



## Industry Engagement

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### Going PRO Talent Fund

*Fiscal Year 2021*

### 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 2021 may be directed to your local Michigan Works! Agency (MWA) contact found [here](#).*

**1. How can I apply?**

Eligible employers may contact their local 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](#).

**2. Where do we submit the Talent Fund application?**

Companies submit their applications to the MWAs. The MWAs will review and then submit applications to the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity-Workforce Development (LEO-WD). The process to apply for a Talent Fund award has gone from paper to digital. LEO-WD will continue to release hard copy (electronic) draft documents to the key contact(s) at each MWA at the appointed release date for planning purposes. Applying for a Talent Fund award is done exclusively online through the new Work-Based Learning Online Management System (WBLOMS). During the application period, a link to the portal will be displayed on the WD Talent Fund website at [www.michigan.gov/talentfund](http://www.michigan.gov/talentfund).

**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, including 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 not-for-profit company/organization). Public institutions or entities are not eligible to apply. Unions are not eligible to apply as employers, however, they may be eligible training providers.

## **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](http://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, and new this year high school diploma/equivalency trainee?**

Yes. An extra incentive may be reimbursed to an employer for each employee who qualifies under one of the following 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 new Veterans, new Active Military Reservists, new Older Workers, new Returning Citizens and \$1,000 for new and incumbent High School Diploma/Equivalency trainees, even if the employee meets the criteria in more than one category.

**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' 2014-2019 was approximately \$32,000.

**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., January 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 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. We are on the border of Michigan and we employ non-residents. Can we train non-residents with Talent Fund funding?**

The Talent Fund may pay for training of non-Michigan residents if the employee is permanent full-time and the employer is paying all applicable taxes to the State of Michigan for the employee.

**21. What are eligible training expenditures?**

Eligible training expenditures include the actual costs for the classroom, new employee on-the-job training and 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.

**22. 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 (see Eligible/Ineligible Training Guidance). Although these expenditures are not eligible for reimbursement, employers may include them as part of their contribution/leveraged funds.

**23. 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. See question #22\_ for additional details.

**24. Can the Talent Fund be used for curriculum development?**

No. See question #22 for additional details

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

The cap per trainee is \$1,500 for all training except for USDOL Registered Apprenticeships, which is \$3,000 per trainee.

**26. 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 on-the-job training and new USDOL Registered Apprenticeship training).

**27. 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.

**28. What is the definition of new employee on-the-job 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.

**29. 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.

**30. 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.

**31. Can the Talent Fund be used to pay for training that is delivered through distance learning?**

Distance or online training is eligible if the training cannot be obtained locally or within a reasonable travel or time training is not offered in the classroom. The preference is the course is instructor-led, virtual training versus online learning at trainee's own pace, and training results in a credential; specific to a customized, short term technical skill.

**32. 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.

**33. 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.

**34. Can a business participate in multiple Talent Fund projects?**

Businesses may participate in industry-led collaborative applications and one independent Talent Fund project per year, per location.

**35. Can more than one employer be involved in a Talent Fund project?**

Yes, we encourage collaborative efforts to reduce training costs, however an employer is limited to one independent award and one ILC award based on the employer location. On a case-by-case basis, employers may complete one application that includes multiple plants/sites/facilities/locations, however, WD reserves the right to limit an employer to a maximum award amount for all locations combined.

**36. For an ILC, it is preferred to see three or more employers, however two employers are the minimum. Whether there are two, three or more employers as part of the ILC application, at least two employers must have employees participating in all training courses listed on the training plan. Can a request for an industry-led collaborative of employer's cross counties/regions?**

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

**37. 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.

**38. 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.