

## **Frequently Asked Questions RWIP**

1. If we have started a project but have some items that we have not expended funding on would this be eligible?
  - Grant funds cannot supplant an existing budget. Grant and match funds can only cover expenses during the term of the agreement. Grant funds must be spent by June 15, 2025.
2. What is the difference between the first round of RWIP and this current round of funding?
  - The difference in the funding comes from the sources of funding. The previous round of funding was federal funds that carry different eligibilities. This current round of funding is state funds. This means that this funding is not eligible for expenses incurred prior to the award.
3. On page 3, it states a project " ... cannot be an extension of any current or previously funded projects or current applications." - but, in the section right before this, it also states "Enhancements to projects previously funded by RWIP and in one of the qualified categories stated above are eligible." Can you explain the difference between "extension" and "enhancements"?
  - An extension is funding requested to finish an existing project with an existing budget that was funded in the prior RWIP opportunity. An enhancement is a request for funding a project that builds capacity/infrastructure to create more impact than the initial completed project. Examples of enhancement to previously funded projects would be new or additional talent attraction activities or infrastructure that would create additional childcare slots.
4. Is a previous RWIP recipient for a Childcare Center eligible to apply again for infrastructure upgrades to help expand the center?
  - They may be eligible if they can explain how they are expanding and enhancing the previous project while adding more childcare slots. The project must be distinctly different from the previous application. Applicants will also have to ensure that the budgets are not covering the same items that they requested previously.
5. Can you explain how the Regional Councils may end up being involved in this grant program, if they will be in any way?
  - Regional Councils are eligible applicants and may pursue funding. Regional Councils that are currently serving as lead regional applicants will not need to be involved in this capacity under new RWIP guidance. Regional Councils are often knowledgeable of overarching needs, gaps, and resources in their regions and communities. They can inform organizations in their regions of these needs or provide context to partners for projects.
6. If you have a project that may fall under more than one category, is the cap increased to include both categories?

- If an entity has projects that align with multiple funding categories, applications for each category should include the activities and budget that aligns. Each application would be considered to the related funding category and may be eligible for up to the funding cap per category.
7. What if the project does not have all the match on hand at the time of the application deadline?
    - The project will need a letter of support/commitment from the entity providing matching funds that will demonstrate that the match is committed to the project.
  8. Can public funds be used as match?
    - Public dollars imply that the match funds are coming from an organization that is controlled or managed by the government or other state/federal-run entities. If using government funds as match funds, the applicant must specify the source, funding period, confirmation from the government funding award, and demonstrate that the funds can be used as match per the funding source regulations.
  9. Can RWIP match other State grant funds?
    - No.
  10. Do all match letters and match funds need to be secured at the time of application?
    - Letters of support/commitment must be submitted with the application. An application without these letters will be considered incomplete and will be automatically disqualified from receiving funding. Match funds do not need to be available at the time of application, but applicants must be able to prove the match amount, how match will be used, and where it is coming from.
  11. What if a community is planning to fundraise donations for match during the project? How should commitment from community members that don't know that they will be donating yet as we will be fundraising during the project?
    - Match must be documented at the time of the application. If fundraisers are being utilized to raise match funds, they should take place prior to the application being submitted unless the organizing entity can guarantee a certain amount that can be articulated in a letter of support and demonstrated in the budget submitted at the time of application.
  12. If a municipality is applying and has the 25% match are the letters still required?
    - Yes, a letter should be provided from the board that is overseeing the municipality.
  13. If a region does not have eligible requests totaling the regional allocation, will funds be available for other regions to apply for and utilize?
    - No.
  14. When we see a cap of funds (e.g. \$250k) on a project category, is that per applicant or per region? Also, does this max cap include the match, or it just the max for the grant amount?

- The cap is per project, per application. The grant guidance states that one project may be submitted on each application, with a maximum of two applications per applicant as seen on page 3 of the grant guidance and explained further on page 5. The match dollar amount is additional funding toward the total project costs.
15. Please define infrastructure projects and how they relate to workforce (noted on page 2 of the grant guidance).
- Infrastructure development projects are proposed plans to build, maintain, and upkeep infrastructural facilities, systems, and services directly related to the implantation of a qualifying workforce solution, as listed in the grant guidance.
16. Do you have examples of past retention projects that were successfully funded and delivered good results?
- Retention is new this round of funding and we do not have past retention projects to share.
17. Are there word or character limits for the narratives?
- Yes, each question has a character limit of 3,000.
18. Can Area Career and Technology Centers or Career Academies apply for equipment?
- No; however, the Technical Skills Training Grant may be an option.
19. Is the purchase of vehicles eligible?
- This is not eligible for state grant funds, but may be identified as match.
20. Can Operation Intern be expanded with RWIP in our region?
- No. RWIP funds cannot supplant an existing program, including those administered by Commerce or other local entities and state agencies. Operation Intern funds will be available February 1<sup>st</sup> on a first come first serve basis.
21. Are stipends eligible for local businesses for use of housing renovations for the purpose of employee housing project to attract and retain new employees?
- No, stipends are not eligible for funding in this grant. Direct payment to individuals and/or current and future operating expenses are not an allowable expense (see p. 8 of the RWIP Guidance).
    - The Workforce Housing Grant may be an option for development and improvement of affordable housing. Review the information at the link [Rural Workforce Housing Grant \(nd.gov\)](#).
22. If a project began prior to the grant period, but some of the aspects of the project have not started, would they qualify for RWIP dollars funding?

- Any items that are part of a previously approved budget are not eligible for RWIP funding. This is considered supplanting and is not allowable under RWIP grant guidance.
23. The grant guidance states that schools may be eligible for childcare facility projects, then later states that school districts aren't eligible. If a school district is looking to add a childcare facility, would it be an eligible applicant?
- After the grant guidance was released, a revision was made to allow schools to apply for childcare facility projects. This is the only type of project for which school districts may apply.
24. Can a residential group childcare facility that is purchasing a building to become a center, would this be an eligible project?
- This may be an eligible project.
25. Can grant funds be used for childcare items inside the building?
- Under the current program guidance (dated 11/2/2023), allowable childcare related expenses are for infrastructure only.
26. Are new childcare centers eligible??
- If a qualifying application is submitted, a new childcare center may be eligible.
27. When will the awards be announced?
- Awards will be announced as soon as application review and scoring is complete. The timeline for review will depend on the number of applications received.
28. What does EIN stand for on the application?
- EIN stands for Employee Identification Number or Federal Identification number for your organization.
29. Is a deadline extension a possibility?
- No. The deadline to apply is December 6, 2023.
30. How will questions and potential updates to the RFP be distributed?
- Updates for the grant, as well as to the grant guidance, will be available on the RWIP webpage.