QUICK RESPONSE TRAINING
Program Guidelines

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Program Overview

The Quick Response Training program, is designed to increase the competitiveness of Florida businesses in the global economy. In existence since 1993 and lauded by economic developers and national business groups, the program continues to play a vital role in the state's overall economic development efforts. The Quick Response Training program provides grant funding for customized, skills-based curriculum development and training, through partial reimbursement, to new or expanding businesses in Florida's targeted industries (qualified targeted industries). These are high-skill industries with exportable goods or services and wages of 125 percent above state or local wages.

The program is cited by economic developers as the number one program with the largest impact on their ability to win multi-state contracts. Furthermore, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Chamber Foundation have recognized the success of the Quick Response Training program over the past several years in their annual rankings.

The Quick Response Training application process is designed as a collaborative effort between the business requesting training, its chosen fiscal agent – a community or state college, area technical center or state university – and the local economic development organization. [See section 288.047(3), *Florida Statutes*.]

The program is a state-funded grant program that provides funding to qualifying businesses to train their net new, full-time employees. Funding is provided in the form of a performance-based reimbursable grant, for a 12-month maximum term. A business pays for pre-approved, direct training-related costs and is reimbursed by CareerSource Florida, through the fiscal agent, upon submission of required documentation.

All applications for new and expanding businesses creating new high-quality jobs will be given equal consideration and are processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

For Employers:

- Increased Competitiveness
- Skilled Workforce
- Increased Productivity
- Increased Profits
- Company Growth
- Reduced Turnover

For Employees:

- Advancement Opportunities
- Increased Job Opportunities
- Job Retention
- Transportable/Transferrable Skills

Available Funding

The total amount of funding available for the Quick Response Training program in 2017/2018 is $15 million, the maximum amount is $500,000 per grant/per company. Applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis until available funding has been awarded. Priority will be given to businesses applying for the first time. A notification will be posted on careersourceflorida.com when funds are no longer available.

Businesses Applying for Funding:

- Must be "for profit" and create net new, permanent, full-time (35+ hours per week) jobs for Florida workers requiring customized high-level skills training not available at the local level.
- Create new, full-time, permanent, high-quality jobs in qualified targeted industries.
- Require non-degree, specialized skills based training of 12 months or less that is not available at the local level.
- Create high-quality jobs paying an average annual wage of at least 125 percent of local or state private sector wages, whichever is lower, unless the business is located in a distressed urban or rural community, or brownfield area (ES202 Wage Requirements). [Average annual wage means the average for a 12-month period or, if less than a 12-month period, converted to a 12-month period of actual wages. This includes salaries, commissions, bonuses, drawing accounts (against future earnings), prizes and awards (if given by the employer for the status of employment), vacation pay, sick pay, and other payments paid to employees consistent with Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity's definition. Benefits are not included.]
- Must produce an exportable (beyond regional markets) good or service.
- Shall provide sufficient documentation for identification of all participants who would have access through the automated student databases, pursuant to section 288.047(5)(e), *Florida Statutes*, or electronic listings by Social Security number for calculation of performance measures, and any other outcomes as specified in F.S. 1008.39, or deemed pertinent to CareerSource Florida.
- May not qualify for funding if relocating from one Florida community to another Florida community, pursuant to section 288.047)(2), *Florida Statutes*.
- Demonstrate financial viability by providing:
    - The most recently filed IRS Form 941 (if the business is a Corporation) or a most recently filed copy of the 1040 Income Tax Return with Schedule SE (if the business is a Sole Proprietorship).
    - A letter of Tax Clearance from the Florida Department of Revenue dated within 45 days of application submittal.

Funding Priority Given to Businesses:

- First time applicants
- Offering jobs located in a distressed, urban inner city, rural area, or Brownfield area.
- Whose grant proposals have the greatest potential for economic impact that contribute in-kind and/or cash matches.
- On a first-come, first serve basis.

Reimbursable Training Expenses

The CareerSource Florida professional team will work with each company individually during the application process to assist in ensuring the courses meet training related needs. Typically, Quick Response Training includes as reimbursable expenses a portion of instructors'/trainers' salaries, curriculum development, textbooks/manuals, customized, skills based online training, domestic travel for trainers or trainees, and other costs. Trainee wages are not included as an allowable reimbursement expense. CareerSource Florida will determine an approved per-trainee reimbursement amount based upon the industry, wage, location and reimbursable expense amounts. The actual reimbursement to the company is calculated based on the number of new hires that have completed training and the approved amount per trainee.

Training Services

One of the unique features of the Quick Response Training program is that it provides flexibility regarding the type(s) of training and training provider(s). Based upon the needs of the company and its overall workforce development need, the company may choose who provides training as well as the type of training provided, if it meets the requirements of being customized and skills based. More specifically:

- The training can be provided by one of Florida's public or private educational institutions, a private training company, a private instructor, a company employee who has the subject matter expertise, or a combination of training providers.
- The training can be at the company's facility, at the training provider's facility, or a combination of locations.
- The training can include occupational skills training designed to meet the special requirements of a business or industry.
- The training can be professional development (i.e., leadership training).
- The training can be in strategies to improve efficiency of business operations.
- The training can be technical/hard skills training such as computer software training.
- The training can be delivered in person or online.

The following are examples of trainings that cannot be funded:

- CPR and first aid training
- OSHA and safety training
- New hire orientation
- Diversity and sexual harassment training
- English as a second language training
- Degree programs
- Workplace literacy or soft skills training
- Training that takes place as part of a conference event where food is included

Application Process

The Quick Response Training application is online at careersourceflorida.com. The application process is designed as a collaborative effort between the business requesting training, its chosen fiscal agent – a community or state college, area technical center or state university – and the local economic development organization. [See section 288.047(3), *Florida Statutes*.] Quick Response Training is a state-funded grant program that provides funding to eligible businesses to train their net new, full-time employees. Funding is provided in the form of a performance-based reimbursable grant, for a 12-month maximum term. A business pays for preapproved, direct training-related costs, and is reimbursed by the State of Florida upon submission and approval of required documentation.

Section 1: Employer Identification

A business seeking training through the Quick Response Training program should complete the Employer Identification section (Section 1) of the application. The business will select the fiscal agent (college or school district that is in the service area of the company applying for the grant) who will assist with the application process. The system will notify the fiscal agent of the application.

The company should also upload its letter requesting grant services. The business letter should address the following:

- Description of type of goods or services produced and the market area served;
- Description of the products/services produced/offered by the business;
- Description of the impact of the business on the state's economy;
- Description of the need for the business to acquire training services (e.g., new product line, expansion of existing operation, relocation to Florida, etc.);
- Self-declaration of the intent to locate or expand in Florida; and,
- Description of how the availability of training funds will affect the decision to locate or expand in Florida.

Section 2: State Fiscal Agent

Section 2 (Local Fiscal Agent) is completed and submitted by the fiscal agent. The fiscal agent will complete and sign this section once the application is completed. The fiscal agent will also gather the necessary support letters from the local economic development office and local workforce development board. Once the fiscal agent has reviewed the application and other supporting documentation, the company will be notified that the review has been completed.

Section 3: Training Programs

In Section 3 (Training Programs), the company will complete a Training Summary for each training course. A training provider is defined as a person or entity that provides employment-related, customized training and includes public schools (technical centers, community colleges, and universities), private institutions, training consultants, vendors, employer associations, and/or business trainers. The following applies to training services:

- Can be conducted at the businesses' facility, at the training provider's facility or at a combination of sites.
- Instructors can be either full- or part-time educators or professional trainers from the business.
- Should include specific objectives (what is to be accomplished through the training).
- Should include expected outcomes (the anticipated outcomes should directly assist the company in increasing its competitiveness, viability and/or profitability).

Review and Approval

Once the completed application has been electronically received at CareerSource Florida, review and approval can take about five to ten business days.

> An automated email from the application system will notify the company by email that the application has been submitted. If you do not receive this, the application has not been submitted Holidays or a large influx of applications may cause a delay in the sending of this email. Once the application has been reviewed, an email will be sent to the company contact listed in the application advising of the pre-approval, the pre-approved grant amount and the date that training can commence. Training may commence as of the approval date provided in the congratulatory email.

Grant Contract

The grant contract – listing all parties, including CareerSource Florida, the company seeking the grant, and the fiscal agent – will be prepared and sent electronically to the fiscal agent through DocuSign for signature by the fiscal agent and company representatives. The contract will then be returned via email to CareerSource Florida for signature. Once received, CareerSource Florida will execute the contract through DocuSign. The executed contract will then be emailed to all parties. All contracts not executed within 90 days will be voided. No reimbursements will be made until the contract is fully executed.

The contract will set forth all processes and expectations for administering, implementing and completing the training.

All training must be completed within the time limitations of the contract.

Reimbursement Requests

Quick Response Training program representatives expect to have ongoing communication with the businesses and fiscal agents regarding the progress of the training covered under the grant. While training is occurring, reimbursement requests must be submitted at least on a quarterly basis. If no training has occurred, then on a quarterly basis. If no communication has occurred, CareerSource Florida will reach out to the company and/or fiscal agent to inquire regarding the status of the training project.

Reporting Forms and Process

There are specific reporting forms required and provided for use with your grant. The forms are in Excel format and are customized specifically for your company. The fiscal agent assisting the company with the application process will review the reporting process and forms with the company.

For most efficient processing, companies are required to submit quarterly reports. Companies may also report more frequently if they choose. Reimbursements will be made in direct correlation with the business's hiring and training progress. The percentage of funds reimbursed will be equal to the percent of trainees that have been hired and trained to date. All reimbursement requests must be submitted within 60 days of the contract end date. Reimbursement requests received after the 60-day cutoff will not be processed. Further instructions will be made available to the company upon contract execution.

At or near the end of the contract, or at the time of your final reimbursement request, a Quick Response Training Evaluation on the training project is required no later than 60 days from the

end of training. This report can be accessed with a link that is within the reimbursement templates that will be provided to the fiscal agent as well as the company.

Required Trainee Information

In addition to the reporting requirements listed above, there are specific reporting requirements regarding the individual employees who have received training. [See section 288.047(5)(e), *Florida Statutes*.]
These requirements include:

- Legal name of trainee
- Social Security number
- Date of hire
- Job title

To ensure the security of your data, trainees' personal information should be submitted electronically by using the link within the reimbursement templates provided to the college and company.

This sensitive information resides behind a firewall that has achieved certification by ICSA Labs (an independent lab that conducts a rigorous certification process of security applications). Access to Social Security data is protected by a complex password of more than 20 characters, with access limited to the Quick Response Training staff. The data are stored in an encrypted volume using AES-256 encryption.

Servers and backup media are stored in a room with limited, keyed access. Data stored on offsite backup media are stored in an encrypted state using AES-256 encryption.

On an annual basis, CareerSource Florida sends one file containing all Social Security numbers from all companies receiving Quick Response Training funds to the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program. This agency conducts long-term follow up and accountability studies. When the data is sent, only the Social Security numbers are sent; the names of employees, dates of hire, and company names are not sent. Quick Response Training staff will discuss the methods for secure transmittal with the business upon request.

Please note: The Social Security numbers reported are verified in the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program database. The provision of incorrect or falsified information may be construed as fraud. If deemed fraudulent, expended funds would be immediately due and payable back to CareerSource Florida.

Technical Assistance

Quick Response Training representatives are available to provide technical assistance throughout the process, from the application stage through contract execution, monitoring and fiscal closeout.

Substitution Requests

The application is approved based on the training outlined in the proposal. Understanding that training needs may change, additional training can be added if it meets the approval requirements of customized, skills-based training. If additional training is needed, the company should email CareerSource Florida with a description of the revised training needs. The company should expect a response within five business days. The amount of the grant does not change.

Other Training Resources

There are training programs at the local and state level designed to support Florida businesses by providing training grants. A business can apply for an Employed Worker Training grant or an On-the-Job Training grant through its local workforce development board. The Incumbent Worker Training grant is available through CareerSource Florida. Businesses can use any or all of these grants concurrently; however, the grants cannot subsidize the other's training and cannot cover the same training costs. Receipt of other federal training funds, i.e., through the local workforce development board or Incumbent Worker Training must be disclosed in your Quick Response Training application.