

ANALYSIS

Higher Education Coordinating Commission Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs

Analyst: Kim To

Request: Approve the submission of a federal grant to the Department of Labor Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program, in the amount of \$5,000,000, to augment statewide training programs that prepare participants for quality jobs in the surface transportation infrastructure sector, including jobs that are critical to transitioning Oregon's surface transportation to renewable energy.

Analysis: The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) is requesting authorization to apply for a federal grant through the Department of Labor Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program. This grant opportunity is intended to develop the skilled workforce needed for projects funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) by investing in programs that train job seekers in occupations that support renewable energy and transportation infrastructure sectors.

A 15% match is required from public-private partnerships. HECC will meet the match requirement with a combination of existing general fund dollars, in-kind existing staff time, and partner in-kind and monetary contributions. HECC will not require additional staffing to administer the grant.

If awarded, HECC will work with the State's Local Workforce Development Boards, Portland General Electric (PGE) and its Clean Energy Coalition to invest in partnerships to design quality training and work-based learning opportunities to build equitable pathways to renewable energy and transportation infrastructure sectors jobs necessary to support state projects funded by IIJA.

Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends approval of the request.

Higher Education Coordinating Commission Crawford

Request: Authorization to apply for a \$5,000,000 grant from the federal Department of Labor’s Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program (Building Pathways Program) to develop and diversify the workforce critical to meeting the goals of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Recommendation: Approve the request

Discussion: The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) is seeking authorization to apply for a \$5,000,000 grant from the Building Pathways Program to scale existing training models that have shown success in developing workforce needs. The primary partners in this effort will be Oregon’s Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB). LWDBs are regional partnerships comprised of a broad range of stakeholders.

Grant funds will be used to scale-up construction and/or building training programs in the surface transportation infrastructure sector. The agency believes this the grant will provide educational pathways to well-paying jobs for working families, help address the current housing shortages with infrastructure and broadband development and encourage public private partnerships to work together through focusing on equity and sustainability.

The grant application is due July 7, 2023, with a 60-month performance period beginning October 1, 2023. This is a competitive grant with a match requirement of at least 15 percent. HECC plans to meet the match requirement with existing resources and will not be requiring additional staff. If successful, HECC will return to the Legislature to request additional expenditure limitation.



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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May 24, 2023

The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Steiner, Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means
The Honorable Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

Nature of the Request

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission's (HECC) Office of Workforce Investments (OWI) is intending to apply for \$5,000,000 through the [The Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program](#) from the Department of Labor (DOL). This grant program aims to develop and diversify the talent pipeline necessary to support the infrastructure sectors, industries, and occupations critical to meeting the goals of the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) (BIL) by investing in workforce partnerships that build equitable pathways to good infrastructure jobs.

Federal Grant Information

The Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program's purpose is to invest in public-private partnerships to develop, implement, and scale worker-centered sector strategy training programs in H-1B jobs, such as advanced manufacturing, information technology, and professional, scientific, and technical services occupations that support renewable energy, transportation, and broadband infrastructure sectors.

There are two tracks for this grant program: the development track & scaling track. HECC intends to apply for funding within the Scaling Track. The goal of the Scaling Track is to scale existing training models to the statewide or national level that have shown demonstrated success in one infrastructure-related sector. This track will invest in statewide and national partnerships that will set the stage to enable support and growth in evidence-based worker-centered sector strategies.

Both tracks require public-private partnerships to develop workforce training programs which incorporate the following core principles into their grant project design to ensure equitable access to quality jobs:

1. Strategies for ensuring diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility;
2. Career pathways that lead to middle- to high-skilled employment; and
3. Worker-centered sector strategies.

HECC's primary partners will be Oregon's nine Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs). LWDBs are regional partnerships that bring together local elected officials, employers, community-based organizations, economic development, education and training providers, labor, and others to development and implement strategies that meet local workforce needs. HECC is also exploring partnerships with the Oregon Department of Transportation, industry organizations, and others as part of this grant proposal.

Grant funds will scale-up statewide construction and/or building training programs that prepare participants for quality jobs in the surface transportation infrastructure sector, including jobs that are critical to transitioning our surface transportation to renewable energy.

- The grant application deadline is July 07, 2023, no later than 11:59 pm Eastern Time.
- The period of performance is 60 months with an anticipated start date of 10/01/2023. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities.
- For the Scaling Track, public-private partnerships are required to secure at least 15 percent of the total requested funds in qualifying match to support the grant project. HECC shall meet the match requirement with a combination of available general fund dollars, in-kind staff time, and partner in-kind and/or fiscal contributions.
- HECC expects to be able to meet this match requirement without effecting currently budgeted services or performance measures.
- The HECC will not require additional FTE for this grant. As mentioned above, staff time from existing staff will be used to meet the match requirement.
- One of the core pieces of HECC's agency mission is to improve Oregon's economic competitiveness and quality of life.

HECC believes that this grant will provide educational pathways to well-paying jobs for working families, help address the current housing shortages with infrastructure and broadband development and encourage public private partnerships to work together through focusing on equity and sustainability.

Action Requested

HECC requests authority to apply for a grant in the amount of \$5 million from the Department of Labor.

Legislation Affected

If funds are received, HECC will be requesting additional expenditure limitation.

We appreciate your consideration in advance.

Sincerely,



Ben Cannon, Executive Director

Higher Education Coordinating Commission