FY2025-2026 Grant Guidelines & Application Process Q&A Document

Instructions: Please submit any questions that you have regarding the State grants, Perkins grants or WTCS Apply Portal to grants@wtcsystem.edu. We will review and then post the questions and responses to them in the appropriate sections below. Note that general questions will be listed first followed by State, Perkins and then WTCS Apply Portal.

# **GENERAL QUESTIONS** (applies to all grant categories)

### 10/17/24 – In previous state grant cycles, we were asked to show how our project links up to the WTCS Commitment to Progress, such as Focus on Equity in Student Access and Success and Use Data to Close Equity Gaps. I am having trouble locating these commitments on your website and am wondering if they have moved, or if you no longer wish us to make that connection within our proposals.

Currently the Commitments to Progress are not on our website. The ideas may be updated and posted with our new strategic directions. Currently, the grants need to support student success, but don’t need to reference or link to the Commitments to Progress.

### 10/4/24 – **Data Situation**. Tableau is no longer available to us. Available data has been sent out to our grant contacts at each of the colleges.

* An email was sent 10/4/2024 explaining options for the final grant reports
* The completion chart has been updated in both the portal and the State Guidelines for FY25-26
* Data spreadsheets have been created and sent for the completion and career prep grants

### 8/13/24 – How often will the Q&A be updated?

The Q&A will be updated at a minimum weekly.

### 8/13/24 – Will there be a session like this for the AEFLA grants?

In lieu of a session like this, the guidelines, an FAQ, and recordings are available on MyWTCS. FY25-26 is a competitive year, by having everything available online (click on the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) , <https://mywtcs.wtcsystem.edu/grants-data-reporting/grants/>) we don’t give one applicant an advantage over another.

## 7/18/24 - Will all FY25-26 grants be submitted through the WTCS Apply Portal?

Yes, the grant applications, any revisions and the grant reports will all be submitted through the Apply Portal.

## 7/18/24 - Where can we find the FY25-26 grant applications?

Please go to the WTCS Apply Portal website at wtcs.smapply.io

# **Procurement Questions**

## 7/18/24 – For services under $50,000, does this follow the academic or calendar year?

The service follows the length of the contract.

## 7/18/24 – How specific does the description of the equipment need to be?

If the function and type of the equipment is grant eligible it can be listed in the grant. If the equipment meets the thresholds of your college’s procurement process, that process must be followed.

# **Program Income Questions**

## 7/18/24 – Does program income apply to all grants?

Program income **applies to federal grants only**, which currently is Perkins and AEFLA. Any additional federal grants that we get that we subaward, we will notify colleges that program income applies during the grant conference.

## 7/18/24 – If you have program income for a grant event, can you purchase food?

Program income should be used for costs that are typically allowable under Federal guidelines. Because food is not typically allowed under Federal guidelines, you should not use program income to purchase food.

# **STATE** (applies to all state grant categories)

### 10/4/24 – **Data Situation**. Tableau is no longer available to us. Available data has been sent out to our grant contacts at each of the colleges.

* An email was sent 10/4/2024 explaining options for the FY23-24 final grant reports
* The completion chart has been updated in both the portal and the State Guidelines for FY25-26
* Data spreadsheets have been created and sent for the completion and career prep grants

## 9/13/24 – If professional development occurs early in the next fiscal year, can a college pay for registration and basic airfare costs in one fiscal year (with college funds to secure a spot and save money) and then be reimbursed for those costs from a state grant when the new grant year begins?

### This is allowable in State General Purpose Revenue grants.

## Can a college partner with a Tribal College or University on a WTCS GPR grant?

While the following GPR grants must be awarded to the WTCS Technical College, we encourage you to look at the AEFLA guidelines and see who can apply. Other avenues to work with IET’s could be Dept. of Workforce Development, or the WEDC.

### 8/13/24 – Can you provide a link to the rubrics?

<https://mywtcs.wtcsystem.edu/grants-data-reporting/grants/application-forms/>

## 8/13/24 – Regarding sustainability - We are supposed to describe ways outside of the operational budget. I don’t know another way to “sustain” other than to state, “Seek external funding opportunities.” How will that be looked at?

Sustainability plans that include more detail often score higher on this rubric criterion. Describing how the program is tied to other supporting initiatives such as career pathways, student success and support programs at the college and/or part of the WTCS mission, vision and Commitments to Progress, future grant and/or other internal/external funding opportunities, community partnerships, advisory/employer relationships, etc. help to explain the college’s plan to bolster the named program.

## 8/13/24 – Are Tribal Colleges and Universities eligible to apply for State General Purpose Revenue (GPR) grants? Could they partner with a WTCS college to receive funding on a consortium project?

GPR grants must be awarded to a WTCS Technical College, and the college cannot be a pass through to a non-WTCS college/university. We encourage you to look at the AEFLA guidelines to see if you can apply. Other avenues to work with IET’s could be Dept. of Workforce Development, or the WEDC or talking to your local technical college for additional resources.

## 8/13/24 – Can a college partner with a Tribal College or University on a WTCS GPR grant?

While the following GPR grants must be awarded to the WTCS Technical College, we encourage you to look at the AEFLA guidelines and see who can apply. Other avenues to work with IET’s could be Dept. of Workforce Development, or the WEDC.

## 7/18/24 - What happens if there are discrepancies with the detailed budget, SFR and budget summary in my competitive grant application?

If there are discrepancies in these three areas, you will lose points in the budget section of the rubric.  The totals in each budget line item for these three areas should match.  We’ve set up the detailed budget spreadsheet so that the amounts in the total lines should automatically be pulled over and appear on the SFR sheet.  If you delete or alter the formulas that we have set up in the detailed budget spreadsheet, it will change/impact what gets pulled over into the SFR.  To complete the budget summary section, you just have to copy the totals from each line item from the SFR.

## 7/18/24 - When is the blackout date for questions regarding the State grant categories?

All blackout dates for questions relating to the following grants are one week prior to the application due date.

* State Grants - the blackout date is Friday, January 3, 2025, at 4 pm
* IET Development and Expansion Grant - the blackout date is Friday, March 7, 2025, at 4 pm
* WAT grant - the blackout date is Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 4 pm

# **Career Pathway**

## 12/18/24 – The Career Pathways rubric states in Section 2: Details a minimum of one measurable objective and supporting activities to support the entrance of non-traditional students into a pathway. How do you define non-traditional here?

Very generally speaking, non-traditional students are those who are not coming to our colleges directly from the K-12 system.

## 12/18/24 – Could you provide a little more clarification on the restriction limit of $1,000 for conference related costs (budget worksheet indicates this is in Other). What exactly is that referring to? Costs associated with hosting a conference on our campus or costs of sending someone TO a conference.

Conference-related costs refer to any cost associated with the attendance of a conference by technical college faculty and/or instructional staff: these costs include but are not limited to registration, travel and lodging. If virtual conference, the costs belong in the Other line, if the grant is paying for travel for the conference, all costs go in the travel line.

## 10/21/24 – I noticed the grant guidelines state that marketing costs are limited to 5% while the detailed budget sheet lists 10%. What is the limit for marketing?

Please follow the guidelines which show a 5% limit. The detailed budget sheet in the portal has been updated to reflect the 5% limit.

## 10/14/24 - In the guidelines it states: “Individual programs may not be funded for more than two consecutive fiscal years.” Can you please clarify what it meant by two consecutive years?

This language is intended to limit CP grant-funded work on a specific program to 2 consecutive years.

* 1 year grant followed in the next grant cycle by another 1-year grant in the same program area is allowable.
* 1 year grant followed in the next grant cycle by another 1-year grant in the same program area, followed by another 1-year grant (year 3) in the same program area is not allowable.
* 2-year grant followed by another 1-year grant in the same program area is not allowable (and vice versa).

The Exception to the Rule - In some cases, exceptions to this limitation may be allowable if the college can clearly show that the focus of the subsequent grant is on a vastly different aspect/part of the program (than the CP grant funded in the previous cycle).

For example, The Information Technology (IT) Program:

* Project 1) Revising curriculum within the Networking track based on industry trends while also building awareness of the Networking track with potential students. Project was two years in length.
* Project 2) Developing relationships with regional employers who hire mostly Developers from the IT program. Project one or two years in length.

\*Technically, both projects focus on the IT program and have different emphasis within that program.

# **Completion**

### 12/13/24 – Hypothetically, if a position is written into the Completion grant, how likely is it to be supported year after year? Assuming the grant can provide reason of course.

It would be allowable for a position to be approved in the Completion grant one year and then included in subsequent year's applications. Of course, each year we rate the entire grant and so whether or not your college is awarded year after year is something to consider, but there isn't anything saying that you couldn't.

### 10/4/24 – **Data Situation**. Tableau is no longer available to us. Available data has been sent out to our grant contacts at each of the colleges.

* An email was sent 10/4/2024 explaining options for the FY23-24 final grant reports
* The completion chart has been updated in both the portal and the State Guidelines for FY25-26
* A data spreadsheet has been created and sent for the completion grant

## 9/18/24 – The FY25-26 Guidelines Completion grant example for the data chart shows 2021, 2022, and 2023 as the data to use in the upcoming grants, can you confirm this is accurate as it’s the same years we used for the FY24-25 grants?

In the data chart directions, the first direction is the following “Completing the Grant Data Chart: Data Source - Student Success Tableau Dashboard – **Adjust settings to reflect your college and the three most recent complete data years for each item below**. The three most current years would be 2022, 2023 and 2024. Due to moving from Tableau to Power BI, the Student Success Dashboard data for 2024 will not be available. WTCS will pull comparable data metrics and email to each college by end of day October 4th.

## 9/16/24 – Is having food available in our food pantry an allowable expense to remove barriers? For example, could “grab and go” meal kits be supported with these grant dollars, or does it have to be a direct reimbursement to a student for a grocery bill?

Yes, this would be allowable and in line with what we have approved before. Both the grab and go meals and the infrastructure for the pantry.

## 8/21/24 - Could you clarify whether or not we can help with supplies/books/materials in Completion? There seems to be a contradiction in the guidelines.

Thank you for the question, this will be updated when we repost the guidelines after the September Board Meeting. What is should and will say in September.

**Funds Available and Additional Limitations**: Payment of student tuition and textbooks **are not allowed**.

**Allowable Activities**: Remove financial barriers for students experiencing gaps in completion outcomes by providing direct support (Examples: childcare to attend classes, groceries, reimbursement of transportation costs, housing, utilities, testing fees, background checks, course materials and supplies (i.e. scrubs, welding gloves) etc.). These funds can also be used for unplanned events causing unanticipated expenses such as medical treatment or vehicle repair.

## 8/13/24 - How do we write activities for a second year (new grant, same or similar activities) when we’re just in the middle of the original grant?

Show the continued need and provide an explanation as to why you think this is necessary. Write about what you are doing and the reasons you want to continue those activities. Always remember each new grant year you are competing for funds.

# **Core Industry**

## 1/3/25 – Are letters of support required for Developing Markets and/or Core Industry grant applications? Where can such documents be included in the grant applications?

Letters of support are not required for Developing Markets or Core Industry grant applications.

Per Developing Markets (DM) guidelines and rubrics, there are no additional uploads required for this category nor is there a supplemental documents section for this application type in the Apply Portal. The information required for the app should be included in the statement of need narrative (see DM rubric).

Core Industry (Core) grant applications require documented advisory committee support for the proposed grant project and grant equipment purchases. Per Core guidelines and rubric, advisory and/or ad hoc committee meeting minutes are required; letters of support may assist in demonstrating support but are not required. Core grant applications are also set up differently from DM applications in the Apply Portal, allowing for the additional upload of supplemental documents, which could include letters of support. Letters of support should not be included in lieu of advisory committee meeting minutes with complete roster and other named requirements (see guidelines).

## 12/9/24 - In reviewing the FY2025-26 Core Industry grant rubric, it appears a college is scored on the following: Spend rate on most recent, completed Core Industries grant project confirms successful grant management capability. Where do we address this in our grant application? Is there a specific area in the Overall Monitoring and Evaluation section where we include this?

The rubric criterion is assessed by grant reviewers who will review past spend rates of the college’s most recent, completed Core Industry grant project and assign a score based on the successful spend-down of that grant. Turnback of funds along with obligation of funds will impact the score that is assessed. Colleges need not include language in the grant application that addresses this criterion as it would be irrelevant to the manner in which this item is scored.

## 9/6/24 – Does the Core Industry grant have a “time out” period, where you can’t apply for a program that has been funded in the past year or so?

There is no formal rule that prohibits an applicant from requesting funding for the same program more than one year in a row. Subsequent applications that feature the same program funded in the past, however, must have different project needs, justifications, goals, activities, etc. The same reasons/project components for funding cannot be used from year to year. It must be clear that the subsequent application is an entirely new project.

## 8/25/24 – Could you please share guidance on options for possible evidence sources for demonstrating high-demand fields within the college district?

The DWD “Hot Jobs” list is just one possible source of labor market information (LMI) that a college could use to prove project need for Core Industry grant applications. The need can be national, state or locally based; advisory committee meeting minutes, employer surveys, employer letters of support that identify job openings/high employer demand for grads of the grant-named program of benefit, and regional/state studies or publications with sourced data showing high demand for the occupation are common ways that colleges document LMI. Colleges should be intentional about tying in local need and program results to industry demand.

## 8/13/24 - The grant management question has been added to the Core Industry rubric, how far will you look back to check the spend rate?

We will look at the most recently completed grant. It would be FY22-23 (2-year grant) or FY23-24 (1-year grant) if you had one approved for those years. If not, we would go back to the most recently completed grant.

# **Developing Markets**

## 1/3/25 – Are letters of support required for Developing Markets and/or Core Industry grant applications? Where can such documents be included in the grant applications?

Letters of support are not required for Developing Markets or Core Industry grant applications.

Per Developing Markets (DM) guidelines and rubrics, there are no additional uploads required for this category nor is there a supplemental documents section for this application type in the Apply Portal. The information required for the app should be included in the statement of need narrative (see DM rubric).

Core Industry (Core) grant applications require documented advisory committee support for the proposed grant project and grant equipment purchases. Per Core guidelines and rubric, advisory and/or ad hoc committee meeting minutes are required; letters of support may assist in demonstrating support but are not required. Core grant applications are also set up differently from DM applications in the Apply Portal, allowing for the additional upload of supplemental documents, which could include letters of support. Letters of support should not be included in lieu of advisory committee meeting minutes with complete roster and other named requirements (see guidelines).

## 10/8/24 – When is the best time to submit a Developing Markets grant for a new program that would include getting a new facility and equipment in place as well as a long accreditation process? If we apply for funds to bring the program director on board to write the accreditation application, could we submit a 2nd grant for the same program later that would cover the initial instruction costs?

No, the Developing Markets grant supports a program that is new or only offered up to a year prior to the grant application. It is available for a new program one time. Colleges can apply for a 1 or 2-year grant to cover the work to be completed. The accreditation process does not need to be complete prior to applying for grant funds. Developing Markets grant awards can be used to develop curriculum, pilot program delivery, purchase equipment, outfit labs, stock consumable supplies, purchase and maintain software/tech, etc.

## 8/25/24 – Could you please share clarification on whether new non-accredited or new non-accreditation-seeking programs may be considered for funding in the Developing Markets category in 2025-26?

Yes, programs that don’t require accreditation are eligible to be considered in this grant category.

# **Emergency Assistance**

## 8/13/24 - For FY24-25 can we go up to $1,000 per student? Are there still additional funds if we go through our original allocation?

Yes, FY24-25 you can award each student up to $1,000 (still two awards per student per fiscal year). When your college gets down to $1,000 you can contact WTCS to see if additional funds are still available.

## 8/13/24 - The FY24-25 guidelines still state that the Emergency Assistant grant maximum amount per student is $500 and the report is due 6/25.

The FY24-25 guidelines were updated on 8/13/24 to reflect the current law. ($1,000 per student per fiscal year and “Eligible student" means a student enrolled in a technical college whose financial need meets the eligibility criteria for a grant from the Federal Pell Grant Program).

## 8/13/24 – Does the Emergency Assistance grant $1,000 per year apply to the direct support funds in the Completion and Perkins grants?

The $1,000 limit is just for the emergency assistance grant. The basic need support for Perkins and the Completion grant do not follow the emergency assistance law/requirements. That being said, while we want to support our students, we don’t want to put all the funding in one area.

# **IET Development & Expansion**

## 8/13/24- Is there an IET grant for FY25-26?

Yes, the IET grant guidelines will be approved in the September Board meeting, the due date for the grants is March 14, 2025

# **Workforce Advancement Training** (WAT)

## 3/20/25 - Could you clarify whether DiSC assessments can be funded through WAT grants? I see that item 10 in the Additional Limitations section notes, “While costs related to obtaining nationally portable, industry skills certifications are allowed, other assessment costs are not allowed.” However, item 1 in the Allowable Activities section notes “Assessing the learning needs of employees to determine knowledge and skills needed to more effectively perform current or future job assignments.”

With respect to DiSC Assessments within WAT-funded training projects, this type of assessment cost is allowable as a part of the skills training.  Other licensing/certification exam fees are not allowed based on the WAT grant guidelines.

# **PERKINS** (applies to all Perkins grant categories)

## 9/13/24 – If professional development occurs early in the next fiscal year (i.e, FY25-26), can a college pay for registration in one fiscal year (i.e., FY24-25) to secure a spot or meet early bird savings for professional development in the following fiscal year?

### **Registration only** may be paid, it should be well documented with registration deadlines (ex. email and/or agenda).

## 8/13/24 - Are there income requirements for basic needs assistance in Perkins grants like those in the State Emergency Assistance grant?

You can use the term “At Risk” but be specific in your explanation of what “At Risk” means to you and your students. Explain the gap the students are experiencing.

## 8/13/24 - Is “At Risk” an outdated term? Should we only refer to Perkins Special Populations?

The Perkins basic needs assistance does not follow the same rules as the State Emergency Assistance grant. We no longer refer to “emergency assistance” in the Perkins guidelines due to confusion. Please see the guidelines for examples of basic needs assistance.

# **Capacity Building**

## Question 1:

Response 1:

# **Career Prep**

### 10/4/24 – **Data Situation**. Tableau is no longer available to us. Available data has been sent out to our grant contacts at each of the colleges.

* An email was sent 10/4/2024 explaining options for the FY23-24 final grant reports
* A data spreadsheet has been created and sent for the career prep grant

## Question 2:

Response 2:

# **NTO**

## Question 1:

Response 1:

# **Strengthening Programs**

## Question 1:

Response 1:

# **Student Success**

## 8/13/24 – Focused Need - We were asked to focus more on equity gaps for special populations or specific groups of students. The activities still relate to all eligible students. If the activities are based on all students eligible, but the focus need is on one subset, can you please help me understand how to do that?

The purpose of the student success grant is "to provide direct student support services designed to meet the needs of designated career and technical education student populations experiencing gaps in student success outcomes". As such, activities should be focused on supporting populations that are experiencing gaps. Focused needs should outline the specific gaps the college is focusing on. If a college is proposing an activity that is open to all students to address the gaps, they must provide information in the activity description about how this activity will specifically outreach to or connect with the populations experiencing gaps in success outcomes.

## 8/13/24 - Are pre-enrollment activities allowed in the Student Success grant?

If you are thinking of including pre-enrollment activities for any special populations experiencing gaps in Student Success, please contact Colleen Larsen to talk things through.

# **WTCS APPLY PORTAL**

## 8/13/24 – Can colleges see the archived grants/other documents (grant documents, grant reports, budgets)?

Due to portal limitations, we must archive grants when the year is final and all reports have been submitted and approved. We highly recommend you keep copies of the documents uploaded to the WTCS Apply Portal. On a very limited basis, we may be able to help.


## 8/13/24 – Is there a way to search or organize the grants so we don’t have to scroll through so many grants to get to the one we need?

Due to portal limitations, this is not possible. We have put in this request, but Survey Monkey has not updated this feature yet.

## 8/13/24 –In the Developing Markets grant, has a drop-down menu been added for the accreditation question (reply yes or no, if yes, share the status and name of the accreditation)?

A drop-down menu has not been added. It’s very important to read the whole question/requirement of each answer. This is another place where a second set of eyes on the grant can be helpful.

## 8/13/24 –Has the “previous versions” upload been removed from view for the colleges?

That issue has been cleared up. When applying if something looks off/different, please reach out to let us know so we can check on it, correct if needed and assist you if necessary.

## 8/13/24 – Regarding revision, once a revision is submitted and approved, it becomes the new “original” submission. So, if you need to submit a second revision, you will work from the most recent submission. Is this correct?

Yes, everyone on your team should work off the new, same grant application & information. Please see the WTCS Apply Portal User Guide for instructions for first and subsequent revisions. The guide can be found here (very bottom of the page), <https://mywtcs.wtcsystem.edu/grants-data-reporting/grants/egrants-apply-portal/>