

Guidelines:

Bluegrass State Skills Corporation (BSSC) Grant-in-Aid (GIA) Program

FY 2017-2018

Introduction

The Bluegrass State Skills Corporation (BSSC) was established in 1984 by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky to stimulate economic development through customized business and industry-specific skills training programs. The BSSC works with business and industry and Kentucky's educational institutions to establish programs of skills training.

An eighteen-member Board of Directors, including representatives of business, government, education, and labor, governs the BSSC. The Board is made up of private sector individuals as well as public officials. The public officials, who serve as ex-officio members on the Board, include the Secretaries of the Cabinet for Economic Development, Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, and Labor Cabinet, as well as the President of the Council on Postsecondary Education, the President of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, and the Commissioner of the Department of Workforce Investment.

The purpose of the BSSC is to improve and promote employment opportunities for the residents of the Commonwealth through skills training assistance. The BSSC's main functions are:

- To administer and fund customized business and industry-specific training through agreements for Grant-in-Aid and Skills Training Investment Credit incentives;
- To act as a broker by coordinating the resources of providers of skills training and employment services;
- To facilitate the creation of public/private partnerships through education and training programs designed to meet training needs of individual and multiple company (training consortia) training projects; and
- To administer any special state appropriations for customized business and industry-specific training.

Application Submission and Board Meeting Schedule

The schedule for submission deadlines for grant applications and BSSC Board of Directors meetings are as follows:

Submission Deadline	Board Meeting Date
June 15, 2017	July 26, 2017
August 15, 2017	September 27, 2017
October 16, 2017	December 6, 2017
December 15, 2017	January 31, 2018
February 15, 2018	March 28, 2018
April 16, 2018	May 30, 2018

All meetings will begin at 1:00pm and will be held at the 1st floor conference room at the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, Old Capitol Annex, 300 West Broadway in Frankfort. Notices of the meetings will be published in advance of the meetings. The BSSC reserves the right to schedule, reschedule, cancel or change meeting location designated in advance at its discretion.

Grant-in-Aid Program

The purpose of the Grant-in-Aid program is to improve and promote employment opportunities for residents of the Commonwealth through training grants to business and industry. The program provides reimbursement dollars to companies/consortia for company specific training activities.

Funding Caps

It is the intent of the BSSC to provide for the equitable distribution of BSSC funds to eligible companies. Therefore, the following funding caps have been established:

- Applications must include \$6,000 in reimbursable costs to be considered.
- The maximum grant amount that an individual company may receive is:
 - » \$25,000 (1 to 499 KY resident, full-time employees); or
 - » \$50,000 (500 or more KY resident, full-time employees)
- A consortium may receive a grant up to a maximum of \$75,000.
- All applications are further limited based upon a calculation of the total number of trainees multiplied by \$2,000.

Unused Funds: Approved companies shall notify the BSSC if they find they are unable to use all or a portion of the funds that have been set aside for them. These unused funds will then be reallocated. Companies that act responsibly in this manner are in no way penalized when applying for future BSSC funding.

Eligible Companies

Companies must be registered and in good standing with the Secretary of State's Office. Eligible BSSC companies are separated into five categories:

Manufacturing – Any Kentucky manufacturing company is eligible for BSSC funding.

Service and Technology (non-retail) – The BSSC also provides training funds for Kentucky's non-retail, service and technology companies. A service and technology company is considered an eligible company if the company provides a service to or uses technology for customer or affiliate entities predominantly outside the Commonwealth or is designed to serve a multistate, national, or international market.

Headquarters – Headquarter operations are eligible for BSSC funding. Headquarters means the principal office where the principal executives of the entity are located and from which other personnel, branches, affiliates, offices or entities are controlled

Public or Non-Profit Hospitals – Public or non-profit hospitals licensed by the Commonwealth of Kentucky are eligible BSSC applicants.

Consortia/Industry Partnerships – The BSSC Board of Directors promotes collaborative training initiatives and provides priority consideration for training agreements that demonstrate the willingness of multiple companies to work together through training consortia and industry partnership. The following points must be addressed in a consortium application:

The common training and workforce development needs of the participating companies are:

- The effort is industry-driven;
- There is collaboration by the area providers of employment and training services;
- There is an overall savings in training costs because of the collaborative effort (must be able to document the overall cost savings); and
- The project will facilitate the advancement of the host community's economic development efforts.

An eligible consortium/industry partnership application shall include three or more BSSC eligible companies, appoint an administrator and authorize an administrator to act on their behalf. Consortium/Industry Partnership projects shall include a listing of the member companies and a "lead company" whose representative is authorized by the consortium/industry partnership to provide his/her signature on behalf of the consortium/industry partnership.

Unless otherwise specified herein, BSSC requires that at least three consortium/industry partnership member companies be engaged and participate together in any single activity on the Training Plan page of the application. The applicant consortium/industry may request an exception under specific circumstances as follows:

- » A newly formed consortium/industry partnership (one year from start date of initial application) may request on its initial application for a Grant-in-Aid project that a minimum of two consortium/industry partnership member companies be allowed to participate in a single activity; and
- » An existing consortium/industry partnership may request that a minimum of three consortium/industry partnership member companies be allowed to participate individually in the same type of single activity on the Training Plan page of the application, as long as the individual trainee cost of the single training activity is the same for each participating company.

Any firm, company, consultant, or institution whose primary business is to provide training or training consultation for a fee is not eligible for BSSC grant funds. Retail establishments will be eligible to apply only when specific funds for grants-in-aid to retail businesses are appropriated by the General Assembly. At this time, no funds have been appropriated by the General Assembly; therefore, retail establishments are not eligible.

A company or member of a consortium that has been found (adjudicated) to have committed a willful Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) violation within three previous years is not eligible to apply for BSSC funds. If a company is approved for funding and is then found (adjudicated) to have committed a willful OSHA violation during the life of a BSSC grant, no remaining funds will be paid to the company from the date the willful violation is made known to the BSSC.

Co-Applicant

The application may be written and submitted by the company alone or submitted jointly with a co-applicant. A co-applicant must be either a public or non-public secondary or post-secondary educational institution, or an independent (private or proprietary) provider within the Commonwealth authorized by law to deliver a program of

skills training or education.

Eligible Trainees

Participants (i.e. trainees) in the BSSC program must be limited to residents of the Commonwealth who are seeking or have already obtained permanent full-time employment. A full-time employee is a Kentucky resident who is employed by the qualified company to work for a minimum of 35 hours per week and is subject to the tax imposed by KRS 141.020. Full-time employees do not include contract or seasonal labor.

Pursuant to KRS 141.010(17): “Resident” means an individual domiciled within this state or an individual who is not domiciled in this state, but maintains a place of abode in this state and spends in the aggregate more than 183 days of the taxable year in this state..

Trainee Minimum Wage Rate and Benefits: A goal of the BSSC program is to stimulate economic development by establishing a minimum wage rate of 150% of the federal minimum wage (\$10.88 per hour). In addition to the applicable minimum hourly wage, the eligible company shall provide employee benefits equal to at least fifteen percent (15%) of the applicable minimum hourly wage for trainees on grant applications to be considered by the board. The term “employee benefits” is defined as “payments by an approved company for its full-time employees for health insurance, life insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, defined benefits, 401(k) or similar plans.” If the eligible company does not provide employee benefits equal to at least fifteen percent (15%) of the applicable minimum hourly wage rate of \$10.88 per hour, the eligible company may qualify under this section if it provides the employees a total hourly compensation equal to or greater than one hundred fifteen percent (115%) of the applicable minimum hourly wage through increased hourly wages combined with employee benefits (\$12.51 per hour).

Eligible Training Provider

A company may choose to use in-house trainers, educational institution regular or adjunct faculty, training consultants, or a combination thereof. Companies are free to use any provider they choose. BSSC does not recommend, endorse, certify or advertise for any particular training providers. Training Providers are not permitted to use the BSSC name in any of their advertisements, brochures, or other promotional materials for the purpose of soliciting or obtaining customers.

Eligible Training Costs

Specific skills training programs may be customized for a particular company/consortium to encompass one or more of the following eligible training costs. The BSSC gives preference to training projects that create, maintain, and promote higher wage jobs, given its statutory mandate to improve and promote the employment opportunities of the residents of the Commonwealth. BSSC will provide reimbursement funds for fifty percent (50%) of total eligible costs up to the maximum allowable funding cap.

In-House Training

The BSSC will reimburse the company/consortium for fees or salaries required to be paid to instructors who are employees of the company in connection with an occupational or skills upgrade training program sponsored by a company that includes company specific classroom and on-the-job training. (For eligibility, training must be a minimum of 30 minutes and may be claimed in increments of 15 minutes above the 30-minute minimum.)

The BSSC will reimburse the company/consortium at a rate of \$25 per hour for instruction where company employees serve as in-house training instructors. The company/consortium shall provide a match of \$25 per hour for in-house instructor training costs. This match may be in the form of in-kind contributions such as company-paid

wages to the trainer and trainees. (Note: \$25 per hour as used herein is equal to fifty percent (50%) of the total eligible rate of \$50 per hour).

Educational Institution and Consultant Training

The BSSC will reimburse the company/consortium for fees or salaries required to be paid to full-time, part-time, or adjunct instructors with an educational institution; instructors who are consultants on contract with a company; and per employee training costs. Eligible training in this circumstance shall include job related classroom training, tuition courses, certifications, trainer development, licensing, online training, and video conferencing. Registration fees for annual meetings, conferences, or seminars without proof of training are not eligible for tuition reimbursement. It is not the intent of the BSSC to provide funds for Continuing Education Units or tuition courses that are not specifically related to the employee's current or future job function.

Instructional Materials, Texts and Supplies

The BSSC will reimburse for the actual reasonable costs of instructional materials, texts and supplies used exclusively in an occupational or skills upgrade training program sponsored by a company/consortium. Instructional materials and texts include training manuals and textbooks in hard copy or electronic formats and instructional materials (overheads, photocopies, etc.). Supplies include paper, pencils, highlighters and easel pads. The BSSC will only provide reimbursement for shop training materials (welding rods, scrap metal, etc.) used for classroom instruction and not for on-the-job training activities.

Employee Wages

The company/consortium is eligible to receive reimbursement for employee (i.e. trainee) wages to be paid while training during an occupational or skills upgrade training program sponsored by a company. The wage used for reimbursement will be the average wage submitted on the approved application.

Registered Apprenticeship – Year-One Apprentices

The BSSC will reimburse \$2,000 per year-one apprentices enrolled in a registered apprenticeship program during the term of the approved agreement. Participation in registered apprenticeship will be verified by the Kentucky Labor Cabinet's Director of Apprenticeship.

Consortia/Industry Partnership Expenses

Due to the unique training and workforce development needs and functions that exist within training consortia and industry partnerships, the BSSC recognizes that additional eligible training costs could be required for these entities to be successful. In addition to the eligible costs previously listed, the following are also eligible costs specifically for consortia and industry partnerships to be reimbursed at 50% of cost:

- Pre-employment training and certification activities
- Equipment purchased by the consortia/industry partnership, used solely for training purposes and to be used for training listed on the BSSC application. BSSC shall not make reimbursements based on the value of donated equipment. Reimbursement for equipment shall not exceed 25% of the approved grant amount.

Note: Stand-alone safety, mandated training, regulatory training, retroactive training, and pro/con union training are not eligible. Safety Management or Safety Record Keeping is considered safety training and is not allowed. Safety, mandatory or regulatory training includes but is not limited to: blood borne pathogens, control of hazardous materials, lockout/tagout, emergency action plan, emergency response, hazard communication, hearing conservation, safe electrical workplaces (all OSHA), and stand-alone safety (including first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), emergency medical technician (EMT), etc.). Given the nature of work required for medical personnel what would be deemed safety training for other areas of industry would not be deemed safety for hospitals. Therefore, concerning ONLY hospitals, safety hours will be evaluated on a training-by-training basis and may or may not count as strictly safety hours.

Length of Agreement

Grant-in-aid agreements shall be up to one (1) year in length from the approved start date. **Grant-in-aid applications shall not contain any retroactive training.**

BSSC Funding Process

Completion of BSSC Application – An educational institution and a business or industry may submit a joint application to the BSSC detailing the training to be provided. To qualify for a grant in which a provider other than an educational institution will provide training, the business or industry may independently submit an application to the BSSC detailing the desired training. All applications will be arrival time and date stamped upon receipt as long as required signature pages are included.

Submission of Application – Complete, signed applications are due in the BSSC office by the submission date found under the Application Submission and Board Meeting Schedule of these guidelines.

Evaluate and Score Application – BSSC staff review applications for eligibility, completeness and accuracy and verify the calculation of the score. Staff may contact the applicant if there are any questions. Upon completion of staff's review, eligible applications are submitted to the BSSC Board for funding consideration. Not all applications submitted are approved by the BSSC Board.

Approval of Training Application – If the BSSC Board of Directors approves the training application, an approval letter indicating the amount of BSSC funding is emailed to the company contact and educational institution contact if applicable. An agreement is also sent to the company for execution. Upon receipt of the executed agreement from the applicant, the agreement will be signed by BSSC and becomes effective. A copy of the agreement will be returned to the applicant. Information to assist in maintaining documentation and requesting reimbursement payments can be found on our website.

Submission of Reimbursement Request – All requests for reimbursement will be submitted to the BSSC in the form of a Reimbursement Worksheet along with any other required documentation. To expedite the reimbursement process, a reminder of the training end date may be sent to the company.

Interim Reimbursement Process (If applicable) – Up to two (2) Interim reimbursements can be requested before the training program is completed. After the BSSC staff reviews the Reimbursement Worksheet and it is found to be complete and satisfactory, the payment will be processed. A check will then be forwarded to the company or a payment will be deposited electronically in the company's account.

Final Reimbursement – The company is responsible for notifying BSSC staff once the training is completed to initiate the final reimbursement. If notification is not received within one year after the date of approval, BSSC staff will contact the company and provide the requirements for final reimbursement. When the training has been completed and the final reimbursement is being requested, the company will sign and forward the Reimbursement Worksheet to the BSSC. This document provides detailed information on eligible costs incurred in instruction and materials categories. The company will also complete and forward a Performance Evaluation Questionnaire.

Organized Labor

When a collective bargaining unit exists at the work site where the proposed training will be provided, the company shall provide written notification to the on-site collective bargaining agent of the company's intention to apply for

BSSC funding. Notification shall include a summary of the proposed curriculum and shall occur prior to the time that the company files the proposal with the BSSC. A copy of the notification indicating the date the notice was provided, the sender, and the recipient, shall be filed with the BSSC application.

One of the goals of the BSSC is to promote cooperative training activities between a company and its employees. Therefore, a proposed skills training application will not be approved during a legal work stoppage and an active training application will be postponed during a legal work stoppage.

Equal Opportunity

Persons shall not be discriminated against in accordance with KRS 344.040. The BSSC is interested in training a diverse array of individuals under its programs. The BSSC has not set numerical goals for the types of individuals to be trained because it recognizes that the trainee profile of the individual training programs will vary depending upon the employee profile of the applicant company.

Application Scoring

In order to qualify for BSSC funding, a grant-in-aid application must earn a minimum score of 70 points. Applications that do not meet this requirement will not be considered by the BSSC Board of Directors and will be returned to the applicant.

No.	Description	Criteria	Points
1	Company/Consortium Status*	<i>(Total number of Kentucky residents employed in permanent, full-time positions)</i>	20
		Existing company of 100 or less	15
		Existing company of 101 – 500	10
		Existing company of 501 – 1,000	5
		Existing company of 1,001 or more	
2	Area of Need (Range of BSSC Index)	(See Area of Need Chart)	
		0 to 70	20
		70.01 to 80	17
		80.01 to 90	15
		90.01 to 100	10
		100.01 to 110	7
3	Trainees Average Hourly Wage Rate (excluding Benefits)	\$16.00 or less	15
		\$16.01 or more	20
4	Progressive Company Initiatives	See details below	40 (max)

*The employment figures for all participating consortium member companies are averaged to determine the proper category for criteria #1.

The scores for criteria 4 are based on information contained in the application regarding the company’s philosophies and role in Kentucky’s economy. Listed below are the criteria and potential points associated with each. In order to receive the point(s) for a criterion, the applicant company/consortium must demonstrate in the application that it is already participating in the activity. The point(s) will not be given if the applicant is just beginning to train in the activity. When a criterion requires examples, points will only be given if examples are provided in the application.

Progressive Company Initiatives - (maximum of 40 points)

Description	Points
This application is a consortium/industry partnership application	40
Company was not approved for any BSSC incentives during previous BSSC fiscal year (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017)	15
Expanding Company adding more than 10% new, full-time jobs for Kentucky residents paying a minimum hourly wage of \$10.88 with a minimum of 15% benefits	10
Expanding Company adding more than 5% and up to 10% new, full-time jobs for Kentucky residents paying a minimum hourly wage of \$10.88 with a minimum of 15% benefits	5
Expanding Company adding 5% or less new, full-time jobs for Kentucky residents paying a minimum hourly wage of \$10.88 with a minimum of 15% benefits	2
Career growth: trainee receives pay increase as a result of training project. Must include percent or dollar amount of pay increase and identification of class title (example required)	7
Participates in development of future workforce through activities that prepare students for work including, but not limited to: co-op, work study, career days, job shadowing, school-to-work, TRACK, etc. (example required)	4
Grant includes training that is part of a Registered Apprenticeship program (as defined by the Labor Cabinet)	4
Grant includes training for post-9/11 veterans who served on active duty and were discharged or released for other than dishonorable discharge	3
Company is an active member of an industry partnership or consortia that is primarily focused on training and workforce development. (example required)	3

Additional Program Requirements

Modifications

A company/consortium may request one extension up to a maximum of six months for a grant-in-aid in the event more time is needed to complete training. Requests must be made prior to the original grant expiration date and be in the form of a letter to the executive director giving justification for the request.

A consortium may request a modification to add additional eligible companies to the grant-in-aid in order to allow additional companies to participate. Requests must be made in the form of a letter to the executive director giving justification for the request.

All modification requests must be signed by both the applicant company/consortium and educational institution (if applicable) that submitted the original application. Modifications will not become effective until received, reviewed by the BSSC staff, and approved by the executive director.

The BSSC may allow deviations from the original application with no written modification request if the approved amount of the grant does not increase and the change(s) is in accordance with the BSSC Guidelines.

Educational Institution and Consultant Training

All payments to companies/consortia by the BSSC will be on a cost reimbursement basis supported by documentation capable of being successfully audited. Reimbursement for educational institution and consultant training will be based on copies of the invoice(s) from the provider to the company/consortium, which clearly identify the work performed, cost involved and proof of payment. Reimbursement for company in-house training will be based on a training summary document that identifies the training performed and paid receipt(s) for approved materials purchased or approved activities performed. The training summary document shall include the following information: 1) dates of classes, 2) class titles, 3) instructor name(s) and hours taught, 4) number of trainees per class, 5) total number of unduplicated trainees, 6) trainee wages and 7) close with a statement certifying that all trainees are Kentucky residents, signed by a company representative. Supporting documentation from which the training summary document is prepared must be maintained on site by the company/consortium for a period of five years from the end date of the project and must be available to independent auditor(s) and/or the staff of BSSC upon request.

See our website for complete reimbursement instructions and forms. Reimbursements may be requested up to three times for each approved project with the third being the final request.

The company/consortium may maintain a master list on site of all trainees who participated in all BSSC-funded training with company identification numbers or the last four digits of the trainees' social security numbers, city and state instead of this information being collected on sign in sheets.

Area of Need

Percentage Above or Below Kentucky's Average BSSC Index

Points may vary on application. Index will be updated May 1 for Current Fiscal Year

Multi County	Averaged-based on counties	Daviess	7	Knox	20	Ohio	15
Statewide	5	Edmonson	17	Larue	15	Oldham	5
Adair	20	Elliott	20	Laurel	15	Owen	10
Allen	15	Estill	17	Lawrence	17	Owsley	20
Anderson	7	Fayette	5	Lee	20	Pendleton	15
Ballard	10	Fleming	17	Leslie	20	Perry	15
Barren	10	Floyd	17	Letcher	20	Pike	15
Bath	20	Franklin	5	Lewis	20	Powell	17
Bell	20	Fulton	17	Lincoln	17	Pulaski	15
Boone	5	Gallatin	7	Livingston	10	Robertson	20
Bourbon	10	Garrard	15	Logan	10	Rockcastle	17
Boyd	7	Grant	15	Lyon	15	Rowan	17
Boyle	10	Graves	15	Madison	10	Russell	17
Bracken	15	Grayson	17	Magoffin	20	Scott	5
Breathitt	20	Green	17	Marion	10	Shelby	7
Breckinridge	17	Greenup	15	Marshall	7	Simpson	7
Bullitt	7	Hancock	5	Martin	20	Spencer	7
Butler	17	Hardin	7	Mason	10	Taylor	15
Caldwell	15	Harlan	20	McCracken	7	Todd	15
Calloway	15	Harrison	10	McCreary	20	Trigg	15
Campbell	7	Hart	15	McLean	15	Trimble	15
Carlisle	10	Henderson	10	Meade	10	Union	10
Carroll	5	Henry	15	Menifee	20	Warren	7
Carter	17	Hickman	15	Mercer	7	Washington	10
Casey	17	Hopkins	10	Metcalfe	17	Wayne	20
Christian	10	Jackson	20	Monroe	15	Webster	7
Clark	7	Jefferson	5	Montgomery	15	Whitley	17
Clay	20	Jessamine	10	Morgan	20	Wolfe	20
Clinton	20	Johnson	17	Muhlenberg	15	Woodford	5
Crittenden	15	Kenton	5	Nelson	7		
Cumberland	17	Knott	20	Nicholas	17		

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