to registered attendees.

Proposal Timeline

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

- Proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. on June 26, 2026.

Proposal Review and Questions from the Deep Tech Talent Advisory Council

- All submissions will be initially verified. Applicants should be prepared to respond to requests for clarification or additional information.
- The Deep Tech Talent Advisory Council will review all eligible proposals.

- Applicants should be prepared to respond to final requests for clarification or additional information.

Proposal Recommendations and Award

- After the initial proposal review, the Deep Tech Talent Advisory Council recommendations will be presented to the Talent Ready Utah Board in the July 2026 Board meeting.
- The Talent Ready Utah Board recommendations will be presented the Utah Board of Higher Education for approval.

Award Notification to Awardees

- Upon the Utah Board of Higher Education's final decision, award notifications will be emailed to the contact listed on the application.

Submission Process

Each institution 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](#)
- Per 2024 H.B. 335 State Grant Process Amendments, if the applicant will receive any additional funding from the State of Utah for the proposed program, they must provide budget details for the additional funding.
- Letter(s) of Support

See **Instructions for Proposals** on page 10 for more details.

Budget

The primary purpose of awarding ongoing funding is to support institutions to pay the salaries of instructional staff required for the program. The proposed budget should be no greater than the amount funded for the current award year. Requested funding will be used solely for the direct costs associated with the program, such as the cost of instructors, marketing, staff and faculty training, or equipment and supplies. Funding for general administration is not

allowed. Ongoing costs will become part of the institution's base budget. Budget requests must differentiate between initial (October 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027) and ongoing costs.

Allowed Budget Categories:

Salaries & Benefits

- Salaries: Compensation for faculty, staff, and other personnel directly involved in the project, including those working on curriculum development.
- Benefits: Health insurance, retirement contributions, and other fringe benefits related to the personnel.

Equipment

- Non-Capital Equipment: Purchase of items with an acquisition cost greater than or equal to \$3,000 but less than \$5,000.
- Capital Equipment: Purchase of a single item (not invoice) that costs \$5,000.00 or more, is freestanding, and has a use life of one year or more.

Supplies - Office Supplies

- Office Supplies: General office materials including paper, pens, toner, and other everyday items used for administrative purposes.
- Project-specific Supplies: Specialized materials necessary for the project, such as textbooks, educational resources, curriculum development software, and scientific supplies.

Travel - Staff Domestic

- Staff Domestic Travel: Expenses for transportation, lodging, meals, and other travel-related costs for project personnel within the country.

Contractual - Subcontracts- (TRU Approval Required)

- Subcontracts: Agreements with external organizations or individuals to perform specific tasks or services directly tied to the project.

- Professional Services: Fees for external consultants, experts, or professional services engaged to support the project, including those assisting with curriculum development.

Other Direct Costs

- Communication: Telephone, internet, postage, and other communication expenses necessary for project execution.
- Publication, Printing, & Marketing: Costs for publishing and disseminating project results, printing curriculum materials, and marketing efforts related to the project.
- Conferences & Meetings: Expenses related to organizing and attending project-related events, including venue rentals, materials, and travel costs.
- Employer Operational Expenses: General administrative expenses required to support project operations/participant success.

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.

Budget Flexibility and Variance

Institutions are permitted a variance of up to ten percent (10%) within approved budget categories without prior written approval from Talent Ready Utah, provided that such adjustments do not alter the overall scope, intent, or outcomes of the approved program. Any variance exceeding ten percent (10%) or any material change to the program scope, design, or implementation must receive prior written approval from Talent Ready Utah.

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 Payments

Ongoing funds will be added to the institution's base funding for FY27. Funding will continue as long as the Utah State Legislature continues funding, and the institution continues to operate the proposed program.

CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS AND AWARD CONDITIONS

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

Data Tracking and Outcome Reporting Requirements

Awardees are required to establish and maintain systems and processes necessary to track and report program outcomes. At a minimum, institutions must be able to accurately collect, validate, and report the following metrics:

- Number of students enrolled in the program
- Number of students who complete the program
- Number of students placed in employment related to the program of study

Awardees are responsible for ensuring that appropriate data collection methods, systems, and partnerships are in place at the time of award to support these requirements. The inability to track or report required outcomes will not be considered a valid justification for non-compliance.

Institutions must maintain documentation sufficient to support reported outcomes and provide such documentation upon request. Talent Ready Utah reserves the right to verify reported data.

Failure to meet data tracking and reporting requirements may result in corrective action, including but not limited to withholding of funds, repayment of funds, or ineligibility for future funding.

Acknowledgment of State Funding

Awardees are required to acknowledge that the program is supported by funding from Talent Ready Utah and the State of Utah in all public communications. This includes, but is not limited to, statements, press releases, program materials, and solicitations.

Such communications must clearly and accurately disclose:

- • The total dollar amount of funding provided by Talent Ready Utah
- • The percentage of total program costs financed with Talent Ready Utah funds
- • The percentage and dollar amount of total program costs financed by non-governmental sources

Assignment and Subcontracting

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

Use of Funds and Post-Reporting Requirements

Following the completion of the required five-year reporting period, any ongoing funds provided through this award shall be used solely for the continued operation of the approved Deep Tech Talent Initiative program. These funds are restricted to the purposes outlined in the approved proposal and may not be repurposed for other institutional activities or programs.

Institutions remain responsible for ensuring that all awarded funds are expended in direct support of the approved program, regardless of the reporting period. Any funds not used for the approved purpose must be returned to Talent Ready Utah.

If an institution discontinues, suspends, or materially reduces the scope, scale, or capacity of the approved program, the institution must immediately notify Talent Ready Utah. Any remaining or uncommitted funds at that time must be returned.

Ongoing funding is contingent upon the institution's continued operation of the approved program and alignment with the objectives outlined in this RFP.

REPORTING AND DATA COLLECTION

The institution shall provide an annual report for five years and on a regular basis as reasonably requested by Talent Ready Utah. The report will be due by the 2nd Tuesday in October of each year.

At a minimum, the education partner shall address the following in their annual report, **as applicable or outlined in the MOU:**

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 deep tech 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 deep tech 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 deep tech research as a result of the program.
 - b. Amount of external funding secured for deep tech projects.
 - c. The number of startups or spin-offs originating from deep tech research conducted within higher education institutions.
6. Continuous Improvement
 - a. Annual assessments of deep tech program quality and relevance conducted by external 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	25	10%
Past Performance	25	35%
Projected Performance Outcomes	25	25%
Budget	25	30%
Total Possible Points	100	100%

Talent Ready Utah may contact the respective institution that submitted proposals for additional information and/or revisions if the Deep Tech Talent Advisory Council requires further information to recommend.

If you have any questions regarding the Deep Tech Talent Initiative grant and application process, please email TRUgrants@ushe.edu.

Proposal Debriefing

Upon request, a debriefing meeting will be scheduled with an applicant. 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.

See the Next Page for Proposal Instructions/Outline

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSALS

Formatting

The proposal narrative should not exceed 10 pages in length. This includes the cover, table of contents, attached graphs, and any appendices to the proposal. It does not include the budget worksheet 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 identifiers 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	(25 points)
Past Performance	(25 points)
Performance/Outcomes	(25 points)
Budget	(25 points)

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

Proposal Outline

Introduction - 25 points

- Provide a description of the program, highlighting any modifications from the initial proposal.
- Describe the future regional or state workforce needs of the deep technology occupation(s) this program meets.
- Describe how the program has and will continue to expand the capacity to meet state or regional workforce needs related to deep technology.
 - Provide a list of occupations the program is preparing students for.
 - Include any supporting data that validates that the program prepares students for these careers.

- Provide a summary of how employers/industry associations have been involved in curriculum development, instruction, project-based learning, internships, or employment opportunities.
- List employers anticipated to hire projected program completers, 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?

Letter(s) of Support may include:

- How the partner intends to support or contribute to the proposed program.
- Validation of workforce needs.
- Commitment of materials, resources, and/or financial support to the proposed program.

Past Performance - 25 points

- Provide a detailed update on the achievement of timelines, outcomes, and key deliverables listed in your initial proposal and referenced in the MOU.
- Provide a review of the timeline proposed in the initial proposal, along with the month and year that the benchmark was achieved. Explain and plan for any benchmark that has not been achieved.
- Provide a review of the timely and accurate submission annual report.
- Provide a comparison of your initial proposed budget and actual budget expenses, by year with any explanations and approvals provided.

Projected Performance Outcomes - 25 points

- Based on your enrollment history, provide a projected number of students to enroll in the program annually. What is the targeted annual completion/graduation rate? How many students will obtain Deep Tech industry-related employment? How do you plan to collect and track the data required to be provided in your annual report?
- How does the institution plan to sustain the program's future growth?
- How will the institution collect and track what is required for the annual report?
- Describe how industry/employer feedback will be obtained and utilized to improve the program's quality.

- For the time that your program has been funded, provide a table that presents the number of applicants by year, number of students accepted, number of students enrolled, completers, and placement.
- Describe any institution or employer-specific metrics that will be used to measure program success.
- How will the institution track performance/outcome data?

Budget Worksheet/Narrative - 25 points

Applicants must include a budget narrative that describes and justifies requested budget items and costs. In your budget narrative, describe how the Budget Information, and “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.