1. **Does each proposal have to include all three major elements of programming: career exploration, college and career readiness training, and work-based learning?**
   No; proposals can include any or all of these three major elements of programming. Applicants should note that work-based learning must be complemented with college and career readiness training to prepare participants for success in those work-based learning activities.

2. **There is a required minimum amount of participation hours for paid summer work-based learning, at 80 hours. Is there a minimum amount of participation hours for other programming?**
   No, the length of programming outside of paid summer work-based learning is up to the partnership to decide.

3. **There is a requirement of at least five weeks for summer programming. Can grantees propose four weeks of programming in the summer? Alternatively, can summer programming be longer than five weeks?**
   The five-week summer work-based learning requirement is to ensure a depth of experience for participants. If partnerships have a compelling reason to limit the summer experience to four weeks but can still ensure a deep and high-quality experience, they should make the case in their proposal. There is no upper time limit for paid summer programming, and it could certainly extend into the academic year if appropriate – again, partnerships should make the case in their proposal.

4. **For current Real Skills for Youth grantees who have year-round funding, is it permissible to prep students for future summer work during year-round programming now?**
   If this is part of a grantee’s current scope of work under their RSFY grant, that would be fine. If this is the case, proposals should articulate how participants are being prepared now for summer activities.

5. **Can college and career readiness training take place year-round, or is it specific to the summer? Can it be structured as a precursor to work-based learning?**
   It is up to the partnership to determine how college and career readiness training will be embedded in programming. It can happen year-round, in the summer, or both. Applicants should note that college and career readiness training is a requirement if participants will engage in work-based learning, and this can happen as a stand-alone training or embedded within the program.
6. **Is there a mandatory adult to youth participant ratio?**
   There is no mandatory adult to youth participant ratio, though staffing should be reasonable to provide adequate supervision and mentoring to participants. Staffing plans should be well articulated in proposals.

7. **Can grantees propose different participant cohorts under the same proposal? For example, can grantees propose that twenty-year-olds and fourteen-year-olds would be engaged in different activities?**
   Absolutely, activities should be differentiated for age, skills, and experience. Partnerships should articulate the differences in programming in their proposal.

8. **The stated age range for paid summer work-based learning is 14-24. Can we limit the age to younger than 24?**
   Absolutely, those are the lower and upper limits. Programming can serve whatever ages within that limit for paid summer work-based learning (example, only 15-18 year olds); partnerships should articulate this in their proposal.

9. **For participants under 14 years old, can partnerships focus on career exploration?**
   Career exploration is a great activity for younger students. Applicants should note that the majority of Real Skills funds will be dedicated to paid summer work-based learning opportunities for youth ages 14-24, however career exploration for younger youth is certainly allowable in a proposal.

10. **Our organization meets the criteria for an industry representative and a youth-serving representative. Can we apply as one organization meeting both roles?**
    A lead applicant may apply as meeting both roles of industry representative and youth-serving organization as long as the proposal clearly demonstrates how the organization represents two distinct roles serving youth and industry.

11. **Are there requirements for the recruitment and enrollment process; for example, should we recruit participants from youth centers or use a particular enrollment form?**
    There are no required enrollment forms, though partnerships should ensure that enrollment forms collect all required information to ensure eligibility and for reporting participant data to the GWB, and to include parent signatures for acknowledgement that data will be shared with funders. Applicants are not required to partner with youth centers for enrollment, though they are encouraged as partners given the large number of youth signing up for summer work-based learning opportunities at those locations.

12. **Is connection to student Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) a required component of the proposal?**
    The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a student-directed planning and monitoring tool required for all students starting in grade 6 - the ILP documents students’ interests, needs, supports, course selections, transition placements and other learning experiences both in and out of school. Connection to Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) is not a required component of a Real Skills proposal, however connection with ILPs is encouraged where possible, particularly where schools or school districts are partners.
13. **Real Skills for Youth relies on partnerships. How can we connect with potential partners?**

A list of RSVPs of interested parties for the Pre-Proposal Conference is posted [here](#). Not everyone RSVPed to the meeting, so if your name and organization is not on the list, please email [Caitlin Downing](#) for your name to be added. You can also contact the Governor’s Workforce Board to help connect you to potential partners.

14. **Is there a limit to how many proposals one organization can join?**

There is no limit, however proposals should demonstrate how that organization contributes to each partnership, and how the organization will ensure that it has sufficient capacity to partner in each case.

15. **Will the GWB vet proposed partners, for example partners that will host youth for internships, to ensure they are appropriate?**

No, the GWB leaves it up to the lead applicant to vet partners and ensure they will provide high-quality and safe experiences for youth participants.

16. **Page 11 of the grant solicitation mentions that employers should sign a worksite agreement outlining responsibilities. Can you provide a template of a worksite agreement?**

There is no required template, however the grant solicitation on pages 10-11 outlines responsibilities of employers which should be included in this agreement. Current Real Skills grantees are a great resource for this.

17. **Will youth be required to obtain work permits and fill out certain tax forms if paid by stipend?**

Youth ages 14 and 15 do need a [Special Limited Permit to Work](#) to be employed and receive wages. However, if youth aged 14-15 are participating in an educational program that provides them with a classroom-based experience (ex. industry project, service-learning project, school-based enterprise) and they are receiving a stipend from an intermediary organization (not an employer) then they would not be required to have work permits. Regarding tax paperwork, providers are responsible for ensuring that youth have the proper paperwork needed to receive payment. Youth centers have managed eligibility and payment processes in the past, and we encourage applicants to use them as a source of expertise.

18. **How does income from Real Skills affect family social assistance benefits? We hear of youth not participating because of concerns that their income will affect their family’s benefits.** The below information describes the treatment of income earned by youth for the RI Works cash assistance program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Additional questions should be directed to the RI Department of Human Services.

For the [RI Works Program](#):

1424.25 INCOME DISREGARDS
REV:10/2008

For applicants and recipients, net adjusted income equals the total of any unearned income plus any amount remaining from earned income after deducting the earned
income disregards and any allowable dependent care disregards. This amount must be less than the appropriate cash assistance standard in order for financial eligibility to exist. The disregards are allowed in the order specified below.

Exclusion of Earnings of a Dependent Child
Disregard all the monthly earned income of each dependent child from the assistance unit's income.
...

For the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program:
1008.10.55 (7 CFR 273.9) Earnings of Children
REV: 12/2016
Disregard the earned income of children who are members of the household if they are elementary or high school students at least half-time and are not yet eighteen (18) years of age. Their income is also excluded during temporary interruptions in school attendance due to semester or vacation breaks, provided the child's enrollment will resume following the break. If the child's earnings or the amount of work performed cannot be differentiated from that of the other household members, the total earnings must be prorated equally among the working members and the child's pro-rata share excluded.

Individuals are considered children for this exclusion if they are under eighteen and under the parental control of another household member.

19. Can partnerships provide stipends to participants for career exploration activities?
Yes.

20. If choosing to pay summer work-based learning participants by stipend, is there additional guidance in terms of equivalent hourly payment or minimum payment over a length of time?
It is up to the provider to determine what makes the most sense for that particular program. Some additional guidance in terms of work-based learning and payment can be found in the GWB Work-Based Learning Guidance, and applicants can also contact the GWB to discuss further.

21. Is there flexibility regarding the minimum wage requirement? Can participants be paid higher than minimum wage?
If participants are paid wages, they must be paid at least minimum wage – this does not prevent partnerships from paying higher than minimum wage. However, final decisions on budgets will be based on funding available.

22. Is there a funding limit per proposal?
There are no funding limits, however budgets will be examined as part of the evaluation process and final decisions will be based on available funding.

23. Is there a limit to administrative/staff costs in the proposal budget?
There is no limit. The expectation is that the majority of funds will go toward direct
provision of services to youth and not toward capacity-building or administrative costs.

24. Can you provide the cost per participant from last year’s program?
For paid summer work-based learning programming, average costs in the Real Skills program were between $1300 and $1400 per participant.

25. Do Real Jobs or Real Pathways partnerships need to apply to this grant solicitation if they want to engage in youth work?
Real Jobs and Real Pathways partnerships can propose youth work through the traditional “PITCH” process. Proposed activities should align to this grant solicitation and to the partnership’s comprehensive plan. Real Jobs and Real Pathways partnerships should contact their grant advisor to discuss further if this is of interest.

26. In the evaluation process, will employer connections with Real Jobs Rhode Island partnerships be scored higher than connections with non-Real Jobs industries or employers?
There are no added “points” for connections to Real Jobs partnerships, though engagement with high-wage, high-demand industries is encouraged. Proposals will be evaluated on their quality, which includes the presence of industry/employer representation to provide demand-driven programming.

27. In the evaluation process, will preference be given to proposals that offer high school or college credit to participants?
While there are no additional “points” dedicated to this, offering academic credit as part of youth participation in programming is encouraged when possible.

28. After the program is complete, will the GWB provide a standardized evaluation for all partnerships to use with participants?
Proposals should provide qualitative and quantitative outcomes for their programming, and explain how they will collect and analyze that data to gauge progress toward those outcomes. The GWB is considering a required standardized evaluation form or survey for participants to measure skill gains, in addition to outcome reports from grantees.