The Higher Education Strategic Investment Grant Initiative FAQ and Scoring Criteria 2024

FAQ

What is the Talent Solutions division?	MEDC's Talent Solutions division provides a concierge service for key employers in priority industries for the State of Michigan. Talent Solutions works with higher education partners, training providers, PK-12 partners, and recruiters to attract, recruit, train, and retain the talent needed to meet the workforce needs of select key companies, facilitating business success and expansion in Michigan. Current priority industries within Advanced Manufacturing include EV, Mobility, and Semiconductors. Talent Solutions also brokers R&D partnerships between industry and Michigan's multiple world-class research institutes, and funds expansion of research infrastructure where it is an industry priority.
What is Talent Action Team (TAT)?	The Talent Action Team, or TAT, is a consortium of industry, higher education, and training and recruitment program partners that support the need to raise awareness and train talent for the Advanced Manufacturing industry. These efforts include industry awareness, training and curriculum enhancements, internship and hire opportunities, and more.
What is the goal of the Higher Education Strategic Investment Grant Initiative?	MEDC is seeking programmatic solutions to the following goals aligned upon with the advanced manufacturing industry, in particular EV, mobility, or semiconductor: • Build a more diverse pipeline of job seekers by raising awareness of the industry at a young age and increasing access to existing or future relevant education programs (e.g., engineering degree pipeline expansion through bootcamps and PK-12 engagement, industry programming and curriculum in PK-12). • Develop training programs that meet Michigan industry needs now (<500 annually), but that can be quickly scaled to graduate ~500-1,000 students (in relevant programs/degrees) annually in future years if business attraction and expansion opportunities occur. • Connect more of Michigan's top engineering talent with opportunities in the industry. **The grant will focus on three (3) initiatives, primarily in the EV, mobility, and semiconductor sectors:**

Contact MEDC Talent Solutions at talent@michigan.org for questions.

	• **PK-12 Engagement:** Promoting engineering / career readiness and industry awareness among PK-12 students (e.g., factory / manufacturing center tours, summer bootcamps). • **Curriculum Development:** Developing curriculum and flexible training models, that meet current industry demand and develop the infrastructure to quickly scale with new needs (e.g., "Quickstart" programs, Semiconductor Technician associate degree). Curriculum development applications <u>must have</u> an employer partner already identified and TAT employers are highly preferred. Incumbent workers from TAT employers who enroll in these training programs can be offered reduced tuition (50%), subsidized by the MEDC via this grant. ***This will be federally funded.*** • **The Michigander Scholars:** Administer The Michigander Scholars program and award scholarships to eligible students who complete internships (including co-ops, capstones) and/or accept a full-time job hire and agree to stay in Michigan for at least one year. Employer partners for this initiative are identified by the MEDC. ***This will be federally funded.***
Who is eligible to apply?	All applicants must certify that they are: (A) Either a Michigan higher education institution (e.g., community colleges, 4-year colleges and universities), private training provider, or other workforce training entity. (B) Applying for the Higher Education Strategic Investments, a Talent Action Team (TAT) initiative, for activities between January 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. Applicants submitting applications for Curriculum Development and/or The Michigander Scholars must also certify that they are: (C) Not included on the federal government exclusions list in the System for Award Management as being debarred or suspended from receiving federal funds. (D) Registered or have the ability to register for a federal UEI number.
How is this grant funded?	The grant will support three initiatives: PK-12 Engagement, Curriculum Development (including Incumbent Training), and The Michigander Scholars.

	Two of the three initiatives will be funded by federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF or FRF) to provide support for employers and employees statewide in critical industries to provide attraction, retention, and development of new and existing employees. These funds will specifically target unemployed and underemployed talent across Michigan with the intent of removing the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic from Michigan's labor force. Please note that the obligation, expenditure, and purpose of the fund are tied to the source of the federal funds and supplemental appropriation boilerplate (Sec. 608) in PA 119 of 2023. The third initiative will be funded by other sources (e.g., corporate, state).
What timeframe are these programs to be implemented?	Funding is to be used for program activities implemented between January 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. **No extensions can or will be given.** Applicants must consider this timeline when requesting funds and outlining anticipated outcomes. Programs should aim to kick off development by the end of the 2024 calendar year. Applications should consider their organization's policies and timeline for curriculum review, approval, and implementation to ensure that the curriculum can be developed, approved, and implemented within the grant period. This should be included in the timeline of the application.
What can/cannot funds be used for?	Funds can be used for recruitment, marketing, faculty / staff / support staff, program development costs, facilities, materials, equipment, and student support. Funding uses must directly be associated with the program awarded. Out of scope costs include costs that have broad applications beyond the advanced manufacturing priority industries (EV, mobility, semiconductor) and core employer needs (e.g., K-12 outreach focused on broad STEM application, faculty / staff in perpetuity, capital equipment or space with broad applications, program development not tied to serving core employer needs / priority roles, etc.)
Are matching funds required?	Matching funds from the applicant are not required but are encouraged.

What is the amount of funding for this grant?	Funding includes roughly $11 million in ARPA FRF funds for this application round.
When will I be notified if awarded?	Notifications should be expected to be made by mid-June 2024. Applicants not receiving awards will also be notified.
When is funding distributed?	Funding will be provided as reimbursement only for this grant. Exceptions may be made for contracts supporting PK-12 Engagement activities. Applicants with selected applications for Curriculum Development and The Michigander Scholars Applicants also need to be registered in SAM.gov and provide a UEI number for the grant agreement before any funding can be disbursed.
Is there a maximum amount of funding per proposed program?	Currently there is no expected average per funding request. We expect proposed programs to be at the scale needed for effectiveness. Previous grants awarded have ranged from $50,000 to $1,000,000.
What is considered a certificate of training?	Certificates are academic credentials awarded by colleges, universities, or other training providers. These programs are generally noncredit and short-term (<6 months). Certificates represent the learned knowledge in a specific subject or discipline and completion of coursework. Certificates can be stackable for an increased path of knowledge or standalone.
What is considered a faculty externship opportunity?	Faculty training/experiences fall in two categories depending on the type of initiative: • **PK-12:** Faculty experiences would be any type of employer engagement where one is learning about subjects to then build into the PK-12 program directly. • **Curriculum Development:** Faculty training in this case would need to lead to a credential.
Are in-direct costs allowable?	Indirect costs may not exceed a de minimis rate of 10% of the total funding request.

Contact MEDC Talent Solutions at talent@michigan.org for questions.

	Direct costs are those that are identified specifically as costs of implementing the program objectives, such as contract support, materials, and supplies for a project. Indirect costs are general overhead costs of an organization where a portion of such costs are allocable to the award such as the cost of facilities or administrative functions like a director's office. Each category of cost should be treated consistently in like circumstances as direct or indirect, and recipients may not charge the same administrative costs to both direct and indirect cost categories, or to other programs. Any direct and/or indirect costs need to be a part of the Total Authorized Budget in the grant agreement between MEDC and the grantee; they may not be over-and-above that amount.
What are the eligible priority roles?	**PK-12 Engagement and Curriculum Development** Applications for these initiatives that focused on the priority roles identified by TAT employer partners should be prioritized: • Electrical Engineers • Computer Engineers • Process Engineers • Software Developers • Semiconductor Processing Technicians • Semiconductor Maintenance and Repair Workers • EV Production Workers • EV First-Line Supervisors Applications for these initiatives that focused on the priority roles identified by TAT employer partners should be prioritized: • Electrical Engineers • Computer Engineers • Process/Materials/Industrial Engineers • Software Developers • Semiconductor Processing Technicians • Semiconductor Maintenance and Repair Workers • EV Production Workers • EV First-Line Supervisors Additionally, as we look to expand our efforts within advanced manufacturing, applicants submitting applications for PK-12

	Engagement and/or Curriculum Development with the following roles will also be highly considered: • Maritime Engineers • Nuclear Engineers • Semiconductor Production Supervisor Applications should still have employer partners identified even if they are not a TAT employer. **The Michigander Scholars** Students from various majors can participate in The Michigander Scholars program, however, the current priority roles identified by TAT employer partners, which students must complete internships (including co-ops, capstones) or accept full-time employment with, must be synonymous with: • Electrical Engineers • Computer Engineers • Process/Materials/Industrial Engineers • Software Developers Additional tech and engineering priority roles may be added to The Michigander Scholars, based on participating employer input, on an annual basis. Completed skills profiles of our original priority roles can be found here. We will be working with TAT employers to create skills profiles for the additional priority roles.
When can grant applications be submitted?	The grant application portal for proposed program submissions will open on April 29,2024, and all submissions are due by **11:59pm ET on May 31st, 2024**.
Are employer partnerships required for the application?	For the Curriculum Development initiative, employer partnerships are required for the application and partnerships with our current TAT employers are most preferred. Education institutions applying for funds are encouraged to consider which partners in their region / value chain focus may take advantage of the programming.
Who are the current TAT	Please see a list of our current TAT employer partners here.

Contact MEDC Talent Solutions at talent@michigan.org for questions.

employer partners?	
Are other partnerships required?	Other partnerships, such as with other higher ed partners or education / workforce partners (e.g., ISDs, MWA) are not required but are encouraged and preferred in the application.
Is there a preferred length for the application(s)?	Applications are expected to be at the length necessary to provide ample understanding of the program or curriculum being created, prior program expansion efforts, budget item breakdown details, reason for need of the program and how it will affect the industry.
What application platform is being used?	Applications will be submitted using the Wizehive platform.
Where do I apply?	Please follow this link to register for access and submit your application(s).
Do former awardees of a MEDC Higher Education Grant Initiative need to reapply for continued funding?	Yes, former awardees of a PK-12 Engagement or Curriculum Development application can reapply for funding to expand the current program in the following grant cycle. It will be expected that the application clearly details how current program will be expanded (e.g., # of participants, additional location offerings, virtual component that can be distributed to other organizations/institutions). Former institutions that house The Michigander Scholars program will need to apply to outline funding needs for the grant cycle.
Can more than one application be submitted for the same category?	Yes, we welcome multiple applications in the same category. An application is meant to be for one specific program idea and not to combine additional application ideas.
Does an application need to incorporate each priority industry sector (EV/mobility, semiconductor)?	No, an application can focus on one or more of these priority industries. There is benefit that a program incorporates multiple, as the transferability of skills between these industries are high. If programs focus on one specific industry and fall under the same category, they must still be separated into multiple applications since they are different programs.

Contact MEDC Talent Solutions at talent@michigan.org for questions.

Is there a maximum to the number of applications that can be submitted?	There is no maximum, but we anticipate most partners will not submit more than 5 applications for funds.
Is there a preference on single PI or collaborative applications?	There is no preference between a single institution submission or joint application. Please consider that contracts, award disbursement, reporting, and metrics are only worked through one institution.
Will TAT employers need to provide letters of support?	Letters of support from TAT employers are not required, nor expected. If you do receive letters of support, please communicate this via email at talent@michigan.org as there is no area to upload documents within the submission portal.
How will applications be scored?	Scoring criteria for each initiative category can be viewed on the application site.
Can feedback on former applications from previous cycles or on concept papers be provided?	There will be a Q&A period in which we'll collect questions and share our responses with all potential applicants, but we cannot provide feedback or guidance on selecting an initiative or reviewing concept papers. Applicants will be able to submit questions about the grant to talent@michigan.org about the grant until **11:59 PM on Wednesday, May 8, 2024**. Responses will be updated in the FAQ document by **Monday, May 13, 2024**.

Contact MEDC Talent Solutions at talent@michigan.org for questions.

Added 5/13/2024

How do we apply? Is there a template?	At the bottom of the grant initiative website there is an Apply Now button. Please select that button and it will take you to the grant application portal. You will need to create a profile to access the grant application questions – even if you are not applying on behalf of your organization and are only curious about the questions.
Can you provide grant application templates/guide that we can use to begin working on the application? Or is this located within the portal?	There are no copies or guides of the application. In the grant application portal, after selecting the initiative you're applying for, the questions that need responding will atomically come up. You can save your copy as you work on it and will have access to edit it before the deadline.
How should applications be submitted that are part of a collaborative between two of more institutions?	Each institution should submit separate applications, referencing the other institutions and how the efforts are linked.
Do we just identify one of the TAT partners on the list to indicate that we want to work with them? Or should we already have established the partnership	Curriculum Development applications will need to have a relationship with the TAT employer – the program(s) being submitted should be addressing a need / needs the employer has identified that would be within the scope of the grant, e.g., leading to credentials for the priority roles outlined in the application. Applications for PK-12 Engagement and The Michigander Scholars do not require existing relationships with TAT employers as the MEDC can provide those connections.

Contact MEDC Talent Solutions at talent@michigan.org for questions.

with the company before submitting the grant proposal?	
Can there be program deliverables after June 30,2026 even if all funding spent by the end of the project period? For example, we complete the course development for a new certificate program by June 30, 2026, for launching the new program for fall 2026.	All program activities – expenditures, implementation, deliverables that are expected for the grant application – must take place within the timing of the grant. In this example, if the metrics of the grant include a certain number of students enrolling in the course that was developed, then the students would need to be enrolled on or before June 30, 2026 for those metrics to count.
What are the financial and performance reporting requirements? What is the planned frequency of reporting?	This will be outlined in the grant agreement. Typically, this is monthly invoicing and quarterly progress reports. Most of these grants will be ARPA-funded, so there may be additional requirements to consider that will be communicated with the grantee.
Do both EV Service Technician and EV Battery	Please review the skill profiles for the priority roles: https://www.michiganbusiness.org/498d6d/globalassets/documents/talent/ev-semi-priority-role-skill-profiles.pdf.

Manufacturing Technician fit within "EV Production Worker"?	
The portal asks for an individual to whom a background check will be done: Do you recommend this be the authorized official at our organization? (i.e., VP Finance)	The background check will be done on the organization - we're looking for a main point of contact who can be the lead for the organization of the applications that are being submitted. Whoever is listed will be responsible for ensuring liaising with others at the organization that need to be pulled in for the grant - e.g., grant manager, sponsored programs - so it could be the PI (Principal Investigator) or someone in another position.
For PK-12 initiative and curriculum development, can we identify a company that is not on the list?	Only for the priority roles that do not have skill profiles – i.e., maritime engineers, nuclear engineers, and semiconductor production technicians.
For The Michigander Scholars: how do students receive the scholarship funding?	The MEDC will provide the institution with a grant for administering the program and awarding students with scholarships. The institution will work with the employers to ensure the students are aware of the internships and full-time hire positions and award students who complete an internship and/or accept a full-time and agree to stay in Michigan for 12 months post-graduation. There is a specific list of employers participating in the program and we can provide their contact information to be sure the institution(s) and employer(s) are connected.
For The Michigander Scholars: In the	The institution is responsible for administering the program on the ground, including ensuring a minimum number of events take place throughout the period of the grant where Scholars and participating employers are networking. The MEDC can help connect Scholars to

description of the program, it says that "Scholars are invited to attend various networking events, expos, and career fairs." Who is responsible for coordinating these events?	additional opportunities and employers are encouraged to host events, 1:1 coffee chats, etc., where possible.
For The Michigander Scholars: Can the MEDC help us develop relationships with every participating company?	Yes.
For The Michigander Scholars: Will there be opportunities to expand the list of participating employers?	Yes. At current, only TAT employers can be a participating employer. We take recommendations from our partners for companies who could become a TAT employer, there is a process for this that is dependent on many factors.
For The Michigander Scholars: Would students working in the summer of	This grant period is from January 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, so offers for internships and full-time hires would need to occur within this window to be eligible.

2024 be eligible for these scholarships?	
For The Michigander Scholars: What sort of reporting does MEDC expect from universities?	This program will be ARPA-funded, so reporting requirements may change, however at present we require the institutions to submit a monthly tracker to report the awarded scholarships and a monthly invoice to track expenditures on the grant.
For The Michigander Scholars: What happens if the student doesn't stay in Michigan for 12 months?	The employer is responsible for reporting whether a student does not fulfill their commitment. Students are required to sign a letter of intent (template provided by the MEDC) in order to receive their scholarship. If the student does not fulfill the terms of the commitment, there is a formula to return the funding to the university / State.

Contact MEDC Talent Solutions at talent@michigan.org for questions.