

**Texas Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Grant Program
Application and Implementation Guide
August 2026**

DRAFT

Purpose of the Guide

The Texas Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship (TIRA) Grant Program Application and Implementation Guide (Guide) serves as the authoritative resource for understanding the policies, requirements, and operational procedures governing the TIRA Grant Program. It ensures consistent and accurate implementation of statutory and administrative requirements by providing clear, comprehensive instructions for all components of the TIRA process, including the occupation recognition process, TIRA program certification, application submission, and performance reporting.

This Guide is intended for use throughout the full lifecycle of the grant—from initial application development through ongoing program administration and reporting—and is updated as necessary to reflect changes in statute, rule, or agency policy.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

The TIRA Grant Program is governed by the following authorities:

- [House Bill 2784 \(86th Legislature\)](#)—Establishes the TIRA Grant Program to address Texas' immediate industrial workforce needs resulting from hurricanes, other natural disasters, and broader workforce shortages; directs the agency to develop and adopt rules to administer and enforce programs requirements
- [House Bill 3260 \(89th Legislature\)](#)—Provides statutory changes granting the agency flexibility to distribute payments as partial reimbursements to program participants who meet designated training, credentialing, and employment-retention milestones. The bill also outlines guidelines for identifying qualifying occupations and certifying training programs, defining performance metrics, and publishing aggregated performance data on the agency's website
- [Texas Labor Code, Chapter 302](#)—Defines the agency's workforce development authority and provides the statutory foundation for the TIRA Grant Program
- [Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Part 20, Chapter 838](#)—Contains the adopted rules governing the TIRA Grant Program, including definitions, eligibility criteria, allowable expenditures, reporting requirements, and compliance standards

Collectively, these authorities establish the program's purpose, structure, requirements, and operational expectations.

Program Objectives

The following objectives guide the administration of the TIRA Grant Program:

- Ensure that program funds are directed to workforce areas impacted by hurricanes or other natural disasters, and support both immediate workforce needs and broader workforce shortages.
- Encourage private-sector employers to develop and expand specialized apprenticeship programs in Texas.
- Develop training projects that result in participant wages at or above the median wage for the occupation associated with the TIRA.
- Promote skill advancement, enabling participants, at minimum, to obtain an industry-recognized credential in the occupation or field supported by the TIRA.

Federal and State Alignment

The TIRA Grant Program is authorized and funded at the state level yet intentionally structured to align with federal apprenticeship principles and national workforce development priorities. This alignment promotes consistency, quality, and interoperability across apprenticeship systems operating in Texas.

The TIRA Grant Program aligns with federal frameworks by:

- incorporating structured, related instruction, on-the-job mentorship, competency-based progression, validated skill attainment, and aligned with established industry practices;
- targeting industries affected by federal disaster declarations following hurricanes, supporting national workforce recovery and resilience objectives;
- promoting data practices that complement federal workforce standards (e.g., consistent participant identifiers, demographic fields, outcome measures), enabling interoperability and reliable statewide performance measurement without implying federal requirements; and
- encouraging program designs aligned with the same quality elements highlighted by the U.S. Department of Labor for industry-recognized, employer-validated training pathways.

This federal-state alignment strengthens Texas' apprenticeship ecosystem, supports worker mobility across state and federal systems, and ensures that TIRA-funded programs meet widely recognized quality benchmarks.

Sources and best practices informing these principles:

- [USDOL Apprenticeship.gov](https://www.usdol.gov/apprenticeship) — federal guidance on high-quality apprenticeship components, competency models, and work-based learning design.
- [USDOL Competency Model Clearinghouse](https://www.usdol.gov/competency-model-clearinghouse) — industry competency frameworks validated by employers and national associations.
- Employment and Training Administration (ETA) [Work Based Learning Guidance](https://www.eta.gov/work-based-learning-guidance) — quality elements for employer driven training pathways.
- Industry or sector specific [competency frameworks](#) — employer-validated skill standards published by national associations and recognized by USDOL.

State Appropriations and Allocations

Funding for the TIRA Grant Program is appropriated by the Texas Legislature and allocated through multiple state funding streams that support program administration, employer engagement, and specialized apprenticeship development. For the 2026–2027 biennium, TIRA appropriations include the following:

- Regular Legislative Appropriation—\$20 million appropriated directly to the agency to administer the TIRA Grant Program and expand industry-recognized apprenticeship opportunities statewide
- Broadband, Telecommunications, and Digital Infrastructure Funds—\$10 million appropriated to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts and transferred to the agency for administration. These funds support apprenticeship programs connected to digital infrastructure, telecommunications, broadband deployment, and related high-demand occupations.

Collectively, these appropriations strengthen program administration, expand employer-driven apprenticeship development, accelerate digital infrastructure workforce growth, and bolster healthcare workforce capacity in high-need areas.

Occupation Recognition Process

The occupation recognition process establishes how the agency determines whether an occupation qualifies for development and funding under the TIRA Grant Program. This process ensures that occupations selected for TIRA investment align with statutory intent, address documented workforce needs, and support high-quality apprenticeship pathways.

Purpose of the Recognition Process

The purpose of the occupation recognition process is to identify occupations that meet the definition of a Texas Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship and demonstrate sufficient industry demand, employer involvement, and workforce relevance to justify TIRA funding. Recognized occupations form the basis for program certification, application development, and performance evaluation.

Criteria for Recognizing an Occupation

An occupation may be recognized for TIRA funding when it meets all criteria outlined below. The criteria ensure that TIRA investments support high-quality, industry-validated apprenticeship pathways that address Texas' workforce needs:

- **Apprenticeability and Industry Alignment**—The occupation must be apprenticeable and suitable for apprenticeship. Qualifying occupations demonstrate:
 - clearly defined skill progression;
 - industry-validated competencies;
 - structured training or credentialing pathways; and
 - employer-endorsed skill development models.

Note: These elements confirm that the occupation can support a structured, progressive apprenticeship model.
- **Documented Workforce Demand and Economic Relevance**—The occupation must address an actual disruption or labor shortage. Acceptable evidence includes:
 - Labor market data indicating shortages
 - Employer demand or hiring commitments
 - Regional or sector-specific workforce gaps
 - Disaster-impacted or recovery-critical occupations

Note: This ensures the occupational framework supports meaningful economic relevance.
- **Wage Outcomes at or Above Mid-Level Status**—The occupation must support wage outcomes that meet or exceed the median wage for the occupation. Wage data must demonstrate:
 - wage outcomes at or above median wage levels;
 - sustainable employment;
 - clear advancement pathways; and
 - alignment with industry wage expectations.

Note: This ensures the apprenticeship leads to competitive, market-aligned earnings.

- **Competency Framework**—The occupation must support training objectives that are specific, measurable, and aligned with industry standards. Demonstrated frameworks include the following:
 - Clearly defined skills and competencies
 - Required related instruction
 - On-the-job learning components, where applicable
 - Safety, regulatory, and industry-specific requirements mandatory for the occupation
 - Credential attainment pathways

Note: The framework must reflect current industry practices and be validated through employer or industry consultation leading to at least one industry-recognized credential that can be attained in six months or less.
- **Employer Involvement and Industry Support**—Employer and industry engagement is required to confirm the framework’s relevance. Involvement includes:
 - employer participation in program design and curriculum validation;
 - confirmation that skills and competencies reflect current industry practice;
 - demonstrated commitment to hiring or advancement pathways; and
 - evidence of broad industry relevance and endorsement.

Note: This element ensures the framework is employer-driven and industry-aligned.

Steps to Request Occupation Recognition

Applicants seeking to have an occupation recognized for industry-recognized apprenticeship development must complete the steps outlined below. These steps ensure that each occupation is evaluated consistently and supported by verified labor market evidence, industry validation, and credential relevance.

1. **Complete and Submit the Occupation Recognition Request Form**—Applicants must complete the official Occupation Recognition Request Form and submit all required supporting documentation. This includes occupational descriptions, competency frameworks, wage information, and evidence of workforce demand.
2. **Provide Supporting Documentation**—Applicants must attach all materials necessary for review, including:
 - Labor market evidence
 - Employer or industry consultation materials
 - Credential or certification validation
 - Competency frameworks and training outlines
3. **Agency Review of Submitted Materials**—The agency reviews the request and all associated documents to determine whether the occupation meets program criteria. This includes evaluating apprenticeability, workforce demand, wage outcomes, and alignment with industry standards.
4. **Labor Market Evidence Verification**—The agency examines labor market data, employer demand, and regional workforce needs to confirm that the occupation addresses a documented shortage or emerging demand.
5. **Industry Consultation and Validation**—The agency may consult with employers, industry associations, or sector partnerships to validate the occupation’s relevance, competencies, and hiring pathways.

6. **Credential and Training Pathway Validation**—The agency reviews any associated credentials, certifications, or structured training pathways to ensure they align with industry expectations and support measurable skill attainment.
7. **Documentation Review and Determination**—The agency completes a full review of all submitted materials and issues a formal determination, including:
 - adding **approved occupations** to the recognized list; or
 - providing written feedback for **denied occupations**, identifying required revisions or missing documentation.
8. **Publication on the Agency Website**—Once approved, the occupation is published on the agency's website as an officially recognized occupation eligible for industry-recognized apprenticeship development.

Certification of TIRA Program Projects

To be certified as a TIRA program project, applicants must:

- demonstrate alignment with the recognized occupation;
- provide documentation showing that the training program meets the definition of a TIRA;
- submit measurable training objectives;
- show employer involvement in program design, delivery, and evaluation;
- provide evidence of wage outcomes meeting or exceeding median wages for the occupation; and
- complete and submit the Application for Funding Form as part of the certification process.

Certification is granted only when all statutory and administrative requirements are met.

Program Eligibility

The TIRA Grant Program establishes eligibility requirements for applicants, industry-recognized apprenticeship models, and participants to ensure that funded projects align with statutory intent, address critical workforce shortages, and support high-quality, industry-recognized training.

Eligible Applicants

Entities eligible to apply for TIRA funding include:

- Trade and industry groups
- Corporations
- Nonprofit organizations
- Educational institutions
- Unions
- Joint labor-management organizations

Applicants must demonstrate the organizational capacity, partnerships, and administrative readiness necessary to implement, operate, and sustain high-quality apprenticeship programs consistent with TIRA requirements.

Eligible Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Models

To qualify for TIRA funding, an eligible training program must define, within its curriculum framework, a model that:

- provides structured training that includes Related Technical Instruction (RTI), On-the-Job Training (OJT), or supplementary instruction:
 - in an occupation recognized by the agency; and
 - delivered under an industry-recognized and accredited training curriculum;
- is certified by the agency as an awarded TIRA program project;
- guarantees employment for participants during training **and** upon successful completion;
- pays each participant a progressive wage and provides eligibility for full-time employee benefits during and upon completion;
- advances participants to mid-level competency, ensuring skill progression that leads to a credentialed, performance-verified mid-level status, as demonstrated by attainment of a median wage in an occupation aligned with the TIRA program;
- maintains a limited duration of no longer than 26 weeks;
- prioritizes targeted populations by giving preference in training and hiring to:
 - unemployed Texans who have filed Unemployment Insurance claims;
 - veterans of the United States Armed Forces;
 - formerly incarcerated individuals; and
 - underemployed individuals working without industry-recognized certifications or credentials.

Eligible Participants

Individuals eligible to participate in TIRA-funded apprenticeship programs must:

- train under a TIRA apprenticeship agreement;
- be employed full-time in the private sector during training, receiving wages and benefits consistent with program requirements;
- maintain suitable employment for at least 12 consecutive months immediately following successful completion of the TIRA program;
- receive related instructional training necessary to learn and advance skills in a recognized occupation aligned with the TIRA program.

Partnership Requirements

Applicants are encouraged—and in some cases required—to establish partnerships that strengthen program quality and sustainability. Eligible partnerships include:

- employer–training provider partnerships;
- sector partnerships or consortia;
- Local Workforce Development Boards and community organizations; and
- industry associations supporting multi-employer apprenticeship models.

Partnerships must be documented in the Application for Funding Form and must demonstrate shared responsibility for program design, delivery, and outcomes.

Application for Funding Instructions

Applicants seeking TIRA funding must submit a completed Application for Funding Form that includes all required elements. Applications must demonstrate program readiness, statutory alignment, and the capacity to deliver high-quality, industry-recognized apprenticeship training. Incomplete applications or applications missing required documentation will not be considered.

Required Application Components

A complete Application for Funding Form must include the following:

- **Applicant Information**—Entity details and identifiers, plus primary contact information
- **Project Summary**—Brief narrative describing skills gained, participant count, training duration (≤ 26 weeks), and the training component supported
- **Program Components** consisting of the following:
 - **Training Plan**—Curriculum outline, modules, objectives, assessments
 - **Industry Alignment**—Alignment with competency standards, accrediting body frameworks, documented safety or regulatory requirements, and employer-validated skill progression, supported by labor-market validation
 - **Employer Partnerships**—Employer role, hiring commitments, full-time employment benefits, and formal partnership agreements outlining roles and responsibilities
 - **Apprenticeship Agreement**—Documentation of training standards and program commitments including competency frameworks, safety and regulatory requirements, credentialing standards, wage progression, and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) compliance
 - **Implementation Timeline**—Six-quarter timeline of training activities and milestones
 - **Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) Cost Alignment**—If applicable, documentation confirming alignment with ETPL rates
 - **Equal Employment Opportunity Policy**—Employer’s current EEO policy
- **Measurable Training Objectives**—Objectives aligned with program requirements, including recognized occupation, enrolled/completion wages, projected completions, and credential attainment
- **Budget Summary**—Anticipated costs for instruction, materials, assessments, and administrative activities, plus a completed Budget Detail Form aligned with the implementation timeline
- **Required Documentation**—Supporting materials such as curriculum, occupation validation, apprenticeship agreements, partnership documentation, ETPL cost alignment, EEO policies, and the Budget Detail Form
- **Additional Agency Required Information**—Any additional information requested to support eligibility determination, program certification, or funding review, including required certifications and acknowledgements demonstrating alignment with TIRA requirements

Disclosure of Other Funding

Applicants must also disclose any other grant funds sought or awarded for the proposed project, including federal, state, local, or private funding sources. This disclosure must identify the funding entity, amount requested or awarded, and the purpose of the funds to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and prevent duplication of support.

Maximum Award

The agency will award grants to applicants that achieve a minimum score of 75 points or higher and demonstrate strong capacity to meet all program criteria. Awards will be given to as many high-quality applicants as possible within the limits of available funding. The maximum amount an applicant may request is one million dollars (\$1,000,000).

Grants awarded under the TIRA Grant Program are funded on a per-participant basis, up to \$10,000 per participant, excluding wages and benefits. The cost per participant will be calculated in the Budget Detail Form as the total amount of funds requested, covering both program costs and administrative costs, divided by the total number of participants to be trained.

Length of Funding

The award period will span up to 24 months, providing sufficient time for grantees to complete all required training activities, conduct retention efforts, and finalize closeout and performance reporting. This duration represents the full period in which awarded funds may be expended and program outcomes must be achieved.

Application Review Process

The agency reviews all submitted Applications for Funding to determine eligibility, completeness, and alignment with TIRA statutory and administrative requirements. The review process ensures that funded projects demonstrate readiness, address targeted labor shortages, and support high-quality, industry-recognized apprenticeship training.

Review Stages

The review process consists of the following stages:

- **Initial Compliance Review**—The agency verifies that the application is complete, includes all required components, and meets basic eligibility criteria. Applications missing required documentation or failing to meet minimum eligibility standards will not advance.
- **Regulatory Review**—The agency will assess for factors that may affect the applicant's ability to administer funds responsibly, such as:
 - outstanding state or federal tax liabilities;
 - negative financial or legal judgments;
 - unresolved compliance issues or reporting deficiencies; or
 - other uncertainties that may pose risk to project execution or fiscal stewardship.
- **Programmatic Review**—The agency evaluates the proposed project's alignment with TIRA requirements, including:
 - recognized occupations and targeted labor shortages;
 - training structure, employer involvement, and measurable objectives;
 - job creation and retention strategies;
 - proposed wages, benefits, and participant advancement; or
 - partnership commitments and administrative readiness.
- **Budget and Cost Review**—The agency assesses the proposed budget for accuracy, allowability, and alignment with program requirements. If applicable, the agency confirms cost alignment with ETPL rates.
- **Risk and Capacity Assessment**—The agency evaluates the applicant's organizational capacity, fiscal controls, prior grant performance, and ability to implement and sustain the project.
- **Final Determination**—After completing all review stages, the agency issues a determination based on statutory compliance, program quality, and available funding. Applicants may be approved, conditionally approved, or denied.

Determination Types

The agency may issue one of the following determinations:

- **Approved**—The application meets all statutory, programmatic, and administrative requirements. Approved applicants will receive an award notification outlining the funding amount, reporting obligations, and next steps for contract execution.

- **Conditionally Approved**—The application meets core requirements but requires clarification or additional documentation before funds can be released. Applicants must submit all requested materials within the specified time frame to finalize the award.
- **Denied**—The application does not meet statutory or programmatic requirements, does not demonstrate sufficient readiness or alignment, or cannot be funded due to limited availability of funds.

Notification of Determination

Applicants will receive written notification of the agency’s decision. Notifications include:

- determination type;
- approved funding amount (if applicable);
- required conditions and documentation (if conditionally approved);
- instructions for award preparations; and
- timelines for next steps.

Post-Determination Inquiries

Applicants who are not selected for funding may request clarification regarding the decision. Inquiries may address compliance with review standards but cannot challenge discretionary scoring or funding availability.

Allowable & Unallowable Costs

TIRA funds must be used in accordance with state requirements governing apprenticeship, workforce development, and grant administration. This section outlines allowable expenditures that directly support TIRA program delivery, as well as unallowable costs that are prohibited under applicable rules.

Allowable Costs

Allowable expenditures must directly support the delivery, administration, and successful completion of TIRA participants. All costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the program.

Administrative Costs

Administrative costs must not exceed 10 percent of total funds expended under the award. Administrative costs necessary for program oversight may be allowable within established limits. Examples include:

- program coordination and reporting;
- fiscal management and compliance activities; and
- monitoring and documentation systems.

Program Costs

Program costs are expenses directly tied to training activities. Examples include the following:

- Related Technical Instruction (RTI):
 - Instructor or trainer fees
 - Classroom, lab, or simulation expenses
 - Occupation-specific tools, supplies, and consumables
 - Instructional materials, manuals, and digital learning resources
 - Technology used for hybrid or virtual RTI delivery
 - Examination fees, proctoring services, and certification testing costs
- Supplementary Instruction:

- Subject matter experts (SMEs) or advanced trainer fees
- Specialized training materials, digital tools, devices, or technology
- Regulatory or compliance-driven training aligned with industry standards
- Classroom, lab, or simulation space for advanced instruction
- Technology for instruction delivery (software, licenses, learning platforms)
- Exam fees and testing platforms associated with earning advanced or stackable credentials

Note: Supplementary instruction cannot be funded as a standalone training activity. It must be paired with either RTI or OJT to ensure alignment with the program's structured training framework.

- On-the-Job Training (OJT):
 - Mentor time and effort spent conducting hands-on skill application and competency development
 - Training supplies used during hands-on learning
 - Monitoring and assessment activities necessary to ensure alignment with training standards drawn from federal guidance, state regulatory requirements, and industry specific accrediting bodies, depending on the occupation

Unallowable Costs

Unallowable costs are prohibited under state rules and may not be charged to TIRA funds under any circumstances. These costs do not directly support apprenticeship training or they violate fiscal requirements.

Prohibited Participant Payments

The following costs are unallowable:

- Direct cash payments to apprentices not tied to allowable support services
- Stipends or wage subsidies
- Bonuses, incentives, or gift cards

Capital or Facility Costs

TIRA funds may not be used for:

- construction, renovation, or capital improvements;
- purchase of buildings or land; or
- equipment purchases.

General Operating Costs

The following organizational costs are prohibited:

- Rent, utilities, or facility maintenance
- General office supplies not tied to training
- Organizational marketing or public relations

Unrelated Personnel Costs

TIRA funds may not support:

- salaries or benefits for staff not directly involved in TIRA program delivery;
- executive leadership or administrative overhead beyond allowable limits; or
- employer wages or payroll costs.

Prohibited Costs Under State Rules

The following costs are categorically unallowable:

- Entertainment, food, or beverages

- Lobbying or political activities
- Fines, penalties, or legal settlements
- Alcohol, tobacco, or controlled substances
- Any cost prohibited under that state's grant management standards, cost principles governing the Notice of Award, the agency's Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts, or state administrative rules

Performance Reporting Requirements

Grantees must comply with all reporting requirements established in the Notice of Award, as well as any additional directives issued by the agency. Performance reporting ensures accountability for state funds, validates participant outcomes, and supports program eligibility.

Required Reporting Elements

Grantees must submit performance data that includes, at minimum, the following:

- **Participant Enrollment, Completion, and Credential Attainment**—Grantees must report the number of participants enrolled in the grant-funded program, their progress through training, successful completions, and attainment of industry-recognized credentials supported by the Notice of Award.
- **Wage Outcomes and Employment Placements**—Grantees must document post-training employment placements, wage outcomes, and retention consistent with statutory expectations and the commitments outlined in the award.
- **Use of Funds and Cost Reconciliation**—Grantees must provide detailed accounting of all expenditures charged to the award, verify allowability, and reconcile costs against the approved budget and payment structure.
- **Progress Toward Measurable Training Objectives**—Grantees must report progress toward the measurable training objectives identified in the project plan, including competency milestones, instructional benchmarks, and performance-based progression requirements.
- **Additional Agency-Required Reporting**—Grantees must submit any supplemental information requested by the agency to support compliance monitoring, program evaluation, or statutory reporting associated with the award.

Submission Requirements

Reports must be submitted according to the schedule and in the format prescribed in the Notice of Award. All deadlines, templates, data specifications, and submission procedures will be communicated by agency grant management staff and updated as necessary to align with statutory or administrative changes.

Payment Processes

TIRA payments are issued in accordance with the terms of the Notice of Award, applicable state fiscal requirements, and the performance expectations established in Texas Labor Code §302.258 and Chapter 838. Payments are tied to verified participant outcomes, allowable expenditures, and compliance with all award conditions.

Payment Structure

Payments are made on a reimbursement basis and must correspond directly to allowable costs incurred by the grantee in support of the approved project. Reimbursement requests must reflect actual expenditures and may not exceed the total award amount.

Allowable Cost Verification

Before payment is released, the agency verifies that all requested costs:

- align with allowable expenditures identified in this Guide;
- support participant training, credential attainment, or program administration;
- are reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the TIRA project; and
- comply with state fiscal requirements.

Costs determined to be unallowable or insufficiently documented will be removed from the reimbursement request.

Participant Outcome-Based Payments

All payments may be tied to participant outcomes achieved during the grant period. Outcome-based payments are designed to ensure that grantees demonstrate measurable progress toward skill development, credential attainment, and employment outcomes consistent with TIRA requirements.

Outcome-based payments may be issued when participants reach designated milestones, which may occur **quarterly** or at other intervals defined in the Notice of Award. Milestones must reflect meaningful progression through the training program and may include:

- completion of training aligned with recognized occupations;
- attainment of industry-recognized credentials;
- verified employment placements and wage outcomes;
- retention consistent with statutory expectations;
- achievement of competency-based milestones documented through OJT and RTI; or
- quarterly progress benchmarks demonstrating advancement toward median wage status.

Milestones must be clearly defined in the grantee's training plan and aligned with the measurable training objectives approved by the agency.

Outcome-based payments require submission of supporting documentation with each reimbursement request, including:

- participant progress records;
- assessment results or skills verification;
- credential attainment documentation;
- employer validation of performance proficiency;
- wage records or employment verification; and
- quarterly reports, if applicable.

The agency may request additional documentation to validate milestone achievement before releasing payment.

Reimbursement Request Submission

Grantees must submit reimbursement requests:

- using the forms, templates, and data specifications prescribed in the Notice of Award;
- according to the schedule established by agency grant management staff; and
- with all required supporting documentation, including invoices, proof of payment, participant records, and cost-allocation details.

Incomplete or late submissions may delay payment processing.

Agency Review and Approval

Upon receipt of a reimbursement request, the agency conducts a fiscal and programmatic review to confirm:

- allowability and accuracy of costs;
- alignment with approved budget categories;
- compliance with reporting requirements; and
- progress toward measurable training objectives.

The agency may request clarification or additional documentation before approving payment.

Payment Release

Once approved, payments are issued through the state's financial system and disbursed to the grantee according to standard state payment timelines. Payment release is contingent upon:

- compliance with all grant conditions;
- submission of required performance reports; and
- resolution of any outstanding fiscal or administrative issues.

Hold-Back Requirement

The agency will withhold **30 percent of the total award amount** until all closeout requirements are met. The hold-back is released only after the grantee submits and the agency approves:

- final performance reporting;
- final fiscal reconciliation and documentation;
- verification of participant outcomes, including credential attainment and employment retention; and
- confirmation that all contractual obligations have been fulfilled.

Failure to meet closeout requirements may result in reduction or forfeiture of the hold-back amount.

Adjustments and Withholds

The agency may adjust, reduce, or withhold payments if:

- expenditures are unallowable or unsupported;
- reporting requirements are not met;
- participant outcomes do not align with award commitments; or
- the grantee is out of compliance with statutory or administrative requirements.

Any adjustments will be communicated in writing with an explanation of required corrective actions.

Monitoring and Compliance

The agency conducts monitoring and compliance activities to ensure that grantees administer TIRA funds in accordance with Texas Labor Code §302.258, Chapter 838, the Notice of Award, and all applicable state requirements. Monitoring activities validates program performance, fiscal integrity, participant outcomes, and adherence to statutory expectations.

Program Monitoring

Program monitoring evaluates the grantee's implementation of the approved project, including:

- delivery of RTI;

- alignment of training activities with recognized occupations;
- participant progress toward measurable training objectives;
- employer involvement and partnership commitments; and
- documentation supporting credential attainment and employment outcomes.

The agency may conduct desk reviews, virtual monitoring, or on-site visits to verify compliance.

Fiscal Compliance

Fiscal compliance reviews confirm that all expenditures charged to the award:

- are allowable under TIRA requirements;
- are reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the project;
- align with the approved budget categories;
- are supported by adequate documentation; and
- comply with state and federal fiscal rules, including Uniform Guidance.

The agency may request additional documentation to validate costs or reconcile discrepancies.

Regulatory and Risk Review

The agency conducts ongoing regulatory and risk assessments to ensure the grantee maintains good standing. Reviews may include:

- negative financial or legal judgments;
- unresolved compliance issues or reporting deficiencies; or
- organizational risks that may affect fiscal stewardship or project execution.

Findings may result in corrective actions, enhanced monitoring, or payment adjustments.

Corrective Actions

If monitoring identifies deficiencies, the agency may issue a corrective action request requiring the grantee to:

- submit additional documentation;
- revise internal processes or fiscal controls;
- modify training activities to align with program requirements; or
- address compliance issues within a specified time frame.

Failure to resolve deficiencies may result in payment withholds, award modifications, or termination.

Continuous Compliance Expectations

Grantees must maintain compliance throughout the entire grant period, including:

- timely submission of required reports;
- adherence to participant outcome commitments;
- maintenance of accurate and complete records;
- cooperation with all monitoring activities; and
- immediate notification to the agency of material changes affecting project delivery.

Record Retention

Grantees must retain all programmatic and fiscal records for the period specified in the Notice of Award and applicable state rules. Records must be accessible for monitoring, audit, or review upon request.

Contract Execution

Contract execution formalizes the grantee's award under TIRA and establishes the legal, fiscal, and performance obligations required for project implementation. All grantees must complete contract execution in accordance with Texas Labor Code §302.258, Chapter 838, and the terms outlined in the Notice of Award.

Award Acceptance

To initiate contract execution, the grantee must formally accept the award by:

- acknowledging all terms and conditions in the Notice of Award;
- confirming the approved project scope, budget, and performance commitments; and
- designating authorized representatives responsible for contract administration.

Award acceptance must occur within the time frame specified by the agency.

Contract Package Completion

Grantees must complete all required contract documents, which may include:

- standard state grant agreement forms;
- assurances and certifications required under state and federal rules;
- documentation verifying organizational authority to enter into the contract; or
- any additional materials requested by agency grant management staff.

All documents must be submitted in the format prescribed by the agency.

Verification of Eligibility and Compliance

Before contract execution is finalized, the agency verifies that the grantee:

- meets all statutory and administrative eligibility requirements;
- is in good standing with state and federal regulatory entities;
- has no outstanding compliance issues, negative judgments, or unresolved fiscal findings; and
- maintains the organizational capacity necessary to administer the award.

Any issues identified during verification must be resolved prior to contract execution.

Budget Finalization

The agency and grantee finalize the approved budget to ensure:

- alignment with allowable cost categories;
- accuracy of projected expenditures;
- consistency with program objectives and participant outcome commitments; and
- compliance with state fiscal rules and Uniform Guidance.

Budget revisions may be required before contract execution is completed.

Execution and Activation

Once all requirements are met:

- the agency executes the contract;
- the grantee receives confirmation of contract activation;
- the project start date is established; and
- reimbursement and reporting schedules become effective.

No costs incurred prior to the contract start date may be charged to the award.

Post-Execution Requirements

Following execution, grantees must:

- participate in agency onboarding or orientation sessions;
- establish internal systems for fiscal tracking, reporting, and documentation;
- ensure all partners understand their roles and responsibilities; and
- begin delivering project activities according to the approved plan.

Failure to meet post-execution requirements may delay payment or trigger additional monitoring.

Appendices

The Appendices provide supplemental materials that support grantees in understanding, implementing, and complying with all TIRA program requirements. These resources are referenced throughout this Guide and are incorporated as official components of the TIRA administrative framework.

Appendix A: Glossary

Key terms used throughout the guide are defined, including statutory terminology, apprenticeship concepts, fiscal definitions, and administrative language necessary for accurate interpretation of TIRA requirements.

Apprentice—An individual employed by a participating employer who receives structured On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Related Technical Instruction (RTI) as part of an approved apprenticeship program

Applicant Eligibility Criteria—All applicants must:

- be in good standing under Texas law;
- not owe delinquent taxes to any Texas taxing unit; and
- operate an industry-recognized apprenticeship program that meets Guide requirements.

Apprentice Agreement—A formal document between the apprentice and employer establishing the terms, conditions, responsibilities, and obligations of participation in a TIRA-funded apprenticeship program. A valid agreement must specify the occupation, training structure, wage progression, performance expectations, duration (≤ 26 weeks), guaranteed employment, continued employment requirements, and mutual responsibilities.

Competency-Based Progression—A training approach in which advancement is based on demonstrated mastery of skills rather than time spent in training

Corporations—Private-sector companies seeking to develop or expand apprenticeship programs aligned with critical workforce shortages

Credentialed, Performance-Verified Mid-Level Status—The point at which an apprentice has demonstrated, through assessment, employer validation, and credential attainment, the skills required to perform intermediate-level work. A participant must complete OJT/RTI competencies, earn an industry-recognized credential, demonstrate proficiency, and meet occupation-specific benchmarks.

Educational Institutions—Community colleges, technical schools, universities, and other training providers delivering RTI in partnership with private-sector employers

Employer Partner (Texas private sector)—A business or organization that hires apprentices, provides OJT, and participates in program oversight

Full-Time Employee—An individual employed by a private-sector employer who receives full-time wages and benefits consistent with employer policy and TIRA requirements

Grant Recipient—An entity within Texas awarded TIRA funds by the agency. Grant recipients must comply with all contract requirements and agency monitoring activities under Chapter 802, Subchapter D of Texas Labor Code, Chapter 302.

Industry-Recognized Certification—A credential issued by an industry association, licensing body, or certifying organization validating mastery of skills required for employment in a specific occupation

Joint Labor-Management Organizations—Collaborative entities formed by unions and private-sector employers to design and administer apprenticeship programs

Milestones—Defined points in a participant’s training progression that demonstrate achievement of specific skills, competencies, or training benchmarks outlined in the program design. These markers verify that the participant has reached a measurable stage of advancement within the training cycle.

Nonprofit Organizations—Mission-driven entities supporting workforce development, employer engagement, or apprenticeship coordination

On-the-Job Training (OJT)—Paid, supervised work experience in which apprentices learn job-specific skills

Participant—An individual training under a TIRA apprenticeship agreement who is a full-time, paid worker receiving benefits during training, maintains suitable employment for at least 12 consecutive months following completion, and receives RTI to advance to credentialed, performance-verified mid-level status in a recognized occupation

Payment Milestones—Designated training milestones at which an eligible grant recipient may request reimbursement, in the amounts specified in the grant agreement. Payments are tied to the participant’s successful achievement of these milestones. The grant recipient must repay any milestone reimbursements issued for a participant who does not complete the full training program—including required employment outcomes—in accordance with the repayment terms outlined in the grant agreement.

Recognized Occupation—An apprenticeable occupation that is learned through structured OJT; is clearly identified and commonly recognized throughout an industry; involves manual, mechanical, or technical skills requiring significant work experience; and requires related instruction to supplement OJT

Recognized Occupation List—An official inventory of occupations reviewed and approved by TWC as eligible for development under the TIRA Grant Program

Related Technical Instruction (RTI)—Classroom, online, or hybrid instruction supporting the technical knowledge required for the occupation. RTI may include occupation-specific safety training such as OSHA 10, EPA 608, or other mandatory certifications; accrediting-body curriculum such as NCCER modules, CompTIA A+ content, MSSC CPT modules, or FOA fiber optic standards; and employer-developed instruction that builds foundational skills before apprentices perform tasks independently (e.g., equipment operation basics, quality control procedures, technical theory). RTI must reinforce the apprentice’s progression toward mid-level proficiency and ensure that technical knowledge aligns with industry-validated competencies.

Sector-Based Trade and Industry Groups—Organizations representing private employers with shared workforce needs

Supplementary Instruction—Additional, credential-bearing training that is generally upskilling rather than foundational, focused on expanding or deepening competencies beyond the apprentice level. This instruction keeps workers current with evolving industry standards, technologies, and safety requirements, and reinforces the broader curriculum framework through advanced, occupation-specific learning.

Texas Trade Association—A statewide association of business or professional competitors designed to assist members in addressing mutual industry needs and promoting shared interests

Tri-Agency Self-Sufficiency Wage—As defined in Texas Government Code §2308A.012, the minimum wage level at which an individual can meet basic living expenses without public

assistance. Under TIRA, employers must ensure participants receive progressive wages and full-time benefits at or above this wage.

Unions—Labor organizations engaged in apprenticeship training, worker upskilling, or sector-based workforce initiatives

Appendix B: Templates and Forms

Includes standardized templates and forms prescribed by the agency for grant administration, such as:

- reimbursement request forms;
- reporting templates;
- contract execution documents;
- budget worksheets; or
- participant outcome documentation forms.

Grantees must use these materials unless otherwise directed by the agency.

Appendix C: Sample Program Elements

These illustrative-only samples do not replace required templates or forms but demonstrate compliant program design and administration, such as:

- sample training plans and measurable training objectives;
- sample partnership agreements;
- sample credential-attainment documentation; and
- sample monitoring and reporting records.

Training Plan and Instructional Framework—Example

Related Instruction

Related instruction refers to the employer-designed training that supports hands-on learning and skill progression. Under TIRA:

- Employers determine the curriculum, competencies, and delivery method.
- The only statutory limit is the maximum 26-week training duration.
- There is no required minimum number of classroom hours.
- Instruction may be classroom-based, online, modular, or embedded in workplace training.
- When an occupation has industry-recognized training standards (e.g., NCCER, CompTIA, FOA, MSSC), employers are encouraged to align their related instruction with those standards to ensure quality and consistency.
- Occupations with mandatory safety training (e.g., OSHA-10, HAZWOPER, EPA 608) must incorporate those requirements.
- Related instruction must support advancement to credentialed, performance-verified mid-level proficiency, meaning apprentices gain the skills needed to perform independently at a recognized mid-level standard within the occupation.

This structure preserves employer flexibility while ensuring training reflects industry expectations and leads to validated skill attainment.

On-the-Job Mentorship

Mentorship refers to structured, supervised skill development on the job. Under TIRA:

- Employers choose the mentorship model that fits their operations.
- There is no mandatory mentor-to-apprentice ratio, as mentorship expectations are already established within the industry standards and typical supervisory practices. Employers must follow the ratios and supervision norms standard for their field.
- There is no required number of supervision hours.
- Mentorship must be competency-based and delivered by a qualified employee.
- If an accrediting body or safety standard requires specific supervision practices (e.g., tower climbing under NWSA guidelines, electrical work under NCCER safety protocols), employers must follow those requirements.
- Mentorship should reinforce progression toward mid-level proficiency, ensuring supervised practice aligns with validated occupational skill standards.

Apprenticeship Agreement—Example

1. Occupation and Training Standards

This agreement establishes the training relationship between [Employer] and [Participant] for the occupation of [Recognized Occupation Title]. The employer will provide training aligned with industry-recognized standards, including required competencies, total Related Technical Instruction (RTI)/ On-the-Job Training (OJT) hours, and performance expectations. See Occupation Standards for guidance.

2. Structure of Training

- RTI: [Total Hours], delivered via [Classroom/Online/Hybrid].
- OJT: [Total Hours], following a structured sequence of skill development. See Training Structure.

3. Wage Progression Schedule

The employer agrees to provide wage increases tied to competency attainment.

Stage	Milestone	Hourly Wage
Entry	[Insert]	[Insert]
Mid-Program	[Insert]	[Insert]
Completion	[Insert]	[Insert]

4. Supervision and Mentorship

The participant will receive structured supervision from [Supervisor Name] and mentorship from [Mentor Name], including coaching, performance evaluations, and documentation of competency attainment. See Supervision Expectations.

5. Employment Commitments

The employer commits to providing full-time employment during training and intends to retain the participant upon successful completion, contingent on performance and program requirements. See Employment Commitments.

6. Equal Employment Opportunity

The employer agrees to comply with all Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) requirements, including nondiscrimination in recruitment, training, evaluation, and advancement. A copy of the employer's EEO policy is attached.

7. Signatures

Employer Representative Name: _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant: Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Implementation Timeline and Milestones Response—Example

Quarter 1 (Months 1–3) Program Launch and Enrollment:

1. Training Activities—Finalize training schedule with employer partners, launch recruitment campaign, and enroll [number] participants. Begin training modules. Begin preparing activity reports and participant data files.
2. Milestones—[Number] participants officially enrolled; apprenticeship agreements signed; initial skills assessments completed
3. Quarterly Cost Alignment—\$[Amount]. Costs correspond to program administration, training materials, recruitment marketing, and initial instructor fees/tuition.

Quarter 2 (Months 4–6) Completion and Credentialing:

1. Training Activities—Complete the maximum 26-week training for apprentices. Administer final assessments and industry-recognized certification exams. Update activity reports and participant data files.
2. Milestones—[Number] participants complete training; [number] participants earn [credential name].
3. Quarterly Cost Alignment—\$[Amount]. Costs correspond to remaining instructor fees, testing/certification fees, and materials/consumables used during training.

Tip: Be specific with costs. In the “Quarterly Cost Alignment” sections, explicitly link the dollar amount to the milestone (for example, “10 percent instructor fees billed upon completion, and 15 percent billed upon credential attainment, totaling \$[amount] for Q2”).

Appendix D: Informational Resources

[Texas Grant Management Standards \(TxGMS\)](#)

[TWC Financial Manual for Grants & Contracts \(FMGC\)](#)

[WD Letter 02-18, Change 1, “Handling Sensitive Personal Information and Other Confidential Information—Update”](#) and subsequent issuances

[WD Letter 04-15, Change 2, “Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting System Instructions—Update”](#) and subsequent issuances

[Texas Labor Code §302.251, Texas Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs Grant Program](#)

[TWC rules codified at Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapter 838, relating to Texas Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Grant Program](#)