

ATTACHMENT G: HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY CONSORTIUM RECOMMENDATIONS WORKFORCE READY GRANTS ROUND 3: HEALTHCARE



Healthcare Industry Consortium *Sector-Specific Workforce Ready Grant Funding Criteria Recommendations* January 25, 2024

The Funding Workgroup, a committee of the Healthcare Industry Consortium, convened three times between October 2023 and January 2024 to develop recommendations for future rounds of Workforce Ready Grant Funding. This document outlines the workgroup's process and recommendations.

Workgroup Scope

Healthcare Industry Consortium funding workgroup was charged with advancing recommendations for **\$18M** of the remaining ARPA funds. The recommendation parameters include:

- Number of RFAs and funding amounts for each
- Focus of the RFAs (e.g., occupation / credential specific)
- Information that should be included in the applications (i.e., additional criteria like partnerships, etc.)

Guiding Principles

The funding workgroup elevated a set of guiding principles that they used to direct their recommendation process. These include:

- Funding should balance program scale and equity
- Funding should seek to address occupations with largest workforce shortages identified in the data and allow for local needs to be elevated if they are not represented in statewide data
- Funding should seek to fill funding gaps and not duplicate other funding sources
- Funding should incentivize and resource partnerships between education and training providers, employers, and community-based organizations
- If funding is directed to short term credentialed, non-licensed occupations (that are often lower wage jobs) the consortium needs to include upskilling, retention, and career advancement strategies that create higher-wage opportunities for priority populations
- Funding should address barriers for priority populations (for example, wrap around supports like childcare or tuition support)

Recommendations

The Funding Workgroup recommends the HECC run two RFAs focused on the healthcare workforce. These RFAs should split the available \$18M for healthcare grantmaking equally between the two RFAs. The focus of the two RFAs are described in detail below.

RFA #1: Nursing Career Pathways (\$9M available)

The first RFA should focus on Nursing Career Pathways to help address nursing shortages across the state. This RFA should focus on expanding education and training, job placement, retention, and career advancement for the broad nursing career pathway. Credentials include Certified Nursing Assistant 1 (CNA1), Certified Nursing Assistant 2 (CNA2), Medical Assistant (MA), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) and Registered Nurses (RN).

Additional criteria that should be surfaced in the proposals and considered as evaluation criteria include:

- HECC should consider proposals that address barriers to nursing program expansion outlined in the Oregon Longitude Data Collaborative [Postsecondary Healthcare Education Shortage](#) study and the [Nursing Shortage Summary Findings and Recommendations](#).
- HECC should consider proposals that engage entry level healthcare adjacent occupations in this RFA like personal care assistants, homecare workers, and others if the proposal is focused on providing support to upskill those workers to nursing career pathways.

- HECC should prioritize applications that have strong partnerships between education and training providers, employers, and community-based organizations.
 - o Regions that do not have a strong Community Based Organization ecosystem should not be deprioritized if they are not part of the application. Regions should identify the partnerships that best represent the region and that intentionally reach priority populations.
 - o HECC should balance the employer community when evaluating applications. Partnerships with employers should be representative across direct care, long-term care, and community-based models of care.
 - o HECC should consider prioritizing proposals that address proctor, faculty, and preceptor capacity by leveraging experienced nurses to advance a more diverse workforce.
- HECC should prioritize projects that clearly articulate a sustainability plan.
- HECC should prioritize proposals that provide culturally specific and responsive education and training programs, including wrap around supports for priority populations.
- HECC should prioritize scaling existing programs that are already established or need expansion rather than investing in new programs.
 - o Proposals should demonstrate how they are scaling existing programs. This may include but is not limited to:
 - Using resources to add wraparound supports to engage priority populations more intentionally in accessing existing nursing education and training programs.
 - Using funding to invest in AI/virtual lab equipment to offset clinical placement barriers for existing programs.
 - Expanding programs to reach additional geographies or priority populations
 - Expanding programs to reach more students.
 - o Expansion of existing programs is not specific to organizations that have received prior Future Ready Oregon funding, but emphasized programs must demonstrate existing infrastructure and capacity to reach priority populations, bolster their programs, or provide more intentional support for priority populations so they can advance in their career through upskilling or obtaining additional high value industry recognized nursing credentials. This capacity can also be demonstrated through partnerships.

RFA #2: Flexible to meet regionally identified workforce needs RFA (\$9M available)

The second RFA should focus on innovation and regional partnerships. Proposals can include a myriad of efforts that focus on recruitment, education and training, and/or retention projects that meet regionally identified workforce needs. Examples include but are not limited to: Upskilling traditional health workers, expanding education and training programs for the behavioral health workforce, and innovative approaches to training direct care support staff like radiology technicians.

Additional Criteria include:

- HECC should prioritize projects that clearly identify local/regional data to support their local workforce need, that is different from what statewide data might otherwise suggest.
- HECC should prioritize projects that have strong partnerships between education and training providers, employers, and community-based organizations, including demonstration of strong regional partnerships.
- HECC should prioritize proposals that provide culturally specific and responsive education and training programs, including wrap around supports for priority populations.
- HECC should prioritize proposals that clearly articulate how the proposed project is innovative.
- HECC should prioritize projects that clearly articulate a sustainability plan.

Next steps

HECC will work to enact these recommendations as discussed and advanced by the Healthcare Industry Consortium on January 25, 2024. The HECC will make final funding decisions after a competitive grant process is deployed. Healthcare Industry Consortium members can ensure there is a strong pool of applicants by promoting the RFAs to a broad audience that is representative of the diverse healthcare workforce ecosystem and includes perspectives across the direct care, long term care and community-based care employer community.