

# Training Acceleration Grant (TAG) Program Guidelines

## General Eligibility

### Eligible Companies

- Only companies registered with the Indiana Secretary of State and legally permitted to operate within Indiana are eligible for TAG funds.
- An employer cannot have any outstanding tax liabilities with the State of Indiana.
- An employer must pay into the Unemployment Insurance fund and the Incumbent Worker Training fund.
- Please note: All employers are eligible to apply for training funds that prepare individuals to be nurses or boost the education level of nurses i.e. LPN to RN: LPN to Associate degree: Associate degree to Bachelors: Bachelors to Masters.
- Government entities are not eligible to receive TAG funds.

### Eligible Trainees

- Only employees who work within the state of Indiana are eligible for training.
- All trainees receiving TAG-funded training must be full-time workers who have passed their probationary period by the time of their enrollment. Contract or temporary workers are not eligible.
- If a company has more than 100 employees, its executive and management level professionals are NOT eligible to receive TAG-funded training. Front-line supervisors are eligible.

### Eligible Training

- Training must result in a portable, national or industry-recognized credential.
- Training required by federal, state, or industry guidelines is not eligible (i.e. OSHA, FDA requirements, real estate licenses, etc.).
- Seminars and general *Certificates of Completion* do not qualify as an eligible credential.
- Continuing Education Units are not eligible under TAG.
- Associate degrees are an acceptable credential. Bachelor's and Master's degrees are permitted only in the nursing field.
- A minimum of six college credit hours is considered an eligible credential in conjunction with pursuit of an Associate Degree or a similar training module.
- Training must be limited to two years and all credentials must be obtainable within those two years. Exceptions to obtaining credentials within two years can be made for college degrees or apprenticeships.

## Core Objectives

A company must select and achieve one of the following “Core Objectives” of the Training Acceleration Grant program:

***Increase personal income for Hoosier workers:*** To meet this objective, wage increases must be awarded upon completion of training. Documentation of the wage increases must be submitted to IDWD before the grant is closed.

***Promote small business growth:*** Only employers with 100 or fewer employees are eligible for this objective. To achieve this objective, the grantee must demonstrate how the grant contributed to the growth or success of the company.

***Foster job retention and expansion:*** To meet this objective, an employer must demonstrate that training is necessary to retain jobs or support an expansion. A report on the results of this objective will need to be submitted to IDWD within three months after training has ended.

***Close skill gaps identified through WorkKeys® assessments:*** To meet this objective, an employer must have a WorkKeys® profile on file with IDWD and skill gaps identified through WorkKeys® assessments. Upon conclusion of the training, the grantee will need to submit pre-training and post-training assessment scores.

**Note:** The outcomes of these objectives may affect future TAG participation.

## Training Providers

### **Provider Eligibility**

- Internal or on-staff trainers are not eligible for TAG funds.
- The training provider must be accredited by a governing organization or otherwise demonstrate an ability to provide the requested training. Proof of accreditation or qualifications may be requested.

### **Indiana Training Providers**

- Indiana-based training providers are preferred over out-of-state training providers.
- Special consideration is given to projects that use Ivy Tech Community College.

### **Out-of-State Training Providers**

- The use of an out-of-state training provider is considered justified under the following circumstances:
  1. The applicant can demonstrate that no Indiana vendor can provide the training.
  2. The geographic proximity to an out-of-state provider is more cost effective than using an Indiana provider.
- Written justification explaining why an out-of-state training provider is preferable to an in-state provider must be submitted with the TAG application.

## Budget Constraints

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- TAG funds can be used for the following:
  1. Tuition
  2. Contract services
  3. Books
  4. Lab fees
  5. Technology fees
  6. One-time exam fees
  
- TAG funds cannot be used for the following (however, these ineligible grant expenditures can be used as matching funds):
  1. Supplies (i.e. paper, pens, etc.)
  2. Equipment (i.e. machines, hardware, software, etc.)
  3. Travel
  4. Wages and benefits (i.e. health coverage, insurance, etc.)
  5. Fees for rental of space secured for training purposes
  
- Requests should be limited to an average of \$3,500 per trainee per year.
  
- Training costs should be competitive.
  
- A company is not eligible for more than \$200,000 per year. Under special circumstances, a company may petition for consideration in excess of \$200,000.

### Matching Funds Requirements:

- Matching funds are required and may be cash or in-kind (i.e. training space, materials, equipment, etc.).
  
- Matching funds can include any costs associated with training.
  
- Companies with more than 100 employees must provide a dollar-to-dollar match of funds requested from TAG.
  
- The match required for companies with 100 or fewer employees is based upon the following scale:

#### TAG Matching Funds Scale

Total Number of Employees	Required Match (Percentage of Requested Amount)
1-10	10%
11- 20	20%
21- 30	30%
31- 40	40%
41- 50	50%
51- 100	75%

- The grantee must provide and account for the matching funds as agreed upon in the approved application and budget.
  - Match for participant wages and benefits are limited to wages and benefits earned while “on-the-clock” and in training. Grantee must retain copies of records to account for matching wages and benefits.
  - Monetary incentives offered to trainees to attend training (i.e. bonuses, etc.) can be used as match.
  - The value of match, in terms of travel expenses, sustenance, lodging, etc. will be determined in accordance with grantee written policies and procedures.

In the absence of such policies and procedures, the value will be determined in accordance with state policies regarding such items.

- The value of in-kind contributions is determined by the current market value of the contribution and must be substantiated with proper documentation.

### **Administration of Consortium Grants**

#### **Definition of Consortium**

A consortium consists of three or more companies preferably those with 100 or fewer employees that are seeking similar training through a single TAG grant. A key advantage of a consortium is that it allows smaller companies to take advantage of training that would be too costly otherwise. For example, a small rural company would like industrial maintenance training for one person. To customize this training for one employer would be cost prohibitive. Recruiting other employers in the area with the same training needs would reduce costs.

#### **Consortium Grant Administrator**

A third party can be the grant administrator of a consortium. In such a case, the grant administrator is the legal recipient of the grant funds.

#### **Responsibility of a Consortium Grant Administrator**

The consortium grant administrator is responsible for the application process and management of a TAG grant on behalf of all participating companies. This includes submitting the application, providing all requested information to IDWD, modifying the grant agreement, requesting reimbursement, and all other duties deemed necessary to properly manage the grant. In return for these services the grant administrator can collect administrative fees from TAG funds.

#### **Eligible Consortium Grant Administrators**

- All entities registered with the Indiana Secretary of State to legally operate within Indiana are eligible to be a consortium grant administrator.
- The grant administrator and training provider can be the same entity, but it cannot collect both administrator fees and training provider fees.
- The grant administrator is not required to pay into the Unemployment Insurance fund or the Incumbent Worker Training fund. However all participating companies are required to do so. Exceptions can be made for healthcare related training.

#### **Administrative Fees for Consortium Grant Administrators**

- In return for the services provided by a consortium grant administrator, compensation can be requested from TAG funds.

- Administrative fees cannot exceed 5% of the approved amount requested.
- Matching funds cannot be included when calculating the administrative fee.
- The number of trainees, the number of training providers, and the complexity of the overall project may also be taken under consideration when determining the approval for administration fees.

#### **Match Requirement for a Consortium**

- Each participating company is required to meet its individual match requirement as determined by its employment size.
- Unless the consortium grant administrator is participating in training, it is not required to contribute match.

#### **Eligible Training in a Consortium**

- All companies in the consortium must be in related fields or seeking training and credentials within the same field.

**Example of an Acceptable Consortium:** Multiple companies from different fields seeking information technology certifications.

**Example of an Unacceptable Consortium:** A hospital seeking to train nurses, a manufacturer seeking welding certifications and a small business wanting computer training is not acceptable. There must be a common thread that links the training needs of all the participating companies.

### **Non-Consortium Grant Administrators**

#### **Non-Consortium Grant Administrators**

A solitary company may choose not to manage its awarded grant and elect to have a third party manage the grant on its behalf. Under such a circumstance the following guidelines apply:

1. The Third Party Administrator Form must be completed in full and submitted with the application.
2. Expenses associated with the administration of the grant are not eligible to be paid for with TAG funds.
3. Expenses associated with the administration of the grant cannot be used as matching funds.

### **What if my application is denied?**

All applicants are encouraged to re-apply for training funds in the event their application is denied. Regional business consultants are available to assist in the review of the guidelines and the evaluation check list as well as assist in revising the application. The revised application will undergo the same review as the original application.