



Training Grant Program Guidelines

Colorado knows successful businesses rely on well-trained employees, and the Colorado FIRST and Existing Industry programs provide training incentives to improve employment opportunities for Coloradans and enhance Colorado's competitive position among states. Authorized by the General Assembly in 1984, the Colorado FIRST Customized Training Program assists primary industry employers with short-term, fast-track training. In 1989, the Existing Industry Program was created to maintain the competitiveness of the existing industrial base and provide job security for Colorado workers. Since the inception of Colorado's customized job training programs, more than 6,600 companies of all sizes have benefited from the programs and over 134,000 Coloradans have been trained.

The programs are administered jointly by the Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade (OED) and the Colorado Community College System (CCCS). This partnership strengthens the programs' goal to promote and encourage the expansion and well-being of existing Colorado companies and to attract new businesses to Colorado.

Colorado First

- Incentive Program - This Program is designed for companies who are relocating to Colorado or are undertaking a major expansion. Local Economic Development organizations work with OED to identify eligible companies. Grants are usually funded based on the number and quality of jobs created. Grants are administered by the community colleges.
- Competitive Grants - Companies adding a significant number of new full-time jobs to their workforce may apply for Colorado FIRST funds by creating a training plan and application with their local community college. There are several grant periods throughout the year.

Existing Industry

- Existing Industry grants are designed for Colorado companies who are implementing new technology to remain competitive and keep jobs in Colorado. The application process is the same as for competitive Colorado FIRST grants.
- Existing Industry addresses the challenges of technological advancement. When technology changes threaten a company's competitive edge, Existing Industry retraining can immediately boost productivity and allow the company to meet the challenge of a changing market. Capital investment in new equipment is enhanced by the new skills employees will receive.

General Guidelines

1. Training funds must target full-time, primary (dollar-importing) jobs that have significant career opportunities and require substantial instruction. Part-time, seasonal, retail and tourism jobs are not eligible.
2. Preference will be given training projects that are located in lagging economic regions that demonstrate a strong company commitment and teach technical, transferable skills.
3. Training is provided only for jobs that pay above minimum wage and for which health benefits are provided. Priority is given to companies that pay a minimum of \$8.20 per hour in rural areas of the state (defined as non-entitlement areas by the Department of Housing and Urban Development), and \$10.46 per hour in large urban areas along the Front Range.
4. Community colleges or area vocational school facilities and resources must be used whenever they meet the company's training requirements and standards. Training must be customized to fit the company's training needs.
5. Participating companies are expected to contribute money and resources to help train their own employees. The company's financial investment demonstrates the company's commitment to its own workforce and eliminates frivolous grant applications. **Colorado FIRST/ Existing Industry will not fund 100 percent of project training costs; participating companies must contribute at least 40 percent of direct training costs.** Grant funds may not be used to pay wages or stipends to trainees.
6. Colorado FIRST grants will not be considered for Colorado companies relocating within the state, unless it is part of an overall expansion that will create new jobs.
7. For Existing Industry grants, priority will be given to situations where training may prevent imminent layoffs or otherwise enhance worker retention.
8. Prior to any funding commitments, a review of financial information shall be required for companies seeking grants. The state and college hold such information confidential. In general, the program is not to be used as a measure to prevent the closure of businesses adversely affected by market conditions.
9. **The grant process is competitive and eligibility does not constitute an agreement to award nor a funding level commitment.** These funds are subject to annual State legislative appropriations.

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