
Sponsor: Workforce Solutions

Meeting Date: 1/11/2022

Title: Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Saint Paul, City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County to apply for the Economic Development Administration Good Jobs Challenge

File Number: 2021-681

Background and Rationale:

As a part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the Economic Development Administration (EDA) within the Department of Commerce has opened a funding opportunity with \$500 million of available funding through the Good Jobs Challenge <<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=334720>>. The Good Jobs Challenge aims to get Americans back to work by building and strengthening systems and partnerships that bring together employers who have hiring needs with other key entities to train workers with in-demand skills that lead to good-paying jobs.

The EDA encourages efforts to reach historically underserved populations and areas, communities of color, women and other groups facing labor market barriers such as persons with disabilities, disconnected youth, individuals in recovery, individuals with past criminal records, including justice impacted and reentry participants, trainees participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) programs, and veterans and military spouses.

These systems and partnerships will create and implement industry-led training programs, designed to provide skills for and connect unemployed or underemployed workers to existing and emerging job opportunities. Ultimately, these systems are designed to train workers with the skills to secure a union job or a quality job that provides good pay, benefits, and growth opportunities.

Ramsey County, in partnership with the city of Saint Paul, the city of Minneapolis and Hennepin County, will apply as the lead entity for the EDA Good Jobs Challenge. Ramsey County will act as the fiscal agent for the lead entity. The lead entity coordinates across and supports the sectoral partnerships within its system. The application will include three sector partnerships in areas of tech, healthcare and construction. Identified industry backbone organization applicants have been identified and will be co-applicants for the grant. They include MnTech (tech industry sector), HealthForce Minnesota (healthcare sector) and Associated General Contractors of Minnesota (construction sector). In addition, there will be opportunities to engage strategic partners such as adult basic education, organized labor, chambers of commerce, institutions of higher education, local workforce development boards, and human services organizations.

The Good Jobs Challenge is designed to develop or strengthen regional workforce training systems and sectoral partnerships. EDA will fund proposals with one or more of the following three phases of the system and/or sectoral partnership lifecycles, as applicable to regional needs:

- System Development funding to help a System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization establish and develop a regional workforce training system or sectoral partnerships
- Program Design funding for sectoral partnership(s) to identify the skills needed by industry and workers, develop the skills training curriculum and materials, and secure technical

expertise needed to train workers with the skills needed by businesses, including providing professional development and capacity-building to trainers and educators. Employer commitments to hire should also be secured in this phase.

- Program Implementation funding to deliver workforce training and wrap-around services that will place workers into quality jobs through a new or expanded sectoral partnership(s).

It is anticipated that there will be 25-50 awards nationwide ranging from \$5 million to \$25 million. Grants will be funded at 100% grant rate although grant applications that leverage other funds will be more competitive. Local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding and local ARPA funds are allowed as leveraged funds.

Applications are due February 10, 2022 and notifications of awards begin July 22, 2022. Performance period for this grant ends in May 2027.

As we continue to rebuild from the impacts of COVID-19, the opportunity to apply for other funding is an important strategy to bring more resources into the community beyond the county's state and local government ARPA allocation. For more information on the EDA Good Jobs Challenge, visit: <https://eda.gov/arpa/good-jobs-challenge/>.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Approve the Joint Powers Agreement with the city of Saint Paul, city of Minneapolis and Hennepin County to apply for the Economic Development Administration Good Jobs Challenge.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the agreement.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Ortega, seconded by Commissioner Carter. Motion passed.

Aye: - 7: Carter, Frethem, MatasCastillo, McDonough, McGuire, Ortega, and Reinhardt

By: 
Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board