Going PRO Talent Fund

Fiscal Year 2022

Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQs were developed as a supplement to the Going PRO Talent Fund (Talent Fund) Overview. Questions regarding the Talent Fund Fiscal Year 2022 may be directed to your local Michigan Works! Agency (MWA) contact found here.

1. **How can I apply?**
   Eligible employers must contact their chosen Michigan Works! Agency (MWA) to discuss the requirements for the Going PRO Talent Fund and determine if they are eligible to apply. For a list of MWA contacts please visit the Talent Fund website. If determined eligible to apply, the MWA will provide further instruction.

2. **Where do we submit the Talent Fund application?**
   Applying for a Talent Fund award is done exclusively online through the Work-Based Learning Online Management System (WBLOMS). A link to the portal is displayed on the LEO-WD Talent Fund website at www.michigan.gov/talentfund. Prior to accessing the online portal, it is recommended that employers contact their MWA to determine eligibility. To gain access to an online application, employers must first submit an authorization request. Once an authorization request is approved, an application may be started. The MWAs will review the application for consideration before submission to the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity-Workforce Development (LEO-WD).

3. **Can a training provider submit an application?**
   No, all applications must be submitted by a Michigan Works! Agency.

4. **How will I be notified about the status of my application?**
   LEO-WD will notify the Michigan Works! Agencies of all awards and, in turn, the MWAs will notify the employer applicants.

5. **Who is a potential eligible employer?**
   LEO-WD shall ensure that the Talent Fund provides a collaborative statewide network of workforce and employee skill development partnerships that addresses the employee talent needs throughout the state. Therefore, to be eligible for a Going PRO Talent Fund award, an employer must have a need for skill enhancement, such as apprenticeship

programs and advance-tech training programs for current employee(s) or new employee(s). Additionally, employers must: have a physical presence in Michigan; be in compliance with all state tax obligations including, but not limited to, corporate, sales, use, withholding, personal income and unemployment insurance taxes; and be willing to participate under the program's eligibility parameters and guidelines.

An eligible employer may be from the private sector only (for profit and non-profit). Governmental public institutions or entities are not eligible to apply. Unions are not eligible to apply as employers, however, they may be eligible training providers. In addition, employers from the marijuana industry are not excluded from receiving an award. Per PI 20-22, federal funds may not be used to work with companies in the marijuana industry. Talent Fund awards are made with state funds that are not subject to federal prohibitions on marijuana. Proper safeguards must be in place when MWAs or employers are braiding federal funds with the Talent Fund to support the overall operation of the Talent Fund program or marijuana related activities. MWAs and employers need to ensure there are appropriate firewalls in place to prevent federal funds from being charged for the relative benefit of any effort, such as staff time for the submission and management of awards, training, and supportive services associated with marijuana related activities.

6. Who is an eligible training provider?

Michigan community colleges; private and public college and universities; private training providers; labor unions; registered United States Department of Labor (USDOL) joint apprenticeship training centers (JATC); vendors providing training in operation of equipment or systems for which they were the provider; employers (only if their resources or equipment are exclusive where training is not available elsewhere and supporting rationale is documented in the application); other training providers identified by and agreed upon by all partners that can do accelerated "just-in-time" training; and any proprietary institution providing training must comply with Public Act (PA) 148 of 1943, Private Trade Schools, Business Schools and Institutes. Proprietary schools must be licensed in Michigan. See question #7 for additional details.

7. Must training be provided by a licensed training provider?

Any proprietary institution providing training must comply with Public Act (PA) 148 of 1943, Private Trade Schools, Business Schools, and Institutes, which includes:

MCL 395.101 Sec. 1. (1) A person shall not operate a proprietary school in this state without a temporary permit or license from the department under this act. The department shall prescribe the form of license and temporary permit.

MCL 395.101a (b) "Person" means an individual, partnership, corporation, limited liability company, association, organization, or other legal entity. (c) "Proprietary school" means a school that uses a certain plan or method to teach a trade, occupation, or vocation for a consideration, reward, or promise of any kind. Proprietary school includes, but is not limited to, a private business, trade, or home study school. Proprietary school does not include any of the following:

- A school or college possessing authority to grant degrees.
- A school licensed by law through another board or department of this state.
- A school maintained or a program conducted, without profit, by a person for that person's employees.

If it is determined locally that an institution identified to provide training under the Talent Fund requires licensing, the forms necessary to begin the licensing process can be obtained at the following website: michigan.gov/lara.

8. **Who is an eligible trainee?**
   Trainees may be any Michigan resident 18 years of age or older. Trainees who live out-of-state and work for a Michigan company that pays all applicable taxes to the State of Michigan are also eligible. Trainees, both current and new employee(s), must be permanent, full-time employees of the employer. Seasonal and/or part-time employees, current or future, are ineligible.

9. **Is there a preference for hiring United States Veterans, Active Military Reservists, Older Workers, Returning Citizens, High School Diploma/Equivalency trainee, and new this year Public Assistance Recipient, and Individual With Disability (IWD)?**
   Yes. An extra incentive may be reimbursed to an employer for each employee who qualifies under one of the categories, and who has been trained and retained by the employer. The additional incentive must be used to offset additional training costs. The maximum amount per trainee that an employer may receive as incentive funding is $500 for each Veteran, Active Military Reservist, Older Worker, Returning Citizens, IWD, or Public Assistance Recipient new trainee; and $1,000 for each High School Diploma/Equivalency new and incumbent trainee. An employer may only be reimbursed once for each trainee regardless of how many categories they qualify for.

10. **What types of training are eligible?**
    All training must fill a demonstrated talent need experienced by the employer, be short-term, and lead to a credential for a skill that is transferable and recognized by industry.

    The amount requested cannot exceed $1,500 per person or $3,000 per first year U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Registered Apprenticeship. It must also meet at least one of the following criteria:
    • Classroom or customized training
    • New employee on-the-job training
    • Training for new or first year USDOL Registered Apprentices

11. **What is the role of an employer participating in the Talent Fund?**
    Please refer to the Going PRO Talent Fund Program Overview for expectations of employers.

12. **Is there a maximum amount that may be requested on an application?**
    No, however, companies need to drill down to the critical skill needs. It has been demonstrated that large grant awards are difficult for companies to successfully

complete. As a point of reference, the average award for Fiscal Years' 2014-2021 was approximately $31,000.

13. Can training only take place in Michigan?

The preference is for training to be completed in Michigan. If there is a documented need and rationale for training to occur out-of-state, and the local MWA is supportive of the proposal, it may be submitted for consideration.

14. What is an appropriate length of training?

Funding will be utilized to provide short-term training to meet current, documented needs of employers. No single training should exceed six months. All training, including new employee On the Job (OJT) training, as well as the 90-day post-training retention period, should conclude within one year from the date of the award (i.e., December 31, 2022).

15. Since Registered Apprenticeships are not short-term training, how is it envisioned that the Talent Fund be utilized?

The Talent Fund can help with first year USDOL Registered Apprenticeship start-up to offset some of the employer's costs.

16. Will classroom training be paid prior to the start of training?

No, payment will be made after training has been completed. The Talent Fund is a reimbursement-based program, and will not reimburse for training that has occurred prior to the application being awarded

17. Can the names of the trainees change between application and start of training?

Yes. At the time of award closeout, the employer must ensure that the final list of employees who completed training is accurate and must provide the required back-up documentation.

18. Must an employer provide a prevailing wage for participants?

Following the completion of training, employers must pay wages that are equal to, or greater than, the current regional labor market occupational wage for the applicable job title.

19. How does an employer document "need/demand"?

By working with the MWA to determine whether the skill sets needed are available in the current labor pool.

20. What are eligible training expenditures?

Eligible training expenditures include the actual costs for the classroom, new employee on-the-job training and first year USDOL Registered Apprenticeship training, as well as any other reasonable cost required for the successful completion of training. For example, a training provider may quote a fixed amount for training that includes the cost of their travel.

21. What are the ineligible training expenditures?

Ineligible training expenditures include the purchase of tools or other equipment including laptops/computers, licensing fees, testing fees, curriculum development, travel costs to send trainee(s) to training, online training subscriptions. Although these expenditures are not eligible for reimbursement, employers may include them as part of their contribution/leveraged funds.

22. Can the Talent Fund be used to purchase equipment?

No, the Talent Fund cannot be used to purchase equipment. However, equipment purchased by a company and used during the training of participants should be counted as an employer contribution.

23. Can the Talent Fund be used for curriculum development?

No. See question #22.

24. What is the eligible cost per trainee in a Talent Fund project?

The cap per trainee is $1,500 for all training except for first year USDOL Registered Apprenticeships, which is $3,000 per trainee. WBLOMS will automatically calculate the per person cap when a trainee is assigned to a course. First year USDOL Registered Apprentices must be assigned to a training course with a training type *Registered Apprenticeship – Classroom* or *Registered Apprenticeship – OJT*.

25. Can companies submit an application that has training for new employees as well as current employee(s)?

Yes, it is acceptable that an application has all types of training included (i.e. classroom, new employee OJT training and first year USDOL Registered Apprenticeship training).

26. Is there a minimum number of hours in which the training must occur?

No, there is not a minimum number of hours or weeks in which training must occur.

27. What is the definition of new employee OJT training?

On-the-Job Training activities are training services provided to eligible trainees via an agreement between the MWA's and the employer. Training allows the individual(s) to become proficient in the full-time job for which they were hired. Training is conducted at the worksite. Employers must commit to retaining the trainee at the end of a successful training.

28. Can we use the Talent Fund for wage replacement of a current employee?

No. However, the wages may be used as an employer contribution or leveraged funds.

29. Can the Talent Fund be used for travel costs to send someone to training?

No, the Talent Fund may be used for training costs only. The employer must cover these costs but may show them as part of the employer contribution.

30. Can the Talent Fund be used to pay for online training?

Online training is eligible if it is live and instructor-led; versus recorded learning at the trainee's own pace. It must meet all eligible/ineligible training topic requirements, and

result in a credential specific to a customized, short term technical skill.

31. An employer has professional trainers on staff and most of the training material is exclusive (proprietary). Is it eligible for the employer to provide the training and be reimbursed directly for the training?

Such training will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis. The training should be fully explained in the application rationale.

32. What is exclusive training?

Exclusive training is training that is owned and controlled by the business and is subject to laws such as copyrights, patents, or trademarks. The control of the training curriculum usually is retained by the business. It may be training on resources or equipment that is exclusive to a single business process. A company that wants to use its own training curriculum in a Talent Fund project must demonstrate a lack of capacity, or inability, to meet its own demand. An application must also explain why the company's infrastructure cannot support its training needs without the assistance of a Talent Fund award.

33. Can more than one employer be involved in a Talent Fund award?

Collaborative efforts are encouraged to reduce training costs. On a case-by-case basis, employers may complete one application that includes multiple plants/sites/facilities/locations, however, LEO-WD reserves the right to limit an employer to a maximum award amount for all locations combined.

For an Industry-led Collaborative (ILC), it is preferred to see three or more employers, however two employers are the minimum. ILC training must be shared by a minimum of two employers.

Businesses may participate in no more than one (1) independent and one (1) ILC award, based on employer location.

34. Can employers of an ILC cross counties/regions?

Yes. There will need to be a lead MWA identified as the sponsor of the application.

35. Can an employer apply through a MWA other than the one in their area?

Yes. This may occur when an employer is on a border of a county or has multiple locations in multiple workforce areas. An employer may choose to work with an MWA of their choice. The sponsoring MWA must notify the local MWA of the application and obtain a letter or email of support that will accompany the application.

36. How will an employer be paid for the training?

The employer will submit an invoice along with all required documentation to the MWA to request reimbursement. The MWA will reconcile the request with the approved application/training plan and make payment to the employer and/or training provider.

37. Are employers responsible for reporting program outcomes?

Employers are responsible for reporting at closeout of the award, including but not limited to verification of final data including the names of employees who completed training,

number and type of employees trained, training providers, types of training, credentials earned, targeted population incentives, revised projected contribution/leveraged funds, pre-training hourly wages, hourly wages at training completion, hourly wages at six months post-training, employee retention at six months post-training, and impact story.

38. How does an employer log in to WBLOMS?

It is recommended that employers contact the MWA before attempting to log in. Employers may log in to WBLOMS before contacting the MWA, however, will have limited access within the online system until approved to submit an application. Employers may sign in to WBLOMS one of three ways. First, use an existing Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTC) employer account. Second, a new employer account (User ID and Password) may be created for WBLOMS by registering as a new user. A new account created through this method will only be used to log in to WBLOMS, not PMTC or any other State of Michigan website. Additionally, this new account will not be connected to any previous Talent Fund applications. Third, you may log in using an existing WBLOMS account that was created for a previous Talent Fund application period.

39. What file formats can be uploaded in WBLOMS?

Each section of the application that allows files to be uploaded will specify which file formats (.pdf, .csv, .doc) are acceptable. Please note, supporting files uploaded in the written Rationale for Request and Employer Contribution sections should be fully explained in the available text boxes. Additionally, updates to the training plan must be made within the online system. With the exception of the New Hires and Current Employees templates, uploaded files will not alter the training plan.

40. When are attachments needed in the rationale sections of the application?

Supporting attachments should be included if a training would otherwise be considered ineligible without strong justification. Any attachments must be fully explained in the available text box. Refer to the Fiscal Year 2022 Eligible/Ineligible Training Guidance document to determine training eligibility.

41. An employer attempted to reset their password by clicking "Trouble logging in?" and they did not receive a token code to reset their password.

When attempting to reset the password for an employer WBLOMS account, the security token will be active for thirty minutes. Be sure to click "Reset Password" once and wait for the security token to arrive via email. If thirty minutes has passed you may click "Reset Password" again. Check your spam folder if the email has not arrived containing the security token. The token is usually sent within minutes of clicking "Reset Password". The token will be contained in the body of the email.

42. Can I copy and paste in WBLOMS?

Yes, you may copy and paste in most text boxes using the keyboard commands CTRL + C to copy and CTRL + V to paste.

43. Does WBLOMS have spell check?

Spell check is available in some sections. To ensure no typographical errors are made in the Rationale for Request sections, you may type the narrative in a separate Microsoft Word document then copy and paste into WBLOMS.

44. Does WBLOMS automatically save my data?

No, in each section of the application you must click “Save” or “Save and Continue” for your data to be saved. When you successfully save you may see a success message and you will notice a green checkmark on the left side of the screen.

45. Why can’t I submit my application in WBLOMS?

On the left side of the screen while editing an application there is a checklist. Each section must be complete before submitting the application. A completed section will be indicated by a green checkmark. All sections, with the exception of the New Hires and Current Employees sections, must have a green checkmark or the application cannot be submitted. If the Current Employees section is completed, the New Hires section does not need to be and vice versa. If a section was believed to be completed but there is no green checkmark, return to that section and click “Save”.