

INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING GRANT PROGRAM GUIDE



March 2026

Governor's Workforce Board

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
1511 Pontiac Avenue, Cranston, RI 02920

Phone: 401-462-8860

E-mail: dlt.gwbinfo@dlt.ri.gov

Web: www.gwb.ri.gov



An equal opportunity employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request. TTY via RI Relay: 711.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	3
KEY TERMS	3
ELIGIBLE EMPLOYERS	3
REIMBURSEMENT RATES & PROGRAM CAPS	3
ELIGIBLE TRAINING.....	4
ELIGIBLE COSTS.....	4
APPLICATION PROCESS	5
AWARD PROCESS	5
APPLICATION DENIALS	6
APPEAL PROCESS FOR DENIED APPLICATIONS.....	6
REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS	6
CHECKING REIMBURSEMENT STATUS.....	7
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	7

OVERVIEW

The Incumbent Worker Training Grant Program was created to support continuing education, training and upskilling of incumbent employees working for Rhode Island employers and is intended to:

- 1) help employers upskill their workforce to remain competitive in an economy with evolving technologies, techniques, and markets; and
- 2) help workers maintain employment and advance in their careers.

The program is administered by the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB) at the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training and provides a 50% to 100% reimbursement for eligible costs on eligible training activities.

All Rhode Island employers who meet the eligibility requirements outlined in this guide may apply.

KEY TERMS

For the purposes of this program the following definitions apply:

- **Employer** — An entity, company or organization entering into agreement with the Governor's Workforce Board to provide training to its incumbent workers.
- **Incumbent Worker** — An individual working for the employer (also referred to as an Employee, Trainee or Participant).
- **Credential** — Documentation of a person's attainment of knowledge or skills.

ELIGIBLE EMPLOYERS

Employers must meet four (4) eligibility requirements to participate in the program:

- 1) Classified as a for-profit or private non-profit entity doing business in Rhode Island (public/government entities are not eligible).
- 2) Pays into the Rhode Island Job Development Fund via Unemployment Insurance taxes.
- 3) In good standing with all divisions of the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, and not prohibited from contracting with an agency that administers federal funds.
 - **NOTE:** To verify that the organization pays into the Job Development Fund and is current on all tax obligations, please contact the Employer Tax Unit at (401) 574-8700.
- 4) Registered in Rhode Island's supplier management system, Ocean State Procures ('OSP').
If the employer is not currently registered with OSP, registration must be completed and approved prior to applying for an Incumbent Worker Training Grant.

Please visit the [Vendor Self Registration Guide](#) or [click here](#) to be directed to the OSP application. For assistance, please contact WebProcure.Support@perfect.com or call 1(866)889-8533.

REIMBURSEMENT RATES & PROGRAM CAPS

Employers who meet the eligibility criteria outlined above and have 25 or more employees may be reimbursed at a rate of 50% for eligible costs on eligible training activities. Eligible employers with fewer than 25 employees may be reimbursed at a higher rate of 75%.

- **NEW:** Employers of any size may be reimbursed at a rate of 100% for English as a Second Language Training (otherwise known as ‘ESL On-The-Job’).

The annual award cap for all eligible employers is \$25,000 per calendar year. Multiple training grants may be awarded to an employer until the \$25,000 program cap is reached.

Employers with more than one location in Rhode Island may be treated as either one employer or separate employers depending on the Federal Employer Identification Number(s) (FEINs). Employers with locations operating under different FEINs will be considered separate entities and each location may submit its own application(s). Employers with more than one location operating under a single FEIN are considered one entity.

Reimbursable training dollars are capped at a per-trainee, per year amount of \$5,000.

ELIGIBLE TRAINING

Employers may utilize this program to provide training that demonstrates a clear benefit to the organization and its employee(s). To be approved, an Incumbent Worker Training Grant Application must demonstrate at least one (1) of the following:

- Training responds to a new or modified local, state, federal, or international regulation or standard that requires a change in technology, process, etc.
- Training responds to rapidly changing industry practices or skill requirements, new technologies, or the emergence of new products or competitors.
- New market opportunities may become available because of the skills acquired through the training.
- The employee(s) will be positioned to advance into higher paying roles because of the training.
- The employee(s) will receive an industry recognized credential/certification that is transferable should they separate from the employer.

- **NOTE:** Provider-led English as a Second Language (ESL) training that supports workplace communication and job-related language skills is also eligible.

Employers may **NOT** utilize this program to provide training to the following types of personnel:

- Personnel who are not authorized to work in the United States
- Personnel hired as independent contractors under a 1099
- Personnel who are **immediate relatives**¹ of the employer *if* the immediate relatives are the only personnel to receive training.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Costs eligible for reimbursement include:

- Tuition and fees for college courses
- Trainers/Instructors (or training provider fees)
- Training materials and supplies
- Software or subscriptions (if directly related to training and used exclusively for training)

¹ An **immediate relative** is defined as an individual in a person’s family such as a spouse, parent, grandparent, child, stepchild, sibling, in-law, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, cousin, or domestic partner.

- Curriculum development (if necessary)
- Conference registration fees (see below)

➤ **NOTE:** Effective 3/1/2026, conference registration fees are reimbursable only when the training provided results in a verifiable learning outcome (such as a certificate, credential, or documented competency-based result). Conferences focused primarily on networking, or those offering professional development without verifiable learning outcomes, are not eligible.

Training should be delivered in a cost-effective manner using local institutions and training providers whenever possible.

The following costs are **NOT** reimbursable:

- Employee wages
- Employee mileage (or other travel costs)
- Hotel/accommodation costs
- Grant preparation or administration costs
- Food and beverage
- Equipment (including hardware and software) that is not exclusively for training
- Trainings/conferences outside of the U.S. or with non-U.S. based providers

➤ **NOTE:** Reimbursable training dollars are capped at a per-trainee, per year amount of \$5,000. This cap is applied to the matching grant funds (e.g., an employer may conduct training that costs \$10,000 per trainee; however, the maximum grant contribution toward that training will be \$5,000 per trainee).

APPLICATION PROCESS

Before training begins, an application must be submitted by the employer and approved by GWB staff. The Incumbent Worker Training Grant application is available online at www.gwb.ri.gov and can be submitted at any time (please apply at least three weeks prior to the start of a desired training activity). Applications are accepted online only.

When an application is successfully submitted, the applicant will receive an email confirmation. This is the employer's receipt and counts as proof that the application was submitted. If you do not receive an email confirmation after applying, please contact the GWB within 24 hours for assistance.

Applications are typically processed within seven (7) days of receipt. Each submission is reviewed by GWB staff for accuracy and to determine eligibility. If any issues are identified in the application, the point of contact listed on the application will be notified.

Employers should submit one (1) application for each unique training activity.

AWARD PROCESS

After an application is reviewed and approved, the employer will receive a contract for review and signature. Once signed by both the employer and the GWB, the employer will receive a copy of the contract. A copy of the contract may also be sent to the Rhode Island Department of Administration.

The GWB cannot provide reimbursement for any training costs incurred prior to the start date on the fully executed contract.

APPLICATION DENIALS

Applications will be denied if the information provided by the employer is deemed to be inaccurate or if the request does not meet the eligibility criteria outlined in this guide. Employers will be notified via e-mail if their application is denied. The e-mail will contain the reason for the denial and instructions for filing an appeal.

APPEAL PROCESS FOR DENIED APPLICATIONS

Denied applications may be appealed by writing to the Executive Director of the Governor's Workforce Board within two weeks (10 business days) of the notification of denial. Appeals may be sent via mail or via e-mail to dlt.gwbinfo@dlt.ri.gov and addressed to:

Executive Director
Governor's Workforce Board
Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
1511 Pontiac Avenue, Building 73-1
Cranston, RI 02920

The appeal must include the name and contact information for the employer representative (please include a mailing address and phone number) and a description of the issue.

The Executive Director will issue a decision within ten (10) business days of receiving the appeal.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

All payments in the Incumbent Worker Training Grant Program are made on a cost reimbursement basis in which the employer pays the training costs up front and requests reimbursement at the conclusion of the contract performance period. At the conclusion of the contract performance period, the employer is required to submit the Incumbent Worker Training Grant Request for Reimbursement Form and evidence of completed training and costs incurred to dlt.invoice@dlt.ri.gov within sixty (60) days.

If proper documentation is not received within sixty (60) days of the conclusion of the contract performance period, the reimbursement will not be processed, and the contract will be closed.

The following items are required to request reimbursement:

1. Incumbent Worker Training Grant Request for Reimbursement Form

At the time of award, employers will receive a copy of the Incumbent Worker Training Grant Request for Reimbursement Form. It may also be downloaded from the GWB website www.gwb.ri.gov. The form must be completed with the following information:

- Contract Number
- Employer Name
- Training Name
- Total Funding Utilized
- Employer Signature

2. Supporting Documentation (Evidence of Completed Training and Costs Incurred)

The following types of documents may be submitted as verification of completed training:

- Final Transcript(s) or Certificate(s) of Completion
- Training Sign-in Sheets

- Completion Reports
- Post-Training Vendor E-mails

(Please refer to the following table for additional information)

Training Type	Acceptable Documentation						
	Final Course Transcript	Certificate of Completion	Sign-in Sheets	Confirmation of Travel*	Post-Training Vendor E-mail	Completion Report	Pre-/Post-Assessments
Tuition	✓	✓					
Live Training Event		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Online Course	✓	✓				✓	
Training Webinar			✓		✓		
Conference		✓		✓			
On-Site Training		✓	✓		✓		
ESL Training			✓			✓	✓

*Travel is not reimbursable, but validates attendance

The following types of documents may be submitted as verification of costs incurred:

- Itemized invoices from training vendors accompanied by copies of processed checks
- Itemized receipts with dates

➤ **NOTE:** Supporting documents must identify the dates that training occurred/costs were incurred.

If any of the above items are not present or are incorrect, the Governor’s Workforce Board will deny the request for payment and outline the reason for denial. The Employer will have ten (10) business days to rectify any issues and resubmit for payment.

CHECKING REIMBURSEMENT STATUS

Payments will be issued within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Request for Reimbursement Form and supporting documentation. Employers may check [RIPAY](#) for detailed payment information.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

GWB Staff is available to provide technical assistance throughout the entire grant process. For assistance, please call (401) 462-8860 or e-mail dlt.gwbinfo@dlt.ri.gov.



Governor's Workforce Board
Rhode Island
strategy • policy • funding • action