SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & REGULATION

START TODAY SD: PRE-APPRENTICESHIP FUNDING APPLICATION

Application Type:
Competitive School District Implementation Incentive

Application Deadline:
Nov. 30, 2026

Narrative Length:
Recommended 5 Pages

Section 1: Applicant Information

Applicant Name		
Participating High School(s)		
Mailing Address		
District Superintendent		
Superintendent Contact Details	*Email:*	*Phone:*
Lead Project Coordinator		
Coordinator Contact Details	*Email:*	*Phone:*
Applicant Fiscal Manager		
Fiscal Manager Contact Details	*Email:*	*Phone:*

Section 2: Sponsor & Employer Partnership Model

Check the applicable box below and complete the Sponsor details.

☐ **Option A: Existing Sponsor Partnership**

☐ **Option B: District-Led Model**

(If Option A is selected, complete the Employer Sponsor details below)

Sponsor / Company Name		
Primary Sponsor Contact		
Primary Sponsor Contact Details	*Email:*	*Phone:*

Section 3: Project Narrative (Attachment Required)

Attach a separate narrative document (recommendation is no more than 5 pages) responding thoroughly to the prompts below:

1. **Program Need, Context, and Industry Focus:** Provide a brief description of the local workforce need and why this specific pre-apprenticeship pathway is being proposed. Identify the industry and specific occupations targeted and list the associated Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) that serves as the progression pathway. Describe the long-term vision of this pre-apprenticeship and how it adds value to students, the school district, and regional employers.
2. **Occupational Alignment & Articulation:** Describe how the pre-apprenticeship coursework and training align with industry-recognized competencies. Detail how completing students will earn any of the following: advanced placement, articulated high school/dual credit, industry recognized credentials (IRCs), or direct interview preferences/credit for prior learning into the partner RAP.
3. **Financial Plan & Proposed Allocation:** Detail how this startup incentive will help drive and support the development of your pre-apprenticeship program. Rather than functioning as a traditional expense-reimbursed grant, this incentive is designed as flat-rate startup assistance to build local capacity and launch your program. Explain how the school district (and employer sponsor, if applicable) plan to prioritize program planning, educational coordination, and workplace training setup.
4. **Capacity, Partnership, and Program Success:** Describe your school district's capacity and collaborative framework to successfully build, operate, and sustain this pre-apprenticeship program.
    a) Organizational Capability: Highlight your district's capacity to manage special projects, highlighting any previous program successes with the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) or other community partners.
    b) Convening Partners: Describe the division of responsibilities of key partners. School district involvement is mandatory; please clearly define the roles of K-12 administrators, CTE instructors, or school-affiliated student chapters/CTSOs, alongside related instruction providers, business sponsors, and other partners.
    c) Collaboration Commitment: Formally commit to working collaboratively with DLR's Start Today Program and the South Dakota Department of Education to develop and establish the pre-apprenticeship program.
5. **Implementation Timeline:** Provide a timeline of the proposed program plan. All education plans and framework documents must be completed by April 30, 2027, to ensure school-year scheduling readiness for the official cohort launch in the Fall 2027 semester.
6. **Sustainability:** Provide a detailed plan for how this pre-apprenticeship pathway will remain operationally and financially viable after the state incentive period ends. Address how local school district funds, CTE/Perkins state funding, or in-kind commitments from business partners may be leveraged to sustain the pre-apprenticeship program.

Section 4: Authorization & Submission

Was the applicant, or any employee of the applicant or the partnerships listed above, an employee of any agency of the State of South Dakota within the last year?
(Checking yes does not disqualify you from applying)

❍ **Yes** ❍ **No**

By signing below, the applicant certifies that the information provided is accurate and that the school district commits to launching the pre-apprenticeship program by the Fall 2027 academic semester.

_____ _____

Signature of Superintendent / Authorized Official | Date

_____ _____

Printed Name and Title of Authorized Official | School District Name

Checklist

Please verify that all elements are bundled with your final submission package.

☐ **Completed Application Form** (Sections 1, 2, 4 of this document)

☐ **Project Narrative** (Section 3, recommendation of 5 pages)
[Attach Document:]

☐ **Letter of Intent (LOI)** (Mandatory for Option A applicants only; must be signed by school and employer sponsor)
[Attach Document:]

(*Note: Private Employer Sponsors will submit their IRS Form W-9 directly to DLR during the contract onboarding phase after award notifications are sent. No tax documentation is required from the school district or employer at the time of application)*

APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INTENT TO PARTNER

School District: [Name of High School/District]

Employer Partner: [Name of Local Business]

By signing below, the School District and the Employer Partner express their shared intent to collaborate on developing a High School Pre-Apprenticeship pathway for the Fall 2027 academic semester.

We intend to work alongside the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) Start Today SD Program to formalize our partnership, align requirements, and establish a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) prior to April 30, 2027.

School Authorized Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Employer Authorized Signature: _____ **Date:** _____