

MANUFACTURING

in Lehman's Terms

Technical Skills Training

The COVID-19 pandemic changed many aspects of our daily lives. Many businesses had to make drastic changes to how they did business, and many workers began reevaluating their relationships with their jobs. Some employees realized they were ready for a change while others started wondering how they can advance within their current workplace. Now more than ever, manufacturers need to get creative to retain workers, help attract new ones and keep employees satisfied.

One program which has been recognized to be effective in helping manufacturing program providers and employers offset the cost in their effort to support the development of highly trained skilled workers is the Technical Skills Training Grant. The Technical Skills Training Grant is a grant program offered through the North Dakota Department of Commerce designed to support eligible training providers and employers in their efforts to design and launch rapid, non-degree re-skilling and upskilling programs, expand capacity in existing programs that began after May 17, 2021, and/or move training to virtual platforms to train workers. All training programs must mitigate a workforce issue that was created or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program was first developed in 2020 but has since sustained and evolved.

This program has two tracks, each focused on developing or expanding a highly skilled workforce in manufacturing:

- Track A reflects the initial intent of this grant program and is designed for new and expanding accelerated, non-degree training programs that prepare trainees for new jobs.
 - Programs in Track A may be eligible for up to \$100,000 with a dollar-for-dollar match.
 - Programs in Track A are not for incumbent workers.
- Track B is designed for companies wishing to provide internal upskilling opportunities for their existing staff to promote movement and advancement throughout the organization, create more comprehensive onboarding and new worker training programs, and/or provide safety training for employees.
 - Programs in Track B may be eligible for up to \$50,000 with a dollar-for-dollar match throughout the lifetime of the grant program

To qualify the eligible qualified applicants must:

1. Be a North Dakota college and university, business, non-profit organization, city/county municipal, and/or a trades organization/association in North Dakota.
 - a. Note: Degree programs are not eligible for funding under this grant.
2. Have their training take place in North Dakota
3. Have majority of program participants reside and intend to work in North Dakota.



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4. (If tuition or training costs are part of the proposed application) Be paid to the organization providing the education or training. The applicant may not pay those funds directly to the individuals receiving the education or training.

The Technical Skills Training Grant is flexible and can be used in a variety of ways:

1. **Example 1:** One way in which manufacturers can utilize the program is by meeting a critical workforce need in the state to train and certify individuals in welding. They can use the matching funds to purchase welders and supplies to meet the increased demand for welding and training. If a manufacturer is looking to upskill their current employees, this would fall under Track B. If a manufacturer is looking to attract new workers who are maybe looking for a career change, this program would fall under Track A.
2. **Example 2:** What we hope to see with this current round of funding is utilizing these funds for safety training to your workers. This type of program would fall under Track B.

Regardless of how you plan to utilize The Technical Skills Training Grant, please keep in mind the training must be on the Governor's target industries (advanced manufacturing, energy, value-added agriculture, technology-based business, and tourism); or a [high demand occupations](#) as determined by the Workforce Development Council and Job Service ND. For additional questions and assistance regarding the Technical Skills Training Grant, you can contact Melyssa Diebold, Workforce Projects Coordinator at the North Dakota Department of Commerce at 701-328-5382.

For additional information regarding incentives programs or general manufacturing inquiries in North Dakota please feel free to contact me, and best of luck!

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