

New Jersey Economic Development Authority
Notice of Funding Availability
For
Green Workforce Training Grant Challenge

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) will begin accepting applications for the competitive Green Workforce Training Grant Challenge program at 10:00 a.m. EDT August 8, 2024 AND WILL CLOSE ON October 8, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. EDT. The application is open for 61 calendar days, including federal holidays. A total of \$7 million will be available through this program, with minimum and maximum award amounts set at \$250,000 and \$1.5 million, respectively. The application can be accessed at: [Green Workforce Grant - NJEDA](#)

Purpose

This grant opportunity is seeking applicants that will aid in implementing innovative workforce training and skills programs focused on strengthening and diversifying New Jersey's green economy talent pipeline.

Overview

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority seeks to strengthen the state's workforce to ensure all New Jerseyans can benefit from the economic and workforce opportunities presented by the State's burgeoning green economy, as described below. The Green Workforce Training Grant Challenge ("Grant Challenge") is a competitive funding opportunity that will award grants to selected applicants that can provide skill development, workforce training, job placement, and other related services to implement workforce development initiatives in green economy sectors. Applicants will also be expected to prioritize New Jersey's Overburdened Communities (as defined by [NJ's Environmental Justice Law](#), N.J.S.A. 13:1D-157) and provide wraparound or other supportive services to foster diversity, equity, inclusion, and retention in the green economy workforce. Grants will be awarded to proposals that achieve the highest overall scores based on the scoring criteria discussed below.

Funding Source

A total of \$7 million will be available through this Grant Challenge program, ranging from minimum award of \$250,000 to maximum award of \$1.5 million. The funds consist of \$2.65 million provided through the Offshore Wind Sector Initiatives Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the NJEDA and the NJ Board of Public Utilities (October 12, 2023) and \$4.35 million from the Green Council MOU between NJEDA and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (March 28, 2024).

NJEDA will deposit the funds into NJEDA's Economic Recovery Fund and utilize the grant-making powers as defined in the New Jersey Economic Recovery Fund Act per N.J.S.A. 34:1B-7.13 a(12) to disburse funds to each awardee per the disbursement schedule. The statutory provision permits grant funding for initiative-based activities which stimulate growth in targeted industries as defined by NJEDA's Board or supports increasing diversity and inclusion within the State's entrepreneurial economy.

The potential award amount is based upon current information about funding availability; NJEDA reserves the right to increase that amount and number of awards should additional funds become available.

Proposal Scope

Applicants must submit proposals for the application that outline compelling plans to:

- Implement an existing program or new program that will allow New Jerseyans to access workforce opportunities in green economy industries by providing tangible skills sought by employers in those industries. Components of programs must include direct workforce training/skill development, and, where relevant, support services such as access to career services, mentorship, family services (such as childcare, eldercare, or other similar services), counseling, transportation, etc. Proposed initiatives must focus on one or two (but no more than two) of the following industries:
 - Offshore Wind (OSW)
 - Other Renewable Energy Technologies
 - Green Design & Construction
 - Environmental and Green Infrastructure
 - Grid Resilience
 - Clean Transportation
 - Energy Efficiency
- Connect with industry and other stakeholders to design and/or implement a program that prepares and connects participants with job opportunities in the green economy in high-growth and in-demand occupations. Applicants are expected to demonstrate that their proposed program will provide meaningful career opportunities through labor market research, employer and industry engagements, and other relevant analysis.
- Develop and/or utilize outreach, recruitment best practices, program design approaches, and wraparound supports as needed such as mentorship, transportation, and childcare that target and support a diverse and inclusive pool of training participants to successfully complete the program.
- Define program evaluation and success metrics such as: recruitment, enrollment, completion, job placement, and learning acquisition goals.
- Reach and target New Jersey's Overburdened Communities and provide opportunities for economic mobility for these communities in green economy careers.
- Collect, track, and report programmatic data, including trainee demographics, trainee surveys, instructor evaluations, training enrollments and completions, and job placement and retention information.
- If applicable, include strategies to connect current and aspiring workforce with skills-based training targeted to transitioning legacy energy workers.
- Execute the project efficiently and on schedule, achieving well-defined milestones to complete the proposed initiative.

Virtual training programs operated in New Jersey or other states are eligible under this grant challenge so long as the program includes a clear approach to make the training accessible for and targeted to NJ residents and is linked to NJ employment opportunities in green economy careers.

Eligibility Criteria

The Grant Challenge will be open to entities who can design and execute workforce and skills training programs. Eligible applicants can include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Community-based organizations
- Non-profit or private workforce training organizations
- Labor unions
- Technical high schools
- County colleges
- Other non-profit organizations
- Regional workforce development boards
- For-profit companies

Applicants must include, at a minimum, one Community-Based Organization (CBO) that serves one or more NJ Overburdened Communities as part of their application. The CBO must either be the primary applicant or, in the alternative, a strategic collaborator with the applicant that is serving a defined role in the proposed program. All applications that include the CBO as a strategic collaborator must submit a signed letter of intent from the CBO stating that they are a strategic collaborator with the applicant for the proposed program, the role the CBO will have in the proposed program, and the amount of the requested budget allocated to the CBO. The applicant is responsible for transferring the allocated budget to the CBO for their assigned tasks for the proposed program.

- For the purposes of this training challenge, a CBO is defined as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with demonstrated experience serving a NJ Overburdened Community, as defined by NJ's Environmental Justice Law that provides direct services or supports to a specific geographic NJ community(ies) or specific segments of a New Jersey community(ies). For the purposes of this Challenge, government entities, K-12 schools, and institutions of higher learning do not qualify as CBOs. However, these entities may be the applicant or an additional collaborator on the applicant team. Entities that are not 501(c)3 organizations do not qualify as a CBO for the purposes of this grant challenge even if they serve a New Jersey Overburdened Community.
- Per the NJ Division of Taxation, a 501(c)(3) Organization refers to a nonprofit organization that has received a determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) stating that the organization is exempt from federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The CBO term also may refer to a church or ministry that may qualify for an IRS 501(c) (3) determination letter, even though it does not intend to apply for an IRS determination.

Applicants may, but are not required to, collaborate with additional entities, including for-profit or non-profit entities of all types, to design and implement the training program as needed.

In addition to the eligibility parameters already stated above, the primary applicant must also be in substantial good standing with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development ("NJLWD") and NJ Department of Environmental Protection ("NJDEP") to participate in the program. The primary applicant must provide a current tax clearance certificate as part of the application to demonstrate the applicant is properly registered to do business in New Jersey and in good standing with the NJ Division of Taxation.

Proposed initiatives must focus on one or two (but no more than two) of the following Green Economy sectors:

- Offshore Wind
- Other Renewable Energy Technologies
- Green Design & Construction
- Environmental and Green Infrastructure
- Grid Resilience
- Clean Transportation
- Energy Efficiency

Application Process

Applications will be accepted during a competitive application round through the program's online application portal, which will be open from **August 8, 2024** at 10 a.m. EDT to **October 8, 2024** at 5:00 p.m. EDT. All interested applicants must complete and submit their applications online through this portal by the deadline to be considered for the Grant Challenge award. The application can be found at: [Green Workforce Grant - NJEDA](#). Pursuant to EDA's revised fee rules, no application fee will be charged.

After the application window has closed, NJEDA staff will review all applications for completeness and compliance with required documentation and minimum requirements. Following the completeness review, applicants with missing or incomplete documentation will receive an email notification from NJEDA and will have ten business days to submit any missing or requested documentation. Applicants should submit missing documentation electronically to WindInstitute@njeda.gov with the email subject line "*NJ Green Workforce Training Grant Challenge – Missing Documentation Submission for [APPLICANT NAME]*".

After the ten business days, any application that is not complete will not be evaluated or scored. **All complete and compliant applications will be evaluated, scored** and ranked by an Evaluation Committee comprised of NJEDA staff. Staff from the Governor's Office of Climate Action, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, New Jersey Department of Labor, and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education may serve as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and advise the evaluation committee. The evaluation committee will evaluate, score and rank applications received based on five primary criteria:

1. Impactful program design and implementation approach, and the ability of the initiative to meet the needs of New Jersey's growing green economy (up to 35 points);
 2. Ability to serve NJ's Overburdened Communities (up to 10 points);
 3. Ability to provide wraparound supports and low or no-cost training (up to 15 points);
 4. Prior experience creating and implementing workforce development initiatives (up to 30 points); and
 5. Justification for the proposed use of funds with a reasonable budget to implement the proposed training program (up to 10 points)
- To be considered for an award, an application must receive a minimum score of 80 points.

NJEDA staff may request clarifying information from applicants during the evaluation period prior to scoring. Applicants from whom clarifying information is sought will all receive ten business days to

respond electronically to WindInstitute@njeda.gov with email subject line “*NJ Green Workforce Training Grant Challenge – Clarifying Documentation Submission for [APPLICANT NAME]*”.

Grant Amounts

Eligible applicants can propose an initiative with required funding of no less than \$250,000 and no more than \$1.5 million. NJEDA anticipates making multiple awards through this challenge. Funding will be made available according to the following criteria:

- Of the \$7 million total available in funding through this grant challenge, \$2.65 million of the funding is earmarked to fund offshore wind programs;
- Of the \$7 million total available in funding through this grant challenge, \$4.35 million of the funding is earmarked to fund proposals across all eligible green economy industries, including offshore wind; and
- If a proposal covers offshore wind and one other eligible green economy industry, NJEDA, at its discretion, may allocate additional funds from either or both of the Council on the Green Economy and the Wind Institute.

Applicants must provide a detailed budget using the budget template included within the Grant Challenge application materials. The budget should demonstrate how the grant will be used to cover costs related to the proposed program. Program collaborators must be included in the application budget, and be identified for their role in the project and their status as a Community-Based Organization, non-profit, or for-profit entity.

To maximize the total amount of funding allocated through this challenge, NJEDA may opt to request revisions to the proposed budgets or scopes per the following protocol:

- NJEDA will fully fund the top scoring proposals within the maximum program funding of \$7 million and within the funding sub-allocations as described above. If the next highest scoring applicant has a budget request that would exceed the total maximum program funding available, NJEDA may request that the applicant revise their budget and/or scope. The applicant has the right to decline or accept the budget revision option.
 - If this applicant declines, NJEDA may make the same offer to the next highest scoring applicant.
 - This process may continue until a qualifying applicant’s proposal either fits within the maximum of \$7 million available (or the sub-allocations as described above) or accepts the offer to revise its budget to fit within the maximum program funding available.
 - Any applicant that accepts the offer to revise its budget will have the revised application evaluated by NJEDA to determine if the revision would lower their proposal’s ranking to an extent that they are no longer the next highest ranked proposal.

Applicants whose applications are declined will have the right to appeal. All declinations recommended by NJEDA staff that are based on discretionary reasons will be brought to the NJEDA board for approval.

Eligible Uses of Grant Funds

Eligible uses of grant funding include:

- Costs associated with planning (e.g., staff costs for program development, curriculum materials, etc.)

- Soft launch (e.g., outreach costs, recruitment materials and related costs, etc.)
- Capital costs (e.g., procurement, construction or renovation of program space, equipment, and material purchases, etc.)
- Implementation costs (e.g., instructor time, facility fees, participant stipends, equipment or materials, delivery of support services, etc.)
- Administration and indirect costs

No more than ten percent (10%) of the grant amount may be used on indirect costs such as general administration and overhead. No more than thirty percent (30%) of the grant amount can be applied for construction costs.

If capital costs are proposed, the applicant and collaborators performing capital work will be subject to labor compliance, including New Jersey affirmative action, prevailing wage requirements, and the requirement to complete New Jersey Contractor Registration. Applicants who identify capital costs as an expected use of funding will acknowledge as part of the application that they understand the grant is subject to these labor compliance requirements and their documentation may be audited.

Disbursement of Grant Funds

NJEDA will enter into a grant agreement solely with the selected applicants, and the applicant will be held responsible for complying with the terms of the grant.

Selected applicants will enter into a grant agreement with NJEDA, and Funds will be disbursed according to the following schedule:

- 25 percent of the grant will be disbursed upon execution of a grant agreement between NJEDA and the selected applicant.
- 25 percent of the grant will be disbursed upon the Grantee's submission of quarterly and mid-program reports and associated materials, with exact timing and format to be determined based on the grantee's design and/or implementation plan and reflected in the grant agreement.
- 50 percent of the grant amount will be disbursed upon meeting specific program milestones and deliverables to be defined by the applicant in their application and then finalized with NJEDA if a grant award decision is made.
 - No more than five (5) specific program milestones and deliverables shall be defined by the applicant in their application. Milestones and deliverables should occur between the mid-program report and the end of the grant period. However, one of the 5 milestones and deliverables must be to complete and submit the final report no later than 30 days after the end of the term of the grant.
 - Milestone payouts may be pro-rated if the milestone and/or deliverable is not fully met. E.g., if a \$10,000 budget has been allocated to obtain 20 enrollments for a training program, then the grant agreement could assign \$500 per enrollment up to a maximum of 20 enrollments for this milestone. If the grantee acquires 15 enrollments, the grantee's payout would equal 15 enrollments X \$500 per enrollment = \$7,500.

Additional Specifications

NJEDA will reserve a royalty-free, non-exclusive irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use any copyrightable materials developed utilizing funds awarded through this grant, inclusive of training

curriculum materials and program reports.

NJEDA will require quarterly expense reporting from grantees in a template provided by NJEDA, which is expected to include an expense cover sheet and supporting documentation, including receipts, invoices, and proofs of payment for all grant-related expenses. The grantee will be expected to adhere to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and utilize grant funding for agreed upon allowable costs as defined within the grant budget. NJEDA, at its discretion, may conduct an audit and/or reject proposed costs incurred by the grantee that are determined to not be allowable under the project scope of work defined in the grant agreement.

At the end of the grant agreement period, any underspent funds or disallowed costs must be returned by the grantee to NJEDA.

NJEDA will require grantees to provide quarterly reporting on program data, including enrollment, completion, and job outcomes from the training, attendance, exam and credential results, recruitment plans, wraparound services, trainee evaluations, expenses, progress against milestones, challenges/successes, and demographics information.

NJEDA will review, may modify, and approve all branding for programs offered by grantees through the funding received from this grant challenge, including program names, flyers, websites, use of logos, and communication materials.

The term of the grant period will be based upon the following criteria:

- For programs that do not involve program design components and only include program implementation, the term of the grant cannot exceed two years.

For programs that involve both program design and implementation, the term of the grant can be a maximum of three years with no more than one year of the three-year term dedicated to program design. Program design is defined to include the activities leading up to the launch of the training program including curriculum development, facility, and technology setup, and planning documents (e.g., recruitment plans, marketing strategies, etc.). The launch of the program is defined as initiation of marketing and recruitment activities that advertise the program to the program target audience.

Program implementation is defined to include activities after the launch of the training program including curriculum delivery and instruction, wraparound services, and job placement.

Additional Information

Entities interested in collaborating on an applicant team may submit an optional “Potential Collaborator Form” (available on the Grant Challenge page) by August 15, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. EDT. Responses from the forms will be shared with all entities that submit these forms, however EDA will not be coordinating the formation of teams.

Questions regarding the Grant Challenge may be submitted via email to WindInstitute@njeda.gov by September 6, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. EDT with the subject line “Questions – NJ Green Workforce Training Grant Challenge”. EDA will post answers on the Green Workforce Training Grant Challenge website by



September 16, 2024 5:00 p.m. EDT. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to check the Green Workforce Training Grant Challenge website prior to submission of the application.**

Comprehensive information about the Green Workforce Training Grant Challenge is available at [Green Workforce Grant - NJEDA](#)

The NJEDA is subject to State and Federal statutes including, but not limited to, the following, which may impact affiliates: N.J.S.A. 52:32-60.1, et seq., which prevents the New Jersey government entities from certain dealings with businesses engaged in prohibited activities in Belarus or Russia; Compliance with the list of “Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons” promulgated by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov>; N.J.S.A. 24:6I-49 which provides that the following are not eligible for most State or local economic incentives (a) a person or entity issued a license to operate as a cannabis cultivator, manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or delivery service, or that employs a certified personal use cannabis handler to perform work for or on behalf of a cannabis establishment, distributor, or delivery service; and (b) a property owner, developer, or operator of a project to be used, in whole or in part, by or to benefit a cannabis cultivator, manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or delivery service, or to employ a certified personal use cannabis handler to perform work for or on behalf of a cannabis establishment, distributor, or delivery service; and N.J.S.A. 52:13D-12, et seq., which prohibits a member of the Legislature or a State officer or employee or their partners or a corporation in which they owns or controls more than 1% of the stock to undertake or execute any contract, agreement, sale, or purchase of \$25.00 or more, made, entered into, awarded or granted by any State agency, with certain limited exceptions.