

**SkillWorks 2015 RFP
Frequently Asked Questions**

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General Questions

1. Q: Do hard copies of proposals need to be bound?

A: No.

2. Q: How are applicants required to submit proposals?

A: Applicants may submit a hard copy of their proposal to Marybeth Campbell at SkillWorks c/o The Boston Foundation, 420 Boylston Street, 4th Floor, Boston, MA 02116 **AND** a PDF version via email to Marybeth.campbell@tbf.org with a cc: to skillworks@tbf.org.

3. Q: Is there a template or required structure for the narrative portion of the proposal?

A: No. However, applicants should make sure their proposal meets the key criteria on pages 14-15 of the RFP.

4. Q: Can the lead applicant's organizational logic model count as the "one page visual depiction" listed in the Instructions for Submitting the Full Proposal?

A: No. The one-page visual depiction should reflect the specific program and/or project and the flow of work/service that is being proposed (i.e. how are clients, employers served). An applicant may also submit organizational model if it provides information on the how the project will be led and managed, but it is not required.

5. Q: What is SkillWorks' definition of "Greater Boston?"

A: This is the first time SkillWorks has formally expanded our geographic reach. SkillWorks definition of Greater Boston includes stretching our boundary as far as far North as Everett, Revere, and Chelsea, as far Northwest as Cambridge/Somerville, as far West as Newton and as far South as Quincy.

6. Q: Do the geography requirements refer to where participants reside or where the organization/program is located?

A: SkillWorks' expanded geography refers to organization and/or program location, residents and employers. SkillWorks' priority is to serve Boston residents however we will accept applications from organizations located in the Great Boston region (as described above in Question 5) **AND** that serve residents and employers in Boston and/or serve residents and employers where the organization or program is located in the defined Greater Boston area (as described above Question 5).

For example: If an organization is applying for funds and it is not located in the City of Boston, it will need to meet two threshold criteria as follows: 1.) the organization/program must be within the defined Greater Boston region **AND** 2.) that organization must serve Boston residents and/or residents from the defined Greater Boston region. An organization is not eligible if it serves Boston or Greater Boston residents but is not located in Boston or the defined Greater Boston region.

******To applicants applying for the special joint funds between English for New Bostonians ESOL training aligned with SkillWorks funds for Sector-Based training, please note:** Applicants can be located in the defined Greater Boston region but must allow Boston residents as fully eligible participants.

7. Q: What types of organizations are eligible to apply?

A: Nonprofit, public or for-profit entities including community based non-profits, career technical education programs and community colleges.

8. Q: Are lead applications required to be postsecondary institutions or engage in partnership(s) with postsecondary institutions?

A: No. Lead applicants can be nonprofit, public or for-profit entities including community based non-profits, career technical education programs and community colleges. Formal partnerships with postsecondary institutions are not required if a proposal does not have a post-secondary pathways or plan.

9. Q: For any lead applicants that are, or are in partnership with postsecondary institutions, are there credit requirements?

A: SkillWorks will consider credentials at the non-credit and credit levels including certificates and degrees.

10. Q: Can an organization apply for more than one grant?

A: No. An organization may not apply for more than one grant as the lead applicant.

11. Q: Can an organization be part of multiple proposals?

A: Yes. Organizations can only apply once as the lead applicant, but can be part of other applications as partner organizations.

12. Q: What are the minimum and maximum grant terms?

A: The minimum grant term is one year. The maximum grant term is two years, subject to renewal after one year, depending upon year one performance and conditioned on available funds.

13. Q: How many grant awards will be made?

A: This number will be based upon the quality of the proposals and the average grant size attributed to each category. Applicant should not expect SkillWorks will select proposals from each category but will select the best overall proposals in the pool.

14. Q: Each focus of work indicates approximate resources available and a maximum award amount. Is that maximum amount the total amount possible per year?

A: No. The maximum award amount associated with each focus of work is the total amount possible. An applicant can choose to apply for the maximum grant amount for a one year grant or for the maximum amount over a two year grant, receiving the first half of the maximum amount in year one and the second half in year two.

15. Q: Is funding for planning included in the award?

A: Potentially. If included as part of the application, SkillWorks may consider funding planning activities. If applicant is only pursuing a planning grant, applicant must approach SkillWorks directly, prior to proposal submission.

16. Q: Is there a match requirement?

A: For requests of \$50,000 or more per year, SkillWorks will give preference to partnerships or organizations that are able to provide a 50% match to the amount requested. If no match is provided for a request of \$50,000 or more, applicants must provide an explanation.

17. Q: Is there a required type of match?

A: No. Match can be cash, in kind, staff capacity, and other matching sources, as deemed appropriate by SkillWorks staff upon proposal review and discussion with applicant.

18. Q: Do placement wages count toward match requirements?

A: No.

19. Q: If an employer is the lead applicant, can transitional employment services be counted toward the match requirement?

A: Possibly. This can be included in the proposal but must be accompanied by other sources of matching funds.

20. Q: Can SkillWorks grant funding be used to pay wages, stipends and/or internship costs?

A: No.

21. Q: Are applicants required to use the budget template on SkillWorks website?

A: No. SkillWorks uses [Associated Grant Makers'](#) standard template, but applicants are not required to use this template. Applicants may use whatever format best conveys their program budget.

22. Q: If lead applicant is a training organization, is the organization required to provide an outline of the current and/or proposed curriculum?

A: Yes. Competitive applicants will also describe the level of involvement employers have in advising curriculum development.

23. Q: Does SkillWorks have a particular focus on job seekers and/or incumbent workers?

A: No. Applicants may apply for funding to support incumbent workers and/or pre-employment services for job seekers.

24. Q: What is the target age range when referencing “Youth/Young Adults”?

A: 16-24.

25. Q: Are MOUs or MOAs with employers required as part of the application?

A: Yes. If an applicant is applying for funds for Sector-based training and/or Sector partnerships they are required to have at least two employer partners. For all other applicants, employer partnerships are strongly encouraged and a description of employer engagement and commitment should be included in the proposal.

Data and Measurement

26. Q: Does SkillWorks require evaluation and data tracking?

A: Yes. This data feeds into our target Phase III outcomes, as approved by our funders. These outcomes will be subject to a third party evaluation of SkillWorks’ Phase III performance. SkillWorks uses the National Fund for Workforce Solutions’ data guidelines as a baseline for what we expect from our grantees. Anything further is customizable and open to negotiation.

27. Q: Does SkillWorks require applicants to use a specific data tracking/management system?

A: No. Applicants may use any data tracking/management system that works best for their organization, as long as applicant can guarantee appropriate data management and reporting capacity through the required data management narrative portion and *Proposed Outcomes Form* of the proposal.

28. Q: Are specific outcomes goals required as part of this application?

A: Yes. In addition to other required application materials, all applicants must fill out and submit the *Proposed Outcomes Form* which can be found on the [RFPs section of our website](#).

29. Q: Who is expected to collect data?

A: All grantees. Following contract negotiation, SkillWorks grantees are expected to track and report required data based on an agreed upon reporting schedule.

30. Q: Are applicants required to track and report on all measures indicated on pages 7-9 of the RFP?

A: No. Applicants must track and report on the Common Measures indicated on page 7 as applicable to the program design and population served. SkillWorks will work with successful applicants during contract negotiation to select and report on Customized Measures indicated on pages 8-9, depending upon relevancy, negotiation, and capacity.

31. Q: Does SkillWorks have a required template and/or dashboard for data tracking and reporting?

A: Yes. SkillWorks dashboard can be found on our [website](#). As indicated in the RFP, Common Measures are required (as applicable) for all applicants. Customized Metrics are not required and are subject to discussion during the contract negotiation process if applicant reaches that stage.

32. Q: Does SkillWorks have a full list of required participant level data that grantees must collect?

A: Yes. This list is a part of the contract and SkillWorks will work with grantees during the contract negotiation process to ensure that grantees will be able to collect and report all required participant-level data.

33. Q: Will SkillWorks be aligning data and measurement requirements with other funders?

A: Yes. SkillWorks will be discussing data and measurement requirements as they factor into targeting impact across key focus areas. SkillWorks plans to be a convener and influencer on these items.

Special Funding for Organization that Offer ESOL and Sector Based Training Programs

34. Q: Do programs have to be receiving current funding from English for New Bostonians (ENB) and/or SkillWorks?

A: No. Programs do not need to be current grantees of English for New Bostonians and/or SkillWorks, but programs applying for this special funding must currently offer **BOTH** ESOL and sector-based skills training.

35. Q: If the program currently only provides ESOL instruction OR only sector based training, is the program eligible to apply for the Special Joint ENB-SkillWorks Funds?

A: No. Applicants applying for special funding must already provide **BOTH** ESOL instruction and sector based training and demonstrate a history of success in both areas.

Systems Change¹

36. Q: Does systems change only apply to the workforce development system?

A: No. As long as the applicant can make a case, other systems can be included under the systems change requirement, including but not limited to the k-12 education system, postsecondary system, adult basic education system, etc.

¹ SkillWorks defines systems change as efforts to identify and address institutional practices, regulatory constraints, and other conditions that create barriers to hiring, training, retaining, and advancing entry-level or front-line staff in an industry or occupation. Such systems change efforts include the development of services that demonstrate practical, replicable solutions to problems of access or quality of education or training services as well as endeavors to change the policies and practices of employers, industry, education institutions and training providers. Specific examples include (but are not limited to): changes in employer practices or policies that promote advancement for entry-level workers; evidence that grant-funded programs and practices are being institutionalized; new human resource practices or policies; expansion of partnership programs to other industry employers; and expansion of partnership programs/services to other groups of employees at a partner employer.

37. Q: Are systems change activities limited to government policy change and/or a particular industry and/or sector?

A: No.

38. Q: Does employer engagement count as systems change?

A: Yes, if it is the case that employer engagement leads to changes in employment practices as a result of the proposed project.

SkillWorks Phase III Priority Investment Areas

39. Q: Do proposals need to cover all key focuses of work and priority investment areas?

A: No. The key focuses of our work and priority investment areas are not siloed. Most proposals will likely cross over but applicants should select a predominant focus in one key area.

40. Q: Are applicants required to have an industry of focus? If they already have an industry of focus, must they align with what SkillWorks has funded in the past?

A: Yes, projects should have an industry focus. SkillWorks is open to funding programs that train participants for industries we currently focus on (i.e. healthcare, construction/building maintenance, IT/Technology, hospitality) and are also open to exploring new industries as long as applicants are able to support their chosen industries of focus with labor market data, proof of pathways to quality jobs and existing or developing employer partnerships.

41. Q: With regard to SkillWorks Four 'A' of Impact, under "Access," is there a specific outcome SkillWorks is hoping to see?

A: Yes. While this is a new metric for SkillWorks and we understand that many organizations are not currently tracking many metrics around Access to programming, SkillWorks would like to collect, analyze and share this data to help us better shape and advise programs down the road with regard to mitigating barriers to participants accessing training programs.

42. Q: If an applicant applies under the Increase Employability as their primary focus area, can the applicant primarily serve adults? May applicants serve participants older than 24?

A: Yes.

43. Q: Under the Increase Employability focus area, are job readiness and/or coaching programs eligible?

A: Yes.

44. Q: Are applicants exclusively serving youth/ young adult required to propose, track, and/or report on outcomes measures including job placement, wages, retention, etc.?

A: Depending on the type of proposal, outcomes goals/measures may be customized. Applicants must propose proper measures depending on the type of program/services offered. SkillWorks is open to negotiating based upon what makes the most sense for each applicant.