MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Industry Engagement

Going PRO IN MICHIGAN TALENT FUND

Going PRO Talent Fund
Fiscal Year 2026
Employer Guide

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Key Updates

In an effort to continuously improve the program based on feedback received, the following changes have been made from the prior year's guidance.

1. FY26 Scoring Criteria - **New Update 10/14/25:** Combined EV/Mobility, High Speed Internet, and Affordable Housing criteria into one category worth 1 point total.

2. The FY26 multiple training cycles timeline has been updated, including dates for the Cycle 2 application period.

3. Definition of eligible Artificial Intelligence (AI) training has been added.

4. Ineligible Expenditures clarified to include equipment rental.

5. Clarification added to Targeted Population Incentives section.

6. Clarification regarding tips and commission has been added to the Hourly Median Wage Definition.

7. Redundant definitions removed.

8. **New Update 10/14/25:** Maximum award amount per employer site (Independent and ELC combined) reduced to $250,000. Please note, LEO-WD reserves the right to limit an employer to a maximum award amount for all employer sites combined.

Purpose

The Talent Fund brings many benefits to Michigan's employers and employees. The program:

- Helps ensure Michigan's employers have the talent they need to compete and grow, while ensuring individuals have the skills they need for in-demand jobs.
- Expands and improves employees' skills and develops their opportunities for growth or promotion within the company and for economic advancement.
- Addresses skill shortages by reskilling and upskilling Michigan workers based on employers' needs.
- Supports an increase in credentials, certificates and degrees through employer-responsive training that enhances talent attraction, productivity, and retention.

The Talent Fund is designed to create public-private partnerships with employers to develop training models that adapt with changing employer demand. Training must be completed within one year from the date of the award and lead to a credential for a skill that is transferable and recognized by industry. Employers who request funding must actively participate in the development of the training and must commit to retaining individuals at the completion of training.

As a result of individuals being trained and promoted, vacancies should be filled by individuals recruited with the assistance of the local Michigan Works! Agency (MWA). Additionally, due to the challenges of finding skilled talent to fill jobs, companies are encouraged to expand their recruitment to include individuals within Targeted Populations.

The Talent Fund will not reimburse for training that has occurred prior to the effective award date.

Key Partners

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Workforce Development (LEO-WD) awards the funds to employers through Michigan's workforce system, commonly known as the Michigan Works! Agencies (MWA). MWA Business Services staff conduct fact-finding sessions with employers to assess their talent gaps, suitable training providers and availability of federal funding sources. If they determine Talent Fund awards are appropriate, they grant the employers access to the online application submission process. Interested employers should engage their local MWA early to allow ample time to complete the fact-finding process to ensure applications are submitted in time for review prior to established deadlines. The local MWA is responsible for submitting applications to LEO-WD on behalf of the employers to ensure all available funding (federal, state, local, private) is identified and utilized in a strategic, braided manner. If an application is approved, the MWA is then responsible for management and oversight of the award. Payments are made on a reimbursement basis after all required documentation is submitted to the MWA.

Any of the following partners can identify eligible employers that have a documented need for recruitment and/or development of talent for referral to the MWA. Final project approval lies with LEO-WD.

- MWAs as the lead partner
- Chambers of commerce
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
- Local economic development organizations
- Michigan community colleges and other eligible training providers
- Industry collaboratives
- Labor Unions

Eligible Employers

To be eligible for a Talent Fund award, an employer must:

- Have a need for skill enhancement, including USDOL Registered Apprenticeship programs and advance-tech training programs for current employee(s) or new employee(s).
- Have a physical location in Michigan where work is conducted.
- Be a non-government private entity; for profit and non-profit.
- Be compliant with all state tax obligations including, but not limited to, corporate, sales, use, withholding, personal income and unemployment insurance taxes.

Be willing to participate under the program's eligibility parameters and guidelines.
Not eligible to apply:

- Federally Recognized Governments (e.g., Native American Tribes), including tribal casinos
- Federal, State, and Local Governments
- Public Institutions and Entities
- Local School Districts and Intermediate School Districts
- Municipally Owned Utilities
- County Road Commissions
- Community Mental Health Authorities
- Other entities as determined by LEO-WD

Note:

- Unions are not eligible to apply as employers, however, they may be eligible training providers.
- The majority of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are not governmental entities and are eligible for Talent Fund awards. Information on FQHCs may be found on the Michigan Primary Care Association website.
- The marijuana industry is 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.
- MWAs may not apply.
- Staffing/temporary/leasing agencies' applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Eligible Trainees

Two types of employees may receive Going PRO Talent Fund training:

1. **Current employees**
    a. Defined as individuals on the employer's payroll at time of application or hired at least 31 days prior to the award date.
    b. Individuals promoted or moved into a new position.
    c. Individuals moved from part-time to full-time.
    d. Individuals laid off, furloughed, or fired, then rehired.
    e. Individuals who have previously worked for the employer including through a temporary staffing agency, leasing agency, or on contract with a Form 1099.

2. **New employees**
    a. Defined as individuals hired 30 days prior to, on, or after the effective award date. Pure Michigan Talent Connect (MiTalent.org) should be used as a resource to obtain potential candidates for the interview and selection process.

b. Individuals who have not previously worked for the employer, including through a temporary staffing agency, leasing agency, or on contract with a Form 1099.

Every eligible employee, current or new, must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Permanent, full-time employee of the employer when the approved training begins.
    a. Full-time employment is defined as 32 hours per week or more.
    b. Seasonal and/or part-time employees, current or new, are not eligible
    c. If individuals have worked for the employer through a temporary staffing agency, leasing agency or on contract with a Form 1099, the individuals must be increasing their job responsibilities or learning a new job.
2. Works primarily in Michigan, and for whom the employer pays all applicable taxes to the State of Michigan, regardless of where the employee lives.
    a. Example: Employee lives in Wisconsin, works for employer in Escanaba (or remotely for employer in Southfield) and taxes are paid to the State of Michigan. The employee is eligible.
3. 18 years of age or older.
4. U.S. citizen or legally authorized to work in the U.S.

Eligible Training Providers

- Michigan community colleges
- Private and public college and universities
- Private training providers
- Training provider identified by and agreed upon by all partners, who can do accelerated "just-in-time" training
- Labor unions
- Vendors providing training in operation of equipment or systems for which they were the provider
- Employers only for new hire or USDOL RA On-the-job training
- Proprietary schools as licensed in the state of Michigan
- Registered United States Department of Labor (USDOL) joint apprenticeship training centers (JATC)

The preference is for all training to occur in Michigan. However, if training must occur out-of-state, the documented need and rationale must be submitted in writing to the MWA.

Eligible Training – Overview

All training must expand and improve an employee's skills and develop their opportunities for growth or promotion within the company. Training must lead to a credential for a skill that is transferable and recognized by industry. Additionally, the training must fill a demonstrated talent need experienced by an eligible participating employer.

The following are types of training that may be funded under the Talent Fund:

Type of Training	Current Employee	New Employee
1. Classroom/Customized Training (CRT)	Eligible	Eligible
2. New Employee On-the-Job Training (OJT)	Not Eligible	Eligible
3. USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Classroom/Customized Training (first year through completion)	Eligible	Eligible
4. USDOL Registered Apprenticeship OJT Training (first year through completion)	Eligible	Eligible

- A new employee who is not a USDOL Registered Apprentice may participate in OJT, or a combination of classroom and OJT.
- USDOL Registered Apprenticeship training includes both RTI and OJT, however 100% OJT is allowable. For Example: RTI has been paid by another source, RTI occurred prior to the effective award date, or the classroom training component has already been completed (front loaded).
- The 90-day post-training retention period applies only to the *OJT portion* of training for *new employees* (non-apprentice or USDOL Registered Apprentice).
  See Required Documentation for Reimbursement section for more information. All training, including the 90-day retention period, should conclude within one year from the date of the award in order to receive full reimbursement.
- The Talent Fund may not be used to offset current tuition reimbursement programs.
- Funding must be utilized to provide short-term training to meet current, documented needs of employers; not more than 6 months in duration, unless employer need is documented and retained by MWA during fact finding.
- The Talent Fund will not reimburse for training that has occurred prior to the effective award date.

Classroom or Customized Training – Details
Each year the list of eligible and ineligible training is reviewed and amended, based on demand and available resources. Training that does not meet the intent of the program (i.e., introductory, or general overview) is subject to denial or non-reimbursement. The list is meant to serve as a guideline and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Examples of **Eligible Training** topics and activities:

• ABS Welding • Advanced IT Networking • Air Pollution Control Systems • Alphacam • American Sign Language (ASL) [1] • Artificial Intelligence (AI) [2] • Assembly Technician • AutoCAD • Blueprint Reading • Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) • Certified Surgical Cleaning Technician • Child Development Associates (CDA) certification • Computer Numeric Control (CNC) Operator • Computer Numeric Control (CNC) Programmer • Drill Press • Electrical Equipment	• English as a Second Language (ESL) [1] • Financial Accounting • Foam Fabrication • Food Safety Modernization • Geometric Dimensioning and Tolerancing (GD&T) • Human Resources, as defined [3] • Hydraulics • HVACR • Industrial Sewing • Information Technology Training/Certifications • Injection Molding • ISO 9000 • Kinetix 6500 Troubleshooting • Lathe • Machine Guarding • Leadership or Management Training [4] • Machining (Mill, Lathe, Surface Grinder, etc.) • Mechanical Drive Systems	• Molding Technology • Online, as defined [5] • Painting Tech • Process Improvement, Risk and Quality Management Systems [6] • Project Management • Quality Engineering • Quality Software • RS Logix 5000 • Radan Nesting and Bending • Robotic Operation PRO • Root-Cause Analysis • Safety Training [7] • Sales Acceleration [8] • Server Visualization • Statistical Process Control • Sterile Processing Technician • Thermal Imaging • Troubleshooting • Utility Technician • USDOL Registered Apprenticeship [9] • Welding

• Emergency Medical Technician • Engine Diagnostics	• Medical Assistant • Metalcasting	• Wound Care Certification

* Superscript Number (Example: [1]) = Refer to the below definitions for additional detail

Eligible Training Definitions

1. American Sign Language (ASL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) should be contextual, with an emphasis on practical application to the work setting.
2. Artificial Intelligence (AI) training with a focus on upskilling for AI-related technologies and/or a specific technical application of AI in the work setting is eligible.
    a. AI training should not be an introductory/overview course. For example, AI literacy training showcasing generic uses of common AI tools is not eligible.
    b. Emphasis should be placed on training that leads to a portable, stackable, industry recognized credential.
    c. Careful consideration should be given to the long-term effects of the AI training. Training should lead to net positive outcomes (layoff aversion, modernization, job creation).
3. Human Resources training for a USDOL Registered Apprenticeship, in accordance with the apprenticeship standards.
4. Leadership or Management Training should not be an introductory/overview course, or a stand-alone/self-contained seminar/workshop/webinar.
    a. Leadership training is eligible if it is a specific component within a training plan that includes technical hard skills training.
    b. A training plan of each employer participating in an ELC cannot be comprised of only leadership training even if other employers meet the requirement for technical hard skills training.
5. Online training is eligible if it is live and instructor led. Recorded learning at trainee's own pace is not eligible. A quality, instructor-led hybrid course that is both modularized and live is also allowable.
    a. Note: 100% online and self-paced training that meets the requirements of USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Programs is allowable.
6. Process Improvement, Risk and Quality Management Systems Training may be eligible if it has a hands-on component (black or green belt preferred). For example: Lean, Six Sigma, Supply Chain and Total Quality Management. Additionally, Going PRO Talent Fund cannot cover consulting services.
7. Safety Training may be eligible if the training would not be considered the cost of doing business. It may also be eligible if it meets the requirements of USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Programs. ServeSafe certification for food handlers, bloodborne pathogens, control of hazardous materials, OSHA Overview, Control of Hazardous Energy Sources (aka Lockout/Tagout or LOTO), HAZWOPER 8 (or Refresher) emergency action plan, emergency response, hazard communications, hearing conservation, safe electrical workplace, first aid and CPR is not eligible training. However, OSHA 10 (10 hours of training) or OSHA 30 (30 hours), HAZWOPER 24, ServSafe Food Protection Manager certification, etc. may be eligible depending on the justification provided to the MWA.
8. Sales acceleration may be eligible if it is not soft skills training. For example: Related to marketplace research, buying signals, company data, statistics, predictive analytics, and integrated platforms.
9. USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Program aligned training that results in a post-secondary credential.

Examples of **Ineligible Training** topics and activities:

• Adult Education (High School Completion / Equivalency) [10] • Adult Education (Remedial Education and Soft Skills Training) • Consulting to improve company processes • Continuing Education [11] • Curriculum Development	• Certification Maintenance, Re-certification, or License Renewal [12] • Current Employee On-the-Job Training (OJT) [13] • Human Resources (non-apprenticeship) • In-house training • Introductory Process Improvement [14] • Language [15]	• Laws, Regulations, and Taxes [16] • Literacy • Microsoft Office [17] • Online Resource Libraries [18] • Safety Training [19] • Seminars, Conferences, Webinars (stand-alone), Workshops, etc.[20] • Subscriptions for eLearning • Vendor/Equipment [21] • Soft Skills [22]

* Superscript Number (Example: [1]) = Refer to the below definitions for additional detail.

Ineligible Training Definitions

10. Adult Education (High School Completion/Equivalency) may qualify as a *Targeted Population Incentive*, eligible to be awarded to the employer for an individual who achieves at least 75% (or completion) of High School Diploma/Equivalency (HSE) program requirements during work hours. OJT and/or eligible classroom training would need to be on the plan and associated with the trainee on the HSE path.
11. Continuing Education for maintaining certification/license; unrelated to employer-responsive training and/or upskilling.
12. Certain training activities and/or costs related to certification maintenance, re-certification or license renewal including but not limited to:
    a. Fees and costs for re-certification, license renewal, or testing
    b. Required courses to maintain certification/license
    c. Other requirements to maintain certification/license
13. OJT for current employees, unless included as part of training for a USDOL Registered Apprentice.
14. Introductory Process Improvement such as Basic Lean/Intro to Lean or Lean Overview.
15. Language, other than English as a Second Language (ESL) or American Sign Language (ASL)
16. Laws, Regulations and Taxes – for example, training related to compliance regulations, federal/state taxation laws, international laws, US labor laws, etc.
17. Microsoft Office courses (Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, One Note, Access, Publisher).
18. Online Resource Libraries or any other resource in which an individual can choose from a number of courses over a period of time.
19. Safety Training that is part of the normal cost of doing business (see Eligible Training Definitions).
20. Stand-alone seminars such as a lecture with no associated classroom component, conferences, webinars, workshops, etc. will be considered on a case-by-case basis in consideration of the course syllabus, material, and outcomes.
21. Vendor/equipment training for which the employer has already paid such as if the employer purchases a piece of equipment and included in the cost of the equipment is training for a specified amount of time. Employer may however request reimbursement for training that is over and above the included training.
22. Soft Skills training including but not limited to the following:

• Active Shooter • Adapting to Change • Anger Management • Assessments • Bankruptcy Laws • Branding • Business Policies and Procedures • Business Writing • Coaching/Mentoring • Conducting Effective Meetings • Constructive Feedback and Criticism • Conflict Resolution • Customer Service • Decision Making • Drug and Alcohol Education	• Drug Testing • Email Skills • Employee Relations • Emotional Intelligence Facilitation • Foreign Culture and Customs • Foreign Languages • Forums • Generational Divide • Habits of Successful People • Non-apprentice HR Training • Interpersonal Communication • Interviewing Techniques • Legal Contracts • Listening Skills	• Literature • Motivation • Myers Briggs • Navigating Difficult Conversations • Negotiation Skills • Orientation/On Boarding • Personal Management/Health • Presentation Skills • Public Speaking • Reading • Sales • Teamwork/Team Building • Telephone Skills • Time Management • Workplace Politics • Workplace Violence

Note 1: Some topics listed in the table above may be approved as acceptable components of a Training Plan that includes leadership/management/supervisory training combined with technical hard skills training as described in the Eligible Training Definitions section.

Note 2: Soft skills resources are available at no cost or may be supported by leveraged resources from other state or federal programs.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) – Details

OJT allows the employee to become proficient in their permanent full-time job. OJT is allowable for all new employees, USDOL RA new employees, and USDOL RA current employees.
The following rules apply:

- Training is conducted at the worksite.
- Reimbursable training begins on or after the effective award date.
- 90-day retention for new employee OJT or new employee USDOL RA OJT begins upon completion of training and must be completed within one year of the date of the award (i.e., December 31, 2026) in order to receive full reimbursement.
    - 50% reimbursement earned once the trainee has retained employment for 30 consecutive calendar days.
    - 75% reimbursement earned once the trainee has retained employment for 60 consecutive calendar days.
    - 100% reimbursement earned once the trainee has retained employment for 90 consecutive calendar days.

USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Training – Details

Support for USDOL Registered Apprentices through completion is a priority of the Talent Fund. An employer may apply the $3,500 reimbursement for each year the apprentice is on the Training Plan, regardless of what year they are in the apprenticeship. All funds awarded for USDOL RA training must be expended on RTI and/or OJT that will lead to the completion of an apprenticeship program. Note: If the employer receives an award in two consecutive fiscal years and an individual's apprentice training spans both award periods, the employer may be reimbursed $3,500 for the individual in both award periods.

The number of USDOL Registered Apprentices will be identified on the Training Plan as part of the WBLOMS application process. It will be up to the employer to determine the number of trainees to be listed on the Training Plan at the time of application, and the MWA must help to manage employer expectations as part of fact finding. First year USDOL Registered Apprentices sponsorship and/or registration dates must be feasible for including trainees on the Training Plan (in alignment with proposed Training Plan start dates). Individuals at risk of not being registered in time to be recognized on the Talent Fund training plan should not be included on the application.
Properly licensed apprentices are not the same as USDOL Registered Apprentices – these are different programs. To verify that the applicant's apprenticeship is USDOL Registered, please take one of the following steps:

1. Inquire on USDOL's website by visiting dol.gov/agencies/eta/apprenticeship
2. Call Michigan's USDOL Office of Apprenticeship at 517-377-1747
3. Contact the LEO-WD State Apprenticeship Expansion team, at 517-335-5858 or apprenticeship@michigan.gov

Cost of Training

- New Employee and Current Employee Classroom training cannot exceed $2,000 per person
- New employee OJT training cannot exceed $2,000 per person
- New employee training that includes a combination of classroom training and OJT cannot exceed $2,000 per person
- USDOL Registered Apprenticeship training (first year through program completion) cannot exceed $3,500 per person
- No more than $250,000 may be awarded to any individual employer site (for an Independent and ELC award combined)

The amount requested on the Training Plan cannot exceed the $2,000 or $3,500 per person cap.

Targeted Population Incentives
As it is becoming harder to find the skilled talent to fill jobs, employers are encouraged to expand their recruitment to include individuals within Targeted Populations, including:

1. Veteran (U.S. Armed Forces)
2. Active Military Reservist (U.S. Armed Forces)
3. Older Worker
4. Justice-Involved Citizen
5. Individual With Disability (IWD)
6. Public Assistance Recipient
7. High School Diploma/Equivalency (HSE) Trainee

An extra incentive may be reimbursed to an employer including: $500 for each Veteran, Active Military Reservist, Older Worker, Justice-Involved Citizen, Individual with Disability, or Public Assistance Recipient new trainee; and $1,000 for each High School Diploma/Equivalency new and incumbent trainee.

The additional incentive must be used to offset additional training costs. The maximum amount per new trainee that an employer may receive as incentive funding is $500 for Veterans, Active Military Reservists, Older Workers, Justice-Involved Citizens, IWD, Public Assistance Recipient, and $1,000 for HSE new and incumbent trainees, even if the employee meets the criteria in more than one category. Other criteria must also be met, and verification documentation must be submitted to the MWA prior to payment. For specific information regarding required documentation and criteria to qualify for the incentives, see Required Documentation for Reimbursement section.

Expectations of Employers

Employers play an integral role in defining specific job skill sets and identifying the appropriate training. Partners and employers will work together to develop a training plan, including the number of individuals to be trained and all available funding and resources.

Talent Fund applicants (and/or awardees) are expected to:

1. Be actively involved in the planning and design of the Training Plan.
2. Include realistic goals and expectations that drill down to the real training need. For example, what training can be accomplished while still meeting production and/or other business needs? Awardees are accountable to implement the approved plan.
3. Pay wages to employees that are equal to or greater than the prevailing wage for the local labor market and occupation. Please note, this is a general expectation that participating employers are paying competitive wages. This is separate from the Scoring Criteria category.
    a. The Talent Fund should not be utilized for low-wage, high turnover occupations; nor should it be used for high-wage, executive level positions. Talent Fund trainee characteristics should comprise of high-demand and high-skill occupations. Occupations that require some college, no degree or a higher level of educational attainment are high skill, as well as occupations that require a high school diploma or equivalent plus long-term OJT, an apprenticeship, or internship/residency.
    b. It is the expectation that training will lead to higher skills, and result in higher wages.
4. Sign a contract/training agreement with the MWA outlining the employer's role and responsibilities in the Training Plan.
5. Provide at least one impact story upon completion of training.
6. Commit to retain employees at the completion of training.
7. Provide wage information prior to training, post-training, and six months post-training.
8. Provide required documentation for reimbursement.
9. Provide projected employer contribution on the application and confirm post-training. Employers should retain supporting documentation for employer contribution as random audits may be conducted. Employer contribution may include:
    a. Total amount of excess classroom training costs that will not be reimbursed by award.
    b. Projected wages (including healthcare benefits/paid leave) of employees while in Going PRO Talent Fund training
    c. Travel costs for employees in Going PRO Talent Fund training
    d. Reasonable cost of new equipment (i.e., one year's value) or software directly related to proposed training
    e. Supportive services provided to employees in Going PRO Talent Fund training (Examples: tuition reimbursement, childcare assistance, additional transportation assistance)
    f. Other examples include overhead/administrative costs, cost of outside training facility, release time for trainees working towards high school equivalency completion during work hours, and lost productivity due to employee(s) attending training
    g. Note: OJT training should not be included
10. Utilize Pure Michigan Talent Connect (MiTalent.org) and Michigan Works! as a resource to recruit for job openings.
    a. Companies in the marijuana industry are excluded from utilizing MiTalent.org due to federal prohibitions.

If a Going PRO Talent Fund awardee anticipates, or is actively laying off employees, the awardee should promptly notify the MWA and provide details of the layoff and how it will impact the approved Going PRO Talent Fund training plan. LEO-WD will review each situation on a case-by-case basis and reserves the right to rescind funds.

Application - Independent/General

Applying for a Talent Fund award is done exclusively online through the Work-Based Learning Online Management System (WBLOMS).

To find the local MWA contacts, visit the Going PRO Talent Fund Website.

- The MWA will conduct a fact-finding evaluation session with the employer and other partners to document the talent and requisite fiscal need.
- The MWA is the lead in the meeting as they will ultimately be submitting the application.
- Employers who have multiple plants/sites/facilities/locations, and desire training at each site, may elect to work with one MWA or multiple MWAs.

DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE PRIOR TO THE AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT:

FY26 Independent Application Cycles:

Independent Application	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Application Period	October 14, 2025 – October 30, 2025 (5:00 PM ET)	April 6, 2026 – April 24, 2026 (5:00 PM ET)
Training period	January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026	July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027

- Employers may have no more than one (1) Independent award and one (1) ELC award, based on employer location. Employers may apply in Cycle 2 if not awarded a Cycle 1 independent application.
- All applications will be reviewed and competitively scored according to budget and demand.
    - It is anticipated that applications will be highly competitive, and requests will exceed available funding.
- Completion of an application does not guarantee funding.
    - All employers may not receive funding.
- The Talent Fund will not reimburse for training that has occurred prior to the effective award date
- Employers need to determine the short-term training requirement while continuing to meet their customer demand.
    - Employers who have multiple plants/sites/facilities/locations and desire training at each site may elect to work with one MWA or multiple MWAs. Additionally, LEO-WD reserves the right to limit an employer to a maximum award amount for all locations combined. Each employer location must submit a separate application.

Training Duration

Funding will be utilized to provide short-term training to meet current, documented needs of employers.

1. No single training should exceed six months.
2. All training, including new employee on-the-job training (OJT), must conclude within one year from the date of the award in order to receive full reimbursement.

Application - Employer-led Collaborative (ELC)

An ELC brings together multiple employers (a minimum of two), education and training institutions, workforce development organizations, and other applicable partners such as economic development organizations to formulate training and education solutions to fill identified talent gaps. Successful ELCs solve a common or shared workforce problem with supported training that leverages the power of collaboration; also increasing the competitiveness of employer partners, while creating, training, and filling “in-demand jobs.”

1. ELCs have a separate application and scoring criteria than the Independent application.
2. ELC application period is scheduled to open March 2025. Once the application period opens, ELC applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. LEO-WD will provide notice when ELC applications will no longer be accepted due to exhaustion of available funding.
3. Training may be for current and new employees, including USDOL Registered Apprentices. Training must follow all guidance in the Eligible Training and Classroom or Customized Training Details sections.
4. Employer partners can be from across the state.
5. Employers may have no more than one (1) Independent award and one (1) ELC award per fiscal year, based on employer location. No more than $250,000 may be awarded to any individual employer site (for an Independent and ELC combined).
6. The intent of an ELC is for multiple, separate employers to apply. A company with more than one site location may apply but must collaborate with at least one additional outside employer partner(s).
7. The ELC application process is competitive, submissions are reviewed and considered for an award in the order they are submitted. Each collaborative will be placed in a queue to be reviewed on a first come first serve basis based on the date and time the respective Lead Employer application was submitted to LEO-WD. The first stage in the review process is to vet employers for an outstanding obligation with the Michigan Department of Treasury. If any participating employer has an outstanding obligation, applicants will have the option to remove the affected employer from the collaborative to maintain position in the review queue. If an employer is removed in this manner, the collaborative will be sent back for MWA Rework to ensure all ELC rules described in this section are met. Alternatively, applicants can give up their position in the queue to wait for the affected employer to resolve the obligation. Applicants will then be added back into the queue at the date and time LEO-WD receives confirmation from the Michigan Department of Treasury that the obligation has been resolved.
8. If an ELC is not awarded and available ELC funds have not been exhausted, employers may reapply. A new ELC must be created in WBLOMS, and revisions should be made to improve upon the original submission.
9. ELC applications are for classroom training only, not wage reimbursement (OJT), with an exception for employers holding shared OJT USDOL Registered Apprenticeship training standards.
10. ELC training must be shared by a minimum of two employers. In the case where shared training has different providers; strong rationale on the common training need, proposed training, training standards, common curriculum, and shared objectives and competencies must be explained in the application. In addition, compelling evidence of collaborative intent must be explained in the Statement of Collaboration section of the application.
11. Training Plan minimum combined total request amount for the ELC application is $1,000. A participating partner or employer’s individual request may be less than $1,000 as long as the total amount of the ELC application in which they are participating is at least $1,000.
12. LEO-WD reserves the right to reduce the amount requested by an employer or entire ELC to ensure available funds can be spread as far as possible.
13. Once awarded, funds cannot be shared from one awarded employer to another.
14. All rules in this section must be maintained during modifications.

15. ELCs can be formed among multiple MWAs, also knows as a Joint MWA ELC. Joint MWA ELCs are a collaborative effort between two or more MWAs with an expectation of shared responsibility.

Scoring Applications

LEO-WD approval of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 Independent applications will be determined by the criteria in the table below. Additionally, LEO-WD reserves the right to deny an application based on past experiences including, but not limited to, poor performance on previous awards or past non-compliance to requests from Michigan Works! and/or LEO-WD staff.

LEO-WD will award funding to the MWA. The MWA will administer project funding to the employer and/or the training institution once the project outcomes have been met and documented.

Independent Application Scoring Criteria

Scoring Criteria	Points FY26	Explanatory Notes
High Priority Industry Sector *	9	1) To earn 9 points, employer must be in Agribusiness, Construction, Education, Energy, Healthcare, Hospitality and Outdoor Recreation, Information Technology, Infrastructure, Manufacturing, or Mobility. 2) Possible points are 0 or 9.
Application includes training directly applicable to Electric Vehicle (EV), Mobility, or related infrastructure. * Application includes training directly applicable to increasing household access to high-speed internet. * Application includes training directly applicable to creating or preserving affordable housing units	1	1) To earn 1 point, employer must respond “Yes” to one or more attestation, and applicable training must be included on the training plan. 2) Possible points are 0 or 1.
Application includes training in partnership with a community college, university, or a third party (as defined) *	Up to 6	1) To earn 6 points, a minimum of one (1) course that results in earned college credit 2) To earn 3 points, a minimum of one (1) non-credit course provided by a community college, university, or third party (as defined in section 2). 3) Possible points are 0, 3, or 6. Note: OJT does not score points and college credit must be conferred by the approved training provider recognized on the Talent Fund Training Plan.
Application includes technical (hard skills) training that results in an industry recognized certification or license within the training period (as defined). *	5	1) To earn 5 points, minimum of one (1) training that results in an industry recognized certification or license within the training period (as defined). Credential must be included on the training plan. 2) Possible points are 0 or 5
Allowance for veteran-owned, women-owned, minority-owned, Individual with a Disability (IWD) owned and controlled; or is a Geographically-Disadvantaged Business Enterprise.	4	1) To earn 4 points, employer must respond “Yes”, and MWA must attest (as defined in Section 5): • The business is at least 51 percent owned and controlled, and day to day operations and long-term decisions are managed by said category, or • Is a Geographically-Disadvantaged Business Enterprise 2) Possible points are 0 or 4. Note: 50% is acceptable in the case of only two individuals, under option 1 above.
Application includes USDOL Registered Apprentices (first year through completion) leading to the	Up to 7	1) To earn 2 points, minimum of one (1) apprentice, and up to 25% of all trainees on training plan are apprentices.

nationally recognized, portable Certificate of Completion. * > 1 and up to 25% of trainees = 2 points > 25% and up to 50% of all trainees = 5 points > 50% of all trainees = 7 points		2) To earn 5 points, at least 25%, and no more than 50%, of all trainees on training plan are apprentices. 3) To earn 7 points, greater than 50% of all trainees on training plan are apprentices. 4) Possible points are 0, 2, 5, or 7.
Hourly median wage of trainees is equal to or above Regional Median Wage.	9	1) To earn 9 points, hourly median wage must be equal to or above Regional Median Wage no later than 90 days post training completion (after all training for the award has ended). Verification must be provided, or employer award will not be reimbursed. 2) Possible points are 0 or 9.
Employer has not received an Independent or ELC award in past two fiscal years (2024 and 2025).	3	1) To earn 3 points, employer must not have received a Talent Fund Independent or ELC award in Fiscal Year 2024 or 2025.
Size of amount of funding requested Up to $60,000: 4 points $60,001 to $120,000: 3 points $120,001 to $180,000: 2 points $180,001 to $220,000: 1 points $220,001 and above: 0 points	Up to 4	1) Based on total amount of request 2) Possible points are 0, 1, 2, 3, 4.
Total	**48**	

* May include training related to Artificial Intelligence (AI) as described in Eligible Training Definitions.

Independent Application Subsequent Scoring Criteria

In the event of clustered scoring, we will revert to the following criteria. Requests may also be subject to budget reductions. LEO-WD reserves the right to further prioritize (i.e., first priority given to applicants with an apprenticeship).

Subsequent Scoring Criteria	FY26 Points (Bonus)	Explanatory Notes
Application includes USDOL Registered Apprentices (first year through completion) leading to the nationally recognized, portable Certificate of Completion.	2	To earn bonus points, minimum of one (1) USDOL Registered Apprentice must be listed on the training plan..
Applicant employs fewer than 100 full-time employees	1	To earn a bonus point, employer must have 1-99 full-time employees at location on the application
50% or more of trainees are new employees (new hires)	1	To earn a bonus point, 50% or more of trainees must be new employees (new hires)
Size of amount of funding requested is no more than $60,000	1	To earn a bonus point, the size of amount of funding requested must be no more than $60,000
Total	**5**	

ELC application scoring criteria is to be announced at a later date.

Section 1: Maintaining Application Score at Closeout

Due to the competitive nature of the program, employers must deobligate funding linked to the initial application score if that funding is not expended for the original pledged intent and/or a major scoring criteria component is not met or improved. Any scoring criteria component that relies on closeout data to confirm if the original goals of the application were met is subject to the deobligation of funds.

1. Community College, University, or third party training
    a. All funding assigned to college credit training on the original Training Plan must be expended on training that results in earned college credit.
        i. In the event the original pledged intent of an application is met and therefore the original number of trainees earning college credit has not decreased, but the cost of training resulting in college credit has decreased, the remaining funds may be used towards other training that does not result in college credit.
        ii. If the original pledged intent of an application is not met and therefore the number of trainees receiving college credit has decreased, all funds originally allocated to the college credit training must be deobligated for those trainees removed from the Training Plan. Additionally, funds originally allocated towards college credit training for USDOL RAs must be deobligated as described if the number of USDOL RA trainees receiving college credit decreases in this manner.
    b. All funding assigned to non-credit courses from a community college, university, or third party training provider on the original Training Plan must be expended towards non-credit training provided by one of these types of providers.
        i. In the event the original pledged intent of an application is met and therefore the original number of trainees participating in training provided by a community college, university, or third party provider has not decreased, but the cost of training provided by those three types of training providers has decreased, the remaining funds may be used towards any other type of training.
        ii. If the original pledged intent of an application is not met and therefore the number of trainees participating in training provided by a community college, university, or third party provider has decreased, all funds originally allocated to training provided by those three types of training providers must be deobligated for those trainees removed from the Training Plan.
2. USDOL Registered Apprentices
    a. All funding assigned to USDOL RAs on the original Training Plan must be expended on USDOL RA RTI and/or OJT that will lead to the completion of an apprenticeship program. If funding assigned to USDOL RA training on the original Training Plan cannot be expended for the original pledged intent, those funds must be deobligated.
    b. If USDOL RA RTI was indicated as resulting in college credit on the original training plan, all rules described in this section pertaining to college credit must be adhered to.
3. Regional Median Wage
    a. If the employer agreed on the application that they would meet or exceed the Regional Median Wage no later than 90 days post training completion (after all training for the award has ended) and they do not, they must rescind their entire award.
4. Earning a Certification and/or License
    a. All funding assigned to earning a certification and/or license on the original Training Plan must be expended on training resulting in a certification and/or license within the training period.
        i. In the event the original pledged intent of an application is met and therefore the original number of trainees earning a certification and/or license has not decreased, but the cost of training resulting in a certification and/or license has decreased, the remaining funds may be used towards other training that does not result in a certification and/or license.
        ii. If the original pledged intent of an application is not met and therefore the number of trainees receiving a certification and/or license has decreased, all funds

originally allocated to the certification and/or license training must be deobligated for those trainees removed from the Training Plan.

Section 2: Training Provider - Third Party Definition
A professional, industry, or employer organization (e.g., National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence certification, National Institute for Metalworking Skills, Inc., Machining Level I credential); or product manufacturer or developer (e.g., recognized Information Technology certifications, such as Microsoft Certified IT Professional (MCITP), Certified Novell Engineer, a Sun Certified Java Programmer, etc.) using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities; A public regulatory agency, which awards a credential upon an individual's fulfillment of educational, work experience, or skill requirements that are legally necessary for an individual to use an occupational or professional title or to practice an occupation or profession (e.g., Federal Aviation Administration aviation mechanic license, or a state-licensed asbestos inspector).

Section 3: Hourly Median Wage - Category Definition

1. To earn points, hourly median wage of trainees must meet or exceed the Michigan Center for Data and Analytics Regional Median Wage provided by LEO-WD no later than 90 days post training completion (after all training for the award has ended). Verification must be provided, or employer award will not be reimbursed.
    a. Median wage must be calculated by first arranging all of the employer's (new hire and current employee) trainee wages from smallest to largest. If the number of data points is odd, the median wage is the middle data point in the list. If the number of data points is even, the median is the average of the two middle data points in the list. MWA will verify hourly median wages against Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives (LMISI) Regional Median Wage data provided by LEO-WD as part of Fact Finding; and retain documentation for monitoring, closeout, and file retention purposes.
    b. Average hourly wage is not relevant to the scoring criteria but is a required data point that must be recorded. Average hourly wage must be calculated by dividing the sum of all (new hire and current employee) trainees' hourly wages by the total number of trainees. For example: $23.34 hourly wage for two current employee trainees plus $19.46 hourly wage for two new hire trainees equals an average hourly wage of $21.40. Note: cost of benefits and bonuses are not applicable.
    c. Note: wages may include all taxable income provided as compensation other than bonuses and the cost of benefits. In the event commission, tips, or any other irregular payments to the employee are included in calculation of an hourly wage equivalent, documentation of the income must be provided to and retained by the MWA. LEO-WD reserves the right to verify all reported wages of trainees.

Section 4: Certification and License - Category Definition
To earn points, training on the Training Plan must result in a certification or license upon completion of training within the training period. When creating an application's Training Plan in WBLOMS, a specific credential must be associated with the accompanying training. Example 1, if entering Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training, the "Certification" option must be selected as the credential earned for the course, and the name of the certification must be entered to earn points. Example 2, if a first year USDOL RA trainee will earn a license upon the completion of their entire 5-year program, the "License" credential option should not be selected in WBLOMS and no points should be earned.

Section 5: Business Ownership and GDBE - Criteria and Documentation
MWA will make the final determination if an employer qualifies as one of the Talent Fund ownership categories, based on all available evidence obtained as part of MWA Fact Finding, and prior to application submission.

Category	Documentation
Minority-Owned	Examples of verification: • U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) - a. Small Disadvantaged Business b. 8(a) Business Development Program • Third party verification a. National Minority Supplier Development Council • Additional programs requiring verification of eligibility a. Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) • Employer submits signed attestation that they qualify for the category
Women-Owned	Examples of verification: • SBA – a. Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Federal Contracting Program b. Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Business (EDWOSB) Federal Contracting Program • Third party verification a. National Women Business Owners Corporation b. U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce c. Women's Business Enterprise National Council • Additional programs that require verification of eligibility a. Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) • Employer submits signed attestation that they qualify for the category
Veteran-Owned	Examples of verification: a. SBA a. Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business Program (SDVOSB) b. Surplus Personal Property for Veteran-Owned Small Business Program b. Third party verification a. Vets First Verification Program b. Disability:IN Veteran Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (V-DOBE) c. Disability:IN Service-Disabled Veteran Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (SDV-DOBE) c. Socio-economic status section of business profile at SAM.gov Employer submits signed attestation that they qualify for the category
Individual With Disability-Owned (IWD)	Examples of verification: • Third party verification a. Disability:IN Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (DOBE) b. Disability:IN Veteran Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (V-DOBE) c. Disability:IN Service-Disabled Veteran Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (SDV-DOBE)

	a. Employer submits signed attestation that they qualify for the category
Geographically-Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (GDBE)	• The requirements for Geographically-Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (GDBE) are detailed in. Executive Directive 2019 - 08 An indication that the GDBE satisfies one or more of the following: a. The GDBE is certified as a HUBZone Small Business Concern by the United States Small Business Administration. b. The GDBE principal place of business is located within a population census tract that is a low-income community designated as a Qualified Opportunity Zone by the United States Secretary of the Treasury pursuant to 26 USC 1400Z-1. c. A majority of the employees of the GDBE either work at a location within a Qualified Opportunity Zone or maintain a principal residence within a Qualified Opportunity Zone. • Employer submits signed attestation that they qualify for the category

Eligible Expenditures

Eligible training expenditures include the actual costs for the:

- Classroom or customized training (including textbooks and lab fees),
- New employee OJT training,
- USDOL Registered Apprenticeship classroom or customized training and OJT.

Also allowed are 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.

Ineligible Expenditures

The following are ineligible training expenditures. Although these expenditures are not eligible for reimbursement, employers may include them as part of their employer contribution.

- Wage reimbursement for current employees, unless the trainee is a USDOL Registered Apprentice
- Purchase or rental 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
- Training that has occurred prior to the effective award date
- The Talent Fund may not be used to offset current tuition reimbursement programs

Award Modifications

Modifications to an award may be considered where circumstances dictate a need to adjust the Training Plan. MWA must approve changes to the Training Plan prior to changes occurring or else the changes are not eligible for reimbursement. Modifications can be entered into WBLOMS once the features are available based on the development timeline. Refer to the WBLOMS Employer Training Guide for step-by-step instructions. Any changes that occurred, and an explanation of the changes, must be reflected in the WBLOMS Final Training Plan.

Modification Allowances

Modifications that maintain the original pledged intent and projected outcomes of the original application are allowed. As described in the Scoring Criteria section, the following components of a Training Plan are connected the Scoring Criteria and may result in the deobligation of funds if altered through a modification or at closeout.

1. Training resulting in College Credit
2. Training provided by a community college, university, or third party training provider
3. Training resulting in a certification or license
4. USDOL RA OJT and RTI
5. Region Median Wage

Eligibility of a modification must be determined prior to reimbursement.

1. Course changes equivalent to the originally approved training, a change in course cost, or a different training provider offering the same or equivalent course, are allowed.
2. Course date changes, within the original approved 12-month period are allowed. Extensions past the original 12-month period are not allowed.
3. Transfer of funds between current employees and new employees (new hires) in either direction is allowed. Please note, a change resulting in 100 percent OJT requires strong rationale documented, retained, and recorded in the WBLOMS modification rationale section by the MWA.
4. USDOL Registered Apprentices cannot be replaced with non-apprentice trainees. USDOL RA funds cannot be used towards non-USDOL RA training.
5. Funds originally allocated to training resulting in college credit, cannot be used towards training that does not result in college credit.
6. Funds originally allocated to training resulting in a certification and/or license, cannot be used towards training that does not result in a certification and/or license.
7. Funds allocated to a course provided by a community college, university, and/or third party training provider cannot be used towards training that is not provided by one of these types of providers.
8. If at closeout the median wage of trainees does not meet or exceed the Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives (LMISI) Regional Median Wage that the employer committed to, the entire award must be rescinded.
9. Changes to Employer Information (i.e., Employer name, FEIN, etc.) are allowed.
10. Modifications that increase the total cost of training to exceed the original award amount are not allowed.
11. Modifications that increase the cost of training over the per person cap for a trainee are not allowed.
12. A modification cannot be used to transfer funds between employers participating in an ELC.

Required Documentation for Reimbursement

For an employer to receive reimbursement they must provide the required documentation to the MWA. The MWA will make reimbursement and retain all essential documentation with award records/file.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">New Employee and Current Employee Classroom or Customized Training</td><td>1. Copy of invoice or receipt from training provider - does not need to show it has been paid</td></tr>
<tr><td>2. Documentation of trainee completion. At least one of the following must be submitted for each completed course per trainee. All examples of documentation listed below should be signed (physical or electronic) by the training provider. An official seal, letterhead, or other notation may be acceptable in place of a signature on a case-by-case basis:
a. Copy of Credential
i. Example: Certificate of completion signed by the instructor or training provider
b. Copy of certification or grades for online courses
c. Copy of grades for credit courses
d. In the case of a trainee not passing the training and therefore not earning a credential, sign-in sheets and/or a statement from the training provider stating that the trainee attended, but did not earn a credential, is acceptable

The 90-day retention period does not apply to new employees only receiving classroom or customized training with no OJT. If the new employee is ONLY completing classroom or customized training, the company may seek reimbursement at completion of training.</td></tr>
<tr><td>New Employee OJT Training</td><td>1. A company payroll register, query from the payroll system or screen shots from the payroll system (a query exported to Excel or similar software is not acceptable) dated at the three-month post-training retention period (90 days after the conclusion of the OJT hours) that includes all of the following:
a. Name(s) or identifying characteristics with a key
b. Hourly wage
c. Hire date of new employees
d. Termination/end date (if applicable)
A query exported to Excel or similar software is not acceptable.
It should be a standardized report pulled from payroll software that is not an Excel spreadsheet. The report should have names or an identifying characteristic for the trainee, i.e., an employee number.
If using an identifying characteristic, a key must be provided with trainee names.

This is required for each Talent Fund funded new employee trainee as proof that they are still employed at 30, 60, and 90 consecutive calendar days following training. The 90-day retention period applies to new employee OJT training only and is not relevant to new employee classroom or customized training.</td></tr>
</table>

	Information for employees not participating in the Talent Fund should be edited out or redacted from the register.
	2. Payroll documentation as described above in item 1 must be provided by the employer to corroborate OJT hours and the 90-day retention period for reimbursement. Payment amounts will be adjusted according to the schedule below, following training completion: a. 50% reimbursement earned once the trainee has retained employment for 30 consecutive calendar days b. 75% reimbursement earned once the trainee has retained employment for 60 consecutive calendar days c. 100% reimbursement earned once the trainee has retained employment for 90 consecutive calendar days *Reimbursement may be requested after the new employee's retention period concludes.*
New Employee and Current Employee USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Classroom or Customized Training	1. Copy of invoice or receipt from training provider - does not need to show it has been paid
	2. Documentation of trainee completion. At least one of the following must be submitted for each completed course per trainee. All examples of documentation listed below should be signed (physical or electronic) by the training provider. An official seal, letterhead, or other notation may be acceptable in place of a signature on a case-by-case basis: a. Copy of Credential i. Example: Certificate of completion signed by the instructor or training provider b. Copy of certification or grades for online courses e. Copy of grades for credit courses d. In the case of a trainee not passing the training and therefore not earning a credential, sign-in sheets and/or a statement from the training provider stating that the trainee attended, but did not earn a credential, is acceptable *The 90-day retention period does not apply to new employees only receiving USDOL RA classroom or customized training with no OJT. If the new employee is ONLY completing classroom or customized training, the company may seek reimbursement at completion of training.*
	3. Employer name, name of each USDOL Registered Apprentice, sponsor name, RAPIDS ID number, RAPIDS printout and/or 671 form.
New Employee USDOL Registered Apprenticeship OJT	1. A company payroll register, query from the payroll system or screen shots from the payroll system (a query exported to Excel or similar software is not acceptable) dated at the three-month post-training

	retention period (90 days after the conclusion of the OJT hours) that includes all of the following: a. Name(s) or identifying characteristics with a key b. Hourly wage c. Hire date of new employees d. Termination/end date (if applicable) A query exported to Excel or similar software is not acceptable. It should be a standardized report pulled from payroll software that is not an Excel spreadsheet. The report should have names or an identifying characteristic for the trainee, i.e., an employee number. If using an identifying characteristic, a key must be provided with trainee names. *This is required for each Talent Fund funded new employee USDOL RA who was working with a Journey Worker on-site as proof that they are still employed at 30, 60, and 90 consecutive calendar days following training. The 90-day retention period applies to new employee USDOL RA OJT training only and is not relevant to new employee USDOL RA classroom or customized training.* *Information for employees not participating in the Talent Fund should be edited out or redacted from the register.*
	2. Payroll documentation as described above in item 1 must be provided by the employer to corroborate USDOL RA OJT hours and the 90-day retention period for reimbursement. Payment amounts will be adjusted according to the schedule below, following training completion: a. 50% reimbursement earned once the trainee has retained employment for 30 consecutive calendar days b. 75% reimbursement earned once the trainee has retained employment for 60 consecutive calendar days c. 100% reimbursement earned once the trainee has retained employment for 90 consecutive calendar days *Reimbursement may be requested after the new employee's retention period concludes.*
	3. Employer name, name of each USDOL Registered Apprentice, sponsor name, RAPIDS ID number, RAPIDS printout and/or 671 form.

Current Employee USDOL Registered Apprenticeship OJT Training	1. A company payroll register, query from the payroll system or screen shots from the payroll system (a query exported to Excel or similar software is not acceptable) dated at the completion of training (the conclusion of the OJT hours, the 90-day retention period is not applicable) that includes all of the following: a. Name(s) or identifying characteristics with a key b. Hourly wage c. Termination/end date (if applicable) A query exported to Excel or similar software is not acceptable. It should be a standardized report pulled from payroll software that is not an Excel spreadsheet. The report should have names or an identifying characteristic for the trainee, i.e., an employee number. If using an identifying characteristic, a key must be provided with trainee names. *The 90-day retention period does not apply to current employee USDOL RA trainees receiving USDOL RA OJT or USDOL classroom or customized training. The company may seek reimbursement at completion of training.*
	2. Employer name, name of each USDOL Registered Apprentice, sponsor name, RAPIDS ID number, RAPIDS printout and/or 671 form.

Targeted Population Incentives – Criteria and Documentation

If an employee is eligible for one of the targeted incentives, the following verification documentation is required to be provided to and retained by the MWA for the employer to receive the additional funds. All non-related personal identifying information should be redacted. Please note, with the exception of High School Diploma/Equivalency, the incentives are intended to encourage hiring of individuals from the targeted populations, and therefore the new hire must meet the relevant criteria on or prior to the date of hire. For example, a new hire must be 55 years of age or older on or before their hire date to qualify for the Older Worker incentive.

Targeted Population Category	Documentation
Veteran (new trainee)	One of the following: 1. DD-214 2. Department of Defense – Manpower Data Center record (provided during background checks) 3. Driver's License with veteran designation 4. Other documentation – to be reviewed and approved by LEO-WD
Active Military Reservist (new trainee)	One of the following: 1. Leave & Earnings Statement (LES) 2. Common Access Card (CAC) – standard ID 3. Other documentation – to be reviewed and approved by LEO-WD
Older Worker (new trainee)	One of the following to verify date of birth: d. Driver's license e. State ID

	f. Passport, Green Card (lawful permanent residency), etc.
Justice-Involved Citizen (new trainee)	One of the following: 1. Screen print from one of the following: a. mdocweb.state.mi.us/OTIS2/otis2.aspx b. vinelink.com c. courts.mi.gov/opinions_orders/case_search/pages/default.aspx 2. Screen print from similar websites in other states 3. Official documentation of conviction or release paperwork 4. Other documentation to be reviewed and approved by LEO-WD, such as a signed affidavit from the employer attesting to the new employee's prior status
Individual With Disability (new trainee)	To verify an individual has a disability, one of the following from the Verification-IWD Form must be used: 1. Verification of Pre-Established Employee Disability: Going PRO Talent Fund 2. Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability: Going PRO Talent Fund
Public Assistance Recipient (new trainee)	To verify participation in one the following Economic Stability Assistance (ESA) programs; the individual's name, date of birth, address, and date of hire must be submitted to MDHHS for verification prior to closeout. An MDHHS case number of the individual would be beneficial if available. The MWA must email this information with the subject line "Going PRO Talent Fund Inquiry" to MDHHS at Policy-Employment@michigan.gov. MDHHS staff will respond to this request within three (3) business days. Individuals must have received a benefit from at least one program listed below within 30 days of the date of hire. • Food Assistance Employment and Training (FAE&T) Child Development and Care • Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) known as the Food Assistance Program (FAP) • Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) known as the Family Independence Program (FIP) and includes clients already participating in Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope (PATH) • Medical Assistance including Medicaid and Healthy Michigan Plan (HMP)
High School Diploma/ Equivalency (new and incumbent trainee)	To verify an individual achieves at least 75% of High School Diploma/Equivalency program requirements during work hours, the following must be provided: 1. Verification of OJT and/or classroom training completion, associated with high school diploma/equivalency preparation, for the particular trainee on the HSE path 2. Diploma or high school equivalency (GED or HiSET) credential (if completed), OR 3. High school equivalency (GED or HiSET) transcript (including name and birthdate) showing the individual passed three (3) tests, or earned 75% of high school diploma credits required for graduation 4. Other documentation to be reviewed and approved by LEO-WD, such as documentation that shows the individual was participating in high school diploma/equivalency training while on the job

The following criteria also apply to qualify for reimbursement:

1. The additional incentive must be used to offset additional training costs.
2. Trainees must have completed the planned classroom training or, for OJT training, must have completed the 90-day post-training retention for the employer to receive the extra training incentive.
3. The maximum amount per new trainee that an employer may receive as incentive funding is $500 for each Veteran, Active Military Reservist, Older Worker, Justice-Involved Citizen, Individual with Disability, or Public Assistance Recipient new trainee; and $1,000 for High School Diploma/Equivalency new and incumbent trainees, even if the employee meets the criteria in more than one category.
4. The applicable targeted incentive for each trainee must be selected in WBLOMS. This option is available at closeout.
5. Other criteria must also be met, and verification documentation must be submitted to the MWA prior to payment.

Required Reporting

Employers are responsible for reporting final data at closeout of the award, including individual trainee data. Trainee information may also be requested at some point during the training cycle as a part of monitoring and performance.

Information requested may include but not limited to the names of employees who completed training, number and type of employees trained, training providers, types of training, credentials earned, targeted population incentives, pre-training hourly wages, hourly wages at training completion, hourly wages at six months post-training, employee retention at six months post-training, hire date and termination date (if applicable), revised employer contribution/leveraged funds, and an impact story.

Anticipated Outcomes
Fiscal Year 2026 Talent Fund program goals:

- Individuals hired and trained – 6,330
- Current employees to be trained – 11,755
- USDOL Registered Apprentices to be trained – 1,860
- Training Completion Rate – 100%
- Employment Retention Rate at Six Months post-training – 80%
- Hourly wage prior to training – $26.50
- Hourly wage at six months post-training – $29.00

Definitions
Agribusiness: High Priority Industry Sector employers in agriculture and related commercial activities. Examples include the production, processing, and distribution of crops, livestock, food, soil management, agrichemicals, biofuels, and related technologies.

Certification: A professional credential that is earned through a training program and subsequent assessment. Awarded by associations, companies, and independent organizations, certifications are standardized credentials that certify someone for work in a particular industry with a specific skill. Examples include Project Management Professional (PMP), Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), CompTIA A+, and Certified Production Technician (CPT).

Completion of Training: The final day of a training. For classroom training this would typically be the last calendar day of scheduled instruction. For OJT this would typically be the calendar day in which the employee has met the number of hours used to calculate the OJT period and subsequent reimbursement

amount. For example, Employee A is new hire participating in OJT and $1,000 worth of classroom training. Employee A earns $32.00 per hour and would have completed $1,000 dollars' worth of OJT instruction after 31.25 hours of training. OJT retention for Employee A would start the day after they have worked 31.25 hours.

Current Employee: Defined as individuals on the employer's payroll at time of application or hired at least 31 days prior to the award date.

Days: Consecutive calendar days including weekends and holidays.
Effective Award Date: Date officially signifying an employer's application has been awarded and training may begin. Also used to calculate the 30-day period for new hires. Date is included in the official award letter.

Employer-led Collaborative: An ELC brings together multiple employers (a minimum of two), education and training institutions, workforce development organizations, and other applicable partners such as economic development organizations to formulate training and education solutions to fill identified talent gaps. Successful ELCs solve a common or shared workforce problem with supported training that leverages the power of collaboration; also increasing the competitiveness of employer partners, while creating, training, and filling "in-demand jobs."

Full-time: Full-time employee for the purposes of the Talent Fund is an individual who works 32 hours per week or more.

Hard Skills: Practical abilities and proficiencies needed for success on the job. Sometimes referred to as technical skills. Examples include database management, carpentry, graphic design, welding, etc.

Infrastructure: High Priority Industry Sector employers who contribute directly to physical networks necessary for society to function. Sometimes referred to as "hard" infrastructure, examples include roads, bridges, airports and airways, telecommunications and related technical systems such as network equipment and cabling, mass transit, waste management, and power generation and transmission.

Joint MWA ELC: ELCs can be formed among multiple MWAs. Joint MWA ELCs are a collaborative effort between two or more MWAs with an expectation of shared responsibility.

License: Mandatory credential to legally practice an occupation that is issued by a state-level authority. Licenses require you to pass an exam after required training to validate your competence and adherence to professional standards. Examples include Journeyman Electrician, Commercial Driver's License (CDL), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), and Professional Surveyor.

Municipality: City, town, or other district possessing corporate existence and usually its own local government; a community under municipal jurisdiction; or the governing body of such a district or community.

Mobility: High Priority Industry Sector employers who contribute directly to technologies and services that allow people and goods to move more freely. Examples include electric vehicles, mass transit, batteries, sensors, and supporting technologies including related data and software services.

NAICS Code: The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) was developed jointly by the United States, Canada and Mexico to provide comparability in statistics about business activity across North America. Codes may be accessed using this link: NAICS codes.

New Employee: Individual(s) hired 30 days prior to, on, or after the award date.

New Employee OJT Training: Training that 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 employee at the end of a successful training period. This is not to be utilized for low-wage, high turnover occupations; nor should it be used for high-wage, executive level positions.

RAPIDS: USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Data System (RAPIDS) is the system utilized to collect information on each Registered Apprentice.

Soft Skills: Personal attributes and character traits needed for success on the job. Typically associated with behavior and personality. Examples include communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem-solving, time management, teamwork, work ethic, etc.

Targeted Populations:

- Veteran - A person who served in the United States Armed Forces and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable (U.S. Armed Forces).
- Active Military Reservist – An actively serving member of a reserve component military branch (U.S. Armed Forces)
- Older Worker - An individual age 55 or older.
- Justice-Involved Citizen - An individual who has been previously incarcerated, or given probation, that has a criminal history and is returning to the community.
- Individual With Disability (IWD) – An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- Public Assistance Recipient – An individual on public assistance
- High School Diploma/Equivalency trainee - An individual who achieves at least 75% (or completion) of High School Diploma/Equivalency program requirements during work hours. OJT training and/or classroom training would need to be on the plan and associated with the particular trainee on the HSE path.

Training Start Date: First day trainees are scheduled to attend training.

Training End Date: Last day trainees are scheduled to attend all training.

USDOL Registered Apprentices: USDOL Registered Apprentices may be a current or new employee and funded regardless of what year they are in the program. Validation of USDOL Registered Apprentices will be done by LEO-WD State Apprenticeship Expansion Team once for each apprentice prior to reimbursement and closeout.

Michigan Center for Data and Analytics Regional Median Wages

2024 Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), Michigan Center for Data and Analytics

County	Median		County	Median
Alcona County	$20.67		Lake County	$20.97
Alger County	$21.62		Lapeer County	$24.39
Allegan County	$22.07		Leelanau County	$22.37
Alpena County	$20.67		Lenawee County	$22.07
Antrim County	$20.67		Livingston County	$24.39
Arenac County	$20.97		Luce County	$21.62
Baraga County	$21.62		Mackinac County	$21.62
Barry County	$22.84		Macomb County	$24.39
Bay County	$20.17		Manistee County	$20.67
Benzie County	$22.37		Marquette County	$21.62
Berrien County	$21.72		Mason County	$20.97
Branch County	$22.07		Mecosta County	$20.97
Calhoun County	$23.17		Menominee County	$21.62
Cass County	$22.02		Midland County	$24.35
Charlevoix County	$20.67		Missaukee County	$20.67
Cheboygan County	$20.67		Monroe County	$22.22
Chippewa County	$21.62		Montcalm County	$22.84
Clare County	$20.97		Montmorency County	$20.67
Clinton County	$24.34		Muskegon County	$20.74
Crawford County	$20.67		Newaygo County	$20.97
Delta County	$21.62		Oakland County	$24.39
Dickinson County	$21.62		Oceana County	$20.97
Eaton County	$24.34		Ogemaw County	$20.67
Emmet County	$20.67		Ontonagon County	$21.62
Genesee County	$21.64		Osceola County	$20.97
Gladwin County	$20.97		Oscoda County	$20.67
Gogebic County	$21.62		Otsego County	$20.67
Grand Traverse County	$22.37		Ottawa County	$22.84
Gratiot County	$20.97		Presque Isle County	$20.67
Hillsdale County	$22.07		Roscommon County	$20.67
Houghton County	$21.62		Saginaw County	$21.94
Huron County	$20.97		Sanilac County	$20.97
Ingham County	$24.34		Schoolcraft County	$21.62
Ionia County	$22.84		Shiawassee County	$20.97
Iosco County	$20.67		St. Clair County	$24.39
Iron County	$21.62		St. Joseph County	$22.07
Isabella County	$20.97		Tuscola County	$20.97
Jackson County	$22.46		Van Buren County	$22.07
Kalamazoo County	$22.77		Washtenaw County	$25.00
Kalkaska County	$22.37		Wayne County	$24.39
Kent County	$22.84		Wexford County	$20.67
Keweenaw County	$21.62			