

## **PUBLIC NOTICES**

### **OTHER AGENCIES**

#### **NEW JERSEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

##### **Notice of Funding Availability**

##### **NJ Wind Turbine Technician Training Grant Challenge**

**Take notice** that the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) is seeking applications for the NJ Wind Turbine Tech Training Challenge for 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.

**Name of Program:** NJ Wind Turbine Technician Training Grant Challenge.

**Purpose:** 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 percent 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.

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

Authority will select a winning application to be an up to \$1 million grant to support implementation.

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:

- Wind power operations and maintenance;
- Wind power technology;

- Electrical machinery;
- Fluid systems;
- Mechanical systems;
- Information technology/software programs;
- Renewable energy;
- Algebra;
- OSHA 10; and
- 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.

**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).

**Grant 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.

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:

- Twenty Five percent 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, the Authority reserves the right to terminate the initial selection and award the grant to the next highest scorer.
- Fifty percent of the grant to be disbursed upon the college's presentation of a detailed implementation plan to NJEDA.
- Twenty Five percent 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 percent 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.

**Evaluation Criteria/Scoring:** 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: 1. Demonstrated ability to

develop and deliver industry-recognized training, 2. Demonstrated ability to create career pathways for New Jerseyans, 3. Demonstrated ability to implement, and 4. Resources required, based on the information submitted in applications as set forth in application instructions, which will be posted on NJEDA's website at <https://www.njeda.com/wind-turbine-training/>.

**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 is as follows:

1. No credit: No compelling plan and/or no evidence of ability to execute;
2. Partial credit: Moderately compelling plan and/or minimal evidence of ability to execute; and
3. Full credit: Compelling plan and ample evidence of ability to execute.

Applicants will have the opportunity to receive the points outlined below based on the following criteria:

**Criteria 1 - Demonstrated ability to develop and deliver industry-recognized training (Up to 35 points)**

- Provides a detailed and realistic plan for building and delivering an offshore wind turbine technician training program that will be recognized by industry (Up to 15 points);
- Has significant experience delivering best-in-class programs that equip students with the necessary skills needed to be successful in the industry (Up to 10 points);
- 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 (Up to 5 points); and

- Details a clear plan for securing qualified instructors that includes evidence of relevant experience securing instructors with specific skill sets for new programs (Up to 5 points).

**Criteria 2 - Demonstrated ability to create career pathways for New Jerseyans (Up to 35 points)**

- 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 (Up to 10 points);
- Demonstrates an ability and plan for creating synergies between offshore wind programming and that of other clean energy sectors to broaden opportunities for students (Up to 3 points);
- Details a convincing plan for driving equity, diversity and inclusion, including a diversity reporting strategy (Up to 10 points);
- Details an effective plan to collaborate with labor union(s) to meet program goals (Up to 5 points); and
- Details a realistic and sustainable plan for ensuring affordability for students (Up to 7 points).

**Criteria 3 - Demonstrated ability to implement (Up to 15 points)**

- Details a realistic timetable with clear milestones and a convincing path to target launch of the certificate program by first quarter of 2023 (Up to 5 points);
- Has requisite internal expertise assigned specifically to this project (Up to 5 points); and
- Demonstrates capacity to provide requisite facilities to successfully meet program goals (Up to 5 points).

#### **Criteria 4 - Resources required (Up to 15 points)**

- Grant funds requested (Up to 3 points – 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).
- 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. (Up to 12 points).

**Application Process:** Entities interested in applying for the program should visit the Authority’s website at <https://www.njeda.com/wind-turbine-training/> to access the application instructions, application, information on submitting questions and any other application or reference materials.

The NJEDA will post the application on Wednesday, June 16, 2021. The deadline for applicants to submit questions is June 30, 2021. Applications will be accepted no later than Friday, July 23, 2021, at 5:00 PM.

Applicants should read the application instructions posted to the Authority’s webpage at <https://www.njeda.com/wind-turbine-training/> for more information for further guidance on the process by which applications must be submitted for this program.

Because this is a competitive program, no applications will be reviewed until the deadline has passed and the Authority has collected all applications that have been submitted by the application deadline (Friday, July 23, 2021, 5:00 PM).

**Fees:** No application fee will be collected by the Authority for this program.

**Additional Information:** More information on the Wind Turbine Technician Training Grant Challenge may be found at <https://www.njeda.com/wind-turbine-training/>.