



July 15, 2022

To: Employment First Partners, including Case Management Entities, Providers and VR Counselors

From: Acacia McGuire Anderson (Statewide Employment First Coordinator), Lilia Teninty (Office of Developmental Disabilities Services Director) and Keith Ozols (Vocational Rehabilitation Director)

Re: Future Ready Oregon and Workforce Ready Grants

“Future Ready Oregon” is a comprehensive package passed during Oregon’s 2022 legislative session to make strategic and targeted investments in Oregon’s workforce system. The Future Ready Oregon package will invest in existing successful programs and innovative equity-focused solutions to bolster recruitment, retention, and career advancement opportunities for priority populations that have historically been underserved and underrepresented, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The “**Workforce Ready Grants**” are one of the funding opportunities available within Future Ready Oregon. These grants include a \$95 million investment with \$85 million from the American Rescue Plan Act funds and \$10 million from the Oregon General Fund. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) is administering this grant program.

Workforce Ready Grants will be competitive grants awarded to non-profit community-based organizations as well as non-profit and public workforce service providers that administer workforce programs in the health care, manufacturing and technology industry sectors.

Community-based organizations eligible for Workforce Ready Grants may include providers that deliver employment services through Vocational Rehabilitation, the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) and the Medicaid-funded home and community-based services program.

The Workforce Ready Grants can be used for:

- Paid work experience, including stipends and wages
- Tuition and fee assistance for workforce programs
- Wraparound workforce development services
- For the development of culturally and linguistically specific career pathways for obtaining certificates or credentials recognized by targeted industry sectors
- Funding for organizational investments

Workforce Ready Grants will be issued in rounds. In round one, grant funds can be used for activities intended to increase the grantee's capacity to launch, expand, sustain, or support workforce programs in the health care, manufacturing and technology industry sectors.

The application deadline for the first round of Workforce Ready Grants is August 13, 2022.

The Request for Application (RFA) document includes more detail regarding allowable capacity-building activities, timelines, guidelines and requirements for applications. Technical assistance is also available including:

- [Frequently asked questions](#)
- [Recorded informational session](#) on **July 6, July 13, and July 20, 2022**
- Technical assistance providers
 - [Upward Development, LLC](#)
 - Attn: Andi Kemp (they/them) at 541-870-0588 or andi@upward-development.com
 - [William \(Bill\) Weismann dba Grassroots Northwest](#)
 - 503-422-2502 or grassrootsnw@comcast.net

- [Next Level Nonprofit Consulting LLC](#)
 - Attn: Lynn Egli (541-760-5435 or lynn@nextlevelnonprofitconsulting.com) and Ann Craig (541-829-1850 or Ann@nextlevelnonprofitconsulting.com)

For more information, visit HECC's [Grants and Contracts webpage](#). To get more information regarding the full "Future Ready Oregon" package, and to sign up for updates, visit the HECC [Future Ready Oregon website](#).

Thank you for supporting employment services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Acacia, Lilia and Keith