



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP AND WORK-BASED LEARNING**

**GROWING APPRENTICESHIPS IN NONTRADITIONAL SECTORS
(GAINS) Grant Program
(Round 2 Funding)**

**NOTICE OF GRANT OPPORTUNITY
Fiscal Year 2026**

Announcement Date: January 9, 2026

**Technical Assistance Workshop: Thursday February 19, 2026 at 1pm and
Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 1pm**

Letter of Intent Due: No later than noon Friday, April 10, 2026

Application Due Date: No later than noon Friday, April 17, 2026

Funding Amount: \$6,000,000

**Robert Asaro-Angelo
Commissioner**

**Growing Apprenticeships in Nontraditional Sectors (GAINS) Grant Program
FY2026 Round 2 Notice of Grant Opportunity**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Notice of Availability of Grant Program Funds	Page 3
A. Name of Grant Program	Page 3
B. Purpose of the Grant	Page 3
C. Mission, Goals and Objectives	Page 5
D. Availability and Awarding of Funding	Page 6
E. Eligible Entities/Applicants	Page 9
F. Evaluation Criteria	Page 10
G. Qualifications of Applicants	Page 17
H. Application Process	Page 18
I. Application Requirements	Page 20
J. Required Reports/Documents	Page 22
K. Award Process	Page 23
L. Date by which Applicants shall be notified	Page 24

Attachments:

- Attachment I – Sample Letter of Intent
- Attachment II – Tax Clearance Certificate

Notice of Availability of Grant Program Funds

Take Notice that, in compliance with N.J.S.A. 52:14-34.4 et seq., the Department of Labor and Workforce Development *(hereinafter “the NJDOL”) regularly publishes on its website all notices of fund availability pertaining to Federal or State grant funds, which may be awarded by the Department. The notices of fund availability may be found on the Department’s website under the heading “Research & Information” and the subheading “Grant Opportunities” by hovering the computer mouse cursor over the hyperlink <https://www.nj.gov/labor/research-info/grants.shtml> and hitting Ctrl+Left Click.

A. Name of Grant Program

Growing Apprenticeships in Nontraditional Sectors (GAINS)

The GAINS program is a competitive grant offered by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL).

B. Purpose of the Grant

In March of 2018, Governor Murphy announced the development of the first Office of Apprenticeship has been to develop and manage grant programs, educate New Jerseyans on the benefits of the in New Jersey, and well as the creation of the New Jersey Apprenticeship Network. The Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning works closely with USDOL and serves as the one-stop shop for employers, nonprofits, and secondary- and post-secondary institutions interested in apprenticeship opportunities. The GAINS grant has been designed to help workers, and others with access to on-the job training and advanced credentials.

The New Jersey Apprenticeship Network (NJAN) is focused on driving economic development through skills and educational attainment by concentrating our joint efforts on sector-focused, demand-driven training and education programs that lead to better-paying careers, advanced credentials, and skills attainment. The vision of the NJAN is to develop sector and occupation apprenticeship pipelines by aligning state and federal pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. Through apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship, NJ residents have the opportunity to participate in an ecosystem that provides multiple years of economic support and occupational skills training, leading to sustainable wages and upward mobility.

One of the core functions of the Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning has been to develop and manage grant programs, educate New Jerseyans on the benefits of the Registered Apprenticeship model, and promote policies that improve economic outcomes for individuals through educational attainment, skills training, increased wages, and career pathways. Additionally, the mission of the Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning includes initiatives that will directly benefit employers and encourage greater diversity and inclusion in the state’s workforce.

Registration of an apprenticeship program provides businesses with the following benefits:

Reduced Turnover – A proven strategy to reduce turnover and increase retention, both of which can saddle businesses with high costs related to recruitment and workforce development.

Increased Worker Productivity – Apprenticeship programs have a well-established track record of providing skills training that leads to a more productive workforce; this reality directly benefits an employers' bottom line.

Pipeline of Skilled Workers/Succession Planning – For businesses who are unable to find talent in the market, and particularly in periods where there is low unemployment, apprenticeship programs can be an effective tool to a pipeline of talent and assist with succession planning.

Quality Standards – Registration means the program has met national and independent standards for quality and rigor. Registration tells prospective employees, customers and suppliers that the business invests in its workforce and believes employees are its most important asset.

Federal and State Resources – Businesses and apprentices can access funding and other resources from many federal and state programs (PACE, YTTW, NJBUILD, and NJPLACE in NJ) to help support their Apprenticeship programs, including funding, technical support, and assistance.

The main goal of this Notice of Grant Opportunity is to promote equality of opportunity, upward mobility, and economic fairness for New Jersey residents. Due to the rise of globalization, international trade, advances in information technology, mechanical automation of production processes, and reductions in union membership over the past few decades, American workers have found themselves displaced by new technologies and in competition with overseas labor markets. Advances in technology have increased the use of mechanization in the production process and in professional spaces that are not often attributed to skill-biased technical change. These technological advances have increased demand for more technically advanced, high-skilled positions that require occupational training at the secondary, post-secondary, and adult education levels.

Upskilling and retooling have helped mitigate these labor market conditions. Apprenticeship programs are a tried-and-true method to increase lifetime earnings and provide a pathway to a sustainable career. According to the United States Department of Labor, “90 percent of apprentices who complete an apprenticeship retain employment, with an annual salary of \$80,000.”¹

Grant funds will be awarded to successful applicants responding to this competitive Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO). The purpose of the GAINS program is to promote the expansion and development of United States Department of Labor (USDOL) approved Registered Apprenticeship programs that drive economic development through skills and educational attainment and create pathways to better-paying careers and advanced credentials.

While this NGO describes fourteen (14) sectoral/occupational areas of focus, all occupations that are recognized by US DOL as “apprenticeable” are encouraged to apply.

¹ <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/employers/explore-apprenticeship>

Apprenticeship is an employment opportunity for an individual to start a new career through a training program that has both an on-the-job (paid employment) training component and an educational schooling component (related technical instruction), where individuals obtain workplace relevant knowledge and skills to be successful as they start their new career.

Registered apprenticeships are high-quality, work-based earn-and-learn models that meet national standards for **registration with the USDOL**, resulting in a nationally recognized credential. More information on Registered Apprenticeship can be found [here](#).

C. Mission, Goals and Objectives

Mission

The GAINS program will provide New Jersey businesses/organizations or current registered apprenticeship sponsor in targeted sectors with support for new Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program development, or existing RA programs who seek to expand into new USDOL approved occupations. The GAINS program will encourage participation by providing a 50% wage reimbursement for up to 12 months of newly hired apprentices' employment, offset costs incurred for training the new apprentice, and to incentivize employers for hiring registered apprentices from pre-apprenticeship programs. Examples of training costs include: related classroom instructor costs, materials and supplies, supervision by a journey worker, etc.

Goals

This competitive NGO is being made available to accomplish any of the following primary goals:

- Establish new and expand on existing apprenticeship programs in NJ that are registered with the United States Department of Labor (USDOL), and are within occupations that are currently listed on USDOL's approved occupation list which can be found [here](#);
- Establish apprenticeship programs in high growth occupations, sectors, or industries in New Jersey (NJ) as indicated in the subsequent section.

Objectives

The NJDOL has established the following objectives for the GAINS program:

Establish and expand Registered Apprenticeship programs in the following sectors:

Advanced Manufacturing	Bio Pharma/Life Sciences
Energy, Utilities and Infrastructure	Retail, Hospitality and Tourism
Financial Services/Insurance	Transportation, Logistics and Distribution
Information Technology/Cyber Security	Green Jobs/Renewable Energy
Healthcare	Other Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) related sectors/occupations
Construction & Building Trades – including lead abatement occupations	Public Service
Educational Services	Early Childhood Education

Applicants who do not meet the targeted population or industry cluster criteria are not precluded from applying for grant funding under this NGO.

Long Term Objectives:

1. Support workforce development training initiatives to improve labor market deficiencies.
2. Increase the number of Registered Apprenticeship programs in NJ.
3. Increase the number of New Jersey state residents that are Registered Apprentices in NJ.
4. Provide training that leads to certifications, licenses and/or college credits.
5. Move workers from low skill entry-level positions or from industries directly affected by international trade or skill-biased technical change to full occupational proficiency.
6. Provide greater employment opportunities for members of disadvantaged classes, unemployed/dislocated workers, students.
7. Assist small businesses with developing quality training programs.
8. Develop a highly-skilled workforce that possesses the skills and qualifications demanded by businesses in NJ.
9. Increase the proficiency of NJ's labor supply with the goal of increasing wages in the state and making the state labor market an attractive option for out of state businesses to locate.
10. Increase the number of professional credentials for residents in NJ.
11. Increased employment opportunities for residents in existing or new apprenticeable industries.
12. Recognition of Registered Apprenticeship as a key component of New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System.

D. Availability and Awarding of Funding

Funding for this program is expected to be up to \$6 million for FY2026 Round 2 and is contingent upon the availability of funds. Funding available for this initiative will come from Workforce Development Partnership Fund. NJDOL reserves the right to utilize other state funds, including Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), or federal funds, such as the federal Apprenticeship State Expansion grant funding, if applicable. The anticipated length of the contract period is 18 months unless otherwise extended or reduced at the discretion of the NJDOL. The contract period is expected to be June 1, 2026 to November 30, 2027. NJDOL seeks to fund multiple programs throughout the program year. Competitive proposals will have a maximum cost per head of \$12,000 (divide total number served by the requested grant amount). Program budgets submitted as part of the proposal are not final until contract execution. NJDOL reserves the right to negotiate the costs of all training programs upon award selection. The payment structure for all contracts will be cost reimbursement. All participants as well as employer partners must be New Jersey residents or have a New Jersey presence.

Note about Participant Eligibility: In order to meet the objectives of this grant and ensure compliance with federal immigration laws, all participants must be New Jersey residents and have authorization for employment in the United States. Awardees are responsible for verifying

employment authorization, gathering proof, and having on file such proof for each participant prior to acceptance into the grant program.

The purpose of this grant is to provide initial funding for programs that will not rely on state funding in perpetuity. Successful applicants may be eligible for subsequent funding based on the performance outcomes and measures following the grant award. Each applicant will be required to provide a program sustainability plan that describes the strategy to maintain solvency after state funds are no longer available, irrespective of funding cut-off year.

To be eligible for funding, the starting hourly wage rate for apprentices shall not be below \$18.00 an hour for each apprentice at the date of hire. *In rare occasions, where industry wage rates are below the \$18.00 an hour threshold, applicants can submit justifications in the proposal to explain why an exception for a lower wage rate is needed to meet industry demand.* The Department will only make exceptions to these requests where exigent economic and/or public health considerations outweigh the need to meet the \$18.00 an hour wage requirement of this notice of grant opportunity. All participants as well as employer partners must be New Jersey residents or have a New Jersey presence.

All submissions must address and define the implementation of each of the three (3) core elements – Program Design, Related Technical Instruction (classroom learning), and Program Budget. Determinations for funding are contingent upon authorization and fund availability. Final award amounts will be determined by NJDOL.

NJDOL strongly encourages any organization applying for direct funding to **not** participate as a partner in another application. If an organization chooses to participate as a partner, NJDOL strongly encourages that agency not to participate in more than one application as such, unless a justification is provided indicating that the type of training, and individuals in that training are not overlapping with existing contracts issued by the New Jersey Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning.

Eligible Funding Components

USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Program Development/Expansion Incentives

For new and expanding USDOL Registered Apprenticeship program applicants:

On-The-Job Training Wage Support

GAINS funding can be used to reimburse employers up to 50% of new apprentice's hourly wage rate, which shall not be below \$18.00 per hour at the date of hire for the apprentice, not to exceed a maximum of 40 hours weekly, and for a duration no longer than 52 work weeks. This wage incentive shall only be used for apprentices that are registered after the beginning of the period of performance of the contract. This amount may not exceed \$12,000 per individual apprentice. Sponsors are free to distribute the incentive among as many individual apprentices as needed (e.g. \$12,000 for 10 apprentices, \$6,000 for 20, \$3,000 for 40 etc.) All participants and employers must reside in New Jersey to be eligible for GAINS funding.

Related Technical Instruction Support

All funds budgeted to support the classroom portion of the Registered Apprenticeship program (Related Technical Instruction or RTI) shall be used only once apprentice(s) have been successfully registered with USDOL Office of Apprenticeship. These funds can be used to offset costs related to the RTI portion of the program and support the attainment of advanced industry recognized credentials.

“Front-loaded” RTI is defined as training that occurs prior to an apprentice beginning employment, often as a prerequisite to enter a job site. Examples of front-loaded RTI may include, *but are not limited to*, certifications or licensing courses. For purposes of the GAINS grant, On-the-Job Training and Related Technical Instruction should occur simultaneously, therefore **front-loaded RTI is not permissible**. All applicants are strongly encouraged to develop a proposal that takes into account this requirement – no exceptions will be granted otherwise. If the occupational area of training does contain a front-loaded RTI requirement, applicants are encouraged to partner with a pre-apprenticeship program such as those awarded through NJDOL’s PACE, and YTTW grants, to source candidates who have completed the required training.

Program Management Costs

Applicants are encouraged to include any/all costs anticipated in connection with the development and administration of their apprenticeship program.

For new USDOL Registered Apprenticeship program development applicants:

The applicant will be required to provide supporting documentation, including a program budget, for all initial and anticipated costs associated with the development of a new Registered Apprenticeship program and related technical instruction. The sponsor/employer would be limited to a maximum amount of reimbursement based on the funding available. Administrative costs, consistent with [20 CFR 683.215](https://www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-occupations), will only be reimbursable up to a maximum of 10% of final award amount.

For sponsors developing new programs, the first class of apprentices must be registered with USDOL within 6-months after the grant award announcement.

Funding from the GAINS program is only available for applicants who are developing or expanding upon existing programs that are registered with United States Department of Labor and/or will be within the list of approved apprenticeable occupations. These occupations can be found here: <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-occupations>.

Supportive Services (highly encouraged)

Supportive services reduce barriers to employment for participants and increase their success and retention within Registered Apprenticeship programs.

GAINS funding can be used to access appropriate supportive services during the Registered Apprenticeship program. NJDOL strongly encourages applicants to also use other funding

sources for supportive services as well. Applicants should identify and justify any supportive services that the participant population needs. These services may include *but are not limited to* the following:

- a. Childcare
- b. Transportation
- c. Obtaining driver's license
- d. Expungement programs
- e. Communicating criminal background to employers
- f. Housing services
- g. Counseling or Mentoring
- h. Financial literacy
- i. Tutoring and academic remediation
- j. Obtaining high school equivalency diploma or GED.

Applicants are encouraged to provide a detailed description of all supportive services that will be offered through the GAINS grant if funding should be awarded.

Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) may be able to fund some of these supportive services to individuals who meet certain eligibility requirements. Applicants are encouraged to coordinate with local WDBs to co-enroll eligible individuals in Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) services and leverage those funds. Applicants are also encouraged to ensure all GAINS program participants are registered for One-Stop Career Center services by registering at <https://jobsOURCE.NJ.GOV/JZ/Views/JobZone/Guest.JSF>.

E. Eligible Entities/Applicants

To implement the GAINS Program, NJDOL is seeking proposals from eligible entities with demonstrable capacity, experience, and commitment to providing evidence-based career pathways. All respondents will be required to demonstrate that they have the fiscal and administrative capacity to manage a program at whatever scale they propose.

In soliciting proposals, NJDOL shall not discriminate against any person or organization submitting a proposal pursuant to this NGO because of ethnicity, color, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, national origin, or other basis prohibited by law.

This competitive grant opportunity is open to the following entities who are developing new, or building upon existing Registered Apprenticeship programs:

- Any employer based in New Jersey or with a New Jersey presence;
- Workforce Intermediary Sponsors (refer to Section G.)
- Employer / Trade Associations;
- Any labor organization which represents workers in the occupation for which the apprentices will be trained;
- Labor/Management Partnership (public or private);

- New Jersey Local Education Agency (LEA);
- Public vocational schools within New Jersey;
- Two- and four-year institutions of higher education;
- Public or private non-profit organizations;
- Business or trade organizations representing a particular trade, group of trades, contractors or employers;
- Community-based organizations;
- New Jersey local Workforce Development Boards;
- Economic development organizations;
- State, Local, County governments within New Jersey;
- Faith-based organizations; and
- Any other private educational or training entity that is on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

*****Please Note:** This grant opportunity requires that the applicant be the sponsor of the Registered Apprenticeship program. The Registered Apprenticeship sponsor is the entity responsible for designing, executing, overseeing, and registering the program with the United States Department of Labor.

F. Evaluation Criteria

All applicants, regardless of whether they received grant funds from NJDOL in the past², are considered new applicants for this funding cycle and will be evaluated on the basis of quality, comprehensiveness, completeness, accuracy and appropriateness of response to the NGO.

Submissions exceeding twenty-five (25) pages will be negatively penalized. Any pages exceeding twenty-five (25) will not be considered in the application review process. Additionally, applications that do not adhere to the required sections of this NGO will be viewed as incomplete and not be reviewed.

An independent review committee consisting of fair and impartial committee members will rate proposals based on a scoring rubric. The independent review committee reserves the right to request additional information and schedule interviews or site visits as appropriate. The evaluation team will initially evaluate submissions to determine compliance with the NGO requirements. Any submission failing to meet the compliance criteria will be deemed unresponsive and may be excluded from further consideration. Independent reviewer(s) may not be familiar with your organization's historical performance and will only evaluate the proposal based on information presented. Responses to the proposal narrative prompts will be evaluated by external reviewers using the following scoring guidance found below. The areas of evaluation, specific elements

² Current providers will not be allowed to integrate new programming funded through this NGO with existing funded programs.

comprising these areas with definitions, and scoring points are highlighted in the Evaluation Criteria chart. The maximum score to be received is 100.

Prior grantees funded through the Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning, will be subject to a performance evaluation that could result in an increase or decrease of overall score for a maximum of 15 points. All evaluations will be based on the performance on the previous three fiscal years of data.

Evaluation Criteria		
Category		Total Points
Program Narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Executive Summary</i> <i>Mission, Goals, and Objectives</i> <i>Targeted Sectors/Occupations</i> <i>Number of Apprentices Served</i> <i>Targeted Population Inclusion</i> <i>Statement of Need</i> <i>Organizational Commitment and Capacity</i> <i>Past Performance (where applicable)</i> 	50
Implementation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Comprehensive Program Plan</i> <i>Summary of Expected Outcomes</i> <i>Outcome Timeline</i> 	20
Sustainability Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Narrative describing budget strategy and options if grant funding is not available upon completion of the 18-month contract</i> 	10
Budget Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Cost per apprentice trained (total budget divided by apprentices served)</i> <i>Budget is reasonable</i> <i>Budget is within the cost guidelines of the NGO</i> <i>Innovative usage of 'Other Services' funding</i> <i>Budget summary aligns with Justifications</i> <i>Budget summary includes:</i> <i>Schedule A, Parts 1&2: Personnel Costs</i> <i>Schedule B: Non-Personnel Costs</i> <i>Schedule C: Related Technical Instruction Costs</i> <i>Schedule D: On-the-Job Training Wage Costs</i> <i>No calculation errors</i> 	20
TOTAL POINTS		100

* If any of these documents are not submitted, your proposal will be incomplete and therefore will not be considered.

During the contract period, NJDOL will evaluate the grantee's program to ensure that the grantee is satisfying the outlined mission, goals, objectives, and deliverables. The evaluation may include, but is not limited to, review and analysis of reports, on-site monitoring visits and attendance at meetings.

Explanation of Proposal Components

Program Narrative (no more than 20 pages)

- **Executive Summary:** An executive summary must include the details of the proposal being submitted in the order identified in the Evaluation Criteria table above. The narrative should describe the process that the applicant will have in place to either develop a new apprenticeship program or expand on an existing Registered Apprenticeship.

Greatest weight will be given to applicants with programs that develop or expand Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for the greatest number of individuals, demonstrate high quality related technical instruction and on the job training strategies, and provide adequate compensation for enrollees. **Additionally, programs that seek to train new hires will be given preference over incumbent worker apprenticeship programs.**

- ✓ Describe your business/organization.
- ✓ Indicate if your business/organization has received funding from NJDOL over the past three fiscal years. If yes, please provide the name of the program, amount of funding and successful outcomes.
- ✓ State the new/existing USDOL approved occupation(s) you are requesting to establish, the industry sector, and the anticipated number of apprentices you plan to hire in the new occupation(s) over the next 18 months.
- ✓ Explain how the addition of the Registered Apprenticeship occupation(s) will benefit your company/organization.
- ✓ Describe how the addition of the Registered Apprenticeship occupation will benefit the apprentice.
- ✓ Describe the career path for individuals entering the new occupation(s).
- ✓ List the certifications, licenses and/or college credits the apprentice will receive in the new occupations(s).

- **Mission, Goals, and Objectives:** The applicant must demonstrate how the proposal for developing a new apprenticeship program, or the expansion of an existing program, is consistent with the mission, goals, and objectives outlined in this NGO.
- **Connection to Local One-Stop System Encouraged but Not Required:** Applicants should, where possible, coordinate their programs with the local Workforce Development Board (WDB) and their corresponding One-Stop Career Center. A list of One-Stop Career Centers and their contact information can be found [here](#). Applicants are encouraged to ensure all program participants create an online account with NJDOL at <https://jobsOURCE.nj.gov/jz/views/jobzone/guest.jsf>. Unemployed applicants must receive a

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) eligibility determination at a One-Stop Career Center. Organizations awarded will be responsible for ensuring all participants register through JobSource.

Successful applicants will be able to outline a training curriculum that addresses these requirements, as well as describe what evidence of learning is expected from their training, how individual learning needs will be addressed, and when and how training will be provided.

- **Targeted Population:** Greater weight will be given to applicants who demonstrate a viable strategy to recruit apprentices in one or more of the following categories:
 - DVRS qualified candidates (*Organizations interested in additional information pertaining to DVRS services can submit an email to dvradmin@dol.nj.gov and a Business Outreach Team representative will respond*);
 - Dislocated workers,
 - Women;
 - Member of a minority group;
 - Youth;
 - Out-of-school youth;
 - Youth in the foster system;
 - Youth aging-out of the foster system;
 - Participant of a state funded pre-apprenticeship program or other state funded workforce development program;
 - County vocational school participants;
 - K-12 public school students;
 - Post-secondary students;
 - Ex-offenders;
 - Veterans;
 - Persons with disabilities;
 - Individuals currently unemployed;
 - Long term unemployed;
 - Displaced homemaker;
 - Homeless individual;
 - Single parent;
 - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) eligible individuals

- Other under-represented populations³.

All applicants will be required to provide numeric projections of anticipated target population groups served, as indicated herein. Applicants who demonstrate serving one or more of the categories above will be given preference during the panel review.

- **Statement of Need:** Demonstrate hiring need of each sponsoring organization. A need is defined as the difference between the current status and the outcomes that the applicant would like to achieve. Documentation should include a list of occupations and job descriptions for each intended hire and indicate if the occupation(s) are currently included on USDOL approved occupations list.
- **Organizational Commitment and Capacity:** Applicants should describe the organizational support that exists for implementing the program. The applicant should also describe, where applicable, their experience in conducting placement services as well as the outcomes achieved. Applicants should focus on how previous experience in working with this population will be applied to ensure successful program implementation.
- **Past Performance:** Applicants who received prior state funding, or operated a similar program, must submit description of their performance, including outcome data for the most recent year documenting the program's effectiveness and success in meeting the goals and objectives of the previous state grant that was received. This extends to organizations other than the applying entity that may have received grant funding in the past from NJDOL. In cases where the goals and objectives of the grant were not met, the applicant must submit a narrative describing why those goals were not met and address any future corrective action that would need to be taken in order to ensure future success of a new grant. Applicants who had prior unsatisfactory performance may not be funded with FY2026 funding.

Implementation Plan (no more than 5 pages)

The implementation plan must include the following components:

- **Comprehensive Program Plan** – Applicants must include a comprehensive program plan detailing how the applicant will meet stated objectives of the program. Greatest weight will be given to details regarding how the applicant will partner with related technical instruction (RTI) providers and administer RTI, structure their on-the-job training program, provide a progressive compensation structure for apprentices, length of apprenticeship program, and successfully receive US DOL Registered Apprenticeship Program status. **A breakdown of the customer flow (timeline of expected outcome benchmarks for each**

³ In the context of this definition, the term under-represented is intentionally broad. Generally, the term “under-represented” means a population that does not represent the majority, or a proportional share as indicated by appropriate data, of current participants in Registered Apprenticeship. For example, veterans may be an under-represented population in Registered Apprenticeship. Broadly, the intent of this term is to encourage pre-apprenticeship programs to be inclusive of all populations.

participant) for the program along with an outline of case management services must be included.

- **Summary of Expected Outcomes** – Include a narrative which describes your Expected Outcomes during the 18-month contract period of your grant proposal. Include the occupation(s), expected timeline for approval by USDOL, the number of expected apprentice hires, anticipated salary information, and any business/organizational successes that you expected as a result of this new occupation(s) being established. Credit will be given for plans that provide specific and measurable outcomes that align with NGO and sponsor goals and objectives (e.g. 90% of participants will be in the targeted population or 60% of participants will receive ‘X’ number of college credits in the apprenticeship).

Programs with larger enrollment of individuals into Registered Apprenticeship programs, or applications from small businesses with fewer than 50 employees, will be viewed favorably in the proposal evaluation process. Programs looking to serve DVRS qualified participants will also be viewed favorably in the proposal evaluation process.

- **Outcome Timeline** – The outcome timeline should describe anticipated program development benchmarks, milestones, and provide a target date for the completion of a new program, as well as a hire date for new apprentices.

Program Sustainability Plan (no more than 5 pages)

Applicants will be required to provide a Registered Apprenticeship Program Sustainability Plan. This plan should outline the participant’s strategy for sustainability if/when state grant funding is no longer available. Based on the current structure of the GAINS program, grantee’s may be eligible for subsequent funding based on performance. It is important for the applicant to demonstrate alternative funding sources and/or strategies to continue funded activities beyond the contract period of performance, and in the event that state funds are no longer available.

Budget Summary

Applicants are required to submit an eighteen-month budget within Schedules A, B, C, and D in the IGX system. Program implementation should be within the eighteen-month contract period and should reflect reasonable costs for operating the proposed program. Budget items include but are not limited to personnel costs, salary costs for mentor/journeyperson overseeing the apprentice, non-personnel costs, related technical instruction (RTI) costs, on-the-job wage reimbursement, curriculum development costs, and consultant fees. Amounts reported on the budget schedules must be fully supported by information provided in the description. If any cost is unusual, provide documentation or an explanation to support your estimate. NJDOL refrains from funding items such as laptops, tablets, and machinery as these items typically do not follow the participants of the program at the conclusion of training. *In rare occasions, exceptions to this policy can be taken under consideration if a strong justification for the cost is provided.* Administrative costs, as defined in 20 CFR 683.215, are costs not directly associated with

service delivery and shall not exceed 10% of total award. Successful applicants may be required to submit more detailed budget information at the time of contract negotiations.

NJDOL has limited the cost categories to the following areas:

Personnel Costs

This budget category may include salaries for staff working on the GAINS program. Costs can include salaries and fringe benefits for full-time staff. All information on Schedule A is required to be completed. Administrative costs for staff in-directly associated with the grant can also be requested in this budget schedule providing the requested amount, in total with any other administrative line items, does not exceed 10% of the total award. Verification of the overall administrative costs can be found on the cost summary.

Non-Personnel Costs

This budget category may include non-personnel costs on Schedule B (costs other than Personnel Costs, Related Technical Instruction Costs, and On-the-Job Training Wage Costs). Examples of allowable costs include marketing materials, promotional items, conference registration, mileage, and general office supplies. Any request to use GAINS grant funds to attend a conference will require prior approval by NJDOL. Mileage for grant-related travel will be reimbursed at the New Jersey state-approved rate of \$.47 per mile. Mileage and toll expenses can only be provided for travel within New Jersey. The maximum amount for promotional items such as key chains, pens and pencils is \$1,000. Administrative costs indirectly associated with the grant can also be requested in this budget schedule providing the requested amount, in total with any other administrative line items, does not exceed 10% of the total award. Verification of the overall administrative costs can be found on the cost summary.

Related Technical Instruction

This budget category may include curriculum development, cost of the related technical instruction, materials associated with the training, and consultant fees. Applicants proposing a budget comprised of costs focused on a direct benefit to apprentices will be viewed favorable during panel review evaluation.

On-the-Job Training Wages

This budget category may include reimbursement for on-the-job training wages for apprentices in the Registered Apprenticeship Program. Specific requirements for utilizing this incentive can be found on page 7 of this NGO. Applicants proposing a budget comprised of costs focused on a direct benefit to apprentices will be viewed favorable during panel review evaluation.

Cost per apprentice (total budget request divided by number of apprentices served) will be a significant factor for the panel when determining the reasonableness of the applicant's budget. The maximum allowable cost per head will be \$12,000 per apprentice.

Additionally, programs that utilize in-kind, philanthropic, cash, federal funding (e.g. Individual Training Accounts, WIOA Title 1 etc.), and/or other leveraged funds to support the apprenticeship program will be viewed positively during panel review.

Applicants should also demonstrate any/all financial commitments separate from any award received from the GAINS program. Applicants who adequately address their cost structure and indicate the level of non-state funded investments, including other sources of funding, will be viewed positively during the panel review.

Grant funds provided through this NGO may not be expended for the following:

- Indirect costs (e.g. travel, meals, lodging);
- Pension and/or health benefits for part-time staff;
- Mileage and toll expenses for out-of-state travel;
- Overnight accommodations;
- Capital construction or renovation;
- Costs associated with preparing the grant application; and
- Costs of memberships in associations or organizations.

Key components of the budget summary are listed below:

- Budget is reasonable
- Budget is within the cost guidelines of the NGO
- Innovative usage of ‘Other Services’ funding
- Budget Summary aligns with Justifications
- Budget summary includes:
 - Schedule A, Parts 1&2: Personnel Costs
 - Schedule B: Non-Personnel Costs
 - Schedule C: Related Technical Instruction Costs
 - Schedule D: On-the-Job Training Wage Costs
- No calculation errors

Budget proposals that demonstrate reasonable RTI and OJT costs, while providing quality training at a low-cost ratio per individual apprentice will be viewed favorably during application review.

All of the aforementioned proposal components are to be uploaded/added to the electronic grant application in IGX. See section I for more information.

G. Qualifications of Applicants

Employers and Organizations

All entities outlined in Section D applying for the development of new, or expansion of existing USDOL certified Registered Apprentice programs. The applicant must develop a related technical instruction and on the job training model in a written plan that also embodies the terms and conditions for the employment and training and supervision of apprentices according to apprenticeship regulations.

Workforce Intermediaries as Apprenticeship Sponsors

A workforce intermediary is an organization that can help broker local, regional, and national workforce solutions by, among other things, helping job seekers find jobs and employers find workers; convening employers and community partners to determine workforce trends; and assisting in blending customized services and seed funding to grow the demand for new apprenticeship programs. Examples of workforce intermediaries include industry associations, Institutions of Higher Education, CBOs, and community service organizations. Industry Workforce Intermediaries usually specialize in a specific sector, but some may possess expertise that cuts across more than one market.⁴ All prospective workforce intermediary applicants must comply with US DOL “[Guidance on Organizations that can serve as Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors.](#)”

The applicant must develop a related technical instruction and on the job training model in a written plan that also embodies the terms and conditions for the employment and training and supervision of apprentices according to apprenticeship regulations.

Applications may also be submitted by a lead agency on behalf of a workforce intermediary. The lead agency serves as the applicant agency of record, the legally recognized fiscal agent for the grant project and the single point of contact for NJDOL. The lead agency is responsible for overseeing the implementation of all aspects of the grant, including, but not limited to: Program Design, Related Training Instruction, and Budgeting & fiscal management. It is essential that the applicant carefully construct result-oriented goals and objectives that support the program’s stated goals and objectives, together with the program description and budget, providing a comprehensive plan for the successful accomplishment of the program.

In addition, as a precondition to any award of grant funds under this NGO, the applicant must be in full compliance with all laws enforced by NJDOL. Specifically, the applicant must not have *any* outstanding unpaid liabilities to NJDOL, including but not limited to, for unpaid contributions to the unemployment compensation fund or the State disability benefits fund or for any other worker wage tax collection; to any individual on whose behalf the Department has issued a final order for the payment of wages or benefits; or for any penalties, fees or interest due to the Department pursuant to a final order issued under any of the statutes or rules that NJDOL enforces. Further, the applicant must not be on a debarment list, or any other list that prohibits them from public contracting, administered by NJDOL and the applicant must not be serving a suspension or revocation of their license, certificate, or registration issued by the NJDOL. Please be aware that under N.J.S.A. 34:15-34D and N.J.A.C. 12:9-1.3., NJDOL will be crosschecking applicants against NJDOL records for any of these issues as part of the evaluation process. If applicants are aware of any outstanding liabilities they may owe NJDOL, or of any of the above issues that could impact ability to do business with NJDOL, they are advised to reach out to NJDOL or relevant Division thereof to resolve such issues promptly prior to submitting their application to avoid delay.

All applications will be evaluated on the basis of quality, comprehensiveness, completeness, accuracy, and appropriateness of response to the NGO.

⁴ <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/training-and-employment-guidance-letter-no-26-16>

H. Application Process

Successful proposals must be responsive to the NGO and meet all technical capacity and fiscal viability requirements as described. Applications are submitted and awards are managed through NJDOL's online grant system, IGX. Applications are submitted online, via IGX at <https://njdol.intelligrants.com/IGXLogin>.

Applicants must determine who will serve as the Authorized Official (AO) for this grant application. The AO must:

- be authorized to enter into a contractual agreement on behalf of the company.
- read and understand the FY2026 Round 2 Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO).
- register (create an account) in IGX and submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to apply for a FY2026 Round 2 GAINS grant.

Please Note: A new Letter of Intent is required for all new grant applications.

The AO may delegate completion of the application to others by giving access in IGX but should be aware that responsibility for the contract remains with the AO for the life of the grant.

Applicants interested in applying for the GAINS grant must submit a LOI to express interest in the grant opportunity. This notification allows NJDOL to have sufficient resources in place to carefully review each proposal and to obtain access to the application in IGX.

Applicants must complete, sign and submit a letter of intent as soon as the applicant is interested in applying for the grant opportunity. A sample LOI can be found in Attachment I. The completed and signed LOI must be emailed as an attachment to ApprenticeshipUnit@dol.nj.gov and received no later than noon on Friday, April 10, 2026.

Before submitting the LOI to NJDOL, the AO must register in IGX as a new user. Incorrect or missing information or failure to register in IGX will delay the processing of the LOI, which will delay access to the online application. Once the Authorized Official is registered and approved in IGX, applicants can then proceed to enter the required information and documentation in the IGX system. If the organization is already registered in IGX, please include that information on your LOI.

Technical Assistance Workshop

NJDOL will provide technical assistance sessions via tele-conference to potential applicants. General guidance on completing the required documents, budget forms and an overview of IGX will be provided. It is important that both the Program Director and Fiscal Officer attend this session. It is strongly suggested that applicants attend the technical assistance workshops.

The technical assistance workshops will be held:

Thursday, February 19, 2026 at 1pm or Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 1pm

The technical assistance workshop will be conducted electronically through virtual meeting sessions. Pre-registration is required at least three business days prior to the date of the technical assistance workshop. The following links will bring you to the workshop registration to participate:

Thursday, February 19, 2026 at 1pm: [2/19- FY26 GAINS R2 Technical Assistance Workshop](#)
Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 1pm: [3/25- FY26 GAINS R2 Technical Assistance Workshop](#)

Virtual meeting log-in information will be provided only to those who have registered through the above links.

Proposal Deadline

Applicants interested in applying for the FY2026 Round 2 GAINS grant must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to express interest in the grant opportunity. NJDOL will provide IGX access for the completion of the application upon receipt of the LOI. The LOI should be submitted as soon as an organization decides to apply for the grant opportunity. The LOI must be submitted no later than noon Friday, April 10, 2026.

Final award decisions will be contingent upon the availability of funds and awards will be communicated approximately forty-five (45) days following the panel review date.

The FY2026 Round 2 schedule for submission of complete applications and the panel review dates are as follows:

<u>FY2026 Round #</u>	<u>Letter of Intent (LOI) Deadline: LOIs must be received no later:</u>	<u>Application Deadline: Applications must be submitted in IGX no later than:</u>	<u>Expected Panel Review Begins:</u>
2	12 noon, April 10, 2026	12 noon, April 17, 2026	Week of May 4, 2026

We anticipate having a panel review approximately the week of May 4, 2026. To avoid any technical issues, applicants are encouraged to submit applications early. Applications for FY2026 Round 2 funds will not be accepted after **12 noon on April 17, 2026**.

I. Application Requirements

Applicants are required to submit their application through the IGX system and will consist of the following components.

<u>Required</u>	<u>Form</u>
✓	Standard Assurances and Certifications and General Provisions
✓	Applicant Information
✓	Counties to Serve
✓	Previous Funding

	Required Documents (Program Narrative, Implementation Plan, Program Sustainability Plan, and Tax Clearance Certificate)
	Employer/Sponsor information
	NJ GAINS Deliverables
	Budget Details (Schedules A, B, C and D)
	Budget Cost Summary
	Miscellaneous Attachments

The following forms and descriptions must be included in your application in IGX:

♦ **Applicant Information**

Complete all the required information about your organization.

♦ **Counties to Serve**

Indicate the counties your project will include or if it statewide.

♦ **Previous Funding**

Indicate if the applying organization or any other organization you are affiliated with has received funding from the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development within the last three years.

♦ **Required Documents**

The following required documents, including all required components as outlined within this NGO, must be uploaded:

- Program Narrative (maximum 20 pages)
- Implementation Plan (maximum 5 pages)
- Program Sustainability Plan (maximum 5 pages)
- Tax Clearance Certificate

Public Law 2007, c. 101 requires that as a precondition to the award of business assistance or incentive or as a component of the application for business assistance or incentive, a person or business seeking a grant, loan, loan guarantee, or other monetary or financial benefit from a department or agency of state government shall obtain a [Tax Clearance Certificate](#) from the director of the New Jersey Division of Taxation prior to the issuance of the grant, incentive or assistance. Please see Attachment II for additional information. To avoid any delay in submitting your application, applicants are encouraged to obtain the tax clearance certificate once an organization makes the decision to apply.

♦ **Employer/Sponsor Information**

Include information for each partnering employer in your proposed application. The required information includes: name of employer/sponsor, FEIN number, address, point of contact, contact phone number, and contact email address. Additional employers can be added during the contract period for applicants who are funded through this program.

All employers will be vetted for outstanding tax liabilities with NJDOL Employer Accounts. Employers who have tax liabilities will not be able to participate as a partner in the grant.

◆ **NJ GAINS Deliverables**

Outline the projected outcomes for the grant by providing details on the targeted populations to be served, total number of participants to be served under GAINS, the specific USDOL approved occupation(s) of training, and the number of participants to be trained in each occupation.

◆ **Budget Detail and Budget Cost Summary**

Provide a detailed budget by entering applicable, required information on Schedules A (Personnel Costs), Schedule B (Non-Personnel Costs), and Schedule C (Related Technical Instruction Costs), and D (On-the-Job Wage Reimbursement). All costs must include a breakdown of the cost along with a justification. The cost summary page will summarize all the details entered on the budget schedules. **Be sure to review the budget cost summary page for accuracy before submitting your application in IGX.**

This grant opportunity prohibits the use of grant funds for activities that:

- “Induce, encourage or assist any displacement of currently employed workers by trainees, including partial displacement by means such as reduced hours of currently employed workers; any replacement of laid off workers by trainees; or any relocation of operations resulting in a loss of employment at a previous workplace”; or
- “Replace, supplant, compete with or duplicate in any way existing approved registered apprenticeship programs”; or
- “Impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements, except that activities which would be inconsistent with the terms of a collective bargaining agreement may be undertaken with the written concurrence of the collective bargaining unit and employer who are parties to the agreement.”

Budget amendments must have the approval of NJDOL.

◆ **Miscellaneous Attachments**

The miscellaneous attachments page is optional, and not required to be completed. Utilize this section to submit any additional information or documents that will support your grant application.

J. Required Reports/Documents

Grantees will be required to complete monthly activity and expenditure reports, due by the 15th of each month. The report must list all of the activities of the program, including status on the development of the new apprenticeship occupation(s), update on the timeline of activities and information pertaining to placement of apprentices. The report should include any barriers you are

experiencing which impact the success outcomes of the development of your new registered occupation(s).

In addition, the monthly activity report and monthly expenditure report must include the following documentation:

- Name, address, date of birth, age, race, and gender of the apprentice.
- USDOL Apprentice Registration number, where applicable.
- Apprenticeable occupation of apprentice(s).
- Name, address and contact information of the sponsor.
- Type of business and NAICS code (to ensure it falls into one of the targeted industries).
- Date employee started apprenticeship.
- Status on the apprentice(s) performance in the program.
- Salary information – Pay stubs and hours worked for the period covered by the incentive.
- Program enrollment, drop-out, and completion data.
- Any milestones and/or credentials that will be attained and/or are currently being pursued, and completion dates.

Additionally, for recipients of the administrative/RTI cost reimbursement funding:

- Documentation on how the funds were expended to offset costs.
- Labor hours and pay rates for internal staff.
- Description of work conducted.
- Costs associated with curriculum development and administration.
- Salary costs for mentor/journeyperson overseeing the apprentice.
- Cost quotes from outside RTI providers or, if the applicant is providing the RTI in-house, all costs associated with administration.

A closeout report, due within 60 days from the end of the grant period, must be submitted via IGX. Final reimbursement is subject to submission and acceptance of the final report to NJDOL.

Additionally, all recipients of state and/or federal grant funds in excess of \$100,000 must have a CPA prepared annual audit report completed as required by the State of New Jersey General Provisions document which is attached to this NGO on page 20.

K. Award Process

NJDOL will review each completed application on the basis of quality, comprehensiveness, appropriateness, demonstrated need and adherence to application guidelines. Applicants are reminded that the grants will be awarded through a competitive process. NJDOL cannot fund all applications submitted; therefore, only those applications that meet the highest standards will be awarded.

The final contract amount and contract period will be stipulated in the executed contract between the approved applicant and NJDOL. Reimbursement will be given on a cost reimbursement basis for actual expenses incurred during the contract/grant period. The Division of Workforce Development will closely monitor the grants.

For information, contact:

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning
1 John Fitch Plaza
PO Box 055, 5th Floor
Trenton, NJ 08625-0055

Contact: Bill Sarboukh, Chief, Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning
Email: William.Sarboukh@dol.nj.gov

L. Date by which Applicants shall be notified

NJDOL review team will evaluate the application on the basis of quality, comprehensiveness, completeness, accuracy, and appropriateness to the guidelines and requirements of this NGO. Final decisions on award will be communicated to the applicant no later than forty-five (45) business days following panel review. NJDOL reserves the right to exceed the forty-five (45) day award notice deadline should the application be deemed as incomplete.

Applications for FY2026 Round 2 funds will not be accepted in IGX after **12 noon on April 17, 2026**.

Notice that an organization has been selected as a grant recipient does not constitute approval of the grant application as submitted. Before the actual grant award is made, NJDOL will enter into negotiations concerning items such as program components, staffing and funding levels, and administrative systems. If subsequent negotiations do not result in an agreement between the applicant and NJDOL, NJDOL reserves the right to terminate the negotiation and decline to fund the proposal.

Upon the review and approval of an application for funding, a signed contract will be sent to the grantee via IGX. This contract will provide the grantee with spending authority for the term of the contract. Grantees are not authorized to expend funds before or after the contract period as shown on the contract.

***Dates may be subject to change. Any changes will be posted on NJDOL website.**

Attachment I – Letter of Intent

(NOTE: the AO must also register in IGX as a new user)

(On your organization's letterhead)

Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning
ApprenticeshipUnit@dol.nj.gov

RE: FY2026 Growing Apprenticeship in Nontraditional Sectors (GAINS) – Round 2

Please accept this letter as notice of my intention to apply for the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Fiscal Year 2026 GAINS Round 2 grant program. I have completed registration in the IGX system, read and understand the FY2026 GAINS Round 2 Notice of Grant Opportunity, and am aware of my responsibilities as the Authorized Official.

Legal business name:

Industry/Occupational area of Training:

Federal Employee Identification # (FEIN):

Unique Entity Identifier # (UEI):

NJ business address:

County of NJ business:

Business web address:

Name of Authorized Official (Person Legally Authorized to Sign Contracts):

Title of Authorized Official:

Direct phone # and email address of Authorized Official:

Main point of contact for the GAINS application:

Direct phone # and email address of main point of contact:

Signature of Authorized Official

Date

Email this completed form as an attachment to: ApprenticeshipUnit@dol.nj.gov

Attachment II.

Tax Clearance Certificate

Public Law 2007, c. 101 requires that as a precondition to the award of business assistance or incentive or as a component of the application for business assistance or incentive, a person or business seeking a grant, loan, loan guarantee, or other monetary or financial benefit from a department or agency of state government shall obtain a [Tax Clearance Certificate](#) from the director of the New Jersey Division of Taxation prior to the issuance of the grant, incentive or assistance. Tax Clearance certificates may be requested through the State of New Jersey's [Premier Business Services \(PBS\) portal](#) online. The use of the portal replaces the need for the paper application submission to the Division of Taxation; the processing fee is also waived with the use of the portal. Each applicant will be able to print the necessary clearance certificate through their business's portal account. **It is strongly suggested to apply for the Tax Clearance certificate once an organization makes the decision to apply for funding to avoid any delay in submitted your application. Failure to acquire the necessary Tax Clearance form will result in a delay or cancellation of funding.**

Please Note: All entities regardless of the type of organization or tax exemption status, are able to request and obtain a tax clearance certificate, as this document is tied to registration with the NJ Division of Revenue. More information about this requirement and particular document can be found [here](#).

State of New Jersey W-9 Form

A completed State of New Jersey W-9 form must be on file with the New Jersey Department of Treasury. It is the applicants' responsibility to ensure this step is completed. Applicants may register with the New Jersey Department of the Treasury online at: www.njstart.gov. Failure to complete this step can delay or forfeit a grant award. *(Reimbursement checks are linked with the FEIN that is on file with the New Jersey Department of Treasury. As a result, reimbursement checks are mailed to this associated address.)*

Development Subsidy Job Goals Accountability Act

The Development Subsidy Job Goals Accountability Act: Public Law 2007, c.200 requires that all applicants awarded a grant in excess of \$25,000 complete the [Development Subsidy Job Goals Accountability form](#). This form must be completed within 30 days after the State's fiscal year for a period of five years after the grant is awarded.

The law requires that if the company receiving financial assistance for training services relocates jobs out of state or outsources employee positions within three years following the ending date of the GAINS training contract, the company must return all monies provided by the state for customized training services.