



**FY 2021 Grant Opportunity  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)  
RI Governor's Workforce Board**

**QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE FY2021 GRANT ROUND**

**Is the \$150,000 cap per application irrespective of the number of partners who are part of the application?**

- Yes, the \$150,000 funding limit applies regardless of the number of partners included in a grant proposal. However it is worth noting that while the \$150,000 is a target, it can be exceeded with sufficient justification. Also, if a grant application is approved, the opportunity to access additional funds in the future remains available.

**How does this partnership differ from Real Jobs Rhode Island. Can you give examples of the different activities or goals of each partnership?**

- Both Real Jobs RI and Real Pathways RI have the same goal of meeting employer and industry demand while building pathways to economic opportunity for Rhode Islanders, particularly those with barriers to employment
- Structurally and administratively, a Real Jobs RI partnership is built around the unique workforce challenges facing specific industries; a Real Pathways RI partnership is built around the unique challenges facing specific populations with barriers to employment.

**Can I confirm that one entity can play all three roles (lead, convener, fiscal)?**

- Correct. One entity can satisfy all three responsibilities (lead applicant, convener, and fiscal agent) as long as they demonstrate the capacity to do so.

**What is the most unlikely collaboration you funded?**

- Its hard to identify the most unique or 'unlikely' approach or collaboration. Partnerships are encouraged to innovate and think strategically. Oftentimes, funding limitations force providers to start with the 'available solutions' and try to identify problems that fit those solutions; Real Pathways encourages providers to start with the challenges facing clients and brainstorm on the most effective solution. Some innovative and unique approaches are expected.

**If federal funds are disbursed, must we adhere to WIOA requirements?**

- Federal funds will be braided into the Real Pathways RI program; and the related federal requirements (funding, administrative, programmatic, and otherwise) will be expected of grantees. 'Federal funds' does not necessarily mean 'WIOA funds' (WIOA is the law that funds most workforce development activities on the federal level); however the WIOA enrollment process will be required for all individuals served with grant funds, with limited exceptions.

**Just want to clarify - Applicants must have, at the minimum, a partnership with two organizations other than the lead applicant. So, three entities working together...? Is this accurate?**

- The minimum requirement for the grant program is two service partners (one of which may be the lead applicant), and two industry/employer partners. So, at a minimum, the applicant group must be comprised of four distinct entities – the lead applicant service/community/education organization, a partner service/community/education organization, and two employer/industry partners.

**My organization has over 20 corporate partners who host interns. Does this satisfy both the strategic partner and employer partner requirement?**

- Any employer partners must be listed in the grant proposal and their role and responsibility must be clearly spelled out. They also should provide a letter of intent/support demonstrating commitment to the proposal and its strategy. The 20 employer partners referenced would likely meet the employer requirement; but simply mentioning them as having worked with your organization would not, alone, meet the RFP requirement.

**I just wanted to clarify the difference between program partners and employer partners in this grant. I assume a program partner could also be an employer and a trainer? Are employer partners distinguished in part by the fact that they do not receive funds directly through this proposal.**

- As mentioned,; the minimum requirement for the grant program is two service partners (one of which may be the lead applicant), and two industry/employer partners. So, at a minimum, the applicant group must be comprised of four **distinct** entities – the lead applicant, a partner service/community/education organization, and two employer/industry partners.
- While a service/program partner could absolutely fill both roles within the proposal (example: a community-based organization that will be providing grant-funded services while also intending to hire individuals who complete the program); the minimum requirement for no less than two distinct service partners and two industry/employer partners remains; so an applicant group that includes a service/program partner that is also serving as an employer partner must still include an additional (third) employer partner so that the applicant group includes four distinct entities.

**Can you explain the comprehensive plan expectations? Will you provide specific guidance for this?**

- The comprehensive plan requirement only applies to awardees and is required within one year of the start of their grant. Additional guidance will be provided after an award is made. Applicant groups do not have to be concerned with the comprehensive plan requirement at this time.

**Can a Real Jobs existing partner be the lead applicant?**

- Yes, a current Real Jobs RI grantee can apply for a Real Pathways grant and serve as lead applicant; however current grantees should be advised that the activities they seek to propose may likely be fundable through the Real Jobs RI program and should speak to their grant advisor before applying.

**What responsibilities does the program have for monitoring outcomes after grant end, and if there are responsibilities do they lie with lead, convener or fiscal?**

- Monitoring outcomes during or after the life of the grant would likely rest with the lead applicant organization, although that is up to the partnership to determine roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, the requirement to monitor outcomes after the end of the grant period depends on the nature of the grant-funded activities. If, for example, the proposal is a cohort-based job training program that ends in employment for participants; post-grant mentoring may not be required. If the activity is focused on reducing offender recidivism through employment opportunities; then the proposal might include post-grant monitoring and should budget for this work accordingly.

**Can you speak to 1099/entrepreneurs vs salaried employees? If our program mostly serves self-employed, is that ok?**

- Yes, the Real Pathways program has funded activities focused on entrepreneurs and the self-employed in the past and is open to additional proposals. Reporting of outcomes would be negotiated between the GWB and the grantee upon award.

**Will you send this power point out?**

- Yes.

**The RFP states that the proposal is for 9-10 months. Does the \$150k budget have to be an annual one, or for the 9-10 months?**

- The grant is funded based on the state Fiscal Year (July 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup>) While Covid-19 has caused delays to the start of the grant year; the end of the grant year will still be 6/30/2020; therefore the \$150k budget should be based on 9-10 months of programming.

**Work Incentive information and benefits counseling is proven to help SSI and SSDI beneficiaries choose work and increase hours. It has been recognized as statewide need. Could access to work incentive information and benefits counseling be a Real pathways proposal on its own or should it be built in as a partner in other proposals?**

- The GWB is unable to advise what would, and would not, make sense as a standalone proposal; however we always encourage interested parties to connect and, when appropriate, partner together on a comprehensive proposal that includes multiple activities and projects that might benefit the target population.

**Can a group submit more than 1 proposal?**

- Generally, an applicant group should only be submitting one grant proposal; however, a single grant proposal may include multiple proposed activities. Also, if a grant application is approved, the opportunity to access additional funds in the future remains available.

**We are working with many career centers in New England area by providing instructor led IT training. Under Real Pathway, are we supposed to identify working professionals and/or college students for training, train them and find them jobs? Is the State of RI going to help find them a job and/or identify a potential employer for them?**

- The state of Rhode Island is willing and able to assist with recruitment and/or placement of clients that are trained under a Real Pathways RI proposal; however interested applicants should be aware that many community partners (including but not limited to the state NetWorkRI centers, the Skills for RI's Future program, and many community-based organizations) are available to assist with referral and job placement and could be included in a proposal.

**Can funding serve current offenders or does it have to be ex-offenders? Can funding be utilized to purchase capital equipment?**

- Funding can absolutely serve current offenders (pre-release service) as well as any other populations with barriers to employment. Funding may be used to purchase capital equipment with sufficient justification (additional purchasing and documentation rules apply for large capital purchases – these items will be negotiated with the grantee upon award).

**Would funds to support legal assistance be an allowable cost, if the legal assistance is directly related to making someone job ready?**

- Legal assistance is an allowable cost if it is part of the services necessary to help the client obtain employment. However, costs cannot be incurred for the defense of, or restitution for, criminal violations, fines, fees, or penalties.
- Examples:
  - Legal costs are allowable for civil/administrative matters (fighting eviction reinstatement of licenses, overdue bills, collection notices) or to aide in expungement
  - Legal costs are unallowable if related to criminal violations (criminal defense, Including speeding/parking violations)
  - Fees and costs are allowable if unrelated to a penalty (ex. Registration fee, application fee, court filing fee, background check fee);
  - Fees and costs are unallowable if related to a penalty (ex. Restitution, parking fines, fees, penalties, overdue payments)

**Would transportation be considered for this grant? As part of our plan to address transportation as a major barrier, we are looking to secure funding that would allow us to purchase a van that would employ clients, as well as provide transportation to training and employment opportunities.**

- Transportation is a common barrier to employment and is an allowable cost in this grant. Common transportation costs we have seen include bus passes, and ride-sharing and van-pooling fees. Other proposals are allowable with sufficient justification. The purchase or lease of a van will likely require additional review and additional purchasing and documentation rules apply for large capital purchases – these items will be negotiated with the grantee upon award.

**Will there be any funding forthcoming from Adult Ed to support GED programming? If no, can Real Pathways proposals including funding to continue GED programming? If Real Pathways proposals can include funding for GED services, would an organization included as a subcontracted GED provider in one proposal be precluded from pursuing their own Real Pathways application?**

- Unfortunately the GWB cannot answer questions related to Adult Education funding through the Department of Education. Such questions can be directed to RIDE (<https://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/EducationPrograms/AdultEducationGED/tabid/169/LiveAccId/15831/Default.aspx>).
- Funds for GED programming may be made available through the Real Pathways program as part of larger proposal that is focused on employment, with

## **QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE FY2017 GRANT ROUND**

- **Can primary partners be for-profit?**  
Yes, however they should otherwise meet the definition of an entity focused on meeting the workforce development needs of a target population or region of the state.
- **Can a newly former 501c3 apply as a lead?**  
Yes, however they should know that administrative and fiscal capacity is a key factor in the proposal evaluation process and should be prepared to explain why they are able to meet these responsibilities despite their limited history.
- **If the ‘barrier’ to employment is a lack of experience, could an employer qualify as a ‘primary partner’?**  
No, the primary partners should meet the definition of an entity focused on meeting the workforce development of a target population or region of the state. The employer would still meet the ‘employer partner’ criteria and could play an enhanced role in the partnership.
- **Can an employment/placement agency be part of a Real Pathways partnership? If so, could they be considered an “employer” partner within the partnership?**  
Although an employment agency would not be considered an ‘employer partner’ they can certainly be member of the partnership. Their inclusion and role should be described in the work plan. Placement with the employment agency would not, itself, be an outcome but permanent placement with an employer would be.
- **Do all outcomes have to be completed within the grant period?**  
Outcomes such as program completion and employment should occur within the grant period. Additional outcomes may be negotiated with the GWB.
- **Can a partnership serve ‘statewide’?**  
Yes, provided it otherwise has a unifying element such as the target population it is serving.
- **Based on the amount of funds available do you have a target number of individuals you would like to serve?**  
We really cannot presume or give a ‘target’ for proposals to work toward. Every job seeker’s needs are different and every proposal will be different. It will be up to the evaluators to determine the value of each proposal relative to the outcomes targets included.

- **My proposal would provide ESL, readiness training, and counseling, but then refer participants into another programs' job training once they are ready. Is that allowed? Would the job placement outcome for such referred candidates still be our responsibility?**  
Such a proposal is allowable provided the narrative effectively describes why this approach is the most effective means to address the issues facing the population or region served. The job placement would continue to be the responsibility of your partnership as the training referral was part of your proposed 'plan' to help clients obtain employment. The GWB will make sure to properly 'track' candidates so that each program gets appropriate 'credit' for a potential success or failure while not duplicating data.
- **Can under-employed individuals be served with Real Pathways funds?**  
Yes. However, we ask that your proposal please describe how it will identify and define 'under employed.' Even in federal programming, the definition varies. Generally the GWB has considered an underemployed individuals as: 1) Individuals who are employed who meet the definition of a low-income; 2) individuals who are not currently connected to a full-time job commensurate with the individual's level of education, skills, or wage and/or salary earned previously, or 3) individuals who have obtained only episodic, short-term, or part-time employment but desire full-time employment.