

GIVE 3.0 2024



**GOVERNOR'S INVESTMENT IN
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
GRANT COMPETITION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS &
GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION**



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GENERAL INFORMATION & OVERVIEW

The Governor's Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE) is designed to foster long-term regional partnerships between Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs), community colleges, industry, economic development/workforce agencies, and K-12 to identify and address "skills gaps" in local/regional workforce pools. Through data-driven and collaborative work, Tennessee can ensure that postsecondary education institutions are producing the credentials existing employers need while fostering growth and bringing new industry to the state.

The GIVE program facilitates the alignment of workforce and education partners through a \$40 million competitive grant process. These funds are available to local collaboratives through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC).

Grants of up to \$2 million will be available to local/regional collaboratives for periods of up to forty-eight (48) months to facilitate the development and implementation of employer-driven career pathways that include both K-12 education agencies (LEAs) and higher education institutions. Proposals must identify and address local community/regional skills gaps through one (or a combination) of the following methods:

- 1. Enhance, expand, and/or acquire equipment or other resources to develop an academic program that creates a pathway from secondary to postsecondary that culminates in a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree and fills a critical and demonstrable local/regional workforce need.*
- 2. Develop and implement collaborative, meaningful, and structured work-based learning (WBL) experiences. Successful applicants must demonstrate how they will create or expand the infrastructure necessary to sustain successful WBL programs. WBL experiences may culminate in experiences such as internships, co-ops, pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, or clinicals.*
- 3. Provide industry-recognized certifications to meet an identified regional workforce need.*

WHAT CONSTITUTES A COLLABORATIVE?

Grant applicants must demonstrate the viability of a local/regional collaborative that includes the following mandatory partners:

1. Any public or private, non-profit, four-year institution may participate as a partner, but the fiscal agent must be a TCAT or community college. The fiscal agent will serve as the primary partner for all grant activities and will execute a grant contract with THEC.
2. A local/regional workforce or economic development agency (such as: development district, chamber of commerce, or local/regional Workforce Investment Board).

3. Two or more area employers representing industry sectors with a demonstrated shortage of skilled workers; these employers should be seeking to employ credentialed graduates from the proposed program.
4. At least one K-12 local administrator representing secondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs of study and work-based learning interests.

Lead Entity

The public institution of higher education or local/regional workforce/economic development agency will serve as the lead entity for the grant. The lead entity is responsible for coordinating all grant activities, coordinating partner participation and collaboration, and managing contract monitoring, audit, and reporting. The lead entity and fiscal agent serve as accountable parties for all grant activity.

Fiscal Agent

The eligible institution (TCAT or community college) will serve as the fiscal agent for all grant activities and will execute a grant contract with THEC. The eligible institution may serve as both the fiscal agent and the lead entity.

WHO MAY APPLY?

In this round of funding, all eligible institutions may apply. However, if an applicant has been funded through GIVE 1.0 and/or 2.0, the following requirements must be addressed:

To ensure that GIVE 3.0 is responsive to current workforce needs in each community and does not duplicate previous efforts, collaboratives awarded grant funding during GIVE 1.0 or 2.0 may only participate in GIVE 3.0 via:

1. The proposal must involve the creation of new (not currently offered) educational training programs; and/or
2. The expansion of a program that was not previously funded by GIVE 1.0 or 2.0; and/or
3. The expansion of GIVE 1.0 or 2.0 programs to counties not served by the institution's previous GIVE program(s); and/or
4. Expansion of GIVE 1.0 or 2.0 programs within currently served counties to new site(s) in the area of service; and/or
5. Establishing a stacked credential within the GIVE 1.0 or 2.0 program. For the purpose of this RFP, a stacked credential should align with the US DOL definition: "A credential is considered stackable when it is part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications and help them to move along a career pathway or up a career ladder to different and potentially higher-paying jobs."

WORK-BASED LEARNING (WBL)

The GIVE 3.0 Work-Based Learning (WBL) component intends to encourage local/regional industry partners to provide meaningful and sustainable work experiences to students and increase workforce engagement with local education partners. Applicants must demonstrate how they will create or expand the infrastructure necessary to sustain successful WBL programs. ***While Work-Based Learning is an optional component of the proposal, scoring preference will be given to proposals that clearly incorporate WBL experiences.***

For the purpose of this RFP, WBL is defined as a proactive approach to bridging the gap between secondary and postsecondary education and high-demand, high-skill careers in Tennessee. Students and companies are partnered to reinforce academic, technical, and employability skills through work experience. WBL activities could begin as early as elementary school and continue through postsecondary. The purpose of a continuum of WBL experiences is to develop a pathway that provides students with concrete, coherent, relevant actions, and opportunities. WBL experiences should also culminate in credit-bearing capstones such as internships, co-ops, youth apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, and clinicals.

For more information and resources on offering high-quality WBL experiences, please visit:

<https://www.tn.gov/education/educators/career-and-technical-education/work-based-learning.html>

PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS

Applications will respond to the following criteria and present a detailed plan for achieving the outlined objectives. In Section 1, proposals should establish relevant baseline data to demonstrate a specific need within the targeted area. All additional sections should demonstrate how grant activities will support the skills gaps identified by the data in Section 1.

Section 1: Demonstration of Need (Twenty Points)

Proposals will include a thorough overview of the collaborative area's workforce needs. Entities seeking grant funds must outline the proposed development/expansion of academic program(s), industry certification(s) and/or WBL program(s); any requested equipment; and how these will address demonstrated workforce needs.

Essential Components:

- ***Localized data demonstrating the need for action.*** Demonstrate with data the needs of the local/regional workforce, with a particular emphasis on anticipated needs. Data sources should focus on anticipated or future needs that include but are not limited to, projected growth and retirement metrics. Preferred data sources are the following:

1. [THEC Academic Supply and Occupational Demand Report](#)
 2. Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development information available at [Jobs4TN](#)
 3. Data provided by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development's Center for Economic Research in Tennessee (CERT) such as: [TNECD County Profile Tool](#)
- **Clear linkages between grant activities and local/regional needs.** Clearly illustrate how the proposed grant project is directly linked to addressing the workforce needs and skillset deficits in the local/regional area. Successful applications will thoroughly describe the local/regional high-demand, high-skill trade, and technical occupations and identify how the proposed program addresses the identified local/regional workforce needs in those areas.

Section 2: Program Plan (Twenty-Five Points)

Based on the data identified in Section 1, each proposal must include a detailed description of the planned project.

Essential Components:

- **Detailed summary of proposed program.** Provide a detailed summary of the proposed program to include: how grant activities align with the workforce data, how grant activities will provide a secondary to postsecondary pathway leading to a credential, and two or more early postsecondary opportunities that align with workforce needs. Describe how credentials earned in the proposed program are stackable with other existing credentials and include how the project will produce the appropriately credentialed job candidates possessing the skills employers need.
- **Detailed project timeline and overview.** Provide a quarterly overview of the critical convenings, activities, and actions that will comprise the development and implementation of the identified program.
- **Identify key objectives for each phase of the project and describe how they will be measured.** Detail the metrics to be used to continuously track student outcomes.
- **Project governance and accountability plan.** Clearly detail the plan for governance, meetings, and decision-making structure; identify a project director employed at the lead entity; and identify project steering committee members who will maintain oversight throughout the project period.
- **Overview and structure of the optional Work-Based Learning (WBL) program.** Proposals seeking to establish a WBL program must outline the requirements and expectations for the proposed WBL program (see page 4 for more information on WBL) and include descriptions of whether the WBL program is credit-bearing and how the WBL is aligned with local/regional labor-market needs. Entities seeking to establish a WBL program will submit a signed MOU

with each of the partnered employers providing the proposed work-based learning experiences. While Work-Based Learning is an optional component of the proposal, scoring preference will be given to proposals incorporating WBL experiences.

Section 3: Strength of Partnership (Twenty Points)

Proposals are required to address how the program plan incorporates each of the mandatory partners (higher education, K-12, industry, local/regional workforce, or economic development agency, etc.) in a meaningful role.

Essential Components:

- **Detailed description of each mandatory partner's role and their capabilities in implementing the identified program.** Describe how each partner will carry out the grant project; provide a description of assigned tasks for each of the mandatory partners; and identify specific personnel and the roles they will play throughout the project.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the partnership agreement from local and area employers and partnering postsecondary institutions.** Applicants must also submit a signed MOU with at least two local/regional area employers citing need and outlining benefits for their industry.

At a minimum, a MOU included as part of this grant should establish an agreement among the partners of the collaborative that outlines each partner's respective benefits, roles, and responsibilities. MOUs **must** be signed by **all** partners to earn points in the scoring rubric.

Section 4: Budget Plan (Fifteen Points)

Proposals will include a detailed financial plan and a completed budget using the template provided. Applicable "Grant Budget Line-Item Details" should be submitted **as a separate attachment with the completed budget** (see Appendix B).

Essential Components:

- **Clear alignment between funding requests and grant activities.** Detailed discussion of how each line item of the budget supports the goals and stated outcomes of the proposed GIVE 3.0 program.
- **Role of proposed equipment request.** Required only for proposals seeking equipment purchases with GIVE 3.0 funds. Explain how equipment purchases will specifically address local/regional labor market employment and/or training needs and provide a detailed description of equipment, the educational value of equipment in preparing the workforce, and the justification for purchase. Equipment purchases should help prepare students to enter a career in a local/regional industry while earning a postsecondary credential and/or industry certification.

- ***Explanation of any anticipated indirect costs associated with the implementation and administration of the grant.*** Indirect costs are limited to eight percent (8%) of the total budget.

Section 5: Sustainability (Twenty Points)

Proposals will include a commitment and detailed plan for sustaining grant activities beyond the 48-month period.

Essential components:

- ***Detailed plan for sustaining the program beyond the 48-month funding period.*** Describe how the work supported by this grant will continue beyond the grant period and outline the roles of each partner thereafter.
- If applicable, detailed description of the availability of long-term resources to house, maintain, and/or repair equipment.
- If applicable, WBL programs will describe how the education-industry partnerships will continue beyond the 48-month grant period. This includes a detailed commitment and strategy of private industry to maintain a GIVE 3.0 developed WBL program beyond the 48-month funding period that describes structures for supporting students, including central points of contact for supervisors and other supports, such as transportation and scheduling.

Section 6: Optional Criteria (Up to Fifteen Additional Points)

Proposals may receive up to fifteen additional points by clearly identifying and addressing one or more of the following challenges within the program proposal.

High Demand Programs

A primary goal of GIVE is to align educational programs with the needs of business and industry. To encourage this alignment, proposals including programs of study that clearly align with business and industry demand, will receive five additional points.

[The THEC Academic Supply for Occupational Demand Report](#) identifies in-demand occupations at the statewide and regional levels. Proposals seeking to receive the available points for this subsection should list the applicable in-demand occupation(s) that the proposal is responsive to and the corresponding program(s) of study.

Points for the High Demand Programs subsection are capped at five per proposal.

County Economic Status Acknowledgement

Each year, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) prepares an index of county economic status for every county in the United States. Economic status designations are identified through a composite measure of each county's three-year average unemployment rate, per capita market income, and

poverty rate. Based on these indicators, each county is categorized as distressed, at-risk, transitional, competitive, or attainment.

Tennessee has a long-term objective of reducing the number of distressed counties. To assist in attaining this state goal, proposals that **clearly** serve counties designated *distressed* or *at-risk* will automatically receive points acknowledging the economic status of that area.

For the purpose of scoring proposals, applicants directly serving counties designated as *distressed* or *at-risk* will receive five additional points. Points will be awarded based on the county's economic status designation as of July 1, 2023. The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TN ECD) has developed a dashboard illustrating the current economic status for all ninety-five counties in Tennessee as measured by the ARC. To view the TN ECD dashboard, visit: [County Economic Status Map](#).

Points for the County Economic Status Acknowledgement subsection are capped at five per proposal.

Census Tracts in Persistent Poverty

Recognizing that areas outside of economically at-risk or distressed counties also have a need for targeted interventions, the [United States Census Bureau](#) recently released a report that identifies areas of persistent poverty across the country. The report defines persistent poverty as “geographic locations that have had high poverty rates for an extended time.”

To promote increased educational attainment and workforce readiness within these census tracts, proposals that **directly** serve one or more of these census tracts (excluding those tracts located within an economically at-risk or distressed county) will receive five additional points.

To be eligible for these points, proposals should list the targeted census tract and the school(s) within them that will be served by the proposal. Additionally, proposals should include the targeted census tract map as an appendix. A list of all census tracts in persistent poverty is available to download from the Census Bureau's [website](#).

Points for the Census Tract in Persistent Poverty subsection are capped at five per proposal.

The maximum points available under this section for any one proposal is capped at fifteen points.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES & TIMELINE

The application process consists of two steps: the submission of the Notice of Intent to Submit and the submission of the final proposal.

A [*Notice of Intent to Submit*](#) must be transmitted via Formstack no later than **4:30 p.m. (Central Time) on March 14, 2024**. The *Notice of Intent to Submit* must include the following:

- Lead Entity Information
- Project Director/Co-Director
- Project Director/Co-Director Phone Number(s)
- Project Director/Co-Director Email Address(es)
- Name of Higher Education Institution(s)/Fiscal Agent
- Title of Proposed Project
- Proposed Partners (All additional Mandatory Partners and Anticipated Workforce Partners)
- Proposed Funding Requested

The submission of the Notice of Intent to Submit is a mandatory step to submit a proposal for this grant program. Final proposals must be received electronically through Formstack by **April 30, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. (Central Time)**.

SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED AFTER THIS DEADLINE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Link to Notice of Intent:

https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/give_3_0_notice_of_intent

RFP TIMELINE:

- Release Date: February 15, 2024
- Technical Assistance Webinar: March 1, 2024
- Notice of Intent due: March 14, 2024
- Technical Assistance Webinar: March 22, 2024
- Final proposal due: April 30, 2024
- Tentative Notification of Selection: May/June 2024
- Tentative Technical Assistance Webinar for Grantees: June/July 2024
- Tentative Contract Start Date: August/September 2024
- Tentative Contract End Date: August/September 2028

GRANT APPLICATION PROCEDURES

All grant applications will be submitted via Formstack. After submitting the Notice of Intent, potential applicants will receive instructions for uploading documents through Formstack. Applicants will be able to upload all proposals and verify that their proposals were submitted on time through this process.

The application must include:

- Cover Sheet (see Appendix A)
- Table of Contents
- One-page Abstract/Project Summary
- Program Proposal: This section should be double-spaced, in twelve-point font, with one-inch margins.
- *Note: Maximum document length is **fifteen pages**, excluding the cover sheet, data list, and abstract, table of contents, budget, and appendices.*
- Budget with applicable line-item details (Appendix B)

Notification

Once each proposal has been received, a confirmation notice will be generated by Formstack and received by the project director. **If you do not receive your confirmation notice within one hour of submitting your proposal, please call Mitch Currey at (615) 741-1072 or email the THEC Workforce Development Team at Workforce.THEC@tn.gov.** *It is the sole responsibility of the proposed project director to verify receipt of the proposal and notify project partners.*

One week after the proposal deadline, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission will post all received proposals on the THEC website, accessible at www.tn.gov/thec. **If you have submitted a proposal but it is not listed, contact the THEC Workforce Development Team at Workforce.THEC@tn.gov immediately.**

Review and Award Process

The Governor's Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE) 3.0 grant proposals will be submitted to THEC and reviewed by a selection committee. Selection committee members will score proposals utilizing the standardized rubric which is included in the GIVE Request for Proposals (RFP) as an attachment. The rubric will ensure that all grants are reviewed objectively, and selected proposals are in alignment with the state's workforce and education goals. Further detail on the scoring rubric is found in Appendix C. Final scoring from the committee members alone will determine the proposals that are approved for funding.

LEGAL INFORMATION

Title VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that federally assisted programs be free of discrimination. Should you feel you have been discriminated against, contact your local Title VI representatives. The Title VI Coordinator at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission is Amber Walsh (615) 532-3500.

Funding

Funder reserves the right to fund any proposal in full or in part, to request additional information to assist in the review process, to reject any of the proposals responding to the RFP, and to re-issue the RFP and accept new proposals if the selection committee determines that doing so is in the best interest of the State of Tennessee. In addition, the funder may consider geographic parity in awarding.

All costs incurred in preparation of a proposal shall be borne by the applicant. Proposal preparation costs are not recoverable from grant funds. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) reserves the right to withhold funding if at any point the program is not adhering to federal or state requirements or to the goals and objectives declared in this RFP. THEC staff reserve the right to attend any project activity or meeting to ensure the fidelity of this program, and to conduct regular monitoring of the project.

APPENDIX A: Cover Sheet

NAME OF LEAD ENTITY

2024 Governor's Investment in Technical Education (GIVE 3.0) [Program Title]

[Lead Entity Name] [Fiscal Agent] IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

1. [Workforce/Economic Development Agency]
2. [Higher Education Institution(s)]
3. [LEA/School District Name]
4. [Employer Partners]

[Project Director Name, Mailing Address]

[Director's Telephone]

[Director's E-mail Address]

Funding requested:

[\$Dollar Amount]

X

President of Higher Education Institution
(Fiscal Agent)

X

Project Director (Lead Entity)

X

President of Higher Education Institution
(Fiscal Agent)

X

Project Director (Lead Entity)

APPENDIX B: Budget

GRANT BUDGET				
GIVE Program Competitive Grant				
The grant budget line-item amounts below shall be applicable only to expenses incurred during the following				
Applicable Period: BEGIN:		END:		
POLICY 03 Object Line-item Reference	EXPENSE OBJECT LINE-ITEM CATEGORY ¹	GRANT CONTRACT	GRANTEE PARTICIPATION	TOTAL PROJECT
1, 2	Salaries, Benefits & Taxes	0.00	0.00	0.00
4, 15	Professional Fee, Grant & Award ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Supplies, Telephone, Postage & Shipping, Occupancy, Equipment Rental & Maintenance, Printing & Publications	0.00	0.00	0.00
11, 12	Travel, Conferences & Meetings	0.00	0.00	0.00
13	Interest ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
14	Insurance	0.00	0.00	0.00
16	Specific Assistance to Individuals	0.00	0.00	0.00
17	Depreciation ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
18	Other Non-Personnel ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
20	Capital Purchase ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
22	Indirect Cost	0.00	0.00	0.00
24	In-Kind Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00
25	GRAND TOTAL	0.00	0.00	0.00

¹ Each expense object line-item shall be defined by the Department of Finance and Administration Policy 03, *Uniform Reporting Requirements and Cost Allocation Plans for Sub recipients of Federal and State Grant Monies, Appendix A.* (posted on the Internet at: www.state.tn.us/finance/act/documents/policy3.pdf).

² Applicable detail follows this page if line-item is funded.

GRANT BUDGET LINE-ITEM DETAIL

Line 1 Salaries and Wages

On this line, enter compensation, fees, salaries, and wages paid to officers, directors, trustees, and full-time employees. An attached schedule may be required showing client wages or other included in the aggregations.

Line 2 Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes

Enter (a) the institution's contributions to pension plans and to employee benefit programs such as health, life, and disability insurance; and (b) the institution's portion of payroll taxes such as social security and Medicare taxes and unemployment and workers' compensation insurance. An attached schedule may be required showing client benefits and taxes or other included in the aggregations.

Line 4 Professional Fees

Enter the organization's fees to outside professionals, consultants, and personal-service contractors. (A detailed description is required in the Grant Budget Line-Item Detail if this line-item is funded.)

Line 5 Supplies

Enter the organization's expenses for office supplies, food and beverages, and other supplies. An attached schedule may be required showing food expenses or other details included in the aggregations.

Line 6 Telephone

Enter the institution's expenses for telephone, cellular phones, FAX, E-mail, telephone equipment maintenance, and other related expenses.

Line 7 Postage and Shipping

Enter the institution's expenses for postage, messenger services, overnight delivery, outside mailing service fees, freight and trucking, and maintenance of delivery and shipping vehicles.

Line 9 Equipment Rental and Maintenance

Enter the institution's expenses for renting and maintaining computers, copiers, postage meters, and other office equipment used exclusively for this grant initiative.

Line 10 Printing and Publications

Enter the institution's expenses for producing printed materials (not including posters, advertising, and other marketing materials), purchasing books and publications, and buying subscriptions to publications.

Line 11 Travel

Enter the institution's expenses for travel, including transportation, meals, lodging, and per diem payments.

Line 12 Conferences and Meetings

Enter the institution's expenses for conducting or attending meetings, conferences, and conventions. Include rental of facilities, speakers' fees and expenses, printed materials, and registration fees.

Line 15 Grants and Awards

Enter the institution's awards, grants, subsidies, and other pass-through expenditures to individuals and to other institutions, including travel and equipment allowances outside the institution (this includes WBL salary reimbursements). This classification includes items used in direct support of this initiative. (A detailed description is required in the Grant Budget Line-Item Detail if this line-item is funded.)

Line 18 Other Non-personnel Expenses

Enter the institution's allowable expenses for advertising, the institution's and employees' membership dues in associations and professional societies and licenses, permits, registrations, and testing fees.

Line 19 Capital Purchases

Enter the organization's purchases of fixed assets and purchases with a minimum life expectancy of one year. Include land, equipment, buildings, leasehold improvements, and other fixed assets.

Line 22 Indirect Costs

This amount is intended to cover costs associated with administrative functions including providing the required project reports, financial information, and information to support project evaluation. Not to exceed eight percent of the total budget.

Line 24 In-Kind Expenses

This amount is for reporting the value of contributed resources applied to the program. Approval and reporting guidelines for in-kind contributions will be specified by those contracting state agencies who allow their use toward earning grant funds.

Line 25 Total Expenses

Total Direct and Administrative Expenses, and Line 24, In-kind Expenses, goes on this line.

APPENDIX C: Scoring Rubric



GIVE

Governor's Investment in
Vocational Education

Governor's Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE 3.0) Proposal Rubric

Design

To ensure a fair and impartial review of every proposal, the following rubric will be used as a scoring guide to determine which GIVE 3.0 proposals are awarded funding. The rubric is divided into six sections mirroring the sections of the GIVE 3.0 proposal.

Evaluation Guidelines

For each section, the grant proposal will be reviewed according to the rubric to determine which criteria have been addressed and points will be assigned accordingly.

Each section contains essential components and associated evaluation criteria. Essential components identify the key components required for that portion of the proposal and will be reviewed to determine which criteria have been addressed. Points will be assigned accordingly.

Evaluation criteria establish the available points based on the thoroughness of the proposal response. For evaluation criteria with ranges, reviewers will check the box for the statement that most closely aligns with the information provided in the proposal and award a score in the stated range.

Evaluation criteria with set points are awarded on whether or not they are addressed in the proposal. If the proposal satisfies the criteria, full points are awarded and if not, zero points are awarded.

Reviewer Scores & Notes

Reviewer Name	
Date	

Program Name	
Lead Entity	
Higher Education Partner	

Section	Points Possible	Points Awarded	Notes
Demonstration of Need	20		
Program Plan	25		
Strength of Partnership	20		
Budget Plan	15		
Sustainability	20		
Optional Criteria	15		
TOTAL	115		

Section 1: Demonstration of Need (20 points)

Successful proposals should align with local/regional economic and labor-market opportunities, as demonstrated by available labor market information.

Essential Component: *Localized data demonstrating the need for action.* Demonstrate with data the needs of the local/regional workforce, with a particular emphasis on anticipated needs. (Maximum 10 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, check the box most closely associated with the level of response provided in the proposal and select a point value within the range of the evaluation criteria selected.

- Proposal does not provide general labor market data to justify grant activities. (0 points)
- Proposal provides general labor market data to justify grant activities from **one** of the preferred data sources, including TNECD County Profile Tool, Jobs4TN, and/or the THEC Academic Supply and Occupational Demand Report. (1-2 points)
- Proposal provides detailed state, regional, or local labor market data to justify grant activities from **two** of the preferred sources, including TNECD County Profile Tool, Jobs4TN, and/or the THEC Academic Supply and Occupational Demand Report. (3-5 points)
- Proposal provides comprehensive and rigorous state, regional, and/or local labor market data to justify grant activities from **three** of the preferred sources, including TNECD County Profile Tool, Jobs4TN, and the THEC Academic Supply and Occupational Demand Report. Data sources should focus on anticipated or future needs that include but are not limited to, projected growth and retirement metrics. (6-8 points)

For the following evaluation criteria, identify if the proposal appropriately addresses the criteria. If so, check the box and award full points.

- Proposal utilizes labor market data to identify occupations tied to grant activities that offer livable wages (MIT Living Wage Calculator for a single adult or 75% of the median wage for the region). (1 point)
- Proposal includes industry-specific data from local employers indicating explicit labor market needs aligning with the grant activities and credentials offered. The proposal provides additional supporting materials and resources illustrating industry-specific data (e.g., a letter or report from the local chamber of commerce that shows their own analysis of labor market trends and or specific needs identified by local employer(s) related to labor market data that are utilized to inform grant activities. (1 point)

Essential Component: *Clear linkages between grant activities and local/regional needs.* Clearly state project goals and illustrate how the proposed grant project is directly linked to addressing the workforce needs in the local/regional area. Successful applications will thoroughly describe the local/regional high-demand, high-skill trade, and technical occupations and identify how the proposed program addresses the identified local/regional workforce needs in those areas. (Maximum 10 Points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, check the box most closely associated with the level of response provided in the proposal and select a point value within the range of the evaluation criteria selected.

- Proposal does not state goals or make connections to workforce priorities. (0 points)
- Proposal states goals and connects with workforce priorities but lacks detail on how planned grant activities satisfy workforce needs. (1-3 points)
- Proposal states goals, connects with workforce priorities, and demonstrates how grant activities assist in meeting workforce needs. (3-6 points)
- Proposal provides detailed goals and clear connections between local needs and planned activities. The proposal outlines how the grant activities will increase overall higher education attainment in the region and provides clear linkages between postsecondary credentials offered through the grant and the needs of employers. (7-10 points)

Section 2: Program Plan (25 Points)

Successful proposals should include a detailed timeline and overview of activities: clear alignment of workforce data; measurable objectives; project governance and accountability and work-based learning (WBL) components.

Essential Component: *Detailed Summary of Proposed Program.* Provide a detailed summary of the proposed program to include: how grant activities align with the workforce data, how grant activities will provide a secondary to postsecondary pathway leading to a credential, and two or more early postsecondary opportunities that align with workforce needs. Describe how credentials earned in the proposed program are stackable with other existing credentials and include how the project will produce the appropriately credentialed job candidates possessing the skills employers need. (Maximum 5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, identify if the proposal appropriately addresses the criteria. If so, check the box and award full points.

- Proposal clearly aligns grant activities with workforce data. (1 point)
- Proposal describes how grant activities provide a secondary to postsecondary pathway that will serve as an intentional progression of coursework leading to a credential and/or degree that aligns with workforce needs. (1 point)
- The proposal includes two or more early postsecondary opportunities as a component of the grant activities that align with workforce needs. (1 point)
- Proposal includes stackable credentials involving two or more postsecondary institutions demonstrating the certificates/diplomas/degrees that students can pursue through the grant activities. (1 point)
- Include how the project will produce the appropriately credentialed job candidates possessing the skills employers need. (1 point)

Essential Component: *Detailed project timeline and overview.* Provide a quarterly overview of the critical convenings, activities, and actions that will comprise the development and implementation of the identified program. (Maximum 5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, check the box most closely associated with the level of response provided in the proposal and select a point value within the range of the evaluation criteria selected.

- Proposal does not include a project timeline or an overview of the planned activities. (0 points)
- Proposal includes a project timeline and an overview of the planned activities but lacks detail. (1-3 points)
- Proposal includes a detailed project timeline with a quarterly overview of activities, critical meetings, and actions that will comprise the development and implementation of the project. (4-5 points)

Essential Component: *Identify key objectives for each phase of the project and describe how they will be measured.* Detail the metrics to be used to continuously track student outcomes. (Maximum 5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, check the box most closely associated with the level of response provided in the proposal and select a point value within the range of the evaluation criteria selected.

- Proposal does not identify key objectives for each phase of the project. (0 points)
- Proposal identifies measurable objectives for each phase of the project but does not demonstrate alignment with workforce needs. (1-3 points)
- Proposal includes measurable objectives for each phase of the project that clearly align with workforce needs. (4-5 points)

Essential Component: *Project governance and accountability plan.* Clearly detail the plan for governance, meetings, and decision-making structure; identify a project director employed at the lead entity; and identify project steering committee members who will maintain oversight throughout the project period. (Maximum 5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, check the box most closely associated with the level of response provided in the proposal and select a point value within the range of the evaluation criteria selected.

- A project plan is not presented. (0 points)
- A project plan is presented but lacks sufficient details for governance, meetings, and decision-making structure. (1-3 points)
- A project plan is presented and includes sufficient details for governance, meetings, and decision-making structure. (4-5 points)

Essential Component: *Overview and structure of the optional Work-Based Learning (WBL) program.*

Proposals seeking to establish a WBL program must outline the requirements and expectations for the proposed WBL experiences (see pages 4-5 for more information on WBL) and include descriptions of whether WBL is credit-bearing and how the WBL is aligned with local/regional labor-market needs. Entities seeking to establish a WBL program will submit a signed MOU with each of the partnered employers providing the proposed work-based learning experiences. While Work-Based Learning is an optional component of the proposal, scoring preference will be given to proposals incorporating WBL experiences. (Maximum 5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, identify if the proposal appropriately addresses the criteria. If so, check the box and award full points.

- Proposal did not include optional WBL section. (0 points)
- Proposal provides a detailed overview of quality WBL experiences that align with the program proposal. (2 points)
- Proposal provides a continuum of WBL opportunities offered through grant activities to high school and postsecondary students and how the WBL is aligned with local/regional labor-market needs. (2 points)
- Proposal provides documentation of a signed MOU with employers outlining capstone work-based learning experiences such as internships, co-ops, registered apprenticeships, clinicals, or practicums. (1 point)

Section 3: Strength of Partnership (20 points)

Successful proposals must provide a detailed description of each mandatory partner's (higher education, K-12, industry, local/regional workforce, or economic development agency, etc.) role in the implementation of the identified program, the capabilities of each mandatory partner, and a signed partnership MOU.

Essential Component: *Detailed description of each mandatory partner's role and their capabilities in implementing the identified program.* Describe how each partner will carry out the grant project; provide a description of assigned tasks for each of the mandatory partners; and identify specific personnel and the roles they will play throughout the project. (Maximum 10 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, check the box most closely associated with the level of response provided in the proposal and select a point value within the range of the evaluation criteria selected.

- Proposal does not include all required partners. (0 points)
- Proposal lists all required partners but does not incorporate the partners in a meaningful role. (1-3 points)
- Proposal contains a detailed description of how each partner will carry out grant activities and tasks assigned to each partner. (4-6 points)

- Proposal demonstrates that learning experiences are collaboratively designed by education (secondary and postsecondary) and industry partners. (7-10 points)

Essential Component: *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the partnership agreement from local and area employers and partnering postsecondary institutions.* Applicants must also submit a signed MOU with at least two local/regional area employers citing the need and outlining benefits for their industry. At a minimum, an MOU included as part of this grant should establish an agreement among the collaborative partners that outlines each partner's respective benefits, roles, and responsibilities. MOUs must be signed by all partners to earn points in the scoring rubric. (Maximum 10 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, identify if the proposal appropriately addresses the criteria. If so, check the box and award full points.

- Proposal does not provide all the required signed MOUs (0 points)
- Proposal provides signed MOU(s) with at least two employers demonstrating support and commitment to the grant activities. (10 points)

Section 4: Budget Plan (15 Points)

Successful proposals will provide clear alignment between the funding requested and grant activities. All proposals must include a detailed financial plan and completed budget using the template provided. *If equipment is purchased*, the role of the proposed equipment request must be included. Explain how equipment purchases will specifically address local/regional labor market employment and/or training needs and provide a detailed description of equipment, the educational value of equipment in preparing the workforce, and the justification for purchase. Equipment purchases should help prepare students to enter a career in a local/regional industry while earning a postsecondary credential and/or industry certification. *If the proposal seeks indirect costs*, an explanation of any anticipated indirect costs associated with the implementation and administration of the grant must be provided. Indirect costs are limited to eight percent (8%) of the total budget.

Essential Component: *Clear alignment between funding requests and grant activities.* A detailed discussion of how each line item of the budget supports the goals and stated outcomes of the proposed program. (Maximum 15 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, check the box most closely associated with the level of response provided in the proposal and select a point value within the range of the evaluation criteria selected.

- Budget is not included. (0 points)
- Budget is incomplete and/or impractical, given the scope of the proposal. If required, the proposal does not include a description of the role of the proposed equipment and/or an explanation of any anticipated indirect cost. (1-4 points)
- Budget lacks sufficient detail, but expenditures are practical given the scope of the proposal. If required, the proposal provides a description of the role of any proposed equipment

and/or an explanation of any anticipated indirect cost but does not provide sufficient detail. (5-9 points)

- Budget is complete and accurately reflected, with sufficient justifications and detail listed for each line item. If required, the proposal provides a detailed description of the role of any proposed equipment and/or an explanation of any anticipated indirect cost. (10-15 points)

Section 5: Sustainability (20 Points)

Successful proposals will include a commitment and detailed plan for sustaining grant activities beyond the 48-month grant period. *If the proposal includes equipment purchases*, a detailed plan including the availability of long-term resources for maintenance, repair, and housing equipment is included. *If the proposal includes a WBL component*, a detailed plan describing how the WBL programs and industry partnerships will continue beyond the 48-month grant period is included.

Essential Component: *Detailed plan for sustaining the program beyond the 48-month funding period.* Describe how the work supported by this grant will continue beyond the grant period and outline the roles of each partner thereafter. (Maximum 20 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, check the box most closely associated with the level of response provided in the proposal and select a point value within the range of the evaluation criteria selected.

- Proposal does not include a sustainability plan. (0 points)
- Sustainability plan is incomplete and/or impractical, given the scope of the project. The proposal included equipment purchases and/or WBL, but a plan to house equipment and/or maintain the WBL component was not provided. (1-5 points)
- Proposal includes a plan for sustaining the program and partnerships beyond the grant period but lacks sufficient detail. If the proposal includes equipment purchases and/or WBL, a plan was provided but lacks sufficient detail. (6-10 points)
- Proposal includes a detailed plan for sustaining the program and partnerships beyond the grant period that outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner. If the proposal includes equipment purchases and/or WBL, a detailed plan was provided. (11-15 points)
- Proposal includes formal written documentation of commitment to sustain the grant activities and partnerships beyond the grant period. (16-20 points)

Section 6: Optional Criteria (up to 15 points)

Proposals may receive up to 15 additional points by clearly identifying and addressing one or more of the following challenges within the program proposal. **The maximum points available under this section for any one proposal is capped at 15 points.**

High Demand Programs (Maximum 5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, identify if the proposal clearly addresses the criteria. If so, check the box that indicates the criteria was addressed and award full points. If the criteria is not

clearly addressed, check the box that indicates such and award zero (0) points.

- Proposal does not include at least one program of study that clearly aligns with in-demand occupations as identified in the THEC Academic Supply for Occupational Demand Report. (0 points)
- Proposal includes one or more programs of study that clearly align with in-demand occupations as identified in the THEC Academic Supply for Occupational Demand Report. (5 points)

County Economic Status (Maximum 5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, identify if the proposal clearly addresses the criteria. If so, check the box that indicates the criteria was addressed and award full points. If the criteria is not clearly addressed, check the box that indicates such and award zero (0) points.

- Proposal does not clearly demonstrate program implementation or expansion in at least one economically *at-risk or distressed county*. (0 points)
- Proposal implements a new program or expands an existing program in at least one economically *at-risk or distressed county* as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission. The proposal **clearly** demonstrates implementation through work-based learning, market driven early postsecondary opportunities, and/or other industry informed programs. Points are awarded based on the county's economic status designation as of July 1, 2023. (5 points)

Census Tracts in Persistent Poverty (Maximum 5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

For the following evaluation criteria, identify if the proposal clearly addresses the criteria. If so, check the box that indicates the criteria was addressed and award full points. If the criteria is not clearly addressed, check the box that indicates such and award zero (0) points.

- Proposal does not clearly demonstrate program implementation or expansion in at least one census tract identified by the U.S. Census Bureau as being in persistent poverty. (0 points)
- Proposal implements a new program or expands an existing program in at least one census tract identified by the U.S. Census Bureau as being in persistent poverty, and the proposal includes the targeted census tract map as an appendix. The proposal **clearly** demonstrates implementation through work-based learning, market-driven early postsecondary opportunities, and/or other industry-informed programs. NOTE: Census tracts within at-risk or distressed counties are not eligible to receive bonus points under this section. (5 points)