

PAsmart Pathway Innovations to Registered Apprenticeships Grant Program

Bidder's Conference Q&A – June 10, 2024

Please Note: All questions and answers have been paraphrased.

- **Q: If a proposal submitted would increase the diversity of the apprenticeship pool within the existing program, could it also include an expansion to increase or add some additional focuses of training that don't exist in the current apprenticeship program. Is it possible to seek funding to do both at the same time?**

A: Please review the NGA for what the funds may be used for and the required outcomes. If an existing program will be revisiting a program format, you will need to reach out to the Apprenticeship Training Representative (ATR) to formally change the program and receive approval from the ATO.

- **Q: In addition to the required outcomes, are you allowed to propose additional outcomes?**

A: The required outcomes in the NGA are the minimum. Applicants are encouraged to list additional outcomes within their application.

- **Q: Our registered apprenticeship program has partial funding through 9/30/25, can we apply for funding to expand the program effective 11/1/24 and use the PAsmart funds to help support the existing program after the current funding source expires?**

A: An organization may be eligible to apply as long as the grants are maintained separately, and you are not double billing for the same expense.

- **Q: What is the definition of expansion of apprenticeship?**

A: Within the NGA, existing registered apprenticeships will either meet the required outcome of serving at least 8 apprentices during the grant period for a single county initiative or utilizing a group model to reach multiple counties (3 or more counties); align with at least 3 employers /locations and 25 apprentices during the grant period.

- **Q: Is matching funding required?**

A: No, matching funding is not required.

- **Q: In the May 2024 Forecasted Grant Opportunities, there is a PAsmart 23-24 Growing Registered Apprenticeship grant scheduled to be released, is this the same grant or in addition to?**

A: This is the same grant opportunity listed in the Forecasted Grant Opportunities.

- **Q: Are manufacturing and building trades not given priority or not to be considered at all for this NGA?**

A: Priority consideration will be given to new sector occupations and new, previously unfunded initiatives. These new sector apprenticeships would be targeting occupations found outside of

manufacturing and the building trades. Manufacturing and building trades will have an NGA released in the near future for support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in round two of funding.

- **Q: Can a state registered program partner with a federally registered program to expand occupations in the PA region?**
A: There is an apprenticeship office in each state. Some offices are staffed by USDOL and others are a state apprenticeship agency. Pennsylvania is a state apprenticeship agency and apprenticeships in the commonwealth must be registered with the Apprenticeship & Training Office. Some apprenticeships are nationally registered but not registered in Pennsylvania. Please reach out to the ATO for additional details regarding the proposed program partnership.
- **Q: Are registered pre-apprenticeships program eligible for this grant?**
A: The PAsmart Pathway Innovations to Registered Apprenticeship is specific to apprenticeships and not pre-apprenticeships. There will be a future NGA for pre-apprenticeship.
- **Q: Can funds be used to purchase equipment used in training? Can an existing apprenticeship program add a pre-apprenticeship?**
A: Refer to the budget in Appendix F for details on program expenses. This funding may not be used to add a pre-apprenticeship.
- **Q: Construction sector occupations within the NGA, list a variety of traditional apprenticeships, are they excluded from applying?**
A: The NGA does give priority to new, previously unfunded initiatives in the new sector occupations but does not disqualify the manufacturing or building trades from applying. There will be a specific NGA released in the near future for Increasing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Building and Construction Trades Round 2.
- **Q: What is being considered appropriate for sustainability?**
A: Within the NGA, Appendix E details the questions for impacts and sustainability.
- **Q: Where exactly does it tell you what funds can be spent on?**
A: Please refer to the budget in Appendix F.
- **Q: Can you advise where the funds are from and are there any restrictions on the apprentice to be an incumbent worker with a 6-month working history with the employer?**
A: The PAsmart framework was developed to better align education, workforce and economic development initiatives and funding. PAsmart is based on four goals:
 1. Strategically investing resources in initiatives to support economic growth and education and training opportunities;
 2. Achieving successful outcomes for Pennsylvania students, workers, businesses, and communities;
 3. Improving coordination and alignment of education and workforce development programs, services, and funding; and

4. Transforming inter-agency, cross-sector collaboration around education, workforce and economic development at state, regional and local levels.

The PAsmart initiative was designed as strategic, competitive, and cross-sector investment focused on meeting the education and workforce development needs of students, workers, employers, and communities across Pennsylvania, including those disconnected from education and workforce opportunities.

- **Q: Are rural counties eligible to apply when they could have difficulties meeting the diversity category requirements?**
A: Rural counties are encouraged to apply and the ATO will work with them.
- **Q: Are current grantees with active PAsmart contracts disqualified from applying?**
A: Active PAsmart grantees are not disqualified from applying.
- **Q: Can you apply for new apprenticeship and existing scale in same application?**
A: Applicants may apply for the development of a new registered apprenticeship and expanding an existing registered apprenticeship in the same application. Applicants will need to meet the requirements of the specified outcomes for each activity selected.
- **Q: Expansion of existing apprenticeship program is it required to increase the number of apprentices or what if you expand the scope of training for an existing apprenticeship?**
A: Please review the NGA for what the funds may be used for and the required outcomes. If an existing program will be revisiting a program format, you will need to reach out to the Apprenticeship Training Representative (ATR) to formally change the program and receive approval from the ATO.
- **Q: We will be submitting an application for Multiple Counties. The area covered is within two WIOA regions. Do we need a letter of support from the WIOA or could there be a joint letter?**
A: A joint letter would be sufficient. Please keep in mind if one of the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) will be taking the lead as fiscal agent, this information needs to be noted in the letter of support and the project narrative.
- **Q: Most of the counties that would be represented are rural counties. What advice can you give us to help cover the diversity requirement. This is something that rural counties struggle with because of the lack of diverse groups other than the rural poor.**
A: Within the diverse talent pipeline and underserved populations, the NGA details the following historically underrepresented populations: including women, people of color, individuals with disabilities, veterans, individuals from underserved or unserved communities, individuals who speak English as a second language, individuals who were previously incarcerated, or individuals experiencing multiple barriers to employment. These are key areas of opportunity for rural communities to embrace for their expansion of the talent pipeline.
- **Q: Because we would be working with in the two WIOA regions would we need more than three letters of support?**

A: The minimum of 1 to 3 letters will be appropriate.

- **Q: Is there a commitment required of the participating employers?**

A: Yes, there will be requirements on the employer. Additional details on the requirements for an employer can be found at the Apprenticeship and Training Office's website: [PA CareerLink® | Registered Apprenticeship](#)

- **Q: Page 8 of the NGA there are varied outcomes for the number of apprentices served based on the initiative. If an applicant selects two outcomes, would the applicant split the number of apprentices served for an average?**

A: The NGA does state specific outcomes for the required activities selected by the applicant. For applicants that select multiple options, the listed outcomes will be required, not an average.

- **Q: Does an applicant need to have an approved apprenticeship in order to apply?**

A: Applicants do not need to have an active apprenticeship or state approved apprenticeship in order to apply for the grant. Grantees will be required to register the apprenticeship with the Pennsylvania Apprenticeship and Training Council and the ATO.

- **Q: Does funding allow for paying to register for a new apprenticeship?**

A: Funding can be used for building of an apprenticeship.

- **Q: Could it be a fiscally sponsored organization that brings together a collective of five organizations that apply?**

A: Organizations may collaborate to apply but one of the organizations will need to be the lead entity and listed as the fiscal agent.

- **Q: Is this an opportunity to create a new program or category altogether? For example, would this grant help support the development of a new category like Digital Media Production?**

A: There is Digital Marketer program, Digital Video Editor, and Multimedia Producer listed as apprenticeships. A great resource is [apprenticeship.gov](#) to see what other variations of the occupation that are registered. Type in digital media and many other similar occupations will be listed. Just keep in mind a position title doesn't always equate to a program name, it sometimes fits into the program (occupation) name.