



# **FUTURE READY SHORT-TERM CREDENTIAL GRANTS**

## **Request for Applications (“RFA”)**

Grant Performance Period: upon execution of a Grant Agreement –  
June 30, 2027

**HECC # 26-014**

Date Issued: 06/01/2026

Applications Due: 07/15/2026

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In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this document is available in alternate formats such as Braille, large print, audio tape, oral presentation, and computer disk. For questions, clarifications, or to request this material in a different format, please contact the SPC.

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## **SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

The State of Oregon, acting by and through its Higher Education Coordinating Commission (“HECC”) and Future Ready Oregon is issuing this Request for Applications (“RFA”) to award Grants to eligible entities that develop and administer credentialed workforce programs in the industry sectors, as authorized by Oregon Revised Statute (“ORS”) 660.400.

Future Ready information can be found [here](#).

#### **Additional Information:**

HECC intends to make multiple awards per industry, each a maximum of \$75,000 for a total of not-to-exceed \$735,000 in awards. This program will be funded with state funds.

HECC reserves the right to partially fund Applications. Should HECC receive multiple proposals from different Applicants that are similar in outcomes, HECC may coordinate a collaborative award between the Applicants.

Grant funds awarded under this RFA will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis for actual expenses incurred. Grant recipients will be required to submit each disbursement request on a HECC-provided or -approved request form (“Reimbursement Request”) prior to the disbursement of any Grant funds.

The Allowable Cost Period for awards under this RFA is upon execution of a Grant Agreement – June 30, 2027. Activities that occur outside of the Allowable Cost Period are not eligible for funding.

### **1.2 COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY**

Individuals within a community, and communities within a larger society, need the ability to shape their own present and future, and HECC believes that workforce development and education are fundamental aspects of Oregon’s ability to thrive. Equity is both the means to success and an end that benefits us all. Equity requires the intentional examination of systemic policies and practices that, even if they have the appearance of fairness, may in effect serve to marginalize some and perpetuate disparities. The data is clear that Oregon demographics have been changing to provide rich diversity in race, ethnicity, and language. Working toward equity requires an understanding of historical contexts and the active investment in changing social structures and practice over time to ensure that individuals from all communities have the opportunities and support to realize their full potential. Creating a culture of equity requires monitoring, encouragement, resources, data, and opportunity.

HECC applies its Equity Lens (<https://www.oregon.gov/highered/about/Documents/State-Goals/Equity-Lens.pdf>) to all aspects of its work.

HECC has applied its commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in this grantmaking process in the following ways:

- Consulting with partners to inform development of an inclusive, low barrier Grant process.
- Hosting information sessions to provide prospective Applicants opportunities to ask questions and receive guidance.
- Soliciting engagement in the scoring process from diverse organizations, entities, and partners.

### 1.3 TIMELINE AND INFORMATION SESSIONS

This timeline represents a tentative schedule for this RFA. All times are listed in Pacific Time. All dates are subject to change. See <https://www.oregon.gov/highered/about/pages/grants-contracts.aspx> for the most current information.

Description	Date and Time (all time is Pacific Time)
<b>RFA Issued</b> Application period opens	June 1, 2026
<b>Optional Information Sessions</b> HECC will host optional information sessions where attendees can expect to hear background information, the purpose of the Grants, and how an application will be scored. Attendees may ask questions about the RFA. Subject to technology limitations, HECC will post recordings of the sessions on the Grants and Contracting page.  If Applicant needs accommodation or support registering for a session, please reach out to: <a href="mailto:jennifer.rice@hecc.oregon.gov">jennifer.rice@hecc.oregon.gov</a>	<b>Session 1:</b> June 16, 2026 10:00 AM PT Zoom Registration link: <a href="https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1656238070">https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1656238070</a>  <b>Session 2:</b> July 2, 2026 2:00 PM PT Zoom Registration link: <a href="https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1656901674">https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1656901674</a>
<b>Application Deadline</b>	July 15, 2026
<b>Notice of Award (approximate)</b>	August 3, 2026

### 1.4 DEFINITIONS

- **“Applicant”** means an entity that submits an Application in response to this Request for Applications.
- **“Application”** means a written response to this Request for Applications.
- **“Programs”** means any organized teaching and learning activity in which successful completion qualifies a student for a degree, a certificate of substantial academic or career and technical learning short of a degree, a certificate of preparation related to new or modified occupational licensure, or another academic or Career and Technical Education certificate that represents a shorter period of activity but has value as a public credential.

## **SECTION 2. GRANT OPPORTUNITY AND REQUIREMENTS**

### **2.1 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

#### **2.1.1 APPLICANT**

In order to receive an award under this RFA, the Applicant **must be a post-secondary institution licensed or accredited by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, authorized to receive federal funding under Title IV of the Higher Education Act.** This includes:

- Community colleges
- Public universities
- Private universities
- Private Career Schools
- K-12 Educational School Districts

#### **2.1.2 REQUIRED PARTNERSHIPS**

Applicants must demonstrate partnership with at least two (2) industry partners in their Application. Industry partners should serve a vital and collaborative role in advising and informing the development and delivery of Short-Term Credentials. Industry partnerships may include, but are not limited to:

- Businesses or Employers,
- Industry Consortia, Coalitions, or Advisory bodies, or
- Any other industry association

The Applicant will be required to describe the roles and responsibilities of Applicant identified industry partners within the Application and must submit letters of support, memorandums of understanding (MOU), or other supporting documents that demonstrate commitment from Applicant identified industry partners.

#### **2.1.3 ADDITIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Applicants may also showcase partnerships with community-based organizations, additional workforce training providers, or any other entities that may partner with the Applicant for support in the development or delivery of the Short-Term Credential or with recruitment and outreach of the Short-Term Credential program.

#### **2.1.4 APPLICANT LIMIT TO NUMBER OF AWARDS**

HECC will be issuing one (1) additional RFA for Short-Term Credentials Grants in other workforce areas. Applicants may apply to any number of the Short-Term Credential Grant opportunities listed below but will be limited in the number of awards they may receive. The maximum number of Short-Term Credential Grants a Applicant may receive across all of the below listed opportunities is two (2). HECC seeks to promote collaboration in the development of Short-Term Credentials and encourages Applicants to consider partnering with other entities that may be applying for Short-Term Credential Grants.

Short-Term Credential Grant Opportunities:

Future Ready opportunities:

- Healthcare Short-Term Credential Grants
- Manufacturing Short-Term Credential Grants
- Technology Short-Term Credential Grants

Workforce Talent and Development Board (WTDB) opportunities (under separate RFA# 26-013):

- Construction Short-Term Credential Grants
- Clean Energy Short-Term Credential Grants
- Forestry Operations and Management Short-Term Credential Grants
- Bioscience Short-Term Credential Grants

## 2.2 PROJECT REQUIREMENTS AND LIMITATIONS

The purpose of this project is to support the development of short-term, post-secondary education and training programs that results in industry-recognized credentials.

This RFA seeks to encourage the development of programs that:

- Can be completed in a short period of time, less than the time needed for a degree;
- Directly address an industry or occupational demand;
- Utilize Oregon Employability Skills;
- Leverage co-investment with industry partners.

Programs of this nature will be referred to in this RFA as “**Short-Term Credential(s)**”. Short-Term Credential proposals may be any of the following:

- **A new Short-Term Credential**, that meets an identified workforce need and leads to immediate workforce entry.
- **A modified Credential**, updated so that it can be offered at an accelerated, short-term pace, incorporate new technology, or be redesigned to better meet industry demands, updated guidance or federal program eligibility.
- **Expansion of an existing Short-Term Credentials** by introducing the credential to new or underserved region(s), offering the credential in flexible formats, such as remote or online, or expanding enrollment capacity with additional course offerings.

All proposals should be informed by industry and employers and should demonstrate stackable educational attainment and career pathways. Additional preference may be given to proposed Short-Term Credentials that demonstrate the following:

- Intention to align with Workforce Pell. See legislation on Workforce Pell [here](#).
- Leverage other funds, especially private industry financial commitments.
- Will have curriculum shared on an open-source format for public access, such as [OER Commons](#).

### 2.2.1 ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

Funds awarded as a result of this RFA shall be used for the following purposes:

1. Creating or modifying curriculum for the purpose of developing Short-Term Credentials for education and training programs recognized by industry.

2. Coordinating or facilitating the review and improvement of curriculum by industry and community partners to ensure applicability and accessibility.
3. Expanding the capacity of organizations to provide administration and delivery of the created or modified curriculum for Short-Term Credentials.

Allowable Costs may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Hiring staff or contracting for services;
2. Course or faculty buyout;
3. Professional development and training for faculty and staff
4. Developing strategies around workforce programs including program development;
5. Purchasing equipment, technology, or other supplies;
6. Paying for administrative costs; and
7. Any other activities necessary to increase the organization's capacity to develop or modify curriculum for the purpose of administering Short-Term Credentials that advance economic mobility, educational attainment, and career advancement in its targeted industry sector.

## **SECTION 3. INDUSTRY SECTORS**

### **3.1.1 HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY**

Short-Term Credentials proposed in response to this subsection of the RFA must directly address an identified workforce demand in the Healthcare Industry, providing Oregonians with short-term workforce training and upskilling opportunities that lead to roles in high-wage jobs that may be high-demand or hard-to-fill.

Examples of high wage, high skill, and high demand occupations in the Healthcare Industry:

- [High-Wage, High-Skill, High-Demand Healthcare Sector Occupation Profiles](#)  
The individual occupation profiles included in this document represent occupations that are in high demand and offer a high wage in addition to being high skill occupations.

### **3.1.2 MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY**

Short-Term Credentials proposed in response to this subsection of the RFA must directly address an identified workforce demand in the Manufacturing Industry, providing Oregonians with short-term workforce training and upskilling opportunities that lead to roles in high-wage jobs that may be high-demand or hard-to-fill.

**NOTE:** Manufacturing skills may support a variety of sectors and result in a multitude of occupations. Manufacturing short-term credentials proposed may support any industry, with the exception of the semiconductor manufacturing industry. **Semiconductor device fabrication programs are excluded from this opportunity.** This industry will receive funding for credential development through the Semiconductor Talent Sustainability Fund.

Examples of high wage, high skill, and high demand occupations in the Manufacturing Industry:

- [\*\*High-Wage, High-Skill, High-Demand Manufacturing Sector Occupation Profiles\*\*](#)  
The individual occupation profiles included in this document represent occupations that are in high demand and offer a high wage in addition to being high skill occupations.

### 3.1.3 TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

Short-Term Credentials proposed in response to this subsection of the RFA must directly address an identified workforce demand in the Technology Industry, providing Oregonians with short-term workforce training and upskilling opportunities that lead to roles in high-wage jobs that may be high-demand or hard-to-fill.

With recognition of the investments by Governor Kotek in artificial intelligence (“AI”) workforce development, HECC encourages proposals that focus on or incorporate AI upskilling. Technology short-term credentials should prepare the workforce for projected growth in occupations that demonstrate heavy use of AI and data-driven technologies by providing instruction on in-demand skills with software, tools, and work activities, which may include machine learning, data science, automation, data visualization, data modeling, or AI-enabled tools.

AI-specific resources that may support AI-focused short-term credential proposals include, but are not limited to:

- U.S. Department of Labor [Training and Employment Notice No. 07-25](#) Issued February 13, 2026
- U.S. Department of Labor [Training and Guidance Letter No. 03-25](#) Issued August 26, 2025
- The White House [Winning the Race: America’s AI Action Plan](#) Issued July 2025
- Regional or sector-partnership reports that identify AI, data, or automation skills as emerging priorities.

**NOTE:** Technology skills span all sectors and may be applicable in a variety of post-secondary educational programs. Short-term credentials with considerable technology use and training are appropriate, regardless of the industry they may be focused on, with the exception of the semiconductor manufacturing industry. **Semiconductor device fabrication programs are excluded from this opportunity.** This industry will receive funding for credential development through the Semiconductor Talent Sustainability Fund.

Examples of high wage, high skill, and high demand occupations in the Technology Industry:

- [\*\*High-Wage, High-Skill, High-Demand Technology Sector Occupation Profiles\*\*](#)  
The individual occupation profiles included in this document represent occupations that are in high demand and offer a high wage in addition to being high skill occupations.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

- [Oregon Employment Department Industry & Occupational Projections](#)  
The home page links to Industry Projections, Occupational Projections, and Regional Projections that can be downloaded for reference.
- [Oregon’s Talent Assessment \(2024\)](#)  
Analysis of Oregon’s Industry Clusters and Occupations that offer upward mobility and strong career pathways to workers in Oregon.

Applicants are welcome to reference other studies or data that provide information on industry, employer, or regional demands they intend to address. Applicants should provide citations for any reports referenced in Applicants’ application, including those linked above.

## SECTION 4. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

### 4.1 HOW AND WHEN TO APPLY

All Applications shall be submitted via email to the SPC and copy [HECC.Procurement@hecc.oregon.gov](mailto:HECC.Procurement@hecc.oregon.gov).

**Applications must include:**

1. Attachment A – Grant Application
2. Attachment B – Budget Workbook
3. Attachment C – Application Certification Sheet
4. Letters of Support from partner entities identified in the Application

Please use the templates provided for Attachments A through C, as posted on the HECC’s Grants and Contracting page, here: <https://www.oregon.gov/highered/about/pages/grants-contracts.aspx>. If there are any issues downloading the templates, or if Applicant requires an accessible format to meet an accommodation, please contact the SPC.

**Application submissions are due by July 15, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. PT.** Late or incomplete Applications will not be accepted.

### 4.2 PROJECT INFORMATION AND SCORING CRITERIA

Reviewers will use the following evaluation criteria to review and score proposals. The maximum total score on a single Application 100 points.

REVIEW CRITERIA	TOTAL POINTS
Evaluation Item 1: Industry Relevance	<b>25</b>
Evaluation Item 2: Industry Engagement	<b>25</b>
Evaluation Item 3: Program Sustainability	<b>25</b>
Evaluation Item 4: Strategic Alignments	<b>10</b>
Evaluation Item 5: OES	<b>10</b>

Evaluation Item 6: Co-investment	<b>5</b>
<b>Total Application Points</b>	<b>100</b>

**Project Information**

Please address the following prompts and cite any sources referenced in Applicants’ response:

1. List the proposed Short-Term Credential(s) and specify how long the Short-Term Credential program(s) would take to complete.
2. For each relevant prompt, describe how the proposed Short-Term Credential(s) respond to workforce demands:
  - a. Meets a workforce need with the development of a **new Short-Term Credential**, one that leads to immediate workforce entry, and directly responds to industry and employer demands.
  - b. **Updates or modifies a credential** so that it can be offered at an accelerated pace, incorporates new technology, or is redesigned to better meet industry and employer demands, or is updated with federal guidance or federal program eligibility.
  - c. **Increases access to an existing Short-Term Credential** by introducing the credential to new or underserved region(s), or by offering the credential in flexible formats, such as remote or online, to meet regions and populations with limited access to the existing Short-Term Credential.

**Evaluation Item 1: Industry Relevance (25 points)**

1. Describe how Applicants proposed Short-Term Credential(s):
  - a. Respond to current and projected workforce shortages;
  - b. Lead to high-demand, high-wage occupations, or demonstrate that earnings exceed what would have been earned without the program;
  - c. Are stackable, with examples of career pathways and advancement opportunities the proposed Short-Term Credential can lead to.

**Evaluation Item 2: Industry Engagement (25 points)**

Please address the following prompts:

1. Identify all partners that will be engaged in the proposed project. For each partner, describe:
  - a. Why partners were selected
  - b. What perspective partners bring (industry, employer, community, etc.)
  - c. What partners’ connection is to the workforce gaps that will be addressed by the proposed Short-Term Credential(s).

**NOTE:** Applicants MUST demonstrate partnerships with at least two (2) industry partners.

2. Describe the roles of Applicants’ partners in this proposed project, how they will be engaged in the design, decision-making, evaluation and implementation of the proposed short term credential program.

3. Describe how Applicant will facilitate engagement with its identified partners in the project processes leading up to the implementation of the proposed Short-Term Credential program.

**Evaluation Item 3: Program Sustainability (25 points)**

Please address the following prompts:

1. Describe the implementation process for proposed Short-Term Credential program(s), including:
  - a. The targeted launch date for when the new or modified Short-Term Credential program(s) will be offered to program participants
  - b. What steps must be taken, both internal and external, for the Short-Term Credential program(s) to be offered (e.g. curriculum development, program approvals, staff training, etc.)
  - c. How Applicant will coordinate collaboration with the identified partners, monitor and track the implementation and ensure accountability across project processes.
2. Describe the sustainability plans for the proposed Short-Term Credential program(s), after its implementation, including:
  - a. What actions will Applicants' organization take to ensure sustainability
  - b. How Applicants' partners intend to provide long-term support and commitment
  - c. How Applicant will measure the success of Short-Term Credential program(s) and identify areas for continuous improvement.

**Evaluation Item 4: Strategic Alignments (10 points)**

**Will this project be developed to align with Workforce Pell? (3 points)**

→ **IF YES**, how will Applicant align its program to meet Workforce Pell Eligibility?

**Will this project leverage other funding sources? (4 points)**

→ **IF YES**, describe what types of other funding sources will be leveraged.

**Will the developed curriculum be hosted on an open-source platform for public use? (3 points)**

→ **IF YES**, describe the platform and implementation process for providing the developed curriculum in a publicly available open-source format.

**Evaluation Item 5: OES (10 points)**

Oregon Employability Skills (OES) is a collaborative initiative, in partnership with educational experts, industry professionals, and the community. OES is designed to empower learners with the essential skills they need to transition into the ever-evolving world of careers successfully. The OES curriculum is designed to equip students with the practical skills and mindsets necessary to transition from the school to the workforce. This dynamic curriculum is designed to equip students with the practical skills and mindsets necessary to transition from school to the workforce.

The curriculum focuses on a range of crucial employability skills (1 point per selection):

- Adaptability: Open to change

- Analysis/Solution mindset: Problem solver
- Collaboration: Team player
- Communication: Good communicator
- Digital literacy: Good with technology
- Empathy: Sensitive to others' feelings
- Entrepreneurial Mindset: Go-getter
- Resilience: Plans for success and handles failure
- Self-Awareness: Self-Understanding
- Social diversity/awareness: Sensitivity to Differences

#### **Evaluation Item 6: Co-Investment (5 points)**

Projects with a financial commitment toward the costs of a proposed project from a source other than awarded Grant Funds through cash and/or in-kind resources will be eligible for Co-Investment points. Co-investment can be achieved by a commitment from the Grantee or through various partnerships. A minimum of 25% co-investment is required to receive these points. Co-investment can be leveraged resources, such as staff time that is not supported through the funds of the Grant. but can be a part of the co-investment portion of the overall project budget.

#### **4.2.1 AGENCY REVIEW AND NOTICE OF AWARD**

HECC will advance the highest scoring applications, based on median scores, for final HECC review and funding decisions. HECC's final funding recommendations will consider statewide impact, aiming to ensure broad geographic distribution and a diverse portfolio of projects. HECC reserves the right to award Grant Funds for all or some of the dollar amounts requested in an individual proposal. HECC may consider funding collaborative proposals if the agency identifies proposals from different applicants that are similar in scope and outcomes. Applicants may be asked about the ability to increase or decrease the scale of the project in Attachment C – Project Budget.

HECC will email the Applicant's program contact listed in the Application about funding decisions. A Notice of Award ("NOA") will be sent to funded Applicants for this RFA. The NOA will indicate award amount, performance period, and next steps.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- ATTACHMENT A: GRANT APPLICATION FORM
- ATTACHMENT B: BUDGET WORKBOOK
- ATTACHMENT C: APPLICATION CERTIFICATION SHEET
- ATTACHMENT D: SAMPLE GRANT AGREEMENT (PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS)
- ATTACHMENT E: SAMPLE GRANT AGREEMENT (PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS)