



# **INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING**

## **EMPLOYER HANDBOOK**

## **Introduction**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for partnering with TechBoost as a host worksite in our Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program. TechBoost is a national program that provides comprehensive workforce strategies to prepare the workforce for middle to high-skilled occupations within the information technology industry. By forging public-private partnerships, we bring together industry and employers, education and training providers, the workforce system, and other entities that will work collaboratively to align resources in response to employer demand.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with information on the policies and procedures of the IWT program, plus the responsibilities and duties of you as an employer partner. In the following pages you will read about the IWT program. You will learn about the expectations of the program, employer eligibility, participant (employee) eligibility, training guidelines, the reimbursement process, and more. If you have any questions regarding the material in this handbook, please feel free to contact your TechBoost staff representative.

### **What is Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)?**

The Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program provides funding to help cover the costs of training needed to retain a competitive workforce. The purpose is to connect your existing workers to industry-recognized credentials with the goal of professional advancement, wage gains, and/or increased job and worker retention. We encourage using our IWT program to advance your existing workforce while backfilling positions with new workers.

It is important to note that the IWT program supports **current** (existing) employees who want to obtain industry-based skills and credentials that lead to advancement and income mobility. In contrast, our on-the-job training (OJT) program supports **new** hires in receiving targeted training that meets your business' needs for growth and development. If you are interested in hiring and training new talent, please let us know and we'll be happy to get you started!

This program helps established businesses upgrade the skills of their current employees, which provides immense benefits including:

<b>For Employers:</b>	<b>For Employees:</b>
Increased competitiveness through a skilled workforce	Industry recognized credentials
Increased productivity	Advancement opportunities (position, wages)
Reduced turnover	Increased job opportunities
Increased profits	Job retention
Company growth	Transferable skills

### **Getting Started**

This is a great opportunity to upskill your existing workforce whereby TechBoost grant funds can help you cover the cost(s) of training needed for your employees.

To get started, you must first complete the steps to apply, be accepted into, and join the TechBoost IWT program, as follows:

1. Register your company in the Work Based Learning (WBL) portal
2. Once approved, enter into an Incumbent Worker Training Agreement with TechBoost, then begin training

If you have not yet completed the steps above or need assistance in doing so, please contact us to help get you started.

### ***Business Eligibility***

Employers must:

- Be a private for-profit or private non-profit organization. Public agencies (e.g., federal, state, city, local governments) are not eligible for this program
- Have at least one (1) full-time employee other than the owner of the business
- Be current on all tax obligations
- Provide a description of how the training is related to the competitiveness of both the business and the employee(s) receiving the training
- Demonstrate a commitment to retain, advance, and/or avert the layoff of employees receiving training

### ***Incumbent Worker Eligibility***

The employees receiving training must also meet certain eligibility criteria to comply with TechBoost's program requirements, including:

- Be a U.S. citizen or a non-citizen whose status permits employment in the United States
- Be 17 or older, and not enrolled in secondary school (i.e., high school)
- Be employed by the business with which the IWT contract is being written
  - workers must meet the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements for an employer-employee relationship (e.g., contracted workers are not eligible)

### ***Allowed Costs***

Training can be:

- Provided by a public or private educational institution, a private training company or private instructor, a company employee, or a combination of training providers
- At the company's facility, training provider's facility, or a combination of locations
- Occupational skills training designed to meet the special requirements of a business or industry professional development
- Training in strategies to improve the efficiency of business operations
- Technical/hard skills training, such as computer software training
- Delivered in person or online

The following are examples of trainings that *cannot* be funded:

- New hire orientation, including company policy (e.g., diversity, workplace harassment, etc.)
- CPR/First Aid/Safety (e.g., OSHA)
- English as a second language
- Workplace literacy or soft skills

The following direct training costs/expenses are reimbursable:

- Tuition/training/course cost
- Textbooks, manuals, materials and non-consumables needed for training
- Curriculum development (funding permitted)
- Instructor/trainer salaries (funding permitted)

Costs not eligible for IWT reimbursement (sample list):

- Employee/trainee wages and fringe benefits
- Compensation or consultant fees
- Capital improvements

- Travel
- Food/beverages
- Equipment

### ***Employer Responsibilities***

It is the responsibility of the employer to document the skills gained by the trainee during the IWT period. As an employer in the program, it is also important that you communicate any changes, any employer supervisor changes, or any contact information changes to the TechBoost program staff.

### ***Required Documentation***

The employer is required to submit the following documentation:

At the start of the program:

- A fully executed (signed) IWT agreement
- A completed W-9
- Specifics about the individual employee(s) receiving training:
  - Legal Name of Trainee
  - Citizenship/Authorization to work in U.S.
  - Date of Birth
  - SSN, if available (used only for statistical data analysis and reporting, i.e., long term employment outcomes)
  - Date of Hire
  - Job Title/Wage

For training reimbursement costs, the employer must upload the following to the WBL portal:

- Invoice (invoice template provided) and any necessary supporting documentation (e.g., verification/proof of training costs, fees, etc.)
- Status update for each worker being trained (e.g., start/end dates of training, withdrawals, changes in training activities, etc.)

At the conclusion of the IWT program:

- Copies of achieved certifications or credentials (if applicable) and/or completion of final training and employment information:
  - Date Training Completed (if successfully completed) or date of withdrawal
  - Certifications/credentials earned, if any (and date(s) earned)
- Employment information following training (quarterly for up to one year)
  - including advancement into a new position, receiving an increase in responsibilities in existing position, and/or receiving increased earnings

Our team will work with you to customize any needed templates and/or a tracking system to minimize the burden of the reporting process. Our goal is to periodically collect enough data and information to track the successful outcomes of our partnership in upskilling and advancing your workforce.

### ***Media and Press***

Clark University and its partners provide services under federal legislation in workforce and talent development. From time to time, we may receive requests from media to provide comments, input, or verify facts for public stories. We also seek to engage the media and the public to support our mission of making sure everyone who wants to work can.

To achieve this, TechBoost employs communications staff. The role of the communications team is to facilitate and distribute accurate and factual information to media when requested, as well as draft and publish promotional content and messaging.

Our communications department is here to assist you with anything media or press related. TechBoost's mission when interacting with the media and public is to provide accurate, factual, and grant-compliant information about your company (with your permission), its relationship to TechBoost's programs, and the trainee(s) at your worksite. Should the press approach you or your trainee(s), we ask that you contact us before formally answering the press inquiry or directly refer the press to our team. This step will help ensure that we provide supportive data and increase positive media outcomes for both your organization and the programs we support.

### ***Questions, Concerns, and Additional Information***

All information contained in this handbook is subject to change without notice, as a result of legislation, or changes from the U.S. Department of Labor, or from program policies. TechBoost staff will make every attempt to keep trainees and employers informed of policy changes in a timely manner. If you have any questions, issues and/or concerns please contact our office.

This handbook does not supersede, void, cancel or replace any applicable information contained in the incumbent worker training agreement between TechBoost and the employer.