FY2026-2027 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](mailto: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)

### 8/15/25 – For a two-year grant that started in 2025-26 when the minor and major equipment was minor up to $9,999 and major over $10,000, for the second year of the grant 2026-27 the guidance has changed, what dollar amount do we use?

Stay with the dollar amounts for the year the grant started, so in this case it would be minor up to $9,999 and major $10,000 and up.

### 8/15/25 - Can measurable objectives be changed in a revision?

No, at this time the activities can change but not the measurable objectives.

### 8/15/25 – Grant reporting, do all grants (1 and 2-year) have a final report?

Both 1 and 2-year grants have a final report at the end of the first year. For a 1-year grant, when the report is approved, it will move to a closed grant. For a 2-year grant, at the end of year one, when the final report is approved it will move to 2nd mid-year report.

### How often will the Q&A be updated?

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

## Will all FY26-27 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.

## Where can we find the FY26-27 grant applications?

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

# **Procurement Questions**

## For services under $50,000, does this follow the academic or calendar year?

The service follows the length of the contract.

## How specific does the description of the equipment need to be?

If the function and type of 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**

## 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.

## 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)

## 8/15/25 – Regarding sustainability, there are limited ways we can sustain a project.

We know there are only certain things that you can say and do, but we really need you to think through that process and provide as much detail as possible. Consider how a reviewer would read and do your best to explain what a reviewer would need to understand.

## 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 you provide a link to the rubrics?

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

## 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.

## 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.

## 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 2, 2026, at 4 pm
* IET Development and Expansion Grant - the blackout date is Friday, March 9, 2026, at 4 pm
* WAT grant - the blackout date is Thursday, April 24, 2026, at 4 pm

# **Career Pathway**

## 9/18/25 - If a grant is approved for a cluster/general approach and name multiple programs in the grant, does this “Individual programs may not be funded for more than two consecutive grant periods.” restriction still apply, or does it only apply to projects that focus on a single program?

If the grant covers a specific cluster of programs, the two consecutive grant periods requirement would apply, and the already approved programs must be named and identified. If the approach is an institutional or policy change that covers multiple clusters or all programs, it would not apply.

## 9/16/25 - Can a Career Pathway grant focus on an institutional/systemic change that impacts all career pathway programs? If so, does the requirement to identify a specific program/program number and approval date apply?

With respect to the interpretation of the guidelines that suggest that a specific program(s) must be identified in the application in order to be eligible, this is not entirely accurate as a CP project may focus on other aspects of student support without specifically identifying a program of study if the focus is an institutional/systemic change that can have an impact on all programs. If a program of study is the focus of the grant proposal, that program must be identified in the application as referenced in the guidelines.

## 8/15/25 – Can a single grant application include more than one approved program?

Yes, as long as the programs are approved and identified in the grant by name and number.

## 8/15/25 – Can we do more general clusters such as Business, or do we need to focus on a program?

The guidelines show you need to focus on a WTCS approved program.

## 7/31/25 - Does the Career Pathways grant still support mileage expenses? I noticed details were removed from the funds available and the additional limitations section but were not specified as an allowable activity.

Travel/mileage is still allowed; the limit was removed.

## 7/31/25 - What is the deadline for WTCS program approval for programs that are supported by Career Pathways grants? Is it the same as Developing Markets, or different?

The Guidelines state: All WTCS pathway program(s) and credentials included in the project must be in approved status by the System Office, identified by program name, number and date of official approval (i.e., Medical Assistant, 31-509-1, approved 03-01-2013) on the Career Pathway grant application. Program revisions in pending or disapproved status at the time of application are not allowed. This means the program needs to be approved prior to application submission.

# **Completion**

## 8/15/25 - What is the average length of a focus need for completion – about two pages?

Per the guidelines the focus need should be limited to 500 words – this does not include graphics or graphs. Ensure you are including the rubric points.

## 8/15/25 – Is there any discussion about having a two-year option for the completion grant?

We can look into this, if possible, you **may** see a change in the FY27-28 guidelines.

## 8/15/25 – How do we get the Program Completion in 3 years (3-year Average)?

Use information from the Student Success Dashboard, choose the most recent complete cohorts for the average. You should average the 2021, 2022, and 2023 cohorts. The data for FY2025 on the dashboard will be refreshed mid-October.

## 8/15/25 – Completion chart – Where do we get successful course completion data from?

Use the Student Success Dashboard - the aligned general educations course completion page.

# **Core Industry**

1. 9/3/25 - We have an aid code 30 Truck Driving program. We have offered it for several years in a closed access contracting arrangement. I would like to expand the program and begin offering it in as an open enrolled program. Does the program qualify for a Core Industry Grant?

There have been enrollments for 30-458-1 recorded since 2023, so yes, this program would qualify for Core Industry grant funding.

1. 8/29/25 - Our Banking & Finance program was renamed to "Finance" and has a new program #. It did not go through the formal program approval process, just an update to the name and number. Would a program be eligible under Core Industry?

Programs that have been approved and offered for a year or more at the time of grant application qualify for Core Industry grant funding, including programs that are in the process of or have already undergone a formal Title/Number Change. The Title/Number Change process does not impact program outcomes nor the intent of the program, thus the original program's approval date and duration of time the program has been offered are considered when determining eligibility for Core Industry grant funding.

1. 8/28/25 - If the grant supports the development of new or revised curriculum and the instructional delivery of the new or revised curriculum, can the instructional delivery of the courses only be a one-time delivery? Or can a new or revised course be offered multiple times during the grant period with the grant supporting the instructional delivery for each course section?

The Core Industry grant category does not quantify instructional delivery; colleges may request to fund instructional delivery in a manner that is appropriate for and in alignment with the grant project outcomes. If it makes sense to incorporate multiple instances of instructional delivery during the life of the grant project, Core does not prohibit this. As with all grant activities, please ensure that the need for instructional delivery is clearly defined.

Verbiage from Core Industry grant guidelines, Allowable Expenses:

Instructional Delivery

• Newly developed or modified curriculum and expanding upon delivery methods for existing approved programs.

• Adaptation of instructional delivery such as accelerated programs or various online delivery methods.

1. 8/27/25 – Are Advanced Technical Certificates eligible under Core Industry if offered for a year or more?

ATCs are named as allowable in Core grants if they meet the standard requirements of having been approved and offered for a year or more.

1. 8/15/25 - With past performance being considered in Core grants, should we be speaking directly to it in narrative or will readers just be looking that history up?

This will happen in our office, no need to address in the grant.

1. 7/30/25 – Can the Core grant be used to create an ITS (Individualized Technical Studies) degree

The short answer is no, ITS do not qualify for inclusion in Core Industry grants.

The longer answer is that ITS are not named in Core Industry grant guidelines as allowable, and I will explain a little bit about why that is the case:

1. **ITS are not WTCS Board-approved programs and thus do not meet the “prior approval” program requirements outlined in Core Industry grant guidelines.** ITS are special-case associate degrees offered and documented by colleges and recognized internally by the System Office, but do not exist as formally approved WTCS programs with open student enrollment and completions.
2. **ITS are intended to serve a single student who would not otherwise be able to attain the desired education by taking any other program or combination of programs offered by the college.** ITS must not supersede existing WTCS-approved programs, and they should not be created with the intent of open enrollment; program areas that are new and might be relevant and useful to a larger population as indicated by industry demand should follow the standard program approval process or be organized as a local certificate.

All of that being said, a college could create a Core Industry grant application for a qualifying, existing, WTCS-approved program and feature pathway development as an activity. Simply put, you could do curriculum work to the primary program to set it up for pathway expansion and/or ease of progression along the pathway. You could not create an ITS, however.

## 8/8/25 – Update to the Core Grant Guidelines.

Programs must be open for student enrollments and have been offered for one year or more (January 20, 2025, or earlier).

# **Developing Markets**

1. 10/6/25 - I know that Developing Markets cannot be used for any remodeling and building expenses, but can wayfinding for a new space be included?

The true sense of wayfinding is the signage used to get a person from the parking lot to a specific location at the college. If that is the case, then yes, Developing Market dollars can be used for that.

1. 8/29/25 - Is an existing program with a new name/number eligible for the Developing Markets grant?

If the program went through a program approval process it could be eligible. If it did not go through the approval process, then the program is not eligible.

Retitled/renumbered programs would qualify for Developing Markets funding if initial program approval occurred within the last year (from date of grant application) and the program has not been offered or has been offered for up to a year.

## 8/29/25 - Are new Advanced Technical Certificates (ATC’s) eligible under the Developing Markets grant?

ATC’s are eligible for the Developing Markets grant. Any credential having gone through the WTCS program approval process (concept review and program approval) would qualify for funding under Developing Markets.

## 7/31/25 - For the Developing Markets grant category, can multiple programs be funded in a single application for $200,000?

Based on verbiage used in the guidelines referring to “a” or “the” program, only one program may be funded per application.

## 8/4/25 - Can a college run more than one section of a course for one-time delivery funding support as part of a Developing Market request? Or would only one section of the course be covered under the grant?

It’s allowable to run more than one section of a class, especially if there are enough students that need to be served by the course.

# **Emergency Assistance**

## 8/15/25 – When is the final report due for the Emergency Assistance grant?

Per the guidelines, the mid-year is due on or before February 15, and the final report due on or before August 15.

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# **IET Development & Expansion**

## 8/15/25 – Will training be provided on how to complete the IET planning form?

Yes, we can add that and will include that as we plan Professional Development for the coming year.

## 7/29/2025 - What is considered a student barrier?

For the purposes of the IET Development and Expansion grant, the 10% limit for student barriers is restricted to unexpected emergencies or situations which may make it difficult for a student to attend classes or complete the program. Allowable expenses may include—but are not limited to—transportation assistance, emergency childcare, temporary housing support, or other urgent needs that directly impact a student’s ability to participate in and complete their IET program. These expenses would go in line 8.0 – Other.

A student barrier could also be basic needs to complete the courses within a program. Course instructional materials or supplies (welding protective clothing, scrubs), etc. would be listed in line 7.0-Supplies.

All expenses must be necessary, reasonable and aligned with the goals of the grant.

# **Workforce Advancement Training** (WAT)

## 9/4/25 – Are local government and public entities eligible to participate in the WAT grants?

Per [Wis. Stats. 38.41](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdocs.legis.wisconsin.gov%2F2021%2Fstatutes%2Fstatutes%2F38%2F41&data=05%7C02%7Ctouya.khang%40wtcsystem.edu%7C6de88c058c3d4d4bb60108ddebcee433%7Ccbb68fc49dc54784bfc5fd3d49dcf8bb%7C0%7C0%7C638925996052634619%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=ZN0j6VOTjRJDFh5yNYpYOvMixZWjlnmdQzNWZbrtI18%3D&reserved=0) and [Admin Code TCS 17](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdocs.legis.wisconsin.gov%2Fcode%2Fadmin_code%2Ftcs%2F17.pdf&data=05%7C02%7Ctouya.khang%40wtcsystem.edu%7C6de88c058c3d4d4bb60108ddebcee433%7Ccbb68fc49dc54784bfc5fd3d49dcf8bb%7C0%7C0%7C638925996052663994%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=uxYrojoYS0KPUmAfg6dErjgHz7ZJCWKg9%2B6ILyI4gc4%3D&reserved=0), WAT grants must be awarded to businesses to provide skills training or other education related to the needs of business. Public entities (schools, municipalities, counties, etc.) are not eligible for WAT grant funding.

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

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# **Targeting Attainment Gaps**

## Question 1:

Response 1:

# **Career Prep**

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## Question 2:

Response 2:

# **NTO**

## Question 1:

Response 1:

# **Strengthening Programs**

## Question 1:

Response 1:

# **Student Success**

## 9/18/25 - In the FY25/26 guidelines, there was an allowable activity for “Transition services to support students identified in special populations categories, students of color, and students in Adult Education or ELL courses in successfully transitioning to CTE programs.” I noticed this language was removed. The FY26/27 guidelines state: “All career and technical education students served under this funding priority must be enrolled in at least three CTE program credits or will enroll in three credits of CTE due to grant activities.” Would transition services for high school students with disabilities still be allowable under Student Success?

Transition services like the example given are still allowable.

# **WTCS APPLY PORTAL**

## 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.



## 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.

## 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/>