

Colorado FIRST/Existing Industry Customized Training Programs

Funding Policies & Criteria

All grant applications are evaluated in terms of the following criteria:

Baseline Policies/Criteria (*Baseline eligibility criteria for submission of a grant*)

- ❑ The maximum average cost threshold per trainee is \$800.
- ❑ Companies must meet a sustainable wage threshold: in urban areas, employers must pay an average wage of at least \$10.46/hour; in rural areas, average wage must be at least \$8.21/hour.
- ❑ Health insurance must be a company benefit available to all permanent, full-time employees.
- ❑ All grant-funded training must be customized to meet the company's specific needs.
- ❑ For Colorado FIRST grants, the new or expanding company must demonstrate that it has recently created specific, new positions; in cases where those new positions have not yet been filled, the company must give hiring priority to the individuals who have participated in the Colorado FIRST training.
- ❑ Training may not be for retail, seasonal, public or non-profit sector, part-time, or non-permanent positions or for employees not eligible to work in the United States.
- ❑ Applicant companies must pay for a minimum of 40% of the total training costs. For grants over \$30,000, at least 10% of the company's contribution must be cash.
- ❑ Training that is mandated by a federal or state regulatory agency (e.g. OSHA, FAA) is **not** eligible for grant funds.
- ❑ Company financials must pass a financial review for Existing Industry proposals.

Priority Criteria (*Companies meeting such criteria are weighted more heavily in the grant review*)

- ❑ Small companies, employing fewer than 250 total employees.
- ❑ Companies operating in rural Colorado communities.
- ❑ Primary industries – companies that produce new wealth within a community, while importing and exporting dollars into and out of that community.
- ❑ Industry segments identified as strategic priorities by the Governor. (**aerospace, bioscience, renewable energy, advanced information technology**)
- ❑ Retraining of workers for whom training is necessary for continued employment and/or to minimize worker dislocation. The necessity should be documented and supplemented by supporting data. Training is for transferable skills.
- ❑ Cluster grants maximize the impact of state customized training dollars.
- ❑ College involvement in training.

Other Factors that Influence Funding Decisions (*Considerations during grant review process*)

- ❑ Return on investment – expected pay increases, promotions, or other measurable outcomes.
- ❑ Career ladder opportunities are available to trainees and are directly related to increased skills and training.
- ❑ Proposed training is directly related to the company's strategic priorities.
- ❑ Grant-funded training is only one piece of the company's overall training plan.
- ❑ Proposals from companies who have received Colorado FIRST or Existing Industry funds in the past three years are less competitive and may be ineligible for Existing Industry funding.