

State of Illinois Uniform Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Summary Information

Awarding Agency Name	Commerce And Econ Opp
Agency Contact	Travis Grupe (travis.grupe@illinois.gov)
Announcement Type	Initial
Type of Assistance Instrument	Grant
Funding Opportunity Number	FY26-1
Funding Opportunity Title	Manufacturing Training Academies
CSFA Number	420-00-2361
CSFA Popular Name	Manufacturing Training Academies
Anticipated Number of Awards	6
Estimated Total Program Funding	\$24,000,000
Award Range	\$3000000 - \$6000000
Source of Funding	State
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements	No
Indirect Costs Allowed	No
Restrictions on Indirect Costs	No
Posted Date	12/29/2025
Application Date Range	12/29/2025 - 04/30/2026 : 5:00 PM
Grant Application Link	Please select the entire address below and paste it into the browser... https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/50ac331e80a4467d9af97f983524b360
Technical Assistance Session	Offered : Yes Mandatory : No Date : 01/28/2026 : 2:00 PM Registration link : https://illinois.webex.com/weblink/register/r4c063456350ee2b115c7c4fa30ee461c

Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity

Manufacturing Training Academies Grant Program

NOFO ID: 2361-4221

For information about grants please visit:
<https://dceo.illinois.gov/dceo-grants.html>

A. Program Description

Notice of Funding Opportunity Intent

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (the “Department” or “DCEO”) is issuing this Notice of Funding Opportunity (“NOFO”) to provide capital grants to establish advanced workforce training facilities at downstate community colleges.

Program Description

The Manufacturing Training Academies Grant Program will provide capital grants to establish advanced workforce training facilities at downstate Illinois community colleges (defined as community college districts located outside Cook and the collar counties). The workforce training to be subsequently provided will foster development in manufacturing operations aligned with priority industries identified in the Illinois Economic Growth Plan.¹ Priority industries relevant to this opportunity include:

- Life Sciences;
- Quantum Computing, AI, and Microelectronics;
- Clean Energy Production and Manufacturing;
- Advanced Manufacturing; and
- Next Generation Agriculture, Ag Tech and Food Processing.

These capital grants may fund the construction of facilities and purchases of durable equipment needed to establish manufacturing training academies. Specialized manufacturing training academies will foster development of priority industries, greater opportunities in high-wage careers, increased specialization, and increased industry support and collaboration in manufacturing workforce training.

The Department intends to award two tiers of grants. Tier 1 awards will be up to \$3 million, while Tier 2 awards will be up to \$6 million. The opportunity to apply for Tier 1 grants is intended to extend this grant opportunity to smaller community college districts that do not have the resources or enrollment to support a larger project. Applicants may choose to be considered for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 awards by submitting separate applications for each. However, no applicants will receive multiple awards.

The Department anticipates awarding two Tier 1 awards and one Tier 2 award in both the “Central” and “Southern” regions as shown in Table 1 below. Community colleges that have already received manufacturing training academy grants (see Program History below) are excluded from this grant opportunity.

¹ The Illinois Economic Growth Plan is posted on DCEO’s web site at <https://dceo.illinois.gov/econplan2024.html>

Successful grantees will develop manufacturing workforce training programs that are not already broadly available at community colleges in their region, that would attract students from across the region to participate in manufacturing training, and that meet the workforce needs of priority manufacturing sectors in the regional economy. Grantees are encouraged to consider training programs that may fall outside of traditional community college curriculum, including shorter-duration certification programs and customized job training directed towards their region's manufacturers' current and evolving workforce needs. Training should be employer-centric; employing flexible approaches such as open-entry / open-exit, and learn-and-earn training such as apprenticeships and incumbent worker training.

Successful grantees will also demonstrate that anticipated workforce training programming is aligned with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) 2024-2028 Workforce Development Strategic Plan² and any applicable regional/local WIOA plans.³ Targeted industries and occupational skills training should be tied to data in the WIOA Regional Plans and primary data should be developed locally by employer groups such as sector partnerships (including Talent Pipeline Management employer collaboratives) where they exist, economic development councils / corporations and chambers of commerce.

Table 1. Eligible Community College Districts by Region

Central Region	Southern Region
Black Hawk	Illinois Eastern
Carl Sandburg	John A. Logan
Danville Area	Kaskaskia
Heartland	Lake Land
Illinois Central	Lewis and Clark
Illinois Valley	Rend Lake
John Wood	Shawnee
Kishwaukee	Southeastern Illinois
Lincoln Land	Wyvetter Younge
Parkland	
Rock Valley	
Sauk Valley	
Spoon River	

Program History

This Notice of Funding Opportunity represents the second competitive round of applications for the Manufacturing Training Academies program. Southwestern Illinois College and Heartland Community College received awards in 2021 for their advanced machining and electric vehicle manufacturing training academies, respectively. In addition, Kankakee Community College and Richland Community College received targeted awards facilitating workforce training needed for major economic development projects. As indicated above, these four community college districts are excluded from this opportunity.

Performance Goals and Measures

Grantees will be required to submit performance data to the Department on a quarterly basis.

² The WIOA 2024-2028 Workforce Development Strategic Plan can be accessed from the WIOA Works Illinois web site at <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Pages/StateUnifiedPlan.aspx>

³ Regional/local WIOA plans can be access from the WIOA Works Illinois web site at [https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning/Pages/Plans MOUs Dashboard.aspx](https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning/Pages/Plans_MOU_Dashboard.aspx)

Performance reporting may encompass both achievement of milestones associated with implementation of the project and subsequent impacts on the community. Performance measures may include but will not necessarily be limited to:

- Project milestones completed
- Public and private investment leveraged
- Workforce training milestones completed

Other Information

N/A.

B. Funding Information

This grant program is utilizing state capital funds appropriated by Public Act 104-0003. Total amount of funding expected to be awarded through this NOFO is \$24 million. Awards will range from up to \$3 million for Tier 1 awards and up to \$6 million for Tier 2 awards to Community College Districts in both the Central region and Southern region per the eligibility breakout in Table 1 above. The Department expects to make 6 awards through this NOFO.

Anticipated start date for awards is Spring 2026. The period of performance is expected to be mid 2026 through mid 2028.

Applicants may apply for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects; however, no more than one award will be granted to any applicant. The larger Tier 2 applications will be merit reviewed prior to merit review of smaller Tier 1 awards.

Allowable costs incurred from throughout the period of performance specified in the grant agreement will be allowed to be charged to the Grant. No prior costs will be allowed.

The release of this NOFO does not obligate the Department to make an award.

C. Eligibility Information

An entity must be registered in the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Grantee Portal, <https://grants.illinois.gov/portal/>, at the time of grant application. The portal will verify that the entity:

- Has a valid FEIN number (<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/get-an-employer-identification-number>)
- Has a current SAM.gov registration (<https://sam.gov>). SAM.gov registrations must be marked as “public” to allow the GATA Grantee Portal to expedite the review of the federal information;
- Has a valid UEI number (<https://sam.gov>)
- Is not on the Federal Excluded Parties List (verified at <https://sam.gov>)
- Is in Good Standing with the Illinois Secretary of State, as applicable (https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/business_services/corp.html)
- Is not on the Illinois Stop Payment list (verified once entity is registered in GATA Grantee Portal); and
- Is not on the Department of Healthcare and Family Services Provider Sanctions list (<https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/oig/Pages/SanctionsList.aspx>)

Entities on the Illinois Stop Payment List and/or the Federal Excluded Parties List at time of application submission will not be considered for an award.

An automated email notification to the entity alerts them of “qualified” status or informs how to remediate a negative verification (e.g., not in good standing with the Secretary of State). A federal Debarred and Suspended status cannot be remediated.

At this time, federal memo M-21-20 allows entities to apply for grant awards without a valid UEI number. The UEI number must be obtained prior to grant execution. The State of Illinois has adopted this guidance for the issuance of state awards also.

Pursuant to the policy of the Illinois Office of the Comptroller, to receive grant funds from the State of Illinois, a grantee must be considered a regarded entity by the IRS for federal income tax purposes. Disregarded entities will not be eligible to receive grant funds.

1. Eligible Applicants include:

Community College Districts listed in Table 1 (above).

The Department complies with all applicable provisions of state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment and equal employment opportunity including, but not limited to: The Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/1-101 et seq.), The Public Works Employment Discrimination Act (775 ILCS 10/1 et seq.), The United States Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended) (42 USC 2000a-and 2000H-6), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 794), The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC 12101 et seq.), and The Age Discrimination Act (42 USC 6101 et seq.).

2. Cost Sharing or Matching.

Cost sharing or matching is not required for this opportunity.

3. Indirect Cost Rate.

This grant opportunity is limited to capital improvement expenses. The grant will not compensate for indirect costs, overhead or administrative expenses associated with the execution of the program.

4. Freedom of Information Act/Confidential Information.

Applications and accompanying materials are subject to disclosure in response to requests received under provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1 et seq.). Information that could be proprietary, privileged, or confidential commercial or financial information should be clearly identified as such in the application materials. The Department will maintain the confidentiality of that information only to the extent permitted by law.

5. Other, if applicable.

N/A.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package.

Grant application forms are available at the web link provided in the "Grant Application Link" field of this announcement or by contacting the Program Manager:

Travis Grupe
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
1011 S. 2nd Street
Springfield, IL 62701
Tele: 217-782-6810
Email: CEO.MTA@illinois.gov

2. Content and Form of Application Submission.

A standard application package must be submitted and reviewed by the Department. Each package should contain the following items:

- ☐ Uniform Grant Application in fillable PDF format.
 - Signature page must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
 - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
 - Can be signed digitally
- ☐ Uniform Budget utilizing the template provided by DCEO for this project.
 - The entire Excel document with all the tabs included, even if the tabs are not relevant to the grant opportunity, must be submitted.
 - Do not send a restricted version of the Uniform Budget.
 - Certification page must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
 - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
 - Can be signed digitally
- ☐ Conflict of Interest Disclosure.
 - Conflict of Interest Disclosure must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
 - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
 - Can be signed digitally
- ☐ Mandatory Disclosure.
 - Mandatory Disclosure must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
 - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
 - Can be signed digitally

This Notice of Funding Opportunity also requires the **submission of the following other programmatic specific items as part of a program application that can be found on the website where you accessed the application document:**

- ☐ Program Application
 - ☐ A minimum of 3 letters of recommendation from representatives of economic development, industry, and workforce development stakeholders. This must include a letter of recommendation from the local workforce board(s) that cover the community college district of the applicant. These letters should independently corroborate that the project will facilitate development of workforce skills that are currently lacking in the district, is of critical importance to manufacturing employers in priority industries, and is aligned with applicable WIOA plans.

If applying for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects, please submit a separate applications for each project tier and check the appropriate box.

The Department will conduct a preliminary review for applicant eligibility for all applications submitted two weeks before application deadline. The Department will specifically assess such applications for the following:

- Prequalified status in GATA portal
- All required documents are completed and included in application
- Any other eligibility issues evident upon a cursory review

The Department will confirm apparent eligibility or identify application eligibility issues and/or application deficiencies two weeks before application deadline. Applicants will have the opportunity to remedy deficiencies prior to the application deadline.

Please note there is a maximum upload of 10 documents in the web form that you submit the application, so combining files may be necessary.

3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal or State awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal or State awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

- (i) Be registered in SAM. To establish a SAM registration, go to <https://sam.gov> and/or utilize this instructional link: How to Register in SAM from the gata.illinois.gov Resource Library tab. SAM.gov registrations must be “public.”
- (ii) Provide a valid UEI number in the GATA Grantee Portal registration.
- (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal, Federal pass-through or State award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal or State awarding agency. The State awarding agency may not make a Federal pass-through or State award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the State awarding agency is ready to make a Federal pass-through or State award, the State awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal pass-through or State award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal pass-through or State award to another applicant.

4. Submission Dates and Times.

Applications for this opportunity must be submitted by April 30th, 2026 at 5 PM.

Application materials must be submitted to the Department via electronic form at <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/50ac331e80a4467d9af97f983524b360>.

The Department is under no obligation to review applications that do not comply with the above requirements. Failure to meet the application deadline may result in the Department returning application without review or may preclude the Department from making the award.

5. Intergovernmental Review, if applicable.

N/A

6. Funding Restrictions.

This opportunity does not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs. Other restrictions can be found in Sections A., B., and C.

7. Other Submission Requirements.

Documents stored in Google Docs or other cloud-based servers are not allowed.

Applicants may confirm receipt of the application and documents by contacting the program contact listed in this NOFO.

E. Application Review Information.

1. Criteria.

Grant proposals will be reviewed on a competitive basis. Each proposal will be scored on a 100-point scale. The Department shall consider the following criteria when evaluating the application submittal: Need, Capacity, and Quality.

Need- Identification of stakeholders, facts, and evidence that demonstrate the proposal supports the grant program purpose	
Applicant identifies specific gaps in in workforce training needed by local/regional manufacturers in priority sectors identified in the IL Economic Plan and in alignment with applicable WIOA plans	10
Applicant demonstrates that project will provide effective workforce training opportunities for prospective trainees that would not be feasible without the project	12
Letters of Support from employers, industry groups, and economic development organizations effectively corroborate that the project will facilitate workforce training that will enhance skills valued by manufacturing employers in priority sectors in alignment with applicable WIOA plans.	8
Capacity- The ability of the applicant to execute the project according to requirements of the grant program	
Applicant demonstrates ability to successfully manage capital grants of a comparable scale and scope.	4
Applicant demonstrates ability to develop proposed workforce training curriculum, taking full advantage of facility improvements, that will develop workforce skills needed by manufacturers in sectors targeted by IL Economic Plan	10
Applicant demonstrates ability to assemble qualified instructors knowledgeable about modern manufacturing operations	6
Applicant demonstrates ability to effectively tailor quality workforce training targeted to needs of local/regional industry	10
Quality- The totality of features and characteristics of the project that indicate its ability to satisfy the requirements of the grant program	
Applicant scope of work is detailed and aligned with purpose of the project.	5
Applicant timetable includes appropriate milestones and deliverables	5
Budget is clear and aligned with scope of work	6
Budget is reasonable and supported by evidence	6
Applicant demonstrates that students will gain verifiable, marketable skills valued by the manufacturing employers in the area	8
Applicant demonstrates workable plan for outreach and recruitment of district students	6
Applicant demonstrates workable plan for evaluating workforce training effectiveness, including gathering and assessment of appropriate metrics	4

2. Review and Selection Process.

Applications will be graded using the Merit Review Process and scored on the criteria specified in Section E.1. The Department will designate an Evaluation Committee to grade each application received for this funding opportunity. The final score of each Committee member will be calculated and an average of all scores will be the final applicant score. Grants will be awarded to the highest-scoring Tier 2 application and the two highest-scoring Tier 1 applications in both the Central and Southern regions as shown in Table 1, presuming that applicants earn a merit review score of 75 or higher.

The Department will evaluate Tier 2 applications first. Applicants offered Tier 2 awards will not be considered for Tier 1 awards.

Any remaining funds will be awarded according to merit review score, though the Department may elevate a lower-scoring project from an area of great need or to ensure that both the Central and Southern regions receive a reasonable share of overall funding.

The Merit Based Review process is subject to appeal per <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/meritappealpreview.html>. However, competitive grant appeals are limited to the evaluation process. Evaluation scores may not be protested. Only the evaluation process is subject to appeal. The appeal must be submitted through the merit review appeal request form (<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/6444bed39ef140c589f002f53b9bc092>) within 14 calendar days after the date that the grant award notice has been published.

3. Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates, if applicable.

After the application period is closed, the Department will conduct a merit based review of eligible applications. Successful applicants will receive a Notice of State Award (NOSA) to initiate the grant agreement phase. During this phase, you will be contacted by a grant manager to develop a grant agreement, which can be a months long process depending on complexity, cooperation, and conformity with all applicable federal and state laws.

The Department reserves the right to issue a reduced award, or not to issue any award.

F. Award Administration Information

1. State Award Notices.

The Notice of State Award (NOSA) will specify the funding terms and specific conditions resulting from the pre-award risk assessments and the merit based review process. The NOSA must be accepted in the GATA Portal by an authorized representative of the grantee organization. The NOSA is not an authorization to begin performance or incur costs.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

Subrecipients and Subcontractors: Agreement(s) and budget(s) with subrecipients and subcontractors must be pre-approved by and on file with DCEO. Agreements can be submitted to DCEO when available. Subcontractors and subrecipients are subject to all applicable provisions of the Agreement(s) executed between DCEO and the grantee. The successful applicant shall retain sole responsibility for the performance of its subrecipient(s) and/or subcontractor(s).

Grant Uniform Requirements: The Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (30 ILCS 708/1 *et seq.*) (and its related administrative rules, 44 Ill. Admin. Code Part 7000), was enacted to increase the accountability and transparency in the use of grant funds from whatever source and to reduce administrative burdens on both State agencies and grantees by adopting federal

guidance and regulations applicable to those grant funds; specifically, the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200).

Procurement: Grantees will be required to adhere to methods of procurement per the Procurement Standards (2 CFR 200.317 – 2 CFR 200.327).

Business Enterprise Program: For grant awards of \$250,000 or more, grantees will be required to comply with the Business Enterprise Program for Minorities, Females, and Persons with Disabilities Act (30 ILCS 575/0.01 *et seq.*), which establishes a goal for contracting with businesses that have been certified as owned and controlled by persons who are minority, female or who have disabilities. The Department will work with the grantees to ensure compliance prior to the establishment of the grant agreement as well as through the life of the grant.

Environmental Review Requirements: Capital grants will be reviewed to determine environmental review requirements. Based on the scope of the project, the grantees may be required to complete additional environmental approvals before a grant agreement can be initiated.

Illinois Works Jobs Program Act (30 ILCS 559/20-1 *et seq.*): For grants with an estimated total project cost of \$500,000 or more, the grantee will be required to comply with the Illinois Works Apprenticeship Initiative (30 ILCS 559/20-20 to 20-25) and all applicable administrative rules. The “estimated total project cost” is a good faith approximation of the costs of an entire project being paid for in whole or in part by appropriated capital funds to construct a public work. The goal of the Illinois Apprenticeship Initiative is that apprentices will perform either 10% of the total labor hours actually worked in each prevailing wage classification or 10% of the estimated labor hours in each prevailing wage classification, whichever is less. Grantees will be permitted to seek from the Department a waiver or reduction of this goal in certain circumstances pursuant to 30 ILCS 559/20-20(b). The grantee must ensure compliance for the life of the entire project, including during the term of the grant and after the term ends, if applicable, and will be required to report on and certify its compliance.

Prevailing Wage Act (820 ILCS 130/0.01 *et seq.*): Applicants that are awarded grants shall comply with all requirements of the Prevailing Wage Act, including but not limited to, inserting into all contracts for construction a stipulation to the effect that not less than the prevailing rate of wages as applicable to the project shall be paid to all laborers, workers, and mechanics performing work under the award and requiring all bonds of contractors to include a provision as will guarantee the faithful performance of such prevailing wage clause as provided by contract. Grantees will be required to report on Prevailing Wage Act compliance on a monthly basis.

Employment of Illinois Workers on Public Works Act (30 ILCS 570/0.01 *et seq.*): All grantees will be required to comply with the Employment of Illinois Workers on Public Works Act (30 ILCS 570/0.01 *et seq.*) (the “Act”), which provides that whenever there is a period of excessive unemployment in Illinois (as defined by the Act), if the Grantee is using Grant Funds for (1) constructing or building any public works, or (2) performing the clean-up and on-site disposal of hazardous waste for the State of Illinois or any political subdivision of the State, then the Grantee shall employ at least 90% Illinois laborers on such project. Illinois laborers refers to any person who has resided in Illinois for at least 30 days and intends to become or remain an Illinois resident. Grantees may receive an exception from this requirement by submitting a request and supporting documents certifying that Illinois laborers are either not available, or are incapable of performing the particular type of work involved. The certification must: (a) be submitted to the grant manager within the first quarter of the Award Term; (b) provide sufficient support that demonstrates the exception is met; (c) be signed by an authorized signatory of the Grantee; and (d) be approved by DCEO in consultation with the Illinois Department of Labor. In addition, every contractor on a public works project or improvement or hazardous waste clean-up and on-site disposal project in this State may place on such work no more than 3 (or 6 in the case of a

hazardous waste clean-up and on-site disposal project) of the contractor's regularly employed non-resident executive and technical experts.

3. Reporting.

Periodic Performance Report (PPR) and Periodic Financial Report (PFR)

Grantees funded through this NOFO are required to submit in the format required by the Grantor, at least on a quarterly basis, the PPR and PFR electronically to their assigned grant manager. The first of such reports shall cover the first three months after the award begins. Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.328, Periodic Financial Reports shall be submitted no later than 30 calendar days following the period covered by the report. Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.329, Periodic Performance Reports shall be submitted no later than 30 calendar days following the period covered by the report. Any additional reporting requirements will be disclosed in the NOSA. Grantees are required within 45 calendar days following the end of the period of performance to submit a final closeout report in the format required by the Grantor (See 2 CFR 200.344).

Monitoring

Grantees funded through this NOFO are subject to fiscal and programmatic monitoring visits by the Department in accordance with 2 CFR 200.337. They must have an open-door policy allowing periodic visits by Department monitors to evaluate the progress of the project and provide documentation upon request of the monitor. Program staff will also maintain contact with participants and monitor progress and performance of the contracts. The Department may modify grants based on performance.

Audit

Grantees shall be subject to Illinois' statewide Audit Report Review requirements. Terms of the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 (31 USC 7501-7507), Subpart F of 2 CFR Part 200, and the audit rules set forth under the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act Admin Rules shall apply (See 44 IL Admin Code 7000.90).

G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Grant Help Desk
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
Email: CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov

H. Other Information, if applicable

N/A.