

STATE APPRENTICESHIP EXPANSION, EQUITY, AND INNOVATION GRANTS

Lead Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT)

Entity Type: State Agency

City and State: Cranston, Rhode Island

Project Title. *Apprenticeship FORWARD* **Funding Amount Requested: \$3,956,430**

Rhode Island’s *Apprenticeship FORWARD* project incorporates diversity, equity and inclusion efforts as a key strategy within all Registered Apprenticeship expansion and modernization activities and improved partnership with the public workforce system.

Partner	Type
Department of Labor and Training	Required
State Apprenticeship Agency & Council	Required
Building Futures, a 501(c)3 Organization	Subrecipient
Governor’s Workforce Board (GWB)	State & Local WDB
Multiple Industry Sector Partnerships (Real Jobs RI)	Workforce Intermediaries
Construction Employer Associations (RIAGC, CIRI)	Construction RAPs
RI Building and Construction Trades Council (RIBCTC)	Construction RAPs

Summary. Quality career paths have remained elusive in Rhode Island’s communities of color, which continue to experience poverty at disproportional rates. In Rhode Island, 71% of jobs require post-secondary education, yet less than half of RI adults hold a college degree – a gap that is significantly greater with Hispanic and African-American residents. Compounding these challenges, Rhode Island’s economy remains deeply impacted by the pandemic, with COVID-19 responsible for 84% of all initial unemployment claims in 2020, and disproportionately impacted the urban core cities. Rhode Island’s *Apprenticeship FORWARD* project recognizes RA as a key

Rhode Island *Apprenticeship FORWARD* Project Abstract

strategy to address the state’s challenges. Our focus is on industries with the most projected demand for skilled labor: 1) Construction; 2) Healthcare; 3) Manufacturing; 4) Green/Plant-based Industries; and 5) Business Services (e.g. information technology, finance/insurance, and professional services occupations). Each target industry has strong RA programs established. Our Apprenticeship Rhode Island (ARI) partnership will continue to build RA system capacity, developing nontraditional programs and providing support for State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) process improvements. This apprenticeship intermediary strategy deepens efforts to incorporate RA within the broader public education and workforce development system. With market demand and a long history of successful programs, the construction industry provides a sector-based “learning laboratory” for the RA system. During the project, RA will be further connected with community-based organizations serving underrepresented populations, develop articulation with K-12, Adult Ed Providers, and Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) and become more incorporated within state and local workforce board activities. Importantly, each of the apprentices that complete their Registered Apprenticeship will gain the national portable certification this accomplishment earns.

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