START TODAY SD PRE-APPRENTICESHIP

Partnership & Application Guide

A Companion Resource to the Pre-Apprenticeship Pilot Funding Application

TARGET AUDIENCE	TOTAL FUNDING	KEY REQUIREMENT
SD Public School Districts	$30,000 per approved application – with up to 5 awards available for this pilot	Strict 2/3 and 1/3 partnership funding split

Program Overview & Purpose

This funding initiative is designed to help South Dakota school districts launch new pre-apprenticeship programs that create direct routes for students from classroom to career. Pre-apprenticeship programs funded through this initiative are designed to equip high school students with the technical skills, academic instruction, and professional competencies needed to seamlessly transition into a **Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)**. Successful applicants will integrate the state's new Apprenticeship Experience Capstone course as part of this Pilot Program. Applications may be submitted by school districts or school-affiliated student organizations (such as CTSOs, local chapters or CTE program leads) in mandatory coordination with local school district administration.

Each approved partnership will receive an incentive up to **$30,000** to support the development and launch of their program, with the goal of preparing the first student cohort to launch no later than the **Fall 2027** academic semester.

Core Application Requirements

To be considered for competitive funding, applicants must submit a complete package containing:

1. Completed Application Form

Applicants must fill out all required fields in each section:

Section 1: Applicant Information- Complete all fields with required information.

Section 2: Select the partnership model from the options provided for their Pre-apprenticeship Funding Application. There are three options for a pre-apprenticeship model including:

- **Option A (Existing Sponsor Partnership):** The school district partners with an employer who is already an active, registered sponsor of a RAP. A simple, non-binding Letter of Intent (LOI) signed by the school and the employer showing you are excited to partner is required as an attachment when choosing this option. A standard, easy-to-use template for this LOI is provided in Appendix A of the Pre-Apprenticeship Funding Application Form. *(Note: a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining roles and credit translation will be part of the agreement to be completed at a later date*).
- **Option B (District-Led Model):** The school district acts as both the RAP sponsor and hires the student to work in a school position. (e.g., IT, facility maintenance, early childhood education). *Important: RAPs require a commitment to permanent career pathways, not short-term work experiences. Districts who are current RAP sponsors must place students with the intention to transition into permanent, long-term district employment after high school graduation.*

Section 3: Project Narrative – The narrative is to be attached as a separate document. The narrative should include all points as outlined in the application. Tip for your application: In your narrative, be sure to describe how the employer will be actively involved in learning (e.g., worksite tours, guest instruction) and clearly identify both the "Local Facilitator" managing the student and the provider of the Related Instruction (RI).

Section 4: Authorization & Submission- This section is to be completed by the Superintendent or other Authorized Official.

Incentive Funding

This incentive is structured to encourage shared investment and joint program development between educational and industry partners. This is an incentive-based program, not a cost-reimbursable grant.

Program funding is issued upon the submission and approval of structural milestones. For joint partnerships (Option A), DLR intends to process separate, direct milestone payments to both the School District and the Employer Sponsor using a single Three-Party Agreement. For District-Led programs (Option B), the School District serves as both school and sponsor, and will receive the full, consolidated milestone payments directly. Funding agreements will be established with each successful applicant, and all verification milestones must be met to receive full payment.

Anticipated Milestone Payments: To be completed upon notification of successful application.

For Option A (Existing Sponsor Partnerships):

- **Milestone 1:** Paid upon the submission and DLR approval of all final program framework documents, including the completed partnership agreement (MOU) (due April 30, 2027).
    - School District Share: $7,500
    - Employer Sponsor Share: $2,500
- **Milestone 2:** Paid upon the successful enrollment and active participation of the first pre-apprentice (due December 31, 2027).
    - School District Share (2/3): $12,500
    - Employer Sponsor Share (1/3): $7,500

For Option B (District-Led Models):

- **Milestone 1:** $10,000 paid directly to the School District upon approval of all final program framework documents (due April 30, 2027).
- **Milestone 2:** $20,000 Paid directly to the School District upon student enrollment verification and active participation of the first pre-apprentice cohort (due December 31, 2027).

Tax Identity and Fiscal Verification:

To facilitate the distribution of funding, DLR must verify each applicant's tax identity in the state financial system. School districts will be paid and verified through standard state public agency vendor channels. No additional tax forms are required at time of application. For employer partners, a completed and signed IRS Form W-9 is required to establish your organization in the State of South Dakota's financial systems. This ensures that all direct incentive payments are securely routed without administrative delay.

Key Dates and Deadlines

Milestone Activity	Deadline Date
Application Submission Deadline	Friday, Nov. 30, 2026
Notification of Successful Applications	Friday, Dec. 11, 2026
Milestone 1 submission deadline	Friday, April 30, 2027
First Student Cohort Launch and Milestone 2 submission deadline	Friday, Dec. 31, 2027

Resources and Support

For assistance in developing your application, aligning resources, or identifying a Registered Apprenticeship partner, please reach out to our team:

- Technical Assistance & Program Design: Start Today SD Apprenticeship Team
- Local Employer Connections: Contact your regional South Dakota Job Service Office
- Standards & Course Coding Alignment: South Dakota Department of Education (CTE Division)
- USDOL Training and Employment Notice 05-26: Framework for Effective Pre-Apprenticeships