NJ WIND TURBINE TECHNICIAN TRAINING CHALLENGE

Application Instructions

Introduction

The NJ Wind Turbine Tech Training Challenge is seeking solutions to establish an industry-recognized certificate training program to prepare New Jerseyans for careers as offshore wind turbine technicians, a high-growth, high-wage profession that is integral to the growth of the State's offshore wind sector. Through this Challenge, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) will solicit applications from New Jersey's community colleges and select a winning application to be an up to $1 million grant to support implementation.

The following summarizes the Challenge schedule:

June 2, 2021	Informational Webinar for Prospective Applicants (Optional)
June 7, 2021	Notice of Funding Availability and Application Instructions Posted on NJEDA Website
June 16, 2021	Application Forms Available on NJEDA Website
June 30, 2021	Deadline for Applicants to Submit Questions (Optional)
July 23, 2021	Deadline for Applications
October 25, 2021	Applicants Notified No Later Than This Date

Background

Governor Murphy's economic development plan, "The State of Innovation: Building a Stronger and Fairer New Jersey Economy" identifies offshore wind as one of the State's strategic sectors for accelerating growth in New Jersey's economy. In addition, the plan asserts a commitment to investing in people in order to empower New Jersey students and workers to take advantage of high-growth, high-wage jobs. Governor Murphy's talent development plan, "JobsNJ: Developing Talent to Grow Business in the Garden State" emphasizes the need to bolster industry recognized post-secondary credential programs that support career pathways. The growth of the offshore wind turbine technician occupation in New Jersey represents an opportunity to realize each of these priorities.

Offshore wind turbine technicians maintain and repair wind turbines. They apply mechanical, hydraulic, electrical, and information technology skills to ensure the turbines operate effectively. Industry places significant value on having a local workforce that is equipped to carry out these critical functions for the operation of wind farms. The workforce need for offshore wind turbine technicians was underscored by industry in discussions organized by the Governor's WIND Council, per Executive Order No. 79, as well as

defined in the New Jersey Offshore Wind Strategic Plan released by NJBPU in September 2020 as offshore wind turbine technician training does not currently exist in New Jersey.

The offshore wind turbine technician occupation has not yet been established in New Jersey, and there is no dedicated training program in the State. The profession is growing rapidly; as more turbines are installed, more wind turbine technicians are needed. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of wind turbine service technicians (including onshore and offshore) is projected to grow 61% from 2019 to 2029, significantly outpacing most professions. Establishing a New Jersey based training program will support the development of a locally based, skilled workforce that can meet this demand.

The NJ Wind Turbine Tech Training Challenge aims to establish a training program that enables New Jerseyans to achieve industry-recognized offshore wind turbine technician training and credentials so they can participate in the growing offshore wind industry and help accelerate the State's growth of the industry.

Eligible Applicants

New Jersey community colleges are the only entities eligible to apply for this grant as a primary applicant. New Jersey' community colleges have the ability to provide a holistic program with a stackable credential (e.g., a pathway to an Associate degree), have demonstrated experience serving a diverse population, can offer a wide range of support services (e.g., career services, family services, counseling, mentoring, etc.) and are well positioned to convene and work with various parties to support multiple career pathways.

Recognizing that collaborations with labor unions and industry are necessary for the successful development and delivery of the program, any New Jersey community college applying for this grant must submit applications that include plans to collaborate with regional councils or other umbrella labor union groups to meet the program's goals. Applicants must also include plans to collaborate with representatives of potential employers to ensure curriculum is aligned with industry needs and that the program prepares students for employment in New Jersey's initial offshore wind projects.

Additionally, community colleges are encouraged to submit applications that include collaborations with other entities as needed to meet program goals such as other community colleges, higher education institutions, training providers, non-profit organizations and/or other private entities. Such collaborations can bolster outreach, recruitment, curriculum development and delivery, support services, hands-on/on-the-job training opportunities (including but not limited to access to internships, apprenticeships, and training facilities), job placement services and other program needs.

Regardless of the number of collaborators, the NJEDA will only enter into an agreement with and award the grant to the single primary applicant (the community college).

Scope of Work

NJEDA is seeking proposals from New Jersey community colleges and their collaborators to develop and deliver a training program that will prepare New Jerseyans for offshore wind turbine technician roles.

Applicants must submit proposals that outline compelling plans to:

- Develop and operate an industry-recognized offshore wind turbine technician training program utilizing facilities and equipment that are conducive and sufficient to provide the training, and that includes a credit-bearing certificate and pathway to an Associate degree or higher;
- Collaborate with regional labor union groups and industry stakeholders to develop a targeted curriculum and program that meets industry needs;
- Develop and/or utilize outreach and recruitment practices and program design approaches that target and support a diverse and inclusive pool of training participants to enroll in and complete the program, and that drive equity, diversity and inclusion in the broader offshore wind industry;
- Create clear and inclusive career pathways for students to enter and grow in the offshore wind industry; and
- Execute the project efficiently and on schedule, achieving well-defined milestones to launch the certificate program by the first quarter of 2023.

The community college that is awarded this grant shall use the grant funding to work with industry and other stakeholders to design a curriculum that meets the program's goals and industry standards and to launch and deliver the program. Potential components of the curriculum may include:[1]

- Wind power operations and maintenance
- Wind power technology
- Electrical machinery
- Fluid systems
- Mechanical systems
- Information technology/software programs
- Renewable energy
- Algebra
- OSHA 10
- Resume writing and interview skills

Note: proposals should not include Global Wind Organization Basic Safety & Sea Survival Training. The State is looking to support the development of this program through a separate initiative and it can be assumed students will be able to access this training beginning in 2023.

Grant Amount and Disbursement

Applicants may apply for up to $1 million in grant funding. Only one grant will be awarded under this program. The up to $1 million grant will be disbursed to the winning applicant to support implementation. Eligible uses of grant funding include planning (e.g. staff costs for curriculum development), soft launch (e.g. outreach and recruitment materials, instructor costs), or capital costs (e.g. facility build out, equipment). Applicants must provide a detailed budget that demonstrates how the grant will be used to cover these costs. Applicants that require funding in excess of the grant amount must demonstrate ability to secure these funds.

[1] Bristol Community College's Offshore Wind Power Technology certificate program and Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Wind Turbine Technician Academy certificate program are examples of programs with similar curriculum components. These examples are offered for illustrative purposes and all components of those programs are not intended to be viewed as requirements for this grant challenge. Note: Kalamazoo Valley's program is for onshore wind turbine technicians but is included for informational purposes as a related program.

The winning applicant will enter into a grant agreement with NJEDA. Prior to executing the grant agreement, the grantee will coordinate with NJEDA to ensure labor compliance, including compliance with prevailing wage and Affirmative Action requirements, where applicable.

The grant will be disbursed according to the following milestones:

- 25% of the grant to be disbursed upon execution of a grant agreement between NJEDA and the highest scoring community college (contingent upon Board approval of the grant award). Applications that require funds in excess of the grant amount must demonstrate proof or commitment for any funding needed in excess of the grant amount prior to the execution of grant agreement. If the selected applicant is not able to demonstrate proof of commitment for any funding needed in excess of the grant such that NJEDA and the selected applicant cannot execute a grant agreement in a timely manner, NJEDA reserves the right to terminate the initial selection and award the grant to the next highest scorer.

- 50% of the grant to be disbursed upon the college's presentation of a detailed implementation plan to NJEDA.

- 25% of the grant will be disbursed upon the launch of the certificate program, expected to be Q1 2023. To receive this final disbursement, the community college must provide sufficient evidence that at least 75% of the funding previously received from the first two disbursements was used to pay for eligible planning, soft launch, or capital costs incurred to date.

Grant Recipient's Relationship with NJEDA

NJEDA is responsible for overseeing the application process, the selection of the community college that will develop and operate the training program, and the disbursement of the funding to the selected college. The grant recipient will be accountable to NJEDA by submitting an interim and end-of-year progress report annually that details budgetary information, progress against milestones as outlined in the proposal, and the emergence of challenges or impediments to the development of the training program, until the launch of the certificate program, and for every year that the program is operating through 2026. Reports submitted after the certificate program is running must also include information on number of participants who enrolled and/or completed the program, key demographic metrics – including race and gender – and information on post-program completion job placements as available.

NJEDA will engage with the grant recipient to support connections to industry and other stakeholders that can provide insights on curriculum development and ways to promote diverse and inclusive participation in the program.

Required Items for Submission

The application and associated materials will be available starting on June 16, 2021 at www.njeda.com/wind-turbine-training/

Successful applications should include the following:

- Completed cover sheet (the document is available on the program website)
- A copy of the primary applicant's Tax Clearance Certificate
    - Certificates may be requested through the State of New Jersey's Premier Business Services (PBS) portal online. https://www16.state.nj.us/NJ_PREMIER_EBIZ/jsp/home.jsp
- A PDF narrative that includes responses to all of the following questions in a format of the applicant's choosing. All questions (A – Q) must be answered for an application to be considered complete. All responses must clearly label questions and responses according to the below grid. As part of the above, or separately, narratives must specifically include:
    - Plan to collaborate with regional councils or other umbrella labor union groups (to be included as a response to question K)
    - Plan to collaborate with representatives of potential employers (to be included as a response to question E)
- Program budget using NJEDA's template (the template is available on the program website), that clearly lists the requested grant amount, other sources of funding if applicable, and itemized costs to develop and deliver the program

Applications will be accepted during a competitive application round, after which all applications will be reviewed by an Evaluation Committee. NJEDA staff will review all proposals for completeness and compliance with required documentation. NJEDA staff may request clarifying information from respondents and such information must be received within five business days of the date of request or the response may be rejected. All complete responses will be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee.

I. Demonstrated ability to develop and deliver industry-recognized training	
Required questions for response:	**Suggested components of response:**
A) What approach will the applicant take to develop the credit-bearing certificate and pathway to an Associate degree? *Note: Proposals should not include Global Wind Organization Basic Safety & Sea Survival Training. The State is looking to support the development of this program through a separate initiative, and it can be assumed students will be able to access the GWO training beginning in 2023.*	*Recommended process for program development* *Description of prior experience standing up similar programs in emerging industries* *Key considerations for offshore wind turbine technician programs, including takeaways from relevant nationally recognized programs*

B) What experience does the applicant have in equipping students with turbine technician knowledge and skills including electrical, mechanical, hydraulic, and information technology systems, and other necessary skills, including "soft skills" to successfully participate as an offshore wind turbine technician?	*Metrics around the applicant's performance in electrical, mechanical, hydraulics and information technology training* *Metrics around the applicant's performance in renewable energy or related training* *Description of relevant assets, such as existing programs, curriculum, instructors, training materials, facilities, and equipment that could be harnessed*
C) What experience does the applicant have in offshore wind and adjacent fields, such as clean energy or emerging industries and technologies? What prior experience does the applicant have in implementing projects or programs of similar scale and scope?	*Description of past collaborations with the offshore wind industry, labor unions, apprenticeship programs* *Description of relevant programs, faculty, and strategic initiatives in adjacent fields* *Description of relevant past projects/programs and outcomes*
D) What track record does the applicant have in operating training programs that generate positive employment outcomes?	*Retention and placement statistics* *Letters of recommendation from employers (optional)*
E) What process will the applicant follow to ensure that the skills, program, and credentials are recognized by industry and carry value with offshore wind developers, original equipment manufacturers and other potential employers?	*Descriptions of proposed industry engagement strategies and approaches throughout development and operation of the training* *Description of approach for aligning skills with industry needs*
F) How will the applicant secure qualified and knowledgeable instructors for this program?	*Description of faculty recruiting or retooling plans* *Description of existing instructors with relevant skills and experience*
II. Demonstrated ability to create career pathways for New Jerseyans	
Required questions for response:	**Suggested components of response:**
G) What is the applicant's strategic vision for a stackable offshore wind turbine technician certificate that can be applied to a relevant Associate degree or higher? *Note: the Associate degree does not need to be specific to offshore wind. For example, it could align to engineering or renewable energy.*	*Overview of the content, skills, and hands-on experiences that will be covered in the certificate and degree programs* *Success factors that will be required, including how well the applicant is positioned to deliver on these factors* *Prior experience and/or current commitments to creating stackable credentials*

H) How does the applicant propose to provide opportunities for hand-on learning, whether through access to equipment and facilities, internships, apprenticeships, etc.?	*Proposed facilities, programmatic elements and or strategic collaborations with labor unions, employers or other entities that can support hands-on learning opportunities*
I) How does the applicant propose to create synergies between the offshore wind programming and other clean energy sectors to broaden opportunities for students?	*Proposed connections to other clean energy or related certificate or degree programs*
J) How does the applicant propose driving equity, diversity and inclusion through this program including a reporting strategy? Consider student and faculty engagement and recruitment strategies, including outreach efforts to underserved populations, and any necessary services, programmatic components or partnerships that will enable a diverse student population to enroll in and successfully complete the program.	*Diversity and inclusion engagement plan including outreach and retention activities* *Proposed affirmative action/diversity goals/targets* *Proposed strategic collaborations with relevant community-based organizations, government agencies, and others to provide wrap around or other services* *Prior experience and evidence of successfully driving racial and gender equity and inclusion, and experience with affirmative action compliance reporting.*
K) What approach will the applicant take to collaborate with regional councils or other labor union umbrella groups to meet program goals?	*Proposed collaborations with labor unions to support hands-on learning, apprenticeships, program development and/or other program goals*
L) What strategies will the applicant pursue to ensure program affordability for students?	*Recommended approach to reduce financial burden on students* *Prior experience collaborating with industry and/or other stakeholders to reduce cost to students for other programs*
III. Demonstrated ability to implement	
Required questions for response:	**Suggested components of response:**
M) What is the approach, including timeline the applicant is proposing to successfully launch the certificate program by the first quarter of 2023? In addition, what is the timeline for establishing pathways to higher degrees? Clearly identify all key milestones. *Note: The Associate degree and, if applicable, the Bachelor degree, components of the program do not need to be established by the first quarter of*	*Detailed plan and timeline* *Description of critical milestones and decision points* *Phased implementation path for developing certificate and stackable pathways including "off-ramps" to apprenticeships and other training opportunities*

2023 though proposals must provide detailed plans and timing for building stackable pathways.	
N) Who are the key personnel from the primary applicant and collaborating organizations who will be responsible for the project?	*Description of relevant personnel and their credentials/experience* *Description of roles and responsibilities of key personnel*
O) Where will the program exist (geographically) and what is the strategic rationale for this location? Applications from across all geographic areas of the state are welcome. What facilities will be utilized for the program?	*Description of proximity to current or planned offshore wind industry activity and/or other relevant facilities* *Description of proposed facilities to be utilized by the program, either new, refurbished or existing*
IV. Resources Required	
Required questions for response:	**Suggested components of response:**
P) What is the specific grant amount the applicant is requesting, up to $1 million	*Rationale for specific grant dollar request*
Q) What is the applicant's plan for ensuring the sustainable operation of the program over time? What costs does the applicant anticipate will be incurred to both develop and operate the program? Applicants must complete a budget using the template provided by NJEDA.	*Proposed sustainability plan that outlines how seed money from grant will be used to ensure program's longevity* *Description of strategies to achieve cost efficiencies* *Description of additional funding sources beyond the grant (if applicable)* *NJEDA Budget*

Evaluation and Scoring Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by an Evaluation Committee comprised of staff from NJEDA, Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), and the Department of Labor & Workforce Development. Other Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from NJ EDA may serve in an advisory role. The Evaluation Committee will evaluate, score and rank applications received based on four primary criteria: (I) demonstrated ability to develop and deliver industry-recognized training, (II) demonstrated ability to create career pathways for New Jerseyans, (III) demonstrated ability to implement, and (IV) resources required. **Note: The highest**

score possibility is 100 points. A minimum score of 80 points must be earned by responses to be considered as a Challenge winner.

Scoring criteria for each component of the evaluation:

No credit…… No compelling plan and/or no evidence of ability to execute
Partial Credit…… Moderately compelling plan and/or minimal evidence of ability to execute
Full Credit……. Compelling plan and ample evidence of ability to execute

I. Demonstrated ability to develop and deliver industry-recognized training

Description of Scoring Components & Maximum Points for Each Component	
Provides a detailed and realistic plan for building and delivering an offshore wind turbine technician training program that will be recognized by industry	15
Has significant experience delivering best-in-class programs that equip students with the necessary skills needed to be successful in the industry	10
Outlines a plan that demonstrates a strong understanding of what is required from the training to meet the needs of industry and strategies to engage with industry in the program development	5
Details a clear plan for securing qualified instructors that includes evidence of relevant experience securing instructors with specific skill sets for new programs	5
Total	35

II. Demonstrated ability to create career pathways for New Jerseyans

Description of Scoring Components & Maximum Points for Each Component	
Details a compelling approach for delivering a stackable credential, including a credit-bearing certificate and pathway to higher degree(s), with opportunities for hands-on learning	10
Demonstrates an ability and plan for creating synergies between offshore wind programming and that of other clean energy sectors to broaden opportunities for students	3
Details a convincing plan for driving equity, diversity and inclusion, including a reporting strategy	10
Details an effective plan to collaborate with labor union(s) to meet program goals	5

Details a realistic and sustainable plan for ensuring affordability for students	7
Total	35

III. Demonstrated ability to implement

Description of Scoring Components & Maximum Points for Each Component	
Details a realistic timetable with clear milestones and a convincing path to target launch of the certificate program by first quarter of 2023	5
Has requisite internal expertise assigned specifically to this project	5
Demonstrates capacity to provide requisite facilities to successfully meet program goals	5
Total	15

IV. Resources required

Description of Scoring Components & Maximum Points for Each Component	
Grant funds requested up to $1 million *Application with the lowest amount of requested funds will be awarded 3 points; all other applications will be awarded a pro-rated number of points based on the percent difference from the lowest requested grant amount.*	3
Defines a clear project budget and financing strategy for development and long-term sustainable operation of the program, including outlining costs to be covered by grant and defining funding sources for project costs that exceed the grant amount *Applications that require funding in excess of the grant must clearly demonstrate the applicant's ability, including timing, to secure all necessary funding required to deliver the program and meet program goals.*	12
Total	15

Total score: Maximum 100 points

Questions & Answers

NJEDA will electronically accept written questions and inquiries from all potential applicants sent via email to Windturbinetraining@njeda.com no later than June 30, 2021. Phone calls/faxes shall not be accepted. The subject line of the e-mail should state: "Questions – NJ Wind Turbine Tech Training Challenge".

All questions received, and answers given in response, will be answered in the form of a Frequently Asked Questions document to be posted and continually updated on the NJEDA's website, www.njeda.com/wind-turbine-training/, up until one week prior to the application deadline. The Authority will also post any addenda on the same website. It is the responsibility of any potential applicant to review the website on a frequent basis to become aware of any answers and addenda.

Application Submission

Applications are due by 5 PM (EST) on Friday, July 23, 2021.

The applicant must submit applications electronically by emailing the complete application to Windturbinetraining@njeda.com. The subject line of the email should state: Application – NJ Wind Turbine Tech Training Challenge.