

Workforce Solutions Program Informational Webinar

Tuesday, May 5, 2026
10:00-11:00am

Presentation Overview

- What is Workforce Solutions?
- Eligibility and Funding
- Grant Calculator Examples
- Ineligible Businesses
- Business Location
- Application Process
- Reimbursements
- Visits & Monitoring
- Closeout Steps
- FAQs
- Additional Resources
- Q & A



What is Workforce Solutions?

Workforce Solutions Grants cover qualified training for current employee upskilling and new hire on-the-job (OJT) training, leadership development, technology skills, and more!

Workforce Solutions reimbursement grants are funded through the City of Chicago via:

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Proceeds from the Housing and Economic Development Bond

Grants may fund up to 100% of eligible expenses for businesses seeking to train current employees and/or new hires.



Eligibility Requirements

- Located in, expanding into, or relocating to the City of Chicago
- Workforce training for W-2 permanent full-time and/or permanent part-time staff
- Commitment to remain in community area for at least **three years**
- **Financially prepared** to support training costs
- \$250,000 grant limit with 3 year waiting period after limit is reached
- If your organization is **woman-owned and/or minority-owned**, please be sure to complete the **WBE/MBE question** within the application. **You do not need to be formally certified or registered** as a WBE or MBE for this application. This section is based on **self-identification**.

Eligible Industries

- Nonprofits
- Food Service, Tourism and Hospitality
- Healthcare and Life Sciences
- Manufacturing and Industrial
- Information Technology
- Real Estate, Finance, Insurance
- Retail
- Energy
- Education and Training
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics



This list is not all inclusive – if you have questions about your industry, please contact the Workforce Solutions Program Director

What will Workforce Solutions Fund?

The Workforce Solutions program can fund **trainings** for:

- Current employees
- New hire on-the-job training (Chicago residents only) *
- Leadership Development
- Instructor Wages/Trainer's fee (for incumbent worker training)
- Training supplies/materials (items associated with direct training costs)
- Training rental equipment
- Customized Training Curriculum

Funding Overview

The Workforce Solutions Program is a **reimbursement** grant that can fund:

- **Up to 100%** of total eligible project costs up to a standard maximum of \$250,000.

Projects eligible for 100% reimbursement	
Commercial	
Up to \$1.5 Million in Annual Sales	100% of eligible costs
Industrial	
Maximum of 40 full-time employees	100% of eligible costs
Nonprofits	
All Nonprofits	100% of eligible costs

Funding Overview (cont.)

25% Contribution
Commercial
Up to \$5 Million in Annual Sales
Industrial
Maximum of 125 full-time employees

50% Contribution
Commercial
Exceeding \$5 Million in Annual Sales
Industrial
More than 125 full-time employees

- Contribution "Match" is based on business size.
- Contributions may include expenses not already included in the project costs such as:
 - Wages for staff used to assist with training
 - Materials and supplies used to support training
 - Wages paid to incumbent employees during training

Grant Calculator: Example 25% Match/Contribution

Lori submits an application for the Workforce Solutions Grant in an open TIF/Community Area. She is proposing training **with a total eligible cost of \$100,000** for incumbent worker training. Over the past 3 years Lori's hospitality business has grossed \$4 million in annual sales.

The breakdown of Lori's eligible costs are as follows:

- Total Eligible Project Costs: \$100,000
- Commercial Business Annual Sales Over \$1.5 M/Under \$5 M: 25% Business Contribution
- Workforce Solutions Grant: \$100,000
- Business Contribution/Employee Investment: \$25,000

25% Contribution
Commercial
Up to \$5 Million in Annual Sales
Industrial
Maximum of 125 full-time employees

Grant Calculator: Example 50% Match/Contribution

Sam submits an application for the Workforce Solutions Grant in an open TIF/Community Area. He is proposing training **with a total eligible cost of \$200,000** for 20 current employees. Sam's manufacturing company employs 250 employees.

50% Contribution
Commercial
Exceeding \$5 Million in Annual Sales
Industrial
More than 125 full-time employees

The breakdown of Sam's eligible costs are as follows:

- Total Eligible Project Costs: \$200,000
- Industrial Business Gross Sales +125 Employees = 50% Business Contribution
- Workforce Solutions Grant: \$200,000
- Business Contribution/Employee Investment: \$100,000

Grant Calculator: Example 0% Match/Contribution

Jessica applies for Workforce Solutions Grant in an eligible TIF/Community Area. Her **Non-Profit Organization** serves the homeless at shelters throughout the City of Chicago. She is proposing training with a total eligible cost of \$125,000 for incumbent worker training and On-The-Job Training for 2 new hire positions. Over the past 3 years her non-profit has grossed \$450,000.

The breakdown of Jessica's eligible costs are as follows:

- Total Eligible Project Costs: \$125,000
- Workforce Solutions Grant: \$125,000
- Non-profit Organization: No match required

Ineligible Businesses/Organizations

- Chain Businesses
- Branch Banks
- Employment Agencies
- Religious Worship Institutions
- Currency Exchanges
- Pay Day Loan Stores
- Pawn Shops
- Astrology/Palm Reading Stores
- K-12 Schools
- Gas Stations
- Residential Run Businesses
- Online Only Businesses
- Liquor Stores/Bars/Night Clubs
- Smoke shops/cigar lounges
- Adult Uses
- Firearms Stores/Shooting Ranges
- Massage Parlors
- Hotels or Motels
- Residential Storage Warehouse
- Track Waging Facilities
- Trailer Storage Yards/Junk Yards

*This list is not exhaustive

Business Location

TIF funding requires your business to be in one of the 28 TIF Districts designated for the Workforce Solutions Program. **Exciting Update:** The City of Chicago has approved additional TIF districts that will be opening soon. Please stay tuned and check our website for updates!

- 119th/Halsted
- 119th/I-57
- 35th/Halsted
- 47th/Ashland
- 47th/Halsted
- 47th/King Drive
- 47th/State
- 71st/Stony Island
- 79th/Vincennes
- 87th/Cottage Grove
- Austin Commercial
- Avalon Park/South Shore
- Bronzeville
- Chicago/Central Park
- Commercial Avenue
- Division/Homan
- Elston Armstrong
- Englewood Neighborhood
- Fullerton/Milwaukee
- Greater Southwest (East)
- Kinzie Industrial Corridor
- Lawrence/Broadway
- Pulaski Corridor
- Roseland/Michigan
- Stevenson/Brighton
- Washington Park
- West Woodlawn
- Woodlawn

Business Location

Not in a TIF District?

- Apply and E&ES will discuss options for other potential funding opportunities.

In a TIF District with no funding?

- Not currently eligible for Workforce Solutions
- E&ES will notify you if/when future funding may be available

All are welcome to apply if:

- Upskilling and training is needed for your employees
- You are hiring new employees to enhance the success of your business

How Do You Apply?



[Home](#) [About](#) [Contact](#) [Calendar](#) [Business Services](#) [Job Seekers](#) [CHA Job Seekers](#) [CHA Families](#)



[Start Here](#)

Workforce Solutions Program

The City of Chicago's Department of Planning & Development (DPD) Workforce Solutions Program is a semi-competitive (depending on the applicant's location), reimbursable grant that covers trainings to upgrade the skills of current (incumbent) employees and/or training for new hires (On-the-Job Training).

Workforce Solutions reimbursement grants are funded through Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and proceeds from the 2025 Housing and Economic Development Bond. Grants fund up to 100% of eligible expenses for businesses seeking to train current employees and/or new hires. E&ES serves as the Workforce Solutions Program Administrator on behalf of the Chicago Department of Planning and Development.

[Policy & Procedures](#)

[Submit Application](#)


Already applied? Find more resources on the [Current Applicants](#) Page.

How Do You Apply?

- Applicants must apply via Submittable
 - <https://cocdpd.submittable.com/submit>
 - Search for: Workforce Solutions Grant Application

- Complete the Pre-Application Intake Form
 - <https://cocdpd.submittable.com/submit/ab74c46c-65f5-4872-8999-008261859fde/2026-workforce-solutions-program-grant-application>

- The initial application review process to determine pre-eligibility takes approximately 1-2 weeks to complete.



2026 Workforce Solutions Program Grant Application

Workforce Solutions Program Grant Application

The Workforce Solutions Program helps eligible Chicago businesses train and upskill their workforce.

Eligible training may include:

- Incumbent worker training
- On-the-job training (OJT) for new hires
- Leadership development
- Technology skills
- Workplace safety
- Other job-related trainings

Program Basics

- Reimbursement grant covering up to 100% of eligible training costs
- Up to \$250,000 per business
- Businesses pay costs upfront and are reimbursed after project completion
- Administered by [Employment & Employer Services \(E&ES\)](#) on behalf of the [City of Chicago](#).

Funding & Review

Funding comes from Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts and Housing & Economic Development (HED) Bond proceeds:

- TIF projects: reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis
- Bond projects: reviewed competitively, with application and review cycles

You do not need to determine your funding source. Program staff will route you to the appropriate application after submission of the Pre-Application Intake form.

Bond 2026 Funding Cycles

Quarter	Opens	Closes
Q1	Feb 1, 2026	Mar 2, 2026
Q2	Apr 1, 2026	Apr 30, 2026
Q3	Jul 1, 2026	Jul 30, 2026
Q4	Oct 1, 2026	Oct 30, 2026

Application Process Steps:

Timeline is tentative and subject to change – Bond Funded Application Timeline will vary

Eligibility Notification
Training Assessment
(1-2 weeks)

Submit Required
Documents
(1-2 weeks)

Document Approval -
Recipient Agreement
(3-4 weeks)

Contract Executed
and Processed
(3 weeks)

Step 1 - After submitting application, applicant is notified of their eligibility via Submittable and asked to complete a Training Needs Assessment

Step 2 - Applicant proceeds with submitting the required documentation

Step 3 - Once documents are reviewed and approved, E&ES sends applicant the Recipient Agreement to review and sign

Step 4 - Applicant submits executed Recipient Agreement to E&ES

Step 5 - Applicant is notified that contract has been executed and processed and business receives conditional award letter. Applicant may begin trainings.

Applicant Approval – Time Sensitive Step

- Scofflaw and Indebtedness Check completed during the approval process
 - Compliance with Child Support Laws
 - Verify no debts owed to the City
 - Economic Disclosure Statement



Note: Applicants with outstanding City of Chicago debt will be required to resolve the debt or demonstrate significant progress toward resolution before the application can move forward.

Required Documentation

- Training Needs Assessment
- Proof of Revenue
- Certificate of Insurance
- Program Policies & Procedures
- Economic Disclosure Statement
- Principal Profile
- Child Support Affidavit
- Copy of Business License
- Monitoring Protocol Requirement
- ACH Banking Information
- Training Curriculum/Schedule
- Training Resumes/References
- Training Cost Estimate/Quote
- For New Hires: Job Description(s)

Reimbursement for Eligible Costs

- Vouchers and documentation can be submitted for reimbursement
 - after training sessions are completed,
 - and training providers are paid
 - or wages are paid for new on-the-job hires.
- Frequency:
 - Incumbent Worker Training:
 - Up to three vouchers may be submitted during the contract term
 - On-the-Job Training:
 - Monthly for a maximum of 13 weeks (3 months)
 - Retention/Close-Out

Reimbursement for Eligible Costs

Step 1

Documents submitted for reimbursement:

- Voucher Forms
- Invoices
- Receipts (if applicable)
- Proof of payment
- Sign-in sheets for trainings
- OJT Only: Proof of wage payment in the form of paystubs

Step 2

Review and approval of submitted documentation by E&ES and DPD.

Reimbursement can take 6-8 weeks, pending voucher and documents are accurate and complete.

Visits & Monitoring

- Agreed upon monitoring and compliance check-ins
- Submission of required attendance and wage reports
- Scheduled site visits to observe training
- Business stays in community for at least three years after having received the grant.
- Agreed upon annual follow up discussions for three years to discuss business needs post training.
 - Follow ups can include phone calls and/or e-mails.

Closeout Steps

- Close Out Report and final voucher documentation must be submitted when all training has been completed.
 - Training/business goals will be noted at the start of the contract period
- The Close Out Report provides a summary of what the trainings accomplished, their impact, return on investment and any challenges faced throughout the process.
- Pending funding grant agreement, applicant may be eligible for a 2% administrative compensation upon completion of the Close Out Report.

Frequently Asked Questions



Workforce Solutions Program FAQ

What is Workforce Solutions?

The Workforce Solutions program is a reimbursable training grant initiative provided by the City of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development and administered by Employment and Employer Services (E&S). The grant is designed to support Chicago employers seeking to enhance the skills of their existing workforce and/or onboard new employees through targeted training initiative.

Thanks to a combination of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and proceeds from the 2025 Housing and Economic Bond, this program is available to businesses City-wide. However, due to funding limitations there may be waitlists in some areas.

Who is eligible for Workforce Solutions?

- A company, organization or non-profit located, expanding into, or relocating to the City of Chicago.
- An active non-profit organization, such as but not limited to an industrial council, community development corporation, business/trade association, or labor organization.
- A company, organization or non-profit planning to remain operational in their community area for a term no less than three years.
- Financially sound business/organization not solely dependent on Workforce Solutions grants to stay in business.

What training activities are eligible under Workforce Solutions?

- The Workforce Solutions program can fund training for upskilling current employees, new hire on-the-job training (Chicago residents only), or a combination of both.
- Training skills obtained through the proposed training program must directly relate to job or business performance and occupations.
- Eligible costs include:
 - Current employee upskilling (incumbent worker training)
 - On-the-Job (OJT)/New Hire Training
 - Training supplies and materials (items associated with direct training costs only)
 - Customized Training Curriculum (note: curriculum becomes City of Chicago property)

[Created May 1, 2025]



What training activities are not eligible under Workforce Solutions?

- Educational degree programs, including General Equivalency Degree (GED) programs
- Consulting services not related to workforce training
- Non-job-related training
- Any expenses not agreed to at the time of contract

What types of activities does the Workforce Solutions Program fund?

Applicants have to demonstrate that the grant funding being requested is job or skill specific and will have an impact on the applicant's workforce needs. The following costs are eligible for reimbursement through the Workforce Solutions Grant Program:

- **Market Expansion** training for applicants that are obtaining new or additional product lines and machinery.
- **Staff Development** to improve specific aspects of job performance.
- **Company or Job Specific Skills based** training directly related to specific job duty/occupation, business assessments and/or business coaching and mentoring.
- **Industry Required Trainings** related to remaining competitive in the applicant's respective industry, workplace safety, and/or regulatory compliance

How much does Workforce Solutions fund?

- Up to 100% of total eligible project costs up to a standard maximum of \$250,000.
- Depending on business revenue and/or size – there will be required contribution to demonstrate a commitment to the training and to reflect a direct investment in its success.

How can a business or organization apply for Workforce Solutions Grant Program?

To learn more about the program requirements and how to apply please visit our website at: <https://www.eesforjobs.com/workforce-solutions-program/>

Contact the E&S Workforce Solutions staff at 312-380-9933
Email: workforcesolutions@eesforjobs.com

[Created May 1, 2025]

Additional Resources

Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF)

Grant funding for permanent building improvements and repairs. Program participants can receive grants to cover between 30% and 90% of the cost of remodeling work, with a maximum grant of \$150,000 for commercial properties and \$250,000 for industrial properties.



[Chicago.gov/SBIF](https://chicago.gov/SBIF)

Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF)

Leverages funds generated by new development in the Loop to support corridors in Chicago's underserved neighborhoods. NOF provides grants of up to \$250,000 for business and property owners to pay for the construction or rehabilitation of properties that support new or expanding businesses or cultural assets.



[Chicago.gov/NOF](https://chicago.gov/NOF)

Additional Resources

Community Development Grant (CDG)

Cover eligible new construction and renovation through proceeds from the 2024 Housing and Economic Development Bond and other funding sources. CDGs are available at three funding levels to support local commercial and light manufacturing projects via Small, Medium and Large grants.



[Chicago.gov/CDG](https://chicago.gov/CDG)

Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP)

Serves as a key resource for Chicago businesses, offering guidance, training, and webinars to support growth and compliance.

Learn more about BACP programs and services by visiting: [Chicago.gov/BACP](https://chicago.gov/BACP)

Questions and Answers?

Program Contact Information:



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